CONSTANCE P. IACONA AND EDWARD V. GEORGE, Columbus' First Voyage: Latin Selections from Peter Martyr's De Orbe Novo (Waucunda, Bolchazy-Carducci, 2005); xvi plus 40pp; ISBN 08615166137; paper; $US17.00.

Five short passages from De Orbe Novo are intended for students in their second year of Latin. The choice of text is shrewd, asserting the importance of Latin for studies in colonialism, the Hispanic world and Early Modern History. The style of presentation, with copious notes and almost complete glossing, much subdivision of material and the Auxiliary Sentences for a progressive introduction to the full complexity of the text, is well judged for contemporary students. Imperfections in the implementation of the choices, however, mean that recommendation, either for solitary study or use in class, must be somewhat tempered.

Not infrequently (perhaps twice in each selection) points are left unexplained that might puzzle the intended reader; this is no great matter for an instructor to fill in, but enough to frustrate a reader working through the book on their own.

The Auxiliary Sentences are adapted from the original text, and lead the reader by simple stages to a full comprehension. They would be more effective if they could be easily compared with the actual text; it would have been a better use of space to reprint the original passages alongside the Sentences, rather than at the head of the Background Notes.

With this exception, the layout of the book is effective. The illustrations from a contemporary pictorial edition of Columbus' Letter punctuate the book nicely, even if they add no reliable information. It is a pity that the care taken and space available has not resulted in a more handsome volume; the lettering on the map of the Caribbean seems to have been done originally with a dot matrix printer, and the whole book has the feel of Desktop Publishing c. 1989.

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Contextualization is carefully done, but more might be done to stimulate readers with rudimentary Latin, but capable of sophisticated thought. The claim in the third extract that the indigenous people join in acts of Christian reverence might be identified as needing consideration from various points of view. The comment made on the report of cannibalism (p. 17: the passage in question is not included) seems excessively deferential to the theory of European projection of horror; it would not have been written so in the South Pacific, and my one acquaintance of Carib ancestry has no embarrassment about descent from cannibals.

This book is the product of sound strategic judgments. It is unfortunate that the helps provided are not quite complete for private study. An instructor contemplating using the text in class will have to judge whether $US17.00 is value for money for two and a half pages of Latin text.

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