ROSE WILLIAMS, *Vergil for Beginners: A Dual Approach to Early Vergil Study* (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2006); x plus 86; ISBN 0 86516 628 5; paper: $US19.00

For those progressing in their reading of Latin from prose to dactylic hexameter, the guidance provided within this slim reading supplement will be of assistance. Rose Williams, an established author of entertaining and encouraging books for teachers and students of Latin, has in this book provided a choice of pathways to the achievement of some facility in comprehending and translating Vergil’s verse.

Explanations of the intention of the book and suggestions for its use with grammar-based or reading-based approaches are given in the preface, and an introduction outlines Vergil’s life and the nature of ancient deities. Encouragingly, Rose Williams comments (x) that simplicity is ‘one of the most outstanding features of Vergil’s monumental work’.

Five sections follow, the first giving an English summary of the *Aeneid* to explain the context of Latin passages printed later in the book and the second containing an English ‘playlet’ of scenes linked to those Latin passages for students to read or perform. The playlet ‘spoofs and summarises’ (p.5) major scenes from Books 1-6, providing opportunity for humour in class as it assists understanding of the story.

The third section is a short introduction to reading Latin hexameters aloud, starting with rhythm and metre in examples of English poetry, then moving on to elision in Latin. Long vowels and long and short syllables in Latin are shown but explanation is brief and students will need a teacher to develop their confidence.

The fourth section contains six Latin passages selected from Books 1, 2, 4 and 6 of the *Aeneid*. Suggestions for approaches
to study precede the passages which range in length from six to thirteen lines, making some sixty lines in total. The format for each passage comprises an English introduction, a Latin to English vocabulary list, the Latin passage, vocabulary aids, comprehension questions and discussion and exploration questions (e.g. to find out the significance of *intonuit laevum*).

The fifth section *Carpe Grammaticam* contains exercises linked to each selected passage, with a ‘Word Bank’ attached to provide the necessary vocabulary. There are various practical hints for teachers within this book, and assistance from marked long vowels, a list of abbreviations and a glossary of all the needed vocabulary (467 entries).

Knowledge gained from years of teaching experience and an ability to recognise what students will enjoy have enabled Rose Williams to write this well-considered and clearly set out booklet. It should achieve its author’s aims to acquaint students with the nature of verse by Vergil, to encourage Latin to English comprehension and to develop student knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. It has the advantage of being suitable for introducing New Zealand school students to Vergil’s writing in their second or third year of Latin and would be of value to students who continue with Latin into Years 12 and 13 or who choose the Vergil option for NCEA Level 3 Classical Studies.

Janice F. Cheeseman
Pukekohe