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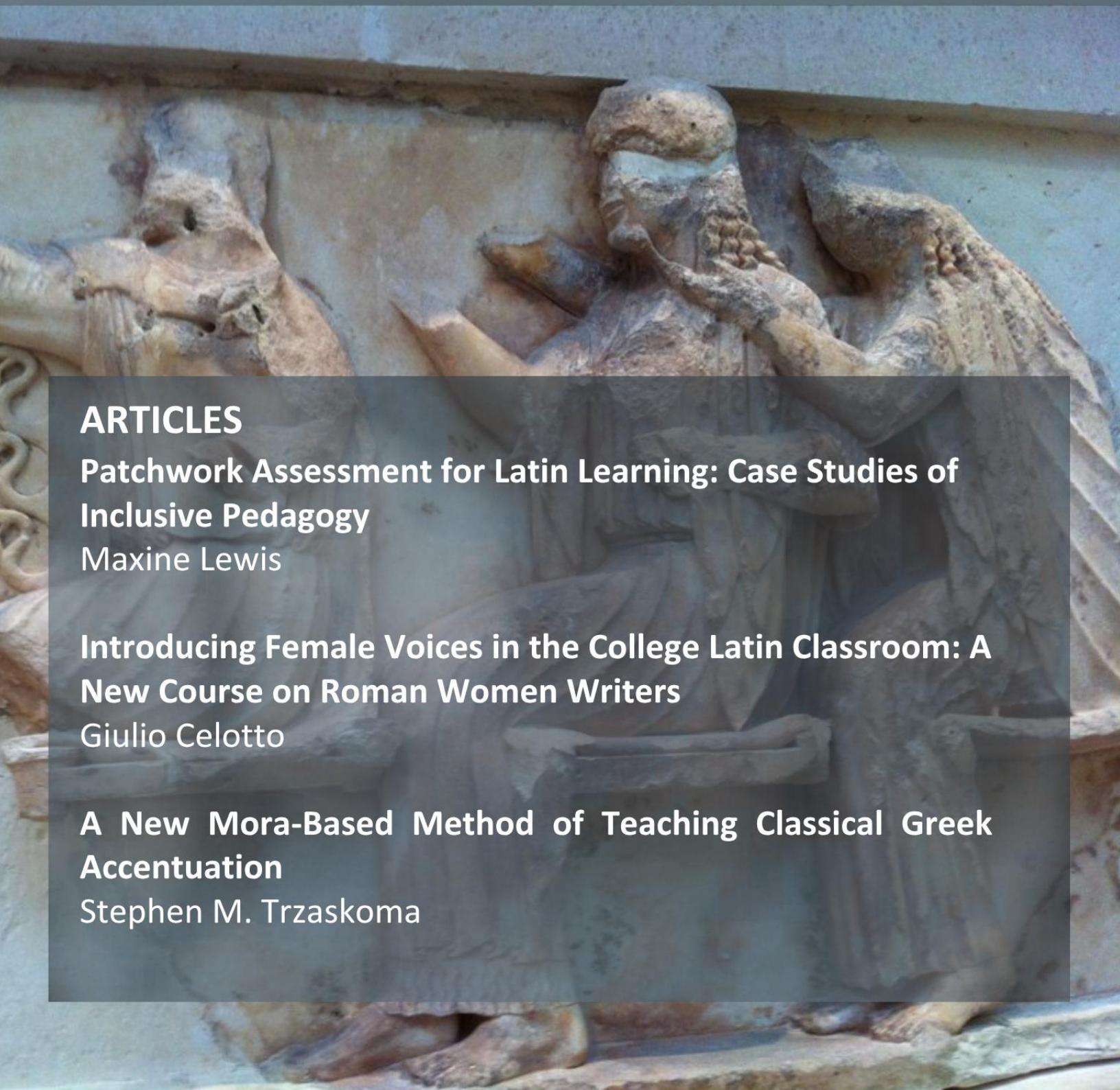

ARTICLES

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TEACHING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES MISSION STATEMENT

Teaching Classical Languages (ISSN 2160-2220) is the only peer-reviewed electronic journal dedicated to the teaching and learning of Latin and ancient Greek. It addresses the interests of all Latin and Greek teachers, graduate students, coordinators, and administrators. Teaching Classical Languages welcomes articles offering innovative practice and methods, advocating new theoretical approaches, or reporting on empirical research in teaching and learning Latin and Greek. As an electronic journal, Teaching Classical Languages has a unique global outreach. It offers authors and readers a multimedia format that more fully illustrates the topics discussed, and provides hypermedia links to related information and websites. Articles not only contribute to successful Latin and Greek pedagogy, but draw on relevant literature in language education, applied linguistics, and second language acquisition for an ongoing dialogue with modern language educators. Teaching Classical Languages welcomes articles offering innovative practice and methods, advocating new theoretical approaches, or reporting on empirical research in teaching and learning Latin and Greek.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Diuersae uarie uiae reportant. "Branching roads bring back by varied ways." The eleventh and last line of Catullus' poem 46 has echoed in my head while working on issue 14.1 of *Teaching Classical Languages*. The old friends he addresses who left for places far away from home (*longe quos simul a domo profectos*) return via different directions back to where they all began from. So do the three articles of this issue each approach the teaching of ancient languages by various means, to reach students who come to our classrooms via different paths.

Maxine Lewis' article "Patchwork Assessment for Latin Learning: Case Studies of Inclusive Pedagogy" explains how to implement a non-traditional approach to grading in which each student chooses assignments that best suit their interests and strengths. A sample of student feedback documents the benefits of patchwork assessment and the author's rubrics offer additional insights.

Giulio Celotto's article "Introducing Female Voices in the College Latin Classroom: A New Course on Roman Women Writers" demonstrates how to design such a Latin course. If you are considering teaching a similar class, the article clearly presents how to do so, while recounting how motivated students were to translate and learn about ancient women writers.

The third article by Stephen M. Trzaskoma, "A New Mora-Based Method of Teaching Classical Greek Accentuation," lays out both a rationale and the steps for teaching Greek accentuation based on morae. If you have ever seen students give up on understanding accentuation — or, worse, on learning Greek altogether— a mora-based method is worth at least considering.

These three articles offer ways to make the ancient language classroom a welcoming space for all, an enterprise all the more essential given the times we teach and live in. AI, LLMs, Google Translate, and a host of other software tools and Internet sites have turned translating and parsing

ancient language texts into just another cut and paste operation. On top of teaching grammar, syntax and vocabulary, we now find ourselves tasked with justifying why students should invest the time and energy into learning these fundamentals on their own, especially given that knowledge of ancient Greek and Latin is not a skill that leads to a guaranteed career path.

No matter how many spear-points are aimed our way, how high the waves rise while the winds blast over our heads, we forge on. I first read Catullus' poem 46 about "spring now ushering in milder warmth with cold sloughed off" (*iam uer egelidos refert tepores*) when I was in my last year of high school. I first taught the poem while in my first tenure-track position at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul and as the mother of an autistic, intellectually disabled toddler. To provide our son with the best education and services for his many needs, my husband and I have traveled down many roads and taught at many schools (he is a historian of American religion and culture) in the Midwest, New Jersey, New York, and northern California. My one-year detour working for a Silicon Valley tech company proved unexpectedly of use when the Classics Department of Rutgers University asked me to teach online, asynchronous courses. As I discovered, I was well-prepared for these.

I have been teaching for Rutgers ever since and, this fall, will teach elementary ancient Greek as a fully online course. This is not something I could have envisioned doing or thought possible when I began teaching anymore than I would have believed that my son would one day have ridden over 75,000 miles on his bike with his dad. But he has, leading us on a panoply of adventures best described as *diuersus* like Catullus' roads or ποικίλος ("many-colored, diversified, spangled") in the way that Alcaeus refers to the throat of a certain long-winged bird in his fragment 345.2. To bring ancient Greek and Latin to as manifold an audience of students as possible is the important work that the three articles in this issue offer new ways of undertaking.

Many thanks to outgoing editor Yasuko Taoka, who did the initial editing of two of the articles for this issue, and to our Editorial Assistant, Katie Alfultis-Rayburn, whose work is prized and priceless.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. Maxine Lewis is a Senior Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History at Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland. She publishes on Latin literature and Roman history, its later reception, and inclusive teaching of Classics. In 2020 she won a New Zealand National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award from Ako Aotearoa. Her book chapter on inclusive pedagogy appeared in the edited volume *From Abortion to Pederasty: Teaching Difficult Subjects in the Classics Classroom* (2014), and her article on running a spoken Latin club for students is in the 2022 special edition of *Classicum, Teaching Classical Languages*.

Giulio Celotto received his Ph.D. in Classics from Florida State University in 2017, and is currently serving as Assistant Professor of Classics, General Faculty, at the University of Virginia. His primary research interests focus on imperial Latin literature, that of the Neronian and Flavian age in particular. His first monograph, titled *'Amor belli': Love and Strife in Lucan's 'Bellum civile'*, was published with The University of Michigan Press in 2022. In addition, he has contributed articles on a variety of authors, such as Catullus, Vergil, Livy, Ovid, Seneca, Lucan, Persius, Statius, Juvenal, and Tacitus. Finally, he is the director of the interdisciplinary initiative "The Siren Project: Women's Voice in Literature and the Visual Arts," which was awarded the 2023 SCS Outreach Prize.

Stephen M. Trzaskoma serves as the Dean of the College of Arts & Letters and Interim Dean of the College of Natural & Social Sciences at California State University, Los Angeles. He has published widely on the surviving novels from Ancient Greece and on Greek and Roman myth and mythography, including critical studies, text-critical contributions and translations. He has a longstanding interest in the pedagogy of ancient languages, particularly at the elementary and intermediate levels, and has taught Ancient Greek and Latin for over 25 years at the college level.

Introducing Female Voices in the College Latin Classroom: A New Course on Roman Women Writers

Giulio Celotto
University of Virginia

ABSTRACT

The main challenge in writing the history of Roman women is their silence, for they either did not themselves write, or what writing they did was not kept and transmitted. Stripped of their own voices, they primarily speak to us through the writings of elite male authors. Thus, the study of Roman women is predominantly a study of representation rather than reality. There are, however, a few welcome exceptions. Despite the increasing interest in bringing to the foreground the voice of Roman female writers, their work still struggles to find space in the male-dominated canon of Latin literature taught at the college level. This paper argues for the necessity of creating a more diverse and inclusive reading curriculum and highlights the benefits of such an approach through the description of a newly designed course on Roman women writers.

KEYWORDS

Ancient Roman Women; Roman Women Writers; Women's Voice; Authorship; Gender Studies; Feminism; College Latin Curriculum.

In her influential essay about silence, writer, historian, and activist Rebecca Solnit defines the practice of silencing as an instrument of subjugation and points out that "the history of silence is central to women's history" (22). Examples of the systemic marginalization of women's voices exist throughout time and across geographies. Ancient Rome was no exception. The main challenge in writing the history of Roman women is their silence, for they "either did not themselves write, or what writing they did was not kept" (Richlin, *Arguments with Silence* 5).[1]

[1] Richlin (*Arguments with Silence* 12-16) correctly points out that even the definition of "Roman women" poses some issues, as it includes individuals with very different cultural and social backgrounds.

Deprived of their own voices, Roman women mainly speak to us through the work of elite male authors: erotic and satirical poets, historians and biographers, letter writers and philosophers (Finley 59; Hallett, "Women as Same and Other" 59-69). Thus, the study of Roman women is primarily a study of representation rather than reality, which scholars can only "wish" (Dixon 15) or "hope" (Milnor 41; Richlin, *Arguments with Silence* 8) to glimpse through the veil of male-imposed perception.[2] There are, however, some welcome exceptions. The past twenty years have seen a flourishing of publications aimed to collect and interpret the few surviving writings by Roman women.[3] Despite the increasing interest—further fueled by the development of fourth-wave feminism and the #MeToo movement[4]—in bringing to the foreground the voice of Roman female writers, their work still struggles to find a place in the male-dominated canon of Latin literature taught at the college level. This paper argues for the necessity of creating a more diverse and inclusive reading curriculum and highlights the benefits of such an approach through the description of a newly designed course on female voices from ancient Rome.

In Fall 2024 I offered an advanced fourth-year Latin course on "Roman Women Writers" at the University of Virginia (LATI 4559-001). It extended over

[2] On female characters regarded as images, representations, and reflections of women, see Sharrock. She coins the definition "womanufacture," and applies it to Latin love poetry, which "creates its own object, calls her Woman, and falls in love with her" (49).
[3] See especially Churchill et al.; Plant; Hemelrijk; Natoli et al.
[4] For a discussion of how the #MeToo movement informs recent approaches to Latin literature, see especially Libatique and Celotto with bibliography.

twelve weeks, with 75-minute classes meeting twice a week. Enrollment was capped at fifteen students and eleven students signed up: four Classics majors (one senior, two juniors, and one sophomore), six minors (five seniors and one junior), and one post-baccalaureate. With respect to gender, six students identified as women and five as men. The exceptionally high enrollment[5] and the remarkably diverse demographics provide unmistakable evidence of the keen interest that the topic sparks in the student population. This indication is confirmed by the results of an anonymous survey that students completed on the first day of class. Among the reasons that prompted them to take this course, every single survey respondent pointed out that this would be a unique opportunity to read a number of texts otherwise neglected. Seven of them specifically expressed their interest in examining the peculiar features of women's writing, particularly how the style of female authors differs from that of male authors,[6] as well as how the portrayal of women by female writers compares to that by male writers.[7] Unsurprisingly, students admitted to knowing close to nothing about female voices from ancient Rome: while six of them were familiar with the name Sulpicia, and two had heard of Claudia Severa, no one had ever read a single line written by a woman.

[5] Since in-person instruction resumed in Fall 2021 after the transition to virtual classes due to the pandemic, the average enrollment at this level has been 7 students.
[6] s1: "I'd like to see if we can address issues of style and compare female authors to male authors that we are already aware of."
[7] s2: "I like dissecting the way women are portrayed in male Roman writers' works, so I am really curious about how women portray themselves."

The purpose of the course was to engage in close reading of most of the surviving writings by Roman women, from the earliest testimonies (2nd cent. BCE) to the fall of the Western Roman Empire (476 CE).[8] After spending the first week introducing some basic notions of gender studies and feminist theory, we delved into the letters of Cornelia to her son Gaius Gracchus, transmitted by Cornelius Nepos (fr. 1 and 2), and the messages of Claudia Severa to her friend Sulpicia Lepidina, written on the tablets found in the Roman fort of Vindolanda. We especially emphasized the differences between the public content and the highly rhetorical tone of Cornelia's correspondence, as opposed to the private nature and the colloquial character of Claudia Severa's notes. The following two classes were devoted to epigraphic material. We focused on a number of funerary inscriptions, such as those composed by Salvidiena for her daughter Vitilla and by Constantia for her husband Anastasius, as well as graffiti from Pompeii, which shed light on the every-day life of Roman women. Sulpicia's elegies kept us busy for three more weeks, bringing us to the end of the first half of the course. The second half opened with two class meetings dedicated to Sulpicia Caleni, in which we compared the only surviving fragment of her poetry (preserved in Probus' commentary on Juvenal 6.537) with the portrait that Martial sketches of her in his epigrams (10.35 and 10.38). During the following two weeks we discussed the *Passio Sanctarum*

[8] For the sake of time, we left out the few letters by women to Jerome that survive as part of his corpus (helpfully collected by Joan Ferrante on her "Epistolæ" project) and those by 5th century CE female members of the imperial family (on which see Hillner).

Perpetuae et Felicitatis, particularly how Perpetua redefines conventional gender roles in light of her faith. The last two texts, which accompanied us in the final three weeks of class, were the only works that we did not read in their entirety due to their length. From Proba's *Cento Vergilianus de laudibus Christi*, we restricted ourselves to examining the episode of the creation of Adam and Eve and their banishment from heaven (lines 115-268), which gave us the opportunity to investigate Proba's notion of womanhood. From Egeria's *Peregrinatio*, on the other hand, we used the conclusion of her journey (chapters 19-21) as a sample of her informal and unpretentious prose.

As a primary textbook, I chose Natoli et al. This wonderful volume has the merit of making the voice of fourteen ancient Greek and Roman female writers heard. Each text is prefaced by a concise, yet informative introduction, and is accompanied by a vocabulary list, a thorough commentary addressing questions of language, content, and style, a clear and fluent English translation, and a select bibliography. While this book certainly provides invaluable help to students, unfortunately it does not include every single woman writer. Thus, we had to complement it with other resources. For epigraphic poetry, as well as the work of Cornelia, Proba, and Egeria, we resorted to Churchill et al. This volume supplies for each text an exhaustive introduction and a readable translation; however, no commentary is offered. For the *Passio Perpetuae*, on the other hand, I adopted the collaborative edition coordinated by Hendrickson, which was deservedly

recognized by CAMWS with the 2022 Ladislaus J. Bolchazy Pedagogy Book Award.[9] The text is beautifully illustrated through the notes written by students in the advanced Latin course at Stanford Online High School. Special attention is given to the forms of late Latin used by Perpetua, which prove to be unfamiliar even to advanced college students. In addition to these textbooks, a few pieces of secondary literature were assigned to examine some specific themes in more detail. In particular, the analysis of Sulpicia's elegies greatly benefitted from the discussion of a number of seminal contributions, such as Maltby on the much-debated question of authorship, Flaschenriem on the intersection of gender and genre, Merriam and Keith on Sulpicia's Greek and Latin models, respectively, and Fabre-Serris ("Sulpicia") on the fortune and reception of her verses.

Students were assessed on the basis of their attendance and participation (20%), midterm and final exams (25% each)—consisting of prepared and sight translation, as well as questions on morphology, syntax, style, scansion, and interpretation—a presentation (5%), and a research paper (25%). Presentations were envisioned as an instrument to connect past and present. Women's lack of visibility is an issue that does not exclusively affect ancient Rome. As women have consistently been struggling to make their voices heard through history and across culture, I asked each student to choose a female writer they deeply admire and

[9] For a description of this project, see Hendrickson and Pisarello.

introduce her life and work to their peers in a fifteen-minute lecture. Presentations were scheduled every Tuesday, starting from the second week of class. The selection of the material operated by the students revealed the breadth of their interests, and provided a wonderful opportunity for the whole class—myself included—not only to learn more about some popular female voices, but also to get to know new ones. We discussed, among other works, lyrical songs by the 16th century Hindu mystic poet Mirabai; a pediatric treatise by the first African-American medical doctor Rebecca Lee Crumpler; essays by disability rights advocate and political activist Helen Keller; existentialist poems by Austrian Nobel Prize nominee Ingeborg Bachmann; articles by the pioneer of New Journalism, Joan Didion; nature-inspired verses by Pulitzer Prize winner Mary Oliver; and Italian short stories by British-American novelist Jhumpa Lahiri.

Final papers were equally outstanding. They were the result of a semester-long process involving three different steps: the proposal of a tentative title and a short abstract by the end of week eight, the creation of an outline and a bibliography by the end of week ten, and the submission of the final draft by the end of week twelve. Students had complete control over the choice of the topic. Papers were graded according to five criteria: originality and viability of the thesis, use of primary sources, engagement with secondary literature, organization of the material, and style. Overall, I was impressed not only with the quality of the work, which demonstrated full understanding of the course material and a remarkable

intellectual independence, but also by the wide variety of the topics chosen. In a course that introduces the writing of several authors who engage with different genres, explore different themes, and use different styles, it is certainly easier for each participant to find and pursue their own research interests.

Sulpicia drew the attention of three students, who tackled the thorny question of the authorship of [Tib.] 3.8-18. They strikingly reached the same conclusion, although coming from different perspectives. The examination of how the speaking voice in each piece addresses the gods, resorts to the strategy of delay, and deliberately introduces inconsistencies and contradictions enabled them to persuasively suggests that Sulpicia may be the author of the poems in which she tells her own story in the first person ([Tib.] 9, 11, 13-18), but not of those where she is referred to in the third person ([Tib.] 3.8, 10, 12).[10] Other notable papers investigated: the unconventional—and ultimately masculine—role played by Cornelia in her letter to Gaius Gracchus;[11] Cicero's use of misogynistic stereotypes in his portrait of Antony in the *Philippics*; the use of gender-charged mythological references to mock the emperor Domitian in the *Conquestio* attributed (although not unanimously) to Sulpicia Caleni;[12] the stylistic differences between Claudia Severa's letters and the other texts from Vindolanda, all of which were written by

[10] Thus Doncieux 78-81; Martinon xlv–xlvii; Salanitro 31-34; Parker, "Sulpicia" and "Catullus"; Dronke; Stevenson 42-44; Fabre-Serris, "Intratextuality and Intertextuality" 68-73.
[11] See especially Hallett, "Absent Roman Fathers" 179-85.
[12] See especially Richlin, "Sulpicia the Satirist" 132-34.

men; and the internalized misogyny that emerges from Proba's *Cento*, particularly her depiction of Eve.[13] A few students have already expressed their interest in presenting their papers at regional and national conferences, such as the Virginia Undergraduate Research Symposium in Classics and the CAMWS Annual Meeting, respectively. Another student is considering using her term paper as a starting point for the Distinguished Major Thesis she is planning to work on in the next academic year.

Overall, this course proved to be very successful. All respondents reported that class met—if not exceeded—their initial expectations. Among the strengths of this course, most students highlighted the unique chance they were given to get to know the work of Roman female writers, too often neglected in the Latin college curriculum.[14] They especially appreciated the wide variety of genres, themes, and styles covered throughout the semester,[15] and enjoyed the ample debate raised by several texts included in the syllabus, particularly on the question on authorship.[16] Finally, they welcomed the opportunity to pursue their own research interests with both the presentation[17] and the final paper.[18] When prompted to indicate their

[13] See especially Clark and Hutch 151-59.
[14] S1: "As someone who has taken a lot of Latin courses, you never really get to read work by women."
[15] S2: "We got to discuss such a broad range of topics, time periods, etc. while still doing a deep dive into each one individually. There was something for everyone."
[16] S3: "Since there is a lot of debate and uncertainty about a lot of these works, it leaves room for everyone in the class to offer their own ideas and interpretation."
[17] S4: "Students presentations were really interesting: I found some new women writers through that."
[18] S1: "The term paper was a joy to write."

favorite author or text, the respondents exhibited a clear preference: while three students chose the graffiti, one Claudia Severa, and one Perpetua, Sulpicia received the majority of the votes (six). Similarly, they almost unanimously regarded Egeria's *Peregrinatio* as the least engaging work, with only one discordant voice singling out the verses by Sulpicia Caleni.

As for the weaknesses of this course, only two complaints were raised in the final evaluations. First, although the respondents enjoyed the variety that characterized the syllabus, they also admitted that it was quite difficult to get used to each author's style in such a short amount of time.[19] Unfortunately, this is an issue that inevitably affects every thematic class. The only way to address it would be to leave some writers out. However, considering that this course represents for most—if not all—students the only chance to hear female voices from ancient Rome, and that the number of surviving writings by Roman women is so limited, in this particular circumstance I would not be inclined to do so, as the loss would be greater than the gain.

Second, while all respondents defined Natoli et al. as extremely helpful, they regretted that some authors were not included in the volume, and that Churchill et al. does not provide any commentary on their work.[20] The increasing interest in women's writing gives hope that this gap will be (at least partially) filled in the near

[19] S5: "The course covers so many authors. It makes it more difficult because you don't grow accustomed to a particular author's style."
[20] S2: "*Ancient Women Writers* helps a lot, but I wish *Women Writing Latin* had some sort of notes."

future. Bartolo Natoli's students at Randolph-Macon College, for instance, are currently working on a commentary on Proba's *Cento*,[21] and I am convinced that an analogous project can be successfully developed for Egeria's *Peregrinatio*. As for the epigraphic texts (which appear less suitable for a published textbook due to their scarce number), the lack of exegetic notes made them especially challenging to students.[22] However, they explicitly declared that they would not remove funerary inscriptions and graffiti from the syllabus, because they serve as an important link between literature and material culture and provide an exceptional testimony relating not only to the experiences of elite female writers, as most other literary works do, but also to the every-day life of lower-class women.[23] Should I teach this course again, as I very much hope, I would supply a set of linguistic and stylistic notes to help students with the translation and the interpretation of those admittedly complex texts. In addition, I would likely continue to avoid testing them on epigraphic material, veering toward slightly more accessible works.[24]

In conclusion, this course was designed as a response to the overwhelmingly prevailing—if not exclusive—presence of male authors in the college Latin curriculum, and an attempt to make the literary canon more diverse and inclusive.

[21] Natoli, Bartolo, et al. *Proba's Cento Vergilianus: A Student Text-Commentary.*
[22] S3: "I found the epitaphs interesting, but very difficult to read and understand without notes."
[23] S6: "Epigraphic poetry and graffiti really connect you with the everyday life of normal Roman women in a way that feels concrete and authentic."
[24] In the final evaluations, S7 candidly confessed: "Epigraphic poetry was hard! If I had been tested on it, I wouldn't have done well. But I appreciated the opportunity to read it."

Its successful outcome demonstrates that introducing it among the classes regularly offered at the advanced level would be beneficial for the school, the instructor, and the students. The prospect of approaching for the first time writings by Roman women, commonly left out from the undergraduate curriculum, is likely to draw the interest of a large and diverse student population. In addition, this course provides an exceptional opportunity for the instructor to introduce and for the students to familiarize themselves with several prose and poetic genres, address a wide variety of themes, engage with different styles, and appreciate how the Latin language evolves through time. Given the variety of the course material, each participant may more easily find and pursue individual intellectual interests, thus producing stronger research outputs.

Lastly—and most importantly—this course aims to guide students as they develop not only into rigorous and passionate scholars, but also into conscious and responsible citizens. The class fosters an open and thorough discussion of the timeless issue of the marginalization of women, particularly through the devaluation of their voice. Recent studies have shown that female students' long-term educational and professional realization is strictly intertwined with encountering successful female role models.[25] The encounter with Roman (and non-Roman) female authors is intended to have a similar inspirational and

[25] See, for instance, Campbell and Wolbrecht; Beaman et al.

empowering function.[26] At the same time, fourth-wave feminism has emphasized the importance of men's participation in women's fight toward gender equality.[27] Thanks to social media, the feminist message has indeed reached a wider male population, and more and more men have publicly voiced their support for the feminist cause. Introducing male students to issues of gender oppression is another instrument to raise awareness of the struggle women face to make their voice heard and motivate them to engage in the movement.[28]

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[26] Responding to the initial survey, s3 observed: "As a woman myself, I am not a fan of how lacking my knowledge is of women writers, so I am really looking forward to reading some of their work."
[27] See, among others, Baily.
[28] I am grateful to the anonymous referees for constructive feedback.

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