



# TEACHING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

An Online Journal of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South

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**U**sing  
manuscripts  
in the Latin Classroom

**L**atin in the  
homeschooling  
Community

**R**eadng the  
eneid with  
Intermediate Latin  
Students: The New  
Focus Commentaries  
(Books 1-4 and 6) and  
*Cambridge Reading Virgil*  
(Books I and II)



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## Editor's Introduction

John Gruber-Miller

Earlier this fall, I took twelve students to Italy as part of my Roman Archaeology course. Walking the ancient triumphal way, seeing the Forum or the Colosseum, feeling the tufa and marble, hearing people hawk their wares makes the ancient city come alive, especially for the students, in a way that books cannot. At the same time, the ease of electronic communication in today's Rome—websites, mobile phones, email, Google maps and GoogleEarth—has transformed how we interact with each other and view the monuments. If we get lost, we call or look up our location on a small screen that shrinks the world into the size of our palm.

This balance of the tangible, concrete reality of Rome and the virtual world on our phones and computers is evoked in the articles in this issue of *Teaching Classical Languages*. Inspired by unexpectedly discovering a 15th century manuscript of Lucan's epic poem *Bellum Civile* in his university's library, Mark Thorne decided to share the excitement of seeing and touching this tangible link to the original text with his beginning Latin students. Prompted by his discovery he explored other manuscripts in the Chicago area, and in "Using Manuscripts in the Latin Classroom" he has created a guide for teachers who wish to make ancient texts come alive by exploring medieval manuscripts, their layout, marginalia, illuminations, and history. And while he encourages teachers to visit larger libraries that may have manuscripts for students to read and feel and turn the pages, he also includes many images and links to manuscripts that can bring these primary documents into the classroom, at least virtually. And manuscripts are hot. More continue to be scanned and uploaded to the web each day. Just last month, University College London [announced](#) the creation of an online digital library of Greek history and culture, including hundreds of rare manuscripts. Witness also the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for General Non-fiction, awarded to Stephen Greenblatt's [\*The Swerve: How the World Became Modern\*](#) (W. W. Norton). The book details the 15th century re-discovery of a manuscript of Lucretius' then-lost *On the Nature of Things*, traces the life-cycle of manuscripts, describes how the humanist font was invented, and more.

Our second author, Christine Hahn, teaches in a setting much different from the rest of us, the homeschooling community. She guides students as they learn Latin, both face-to-face in a homeschooling cooperative, but also online, answering their questions through electronic media. As she became more involved with this online community, she wanted to learn more about what motivates homeschooling families to insist on teaching their children Latin, how they teach it, and what textbooks they use. In "Latin in the Homeschooling Community," she reports on a survey of 349 homeschool families about the demographics, teaching methods, and motivations of this important group of Latin enthusiasts. Her survey poses important questions about how teachers in mainstream schools and colleges can welcome these students to our programs, what strengths they have as Latinists, and how homeschooling and traditional school communities can help each other succeed at teaching Latin more effectively.

Finally, in Antonia Syson's review article we come full circle to epic poetry and how well the new commentaries on the *Aeneid* succeed at making Vergil's poem accessible to Latin students coming to it at the intermediate level and beyond. Her wide-ranging review compares the new Focus series of *Aeneid* commentaries and the new Cambridge *Reading Virgil* to the older, standard commentaries of Pharr and Williams. Her ideal commentary asks students to read the text

in Vergil's word order, listen to the sound and meter of the poetry, and emphasize critical enquiry and substantive exploration of the multiple layers of texts and intertexts in the poem. To make the format of these new commentaries more concrete, Meghan Yamanishi, *TCL* assistant editor, has scanned sample pages from the new commentaries so that readers can gain a sense how the new format compares not only to Pharr and Williams, but also to the format of the illuminated Vergil manuscript illustrated in Figure 9 in Mark Thorne's article. I hope that you enjoy this journey from the tangible world of Italy and manuscripts to the electronic publication of these articles in this issue of *Teaching Classical Languages* complete with hyperlinks, illustrations, tables, and figures.

## ***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.



# Using Manuscripts in the Latin Classroom

Mark Thorne  
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## ABSTRACT

Recent years have seen the publication online of numerous medieval and Renaissance Latin manuscripts. These can be marvelous resources for enriching the teaching of Latin if the teacher knows how to utilize them well, and so it is the goal of this article to provide teachers with a basic introduction to manuscripts with an eye for integration into the Latin classroom. Specifically it helps a teacher better understand: how they were made, how to understand the different parts of a manuscript page, how to read the handwritten scripts (paleography), and also where to find them online. The second half of the article presents a small set of specific model exercises for guided classroom use which can help teachers then design their own exercises. These include lessons in script recognition and copying, making your own classroom codex, and even tracing the textual history of a given classroom text back through the centuries to ancient times.

## KEYWORDS

Latin, manuscript, pedagogy, paleography, codex

One of the ongoing challenges of teaching Latin is keeping the lessons fresh and interesting, especially on the visual spectrum. Modern language teachers can reach into a grab bag of goodies—magazines, news broadcasts, YouTube videos, and so on, all in the target language—that Latin teachers usually do not have. Since the majority of class time can easily be spent staring at black print on plain white paper, the desire to find something that is visually stimulating and that actually *supports* the text is one that most of us have probably felt. Textbooks can attempt to meet this need by including photos of Roman ruins or visual reconstructions of ancient daily life, but all too often they are only tangentially connected to the text in question, and they certainly are almost never interactive.

One place, however, where teachers can go to find something that *is* visually engaging, interactive, and clearly connected to *reading Latin* is the world of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts (Figure 1). It used to be the case that only collectors and those teaching at schools with research libraries and rare book rooms had access to these wonderful items, but thanks to the wonders of the internet age an increasing number of high-resolution images and PDFs of Latin manuscripts are now being made freely available online. Accordingly, this article aims to give teachers of Latin (and their students) a brief introduction to 1) their most common features, 2) the important process of text transmission from ancient times to today, 3) using manuscript images productively in the



**Figure 1** – Manuscripts from the Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.  
Personal photo. Used by permission.

classroom, and of course 4) where to find suitable manuscript images. My assumed audience is the high school and college teacher of Latin, but teachers at lower levels and private tutors can find ideas in here to tailor for their own circumstances.

Beginners are often intimidated by the thought of using a manuscript, but even a small amount of preparation can make manuscripts much more accessible. Toward this end, this article is organized into four parts. The first section lays out the many benefits that come from using manuscript images in the teaching of Latin and provides a list of basic terminology. The second section serves as a guided tour that uses selected images of various types of manuscripts to familiarize the reader with their main features. The third section of this article offers a variety of practical suggestions and sample lesson plan ideas for actually utilizing manuscripts as exciting, hands-on supplementary tools in a Latin classroom. The final section provides appendices on where to start for finding online databases of manuscript images as well as other print and online resources for anybody interested in doing further study in this subject area.<sup>1</sup>

### WHY STUDENTS LOVE MANUSCRIPTS

The idea of introducing manuscripts into a Latin class (at any level) may not be an obvious one since most of us tend to think about manuscripts as documents of interest mainly to textual scholars or art historians and as things accessible only to those few who have had formal instruction. This is at any rate how I used to think before one day I was asked during my doctoral days at the University of Iowa to view a previously un-catalogued mid-15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of Lucan's *Bel-lum Civile* that they had just discovered misfiled among unrelated material (Iowa City, Univ. Iowa, Special Collections, Main Library, xMMs.Hi1) (Figure 2). As I was already writing my dissertation on Lucan, I readily agreed, and thus began my self-taught crash course in reading manuscripts. I became fascinated not only by the text itself but also with the visual presentation, the artwork, the smell of the old book (yes, the smell!), and the physical sensation of holding a tangible link to the classical past that I loved so much. I soon began coming up with ideas for sharing this new discovery with my Latin classes at Iowa, and my experiences in this arena ever since have confirmed to me that the visual and physical appeal of manuscripts truly have something of interest to offer everyone.

There are many reasons Latin students love the chance to interact with manuscripts—and why teachers should consider learning how to use them. To begin with, they are physical objects of history that students can touch and manipulate; even working only with digital manuscripts the student can zoom in on a text or “flip” through multiple electronic pages of the document. Hands-on learning is something we build into our Latin lessons far too infrequently. Manuscripts are also visually exciting. Our students today are so-called “digital natives” who have grown up amidst the sensory deluge of multimedia content and the internet, and to this (or any) generation manuscripts are visually appealing, especially when compared to the average Latin textbook format. From a pedagogical perspective, learning to read a manuscript page instills an even deeper attention to detail than textbook Latin due to the difficulty of distinguishing letter forms and abbreviations; the rewards of success are accordingly greater as well. And from a historical perspective, manuscripts

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<sup>1</sup> An early version of this article was presented at the 2008 joint meeting of AMICI, the Classical Association of Iowa, and the Illinois Classical Conference hosted by Augustana College. I would like to thank those in attendance for their helpful feedback, in particular Chris Conrad and John Gruber-Miller, whose mutual encouragements to share my lessons and ideas with more teachers and students have directly led to this article. I would also like to thank the reviewers for their numerous suggestions and corrections that have made this article much more accurate and useful than it would have been otherwise.



stand as concrete physical links in the chain that connects the original work of an ancient author and the edited text students see in their books. When students have the chance to encounter the archaic-looking pages and scripts of a Vergil or Caesar manuscript (even if written 1500 years after they lived), for example, the ancient reality of the text in question comes alive for them in a way unlike other classroom experiences. That kind of new awareness also presents a wonderful opportunity for them to appreciate and do some research into the fascinating historical processes by which our texts have come down to us in the first place. This in turn helps them become more critically aware readers of any text once they realize that they cannot take the words on the page in front of them for granted. But perhaps the final reason I can mention is one of the most obvious: they present a fun and rewarding way to improve at reading actual Latin!

### BASIC TERMINOLOGY

At this point it is worth introducing a few key terms related to working with manuscripts:

- **manuscript (ms)** – collective term for any object that contains hand-written texts (as opposed to texts chiseled into stone, for example)
- **codex** – the technology that we would today call a ‘book’; the codex (unlike its predecessor the papyrus roll) had two cover boards connected by a spine into which were sewn folded stacks of parchment or eventually cotton-fiber paper; the term ‘spine’ derives from the fact that leather covers for codices often came from animal skins, and since the skin over the spine area was naturally bent already it was a natural fit for the part of the codex that needed to bend the most
- **folio (f)** – the two sides of a physical ‘page’ or sheet of a manuscript; they are thus numbered by the actual sheet and not by page face as today
- **recto (r)** – the front face of a folio (e.g. folio 6r would be visible on the right side of a page spread after a reader had flipped the fifth folio sheet over)
- **verso (v)** – the reverse face of a folio (e.g. folio 6v would be visible on the left side of a page spread after a reader had flipped folio 6r over)
- **vellum/parchment** – sheets made from animal skins that have been carefully cured and scraped free from hair (the ‘hair side’ of a parchment sheet shows the tiny dots of hair follicles and tends to be slightly rougher than the smoother interior skin on the other side); the two terms are commonly used interchangeably, but strictly speaking parchment refers to sheets prepared from the skins of sheep or goats (or other animals) whereas vellum refers only to the finer sheets prepared from unsplit calfskin
- **ruling** – lines lightly drawn across a page to help the scribe write the text smoothly without dipping up or down (the ancestor of our modern ruled notebook paper)
- **illumination** – artistic decorations added to a manuscript
- **hand** – the hand-writing style used at any given point on a manuscript page

## THE MANUSCRIPT PAGE

## Example 1

The first task is to become familiar with what a manuscript page is likely to contain. When we open a modern book we have certain expectations about what we are likely to see on a page (e.g. plain text, illustrations, sidebars, or maybe footnotes), but a quick glance at the following samples will reveal that manuscripts rarely align with modern expectations. A brief overview is thus in order. The opening page of Iowa xMMs.Hi1 alluded to above (Figure 2) will serve well as my first example.

The first thing to notice is that the page looks rather busy, with multiple kinds of text in different sizes and script types; opening pages of texts (as this is) usually look extra crowded with their special rubrics and capitals to mark major transitions in the text. The text on the page roughly divides into 1) the transmitted text of the work and 2) the extra commentary meant to help the reader understand the text. The main text is typically copied into the center portions of the page and can be located by finding the lines of text that look the most ordered and legible. In this example these lines use larger lettering than the other surrounding scripts. Lines of poetry, as can be seen in the picture to the right, are usually easy to pick out because they tend to have a regular metrical length which leaves larger margins. Prose texts are more variable in that they will sometimes expand closer to the page edges but not always. The surrounding commentary is written into these margins and even between the lines of text. Key features that might be found in any manuscript include:



Figure 2 – Lucan, Bellum Civile (1.1-21) Iowa City, Univ. Iowa, Special Collections, Main Library, xMMs.Hi1, fol. 8r. 1465

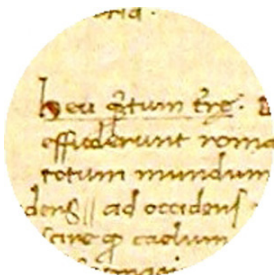


**Author's Text** (lines 1.14-17 shown here) – The initial letters of each line have been written in their upper-case (majuscule) forms and set off from the rest of the line to help the reader quickly find the start of each successive line amidst the jumble of commentary texts. Also note that these initial capitals are evenly spaced vertically, and one can still faintly see the hand-drawn horizontal rulings to keep that spacing (the precursor to modern lined notebook paper).





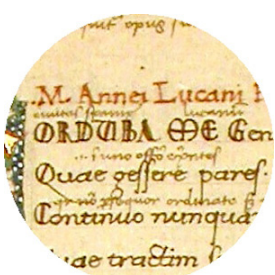
**Painted Initial** – The first letter of a work and each important section break thereafter is frequently written as a super-sized block that instantly draws the eye of the reader to that space while communicating its importance to the text. When designing the layout of a page, scribes regularly had to set aside space for these large initials. They range from the relatively modest in size and coloring (or with no extra coloring at all) to the deeply colorful and ornate, as in the example shown here. This ‘B’ is the very first letter of the first word (‘Bellum’) of Lucan’s epic poem *Pharsalia* (also known as *Bellum Civile*). Accordingly it is the largest of the painted initials on the opening page and clearly marks the start of the most important piece of text. In this case an artist (probably different from the main scribe) artistically decorated the letter with fanciful designs and bright colors, even adding a layer of gold ink to make the ‘B’ stand out yet further and glitter in the Renaissance candlelight).



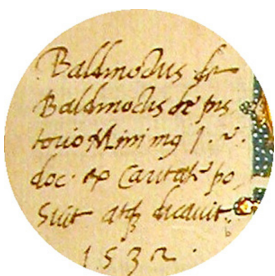
**Marginalia** – Explanatory notes and commentary could be written in the margins for the purpose of clarifying a phrase or passage. Sometimes a scribe would dutifully copy these comments from an older manuscript, and sometimes he would add in his own notes either in place of or in addition to previous sets. The marginal comment seen here starts by underlining the lemma (the abbreviated form of the phrase to be commented on, e.g. ‘*heu quantum terrae*’) followed by commentary in Latin.



**Interlinear Glosses** – In addition to the marginalia, very short explanatory notes could be written immediately above or adjacent to a word in order to explain its meaning or usage. Remember that by the later middle ages many classical Latin words had dropped out of common usage. In the example seen here, ‘*cruorem*’ (from 1.9) is glossed by the interlinear note ‘*sanguinem*’ for the benefit of those who, while they can read Latin, may not be as familiar with the sense of ‘*cruor*’ here. Think of these as the vocabulary helps that today are found at the bottom of a page or in the back of a textbook.



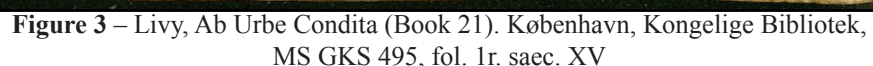
**Rubrics** – Sometimes, particularly at the beginning of a new section or book, readers will encounter words written in red ink (Lat. *rubrica*) rather than black. The red color signifies that these words are not actually part of the author’s text being transmitted but most often represent section headings or other explanatory content that do not fit under marginalia. In liturgical texts the rubrics usually give instructions to the priest and are thus more frequent; the color reminds him not to read those words out loud. In this manuscript example, this rubric gives the author’s name in the genitive (*M. Annaei Lucani*) followed by the given title (*Pharsalia*) and the notice that the work begins here (*liber incipit*). The lines that follow comprise a brief hexameter ‘epitaph’ of Lucan that was not written by him but appears throughout the manuscript tradition (similar to the epitaph that appears in Vergil manuscripts).



**Later Hands** – Occasionally, there are pages that contain what is clearly a later addition in another person’s handwriting. These can be found for any number of reasons. Personal notes of subsequent owners and readers make up the bulk of this category. In this example we see that a certain Baldinotto Baldinotti, who appears to be the nephew of the original scribe, deposited this book in a library in 1532 (Huskey 106).

### Example 2

This manuscript page (Figure 3) from the 15<sup>th</sup> century represents the simpler end of the spectrum with respect to design and content as it contains only the bare text of Livy with just one marginal note (in this case a scribal correction). Two features of the page are worth noting. First, the original line scoring is clearly visible on the page, particularly in the empty space at the upper left. This empty space is itself the second notable feature, since a large illuminated capital 'I' was meant to go here ("IN PARTE" commencing the first sentence both of Livy 21 and the codex as a whole), but it was never included, perhaps due to lack of time or funds needed to hire the artist.



**Figure 3** – Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* (Book 21). København, Kongelige Bibliotek, MS GKS 495. fol. 1r. saec. XV



*Example 3*

Here (Figure 4) we see a highly decorated page from a 15<sup>th</sup> century Book of Hours from the Newberry Library in Chicago, IL. These books, which are devotional compilations of liturgical prayers, Psalms, and other Biblical texts, represent one of the largest categories of surviving medieval and renaissance illuminated manuscripts (De Hamel 168). Thus an example is included here since readers are more likely to come across a Book of Hours than a classical text in a stack of manuscripts that might be available in a nearby library or museum. This page, containing John 1:1-14 written in a Gothic script known as textualis quadrata formata (Saenger 77), is filled to the edges with intricate and colorful illuminations. The illuminated capital 'I' also contains an image of the eagle that often symbolized St. John in medieval iconography. Nearly every page of this manuscript is filled to bursting with illuminations and colorful designs, all different. Many other Books of Hours (but by no means all) share similar patterns of rich illuminations.



Figure 4 – John 1:1-14. Book of Hours. Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 44. fol. 15r. saec. XV2



## Example 4

I have included this page from a late 12<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of Vergil, containing *Aeneid*



**Figure 5** – Vergil, *Aeneid* (9.55-108). København, Kongelige Bibliotek, MS GKS 2006, fol. 60v. saec. XII2

9.55-108 (Figure 5), because it contains the visually striking feature of a sizeable hole in the parchment. A long tear curving up the page from the right side of the hole interferes with the lines of text. Somebody (the scribe or someone else) attempted to sew the tear together, and then the scribe dutifully wrote the lines *around* the hole and tear line the best he could.

All of this illustrates an important fact about the production of manuscripts: they were *expensive*. Today, if we tear a hole in a sheet of notebook paper we throw it away and reach for another. If one of our favorite books gets damaged we would think little of going out to buy another copy. But in an age when every book was made by hand and the very pages themselves were derived from animal skins after a laborious and costly curing process, book materials were simply too valuable to waste.

## READING THE MANUSCRIPT:

### PALAEOGRAPHY

Even a brief inspection of the examples above will show that the texts on manuscripts are not that easy to read without a bit of practice. Today we are used to the standardized letter forms that appear in modern print fonts, but manuscripts reveal that medieval and renaissance scribes employed many different script types over the centuries. Beginners often balk at the prospect of deciphering all those “squiggly shapes,” but it is worth remembering that the process of learning unfamiliar scripts in Latin is ultimately no different than the way in which we all at one point learned the various forms of English block print or cursive: *exposure* and *practice*.

There are two chief areas of difficulty facing a manuscript reader. The first difficulty is recognizing the actual letter forms. This is most easily done by comparing a manuscript text with the same text in a modern printed edition, since this will typically confirm what the manuscript



has written on it (although one must still watch out for textual variants). Furthermore, our modern expectations for when to see upper-case letters go unfulfilled since many script types did not employ majuscules as we do today (e.g. the first letter of sentences in Newberry MS 44 above). Also of particular note is that forms of ‘s’ written before the 19<sup>th</sup> century (even in printed books) frequently are straightened vertically and thus look more like an ‘f’ but without the full horizontal mark through the shaft. Additionally, depending on the script type the letters ‘a’, ‘i’, ‘n’, ‘m’, ‘r’, and ‘u’ tended to be written with nearly identical vertical strokes (minims). Thus the first five letters of the phrase “*in mundo*” can be difficult to distinguish from each other, particularly in Gothic scripts. Finally, it is common to find the ‘ae’ diphthong shortened to just ‘e’ in many scripts. Exposure and practice are the key!

The second difficulty is the extensive system of word abbreviations that can permeate the texts. The use of abbreviations was heavily influenced by scribal practice in Ireland which spread to the continent in the early middle ages, but in some form it goes all the way back to antiquity and the so-called *notae Tironianae*, the system of shorthand ascribed to Cicero’s personal scribe Tiro. Anyone who has tried to copy by hand many pages of text can understand why medieval scribes used abbreviations so much—they save valuable page space and more importantly time. Fortunately, the majority of text abbreviations are formed by the use of a small handful of regular signs (*sigla*) that can be easily learned. The most common by far is a short stroke written above part of the abbreviated word, typically the ending, so show that something has dropped out. It usually stands for a missing ‘m’ or ‘n’ and sometimes an accompanying vowel as well (see Figure 6). In Iowa xMMs.Hi1 shown above (Figure 2), for example, we can see abbreviation examples at the end of the first written line of text (following the giant ‘B’) where the scribe wrote “**plusq**” with extra marks to indicate “**plusq(uam)**.” A second example can be seen in the third line of the next section (following the giant ‘Q’) in the word “**spoliada**” for “**spolia(n)da**.” And earlier in that same line, the scribe wrote “**supba**” with an angled line across the downward ‘p’ shaft to show that he was abbreviating the word “**sup(er)ba**.” Figure 6 lists the most common sigla used in manuscripts.

There are resources that can help explain less common abbreviations (see Appendix 2). Exposure and practice are the keys to building skill in reading manuscripts. The sample activities at the end of this article provide some ideas for how you and your students can practice palaeography at a fairly basic level.

## SCRIPT TYPES

As your class begins to interact with manuscripts, at some point you or your students will likely notice the wide variety in possible script types that can appear. Different scripts with varying letter forms were used throughout the medieval period, often with certain styles dominating in certain regions and/or in specific centuries. Simply put, a script style can be identified by examining the letter forms carefully and comparing them with known examples of various styles. This of course can only be done quickly

- |      |         |                      |
|------|---------|----------------------|
| I.   | — , ˆ   | = m, n               |
| II.  | 9 . 2   | = con, com, cum, cun |
| III. | 9 2     | = us, os, is, s      |
| IV.  | ~ ~ . . | = r, re, ra, ar      |
| V.   | 2 ~ v ~ | = ur, tur, er        |
| VI.  | 2, 2, 2 | = rum                |
| VII. | 7, &    | = et, e.             |

**Figure 6** – List of common abbreviation symbols.  
Adriano Capelli, *Dizionario di Abbreviature latine ed italiane* (6th ed., 1987), xxiv.

after much practice. Mastering the intricacies of all of these lies beyond the scope of this article, but some of the print and online resources included in Appendices 2 and 3 at the end of this article will point in the right direction those interested in learning more. For print, a wonderful starting place is Michelle Brown's *A Guide to Western Historical Scripts from Antiquity to 1600* (1993) which devotes a page or two to a wide, representative sampling of the most common script types likely to be encountered, complete with illustration and transcription. But perhaps the best place to dive in is the highly useful Medieval Writing website, for not only does it explain the process of manuscript production but also provides an extensive list of palaeographic scripts with sample texts *and* most usefully a visual description of how each letter is typically written in that style.<sup>2</sup> By studying these examples along with their transcriptions, you and your students will soon be able to decipher the scripts found in other manuscripts.

### FROM AUTHOR TO TEXTBOOK

When faced with a hand-written text (*manū scriptum*), students get to see a tangible intermediate link between the ancient author and the printed text in their books, and it is my experience that at this point they often start to get more interested and ask good questions regarding who wrote manuscripts, how the process went, how long it took, etc. Finding answers (even if tentative) to these questions should be encouraged since it not only fosters students' historical awareness and joy of discovery but also pays dividends in their deeper appreciation of *why* manuscripts are essential. Scholars strive to establish the best text that they can by comparing the contents of multiple manuscripts, for the truth is that variant spellings, words, or even lines will sometimes appear among different manuscripts of the same work. In scholarly editions of a text the more important of these variant readings are summarized at the bottom of the page in an *apparatus criticus*. Thus looking at manuscripts provides a wonderful opportunity to explain the basics of this important process of textual transmission, to whatever degree of detail is desired.<sup>3</sup>

In simplest terms, the following outline covers the basic steps that nearly every ancient text experienced between first composition and its eventual appearance on a modern printed page:

1. The ancient author composes or dictates the work.
2. Somebody (author or patron or savvy bookseller) pays copyists to make copies.
3. Other scribes make copies from these initial copies.
4. Yet other scribes make copies from the later copies.
5. One or more copies of the work are read (or even rediscovered!), studied, and copied during the Renaissance (note that a few works were not discovered until more recent times).
6. In the wake of the printing press, incunabula—the earliest printed books that appear up through 1500—start to appear, many of them classical works; whether in the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century, the *editio princeps* or “first printing” is produced based either on a single manuscript (more often the case with incunabula) or on multiple existing manuscripts that are collated by an editor.
7. Other printed editions are subsequently published by different editors up to the

<sup>2</sup> The index of scripts is found at: <<http://medievalwriting.50megs.com/scripts/scrindex.htm>>. Less extensive but still highly useful is the set of clearly presented examples found at the Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections website ([http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/research\\_and\\_education/palaeography/palaeography\\_scripts/index.html](http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/research_and_education/palaeography/palaeography_scripts/index.html)).

<sup>3</sup> For more information (and tons of fascinating details to impress your students with), Reynolds and Wilson's *Scribes and Scholars* provides the best account of this process of textual transmission from antiquity to today; less detailed and more accessible for most is the Medieval Writing website (for both see Appendix 2).

present day, usually based on a combination of previous printed editions and new examinations of the main surviving manuscripts.

8. A textbook prints a text that is taken directly from one of the existing published editions.

In order to help students really capture that sense of history that lies behind their printed text, these steps can be researched for many of the authors that high school and college classes regularly read. In the following section of suggested activities I look in more detail at Vergil's *Aeneid* as an example of how one can go about compiling such a series of historical snapshots.

### TEXTUAL VARIANTS

Different manuscripts inevitably reveal slight differences in their contents. Since a scribe is (we assume) doing his best to faithfully copy his source, the differences between any two given manuscripts are because either a) the source manuscripts for each were themselves different, b) one or both of the scribes made an error in transcription, or c) one or both of the scribes intentionally diverged from his source in an attempt at correcting what he believed to be a previous error. Thus all differences arise due to human error somewhere in the line of copying. Anyone who has attempted to copy out by hand line after line of a text knows that he or she is at some point highly likely to make a few mistakes, ranging from introducing accidental spelling errors to skipping entire lines of text! When those mistakes are not caught, whoever subsequently copies from *that* copy is likely to re-copy the original mistake and perhaps unwittingly add a few more. We call the majority of these differences 'variants' since we do not know for sure which of the available options may be correct (if indeed any of them, as the true original may not be preserved any longer); the term 'error' is reserved for those differences that are clearly incorrect. Let us say, for example, that three separate English manuscripts have at the same point in the text the words 'dog,' 'hog,' and 'fog.' If the context makes it clear that an animal should appear, the first two remain possible variants while the third can be safely classified as an error.

Our manuscripts of classical authors are no different in this regard. It often comes as a surprise to students to learn that all the manuscripts of Vergil, for example, do not contain exactly the same words at all points. This realization naturally leads to the question: "So what did Vergil actually write?" Due to the above problems, we cannot claim to know with total accuracy what any ancient author actually composed. Before anyone panics, however, we can confidently say that in most cases we are *nearly* certain, for the contents of the various manuscripts for any given author usually do agree on the order of 98-99%. The situation is even better when we realize that most of the variant wordings are minor and do not clearly affect the meaning of the sentence in which they are located. Yet in any work there remain at least a small percentage of variant readings among the manuscripts that are potentially significant for our understanding of the text. And for a few authors—Catullus is a noted example—their manuscripts are rife with contested variant readings (alongside modern scholars' own proposals for what Catullus meant to write), and our decisions about those variants, or more properly the decisions made by the editor of the text we choose to read from, affect our understanding of what Catullus is even saying in his poems.

It is the perfect time when looking at manuscripts in a classroom setting to introduce this important issue of textual variants. The benefits are numerous: students better appreciate the manuscript's place in the line of transmission and perhaps most importantly they encounter reasons to pay closer attention to the words in front of them when they get their own chance to decide between variant readings. The *apparatus criticus* at the bottom of the page of a scholarly edition



collects important variant readings (but not all the minor ones) that can also help guide curious readers to places where a given manuscript might diverge. Alternatively, they can be spotted by comparing any given manuscript page with the same text in a modern printed edition and noting any differences.

One easily-spotted example is the uncertainty at *Aeneid* 1.2 whether Vergil wrote ‘Laviniaque’ or ‘Laviniaque.’ Both readings are attested in the manuscript tradition, and modern scholars cannot make up their minds either as to which reading to print.<sup>4</sup> Fortunately, the change in overall sense is relatively minor between the two options, and we can understand the gist of the passage without having to make a firm decision. Sometimes, however, an additional letter can make an entirely new word. The last word of Lucan 1.16 is a good example: the majority manuscript tradition (including Iowa xMMs.Hi1 seen earlier in Figure 2) agrees in reading *quaque dies medius flammantibus aestuat horis* (“and where the noon-day [i.e. the south] blazes with its burning hours”). Many modern editors, however, think that at some point in the distant past a scribe wrote ‘horis’ in place of a different original word—perhaps ‘oris’ (“regions”) or ‘auris’ (“breezes”)—and then all subsequent scribes kept dutifully copying the error. They suggest this variant arises from the frequent linguistic phenomenon of intrusive aspiration during the middle ages, namely the addition of the ‘h’-sound to various words. Yet in these situations there is also the possibility that in the other direction a Renaissance scribe, attempting to correct this known problem, might have hypercorrected and removed too many ‘h’s from words in his copy. In the end analysis, the correct reading of *horis* here is not crucial for understanding Lucan’s overall plot or themes, but anyone interested in careful study of the work must still decide which reading seems most likely to be the original. It must ultimately remain educated speculation, but one does not have to look at manuscripts for very long to appreciate that the nicely-edited texts we have today are thanks to the hard philological work that textual editors have put into producing high-quality scholarly editions over the years.

## CONCLUSION

It is my real hope that the information and sample activities contained in this article inspire teachers and their students to take a closer look at what manuscripts have to offer. At the very least it is possible to show some of these images to your classes and see what kind of interest they generate. From there it is very easy to click on some of the links in Appendix 1 to start browsing through a few of the many wonderful manuscripts that are now available online. Not only are they visually stimulating and historically significant but most importantly they also promote *actually reading Latin*. Students attempting to decipher the text of a manuscript are required to pay extremely close attention to detail—more even than they have likely paid thus far—to what the letters and words they’re looking at really are, what the implied forms (and thus case endings) of abbreviated words likely are based on the syntax and grammar of the passage, and what the potential meanings of words might be from context. This is especially true when dealing with potential textual variants. In short, go discover the visually exciting world of Latin manuscripts and invite your students on the journey with you.

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4 E.g. Mynors in his OCT (1972) prints ‘Laviniaque’ whereas Goold’s Loeb (1999) text prints ‘Laviniaque.’

## SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR USING MANUSCRIPTS IN THE CLASSROOM

Note to teachers: The various lesson plans in this section are primarily ideas in outline for you to use/ignore/adapt in whatever way you think best for your given class. Given that each class is unique, and that the time allowed each class for such activities may vary, multiple lesson ideas are included to provide you with the greatest flexibility possible in crafting activity plans tailored to your own needs. It also should be reiterated that I am largely self-taught in this field. The disadvantage here is that I speak not as a refined expert but as an enthusiast, and thus my descriptions may at times be less technically precise than those of a better-trained scholar. The advantage, however, is that my experience hopefully proves that anybody with an interest in manuscripts can learn to enjoy them and use them well in their own classes.

### *Activity #1 – Basic Palaeography*

Palaeography is the study of ancient writing. A skilled palaeographer can look at a manuscript and identify not only the exact script type (e.g. Irish insular miniscule vs Italian littera textualis) but also the geographical region and century in which it was copied. Here, however, we are just interested in getting a little better at the core skill of deciphering the script we see on the page. Repeated exposure and practice are the essential ingredients, both for the teacher and the students. When first starting out, I recommend the following basic procedure:

1. pick a manuscript of a known work (e.g. Vergil's *Aeneid*, the Bible, etc.).
2. find a modern edited text of that work.
3. review the common orthographic issues discussed in the above palaeography section to help make sense of letter forms and potential alternate spellings and abbreviations.
4. set both the manuscript and the modern text side-by-side and begin comparing them; this will help students figure out what the manuscript text is "supposed to say" and will give them practice in recognizing the letter forms of whatever script type your manuscript is written in.
5. make note of any variances in your manuscript from the modern text's reading.
6. try copying out a portion of the text in the exact same script style just as it appears on the manuscript page; this forces the reader to pay attention to scribal details that might otherwise be missed.

After working through a portion of one manuscript, then pick another and repeat the process. It needs to be emphasized that while the above method is a decent way to proceed for the time being when teaching yourself or helping students take their first steps, the *real goal* is to be able to decipher the script of a given manuscript without needing to compare it with a modern printed text, since that is where the best benefits to improving a student's Latin abilities will actually come. And as always, repeated exposure to different types of manuscripts and script types is the best way to improve your palaeography skills and thus ultimately your Latin skills.

What follows here are a few manuscript samples that will help you (and your students) become more familiar with reading manuscripts so that you can then present them to students, either as in-class assignments or as take-home exercises. For each one, apply the 6 steps outlined above. Once you are comfortable doing it, then bring it into your Latin class. I find that it is usually best to start with group work as some individuals left on their own can quickly become lost. Later on,



after you and your students get more comfortable with reading manuscripts, you could ideally find a manuscript of the actual text being read in class (e.g. Vergil, Caesar, Ovid, etc.) for everyone to work through together over the course of a few weeks or even a term.

### #1a – Lucan's *Pharsalia* (or *Bellum Civile*)

Iowa xMMs.Hi1 is a decent place to start as the scribe's handwriting is relatively clear and easy to read. This script, a kind of humanist cursive, developed in the early Renaissance as a conscious imitation of the elegant Carolingian scripts from the early middle ages. For reference, here is the text of Lucan 1.1-7 as printed in Shackleton Bailey's Teubner edition (1997):

Bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos  
iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem  
in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra  
cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni  
certatum totis concussi viribus orbis  
in commune nefas, infestisque obvia signis  
signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis.

5

Now examine the following image (Figure 7) from Iowa xMMs.Hi1 seen earlier in Figure 2 (dated 1465) and try to match the above words to the manuscript's words.

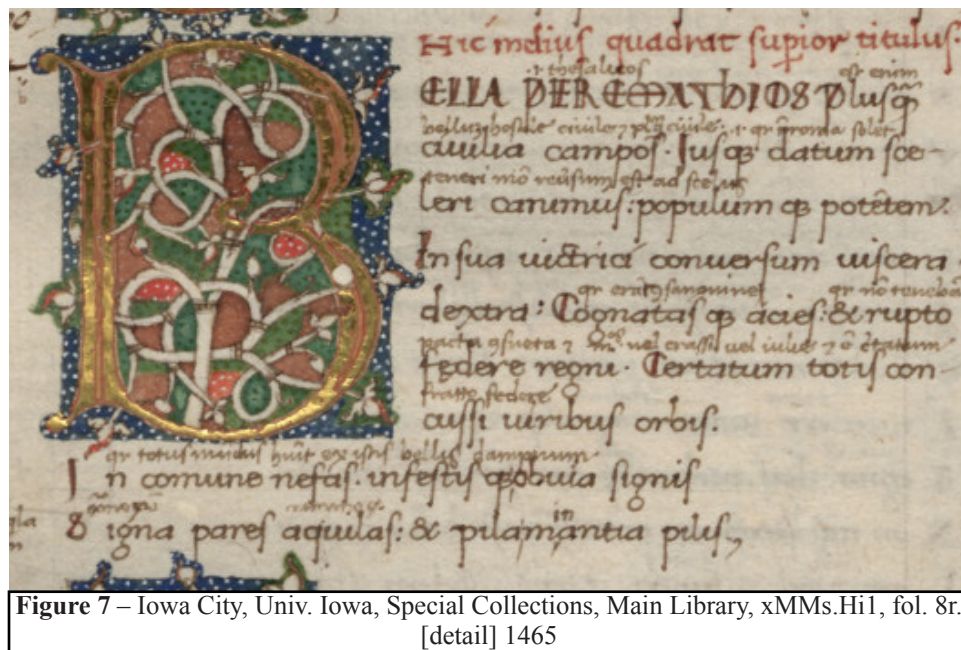


Figure 7 – Iowa City, Univ. Iowa, Special Collections, Main Library, xMMs.Hi1, fol. 8r.  
[detail] 1465

#### Helpful Notes:

- the illuminated capital 'B' causes the line endings to be irregular for the first five lines of the actual poem
- the round 's' (which we use exclusively today) is written instead with the straight 's' (ſ) that is often found throughout medieval and Renaissance palaeography

- the ‘-que’ of ‘Iusque’ is abbreviated, as is the ‘-que’ below it in ‘populumque’
- potêtem = pote(n)tem (this symbol usually stands for a missing ‘m’ or ‘n’ but can at times also stand for other truncated letters)
- the extra mark in ‘victrici’ connecting the two letters ‘ct’ is known as a ligature but otherwise has no special meaning
- & = and (which everyone recognizes, but it shows that the ampersand is one of the few scribal abbreviations that has managed to survive into modern usage)
- federe = foedere (diphthongs like ‘ae’ and ‘oe’ are often written as just ‘e’ to reflect contemporary pronunciation)

Next look at the same text from a different manuscript: Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 98.5, fol. 2r (Figure 8). This manuscript, copied in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century in Italy, is written in a blackletter script known as gothic textualis media (Saenger 191). There are a few spelling differences in this one.

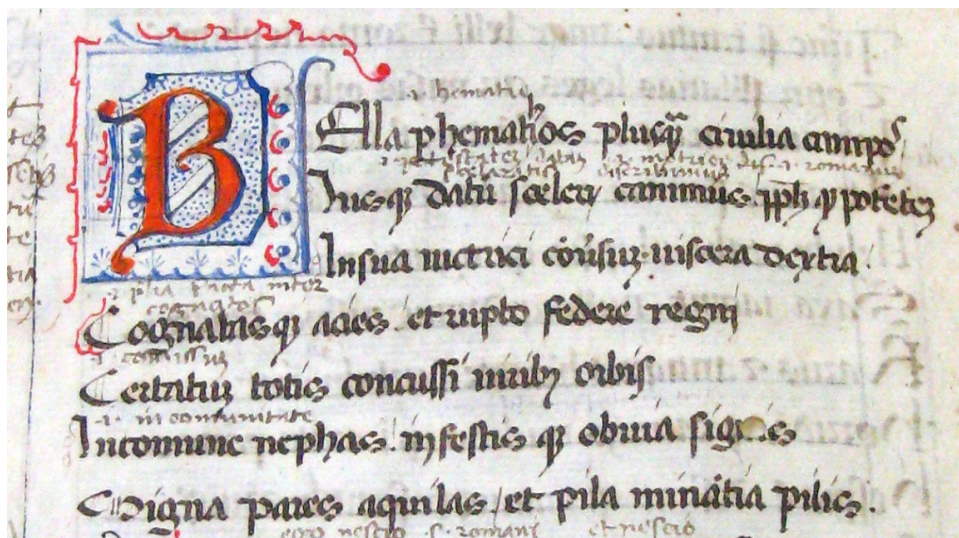


Figure 8 – Lucan, Bellum Civile (1.1-7). Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 98.5. fol. 2r. [detail] saec. XV2

#### Helpful Notes:

- ‘phamethios’ looks like one word but it is in fact ‘p(er) hemathios’ (note the horizontal slash through at the bottom of the descender)
- the ‘h-’ on the front of ‘emathios’ is an example of aspiration common in medieval manuscripts; words that begin with a vowel will occasionally pick up an ‘h’ just as sometimes a familiar ‘h’ will drop out from a word
- there is of course no real ‘v’ in the Latin alphabet; it is a relatively modern convention for representing a consonantal ‘u’, hence ‘ciuilia’ as here



- many script styles (such as this one) make it difficult to spot the distinction between many similar-looking letters, e.g. 'ciuilia' or 'canimus' on the next line can look at first like a jumbled mess due to the similar-looking minims
- 'p(o)p(u)l(um) q(ue)' near the end of the second line is extremely abbreviated; note also the abbreviation '-3' (really a sideways 'm' with a tailing downstroke) for words ending in '-m' or '-n'
- 'cóúsu3' = 'co(n)v(er)sum'
- 'nephās' = 'nefas' (reflecting similar pronunciations of 'f' and 'ph' at the time of copying)

### #1b – Vergil's *Aeneid*

For reference, the opening twenty lines of the *Aeneid* are as follows (Mynors's OCT):

Arma uirumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris	
Italiam fato profugus Lauiniaque uenit	
litora, multum ille et terris iactatus et alto	
ui superum, saeuae memorem Iunonis ob iram;	
multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem,	5
inferretque deos Latio; genus unde Latinum	
Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae.	
Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso,	
quidue dolens, regina deum tot uoluere casus	
insignem pietate uirum, tot adire labores	10
impulerit. Tantaene animis caelestibus irae?	
Urbs antiqua fuit (Tyrii tenuere coloni)	
Karthago, Italiam contra Tiberinaque longe	
ostia, dives opum studiisque asperrima belli,	
quam Iuno fertur terris magis omnibus unam	15
posthabita coluisse Samo. hic illius arma,	
hic currus fuit; hoc regnum dea gentibus esse,	
si qua fata sinant, iam tum tenditque fouetque.	
progeniem sed enim Troiano a sanguine duci	
audierat Tyrias olim quae uerteret arces;	20

The following page shows the same text from Newberry ms 95.5, fol. 53v (Figure 9). It was copied c.1450-1500 and employs a script known as humanistic textualis formata (Saenger 184).



Figure 9 – Vergil, Aeneid (1.1-20). Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 95.5. fol. 53v. saec. XV2

#### Helpful Notes:

- note the frequent use of ‘-’ as an abbreviation for ‘-us’
- the last word of line 9 reads ‘cāus’ for ‘ca(s)us’
- ‘thyberinaque’ = ‘tiberinaque’ (another example of aspiration)
- the small tachygraphic form that looks like ‘H’ is really ‘N’ in line 19 = ‘enim’
- in line 20 this manuscript reads ‘everteret’ instead of the usual reading of ‘vertereret’



### #1c – Gospel of John

After trying the Lucan and Vergil manuscripts, for the third drill see how the opening of John's Gospel compares in difficulty. We will use the Gospel of John 1:1-8a text from Figure 4 above (Newberry 44) (repeated here in miniature). The Vulgate text reads:

*In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil, quod factum est. In ipso vita erat, et vita erat lux hominum: et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt. Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Ioannes. Hic venit in testimonium ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine, ut omnes crederent per illum. Non...*

#### Helpful Notes:

- the first 'v(er)bum' is abbreviated
- 'fuit' is written here with a double 'ff' following scribal convention for this script style



Figure 4 – John 1:1-14. Book of Hours.  
Chicago, Newberry Library,  
MS 44. fol. 15r. saec. XV2

Once students have practiced with these examples, ask them to go back and attempt to decipher other portions of these (and similar) texts *without* having a printed edition as a crutch. They should practice writing out their own transcriptions first and then check them against a printed text. Afterwards, discuss what aspects were most challenging and what they remembered from the first round of practice exercises that helped them. See Appendix 1 for links to other high-resolution image scans available online that can be used for further practice.

### Activity #2 – Student Scribes

Following up on Activity #1, for even more student engagement (and fun), challenge the class to become scribes and create their own manuscript texts. This can be a great artistic outlet for students and a great change of pace from the usual kinds of assignments. The first four chapters of Clemens and Graham as well as the Medieval Writing website (see Appendices 2-3) provide plenty of details on the various stages of historical manuscript production and will prove useful for any such project. Since actual calf-skin vellum is quite expensive these days, for a writing surface I recommend using high-quality “parchment” color résumé paper, easily found in any office supply store. To start with, each student can attempt to duplicate any of the manuscript images in this article as close to the original as he or she can make it. Depending on the image being copied, this could include not only the palaeography of the main text but also marginal notes, illuminated capitals, and other illustrations. You could alternatively assign it as a group project in which each

member is responsible for reproducing a different feature of the manuscript page. Four people in a group works out well since then: 1) one sketches the overall design and rules the text lines, 2) the next writes the text itself, 3) the third writes any marginal or interlinear notes, and 4) the final person adds in any decorated capitals or other illuminations. You can even add a level of fun competition by letting them know that a group of judges (perhaps a few other teachers) will award a prize of some kind to the best-designed manuscript page. Throughout this process, students can experiment with various kinds of inks, colored pencils, or paints, depending on how elaborate they want the final product to be.

Once the students have some practice doing this, the next potential stage is to let them design their own manuscript page for showcasing any Latin text of their choosing. First the students need to look through pictures of a variety of manuscripts to choose a specific handwriting style that they will try to emulate. The scripts database of the Medieval Writing website will provide them with alphabets in the various scripts (see Appendix 3). Once they have chosen which script to use, they should practice copying out the various letters in a notebook and also sample words to get the letters to flow well together. Only after these preparatory steps should they proceed with writing their own texts. Once students work past the initial learning curve, this ability to write in what amounts to medieval calligraphy can be quite addicting, so I encourage this practice as much as possible.

### ***Activity #3 – Make Your Own Manuscript Codex***

Following on the previous lesson idea, the ultimate step (for the advanced student or maybe an honors section) is to set about actually creating a whole manuscript codex. They do not have to be big; a tiny codex of even four or eight pages can serve as a starting point. One option is to have each student buy a commercial “make-your-own-book” kit, various sizes of which can usually be found at art and craft supply stores like Dick Blick, etc. After following the binding instructions, they could then proceed to design the content of the various pages as above in activity #2. Another option is to have the class actually gather their own materials and bind their own books. This does require some preparation but is not as difficult as it might sound. Relevant web searches (especially on YouTube) for “book binding” and “how to make a book” will provide plenty of helpful information. See Appendix 3 for some useful web resources in this arena.

### ***Activity #4 – Mapping the history of your text***

In explaining the process of text transmission to students, it is visually interesting—and thanks to the internet no longer that difficult—to bring in relevant pictures for each step. We cannot show students a photo of Caesar hard at work on his commentaries, but quick searches online will reveal reproductions of medieval copyists at work, writing instruments, the physical components of a codex (such as vellum sheets, stitching, covers), and so forth. Internet searches for early (and current) editions of any given author will complete the picture.

To make things more concrete, challenge the class (or individual students as an enrichment project) to research as many of the transmission stages as they can for a given text, perhaps one they’ve seen before in class. The majority of the necessary research material for such a project can be found in the introductions to the pertinent Loeb or Oxford Classical Text (OCT) editions of the text in question, along with the author’s entry in the invaluable work *Texts and Transmission* by Reynolds and Wilson (see Appendix 2). The date of a text’s *editio princeps* can usually be found online; Wikipedia’s entry on the subject ([editio princeps](#)) actually gives a fairly thorough list. Lists

of critical editions of the text can also be gleaned from a combination of the above resources and online searches (Google Books deserves special mention here).

Let us take Vergil's *Aeneid* as an example, both because it is a text most every Latin student encounters at some point and because it boasts more extant manuscripts than any other ancient text outside the Bible (and is thus a bit more likely to show up in a collection to which you may have access). The information listed below came from a few sources, mainly the introductions to both Mynors' OCT edition (1972) and Goold's revision of the Loeb edition of Vergil (1999). Editions like these provide a list of the important manuscripts that have helped editors shape the printed text, and these are listed as abbreviations (called the *sigla*) representing usually the location (past or current) of that manuscript. Consult these types of editions for other authors to find similar information.

Following the outline earlier in this article, the story of the *Aeneid* from author to textbook can be reconstructed something like this:

1. Vergil composes the *Aeneid* (which is thankfully not burned *post mortem*!).
2. The text is "published" and quickly becomes famous.
3. Scribes make copies of the copies of Vergil continuously through late antiquity, including a number of scribes in the 5<sup>th</sup> century who produce a set of copies that are the oldest substantially-complete manuscripts that still exist; of particular note are those traditionally called M (= Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 39.1) and P (= Vaticana [Città del], Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 1631).
4. Scribes make further copies of these copies and so on up through the middle ages (a group of 9<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts are also particularly important) and the Renaissance.
5. The *editio princeps* is printed in 1469 in Rome, edited by the noted Renaissance humanist Giovanni Andrea Bussi.
6. Vergil's *Opera* are edited and printed numerous times in subsequent centuries as editors continue to compare the best and oldest manuscripts available; notable examples through the 19<sup>th</sup> century include the critical editions of Heinsius (1676), Heyne (1767-1775), and Ribbeck (1859-1868, rev. 1894-1895).
7. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, notable critical editions include the two Oxford Classical Texts of Hirtzel (1900) and Mynors (1969, rev. 1972) as well as the edition by Geymonat (1973).
8. Your classroom textbook uses or adapts one of the modern critical texts.

Using this process as a general guide, choose an author the class might be interested in and start filling in the steps. This kind of project admittedly requires a level of research that may be beyond where you want to go, but it can be a fascinating way to chart the scribal journey that a favorite text in your class has taken from ancient times to today. After picking a work to explore, even sharing the information found for one step per week can make for an enjoyable break from regular grammar/translation work, whether you do the research yourself or show your students how to find this kind of information in modern editions of the text.



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- Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 98.5 (Lucan)
- Iowa City, Univ. Iowa, Special Collections, Main Library, xMMs.Hi1 (Lucan)
- København, Kongelige Bibliotek, MS GKS 495 (Livy)
- København, Kongelige Bibliotek, MS GKS 2006 (Vergil)

## APPENDIX 1: WHERE TO FIND MANUSCRIPTS

Images of manuscripts can be found in one of three places: 1) in an actual manuscript codex (or facsimile), 2) photos printed in a book, and 3) in an online digital database. For physical manuscripts, contact the special collections librarians at any research library (usually on university campuses) within driving distance and ask what Latin manuscripts, if any, they have in their holdings. Even small colleges often have surprising treats for the Latinist tucked away in their archives, and archivists in my experience are usually excited to show their collection off. For books with photos of manuscripts, see Appendix 2 below on print resources for some books with great photos, often with accompanying transcriptions.

It is exciting to see that the number of manuscripts published online is increasing every year, and one can assume that this growth will only persist as the cost of large file storage continues to drop. Below is but a partial list of places to find manuscripts online to help you get started:

### 1. E-Manuscripts of the Royal Library of Denmark

[http://www.kb.dk/en/nb/materialer/haandskrifter/HA/e-mss/e\\_mss.html](http://www.kb.dk/en/nb/materialer/haandskrifter/HA/e-mss/e_mss.html)

This fantastic database is an exemplary model for the online publication of manuscripts, as navigation is easy and one can view not merely sample images but entire manuscripts in high-resolution. The ‘Codices Latini Haunienses’ link leads to the listing of authors and works available on the site.

### 2. Catalogue of Digitized Medieval Manuscripts

<http://manuscripts.cmrs.ucla.edu/>

UCLA hosts a wonderful database of links to the growing number of fully digitized manuscripts available online. Searches are easy, and the results are fantastic.

### 3. Hill Museum & Manuscript Library

<http://www.hmml.org/collections10/collections10.htm>

The Hill Museum at St. John’s University in Minnesota has compiled one of the largest databases of manuscript images in the world. A search on their site will turn up many manuscripts, but note that only some have images available online. I recommend searching by century of manuscript production as an easy way to browse their holdings.

### 4. Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections

<http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/>

This database lists virtually every manuscript housed in any accessible library in all the Netherlands. Most (but not all) manuscript descriptions have a sample image available for viewing. Their ‘Highlights’ section is a good place to start, but to find classical texts, go to the search menu and then choose “classical literature” under the ‘Browse by Category’ section.

### 5. Digital Scriptorium of Columbia University

<http://scriptorium.columbia.edu/huntington/search.html>

This excellent database offers a few sample images of most of their manuscripts.

### 6. Bodleian Library of Oxford University

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/medieval/browse.htm>

The venerable Bodleian offers a sampling of manuscript images in an easy-to-navigate site.

### 7. Mount Angel Abbey

<http://www.mountangelabbey.org/library/manuscripts.htm>

This abbey in Oregon has made available for download a number of medieval Books of Hours.

## APPENDIX 2: PRINT RESOURCES

1. Clemens, Raymond, and Timothy Graham. *Introduction to Manuscript Studies*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007.

This is one of the best introductions to the study of manuscripts currently available. There is a lot of detail here, but it is organized very well so that information is usually easy to find. It makes extensive use of many manuscripts from the Newberry Library collections throughout. Chapters 1-4 are particularly useful for understanding the details of manuscript production, while 11-16 offer invaluable help in working with specific types of manuscripts such as Books of Hours or charter rolls.

2. Bischoff, Bernhard. *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Trans. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and David Ganz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Bischoff is *the* recognized standard scholarly work on Latin palaeography. It is densely packed with great information, but it is a fairly scholarly tome. The main chapters on script development make for a dry read, but once you have oriented yourself in some of the other resources listed here, Bischoff is the place to go for more detailed, accurate information.

3. Brown, Michelle. *A Guide to Western Historical Scripts from Antiquity to 1600*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.

This valuable book presents a history of palaeography through a series of clear manuscript samples beginning with some of our oldest surviving examples from the first few centuries AD and proceeding through to the Renaissance. This allows the reader to see the evolution of writing styles and letter forms over time. Each excerpt is accompanied by a transcription and can be used as a ready-made palaeography lesson. For anyone interested in trying to write out their own manuscript pages in authentic medieval hand styles (as in Activity #2), this is the book to consult.

4. Brown, Michelle. *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms*. Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1994.

This small handbook gives a handy glossary of the terms used in manuscript studies, often with helpful companion illustrations.

5. De Hamel, Christopher. *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Phaidon Press, 1994.

This hefty tome is filled with lavish illustrations that focus mostly on the history of manuscript artwork throughout the centuries. It is still valuable (especially for the pictures) but is not quite as accessible as the Clemens and Graham book above.

6. Shailor, Barbara A. *The Medieval Book*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

Shailor writes a very accessible and succinct introduction to the different types of books that existed in the middle ages as well as how they were made. The numerous illustrations throughout provide great images for classroom use.

7. Cappelli, Adriano. *Dizionario di Abbreviature latine ed italiane*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1987.

Cappelli is *the* standard dictionary of medieval manuscript abbreviations and sigla. Anyone who wants to get serious with deciphering Latin palaeography will at some point need to consult this volume.



8. Reynolds, L.D., and N.G. Wilson. *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

This highly-informative book is considered the standard history of textual transmission of classical works from the ancient world through today.

9. Reynolds, L.D., and N.G. Wilson. *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

Although this volume is unfortunately out of print (and accordingly quite expensive), it remains the single best place to find information on the manuscript traditions of each of the main classical authors in one place.

10. Ullman, B.L. *Ancient Writing and its Influence*. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963.

A classic work on the development of the alphabet and writing styles from earliest times up to the modern day. It is well-written and hits the right balance between detail and accessibility for non-specialists. Recommended for students who want to know more about why we write the way we write today.

### APPENDIX 3: OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

1. <http://web.ceu.hu/medstud/manual/MMM/home.html>

The **Medieval Manuscript Manual**, hosted by the Central European University in Hungary, is one of the best sites on the web for learning about manuscripts from how they were produced to terminology to writing styles, etc. The site is well organized and offers clear explanations that beginners can understand. I recommend both teachers and students start their research here.

2. <http://www.medievalwriting.50megs.com/writing.htm>

The **Medieval Writing** website, like the MMM above, is another treasure trove of information on medieval writing and book production that is highly accessible for the beginner. The site's 'Index of Scripts' is particularly useful.

3. <http://www.hist.msu.ru/Departments/Medieval/Cappelli/>

This online version of **Capelli's Dizionario Di Abbreviature** is a welcome reference to any budding palaeographer. The interface is a bit clunky, and the page images are very large, but the content is all there. The images are of the 1912 edition and thus in the public domain.

4. <http://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/dspace/bitstream/1808/1821/3/47cappelli.pdf>

Even better is this freely available **English translation of Capelli's introduction**. This important document teaches readers the crucial art of deciphering manuscript abbreviations.

5. [http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/research\\_and\\_education/palaeography/index.html](http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/research_and_education/palaeography/index.html)

The National Library of the Netherlands hosts the **Palaeographic Atlas** page which summarizes the variety of script forms found in manuscripts, complete with image samples and a helpful listing of all the major styles in chronological order.

6. <http://www.chd.dk/>

This page from the **Institute for Studies of Illuminated Manuscripts** in Denmark offers a wealth of information for anyone wanting to read a Book of Hours, one of the most common surviving types of manuscript.

7. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-vNiyexqeU>

This video offers a succinct introduction to the basic elements that go into making your own book. Such information will prove useful for any projects that involve the class attempting to build their own codices. Note that the many other related instructional videos seen at the above link will give you and your class a great start in knowing how best to proceed.

8. <http://www.evellum.com/>

**Evellum** is a company that produces software on a variety of medieval topics, and their *Ductus* program is specifically designed to teach about palaeography and manuscript production. The software is not cheap but it looks to be of high quality. I have no personal experience with it, but it might be worth looking into.

# Latin in the Homeschooling Community

Christine Hahn

## ABSTRACT

This paper presents the findings of a 2011 survey of 349 parents who include Latin in their homeschools. The survey gathered basic information regarding family size and makeup, participation in various homeschooling trends, and the duration of prior Latin study among homeschooling parents. Tabulated information includes reasons for Latin study and a summary evaluation of all Latin textbooks used by respondents. Topics discussed include the classical education model, its effects on the motivations and practices of home educators who possess minimal Latin training, and the possibility of positive outcomes related to this development.

## KEYWORDS

Latin, homeschool, survey, pedagogy, classical education, homeschool Latin textbooks, why Latin, reasons for Latin study, Latin grammar

## INTRODUCTION

Previous discussions regarding the history of Latin teaching have focused primarily on Latin teachers, both as individuals and as a professional group (Kitchell). However, the increased popularity of homeschooling in the United States has, for some students, upended the traditional system of Latin learning and placed the homeschooling parent, often with minimal formal Latin training, in the role previously occupied by the professional Latin teacher. Professional Latin teachers are rightly curious about these new developments. After all, we have dedicated our careers to teaching Latin, we love Latin literature, and we spend much of our time fighting the idea that Latin is a boring and dead language. For some, the arrival of a vocal contingent of non-Latinist teachers is nothing short of disturbing. While anecdotal evidence is plentiful, there appears to be no data available on this topic outside of National Latin Exam scores.<sup>1</sup> This article presents the findings of a 2011 survey of home educators who teach their children Latin. It explores the ways in which the classical education movement influences both the motivations and practice of home educators and provides a framework for viewing these developments in a generally favorable light.

## SURVEY METHOD

Data was collected via an online survey created at [Quia](#). The survey was available for ten days in June 2011. Respondents were solicited from 1) the author's personal and professional network in the homeschooling community,<sup>2</sup> 2) online support groups for homeschooling parents who

<sup>1</sup> In 2012, the mean score among homeschooled students was 4-7 points higher than that of traditionally-educated students in all levels of the National Latin Exam, with the exception of the Introductory level, where the mean for both groups was 31 (National Latin Exam). While this issue is intriguing and worthy of further study, it is not the focus of this article.

<sup>2</sup> The author homeschooled her own children for five years. She is also the owner of Latin for Homeschoolers, an online company that provides Latin tutoring and teaching services to homeschooled and traditional students. While survey responses were anonymous, it is likely that the survey group may have included some of the author's current or former clients.



teach Latin, 3) students of teachers who learned about the survey via the Latinteach list-serve, and 4) readers of the Latin for Homeschoolers blog. A total of 349 responses were collected.

The survey questions were designed to provide insight into the most basic questions asked by traditional Latin teachers about homeschool Latin teachers. These questions fall into three general categories: demographics (1-7), methods (8-9), and motivations (10).<sup>3</sup>

The online nature of the survey had some limitations. All of the respondents were people who were actively involved in online support groups, or who at least checked their email on a regular basis during the survey period. Thus, the survey excluded all Latin-teaching homeschool parents who do not participate in online support groups. It also excluded those who did not access the internet regularly during the survey period, as a result of personal preference, socioeconomic status, or other unknown factors.

In addition, the social networking aspect of online support groups skewed the results of the survey. While the survey did not ask where respondents learned of it, members of the support group affiliated with *The Well-Trained Mind* openly discussed the survey online, and often posted publicly when they completed it. Other members of the group, upon seeing these postings, then went on to take the survey themselves. This activity was unique to *The Well-Trained Mind* group. Thus, it is possible that a disproportionately large number of respondents were from this group. Given the self-selecting nature of online support groups, it is also possible that members of each group may have shared the same general demographic characteristics, experiences, and opinions about Latin study in their homeschools.

## SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS<sup>4</sup>

### *Demographics*

*Question 1: How many children ages 18 and under currently reside in your household?*

Families in the survey were larger than the typical American family. American families with children under the age of 18 have an average of 1.86 children (U.S. Bureau of the Census). The average number of children among survey households was 3.21, and nearly one third of all respondents (32.65%) had four or more children (see Table 1<sup>5</sup>). The largest reported families had eighteen children in the household.

*Question 2: In which grade did this student start studying Latin?<sup>6</sup>*

*Question 3: What is the age of the youngest student in your homeschool?*

In general, the data indicate that students in these households begin their Latin studies in the early elementary years (see Fig. 1, next page, and Table 2). Students most commonly began Latin studies in third grade, and the number of students who started in first grade (49) was more than four times that of students who started in ninth grade (11). In fact, three-quarters of all re-

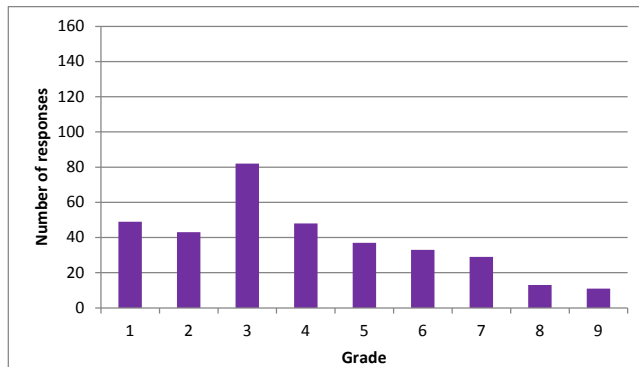
<sup>3</sup> The survey was initially written as a list of top 10 questions professional Latin teachers ask the author when they learn that she works primarily with homeschool families. Thus, some of the questions asked could conceivably fall into more than one category.

<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of organization and clarity, question numbers in this article do not correspond to the order in which the questions were asked in the actual survey. The wording of the questions themselves remains the same. Also, the survey included additional questions that are not discussed or listed in this article. The actual survey may be found in Appendix 1.

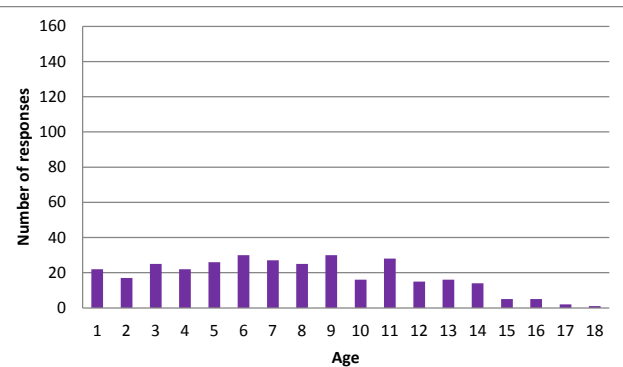
<sup>5</sup> All Tables may be found in Appendix 2.

<sup>6</sup> It was impractical to require parents of multiple children to complete the survey multiple times. Thus, respondents were instructed to “answer this question for your student who studied LATIN for the LONGEST amount of time in your homeschool” for all questions that referred to “this student.”

spondents reported that they began Latin studies before middle school (by the fifth grade) (Table 2). Additionally, while they may not be specifically studying Latin, 32% of respondents reported that the youngest student in their homeschool was five years or younger, with 22 families reporting children as young as one year were included in their homeschool (see Figure 2 and Table 3).



**Figure 1** – Grade in which Latin study began.

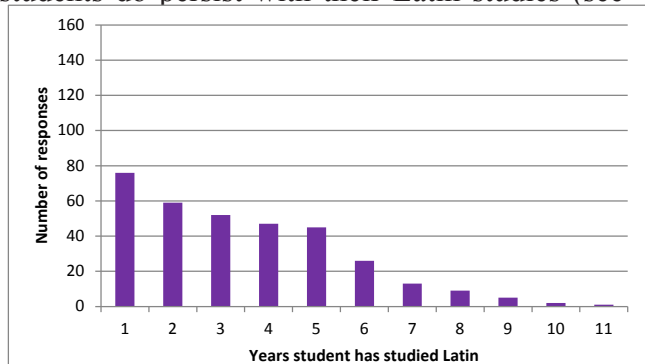


**Figure 2** – Age of Youngest Child in Homeschool.

*Question 4: For how many years did this student study Latin?*

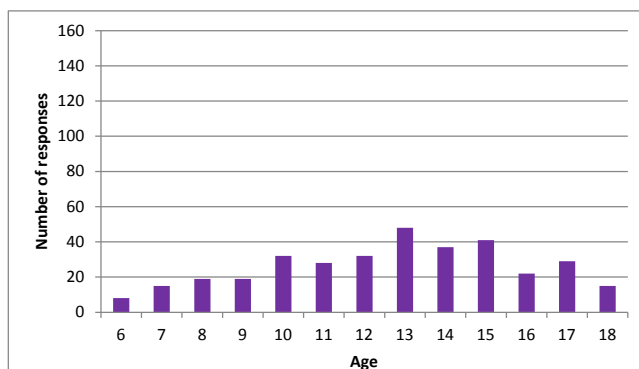
*Question 5: What is the age of the oldest student in your homeschool?*

While more respondents reported that their students had studied Latin for a single year than any other duration, the data suggests that students do persist with their Latin studies (see Figure 3 and Table 4). More than three quarters of respondents reported that their student had already gone on to at least a second year of Latin. The average duration of Latin studies was 3.46 years. For 200 of the 335 (59.7%) people who answered this question, students had studied Latin for three or more years, and 30.1% had studied for five or more years. It should be noted that responses included students still engaged in Latin studies, and do not necessarily reflect the *expected* total number of years of Latin study.



**Figure 3** – Years of Latin study.

Interestingly, there is a marked decline in responses after five years of study. There could be a number of reasons for this. Parents may have completed their chosen textbook series and feel



**Figure 4** – Age of oldest child in homeschool.

that their students satisfied their goals in studying Latin. Other students might have interrupted their Latin studies due to a move from the homeschool to a more traditional school environment. Notably, the age of the oldest student in respondents' homeschools peaks at 13, with a noticeable decline and fluctuation in the high school years (see Figure 4 and Table 5).

*Question 6: Select the number of years (1-9) that you studied Latin prior to becoming a homeschooling parent*

Latin homeschooling parent-teachers are frequently learning along with or just ahead of their students due to a lack of formal Latin training. The survey asked respondents to select the number between 1 and 9 that corresponded to the number of years they had studied Latin. Only 66 respondents, less than one-fifth, reported two or more years of Latin study; 153 reported one year of Latin study (see Table 6).<sup>7</sup>

### ***Methods and Resources***

*Question 7: Please select all descriptions appropriate to your homeschooling experience.*

One of the most common questions asked by people who are curious about homeschooling is: how do they do it? When asked “how do you homeschool,” home educators typically respond with explanations that deal with both philosophy and structure. In casual conversation, common responses are “we’re unschoolers,” or “we are classical Christians,” or “we use a curriculum from (source A),” or “we go to co-op every Monday,” etc. The survey asked respondents to select from a list of eight homeschooling approaches all descriptions that matched their experience.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents choosing description</b>
Classical Christian	62.5%
Classical (secular)	33.0%
Eclectic	41.0%
Publicly funded (ie, online charter school)	4.0%
Umbrella organization (parents teach; organization provides transcripts)	7.4%
Teacher-led cooperative	7.2%
Parent-led cooperative	22.1%
Unschooling	5.2%
None of the above	0.9%
(Note that responses do not total 100%, as respondents could select more than one description)	
<b>Table 7 – Categories of Homeschooling</b>	

The survey did not provide definitions or explanations for these categories, because they are generally understood by homeschooling veterans. A brief description of each category is included here for the benefit of the professional educator who may be unfamiliar with these trends.

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that the survey tool did not allow for the number zero as an option. In other free response sections of the survey, some respondents with no previous Latin experience reported that they had selected 1, the lowest possible number. Other respondents stated that they had simply left the question blank. This question had 129 blank responses, an unusually large number in relation to the rest of the survey. It is likely that most respondents have had little, if any, formal Latin training.



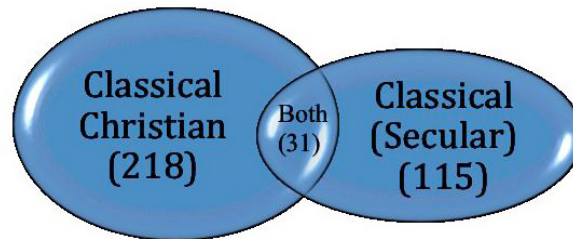
- **Classical (secular).** For the sake of brevity, the term “classical education” in our discussion will refer to the idea as explained here by Susan Wise Bauer, author of *The Well-Trained Mind*:

*Classical education depends on a three-part process of training the mind. The early years of school are spent in absorbing facts, systematically laying the foundations for advanced study. In the middle grades, students learn to think through arguments. In the high school years, they learn to express themselves. This classical pattern is called the trivium.”* (Bauer, “Classical Education”)

The stages of the trivium are commonly known as grammar (early elementary), logic (middle school), and rhetoric (high school). This topic is discussed in greater detail below.

- **Classical (Christian).** This refers to home educators who teach their children according to the stages in classical education, but reject the pagan content involved in the teaching of mythology and many other aspects of ancient culture.
- **Unschooling.** The unschooling home educator provides opportunities for learning to happen organically and support the student as he decides which areas of study are most relevant to his interests. This is generally considered to be the least structured form of education.
- **Eclectic.** Eclectic home educators are those who do not subscribe to a particular teaching style or system. They freely pick and choose from materials and methods based on the needs of individual students and the subject matter being studied.
- **Parent-led cooperative.** This refers to a group of home educators who pool their resources to offer group learning experiences. Classes are taught either by parents themselves or by subject-area experts. Classes usually meet on a regular basis, and students are often assigned homework to be completed independently. While some cooperatives are very flexible and informal, others are very similar to traditional schools, complete with schedules, administrators, and governing boards.
- **Teacher-led cooperative.** Teacher-led cooperatives are formed when subject-area experts offer group learning experiences for homeschooled students. Unlike parent-led cooperatives, teacher-led cooperatives are usually founded, organized, and managed by teachers, rather than the homeschooling parents themselves.
- **Umbrella organization.** Students are enrolled in an umbrella organization, which is often an accredited institution. While home educators are responsible for day-to-day teaching, the organization either provides a standard curriculum, or guidelines regarding curriculum, as well as assessments and transcripts.
- **Publicly Funded.** This refers to home educators who receive public funding for any portion of their children’s education, often via an online charter school. Some of these arrangements allow home educators to select their own books and materials, others require that they use a standard curriculum.

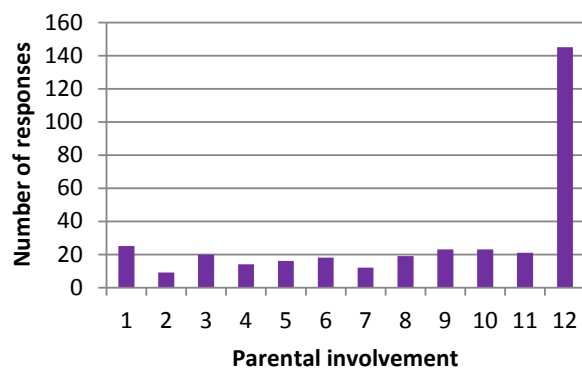
While three respondents declined to place themselves in any of these categories, 346 respondents placed themselves in a total of 610 categories. This averaged out to 1.75 categories per respondent. The top three categories selected were classical (Christian), eclectic, and classical (secular). The categories that contained the word “classical” were selected a total of 333 times.<sup>8</sup> Figure 5 shows the overlap of Christian and secular in these selections.



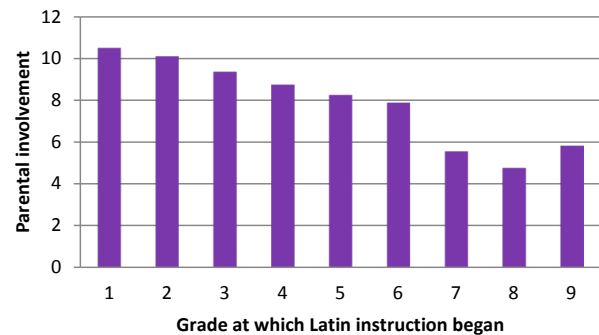
**Figure 5** – Breakdown of Classical (Christian) and Classical (secular) responses.

*Question 8: How active were you in teaching Latin to this student? (1 - outsourced all instruction; 12 - parent taught everything)*

The survey asked parents how active they were in Latin instruction on a scale of 1 (outsourced all instruction) to 12 (parent taught everything). Of the 345 people who answered this question, 145 (42.03%) reported that they alone were involved in their child’s Latin instruction (see Figure 6, Table 8). Approximately 30% (102) ranked themselves 6 or below, indicating that they had outsourced more than half of Latin instruction in their home schools; 25 respondents outsourced all Latin instruction entirely.



**Figure 6** – Parent Involvement Rating (1-outsourced all; 12-parent taught all).

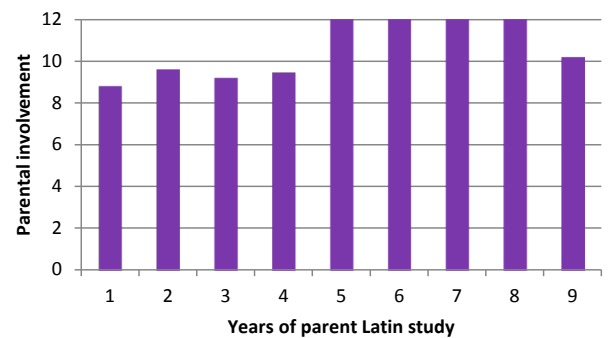


**Figure 7** – Parent involvement in Latin teaching by grade in which Latin instruction began (1-outsourced all; 12-parent taught all).

While parents of students who begin Latin study after sixth grade are still involved in their children’s Latin teaching, parents who reported beginning Latin instruction in seventh, eighth, or ninth grade all had an average score of parental involvement below 6, suggesting that they were responsible for less than half of Latin instruction (see Figure 7, Table 9).

<sup>8</sup> 31 respondents classified themselves as both classical (secular) and classical (Christian) (Fig. 5). It is possible that some Christians who are classical education proponents are comfortable with the study of mythology and ancient culture.

Unsurprisingly, parents with less Latin training are more likely to outsource some portion of Latin teaching than parents with more Latin training (see Figure 8, Table 10). Those with five years or more of Latin training were least likely to outsource, and those who claimed only one year of training or who left the question regarding training blank were most likely to outsource.



**Figure 8** – Parent involvement in Latin teaching by years of prior parental Latin study (1-outsourced all; 12-parent taught all).

*Question 9: List the Latin textbooks you have used, and your general opinion of each of them.*

To identify which Latin textbooks homeschoolers were utilizing, respondents were asked to list the textbooks they had used. Forty-one different resources were listed 844 times, with an average of 2.42 resources per participant. Respondents were also asked to give their general opinion of each. This free response question was designed to evaluate the resources used to teach Latin in the homeschooling community. Each response was individually analyzed, and ratings were assigned to books according to the general criteria in Table 11.<sup>9</sup>

Rating	Criteria	Sample Responses
Positive	Evaluation contained only positive elements.	"...wonderful, rigorous." "...challenging but fun..."
Negative	Evaluation contained only negative elements.	"Fairly pointless." "I hated it."
Neutral	Evaluation contained both positive and negative elements OR evaluation was noncommittal.	"...okay." "...love it, but too difficult..." "dry, but gets to grammar and vocab."

**Table 11** – Criteria Used to Provide Textbook Evaluation Ratings

Table 12, on the next page, shows the results. As one would expect, most of the cited textbooks are targeted at the homeschooling market. One publisher, Memoria Press, was dominant in the survey, with three of the four most popular texts as well as additional products on the list. The most commonly cited traditional series was Cambridge Press's *Minimus* and *Cambridge Latin Course*, which also appeared to be well-received. Elementary level texts were also most cited; the most commonly cited secondary text, Memoria Press's *Henle Latin*, had fewer than half the citations as the most commonly cited elementary text, Memoria's *Latina Christiana*. In keeping with the trend of beginning Latin instruction early in the homeschool, some products, notably *Prima Latina* and *Song School Latin*, are aimed at students as young as four or five years old. The most positively reviewed texts in the survey with at least ten mentions were *The Big Book of Lively Latin*, self-published by homeschooler and educator Catherine Drown; *First Form Latin* by Memoria Press; *Getting Started with Latin* by Armfield Academic Press; *Latin Alive* and *Song School Latin*, both from Classical Academic Press; and Pearson's *Ecce Romani*.

<sup>9</sup> Individual textbooks within a series were listed under the name of the series, instead of the textbook name. For example, *Latina Christiana 1* or *Latina Christiana 2* were both tabulated as *Latina Christiana*.



Textbook	Publisher	Total	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Latina Christiana	Memoria	125	48	28	49
Prima Latina	Memoria	109	59	10	40
Latin for Children	Classical Academic	64	42	5	17
Henle	Memoria	61	31	4	26
Minimus	Cambridge	57	36	3	18
Cambridge Latin Course	Cambridge	48	28	3	17
Wheelock	HarperCollins	41	22	4	15
Big Book of Lively Latin	self (POD)	37	27	1	9
Lingua Latina	Focus	37	22	3	12
Song School	Classical Academic	36	28	2	6
First Form Latin	Memoria	34	25	1	8
Getting Started with Latin	Armfield Academic	24	17		7
Latin Alive	Classical Academic	24	17	1	6
Latin Prep	Galore Park	21	14	2	5
Ecce Romani	Pearson	19	13	2	3
Latin Primer	Canon	13	5	4	4
Latin's Not So Tough	Greek 'n Stuff	13	1	10	2
Oxford Latin Course	Oxford	10		2	8
The Latin Road to English Grammar	Schola	8	4	2	2
Lingua Angelica	Memoria	7	3	1	3
Jerney Latin	Prentice-Hall	6	6		
Latin in the Christian Trivium	XL Group	6	2	2	2
Artes Latinae	Bolchazy-Carducci	5	4	1	
Latin for Americans	McGraw-Hill	5	1	1	3
Rosetta Stone Latin	Rosetta Stone	4	1		3
Visual Latin	The Compass Store	4	2		2
Latin for the New Millennium	Bolchazy-Carducci	3	1		2
Matin Latin	Canon	3	1	1	1
So You Really Want to Learn Latin	Galore Park	3	2	1	
Bella Italia	(unidentified)	2	1		1
Classical Conversations	Classical Conversations	2			2
English from the Roots Up	Literacy Unlimited	2	1		1
I Speak Latin	Quidnam	2	2		
Ludere Latine	Memoria	2	2		
Power-Glide Latin	Power-Glide	2	1	1	
D'Ooge Latin for Beginners	(various)	1	1		
The Great Latin Adventure	Classical Legacy	1			1
Latin Is Fun	Amsco School	1		1	
Logos Latin	Canon	1	1		
Schola Latina	Schola Latina	1	1		
<b>Total</b>	—	844	472	96	275

Table 12 – Textbook Evaluation Results, Organized by Number of Evaluations.

### Motivations

The survey asked respondents the free-response question: “*Why did you include Latin in your homeschool?*” Every response was individually analyzed, and all reasons provided were organized into the general categories provided in Table 13. The process of categorization was to some degree interpretive. However, use of a multiple choice or multiple select question format might have skewed the answers by providing reasons that participants had not previously considered. Thus, these formats were rejected in favor of the free-response question, despite the resulting difficulties in quantifying and measuring the results. Table 14 provides a few sample responses and the ways they were categorized. In all, participants listed a total of 17 different reasons for Latin study. The top three most commonly mentioned reasons were related to English grammar, English vocabulary, and logic/critical thinking skills.

Reason	Number of Mentions
English Grammar	146
Vocabulary	145
Logic/Critical Thinking	110
Foundation for Language Learning	94
History/Culture	58
Classical curriculum	54
Mental Challenge/Discipline	42
Romance Languages	36
Science/Medicine	34
Literature	34
Fun	28
Religious	27
SAT/Standardized Tests	16
Law	9
Bragging Rights	8
No Speaking	7
Required	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>853</b>

**Table 13** – Reasons for Latin Study, Sorted by Number of Mentions.

Response	Sample Categorization
“I believe it is essential in learning the basics of English and other languages and aids a student in language development, literature, history, science, and other academic subjects.”	English Grammar Science/Medicine History/Culture  Literature
“To increase vocabulary and grammar skills, and over-all thinking skills.”	Vocabulary English Grammar Logic/Critical Thinking
“To prepare my children for science careers.”	Science/Medicine
“Because it is the basis of many modern languages.”	Foundation for Language Learning
“Required foreign language...Latin is a good root/base language for all other languages ...ACT/SAT score improvement... for vocabulary....”	SAT/Standardized Tests Vocabulary Foundation for Language Learning Required
“grammar, brain training, vocabulary, foundation for studying Romance languages later on....”	Romance Languages Vocabulary English Grammar Logic/Critical Thinking

**Table 14** – Sample Responses and Categorization.

## DISCUSSION

*Influence of Classical Education Model in Study Group*

The data indicate that a large portion of the study group subscribes to a view of classical education that values Latin study for utilitarian purposes. In addition, this utilitarian approach enables non-Latinists to teach their children Latin for at least some period of time.

Given that our study group consisted of parents who teach Latin in their home schools, it is not surprising that the overwhelming majority of respondents described their homeschools as classical (Christian), classical (secular), or some combination of the two (see Table 7 and Figure 5). It is easy to see how Latin study, with its multitude of facts to be “absorbed”— grammar charts, semantic categories, and vocabulary lists – fits neatly into the grammar stage of the trivium. In the middle grades, the application of grammatical rules through English to Latin translation allows for logic or argument practice. At the high school level, students can express themselves, presumably via Latin composition, or can read models of rhetorical sophistication and emulate them in their essays in English.

Not only does Latin study help to develop the mind in accordance with the trivium pattern, it also teaches English grammar and vocabulary. Here is Cheryl Lowe, author of *Latina Christiana*, on the topic:

*The study of Latin is a complete education in that it develops the intellectual powers of the mind and, at the same time, develops English language skills far more effectively than English grammar, thus achieving the two most important goals of education at the same time. (“Latin & Math”)*

Our survey group generally indicated agreement with both Bauer and Lowe. Indeed, English grammar, vocabulary, and logic/critical thinking skills were the three most commonly listed as reasons for Latin study in our survey (see Table 13). As one respondent stated,

*Latin allows us to have a deep understanding of our own language - by examining its grammatical structure, its vocabulary, its derivation, and its form. One would not take out their (sic) own eye to examine it if one was interested in learning about the eye. Why do we use our own language to examine its structure?*

This emphasis on the usefulness of Latin as a vehicle for understanding English was a recurring theme in the survey comments.

Appreciation for Latin’s usefulness in understanding English grammar and vocabulary is neither new nor unique to the homeschooling community. Professional Latin teachers, both individually and as a group, have, for decades, pointed to this benefit as a justification for the inclusion of Latin in our modern educational system (Kitchell). Even now, the NCLG promotes, along with cultural awareness, increased reading comprehension and vocabulary improvement as valid reasons for Latin study (Lindzey).



The classical education model, on the other hand, is unique in the supposition that training in logical thought and understanding English are the primary benefits of studying Latin, and any other benefits, including the ability to read Latin literature or communicate in Latin, are secondary, if not irrelevant. Taken to its most extreme, this approach allows some proponents to reject the reading of Latin literature while simultaneously promoting the study of Latin. Again, we turn to Bauer:

*In the end I hold to Latin as one of the best possible tools for shaping English language skills—analogue to the five-finger exercises that make it possible to play an immense variety of piano compositions....I've seen both of my older boys improve immeasurably in their writing since studying Latin—which is, for me, the proof of the pudding. Frankly I have no real desire for them to read Latin literature, which is primarily derivative and (in my opinion) second-rate. Certainly I do not want them to join a cultural elite which holds itself apart from “the rest” (those would be the ones Christ tells us to love, right?) I do want them to handle their own language with perfect ease, and Latin (which I studied myself for years) has proved a first-rate tool for this purpose. But not the purpose itself. (“So Back to School”)*

In our survey, reading ancient authors in the original language was mentioned as a reason for Latin study by only 34 respondents, which was on par to mentions of usefulness in the fields of science and medicine, but still slightly behind mental challenge/discipline, which was mentioned 42 times. Additionally, seven participants explicitly mentioned the lack of a speaking requirement as reason, and no respondents mentioned a desire to communicate in Latin, either orally or otherwise (see Table 13).

The age at which Latin study begins and the amount of Latin education on the part of the home educating parent are two factors that might contribute to the outsized emphasis on utilitarian reasons for Latin study in our survey group. As noted previously, over 60% of survey respondents started teaching Latin in fourth grade or younger, and over 50% of students discussed in the survey had been taking Latin for less than four years (see Tables 2, 4). It could be that those who teach younger students are more concerned with teaching the fundamentals of reading and writing in English than the long-term goal of reading or teaching Latin literature. Indeed, the only portion of our survey group in which logic/critical thinking was absent from the top three reasons for Latin study were households where students started Latin after 7<sup>th</sup> grade (see Table 15).

### ***Teaching Methods***

As noted above, the first stage of the trivium is the study of facts during the early elementary years. During this time that students' minds are most receptive to copious amounts of memorization. In the words of Dorothy Sayers, whose essay, “The Lost Tools of Learning,” is a seminal document for classical education proponents:

*Latin should be begun as early as possible—at a time when inflected speech seems no more astonishing than any other phenomenon in an astonishing world; and when the chanting of “Amo, amas, amat” is*

*as ritually agreeable to the feelings as the chanting of “eeny, meeny, miney, moe.”* (Sayers)

On average, survey respondents initiated Latin study near the end of third grade; 259 respondents started prior to sixth grade. This included the 49 students who started as early as first grade (see Table 2). In general, the data indicate that students in these households begin their Latin studies in the early elementary years. Students in homeschools identified as classical generally started in Latin earlier (grade 3.9) than their peers in homeschools that weren’t identified as classical (grade 4.6). In all, 46.84% of respondents reported using at least one resource marketed towards homeschooled students in grades K-3 (see Table 12).

By both focusing on low-level memorization and initiating the commencement of Latin study at a very young age, the classical education approach compensates for the lack of formal Latin training on the part of the homeschooling parent. Since students at this age are often still learning to read and write, the demands placed upon the teacher are largely related to the age of the student, not the difficulty of the subject matter. For example, Classical Academic Press’s Song School Latin emphasizes memorization of vocabulary, but forgoes the grammar charts for the time being. This program focuses on “seasons, body parts, food, animals and common greetings.” Vocabulary is learned (memorized) through age-appropriate songs and jingles, such as those found here: [http://www.classicalacademicpress.com/images/samples/ssl\\_sample.mp3](http://www.classicalacademicpress.com/images/samples/ssl_sample.mp3) (“Song School Latin Sample”).

When Latin grammar is introduced, the home educator’s main task is to facilitate memorization of charts and vocabulary lists *in vacuo*. Often, students spend years reciting charts before they learn their application or meaning. Consider, for example, the treatment of nouns in *Prima Latina* and *Latina Christiana*, two of the most popular textbooks for the youngest homeschooled students. A first grade student will begin his Latin studies with *Prima Latina*, in which he will chant and memorize first declension noun endings. His mother will instruct him that noun endings are facts to be learned now, with the understanding that their usage and application will follow later (L. Lowe). In second grade, he will move on to Memoria Press’s *Latina Christiana I*. Here, he will continue to chant all the first declension noun endings. He will also learn that nouns in the nominative case are subjects or predicate nominatives. In his third year of Latin study, this student, using *Latina Christiana II*, will learn the use of the accusative case and encounter a Latin sentence that contains a direct object. This process, which may seem tedious and inefficient to the professional Latin teacher, ultimately enables a parent to teach Latin to her child for a few years with little, if any, prior Latin training of her own.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, as Figure 7 above indicates, students who start Latin in the first stage of the trivium (the facts stage) are more likely to have a parent solely responsible for Latin instruction than students who start Latin in later grades. What happens when students inevitably move past the early stage of memory work? It appears that parents with less than five years of Latin training are likely to get some sort of outside help for Latin teaching (see Figure 8).

<sup>10</sup> Of the 70 participants who used both *Prima Latina* and *Latina Christiana*, only four reported having three or more years of Latin training.

### CONCLUSION

There are several reasons to be encouraged by the increased study of Latin in the home-school population. First, mastery of morphology and vocabulary, in and of itself, is not intrinsically harmful to Latin study. Classical education proponents might even go so far as to argue that their model of Latin teaching is superior to any other, and that methods which appear tedious and inefficient are in fact deliberately systematic and thorough. Many professional Latin teachers, especially those inclined towards the grammar-translation method, would agree that no amount of grammar practice is too much, and that more vocabulary study is always better than less.

Second, emphasis on memory work *in vacuo* is the beginning, not the end, of the Latin experience for many students. Consider the case of *Henle First Year Latin*, the most popular high school level textbook in our survey (see Table 12). Here, Memoria Press's website promotes the benefits of Henle:

*A basic vocabulary of about 1500-2000 words is necessary to begin reading real Latin authors. Most texts try to teach both grammar and a good portion of this vocabulary in their first year texts, resulting in a course of study which overwhelms the beginning student, regardless of age. Their large vocabularies are used sporadically in the exercises and so the student becomes frustrated by the constant necessity of looking up infrequently used words. The Henle Latin I has a limited vocabulary of about 500 words. Vocabulary words are introduced only as the exercises can support them, and they are used in repetitive expressions. They become a frequent and integral part of the text--in other words, a real usable vocabulary. The Henle approach of a limited vocabulary is much more realistic for those of us who are trying to teach and learn Latin. It is better to get through Latin grammar with a smaller but usable vocabulary than to not get through it at all. (C. Lowe, Memoria Press - Henle Latin: the Next Best Thing to a Real Latin Tutor)*

*Henle* purportedly dispenses with the goal of reading "real Latin authors" in order to allow the student to "get through Latin grammar." The marketing language notwithstanding, *Henle* is a solid textbook series. In addition to copious amounts of grammar drills, it also contains extensive reading passages. Students who complete *Henle Second Year Latin* read both highly adapted and unadapted passages of Caesar. A student working his way through *Henle* for the purposes of "getting through grammar" simply cannot avoid reading Latin, especially if he has access to resources – human or electronic – that can help him through the later stages of Latin.

Third, the existence of an open and dynamic marketplace outside that of the traditionally closed academic system has encouraged the development of more Latin-related products and services. In addition to the 41 different textbooks reviewed by survey participants in Table 12, Latin students now have access to traditional tutors, online tutors,<sup>11</sup> live online classes,<sup>12</sup> recorded online

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<sup>11</sup> See note 2.

<sup>12</sup> Many survey respondents reported having taken online classes at Lukeon and Lone Pine Classical Academy.



instruction with self-teaching modules,<sup>13</sup> streaming instructional videos,<sup>14</sup> instructional DVDs<sup>15</sup> and self-teaching software.<sup>16</sup> Some of these offerings are better than others; we will undoubtedly see improvements as the market grows and matures. The increased accessibility of more and better resources for teaching and learning Latin will ultimately benefit students in both the homeschool and traditional communities, especially given the possibility of a future shortage of Latin professional teachers.

Finally, most people agree that children are more likely to succeed when parents not only value education, but also take active steps to support their children academically. Homeschooling parents who teach Latin to their children, despite their own lack of training in the subject, clearly fall into this category. Furthermore, National Latin Exam data suggest that at least some homeschooled students who study Latin succeed at the intermediate and advanced levels of Latin study.<sup>17</sup>

I am hopeful that this survey is only the first step in learning about the state of Latin in the homeschool community. There are many possibilities for further research on the topic: the relationship between various Latin textbooks (homeschool or traditional) and student achievement in Latin; whether or not traditional textbooks can be modified or supplemented in order to better accommodate the home educator with little Latin education; what, if any, measurable factors contribute to the higher National Latin Exam scores of homeschooled students; the relationship, if any, between the home educator's prior Latin education and student achievement in Latin; differences in motivations, methods, and materials used by classical and non-classical home educators; and finally, a long-term study following a large sample of homeschooling families from the beginning to end of their Latin teaching journey. The history of Latin teaching is far from complete, and this is a chapter worthy of more discussion and investigation.

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.dl.ket.org/courses\\_latina.htm](http://www.dl.ket.org/courses_latina.htm) is but one example.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. <http://www.visuallatin.com>.

<sup>15</sup> Almost all major publishing houses in the homeschool market offer instructional DVDs to accompany their textbooks.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Artes Latinae, Rosetta Stone, and Powerglide.

<sup>17</sup> See note 1.

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## APPENDIX 1: SURVEY

11/19/12

Quia - Worksheet



www.quia.com

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Latin in the Homeschooling Community Survey**

The data gathered in this short survey will be presented to professional Latin teachers at the 2011 American Classical League convention. Thank you for helping to educate them about Latin in the Homeschooling Community!

IMPORTANT: Contact [christine@latinforhomeschoolers.com](mailto:christine@latinforhomeschoolers.com) with questions, or if you would like to be informed when the results are published.

-Christine Hahn  
[www.latinforhomeschoolers.com](http://www.latinforhomeschoolers.com)

1. Please select all descriptions appropriate to your homeschooling experience.

- ☐ classical (secular)
- ☐ classical Christian
- ☐ unschooling
- ☐ eclectic
- ☐ publicly funded (ie, online charter school)
- ☐ parent-led cooperative
- ☐ teacher-led cooperative
- ☐ umbrella organization (parents teach; organization provides transcripts)
- ☐ none of the above

2. Please select the numbers that most closely correspond to your current homeschooling situation.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	N/A	
<b>How many children ages 18 &amp; under currently reside in your household?</b>	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	18	<input type="radio"/>
<b>What is the age of the oldest student in your homeschool?</b>	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	18	<input type="radio"/>
<b>What is the age of the youngest student in your homeschool?</b>	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	18	<input type="radio"/>
<b>How many years have you been homeschooling?</b>	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	18	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Number of adults in your household who are employed outside the home.</b>	1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	18	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Number of</b>																				



11/19/12

Quia - Worksheet

adults other  
than parents  
who are  
involved in  
homeschooling  
your children  
(ie,  
teachers/tutors,  
etc).

1 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 18 ☐

3. Why do you include Latin in your homeschool?

4. Please answer this question for your student who studied LATIN for the LONGEST amount of time in your homeschool.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	N/A
In which grade did this student start studying Latin?	1 <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12 <input type="radio"/>
For how many years did this student study Latin?	1 <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12 <input type="radio"/>
How many hours a week did this student study Latin? (Include class time and independent study)	1 <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12 <input type="radio"/>
Please rate this student's enthusiasm for Latin (1-hated it; 12-loved it)	1 <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12 <input type="radio"/>
How active were you in teaching Latin to this student? (1 - outsourced all instruction; 12 - parent taught everything)	1 <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12 <input type="radio"/>
How satisfied were you as a parent with this experience (1- hated it; 12 - loved it!)	1 <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12 <input type="radio"/>
How satisfied were you with this student's Latin textbook(s)?	1 <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12 <input type="radio"/>
How likely is it that this student will study Latin during the next													

11/19/12

Quia - Worksheet

**academic year (1-not  
likely; 12-very likely)**

1 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 12 ☐

5. Please list the Latin textbooks you have used, and your general opinion of each of them.

6. These questions should be answered by the parent who is primarily responsible for homeschooling in your household.

**Number of years you studied Latin prior to  
becoming a homeschooling parent**

**Your enthusiasm for Latin as an academic  
subject. (1-hate it; 9- love it)**

**Your enthusiasm for teaching Latin yourself (1-  
hate it; 9- love it)**

**Number of hours a week, including grading, that  
you personally spend preparing to teach Latin.**

**Number of hours per week you personally teach  
Latin.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## APPENDIX 2: TABLES

Number of Children	Number of Responses	% of Responses
1	50	14.58%
2	104	30.32%
3	77	22.45%
4	47	13.70%
5	24	7.00%
6	22	6.41%
7	9	2.62%
8	4	1.17%
9	2	0.58%
10	1	0.29%
12	1	0.29%
18	2	0.58%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Table 1 – Number of Children Under 18

Grade	Number of Responses	% of Responses
1	49	14.20%
2	43	12.46%
3	82	23.77%
4	48	13.91%
5	37	10.72%
6	33	9.57%
7	29	8.41%
8	13	3.77%
9	11	3.19%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Table 2 – Grade in Which Latin Study Commenced



Age—Youngest Child	Number of Responses	% of Responses
1	22	6.75%
2	17	5.21%
3	25	7.67%
4	22	6.75%
5	26	7.98%
6	30	9.20%
7	27	8.28%
8	25	7.67%
9	30	9.20%
10	16	4.91%
11	28	8.59%
12	15	4.60%
13	16	4.91%
14	14	4.29%
15	5	1.53%
16	5	1.53%
17	2	0.61%
18	1	0.31%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Table 3 – Age of Youngest Student, in Years

Years of Latin Study	Number of Responses	% of Responses
1	76	22.69%
2	59	17.61%
3	52	15.52%
4	47	14.03%
5	45	13.43%
6	26	7.76%
7	13	3.88%
8	9	2.69%
9	5	1.49%
10	2	0.60%
12	1	0.30%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Table 4 – Duration of Students' Latin Study, in Years

Age – Oldest Child	Number of Responses	% of Responses
6	8	2.32%
7	15	4.35%
8	19	5.51%
9	19	5.51%
10	32	9.28%
11	28	8.12%
12	32	9.28%
13	48	13.91%
14	37	10.72%
15	41	11.88%
16	22	6.38%
17	29	8.41%
18	15	4.35%
<b>Grand Total</b>	345	100.00%

Table 5 – Age of Oldest Student, in Years

Years of Latin Study	Number of Responses	% of Responses
1	153	69.86%
2	26	11.87%
3	14	6.39%
4	13	5.94%
5	2	0.91%
6	3	1.37%
7	1	0.46%
8	2	0.91%
9	5	2.28%
<b>Grand Total</b>	219	100.00%

Table 6 – Years of Parent Latin Study

Description	Percentage of respondents choosing description
Classical Christian	62.5%
Classical (secular)	33.0%
Eclectic	41.0%
Publicly funded (ie, online charter school)	4.0%
Umbrella organization (parents teach; organization provides transcripts)	7.4%
Teacher-led cooperative	7.2%
Parent-led cooperative	22.1%
Unschooling	5.2%
None of the above	0.9%
(Note that responses do not total 100%, as respondents could select more than one description)	

Table 7 – Categories of Homeschooling

Parent Involvement Rating	Number of Responses	% of Responses
1 (outsourced all instruction)	25	7.25%
2	9	2.61%
3	20	5.80%
4	14	4.06%
5	16	4.64%
6	18	5.22%
7	12	3.48%
8	19	5.51%
9	23	6.67%
10	23	6.67%
11	21	6.09%
12 (parent taught everything)	145	42.03%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Table 8 – Parent Involvement in Latin Teaching on Scale of 1-12

<b>Grade Latin Study Began</b>	<b>Parent Involvement in Latin Teaching on Scale of 1 (outsourced all) to 12 (parent taught all)</b>
1	10.49
2	10.09
3	9.35
4	8.73
5	8.24
6	7.88
7	5.55
8	4.77
9	5.82
<b>Average</b>	<b>8.65</b>

**Table 9** – Parent Involvement in Latin Teaching,  
Organized by Grade Student Latin Study Began

<b>Years of Parent Latin Study Prior to Home-schooling</b>	<b>Average Parent Involvement in Latin Teaching on Scale of 1 (outsourced all) to 12 (parent taught all)</b>
1	8.82
2	9.62
3	9.21
4	9.46
5	12.00
6	12.00
7	12.00
8	12.00
9	10.20
<b>Average</b>	<b>9.13</b>

**Table 10** – Parent Involvement in Latin Instruction,  
Organized According to Years of Previous Latin Experience

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Sample Responses</b>
Positive	Evaluation contained only positive elements.	“...wonderful, rigorous.” “...challenging but fun...”
Negative	Evaluation contained only negative elements.	“Fairly pointless.” “I hated it.”
Neutral	Evaluation contained both positive and negative elements OR evaluation was noncommittal.	“...okay.” “...love it, but too difficult...” “dry, but gets to grammar and vocab.”

**Table 11** – Criteria Used to Provide Textbook Evaluation Ratings



Textbook	Publisher	Total	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Latina Christiana	Memoria	125	48	28	49
Prima Latina	Memoria	109	59	10	40
Latin for Children	Classical Academic	64	42	5	17
Henle	Memoria	61	31	4	26
Minimus	Cambridge	57	36	3	18
Cambridge Latin Course	Cambridge	48	28	3	17
Wheelock	HarperCollins	41	22	4	15
Big Book of Lively Latin	self (POD)	37	27	1	9
Lingua Latina	Focus	37	22	3	12
Song School	Classical Academic	36	28	2	6
First Form Latin	Memoria	34	25	1	8
Getting Started with Latin	Armfield Academic	24	17		7
Latin Alive	Classical Academic	24	17	1	6
Latin Prep	Galore Park	21	14	2	5
Ecce Romani	Pearson	19	13	2	3
Latin Primer	Canon	13	5	4	4
Latin's Not So Tough	Greek 'n Stuff	13	1	10	2
Oxford Latin Course	Oxford	10		2	8
The Latin Road to English Grammar	Schola	8	4	2	2
Lingua Angelica	Memoria	7	3	1	3
Jenney Latin	Prentice-Hall	6	6		
Latin in the Christian Trivium	XL Group	6	2	2	2
Artes Latinae	Bolchazy-Carducci	5	4	1	
Latin for Americans	McGraw-Hill	5	1	1	3
Rosetta Stone Latin	Rosetta Stone	4	1		3
Visual Latin	The Compass Store	4	2		2
Latin for the New Millennium	Bolchazy-Carducci	3	1		2
Matin Latin	Canon	3	1	1	1
So You Really Want to Learn Latin	Galore Park	3	2	1	
Bella Italia	(unidentified)	2	1		1
Classical Conversations	Classical Conversations	2			2
English from the Roots Up	Literacy Unlimited	2	1		1
I Speak Latin	Quidnam	2	2		
Ludere Latine	Memoria	2	2		
Power-Glide Latin	Power-Glide	2	1	1	
D'Ooge Latin for Beginners	(various)	1	1		
The Great Latin Adventure	Classical Legacy	1			1
Latin Is Fun	Amsco School	1		1	
Logos Latin	Canon	1	1		
Schola Latina	Schola Latina	1	1		
<b>Total</b>	—	844	472	96	275

Table 12 – Textbook Evaluation Results, Organized by Number of Evaluations

Reason	Number of Mentions
English Grammar	146
Vocabulary	145
Logic/Critical Thinking	110
Foundation for Language Learning	94
History/Culture	58
Classical curriculum	54
Mental Challenge/Discipline	42
Romance Languages	36
Science/Medicine	34
Literature	34
Fun	28
Religious	27
SAT/Standardized Tests	16
Law	9
Bragging Rights	8
No Speaking	7
Required	5
Grand Total	853

**Table 13** – Reasons for Latin Study, Sorted by Number of Mentions

Response	Sample Categorization
“I believe it is essential in learning the basics of English and other languages and aids a student in language development, literature, history, science, and other academic subjects.”	English Grammar Science/Medicine History/Culture Literature
“To increase vocabulary and grammar skills, and over-all thinking skills.”	Vocabulary English Grammar Logic/Critical Thinking
“To prepare my children for science careers.”	Science/Medicine
“Because it is the basis of many modern languages.”	Foundation for Language Learning
“Required foreign language...Latin is a good root/base language for all other languages ...ACT/SAT score improvement... for vocabulary....”	SAT/Standardized Tests Vocabulary Foundation for Language Learning Required
“grammar, brain training, vocabulary, foundation for studying Romance languages later on....”	Romance Languages Vocabulary English Grammar Logic/Critical Thinking

**Table 14** – Sample Responses and Categorization

	Grade at Which Student Latin Studies Started										
Reason for Latin Inclusion in Homeschool	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	blank	Number of Mentions
English Grammar	24	20	35	18	14	16	8	8	3	0	146
Vocabulary	17	23	34	20	16	14	13	5	3	0	145
Logic/Critical Thinking	13	10	33	17	13	12	9	2	1	0	110
Foundation for Language Learning	8	15	19	16	13	12	6	4	1	0	94
History/Culture	12	8	13	10	8	4	1	2	0	0	58
Classical curriculum	6	7	17	12	4	4	2	1	1	0	54
Mental Challenge/Discipline	2	4	23	7	2	1	3	0	0	0	42
Romance Languages	8	3	11	5	3	4	1	1	0	0	36
Science/Medicine	6	5	12	4	2	3	1	1	0	0	34
Literature	5	4	9	4	3	2	3	1	2	1	34
Fun	6	4	6	4	4	2	1	1	0	0	28
Religious	6	4	7	3	2	0	3	1	1	0	27
SAT/Standardized Tests	2	1	3	3	0	5	0	1	1	0	16
Law	3	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	9
Bragging Rights	0	3	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	8
No Speaking	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	7
Required	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	5

**Table 15** – Reasons for Inclusion of Latin Homeschool,  
Sorted by Grade in Which Students Started Latin

# Reading the *Aeneid* with intermediate Latin students: the new Focus commentaries (Books 1-4 and 6) and Cambridge *Reading Virgil* (Books I and II)

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## ABSTRACT

This review article examines the five Focus *Aeneid* commentaries available at the time of writing. When choosing post-beginner level teaching commentaries, my central goal is to assess whether editions help teachers and students integrate the development of broader skills in critical enquiry into their explanations of grammar, vocabulary, and style, instead of artificially separating “literary” and “historical” analytic strategies from “language” skills. After briefly explaining why the well-known Vergil editions by Pharr (revised by Boyd) and Williams do not suit these priorities, I summarize the strengths of the contributions to the new Focus series by Ganiban, Perkell, O’Hara, and Johnston, with particular emphasis on O’Hara’s edition of Book 4, and compare the series with Jones’ new textbook *Reading Virgil: Aeneid I and II*.

## KEY WORDS

*Aeneid*, AP Latin, graduate survey, Latin poetry, pedagogy, Vergil, Latin commentary, intermediate Latin.

## TEXTS REVIEWED

Ganiban, Randall T., ed. *Vergil Aeneid 1*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing/R. Pullins Company, 2009. ISBN: 978-1-58510-225-9

———. *Vergil Aeneid 2*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing/R. Pullins Company, 2008. ISBN: 978-1-58510-226-6

Perkell, Christine, ed. *Vergil Aeneid 3*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing/R. Pullins Company, 2010. ISBN: 978-1-58510-227-3

O’Hara, James, ed. *Vergil Aeneid 4*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing/R. Pullins Company, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-58510-228-0

Johnston, Patricia A., ed. *Vergil Aeneid 6*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing/R. Pullins Company, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-58510-230-3

Jones, Peter. *Reading Virgil: Aeneid I and II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-52117-154-0



The new Vergil commentaries from Focus are an exciting resource for almost anyone reading the *Aeneid* in Latin: undergrad and graduate students, well prepared high school students, teachers at high school as well as college level, and potentially specialist as well as non-specialist readers outside the classroom. The commentaries aim to bring the *Aeneid* to college students “at the intermediate level or higher” (Ganiban 2008, vii). The editors recognize that developing core reading skills and involving students in the interpretive questions raised by the poem are not separate objectives. This recognition has resulted in commentaries that enticingly present basic information in a wider setting of observation and enquiry. They achieve this with refreshingly concise but nuanced notes and introductions, and by gesturing towards a huge range of recent scholarship with brief parenthetical citations.

Different editors in the series have inevitably taken subtly different views on what counts as “intermediate” college Latin. “Intermediate level” is an open-ended category, which in most North American colleges could encompass all undergraduate Latin courses after the beginning level. Those of us who teach such courses will be familiar with the tremendous disparities in motivation, talent, and reading experience (in Latin, English, or other languages) among the students, quite apart from the range of ways in which teachers articulate and put into practice our priorities.

So far five of the single-book editions have appeared (Books 1-4 and 6), at a price far kinder to student budgets than most textbooks (the current list price for each is \$15.95). A two-volume set of commentaries covering the whole poem will eventually bring together these individual books, with the commentaries refocused for more advanced students (O’Hara vii). Meanwhile, Cambridge has published Peter Jones’ sequel to “Reading Ovid.” Unlike his 2007 selection of stories from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* for post-beginners, “Reading Virgil” presents a continuous commentary on the first two books of the *Aeneid*. The sometimes subtle differences between the Focus and Cambridge offerings invite us to re-appraise our own habits and priorities as Latin teachers, now that we have the opportunity to choose between all these new riches.

### *What are we teaching?*

Choosing an intermediate level edition is one way of forcing oneself to evaluate just what it is any of us hopes to teach. My central aim is to help students at a transitional stage (here at Purdue an *Aeneid* course would usually be the fourth semester in a two-year foundational Latin sequence) learn to *read*—in the fullest sense—and enjoy the poem. This is hardly an unusual objective. But that reading experience means different things to different students, and to different teachers. My own priority is to integrate completely the honing of students’ core language skills with the development of their capacity—and their eagerness—to ask questions about the text.

Since the ability to translate into English is an essential skill that involves exploring the texture of both languages, students will experience a kind of dialogic interaction between the Latin text—heard on its own terms with its own rhetorical shape—and their attempts to translate it into idiomatic English. Students become alert to the cultural, historical, and linguistic gaps that create mismatches between the webs of meaning in which a Latin word is situated and those woven around the English terms available as not-quite-equivalents to the Latin. These gaps make themselves felt most with overtly value-laden concepts such as *pietas*, *virtus*, *pudor*, *fama* etc., but extend far beyond those notoriously “untranslatable” terms.

Many of my classroom practices focus on getting students to reading and *hearing* the Latin text’s sounds and meaning together, either aloud or with their inner ear, at least in the portions of the poem they work on in detail. They begin to experience directly the impact of word order in its

shaping of meaning within each hexameter, feeling the weight of particular words and phrases, and enjoying the jolts that occur when the poetry breaks most sharply with conventional expectations. This involves developing the skills of anticipation and suspension that allow English speakers to process meaning in a Latin order. McCaffrey has given a particularly clear account of the rationale for developing these skills and summarizes some of the classroom methods for doing so. See also Harrison for a convenient bibliography, and for exercises to develop these skills at the elementary level.

When students are encouraged to prioritize responding to the text on its own terms and in its own order (rather than first mentally rearranging the Latin to make it fit expectations that are habitual for English-speakers), it often becomes clearer to them why critical enquiry into the poetry is key to increasing their confidence and precision with the language. Instead of learning stylistic terms by rote and visually analyzing rhetorical structures that may well remain abstractions to them, students begin to read aloud with comprehension. Instead of mechanically chasing examples of anaphora, chiasmus, tricolon, and other devices, or noticing enjambment without hearing the role it plays in Vergilian hexameters, students begin to grasp just *why* an established technical vocabulary exists for these poetic and rhetorical tools.

Some students, if not all, will learn to perceive the groupings of words within complex sentences in relation to the metrical shape of each line, noticing how word groupings align (or pointedly do not align) with breaks between and within lines. Attention to caesura and diaeresis becomes a tool that assists comprehension. Students start hearing the hexameter's blend of rhythmic flexibility (the almost syncopated disjunction between word accent and a notional metrical ictus) and regularity (the "dum di di dum dum" pattern where ictus and accent come together in the last two feet of most lines) in relation to the rhetorical shape of each sentence and each section of narrative.

All this takes a lot of classroom time as well as asking for a good deal of energy from students, so it becomes all the more important that the commentaries they use should give them the technical help they need, while also stirring the curiosity that will keep them going in all this hard work. Ideally, the introductions will enticingly present some of the poem's interpretive challenges as starting points to begin enquiry, rather than presenting the author's perspectives as argumentative solutions that shut down the need for further investigation. The line-by-line annotations will help students place the word-by-word sensitivity they are developing in a much larger intellectual context, and will offer models for the kind of exploration that students may choose to develop further on their own.

### ***Why not Pharr or Williams?***

Until very recently there have been slim or non-existent pickings among modern *Aeneid* commentaries well suited to teachers who take this approach to reading. Pharr (both in its original edition and in Boyd's AP-friendly version with selections from books 1, 2, 4, 6, 10 and 12) and Williams have been the most widely used.

Boyd offers a thoughtful new introduction in her revision of Pharr, but the line-by-line commentary gives little space to interpretive questions. Its priority is to overcome difficulties posed for new readers by their lack of confidence with basic grammar, syntax and vocabulary, and by their unfamiliarity with poetic word order.

More problematically, while the Pharr/Boyd edition is positively lavish in its help with vocabulary and grammar, its glosses regularly invite students to mentally rearrange the Latin word

order as a first step in their approach to the poem. All too many of the notes provide simplified prosaic re-orderings, denuding the verses of their rhetorical shape as well as their metrical form. These glosses threaten to distract students from acquiring (conscious and unconscious) strategies for reading that would help them achieve precise comprehension while hearing each word in its place in the Latin. (It should be noted, however, that Boyd's (2006) approach to glossing selections from *Aeneid* 8 and 11 is altogether different from her 2004 revision of Pharr's commentary, and is free of Pharr's distortions of the poem's word order.)

For instance, some of these effects can be seen in Pharr/Boyd's reordering of the lines describing Aeneas' exploration after making landfall following the storm in Book 1.305ff. Both Ganiban and Jones provide similar levels of help for students to analyze the relationship between the various components of this sentence, but their explanations move alongside the Latin reading order, while Pharr/Boyd preempt the poem's subtle rhetorical shaping of this section of the narrative:

*At pius Aeneas per noctem plurima volvens,  
ut primum lux alma data est, exire locosque  
explorare novos, quas vento accesserit oras,  
qui teneant (nam inculta videt), hominesne feraene,  
quaerere constituit sociisque exacta referre. (1.305-309).*

On 1.306-9, after translating *ut primum* and pointing out the series of infinitives that depend on *constituit*, Pharr/Boyd rewrite the Latin: "**Aeneas constituit exire locosque novos explorare, quaerere quas oras accesserit vento (et quaerere) qui teneant (illos locos) referreque exacta sociis (suis).**" This rearrangement risks deafening students to the emphases within the gradual unfolding of Aeneas' thoughts, perceptions, and questions. It obscures the way the narrative characteristically takes its readers through the mental processes that lead to his resolve at 1.309, as the sunlight (*lux alma* 1.306) allows Aeneas to enact his *pietas* (which at night in 1.305 has brought unspecified mental restlessness) through movement (*exire* 1.306) and through a series of observations: alongside Aeneas, we grasp the unfamiliarity of the terrain (with *novos* in a marked position after *explorare* in 1.307), the fact that the region's lack of cultivation prompts him to find out whether humans or wild animals live there (1.308), and the relevance of all this to his *sociis* (1.309).

If the reordering of these lines had been placed last in Pharr/Boyd's notes, after their more detailed comments on lines 307, 308, and 309, it would be less worrying; the rewording would then merely clarify very concisely the grammatical relationships and assist with translation into standard English; as it stands, the rewrite (like many others in the commentary) invites students to rearrange the sentence before they have approached the poetry on its own terms. Williams indulges in these reorderings less often than Pharr/Boyd, but on 1.306f he too substitutes a rewrite for any more specific grammatical help.

By contrast, at 1.306 Ganiban (Focus) and Jones (Cambridge), in addition to other detailed comments on vocabulary, simply warn students that *exire*, *explorare*, *quaerere*, and *referre* are infinitives dependent on *constituit* in 1.309, and point out that 1.307-308 contain indirect questions "after" *quaerere*. These choices, subtly different from the rewrites offered by Pharr/Boyd and Williams, seem a reasonable compromise. Once the students have gained more experience as readers, they will anticipate what sort of verbs are likely to resolve the function of such dependent infinitives and indirect questions; in the meantime, alerting post-beginners to *quaerere* and *constituit*

in 1.309 should lead them towards the skills they need to develop in suspension and anticipation. Both Ganiban's and Jones' notes maintain the Latin word order.

The great strength of Boyd's reworking of Pharr (aside from the advantage for high school groups of its being tailored to the AP curriculum) lies in the practical help given to students working on the *Aeneid* before they are secure in Latin. Its weakness lies in some of the tools the edition adopts for this assistance.

For instance, Pharr/Boyd prints *-is* 3rd declension accusative plural endings as *-es* (see Boyd 2004, vi). This strategy reaffirms the neglect of the *-is* accusative forms by so many elementary textbooks, which leaves students painfully confused when they do eventually meet those very common accusative *-is* endings.

The "visible vocabulary system" (Pharr/Boyd xxxv) in the partly italicized text reminds students in every line where they may look for help in the vocabulary notes below the text, and where they will find words in the list at the end of the volume—or in their memories. This obviously makes prioritizing easier for students who are struggling to get a grip on core vocabulary, but the format visibly replicates and reinforces common post-beginner perceptions of the text of the *Aeneid* as an enigma comprised of familiar and new words, to be decoded, rather than a poem to be read. There is a risk that this approach will fail to be a means of helpfully meeting the students halfway and leading them towards a new experience of the poetry. Instead, this thoughtful but overemphatic format may set up perceptual boundaries that impede students from moving away from puzzling and decoding, and towards reading and listening.

Williams' 1972-3 two-volume commentary raises different problems. He often writes perceptively about the poetry, but he designed his work for a generation of school and university students who needed fewer reminders about the fundamentals of grammar. Williams cheerfully explains "relatively simple questions of diction, metre, and construction" (1972, vii), but his sense of what counts as "simple" meets the needs of few intermediate students today.

Williams' frequent brief translations, which must have been intended as a kind of shorthand for discussing interpretive problems, too often become fragmentary "cribs" for students who are still struggling to read Latin with grammatical precision and accuracy. At 1.151f, for instance, in the famous storm simile, Williams translates *tum, pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem | conspexere, silent arrectisque auribus astant* with "then if it happens that they look upon someone respected for his public devotion and services, they fall silent, and stand still listening intently." Partly as a reminder that *quem* is equivalent to *aliquem* he directs readers towards 1.181, but students who are confused by this sentence are unlikely to be enlightened by that "cf."

In contrast, Pharr/Boyd has the most precise and probably the most lucid note on these two lines, answering most of the questions likely to puzzle post-beginners but without closing down interpretive possibilities. Jones' notes are sparse here, while Ganiban complicates matters unnecessarily by describing the subject of *conspexere* and *astant* in 1.152 as the "*impius plebs*, construed as a collective noun, 'the masses.'" The Pharr/Boyd gloss (after reminding students that *conspexere* is equivalent to *conspexerunt*) explains that these verbs are plurals "because of the collective idea in *vulgus* and *populo*," which conveys the same thought but keeps readers within the framework of the narrative.



### *Critical enquiry in the Focus Aeneid*

Overall, the new Focus series brightens the outlook for Vergil teachers immeasurably. All five commentaries have the potential to transform the way undergraduates experience the poem; O'Hara's Book 4 installment is especially noteworthy, achieving a particularly happy balance of guidance and stimulation.

The introduction to the poem as a whole, provided by Randall Ganiban as series editor, sets the investigative tone of the commentaries. Ganiban handles his topics straightforwardly: "Vergil's lifetime and poetry" (a summary of the poet's career set against the civil wars, dictatorship, triumvirate, and the transformation of Octavian into Augustus the *princeps*), "Vergil and his predecessors" (on the *Aeneid*'s central intertexts), and "The *Aeneid*, Rome and Augustus" (a succinct presentation of some of the issues at stake in the famous—or infamous—"optimism"/"pessimism" controversy). These essays in miniature are far from provocative, but they do exactly what is needed here: Ganiban makes large issues accessible to new readers, and leaves them open-ended. Bibliographical citations are a key part of this strategy, as in the whole Focus series; 44 footnotes for a 10-page introduction point towards the multiplicity of perspectives available in recent secondary literature, as well as telling students where to find basic resources for further information. Even students who are spurred neither by curiosity nor course requirements towards further reading will become aware of how unsettled such questions remain among specialists. Some students will probably find the extensive citation of secondary literature daunting; for others it will be empowering.

Each single-book volume reproduces Ganiban's general introduction (which has been subtly improved with small corrections and refinements as the series has progressed) while providing its own introduction to the book covered, briefly explaining where that book lies in the *Aeneid*'s narrative, and presenting some of its key thematic concerns and interpretive problems. Ganiban's nutshell analyses of Books 1 and 2, Perkell's impressively succinct yet rich explanation of Book 3, and Johnston's account of Book 6 adopt a directive tone and structure. These introductions emphasize intertextual alertness above all, instructing readers (in Ganiban's words) to "consider the *Aeneid*'s interaction with Homeric epic as a creative medium through which Virgil defines his characters and their struggles" (2008, 11); Johnston (14) also points to other "literary, philosophical, and religious influences" on Book 6, which she elaborates in much greater detail later in the commentary. All these brief essays are tightly focused and easy to read, though their admirable clarity and concision may perhaps work less well for student readers unacquainted with the broader range of materials under discussion.

It would be good to see more space devoted to topics likely to prick the curiosity of those students with little background in the wider canon of Greek and Roman literature. Second and third year Latin courses at some colleges are populated mostly with Latin or Classics majors, but here at Purdue (and at many other institutions) most of our second year Latin students are either pursuing an elective, or are completing language requirements for degrees in disciplines far removed from Classics. These students often enter the Latin program without any broader experience in classical literature, and simply do not have time in their schedules to pursue concurrently all of the wider reading we would like to see them undertake.

Perkell's introduction to *Aeneid* 3 is as preoccupied with Homeric and other intertexts or models as Ganiban's and Johnston's. But even while she acknowledges a special concern with the *Odyssey* that will run through the commentary, Perkell introduces students to a range of political and poetic questions about the book as "a journey from the familiar to the new" in which "taking

emotional as well as physical leave of Troy is [ . . . ] a cost of making Rome” (Perkell 15). This five-page introduction is a bit longer than the other introductions in the series, because Book 3 has more neglect to overcome than Books 1, 2, 4, and 6. *Aeneid* 3 has given rise to articles with titles like “The Dullest Book of the *Aeneid*” (Allen) and “In Defense of the Troughs” (Stubbs), but Perkell’s essay is far from over-defensive of a book that offers exceptional riches for exploration.

In his brief introductory analysis of Book 4, O’Hara is as emphatic as the other contributors about the *Aeneid*’s dialogue with other literary works, but he takes an even more teacherly approach: he shows students with little background in other classical literature why this intertextual dialogue matters. O’Hara points out to these new readers how *Aeneid* 4’s layering of tragic and other intertexts express the complexity of Dido and Aeneas’ roles in Vergil’s poem: Dido echoes Sophocles’ Ajax as much as or more than Euripides’ Medea, Euripides’ Alcestis, Sophocles’ Deianeira, and Catullus’ Ariadne, while Aeneas becomes a Theseus and a Jason as well as an Odysseus. Students unfamiliar with those stories are given reasons to ask further questions and extend their knowledge of other literature, as O’Hara uses these issues to provide a framework for considering the broader scope of the book’s problems and ambiguities, noting that Book 4 “follows tragedy’s practice of presenting irresolvable conflict that can be looked at from different viewpoints” (O’Hara 15). O’Hara’s close interweaving of information and enquiry in the introduction is in keeping with his line-by-line commentary, where observations are offered as points of departure for students to mull over and investigate further.

Indeed, O’Hara’s contribution as a whole (*Aeneid* 4) fulfills the dreams of (I imagine) innumerable Latin teachers, and meets all the criteria I described above. If anyone preparing an *Aeneid* course as a fourth-semester bridge towards more advanced reading skills has qualms about the obviousness of placing the story of Dido at the heart of the readings, those qualms will surely be allayed by O’Hara’s achievement. [Rogerson](#) shares my enthusiasm; see Rogerson 2012 also for links to other BMCR reviews on Ganiban (Books 1 and 2) and her review of Perkell (Book 3); all these reviews have welcomed warmly the installments presented so far by Focus.

O’Hara does not take it for granted that readers will be ready from the start to share the scholarly preoccupations and assumptions that determine what kind of information his edition presents. Instead he continually frames facts and observations by showing explicitly what further questions they raise about language, politics, literature, and culture. His glosses blend technical assistance with interpretive lures. In this way O’Hara indicates what readers have to gain from entering into the ongoing conversation with the text that the commentary invites them to join.

Even when O’Hara is helping students with the mechanics of case-usage or other practical issues—and, like most of the contributors to the series, he is as generous with that help as one would wish in a commentary designed at this level—he involves readers in the questions left unresolved by the text. For instance, he points to a small ambiguity at 4.2, glossing **venis** as “probably instrumental (‘feeds *with* her veins/blood’), but could also describe place (‘*in* her veins’), with the preposition omitted as often in poetry.” This acknowledgment of uncertainty right at the very beginning of the book will begin sensitizing students immediately to the ways that translation into English prose demands decisions that Latin poetry leaves open. Other simple but precise notes alert students to the texture of the Latin, with its mingling of metaphor and materiality (at 4.280 **horrore** is glossed as “partly metaphorical, ‘dread,’ partly literal, ‘bristling’”), and to the experiences that would color metaphors for Roman readers (on Dido’s acknowledgment of the limits fixed by Jupiter’s *fata* at 4.614, **hic terminus haeret**, readers are directed to picture this “Roman

image” through “the boundary-stones’ which everywhere marked their fields under the protection of the god Terminus”).

Among O’Hara’s more elaborate explanations, the simultaneous clarity and density of the note on **pudor** at 4.27 exemplifies his approach. Readers are not only informed of Kaster’s nuanced distillation of Roman *pudor*, but are invited into the enquiry, as O’Hara asks, “Is Dido to be judged more as a public figure, or as a (Roman) woman? What laws or restraints of *pudor* would Dido violate by pursuing Aeneas, especially if she sought to marry him?” He goes on to remind or inform readers just how little we may do to resolve these questions by appealing to Roman cultural norms of Vergil’s time, which are as complex and ambiguous as Vergil’s text. By noting Augustan-era ambivalence towards older definitions of *pudicitia*, the commentary situates the interpretive issues at stake in a wider cultural and historical perspective, but instead of using this further information to close down discussion, this perspective draws readers still further into the questions raised by the poem. O’Hara’s approach here contrasts with Pharr/Boyd, for instance, where at 4.27 the gloss on *pudor* simply notes that “although many women (and men) in Vergil’s day remarried after the death or divorce of a spouse, a woman who was **univira** (i.e. had had only one husband) was considered worthy of unusual respect.”

The other Focus commentaries are equally satisfying and precisely nuanced, with varied emphases that will appeal to different intellectual and pedagogic tastes. Ganiban does less than O’Hara to involve students in actively formulating questions about both small and large interpretive issues, but does more to alert them to the sounds and shape of the hexameters, often pointing out (for example) where enjambment places weight on a word whose place in the sentence would otherwise be unemphatic. All the commentaries give brief introductions to each segment within the book-length narrative, but Perkell, above all, extends these into rich yet pithy mini-essays, which help students see the structure of Book 3 in relation to its interpretive challenges. Perkell’s remarkable single-page essay on Buthrotum (3.294-355), for instance, approaches the episode along similar lines to the influential analyses by Quint (1993) and Bettini (1997), but eloquently communicates in just four paragraphs how rich a range of interpretive questions (including issues of characterization, ideology, narrative structures, and intertextuality) are raised by the account Aeneas gives of Helenus and Andromache’s “Little Troy.”

The formatting of Books 3, 4, and 6 is disappointing: the excellent mini-essays and summaries for each section within the book are set in tiny print in the commentary below the Latin (see, e.g., Figure 1)—which must tempt students to skip them, surely? The small print of the normal line-by-line annotations is much easier to

LIBER TERTIUS

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iungimus hospitio dextras et tecta subimus.  
Templa dei saxo venerabar structa vetusto:

83. **hospitio**: ablative of manner. Contrasts with violated *hospitium* of Polymestor (15).  
84–120. Aeneas prays that Apollo may preserve the Trojans and grant them their own city. From the temple’s inner sanctum, a divine voice instructs the Trojans (“sons of Dardanus”) to seek their “ancient mother” and promises universal rule. Anchises interprets the “ancient mother” as Crete, native land of their ancestor Teucrus. He commands the Trojans to sacrifice and set sail. In understanding the Trojans’ “ancient mother” to be Crete, Anchises misses the clue inherent in the address “sons of Dardanus.” The Penates’ subsequent appearance to Aeneas is necessary to set the Trojans again on the right path. (On the characteristic ambiguity of oracles in colonization narratives, see Dougherty (1993) 157–63.) The Penates’ revelation of the Italian origin of Dardanus and hence of his descendants Aeneas and the other Trojans is a key passage in the *Aeneid*, since it makes of the Trojans’ arrival in Italy a return to their true home.  
In the *Aeneid*, as is revealed piecemeal (see also 3.94–99, 147–91; 7.205–11, 8.134–42), Dardanus, ancestor of Aeneas, is a son of Jupiter and Electra, born in a town or region in Etruria called Corythus or Corythum. He immigrates first to Samothrace and then to the Troad, where he founds Troy, marries Batea, daughter of Teucer (or Teucrus), fathers the Trojan race, and ultimately is apotheosed. (Elaborated versions of this story are found in later commentators, such as Servius *ad* 3.104, 167.) That Dardanus comes from Etruria is a significant innovation on Vergil’s part (Horsfall (1973), R.Wilhelm (1992)), with important thematic and political implications.  
Other versions of Aeneas’ heritage were current in Vergil’s time. The Greek historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus, essentially contemporary with Vergil, relying apparently on Varro (Servius), represented Dardanus, the Trojans’ ancestor, as ethnically Greek, from Arcadia, thereby implicitly claiming that Rome was a Greek city. On the other hand, if Dardanus, whom Aeneas (*Aineias*) claims as his ancestor already in Homer, *Iliad* 20.215–43, is Italian (as Vergil tells it), then Aeneas’ voyage is a return, a homecoming, a *nostos*; and his settlement in Italy has unarguable legitimacy. As Syed argues (2005) esp.194–227, the idea of an Italian Aeneas is crucial to the Romans’ sense of their distinctive selfhood—neither Greek nor wholly Eastern (like the Phrygian Trojans). An Italian Dardanus and/or Aeneas as founder embodies an assimilation of Italian and Roman identity, thereby making a community of Romans with a shared past. See further the notes on 168, 180.  
On Dardanus and the Romans’ ethnicity see Horsfall (1973, 1987), Jocelyn (1991), and Wilhelm (1992).  
84. **templa...venerabar**: “regard reverently,” cf.79 n. **saxo...vetusto**: the temple, built from stone ancient even to Aeneas, would pre-exist (and therefore have primacy over) Apollo’s temple in Delphi (Pachalis (1986) 60).

**Figure 1** – Focus *Vergil Aeneid* 3, showing section summary in footnotes (white space removed for clarity).



**34-222: Juno's shipwreck of the Trojans**

In 12-33, we learned the causes of Juno's hatred of Aeneas; we now see that hatred in action. She persuades Aeolus (king of the winds) to send a terrible storm against Aeneas. Though Neptune ultimately quells it, the storm shipwrecks the Trojans at Carthage. Juno here acts as a figure of *furor*, who opposes Aeneas, the epic's figure of *pietas*, and thus dramatizes one of the recurring motifs of the epic. Throughout the *Aeneid*, we will see figures of *pietas* attempting to control *furor*, both their own and that of other characters. This particular manifestation of the theme has important divine and cosmic implications. By resisting fate (39) and by persuading Aeolus to create a storm in violation of his duty to Jupiter (see 50-64 n.), Juno poses a significant threat to the stability of the cosmos and Jupiter's control of it.

The opposition between *furor* and *pietas* is central to the epic. In optimistic or Augustan interpretations, *pietas* prevails (e.g. Pöschl (1962) and Otis (1964); cf. Introduction). The opposition, however, becomes increasingly complex as the poem proceeds, since characters of *pietas* also act with *furor*. Most famously, Aeneas is *furiis accensus* (12.946), when he slays Turnus (see especially the discussions in Putnam (1965, 1995)).

This passage is closely modeled on *Odyssey* 5.282-493, where the god Poseidon (= Neptune) sees his enemy Odysseus sailing home peacefully from Calypso's island and is angered. He sends a storm that will ultimately be stopped by Athena but will leave Odysseus shipwrecked at Phaeacia. The contrasts between the two heroes are especially important because they establish a basic distinction that will run throughout the *Aeneid*. Odysseus is most concerned with his personal glory, while Aeneas will come to reject this heroic outlook and instead base his actions in the overall good of his community. Moreover, the contrasting actions of the sea god in these epics also signal the changed world of Vergil's poem: while Poseidon/Neptune had been the god of wrath who sends a storm in the *Odyssey*, in the *Aeneid*'s corresponding scene he functions as a force of calm and order.

For a general interpretation of the scene, see Pöschl (1962) 13-24, Otis (1964) 227-34, R. D. Williams (1965-66), Anderson (2005) 24-6, McKay (1989), Perkell (1999) 33-42, and R. A. Smith (2005) 12-20. On Juno and the gods, see Feeney (1991) 129-37. On Aeolus, see Phillips (1980). On the literary background, see Knauer (1964a); Hardie (1986) 90-7, 103-10, 180-3, and 237-40; Nelis (2001) 67-73.

**Figure 2** – Focus *Vergil Aeneid I*, showing section summary on its own page.

read, because each lemma is printed in bold. In Books 1 and 2 Ganiban inserts every précis of the subsequent section of narrative in a full size font that breaks up the Latin (Figure 2); it is not obvious why the later contributions have not used the same clear format. At the start of Book 4 the summary of lines 1-172 (p. 19) takes up most of the page, with the result that only one line of Latin is printed: this breaks the flow of the narrative far more severely than inserting into the main text these section-by-section overviews would. The same problem occurs with Book 6, where the summary of 1-263 displaces all but the first line of Latin.

Each volume adapts Ganiban's appendix on Stylistic Terms. These glossaries work hand in hand with the textual commentary to present lucidly and persuasively the traditional vocabulary for analyzing verbal details of rhetoric and poetics. In the line-by-line commentary, both basics (metaphor, simile, irony, rhetorical question) and terms outside the mainstream of everyday English (polysyndeton, epanalepsis, aposiopesis, etc.) are marked with an asterisk pointing towards the appendix. So students will learn this technical vocabulary both through the instance explained within the text and through abstract definitions with the Greek or Latin roots of each term.

All the commentaries have well-crafted but sparse vocabulary lists; these seem intended (reasonably enough) as a convenient supplement to a good dictionary. Ganiban's lists for Books 1 and 2 remind students to notice which verbs work transitively, which intransitively, and which are both transitive and intransitive, but unfortunately the other volumes give no guidance about what case(s) students should expect after verbs, adjectives and nouns.

Vix e conspectu Siculae telluris in altum  
vela dabant laeti et spumas salis aere ruebant, 35  
cum Iuno aeternum servans sub pectore vulnus  
haec secum: "mene incepto desistere victam  
nec posse Italia Teucrorum avertere regem?  
quippe vetor fati. Pallasne exurere classem  
Argivum atque ipsos potuit sommergere ponto 40

34-49. Juno is outraged as she sees the Trojans set sail from Sicily for Italy and chastises herself for not doing more to stop them.

34. **Vix e conspectu...** Vergil, like Homer, plunges at once "into the middle of things" (*in medias res*, Horace, *Ars Poetica* 148). The events described here pick up from the end of Book 3, where Aeneas concludes his two-book flashback. **in altum**: "into the deep," i.e. "out to sea."

35. **laeti**: "happily," as often the adjective can be translated adverbially. **spumas salis**: note the use of the *s*-sounds that perhaps evoke the sound of the sea. **aere**: the prows were covered with brass. **ruebant**: "were driving before them."

36. **aeternum...vulnus**: **vulnus** can be used of psychological "wounding" as well as of physical. For the causes of Juno's pain, cf. 19-28; for the artistic positioning of the phrase, cf. 20 n. Note the heavy metrical quality of this line.

37-8. **haec secum**: "thus to herself" (lit. "these things (she speaks) with herself"). The verb of "saying" is often omitted when the sense is clear, cf. 76, 335, 370, 559. **mene incepto**: "am I, defeated, then to desist from my purpose...?" This use of an accusative (*mene*) and infinitive (*desistere, posse*) interrogatively without a principal verb expresses strong indignation (cf. 97). The elision of *mene* and the initial vowel of *incepto* may produce a word play on the Greek word *menin* ("wrath"), the first word of the *Iliad* describing Achilles' wrath (Leviton (1993)). **Italia**: ablative of separation. **Teucrorum**: the Trojans were called *Teucri* after Teucer, their first king.

39. **quippe vetor fati**: *quippe* gives a reason with considerable emphasis, which must be judged from the context. Here it expresses indignant scorn—"Because—a fine reason indeed—I am forbidden by the fates." Cf. 59 and 661. Juno's subsequent actions will show that, while fate might mandate a certain outcome, she has the ability to influence the path to it, an idea echoed in her words at 7.310-16, as she decides to incite the war that will occupy the second half of the epic. **Pallasne...**: emphatically placed, suggesting Juno's rivalry with her. **exurere...submergere** (40): notice how skillfully the double horror of destruction by fire and water is suggested.

40. **Argivum**: for this genitive plural, cf. 4 n. **ipsos**: "(the Argives) themselves," i.e. men in contrast to their fleet.



The commentaries encourage students to use Allen and Greenough as a reference grammar, which Focus also publishes (in Anne Mahoney's 2002 edition). It makes perfect sense to steer students towards a grammar text, instead of attempting an all-in-one package of text, commentary and grammar like Pharr, but I would have preferred to see students directed to Morwood's *Latin Grammar* for reviewing forms and core constructions. Morwood's is not a full reference grammar, so one would need to make an extensive reference work available for students pursuing more subtle questions of usage. But Morwood's grammar gives more precise, succinct, and clear information than Allen and Greenough on most of the constructions that typically cause most trouble for second and third year students (the section on gerunds and gerundives, for instance, is particularly strong). It is small, portable, affordably priced, and provides simple exercises to consolidate students' understanding of each topic. These exercises make it very easy to organize systematic grammar review as part of a second or third year reading course.

### Comparison with Peter Jones' Reading Virgil

Peter Jones' *Reading Virgil: Aeneid 1 and II* does make Morwood its main reference point for grammar and syntax (Jones also cites Wheelock and *Reading Latin* for review of common constructions). Jones' commentary is aimed at a wider readership than the Focus series. It is designed for anyone who has completed a beginning Latin course, and it is clearly meant to work well for students in continuing education, for high school pupils, and for readers studying Latin on their own.

The tone and content of Jones' commentary is less conventionally academic and more personal and idiosyncratic (though in some ways more conservative) than the Focus editions (as Canetta's enthusiastic [BMCR review](#) notes, "informality and humour . . . permeate the tone of the discussion"). Most of its attention goes to helping readers hear the poetry and follow the story—an important priority for students who are only just getting used to reading an extended narrative in Latin, and who find it difficult to keep track of the story while thinking analytically about the language. Jones divides his comments into three layers on each page: one stripe gives grammar and vocabulary help (Figure 3A); another layer gives suggestions for secondary reading (Figure 3B); in the third Jones leads us through his take on the passage (Figure 3C). His comments on 1.102-7 made me feel as seasick (mostly in a good way)

82 Section 1.102-7: Storm at sea

1.102-7: *Aeneas' ship is badly damaged, others thrown about on the waves*

tālia iactanti, stridēns<sup>^</sup> Aquilōne<sup>^</sup> procella  
uēlūm<sup>^</sup> aduersa ferit, flūctūsque ad sidera tollit.  
franguntur rēmi; tum prōra auertit, et undis  
dat latus; insequitur cumulo praeruptus<sup>^</sup> aquae<sup>^</sup> mōns.  
hī summū in flūctū pendit; hīs unda dehiscēns  
terrām inter flūctū aperit; furit aestus harēnis.

105

#### Learning vocabulary

*Aeneās* (Aenīan acc., Aenīac gen.) Aeneas  
*contingit* (impersonal) 3 *contigi* it comes to pass for  
X (dat.) (with the idea of a happy chance)  
*\*dextra* ac 1f. right hand  
*effundō* 3 *effudi effusum* 1 pour out  
*Hector* m. Hector, greatest Trojan fighter, killed by  
Achilles  
*Iliac-us* a um of Ilium  
*os* or *-is* 3n. face, mouth, speech  
*palm-a* ae 1f. palm (of hands)  
*quater* four times  
*referō referre rettuli relātum* 1 bring/carry back,  
return; recall, recount  
*soluō* 3 *solui solūtum* 1 loosen, dissolve, release; pay,  
perform  
*tel-um* i 2n. spear  
*ter* three times

102 *iactanti*: here used of speech. It is dat. s. part.,  
referring to Aeneas 'to/for him throwing out  
*tālia*: a dat. of disadvantage? Ethic dat. (RL88.4,  
W38, M10)? It is almost the equivalent of an abl.  
abs.  
*\*stridō* 3 *stridi* 1 howl, shriek; whirr  
*Aquilō-nis* 3m. north wind  
*procell-a* ae 1f. squall  
103 *\*feriō* 4 1 strike, hit, break, pierce  
104 *\*frangō* 3 *frēgi frāctum* 1 break, smash  
*rēm-us* i 2m. oar  
*prōr-a* ae 1f. prow

*\*auert-ō* 3 1 turn round (intrans. here, but usually  
trans.), divert  
105 *cumul-us* i 2m. mass, pile, heap (here abl. of  
manner, 'in a mass')  
*praerupt-us* a um sheer, giddy  
*aquae mōns*: the single syllable at the end of the line  
(rare in V.) creates the effect of 'the heavy fall of  
the mass of sea-water' (Page). In this line, there is  
no coincidence between ictus and accent (pp.  
48-50 above)!

106 *hī . . . hīs*: 'these [men]'  
*\*pendō* 3 *pependi pēsum* 1 hang  
*hīs*: 'for these . . .'  
*\*und-a* ae 1f. wave  
*dehiscō* 3 1 gape, yawn, split  
107 *\*aperiō* 4 1 open (up), reveal  
*\*aest-us* us 4m. seething (water), swell, tide; heat  
*\*harēn-a* ae 1f. sand

#### Learning vocabulary

*aest-us* us 4m. seething, swell, tide; heat  
*aperiō* 4 1 open (up), reveal  
*\*auertō* 3 *auerti auersum* 1 turn round (trans. and  
intrans.), divert  
*feriō* 4 1 strike, hit  
*frangō* 3 *frēgi frāctum* 1 break, smash  
*harēn-a* ae 1f. sand  
*stridi(c)*ō (2) 3 *stridi* 1 howl, shriek, creak; whirr  
*pendō* 3 *pependi pēsum* 1 hang  
*und-a* ae 1f. wave

See: Stahl (1981: 157-77) on Aeneas' prayer; and Jenkyns (1998: 61) on the land/  
history/nation theme.

Crunch: 97-101

1.102-7: Almost as if the winds have heard Aeneas' prayer, they hit his ship with the sort of sudden, ferocious blast that every sailor fears. The reaction of the ship indicates the consequences. It is travelling north from Sicily, and the north wind slams straight into it. Whatever the detailed effect of the wind slamming into a sail *aduersa*, the ship would immediately lose way, especially in the mountainous seas (103); add the smashing of the

**Figure 3** – Page from Jones *Reading Virgil*, showing:  
A—notes on grammar and vocabulary; B—suggested further reading; C—Jones' own commentary on text.

as the poem itself does at that point, and he concludes that section by thanking “Cate Trend, an experienced Atlantic-going yachtswoman, for the personal nautical observations” (Jones 83).

The similarities and contrasts between Ganiban’s and Jones’ glossing of the storm in *Aeneid* 1 reveal in miniature their different styles. They say almost the same things about the Latin, but the tone and framework are very different. At 1.101 Ganiban gives us, “**Talia iactanti**: ethical dative or dative of disadvantage; ‘to him,’ as he was ‘hurling such (despairing words),’ the following events occur. *Iacto* is often used of passionate speech (cf. 2.588, 768).” Jones presents his notes on 1.101 as questions: “*iactanti*: here used of speech. It is dat. s. part., referring to Aeneas ‘to/for him throwing out *talia*’: a dat. of disadvantage? Ethic dat. (RL88.4, W38, M10)? It is almost the equivalent of an abl. abs.” I see what Jones means about the resemblance to an ablative absolute, but that throwaway comment could easily confuse students who are just barely getting their minds round the relationship between participles in ablative absolutes and other participial uses.

Both Ganiban and Jones ask students to listen for the unusual rhythm of 1.105 (*dat latus, insequitur cumulo praeruptus aquae mons*). Again, the contrast between them is striking precisely because they are saying almost the same thing. Here is Ganiban on **aquae mons**: “the line ends with a monosyllabic word: the coincidence of verse and word accent that normally ends Vergil’s hexameter is consequently violated here; the violence of the storm may thus be suggested” (Ganiban, 2009, 31). Jones gives us: “the single syllable at the end of the line (rare in V.) creates the effect of ‘the heavy fall of the mass of sea-water’ (Page). In this line, there is *no* coincidence between ictus and accent (pp. 48-50 above)!” Ganiban’s comment on 1.102 is more likely than Jones’ to help students understand what both editors are trying to tell them about the dative *iactanti*. But at 1.105 Ganiban’s more careful comment dries out (in every sense) the language. Jones is less precise, but playfully conveys the excitement to be had from the interaction of rhythm and meaning.

Both Jones and Ganiban improve on the older texts here. Williams, as so often, gives a full translation, both of 1.102-3 and 1.105, though he also points out *iactanti* as an ethical dative “in the loosest possible grammatical relationship with the sentence” and notes how the rhythm of 105 is “deliberately dislocated by the monosyllabic ending.” Pharr/Boyd’s note, on the other hand, acknowledges less uncertainty over *iactanti*. Possible meanings are tersely glossed in the vocabulary list “toss, buffet; utter.” It is designated a dative of reference; readers are sent to the appendix to see if this categorization will help them understand what that might mean in this instance (I rather doubt that it will). No mention is made of how the participle is being used, though Pharr/Boyd do point out that that *talia* implies *dicta* and that it is the object of *iactanti*. They too attend to some stylistic concerns, making their readers aware of the hyperbole running throughout this section (noted repeatedly from 1.103 on), and pointing out “the smashing effect of the monosyllable at the end of the line” in 1.105.

Unlike the Focus series, Jones marks long vowels in the Latin text. There are doubtless good reasons for leaving the text clean of macrons in the Focus editions. But the advantages of weaning students off overdependence on those “long marks” are outweighed, I think, by the importance of teaching second and third year students to read aloud with normal syllable-stress so that they learn correct vowel quantities by absorption and repetition. The Focus volumes do give macrons in their vocabulary lists, but most students need constant reminders in the text to reinforce their pronunciation skills, at least during the first few weeks of any course.

Jones also adds marks to the text to highlight some of the intricately arranged pairings of nouns and adjectives that often confound beginners on their first encounter with Latin poetry. Jones (36) explains “Words to be taken together for translation purposes (almost always because

they agree) are linked A<sup>^</sup> . . . <sup>^</sup>B.”

The sequence can be extended when additional words are linked, and when there are other pairs or groups nested within or intersecting one that is already marked, Jones uses A\* . . . \*B instead (Figure 4). On an initial appraisal Jones’ markings seem a clear and straightforward way to ease new Latin readers into

the skills of suspension and disambiguation that many find very difficult on a first encounter with poetry. But I found when using his 2007 textbook, *Reading Ovid*, that this very clarity becomes a problem when one is trying to help students unlearn old habits of jumping around in a sentence. The marks are so visually striking that they make it harder to instill new techniques of attending to the other ways that words are grouped together (metrically and syntactically). They distract students from analyzing what job each word is doing in its own position in the line, clause, or sentence. The <sup>^</sup> . . . <sup>^</sup> patterns, even when spread across a few lines, stand out on the page and are more quickly and easily perceived than all the more nuanced details that help students process meaning in word groupings within the rhetorical shape of the Latin order.

Spotting agreement (e.g. of nouns and adjectives) too fast, at the expense of the remaining context, impairs students’ ability to comprehend the Latin in order and to translate it accurately and sensitively; there is a temptation to take every adjective as attributive, for instance, because they have rushed ahead in the sequence of words, without noticing the weight within the sentence structure that so many Latin adjectives (as well as participles) carry.

At times the clarification may be worth the costs, especially when the notes help readers grasp further nuances in the arrangement, as at Priam’s futile arming in 2.509, where Jones marks “tremantibus<sup>^</sup> aevo” to warn readers that something else is coming—that is, “<sup>^</sup>umeris” in 2.510. In the notes below (citing Servius), Jones spells out his appreciation of “a superb triplet: no longer used to arms he once wielded, he trembled, not from fear, merely age.” Given the difficulties so many students have with the gaps in poetic word order between nouns and adjectives, and with delays between nouns and appositional participles, Jones’ strategy is perhaps needed; it improves upon the rewritten versions offered by Pharr/Boyd and is unproblematic for those students whose elementary training has habituated them to reading Latin in its own order.

But sometimes the cost is likely to outweigh this benefit, if students have in previous courses been asked to hunt around immediately for subject, verb, object, etc., and have been encouraged to pair nouns and adjectives in English translation as soon as they spot agreement in case, number, and gender. For instance, at 2.39 (“scinditur incertum<sup>^</sup> studia in contraria<sup>^</sup> uulgus”) students with those habits are likely to take the markings as an invitation to fish for the ingredients of an English sentence, rushing to translate the line as “the uncertain crowd is split into opposing factions,” without pausing to hear the weight on *scinditur* or the close relationship between this verb and *incertum* in the first part of the line.

For immediate post-beginners *Reading Virgil* (like Pharr/Boyd) offers a significant advantage in placing vocabulary lists on the same page as the text, so that students do not need to flick repeatedly backwards and forwards between text and vocabulary help or text and dictionary. The Focus editions save their vocabulary lists for the end of each volume, which is a disadvantage for

60 Section 1.1–7: Introduction

\*litora, multum <sup>^</sup>ille et terris <sup>^</sup>iactātus et altō,  
uī superum sacuae<sup>^</sup> memorem\* <sup>^</sup>Iūnōnis ob \*īram,  
multa quoque et bellō passus, dum conderet urbem, 5  
īferretque deōs Latīō, genus<sup>^</sup> unde <sup>^</sup>Latinum,  
Albānīque patrēs, atque altae moenia Rōmae.

**Figure 4** – Detail from Jones *Reading Virgil*, showing use of <sup>^</sup> and \*.  
White space removed for clarity.

practicing sight-reading with post-beginner students. But after students have made some headway, the Focus layout will come into its own. A same-page word list may tempt students to look up vocabulary automatically, without any pause for thought, when they would be better served by taking a moment to make informed guesses about likely meanings, if they are going to log those words in their long term memory.

All these editions (Cambridge and Focus), but especially Johnston's *Aeneid* 6, contain excellent explanations of Vergilian meter. Students are taught how to listen to the hexameter and read it aloud, as well as how to scan a line on paper. Both Johnston and Jones get readers thinking about the relationship between Latin and English meters, Johnston with dactylic hexameters and Jones with iambic pentameters (though I am probably not alone in finding Jones' analysis of ictus in English blank verse misleadingly oversimplified). Like Johnston in her reworking of Ganiban's metrical appendix for *Aeneid* 6, Jones reviews the basic rules of Latin word-accent, which the other Focus commentaries are either more confident in their readers' familiarity with those basic principles, or are less perturbed by the fear that readers will (as Jones puts it) "torture the verse to death" by ignoring the "*natural accent* of the spoken word" (Jones 2011, 49).

Jones uses the technically correct terms "heavy" and "light" (where many of us would simply say "long" and "short" in the classroom) to explain the shape of each metron; unfortunately these categories often confuse students who are just beginning to differentiate between "natural" word accent and metrical ictus, as novices expect "heavy" and "light" to refer to syllable-stress/word-accent, not syllable-quantity in versification. But the strengths of Jones' introduction to "Metre and verse in the *Aeneid*" overshadow its minor drawbacks; mostly his explanations are beautifully clear both in content and visual layout.

### ***Beyond the college classroom***

Jones' *Reading Virgil* and the Focus commentaries have their place in high school Latin programs, as well as college courses. The emphasis on secondary literature in the Focus series confirms that the editors mean just what they say about being aimed at an intermediate college-level readership, and that they do not envisage a younger age group as their main audience. But in their concision and clarity the Focus commentaries are likely to prove accessible to a well-prepared high school class. They carefully familiarize students with the stylistic terminology demanded by the AP Vergil syllabus, but the variety and quality of observations and information in the notes will also help students formulate ideas for the essay sections, for which the AP guidelines request a depth of thought that goes well beyond listing figures of speech.

The Focus commentaries have a useful role to play in graduate seminars, too, and are ideal for the kind of graduate language surveys where students read one or two books of the *Aeneid* in a week. These editions would help address the central problem in such courses, that is, how to keep students' attention simultaneously focused on building their knowledge of the language and on developing their critical responses to the texts. The generous guidance with the mechanics of the Latin, interwoven with introductory-level but highly observant analysis, will save new graduate students from being overwhelmed by the unaccustomed quantity of reading.

All in all, the Focus series balances simplicity and subtlety, reminding students at all levels that increasing technical precision and stretching one's interpretive curiosity are—fundamentally—one endeavor.



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