

TEACHING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

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OF THE MIDDLE WEST AND SOUTH

FEATURES

Latin for Students with Dyslexia
AnnMarie Patterson

ARTICLES

The Language of Race in the Classroom: Teaching Classical History at an HBCU
Karl Baughman

***Ut te exhorter ad bonam mentem* ‘that I encourage you toward a sound mind’:
How Nuanced Latin Emotional Vocabulary and SEL Routines Can Help Every Latin Student Flourish**
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Teaching Classics with Texts from Non-Ethnic Romans
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Vergil’s *Aeneid* and 21st-Century Immigration
Chris Nappa

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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

GUEST EDITORS: CAMWS COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Established by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South in 2010, the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion directs attention to the importance and complexity of bringing the languages, literatures, and peoples of the ancient Mediterranean to increasingly diverse audiences.

Central to the CAMWS mission, of course, the committee's efforts aim to provide a service to teachers and scholars in schools and colleges. In this way, the Committee seeks to assist other CAMWS committees and members in their responsibilities and opportunities. Hence, we quickly said "yes" when Yasuko Taoka invited our Committee to join in preparation of an issue of Teaching Classical Languages that focusses on curricular materials, pedagogical strategies, and the challenges for making classics and its languages available to and accessible by new and increasingly more diverse audiences.

A single issue can only scratch the surface. We attempt here to offer a sample of what "diversity" and inclusion allows: the courage of working with specific populations (e.g., students at all levels with special needs), the importance of looking again and anew at canonical authors (e.g., Vergil) as well as authors themselves examples of the diverse nature of the Roman world (Prudentius). And how the ancients looked at the concept of "race" has significance for all of us who teach the past in an increasingly complex present. Both personal reflective essays and more scholarly approaches have a place in our work. And referees from a wide range of institutions have assisted us in preparation of this issue. We thank the many colleagues whose good will and good judgement we have mined.

We believe that the richness of "diversity" and "inclusion" is itself showcased in this way. Further, with panels and round tables at CAMWS' annual meetings, and with a careful but important social media presence, the Committee hopes to make our profession's commitment to each of the segments in the well-known definition offered by writer/illustrator Liz Fosslien:

"Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard"

Teaching Classics with Texts from Non-Ethnic Romans

NICHOLAS MATAYA

ATONEMENT CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Setting

The Atonement Catholic Academy is a PK3-12th Catholic classical school in San Antonio, Texas. The student population is majority Hispanic, but the faculty has few Hispanics. Students begin studying Latin in 3rd grade with the option of continuing their studies through 12th grade. Middle School Latin (7th and 8th grade) is based largely on familiarizing students with the language. Language learning begins in the Upper (High) School, where students are required to take two years of Latin.

Background

Before my tenure, the Latin program in the Upper (High) School of The Atonement Catholic Academy was based on Hans Oeberg's *Lingua Latina* series. The study and teaching of Latin was seen as a way to 'integrate' minority students into the wider American culture. When I took over in 2017, Latin was despised by most of the student population, and horror stories about Upper School Latin had filtered through the Middle School.

First Steps

When I arrived, with the administration's support, I decided to make a clean break with the old Latin department and cease using *Lingua Latina*. The department moved

to using *Wheelock's Latin* as a placeholder before the school introduced a new Latin curriculum beginning in 2022. While this move did create some momentum in the Latin department, there were still scars from the previous Latin curriculum. This problem was not improved by drastic turnover in administration, with the school going through three principals in three years.

Prudentius

When I was studying at Swansea University (Wales, UK), Professor Mark Humphries introduced me to the works of Prudentius. Prudentius, a Christian and friend of Pope Damasus I, wrote several extant works, including the *Psychomachia*, a gladiatorial combat between the virtues and the vices, and the *Liber Peristephanon*, a collection of hymns to several early Christian martyrs. However, the most fascinating thing about Prudentius to me was that he was not an ethnic Roman: he was a *Vascone*.

In Roman literature, our first explicit mention of the Vascones, a people native to the Iberian Peninsula, comes from the Greek geographer Strabo, who mentions their location and places their main city at Pompaelo (modern: Pamplona) (Strabo, *Geographica*, III.4.10). The first mention of their location in Latin sources is in Pliny, who states that they were “between the Pyrenees and the ocean” (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, 4.110-111). There were, however, earlier interactions between the Romans and the *Vascones*. The historian Livy states that Pompey made his headquarters in their territory, at Pompaelo, during the Sertorian Revolt (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, Frag. 93). *Vascones*, and their relatives, the *Varduli*, were also sent to Britannia, with several inscriptions found along the Hadrian and Antonine

Walls (*RIB* 1128, 1279, 1285, 2149, 1083). The *Vascones* shared a language with the Aquitani, which has been connected with proto-Basque (Mitzelena, *Fonética histórica vasca*, 547-548).

Prudentius was a Latin author from the Iberian Peninsula and not an ethnic Roman.¹ Importantly, Prudentius was also a Christian. I had the freedom, therefore, to use some of Prudentius' works to supplement the Latin curriculum in the later levels. Prudentius' *Liber Peristephanon* is the easiest of his works to use in the teaching of High School students. Moreover, Prudentius opens the *Liber Peristephanon* with hymns to two *Vascone* martyrs, not Roman martyrs. He also mentions that he is a *Vascone* in this hymn.²

I introduce Prudentius' *Liber Peristephanon* with my second-year Latin students. His poetry provides a good, approachable introduction to Latin poetry and some of the more difficult ablative uses. Before we begin Prudentius, I use a short 'culture day' on a Friday where I discuss the history of the Iberian peninsula during the Classical period. If the students continue in Latin, I use more examples from Prudentius in fourth-year.

There are two sections of the *Liber Peristephanon* that I focus on with my second-year students. The first is *Liber Peristephanon* VI, a hymn in honor of three saints from Hispania, Fructuosus, Augurius, and Eulogius. The hymn begins (lines 1-6):

*Felix Tarraco, Fructuose, vestris
attollit caput ignibus coruscum
Levitis geminis procul relucens.*

Hispanos Deus aspicit benignus,

Fructuosus, happy Tarraco
Lifts a flashing head for you (three);
She shines far by virtue of her two
deacons.

The kind God looks on the Spaniards,

*arcem quandoquidem potens **Hiberam** Since the mighty Trinity crowns Iberia*
trino martyre Trinitas coronat. With three martyrs

This hymn begins with three references to Hispania (*Tarraco*, *Hispanos* and *Hiberam*), placing it in a Hispanic context. This short passage includes several rhetorical devices that students will get used to seeing in Latin poetry.

The second hymn I look at is *Liber Peristephanon VII*, a hymn in honor of Quirinus, bishop of Siscia. Unlike hymns I and VI, this hymn is not Hispanic, but focuses on the part of the Roman world that students are rarely exposed to: Illyricum. This hymn serves a dual role, as it has several comedic moments. For example (lines 21-30):

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Summo pontis ab ardui | From the top of a high bridge |
| Sanctae plebis episcopus | The bishop of a holy people |
| In praeceps fluvio datur | Was cast down straight into the flood |
| Suspensum laqueo gerens | Carrying a great mill-stone |
| Ingentis lapidem molae. | Hung by a rope around his neck |
| Deiectum placidissimo | When he was hurled down, in its care |
| Amnis vertice suscipit | The river received him in the calmest of pools |
| Nec mergi patitur sibi. | And did not suffer him to sink in it |
| Miris vasta natatibus | But held up the stone's enormous weight |
| Saxi pondera sustinens | Floating miraculously |

Here, we have a comical scene where the Romans have attempted to execute a bishop, but he is instead just floating in the river, despite the giant rock hung around his neck. The comedy continues, with the Romans finally taking big sticks and forcing him into the water. Grammatically, we have more rhetorical devices, several

ablative uses, and several participles.

Further, Prudentius, as a hymnographer, fit very well with the ethos of The Atonement Catholic Academy. The Atonement Catholic Academy prides itself on its Music program, and many of the hymns they use are Latin. When I arrived at the school, I began to have the students practice their translation skills by translating the Latin hymns they would sing at the liturgy. Working with the Music department, I was able to have the students translate and sing some of Prudentius' hymns.

One of Prudentius' most famous hymns is *Corde Natus ex Parentis*, a Christmas hymn. It is better known in English as 'Of the Father's Love Begotten' or as 'Of the Father's Heart Begotten.' For my purposes, I take the Latin text and let the students attempt to translate it, helping them where needed. I give them popular English versions of the hymn when they have finished. This practice helps the students see how translation works in the 'real world.'

Other Authors

With the success of Prudentius, I quickly looked for other non-ethnic Roman authors. Again, I began to pull from other classes that The Atonement Catholic Academy offers. One of those classes is Philosophy, and one of the major authors is Augustine of Hippo. While Augustine's father, Patricius, was probably a Roman, his mother, Monica, was a Berber, meaning that Augustine was probably non-white. It was, therefore, simple to have students translate portions of Augustine in Latin class while reading the English translation in their Philosophy class.

Another prolific author with a non-Roman background was Damasus I, the bishop

of Rome from 366-384. Damasus, whose parents were *Lusitani* from modern Portugal, wrote several letters and poems, with 67 of his poems extant today. The poems are relatively easy to translate and can supplement the teaching of Vergil, Catullus, and Ovid.

Finally, an interesting Latin author is Chrodegang, the eighth-century bishop of Metz. Chrodegang, a Frank and advisor to Charles Martel, wrote a *regula* for clergy that is simple to translate. While it is not Classical Latin, it is an interesting and fun text for students to translate.

Next Steps

One area that this study could be continued is in the idea of *romanitas*. Although Prudentius was a *Vascone*, he still saw himself clearly as a Roman. This understanding of being a Roman while also being a member of a distinct, non-Roman people could greatly help students from non-traditional American backgrounds, especially recent immigrants. By showing them that non-ethnic Romans could become Romans, and saw themselves as Romans while keeping their own identities, a Latin classroom could be used to help students integrate into American culture while also preserving their identities.

Conclusion

The supplementation of the Latin curriculum with non-Roman authors has been wonderful for my classes. The use of non-Roman authors assists the teacher in dealing with one of the major problems of teaching Latin in the twenty-first century:

why should I learn a language used by a bunch of dead Romans? The use of non-Roman authors allows the student to connect the language with a living history and, for students of non-Anglo descent, allows them to see that the language of Latin is for everyone.

The case of Latin IV is instructive in the impact of this program. While I cannot base the growth in Latin IV entirely on this program, the statistics are intriguing. During my first year teaching Latin IV, I only had one student take the class. During the second year, 17% of the Senior class took Latin IV. During this past year, 25% of the Senior class took Latin IV. For the coming year, 73% of eligible students are enrolled to take Latin IV.

Endnotes

1 In this paper, the word ‘ethnic’ is used to denote someone with non-Italic heritage, particularly those groups who continued being seen by the Romans as distinct from Roman culture proper (e.g., the Vascones, the Berbers, the Britons, etc.).

2 Hoc bonum Salvator ipse, quo fruamur, praestitit, martyrum cum membra nostro consecravit oppido, sospitant quae nunc colonos quos Hiberus alluit: The Savior himself bestowed for our advantage this blessing when He consecrated the [martyrs’] bodies in our town, where now they protect the people who dwell by the Ebro. (Translation mine; emphasis added).

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