

TCL

TEACHING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

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In This Issue:

Close Readings in a
Latin Dictionary



Enhancing Latin and Greek
Classes through a
Convivium



Oil for the Wheels in
Teaching Caesar:
Yesterday and Today



Companions of Aeneas:
Gamifying
Intermediate Latin

SPECIAL SECTION:

PERSPECTIVES ON MENTORING

with perspectives by

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***Teaching Classical Languages* Mission Statement**

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

Letter from the Editor

John Gruber-Miller
Cornell College

Perhaps one of the most overlooked areas of teacher training is mentoring. When I think of the people who made a difference in my pedagogical training, I think first of my dissertation advisor who took the time not only to guide me in my research and ask hard questions, but also to visit my classes on multiple occasions and write up a full page of notes to help me improve. I think of my colleague in French who motivated me to become more sensitive to women's studies and feminist approaches. I think of my high school Latin teacher who showed me that Latin could be both intellectually challenging and fun. I think of my colleagues at Cornell College who are as likely to talk with me about teaching, assignments, and students as they are about governance or committee work or life at home.

Yet when I think of mentoring, I also think of the many part-time visiting professors who have taught at my institution. I have learned from so many of them. While some are eager to have a conversation with me in my office, over lunch, or walking down the ped mall, others have been reluctant to engage in that exchange. Perhaps they are too busy. Perhaps they think that how we teach is less important than research in other areas of the ancient world. Perhaps they are afraid of showing a lack of knowledge or skill. Or perhaps they feel like they are successful at what they do, so why change or expand their repertoire of pedagogical activities or approaches.

Just last week, as I was updating our department webpage, I stumbled upon a list of all the students my colleague and I have sponsored for our annual Student Symposium. The Symposium is an amazing day every spring when the college celebrates the academic accomplishments of our students who present their research as an oral presentation or as a poster. Some have developed or expanded a paper from a class. Others have condensed their thesis into a fifteen minute talk. What I most noticed as I went through the list was how much I remembered that experience with each student, probing, asking questions, brainstorming ideas, thinking about how to reorganize and express the ideas for a general audience. It was a series of moments that prodded them to see themselves as capable and professional adults. It was those

moments of collaboration and trust that deepened our relationship. As a result, I consider each and every one of them not just a student, but also a friend.

This issue of *Teaching Classical Languages* features a special section, “Perspectives on Mentoring Latin Teachers.” It contains personal essays from Latin teachers who are just beginning to those with many years of experience. It contains much wisdom about how we can both mentor and be mentored. The mentoring described can take place in a busy congregate faculty lounge or in a beginning Latin classroom or in a methods course. It can take place seemingly casually or quite intentionally. Significantly, in every case it involves two people who want to grow in their pedagogical exploration and are willing to confess their lack of knowledge or their desire for more. And although the authors of these essays do not explicitly mention it, these meetings evolve into relationships that strengthen our common intellectual enterprise and that blossom into genuine, and often intergenerational, friendships. I hope that these perspectives on mentoring will awaken the desire for you to become more involved and more intentional in mentoring your colleagues and students.

Teaching Classical Languages welcomes articles offering innovative practice and methods, advocating new theoretical approaches, or reporting on empirical research in teaching and learning Latin and Greek.

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Guidelines for submission may be found at

<http://www.tcl.camws.org/guidelines.pdf>.

Close Readings in a Latin Dictionary¹

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an assignment designed to stir students' curiosity about the relations between literary language and Roman society, and the powers of translation to clarify or obscure those relations. Though designed for a fourth-semester university Latin course, this assignment is equally appropriate for advanced high school students. Students are asked to choose a cluster of closely related words (e.g. *liber*, *libertas*, *liberalis*, and *liberalitas*) and to explore in depth what the entries offered by their own intermediate or pocket dictionaries do and—crucially—do not communicate about the uses of these words in Roman life and literature. The exercise heightens sensitivity to the ways meaning may be shaped in specific settings, both at the micro-level of word order and in relation to broader socio-economic and political contexts. It also helps students grasp their own role as translators in generating meanings. This work can therefore simultaneously sharpen awareness of a much larger cultural realm beyond students' fragmentary experiences with Roman literature, and improve their technical skills in reading and translating Latin.

KEYWORDS

intermediate Latin, AP Latin, A level Latin, vocabulary, *pietas*, *libertas*, *prudor*

INTRODUCTION

A first-year university student in an intermediate Latin course introduced an exploration of the adjectives and nouns *liber*, *liberalis*, *libertas*, and *liberalitas* with a broad observation about the function of dictionaries: “It is with these handy devic-

¹ I am profoundly grateful to the joyful Spring 2015 Latin 202 group, both for turning each class meeting into a (thoughtful!) party, and for allowing me to describe their work; special thanks to Kyle Boland, Jordan Field, Dustin Meyer, Tyler Schickel, and Julia Weeder for permitting me to quote their writing in partial anonymity. I am indebted to my colleagues Liz Mercier and Erin Moodie (for brainstorming over the intermediate Latin program, and in Liz's case for inspiring the use of CLA Honors contract work in our language courses), to Mariko Wei (for SLA bibliographical recommendations), and to the audience, chair, and fellow-speakers at the CAMWS panel where I presented a preliminary version of this paper (for their generous encouragement). Inexpressible thanks are also owed for detailed editorial feedback to John Gruber-Miller and the anonymous *TCL* referees, as well as my generous writing group colleagues from Education, History, Linguistics, and Spanish.

es that people delve into a deeper appreciation of a foreign language. However, so often it is dictionaries themselves that can lead us astray, providing only a small and static glimpse of what a word really means in that foreign culture.” Her overview is telling even in its generalizations. She has discovered how much dictionaries can communicate, directly and indirectly, if used effectively. But her emphasis on the “small and static glimpse” also reflects her fresh awareness of the immense range and dynamism of how languages are used in society.

Such a blend of empowerment and sensitive caution, shared by many students in the course, surpassed my hopes when I assigned a dictionary exercise two-thirds of the way into an intermediate level reading course in Spring 2015. The exercise consumed relatively little homework or class time, but played a crucial role in the classroom, both by blending cultural competence with technical linguistic skills, and by stimulating students’ curiosity about the relationship between these aspects of language learning. Students began to reflect on how vocabulary uses would vary in different sub-communities and sub-cultures even during a single era, as well as changing dramatically over time and in different cultural systems.

First I will say something about the teaching challenges addressed by this dictionary exercise. The second section outlines the pedagogical setting and closes by presenting the exercise. The third section discusses what students made of the exercise. In conclusion I share some brief reflections about the place of this exercise in students’ language learning at high school and college levels.

THE TROUBLE WITH TRANSLATING

Many of us who teach ancient languages run up against a central paradox about the role of translation in language teaching. Latin and Greek can offer students an extremely productive analytic distance from their own cultural assumptions. This distancing is one of the most important outcomes of introductory and intermediate language courses; these courses can help students question the social and linguistic norms they have grown up with by setting these norms in a much larger historical context. Yet we want students to become skilled translators, able to make the unfamiliar into something easily recognizable for readers in the target language. So we are asking them both to de-familiarize ancient texts and to turn them into something familiar. How can we reconcile these two goals?

When they translate Cicero and Catullus and Vergil and Caesar, students need to figure out how to bring Latin literature to life once more in English. Yet at

the same time, they are also trying to learn to read Latin in its own terms—cultural, stylistic, and syntactic. Ideally they are starting to look and listen outwards from the Latin, rather than seeing these texts as awkward puzzles that fail to match the clarity of their native language or of other modern languages they speak well. Learning to think in Latin word order is fundamental to approaching literary texts as acts of communication.

The dictionary exercise I present in this article is designed to focus students' attention not only on the relationship and disjunctions between Latin and English usages, but also on the ways Latin cognates interact with one another, through their operations in social practice and through metaphorical links. This double focus can help students think more self-consciously about the double goal of allowing Latin both to become fully accessible in English, and to communicate on its own terms. It involves taking into account what conceptual, political, and cultural associations our own English vocabulary may bring. But it is just one of many strategies to encourage post-beginners to become more flexible in their translations, so as to bring out particular contextual effects, and to become more sensitive to the multitude of elements that together generate meaning in a text.

A second challenge addressed by the exercise is a really basic difficulty that most beginning and intermediate language students experience: how to choose appropriate English vocabulary for each specific use of a Latin word. Most beginners tend to treat dictionaries and vocabulary lists like vending machines: you put in a coin and out pops the chocolate bar. The temptation is to grab at any English word that will fill the gap in their translation, even if it's not nutritionally rich enough for the context.

When language-learners are drowning in unfamiliar vocabulary, even the most curious and thoughtful lose contact with their ability to analyze and contextualize (Horiba, van den Broek, and Fletcher 1993, 355, note that in some circumstances "L2 readers' limited language competence may require that much of their cognitive resources or attentional capacity be used for lower-level processing and hence insufficient resources are available for higher-level discourse processing"). Though most teachers remind students that they will learn more effectively if they use a dictionary to confirm or correct their suppositions after trying to deduce a meaning from the appearance of a word and its context, instead of rushing straight to a gloss or dictionary, students find it hard to keep that advice when almost every word seems new. Of course this mechanical way of working then makes it hard to

remember even frequently-encountered vocabulary (see Laufer and Hulstijn 2001, 11-13 for an especially useful overview of earlier research into incidental vocabulary learning), so this becomes a cyclical problem.

Involving students in even the most preliminary stages of research into Roman culture can draw them into analytical processes that help them both sift appropriate translations of Latin words and remember core vocabulary. The importance of cultural competence in reading comprehension is well acknowledged (see, e.g., Floyd and Carrell 1987); historical and literary studies can play as fundamental a role in students' reading ability as grammar drills. The initial motivation for developing this particular dictionary exercise came from my own experience as a reader of the *Aeneid* after getting interested in questions of dirt and ritual purity. A lot of things became clearer to me after grappling with the way that *pietas* in the *Aeneid* links attention to due remembrance with the aspiration to achieve cosmological order and cleanliness. Sometimes that means cleaning up actual dirt: putting dead bodies in their place with due ritual is important so that the corpses will not rot and stink—but also so that one's friends can reach their proper place in the underworld. Sometimes the emphasis is more on fulfilling obligations that have been created by affection, reciprocity, or expectations of obedience in Roman socio-political and religious hierarchies.

Good dictionaries do not exclude this way of thinking about *pietas*, by any means, but they do leave us to read between the lines. Smith and Lockwood for Chambers-Murray, for instance, do give “to purify with sacred rites” as the second subcategory for the verb *pio, piare* (under the broader definition of “to reconcile or appease by sacrifice, to propitiate). And it suits the multivalence of *pietas* and *pious* in Latin literature that the dictionary entries for adjective and noun should be more open-ended than those for the verb *pio, piare*. Smith and Lockwood tell us that that being *pious* means “being dutiful” towards a bunch of different entities, and they give their readers a lot of freedom to meditate on what being dutiful towards “gods, country, parents, or near relatives” might mean. It would no doubt seem obvious to some readers that fulfilling those obligations would be bound up with pollution-avoidance and purification methods. But since I was brought up with an almost entirely secular set of traditions, and received very little comparative religious training in my undergraduate or graduate degrees, this was not at all obvious to me until I got drawn into the topic by chance. That realization made me wonder how we could get our students reading between those lines in a similar way, even after much less experience

with Roman literature and culture. The dictionary then becomes one of the objects of analysis, rather than a mechanical vehicle hurtling a bewildered passenger towards a confused translation.

TEACHING TRANSLATION

Like most Latin teachers at all K-16 levels, here at Purdue we are always looking for ways to invite students into becoming more broadly curious about Roman literature and culture. But we deal with many of the same difficulties as teachers leading a group through the intense AP curriculum. We cannot ask students to read widely in English. We cannot assume that they will have taken relevant courses with us. We cannot spend a whole lot of classroom or homework time trying to fill those gaps, because there is already so little time for analyzing, reading aloud, and translating Latin literature.

This makes it important to find efficient, even speedy ways of motivating students to think investigatively about the role of Latin as a living language in Roman society. “Speedy” is key. Most of our students here use Latin to fulfill a degree requirement or as an extra-curricular bit of fun (often something of both); very few take more than one classics course per semester, and even the most enthusiastic are often committed to extremely demanding majors in areas far removed from the humanities, which limit how much time they can spend on Latin. Purdue is a large public land-grant university (39,409 undergraduate, professional, and graduate students in Fall 2015), which is self-consciously STEM-centered due to a traditional division of functions between the two largest state research universities in Indiana. Among the 20 students in this particular fourth semester group, only one intended to major in classical languages. To add to the hurdles, particularly for the many non-classics majors, there is increasing pressure to graduate very fast with remarkably heavy course-loads each semester, taking electives only if the courses count directly towards degree requirements.

The particular fourth semester Latin course under discussion here was a conventional two-parter, split between selections from Catullus (using the Bolchazy-Carducci *Legamus* reader edited by Kenneth Kitchell and Sean Smith) and from Cicero’s *Pro Caelio* (using the Focus Classical Commentary edited by Elizabeth Keitel and Jane Crawford). Movement forward in the language at this stage usually consists of lots of little hops. But this motion, though stumbling, can become as satisfying as a great leap forward when students realize that *their* insights are what

animate the imaginative realms of the literature they are reading. Our challenge is to find as many ways as possible to make students conscious that this extraordinary power lies in their own perceptions, provided they sharpen those perceptions effectively through steady effort and precise observation.

A key priority is to help students internalize Latin word groupings. Breaking up analytical work by word group (e.g. asking students to offer provisional translations along the way once smaller units of meaning are resolved) can clarify how sentences are shaped, but more direct acquisition work is also needed. So from the third week in the semester all the students began preparing to recite their favorite lines of Catullus up to that point. All were invited to office hours to become more secure with reconstructed classical pronunciation and appropriate syllabic stress. Very few students were proficient in scansion at that point, but most of the group began to feel metrical effects even before we reviewed and enlarged skills in metrical analysis more formally. Some students absorbed bodily their understanding of the texts and managed to share that deeper understanding through expressive performances. (The class later repeated this with selections from Cicero, which they found much harder to memorize—an experience that also taught them something about Catullan meters).

This embodied sensitivity to stylistic effects in turn sparked some students' interest in important questions raised by translating Latin into English. I frame one of these central questions as a choice between "grammatically literal" (finding ways to replicate directly the sentence structure of the Latin), and "stylistically literal" (finding ways to convey the tone, ambiguities, and emphases shaped by Latin word order and other stylistic effects). Students are asked to give both "grammatically" and "stylistically" literal translations on quizzes, whenever these choices would diverge. But both these visions of what it means to be "literal" appear through interpretive investigation rather than decoding. When students realize this, they see that even as novices they can participate actively in the creation and recreation of knowledge about ancient literature, language, and culture.

The students learned to stop seeing sentences primarily as puzzles. Until this course most had formed the habit of pairing all nouns and adjectives that "agree", and hunting subjects, verbs, etc., *before* approaching the Latin in its own order. Only a few had been learning to read Latin "from left to right," but most students gradually became more skilled at reading in the Latin order; they discovered how to break off manageable nuggets of a complex sentence by grasping the ways meaning is

organized sequentially in word groups. (For a set of exercises designed specifically to develop this skill at the introductory level, see Harrison 2010.) This in turn made them more confident in the distinct task of reordering the sentence when translating into English, because they grasped better the relationships among words, word groups, and clauses.

Students began to pay attention to the multitude of different ways in which meaning is shaped by context—narrative, formal, syntactic, and social/political contexts. They therefore became increasingly sensitive to the nuances involved in vocabulary choices; they began to collaborate on finding the most expressive English words to suit the particular usages we encountered, which sometimes involved switching on what we called the “innuendo alert” (a device that also comes in handy for *Pro Caelio*).

Throughout the course we took a distinctly conversational approach to otherwise fairly standard analysis and translation work. After analyzing each word group in the Latin order and working out provisional translations of word groups along the way, we almost never stopped at one potentially “correct” translation of a whole clause or sentence. We would weigh up together small but important interpretive questions, such as which adjectives seemed merely attributive in function, and when the weight or hinge position shaped by word order might tilt us towards a quasi-adverbial usage expressing circumstances (if a student initially translated 7.10 *vesano satis et super Catullo est*, e.g., as “is enough and more for crazy Catullus,” we also pondered the merits of “even in his madness is really enough for Catullus,” and other variations of the same line). We explored the colors and possibilities of vocabulary in particular contexts. If a student went straight to “we played” for *luscimus* in 50.2, merely lifting without thought the textbook vocabulary suggestion, I pointed out some of the other English word choices offered by published translations, like “we fooled around.” And then how to convey the many levels of *delicatos* in 50.3? We read the whole poem with our collective “innuendo alert” switched on, which provoked a conversation about metaphor, the eroticization of poetic creation, and ancient sexualities.

Another important element of the pedagogical setting was that just over a quarter of the students were doing extra unprepared reading and translation of Catullus with me once a week for an Honors option (the college offers a contract system for incorporating Honors work into regular courses). Their increased enthusiasm and curiosity and confidence radiated outwards so as to benefit the students who were

not in those reading groups, too. And with such alert readers, even tiny amounts of extra exposure to Latin literature goes a long way. They were interested in making connections between their unprepared honors readings and the other ideas and texts they encountered in the course. A student who wrote especially vividly about *pudor* and *pudicitia* vocabulary (see the third section), for instance, had sharpened her curiosity by reading and discussing the (notorious) threats of sexual violence of Catullus 16 in the Honors group a few weeks before we turned to *Pro Caelio* for the regular course reading.

The *Legamus* Catullus we used in the first half of the semester proved effective for both predictable and unexpected reasons. The obvious advantages of this contribution to the Bolchazy-Carducci “Transitional Reader” series lie in the excellent format of the readers. Each chapter prepares students for reading a small chunk of unadapted Latin literature by integrating grammatical, syntactic, and more broadly interpretive preparation. Students are re-introduced (or sometimes introduced) to constructions with exercises directly related to the material they are about to cover—so the relationship is conceptual and imaginative as well as grammatical.

The book offers prosaic rewrites of each poem, labeled “Making Sense of It.” That label, and the Preface’s description of these as “reading aids” could imply that the prose versions communicate precisely the meaning of the poems. This would obscure the importance of word grouping, emphasis and other stylistic effects in *shaping* meaning. I feared students would rely on these rewrites too much, and that the prosaic previews would get in the way of learning to listen to Latin in its own order. The “Making Sense of it” versions in the Catullus *Legamus* usually throw off balance the weight poised in the original phrasing, and temporarily close down productive ambiguities. However these rewrites proved very fruitful, and not only because they enact key recommendations stemming from second language acquisition research (see Patrick 2015, 120-22). The textbook gradually starts to emphasize the effects of the verse in contrast with the prose versions, before weaning students off the adaptations altogether. Teachers may make the most of the contrast to help students appreciate exactly why it is essential to begin and end their encounters with literature by reading (analytically and aloud) in the Latin order. I would regularly read aloud the “what Catullus wrote” version, breathing slightly over-emphatically to heighten students’ awareness of phrasing. Once students start physically hearing the shape of the Latin, it is less tempting to move immediately to the mental reorder-

ing that is usually needed for translating an entire sentence of classical Latin into English.

The effects of drawing attention to contrasts between the poems and their prosaic rewrites became apparent quickly. Two or three weeks into the course I asked students to list the rhetorical/stylistic effects of Poem 7 in its prosaic adaptation and in the verses (in each chapter the unadapted poem is optimistically titled “What Catullus Wrote”). A few students focused entirely on explaining why a teacher would have written the prose version to facilitate basic comprehension; the whole group grasped this pedagogical logic quickly. But most were also ready to begin stylistic analysis of the Catullan verses; they could show what the poem gained (in its ambiguities, verbal economy, and imaginative power) when contrasted with the “Making Sense of It” rewrite.

So the dictionary exercise that I assigned in week 9 was just one of many means to help students think more deeply about reading and translation. The students chose one of three vocabulary clusters to mull over: *libertas*-related words, or *pudor* and *pudicitia* words, or *pietas* vocabulary. Our three vocabulary clusters occur early in the *Pro Caelio*, so students carried out their dictionary exercise soon after turning to Cicero. I asked them to think really hard about a few short entries, to work out what further questions were raised by the information they found, and to articulate these thoughts in a short piece of writing. The prompt questions were broad, along these lines:

- Why do dictionaries offer so many different English words that may seem to our ears to lead in very disparate directions?
- What else would readers need to know more about if they want to understand more deeply the terms they’re looking at?
- What kinds of things are left out of their dictionaries?
- What relationships do they see between the Latin words in their chosen cluster?

The assignment (see Appendix) gave a lot of latitude in presentation, but I advised them to organize their response as a mini-essay, with a clear sense of direction. They were to prioritize clarity, precision, and thoughtful exploratory depth. So the structural prompt questions I gave were simple, too:

- What are your main observations?
- What questions are raised by those observations?
- What (provisional/preliminary) answers does your analysis offer?

STUDENT EXPERIENCES

During a preparatory discussion two days before the dictionary exercise was due it became clear that something exciting was happening. The students were required to bring to class detailed notes and drafts; as I had hoped, they stimulated each other's curiosity and confidence. Sharp questions came even from people who (due to their shaky grammatical foundations) were making almost no visible progress as Latin translators. Several had thought about whether *pietas* might involve quite different expectations for people of different classes. How might we discover what *pietas* would mean for a slave, or for others whose voices we don't usually hear in literature from the late republic? Many were already musing on the ways their understanding of Latin is colored by the specific resonances of English words in the 21st-century U.S.. Several had found "patriotism" and "justice" as suggested translations for *pietas* and were particularly struck by how steeped both those terms are in very specific elements of American political culture.

The written work that students handed in two days later was uneven. A few students seemed unwilling to think independently and observantly (it is harder work). A few others put in considerable effort, but were a bit over-cautious in their responses, not trusting their own analytical skills to provide something fruitful; these had recourse to google-driven snippets of information (or occasionally misinformation).

But at least half of the students had found the confidence really to *think* on paper. At the end of the semester, several chose to build on this exercise for their final projects. Some extended their analysis to the other vocabulary clusters. Others wrote essays exploring in specific texts the questions they had developed using their dictionary exercise; for these final essays they read closely sections of *Pro Caelio* in Latin and other relevant texts in English (e.g. *Pro Milone*), as well as the dictionary.

One final essay explored how Christian thought has molded notions of chastity that might interfere with our understanding of *pudicitia*, particularly for young men. This was written by a first-year majoring in Computer Science. Based on what she had seen in Catullus and in the early chapters of *Pro Caelio*, she decided "*pu-*

dicitia relates more to living within the bounds of predefined expectations of one's social rank than the Christian ideal of sexual exclusivity and purity." Outlining the importance of "social obligations" in being *pudicus* also proved helpful when she turned to *pudor*: "there are infinitely many different reasons for receiving or feeling [shame], and all of them essentially boil down to not living up to the standards placed before oneself, be it by society, family or other forces." She had introduced her reflections by puzzling over the variety of translations offered for *pudor* by a pocket dictionary: shame, sense of shame, decency, modesty; sense of honor, propriety; cause for shame, disgrace; blush. She concluded that *pudor* "is not simply one of these words, but all of them together, coupled along with a very deep and complex concept that was woven into the very fabric of Roman society over the course of hundreds of years."

Other students were less interested in rhetorical strategies, and instead used the exercise to develop what amounted to preliminary research agenda in Roman social history and socio-linguistics. A first-year student examining the *libertas* cluster offered various hypotheses about the social dynamics involved in the vocabulary. *Liberalis* and *liberalitas* "represent the words used to describe the upper class, their version of freedom." She explained that "instead of the more literal freedoms an ex-slave or a member of a lower class might have," *liberalis* and *liberalitas* "could be used to describe someone's social freedoms."

The interactions between social and political hierarchies, ethical conventions, and the challenges of language-learning proved fruitful for another student. In his initial response to the exercise, he wondered about what role emotions play in expectations of *pietas*, in comparison with institutionalized relationships. What kind of *pietas* is expected between lovers, for instance?² In his end of semester project, this student continued his close reading of the dictionary with all three word clusters, and itemized the aspects of Roman life he now felt driven to understand better as a result of pursuing this thought. Some examples: knowing more about the Roman

² This student did not cite *Aeneid* Books 1 and 4, and he had made no mention of reading Vergil in high school on his start-of-semester information sheet (though possibly a memory remained submerged). But here he articulated some of the key questions raised by Dido (e.g. in 4.323 "*cui me moribundam deseris hospes / (hoc solum nomen quoniam de coniuge restat)*") "To whom are you abandoning me—death-bound—my guest (since this name alone is left over from "husband")?" and in 4.382, where she anticipates Aeneas' punishment "*si quid pia numina possunt*"—"if mindful divine forces have any power"). Are Aeneas' *pietas*-obligations reducible to the institutionalized reciprocity of guest and host, or have passion and affection forged new divinely-endorsed ties during his stay?

hierarchical system would help him better understand Latin vocabulary and usage “because after looking [...] at the vast number of translation options each word has it makes me wonder if different classes used different meanings” of the same word; he also wants to know whether “because people were from different social classes they were taught certain words to mean certain things.” He asks a similar question about the gendered use of certain vocabulary (striking in his dictionary because “gentlemanly” is offered as a translation for *liberalis*). And having meditated on the relationship between ethical vocabulary and social status, he says, “I want to know how honor and freedom connect. [...] Obviously, the higher you are in the system, the more honor you can have, and your family can play a large role in your honor. In addition to this, from what we have read, your freedom seems to play a huge role in your honor, but I want to know if slaves, or those who aren’t free can have honor. Say a slave saves the life of a young child, can he be honorable even though he’s a slave, and even if he could be honorable as a slave, does that mean anything, could it help him become free?”

This student was using a little pocket dictionary, and he started to notice what those mini-dictionaries lack; they have no citations of Latin texts to explain the suggested English translations. He commented, “Say for instance, *pietas* was used to mean respect, instead of affection or love, in a particular passage, there’s not a way to clearly show this in a dictionary entry unless you record where it happened and the context around that occurrence. Maybe that’s what happened with justice and patriotism, maybe those were special case translations [...]” All these lucid (though informally worded) questions came from a third-year student majoring in Hospitality and Tourism Management, who had expressed his lack of confidence about his Latin skills at the start of the semester; he had worked steadily for a few weeks, and then entirely lost focus; he temporarily regained his earlier commitment for the dictionary work in two spurts (the first short assignment and the extended final essay).

Another third-year student was interested working out what one would need to know in order to grasp different ranks’ experience of being or striving to be *liber* or *pius* in the ancient world, and how religious functions would have shaped and been shaped by social and political power. This student was taking Latin alongside pre-med work and a major in Creative Writing. He was intrigued by the question of how far the more explicitly religious activities (appeasing the gods, ritual cleansing) expressed in the verb *pio*, *piare* are also involved in the adjective *pius*. He speculates that “*pius* may even be the state achieved with *pio*, but the dictionary does not relay

that information.” The webs of metaphor that link the different English word choices offered by Chambers-Murray also led him (in his final essay) to make interesting connections between the use of *libertas* vocabulary and concepts in *Pro Caelio* and some of the specific translation suggestions in the dictionary, such as “freely growing” for *liber* and “the power of doing as one pleases, freedom from restraint” for *libertas*. These connections prompted him to observe that “freedom can be given or taken away with simply being born in the right place at the right time,” and that the effects of birth status might well extend to freedom of speech, thought, behavior, and legal accountability.

A more advanced student in the same course (a senior minoring in Classics, who will continue Latin during his graduate studies in medieval and renaissance literature) meditated on cultural variations within the Roman world as well as translation problems for English speakers in his exercise. Drawing on Catullus 43.6 (“*Ten provincia narrat esse bellam?*”), in which “the question of the *provincia* perceiving something different from the inhabitants of Rome proper seems to be addressed,” he decided that “it would be unwise to assume any sort of uniform cultural homogeneity in the ancient world, no matter how far Rome reached”; this variation would also apply, surely, to “abstract cultural concepts” like *pietas*. He also pointed out that “in *Pro Caelio*, Cicero uses the word *pius* almost exclusively to refer to familial obligations and duty. There isn’t necessarily a sense of religiousness about it, simply profound reverence for the parents.” This observation addressed the role of cultural analysis in translation, so I will give him this section’s last word: “If we were to include familial piety in the offered definitions, it places the relations of the family amongst religious duties. Would this deify parents to any extent? I don’t exactly have an answer to that,” he said, “but I can note that no definition listed could possibly apply to every situation neatly without pulling our perception of the overall meaning of the sentence in one direction.”

REFLECTIONS

This exercise invites students to negotiate a give and take between openness and closure, a negotiation that is equally important for fundamental reading and translation skills. By this approach I mean the give and take between openness and closure. When making their way through a clause or sentence, students need to learn to keep interpretation open until specific clues justify closing a unit of meaning (e.g. intermediate students who remember learning purpose clauses must also remember

the range of other jobs that *ut* can do—expressing comparison, indirect command, result, etc.; they need to allow context and verb mood to clarify what *ut* may be doing in any particular instance). Yet it is equally important to remain interpretively active, making the most of each opportunity to resolve syntactic suspense, and not to keep all meaning floating unfixed until the end of a clause or sentence. This dictionary exercise, too, invites a balance of interpretive openness and closure. It encourages intermediate Latin readers to question their dictionaries—not to see the information they offer as the end of the story about the way any given word functions in Latin life and literature. But it also aims to help students use that information as precisely as possible, to make the most of what dictionary entries *can* say; this is not merely a matter of increasing awareness of what dictionaries leave out.

I would love to hear from any teachers who have used similar exercises, or who decide to apply this one in their college or high school classroom. I suspect the exercise would be especially fruitful midway through a one or two year course (e.g. AP or A level), as it would then be possible to incorporate the results of new-found curiosity into reading and translation skills. One advantage of the educational context here at Purdue is that a significant proportion of the students have come to a research university because they are fully aware of their intellectual curiosity in other areas, so they already have some degree of competence and confidence in letting that curiosity lead them through their analyses. More active support would be needed for students who have not yet developed such confidence by pursuing research or research-like activities. The students in this fourth semester Latin class had developed many analytical interests and skills well before I met them, through personal enthusiasms, previous Latin teaching, and courses in other disciplines.

For teachers considering incorporating something similar into an AP or similar high school Latin curriculum, it should be encouraging that first-year undergraduates achieved some of the most thoughtful and articulate analyses. Much of their deep curiosity about the interaction between Roman language and society had evidently stemmed from high school Latin classes. Our work together simply crystallized students' awareness that seemingly technical language work is necessarily enmeshed in utterly fundamental questions about the ways human beings use words in society.

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APPENDIX. DICTIONARY EXERCISE: A FEW DETAILS OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Using your own dictionary, explore in depth one of the following groups of words:

- *liber, libera, liberum; liberalis, -e; liberalitas, -atis f.; libertas, -atis f.*
- *pietas, -atis f.; pio, piare; pius, -a, -um*
- *pudicitia, -ae f.; pudor, -oris m.; pudicus, -a, -um; pudet (pudeo, -ere, but usually impersonal in 3rd sing.)*

Analyze what the dictionary does and does not tell us about the role of your group of terms in Roman literature and culture.

- What questions are raised by the definitions that the dictionary does offer? What else would you need to know about Roman culture to understand fully what these definitions imply? What kinds of information cannot be conveyed merely by a brief dictionary definition?
- Are you aware of specific implied meanings/resonances (e.g. based on your knowledge of Latin literature) that are not included in the list of possible definitions/translations for this word?
- What do you make of the disconnection and/or resemblances between the varied English terms that may be used to translate each term in this group?
- How important is it to pay attention to the other terms in this group? E.g., do we need to think about the verb *pio* when considering the abstract noun *pietas*? Must we think about the noun *libertas* when considering the adjectives *liber* and *liberalis*? If so, why?

Write out your analysis as a mini-essay (you'll need at least 600 words to do this adequately, but feel free to write up to 1500 words or more). You may use continuous prose or bullet points, but make sure you shape your investigation as an essay in its analytical structure, addressing the following questions:

- What are your main observations?
- What questions are raised by those observations?
- What (provisional/preliminary) answers does your analysis offer?

Enhancing Latin and Greek Classes through a *Convivium*

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ABSTRACT

Inspired by an elementary Spanish class, the author has instituted an annual banquet in her department for students enrolled in elementary and intermediate Latin and Greek classes. The banquet not only provides an opportunity for students to sample food based on the recipes of Apicius, Cato, Athenaeus, and Archestratus, but it also allows for additional language acquisition. Students translate a formal invitation which is issued in Latin or Greek, compose a response to the invitation in Latin or Greek, and compete in contests focusing on translation, original composition, and dramatic recitation. Students also compete together with their classmates against other classes in a classics-inspired scavenger hunt as part of the event. The banquet has promoted the development of learning communities among students taking classical languages, introduced students in language classes to Roman and Greek culture and thus generated interest in classics as a field, allowed for a more interdisciplinary approach to language education, and energized the elementary and intermediate language programs.

KEYWORDS

Roman banquet, Greek banquet, symposium, Latin pedagogy, Greek pedagogy, *convivium*, interdisciplinary language education

A few years ago, I was introducing third declension nouns to my first-semester Latin class when the quiet of our classroom was interrupted by loud music coming from the classroom next to us.¹ When it became difficult for my students

¹ Many people have helped make the event described in this article a success. I would like to thank all of my colleagues at the University of Georgia, especially Elena Bianchelli, Thomas Biggs, T.K. Dix, John Nicholson, Naomi Norman, Peter O'Connell, Charles Platter, and Benjamin Wolkow; Kay Stanton and Jordana Rich; the graduate students in our department who have helped to plan and to cook for the event and who have provided entertainment; and the undergraduates enrolled in Latin and Greek at the University of Georgia who have attended the event over the last several years and participated fully in the contests and activities. I would also like to thank Emily Luken for assistance with research as well as John Nicholson and Benjamin Wolkow for help with proofreading materials for the *convivium*. Finally, I am indebted to my two anonymous readers for their excellent suggestions.

to hear what I was saying, I went next door to ask the instructor to close the door. It turned out that the music was an element in a party of some kind, complete with different types of food and drinks. The class was an elementary Spanish class, and, the instructor explained to me, the party was something they held in class every Thursday, focusing on one region in the Spanish-speaking world each week. The students all made food to share using recipes from the chosen region and sampled beverages popular there. When I peeked into the class, the students were standing around talking to each other in basic Spanish about the food, drinks, and music, and everyone really seemed to be enjoying the experience. I returned to my classroom and explained what was going on in the room next to us, and several of my students joked that we could not easily work tapas into our curriculum. After some consideration, I decided that students in Latin and Greek classes should experience culture firsthand like college students in modern language classes, even with the obvious limitations of working with ancient material. With support from my department and help from our graduate students, I organized a banquet for all of the students in elementary Latin and Greek classes.² We served grape juice and food based on ancient recipes, decorated the room with garlands, and provided entertainment. Around sixty-five students attended that first banquet, with several students even showing up in costume. Because it was so successful, we held it again the next year, and even more students attended. At this point, it has become an annual event in our department, with over a hundred students from both elementary and intermediate language classes in attendance. Our *convivium* is a major endeavor, and we are lucky enough to have graduate students to assist with all aspects of it. Still, it would not be difficult for a smaller college department or a high school program to effect a similar event with significantly fewer resources. The results of holding the *convivium* each year have been quite positive. The banquet has exposed students in language classes to the larger subject of classics and thus has helped to generate interest in the field. It has helped to foster real learning communities in our language programs, which has resulted in increased motivation among students. It has created a fitting occasion for introducing cultural material into Latin and Greek classes, and it also has provided opportunities for additional language instruction. Overall, the *convivium* has served as an excellent matrix for a more interdisciplinary approach to learning in our language programs.

² For that first *convivium*, we had a budget of five hundred dollars; the *convivium* now costs about eight hundred dollars each time it is held.

In the course of this article, I first will describe various elements of our *convivium* and how we incorporate learning into the event. Next, I will present formal feedback collected from students about the *convivium*, almost all of which has been favorable. Third, I will discuss how our *convivium* addresses the major goal areas set forth in the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* and the *Standards for Classical Language Learning*. Next, I will consider the general importance of learning communities and how a *convivium* helps to promote their growth among students studying Latin and Greek. Finally, I will offer suggestions for less elaborate versions of such an event which could be used at both the college and high school levels.

THE INVITATION

About a month before the banquet, individual instructors issue a formal invitation to all students enrolled in elementary and intermediate Latin and Greek classes, and this invitation provides the first chance to enhance language learning (Fig. 1). Most of our first-semester Latin classes are taught by graduate teaching assistants, and they work together to compose the invitation for the Latin students. Our elementary Greek program is significantly smaller than our Latin program, and the invitation for students in Greek classes is composed by the faculty members who

Magistri linguae Latinae omni discipulo.

Si vales, bene est. Te ad cenam discipulorum invitamus! Mensem Octobrem celebrabimus. Certamina cum praemiis et cibus Romanus Graecusque erunt. Vinum (non inebrians) erit, et Bacchus ipse adveniet. Erunt quoque ludi et hospitium, musica et chori. Huic invitationi respondere debes. Tuae litterae inspicientur. Duo puncta addita ultimam ad probationem accipies, si contenderis in certaminibus. Unum punctum additum accipies, si veneris ad convivium. Te gerere habitum aptum et contendere pro praemio potest. Inter quintam sextamque horam post meridiem ante diem XIV Kal. Nov. incipiemus, et septa hora post meridiem claudemus.

Vale.

Figure 1. Invitation to the *convivium*.

happen to be teaching those classes. We try to incorporate vocabulary which the students know, but we introduce new vocabulary as well. In the past, some especially artistic graduate teaching assistants have carefully dyed and crumpled paper to age it and then rolled the invitations into scrolls before distributing them in class to set the mood for the event. While these invitations no doubt delighted the students who received them, most of us do not have time to accomplish such artistry and simply pass out invitations straight from the department's copier. Most instructors ask students to translate the invitation as a homework assignment and then later go over the text in class. Because we do not cover dates and times in the regular curriculum, instructors specifically explain how Latin and Greek construct these expressions. The banquet thus begins with an exercise which introduces students to new vocabulary and to grammatical material not covered in our elementary and intermediate textbooks.

Students must compose a formal response to the invitation in Latin or Greek, and their compositions are graded. We establish a word count for the response, and the number of words increases with each level of instruction. (For elementary classes, instructors generally require fifty to seventy-five words, and instructors usually ask for seventy-five to one hundred words at the intermediate level.) To help students compose their responses, instructors direct them to resources such as *Cassell's Latin Dictionary*, *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar*, Woodhouse's *English-Greek Dictionary: A Vocabulary of the Attic Language*, and Smyth's *Greek Grammar*, all of which are available in our departmental library. Some students simply use the glossaries in their textbooks, but many students do actually consult the dictionaries and grammars. Most instructors make use of the exercises in composition which are in the elementary textbooks we use in our programs, but for the most part these exercises are only individual sentences. The response to the invitation allows all students to attempt a significantly longer original composition. Most students struggle to come up with the required number of words, but some students create longer, more elaborate responses. In responding to the invitation, students develop their skills in grammar and syntax and also learn about resources which they will need in more advanced classes.

COMPETITIONS IN TRANSLATION AND COMPOSITION

Immediately after the official invitation is distributed, we invite students to participate in several competitions, all of which enhance learning and create antici-

pation for the event. In general, there are individual competitions and one contest in which students compete with their classmates against other classes. Participation in the individual competitions is optional, but everyone contributes to the group contest. Students receive extra credit towards their final exam score for every individual contest they enter, and, for these individual competitions, students only compete against other students taking language classes at the same level. Many students enter at least one competition, and some students participate in multiple contests. To be sure, the extra credit is motivating, but it is also clear that the spirit of competition itself drives many students to enter the contests.

There are two individual competitions which take place during the four weeks leading up to the banquet. The first of these contests focuses on translation. We choose one passage for each language and level. All of the instructors work together to choose the passages, and we try to choose passages from authors not typically covered in early classes. In the past, we have used selections from Pliny the Younger, Propertius, Cicero, and Tacitus for the Latin classes, and, for the Greek classes, we have used passages from Aristophanes, Thucydides, and Lucian. The passages almost always contain grammar which the students have not yet studied, so students have to work to arrive at an accurate translation and indeed earn their extra points. I have often seen students perusing the grammars in the departmental library for this contest, trying to dissect a complicated Latin or Greek sentence. The competition inspires some students to learn new material on their own. Students who enter translations which are obviously copied from professional sources or which do not seem to indicate real effort do not receive extra credit. All of the entries contain mistakes, of course, but the quality of entries is often surprisingly good.

The second individual competition focuses on original composition. Again, instructors work together to choose appropriate English passages for students to render in Latin or Greek, and the exercise is challenging for students at every level. In the past, we have used famous speeches, selections from the Harry Potter series, and newspaper articles. We also have used selections from traditional composition-books such as *Bradley's Arnold Latin Prose Composition*, *Greek Prose Composition* by North and Hilliard, and Sidgwick's *Greek Prose Composition*. Again, there are mistakes in every entry, but there are always several compositions which are quite good. It is clear that students really put effort into preparing their entries. Students competing in both translation and original composition submit their entries a few

days before the banquet, and a panel of graduate students or faculty members meets to choose the winners.

A SCAVENGER HUNT

Last year, we added a new competition which also takes place during the four weeks leading up to the event; each class competes as a team against all of the other elementary and intermediate classes in a classics-inspired scavenger hunt. We are fortunate in that our university has a strong classical heritage, so there are many interesting items to include in this competition. Graduate students organize and judge the hunt in consultation with faculty members; the list features one hundred items, including things to be found around campus as well as questions about Latin and Greek grammar and vocabulary, ancient geography, mottoes, famous quotations, classical literature and history, reference works, works of art and musical pieces which allude to classical material, the influence of Latin and Greek on other disciplines, Greek and Roman contributions to science and engineering, and the reception of classical texts in later periods. Some items on the list are fairly easy to find. For example, we frequently ask students to locate buildings on campus which feature columns of a specific order. Some items on the list are quite difficult to find, however. Such challenging items include rare editions of classical texts in the special collections wing of the library and old paintings of Rome and Greece located on campus. Many items on the list require research in the library. We have asked students to find out how many times Ovid uses a certain word, Hesychius' definition of the Greek word "ekphrasis," and what Pericles says about women in his Funeral Oration. Thus, students have to find a concordance of Ovid's work and learn how to use it, examine a copy of Hesychius' ancient lexicon, and read Book Two of Thucydides' history. We send students to translate Latin inscriptions on buildings and in old graveyards around campus. We even ask them about classical influences found in the university's system of fraternities and sororities. The scavenger hunt serves two purposes. First, it helps to bring about a sense of community in the individual Latin and Greek classes: as they work together to find the items on the list, students become more invested in each other and in their own performance in the class. Second, the scavenger hunt introduces students to the larger field of classics. Most students enroll in elementary and intermediate Latin and Greek classes to satisfy the language requirement for their degree, and their only exposure to classics is through these language classes. The hunt not only shows students how important

the field of classics is to our university, but it also inspires students to explore other areas within the field.

THE MENU

The central element of the *convivium* itself is of course the food and drink, and we strive to give students a culinary experience which is as authentic as possible. For recipes, we use books which offer both direct translations as well as modern interpretations of ancient recipes from authors such as Apicius, Athenaeus, Cato, and Archestratus. For translations of ancient recipes, we use *The Roman Cookery Book: A Critical Translation of The Art of Cooking by Apicius for Use in the Study and in the Kitchen* by Barbara Flower and Elisabeth Rosenbaum, *Apicius: Cookery and Dining in Imperial Rome* by Joseph Dommers Vehling, the Loeb editions of Athenaeus and Cato, and *Archestratos of Gela: Greek Culture and Cuisine in the Fourth Century BCE* by S. Douglas Olson and Alexander Sens. For modern interpretations of the ancient recipes, we use *Roman Cookery: Elegant and Easy Recipes from History's First Gourmet* by John Edwards, *The Classical Cookbook* by Andrew Dalby and Sally Grainger, *A Taste of Ancient Rome* by Ilaria Gozzini Giacosa, *Apicius: Roman Recipes for Today* by Sally Grainger, *Roman Cooking: Ancient Recipes for Modern Kitchens* by Mark Grant; and *Meals and Recipes from Ancient Greece* by Eugenia Salza Prina Riccoti. We usually choose about twenty dishes to make from these books. To keep the cost down and also to make sure there is something for everyone to eat, we primarily prepare vegetarian recipes, although we always offer at least one or two meat and fish dishes. We also offer a few desserts such as honey-cakes and stewed fruits as part of the buffet. In addition to the featured ancient dishes, we offer bread, olives, dates, grapes, and cheese. When I first put together the banquet, I really wanted to serve non-alcoholic red wine, but the cost turned out to be prohibitive. So, red grape juice serves as our wine, and the students seem to enjoy it just as much. A few faculty members cook dishes, but the food is prepared for the event primarily by teaching assistants and first-year graduate students who participate as part of a teaching apprenticeship.

As the banquet approaches, we create a formal text of the menu with the names of featured dishes represented in both Latin and Greek (Fig. 2). We print the menu out on cardstock and pass it out in the elementary and intermediate classes. In composing the menu, we try to keep the names of the dishes simple by focusing on main ingredients, using names such as “ova et nuces pineae cum melle” (hard

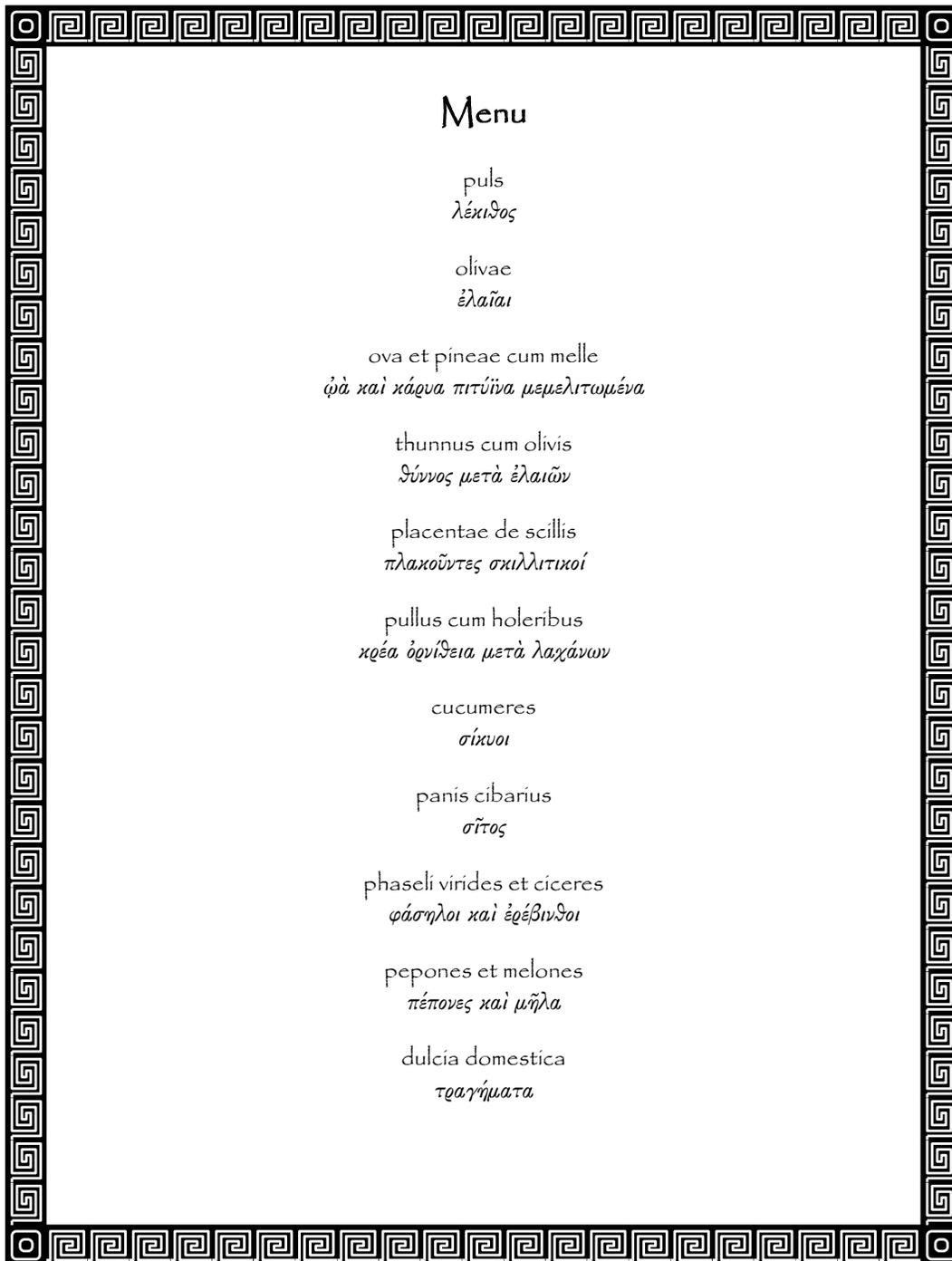


Figure 2. Menu for the *convivium*

boiled eggs prepared with pine nuts and honey), “thunnus cum olivis” (tuna cooked with olives), and “lekithos” (simple porridge). Students in Latin classes are asked to translate the menu in Latin, and students in Greek classes translate the menu in Greek. Thus, students deal with new vocabulary while they learn about the kinds of foods which Romans and Greeks ate. We include both Latin and Greek on the menu to expose students to both languages. Because far fewer students enroll in elementary Greek at our university, the menu provides a useful opportunity to engender interest in Greek among students in Latin classes.

Some instructors also have their students translate ancient recipes before the banquet. For Latin texts, we use *The Roman Cookery Book: A Critical Translation of The Art of Cooking by Apicius for Use in the Study and in the Kitchen* by Barbara Flower and Elisabeth Rosenbaum and the Loeb edition of Cato’s *On Agriculture*. For Greek texts, we use *Archestratos of Gela: Greek Culture and Cuisine in the Fourth Century BCE* by S. Douglas Olson and Alexander Sens and the Loeb volumes of Athenaeus’ *The Deipnosophists*. Instructors often focus on exotic recipes which include elements such as sow’s udder and wormwood, which usually leads to lively class discussions and some trepidation about the upcoming feast. Like the menu, the recipes contain vocabulary (and often grammar) not included in the students’ textbooks, so, again, the exercise helps students further develop their Latin and Greek skills.

RESEARCH PROJECTS FOCUSING ON THE *CONVIVIVM*

Instructors also assign projects which focus on classical culture as part of the build-up to the *convivium*. In the elementary Latin classes, for example, teachers often ask students to research and deliver reports on Roman cultural topics which relate to food and the experience of dining. Topics include houses and apartments, clothing, private and public entertainment, occasions for banquets, food and drink consumed by Romans of different social strata, gender issues and sexuality, medicine and medicinal recipes, slavery, and the distribution of grain. Students are directed to general sources available in our departmental library such as the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, *The Handbook of Life in Ancient Rome* by Lesley Adkins and Roy A. Adkins, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome* by Jérôme Carcopino, and Jo-Ann Shelton’s *As the Romans Did: A Sourcebook in Roman Social History*, but many research their topics much more deeply. Some instructors require students to find and present at least one passage from a primary source which contains information

about their topic. Many instructors show slides of paintings and vases which depict banquets and symposia, and many show pictures of wall paintings which adorned dining rooms. Studying the menu and recipes in class and preparing research projects about Roman and Greek culture not only create excitement for the upcoming banquet but also add fresh activities to the daily routine of drills, translation, and parsing in elementary and intermediate language classes.³

LANGUAGE LEARNING AT THE *CONVIVIVM*

We usually hold the event itself in a large room on campus, and we work to create a festive atmosphere. Our budget for decorations is limited, but we try to recreate the ancient images students have studied in class. We cover the tables with purple plastic tablecloths and drape artificial garlands on the buffet at the front of the room (Fig. 3). We also provide inexpensive plastic or paper wreaths for students to wear. When possible, we have arranged long benches suitable for reclining in



Figure 3. Serving tables set for the *convivium*

³ For general information about and images of Roman and Greek food, dining, and banquets, see Curtis; Davidson; Donahue; Dunbabin; Hudson; Lissarrague; Murray; Wilkins, Harvey and Dobson; and Wilkins and Nadeau. For a general source about Greek life, see Adkins and Adkins.

the center of the event. We award prizes for the most authentic dress, so many undergraduates wear costumes (Fig. 4). Occasionally, we are lucky enough to have students in the department who play musical instruments and who are willing to perform, but most of the time we provide appropriate music from a satellite broadcast. So, with a little effort, there is a classical ambience.



Figure 4. Costumed guests at the *convivium*

We bring language learning into the actual banquet in several ways. First, a herald opens the banquet with a short speech welcoming students in both Latin and Greek (Fig. 5) before welcoming them in English. Some of our instructors use oral Latin and Greek in their teaching, but most of them only use a few phrases at the beginning of class. The herald uses vocabulary which the students have already learned in their classes, and he or she tries to deliver the speech slowly, pausing after each sentence so students can process the language. The opening speech allows students to appreciate Latin and Greek as living languages rather than only as ancient text, and it further serves to introduce students who are only involved with one language to the other language. Moreover, the formal Latin and Greek welcome helps to make language acquisition an important focus of the event.



Figure 5. The herald gives the welcoming address in Latin and Greek

Second, we feature Latin and Greek on the buffet itself. We create a label for every dish which includes the Latin or Greek words for the foods in the dish as well as English translations. As they make their way along the buffet, students read the labels as they fill their plates (Fig. 6). Seeing the vocabulary words for food in context seems to help students remember what the words mean much better than just seeing a vocabulary entry in a textbook (cf. Spinelli and Siskin). Students frequently say the words aloud as they serve themselves, and, as they sit down with friends to eat, we often hear students using the Latin or Greek terms to talk about the dishes.

Third, we put posters around the room which display Latin and Greek passages which focus on food, wine, entertainment, and various dining experiences. We feature works such as Catullus 13, Horace's Ode 37, Propertius 1.3, Ovid's description of the simple feast of Baucis and Philemon in Book Eight of the *Metamorphoses*, Juvenal's fourth satire, Petronius's *Cena Trimalchionis*, Homer's descriptions of the Phaiakians' banquet in Book Eight of the *Odyssey*, Plato's *Symposium*, Lucian's *On Dance*, and Athenaeus' *The Deipnosophists*. We also display the original texts of a few ancient recipes. So that all students can appreciate every passage,



Figure 6. Guests read the labels at the banquet table

we provide English translations of the selections. These posters not only expand students' knowledge of ancient literature, but they inspire students to test their language skills as they walk around the room.

Finally, we put "conversation menus" on each table (Fig. 7). These cards feature Greek and Latin words and phrases which can be combined to create interesting dialogues. Graduate students compose the menus, listing nouns, verbs, and adjectives along with a few conversational terms and suggestions for short dialogues. Again, we try to include a few vocabulary words which students have already learned, but we introduce new vocabulary on the menus. We strive to make the potential conversations fun by including new words which might lead to dynamic conversations such as "ululare,"

"sudare," "misgein," and "laptein." Students are encouraged to talk to others at their tables in Latin or Greek using simple sentences, and they seem to enjoy putting unlikely words together to construct dialogues.⁴ Many students are reluctant to speak in class, but the relaxed and festive setting of the banquet seems to motivate them to try speaking the languages (Fig. 8).

COMPETITIONS AND PERFORMANCES AT THE EVENT

After everyone has had a chance to sample the ancient recipes, we turn to the competitions. First, the winners of the individual competitions in translation and composition are announced. Students who win receive a framed certificate and a golden laurel crown. We then invite students who are wearing costumes to the front

⁴ For suggestions of possible Latin conversations and vocabulary, see Traupman. For possible Greek dialogues, see Saffire and Freis.

LATIN CONVERSATION MENU					
Salve!	Greetings! (singular)				
Salvete!	Greetings! (plural)				
O amice!	My friend (masculine) o friend				
O amica!	My friend (feminine) o friend				
Mihi nomen est...	My name is . . .				
Quod nomen tibi est?	What is your name?				
Mihi placet + nominative sing.	I enjoy...[nominative]				
	cena	the dinner			
	vinum	the wine			
Te amabo	Please				
Tibi gratias ago	Thank you (singular)				
Vobis gratias ago	Thank you (plural)				
Eheu!	Ah me! (surprise, pain, fright, pity, anger, grief, etc.)				
Ecce!	Look!				
Quid est hoc?	What is this?				
Hoc est...	This (thing) is...				
	pulchrum	beautiful	dulce	sweet	
	malum	bad	acerbum	bitter	
	parvum	small	unctum	greasy	
	ferum	wild	salsum	salty	
	optimum	very good	iucundum	pleasant	
nugae, nugarum f.	silliness		bacchatio, bacchationis f.	Bacchic revelry	
cuppedo, cuppedinis f.	delicacy		corona, ae f.	crown, garland	
ignarus, a, um	inexperienced in		lingua, ae f.	tongue	
mutus, a, um	speechless		chorus, i m.	dance	
musica, musicorum n.	music		limosus, a, um	slimy	
ululare	to howl	coronare	to crown	saltare	to dance
sudare	to sweat	ruminare	to chew	cenare	to dine
edo, edere	to eat	praebeo, praebere	to offer	cantare	to sing/play
devorare	to gulp down	purgare	to cleanse	colo, colere	to cultivate/till
spuo, spuere	to spit out	bibo, bibere	to drink	salire	to leap up

Figure 7. The conversation menu for the *convivium*



Figure 8. Guests conversing in Latin

of the room for a costume contest. In the past, a panel of judges would decide on winners for this contest as everyone was eating and socializing, and we would simply award prizes to the winners right after announcing the winners for the competitions in translation and composition. Now, we treat the contest as a dramatic event, and students really seem to enjoy the parade of ancient figures. Each student who enters this contest announces to the room which mythological or historical figure he or she is representing and then walks down our runway, which we create simply by leaving an aisle in the middle of the room when we set up tables and chairs. Some students really put on a show for the audience, and there usually is much applause, whistling, and shouting. At our most recent events, students have created elaborate outfits complete with props for this contest. We have had Roman centurions, stately orators, philosophers, as well as gods and goddesses. At a recent *convivium*, one

student came dressed as the goddess Eris with a sparkling golden apple, and another arrived as Athena wearing a gown embellished with elaborate woven pieces. While we include the costume contest mostly for fun, students do learn something about historical and mythological figures. I overheard many students ask the student dressed as Eris about her character, for example. The woman in costume related the story of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, thus inspiring several conversations about the Trojan War.

The costume contest paves the way for the last individual competition. For this contest, students perform dramatically in Latin or Greek. They may enter this contest individually or in teams. When we first held the banquet, we chose one passage in each language for recitation and we allowed students to read the text. We found that students often did not practice their performances and just read the Latin or Greek without emotion or emphasis, which was rather boring for the audience and at times a bit difficult to endure. Now, we allow students to choose their own passages, and we encourage them to memorize their recitations by awarding extra points for it. Students who enter this competition practice in front of their classmates and receive feedback before the banquet. Students support their classmates and cheer enthusiastically when they stand up to perform. Thus, the recitations at the banquet are quite good (Fig. 9). Students have chosen passages from



Figure 9. A guest offers a recitation at the banquet

Homer, Vergil, Cicero, Horace, the New Testament, Ovid, Propertius, and Catullus. One student offered a particularly memorable performance when, dressed as a Roman centurion, he climbed on a table and exhorted everyone with a Latin translation of a speech from the film *Braveheart*. Groups have performed scenes from Aristophanes and Plautus. One year, a group even composed an original short play in Latin and performed it for everyone. This competition has become quite spirited, and students really seem to enjoy the performances. Winners are chosen by a panel of judges appointed for the purpose, and, again, these students receive golden laurel crowns and, after the event, framed certificates.

We usually also offer a few special performances for entertainment. All performers are volunteers, and undergraduates, graduate students, and even staff members in the department have participated. Most acts draw directly from ancient texts. For several years, a graduate student who was famous in our department for



Figure 10. Another student offers a recitation

his beautiful pronunciation of Latin and Greek amazed everyone with elegant dramatic recitations of Horace, Vergil, Seneca, Homer, Sappho, and Sophocles (Fig. 10). When I was teaching a class on Greek theater at the same time as the banquet, students in that class staged the final scene from Euripides' *Alcestis*. One particularly motivated student recently constructed a lyre and sang Greek lyric poetry as she played (Fig. 11). Students seem especially to enjoy seeing their own instructors perform. At our first banquet, for example, a graduate student who was teaching a section of first-semester elementary Latin recited Horace in the style of William Shatner, which was quite entertaining for everyone but thrilled his students most of all. When instructors perform, their students applaud loudly for their



Figure 11. A guests sings and plays the lyre

acts, and the sense of community in those individual classes is further strengthened. Like the herald's opening speeches, the performances of ancient material allow students to experience Latin and Greek rhetoric, poetry, and drama aurally and visually rather than only as text on a page. Some acts draw from adapted material. At our most recent banquet, for example, a graduate student sang the invocation from Stephen Sondheim's adaptation of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, and a string quartet in which a member of our staff plays performed a short selection from *Orfeo ed Eurydice* by Christoph Willibald Gluck. Such performances of classics-inspired material help cultivate an awareness among the students of how classical culture and literature remain influential in our society.

After the special entertainment, we announce which class has won the scavenger hunt. During the weeks leading up to the banquet, classes work hard to find and answer everything on the list for the hunt, and, as discussed earlier, the hunt helps turn individual classes into close communities. Thus, students are anxious to hear the announcement. We build up to this final announcement by explaining the answers to several of the more difficult items on the list. This build-up allows us

to point out interesting holdings in the university's libraries and museums as well as classical allusions around town. It also allows us to fortify what students have learned themselves about classical resources and texts through active participation in the hunt. We issue the announcement itself with trumpet fanfare and drumrolls, and the winning class is treated to a pizza party later in the semester.

FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

After the *convivium* held in March 2015, I asked students to complete a simple questionnaire about the experience. Participation in this study was optional, and questionnaires were completed anonymously by students in seven different Latin and Greek classes. There were no incentives for participation. Many students chose not to complete a questionnaire, and many turned in surveys which were incomplete. Still, I managed to gather some meaningful feedback.

First, students were asked to describe their general reaction to the *convivium* and the activities which are associated with it. Responses were overwhelmingly positive: all of the twenty-seven students who answered this question wrote favorably about their experience. Responses included the following:

- I enjoyed sampling the dishes and also enjoyed watching the performances, even though I was too scared to do one myself. I learned a lot, especially about classical culture.
- It was very fun. The best part was sampling the dishes. (The bread was amazing!) I wish there had been more performances, but the ones I saw were interesting.
- I enjoyed meeting students from other sections. The performances were very entertaining and informative.
- The food was lovely[,] and it was interesting to try the food we had been learning about in class. The performances were very well done.
- The Roman and Greek-inspired food was positively delightful. The performances were entertaining, and the recitation contest was rath-

er impressive. It provided a good atmosphere for people with an interest in the subject to discuss their experiences with it.

- It was a lot of fun. In Latin, we do not spend much time learning the culture, and this allowed us to do that.

Most students reported that they had fun and that they enjoyed tasting the food. It was striking to me that so many students (twenty-three) reported as part of their general reaction to the *convivium* that they enjoyed hearing the Latin and Greek performances and recitations at the event. Also notably, about twenty-five percent of the responses to this question mentioned learning as part of the overall experience of the *convivium*.

Next, students were asked specifically about their reactions to the recitations and performances. Of the twenty-six students who answered this question, twenty-four said that the experience of hearing Latin and Greek at the banquet contributed to their appreciation of the languages. Responses included:

- It was impressive to see someone speak in Latin that well [and] made me appreciate the language more.
- It allowed a glimpse of what Latin and Greek cultures were like.
- It was impressive and displayed the musicality of the language.
- I liked being able to hear the correct pronunciation, but with feeling.
- They are beautiful languages. It was nice to hear in different contexts.
- As students of ancient languages tend to read the language, hearing the languages was refreshing, and [it] seemed to bring the languages to life.
- It did contribute to my appreciation for the languages. It was interesting to hear the more natural rise and fall of the languages outside a classroom setting.

The survey asked students what they would like to be included at the next annual banquet, and, although many students who completed the questionnaire did not answer this question at all, most of the students who did respond indicated that they would like additional recitations and performances.

Students were asked about what they learned through the *convivium*. Examples of responses follow:

- Overall, I learned about the culture and got a better handle on the language due to the contests.
- I learned how to better translate and compose through the [response to the] invitation.
- I learned some neat social skills [from trying the conversational Latin].
- I learned new Latin vocabulary and a great deal about ancient cultures.
- I learned more about Greek and Roman culture than I would have otherwise. It has been a great way to see the context the language I am studying would be used in.
- I stretched my understanding of the language via the translation contest and response [to the invitation].

I expected that students would report that they had learned more about classical culture, but it was especially interesting to me that several students focused on language skills in their responses, noting the acquisition of new vocabulary and improvement in translation and composition.

Finally, when asked about the exercise of composing a formal response to the invitation, thirty-seven out of the forty-six students who answered the question said that it helped to improve their language skills. Students commented that the exercise was difficult, frustrating, and time-consuming but that it was worth the effort. Students specifically reported that they learned new vocabulary, developed a better understanding of grammatical constructions, and reviewed forms of nouns and verbs. Of course, the competition in original composition also helps students de-

velop their language skills, but it is probably the most challenging of all the contests. Thus, only a few students from each class tend to enter that competition. Because students themselves have recognized the benefits of longer composition, in the future we may add another exercise in composition in which students write an essay in Latin or Greek about their experience at the event.

STANDARDS FOR LEARNING LANGUAGES AND THE CONVIVIVUM

Our annual *convivium* provides opportunities to engage with most if not all the Standards presented in the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* and the *Standards for Classical Language Learning*, but in particular it has helped us incorporate several of the more challenging Standards into our language programs. For example, the *convivium* has helped us more fully implement the Standards under the goal area of Communications, especially Standard 1.2 of the *Standards for Classical Language Learning* (8), in which students speak, hear, and write the languages. A few of our instructors use some conversational Latin and Greek in their classes, but in general the use of oral and aural material in our program is limited. Susan Thornton Rasmussen has recently explored reasons for including oral activity in Latin class, and Paula Saffire has argued for the benefits of speaking ancient Greek.⁵ Oral use of any language helps develop grammar skills and knowledge about vocabulary (Richards and Rodgers 36-38; Lightbown and Spada 165), and it certainly contributes to students' enjoyment of and appreciation for the languages, as attested by our own students' comments about the performances and recitations at the banquet. The banquet also has afforded a chance for students to write more extensively in Latin and Greek, both in composing a formal response to the invitation and by entering the competition in original composition.

The *convivium* has provided context for addressing both Standards under the goal area of Culture, which in the *World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning* call for students to "investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices" and "products" of a culture and its "perspectives" (72-80). In general, most instructors in our programs introduce culture into their classes by showing slides of ancient art and architecture as supplements to Latin and Greek passages. The banquet allows instructors to incorporate significantly more material about Greco-Roman culture into their classes. Students not only research related

⁵ For additional information about the importance of oral and aural activity, see Coffee, Gruber-Miller, and Wills, for example.

topics about Greek and Roman products and perspectives in the weeks leading up to the event, but they experience Greek and Roman food, dress, and conversation at the banquet itself. The event also enables instructors to more easily integrate cultural material into lessons about language.

Regarding the goal area of Connections, since establishing the *convivium* we have been better able to address Standard 3.1 in elementary and intermediate classes, which in the *World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning* calls for “learners [to] build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively” (85-86). The activities and performances associated with the *convivium* help students develop an understanding of how classical languages inform other disciplines and also help students expand their knowledge through exposure to Latin and Greek texts, recipes, and cultural material which they would not otherwise encounter. The scavenger hunt in particular motivates students to discover how classical languages influence other fields of study, and performances of musical pieces and scenes from plays which are adapted from or inspired by classical texts show students how influential the field of classics has been in the arts.

Under Comparisons, Standard 4.1 in the *World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning* calls for students to “use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own” (95-97), and Standard 4.2 calls for students to compare and contrast their own culture with Greek and Roman culture (98-100). Of course, instructors in our program do make comparisons with English and other languages, and short discussions about Greek and Roman culture occur regularly in class. Still, elements of the banquet such as the herald’s opening speech, which is delivered in Latin, Greek, and then English, significantly enhance the basic comparative material offered in individual classes. Learning about and sampling the various foods at the event in particular invites students to notice similarities and differences in ancient tastes, and students not only learn about what flavors and textures the Romans and Greeks liked but also that culinary taste itself is culturally constructed.

Perhaps the most difficult of the Standards to work into Latin and Greek programs are those under the area of Communities, in which “learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world” (Standard 5.1) (105) and “learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement”

(Standard 5.2) (109). Sally M. Magnan and her colleagues have shown that, although in general language instructors focus least of all on the area goal of Communities (cf. Phillips and Abbott 6), students studying foreign languages at the college level value these Standards more than all the others (Magnan et al. 176). Thus, it seems that the Standards under the goal of Communities should be an essential part of language instruction at the college level, even if they are challenging to incorporate. The *convivium* serves both as a reason in class and an occasion outside of class for students interested in classical languages and culture to interact with each other. Both in class during the weeks leading up to the banquet and at the event itself, students experience texts, images, recitations, and performances as part of a group. At the *convivium*, they respond together to the immediacy of the oral and written Latin and Greek, and the festive atmosphere provides context for simple but meaningful conversation in the languages. The *convivium* has made a larger community of classicists available to students studying Latin and Greek. Thus, it has served to better provide what college students themselves want and expect from studying a foreign language.

THE CONVIVIAM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Multiple definitions exist for what learning communities are, but this basic definition, offered in *Learning Communities: Creating Connections Among Students, Faculty, and Disciplines*, seems appropriate:

A learning community is any one of a variety of curricular structures that link together several existing courses—or actually restructure the curricular material entirely—so that students have opportunities for deeper understanding and integration of the material they are learning, and more interaction with one another and their teachers as fellow participants in the learning enterprise. . . . In learning communities, students and faculty members experience courses and disciplines not as arbitrary or isolated offerings but rather as a complementary and connected whole. These interwoven, reinforcing curricular arrangements make it possible, then, for faculty and students

to work with each other in less distant, routinized ways and to discover a new kind of enriched intellectual and social ground (Gabelnick et al. 19).

Students who participate in learning communities value in them, among other things, the friendships they make, the sense of interacting with other students and members of the faculty, collaborative learning, the realization of their own intellectual ability, becoming aware of the importance of primary texts, and the diversity of perspectives which is available (Gabelnick et al. 67-72). Learning communities can exist as formal institutions or as informal groups, but they have been shown to promote students' engagement, to fortify students' interest in their own education, and to contribute generally to positive learning outcomes (Zhao and Kuh 124-127; Love).⁶

The *convivium* has made available to students in the early stages of learning Latin and Greek a larger community with shared interest in classics, and it also has resulted in the growth of smaller learning communities within our department. As they participate in the contests which lead up to the banquet, students interact more with other students in their individual classes. Activities such as the scavenger hunt motivate students to work together outside of class; students find items in the library or on the internet in groups and explore their university together. When students practice for the recitation contest in front of their classmates, for example, the whole class focuses on the students' success in that competition. Because they have made connections with other students in their classes, students have more enjoyment of their time spent in Latin or Greek class, and they become more invested in their own academic performance. At the banquet itself, students get to know students in other sections who are studying the same languages. They talk about their classes and get advice from students in more advanced classes about interesting courses to take in the future. Of course, the *convivium* does not transform the experience of every student taking Latin and Greek. Still, through participation in it students have formed bonds with other students in the department, and these relationships have inspired and augmented learning. The learning communities which have developed as part of the *convivium* even have motivated some students to continue taking Latin and Greek after their language requirement has been satisfied.

⁶ For additional information about learning communities, see also Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt; Laufgraben and Shapiro; Shapiro and Levine; and Smith, MacGregor, Matthews, and Gabelnick.

SMALLER POSSIBILITIES

Our *convivium* has become a major production, but it also would work on a much smaller scale at either the college or high school level.⁷ When I last taught our intensive Latin course, for example, I put together a banquet during one class period in the middle of the term, when the students were starting to feel the effects of constant memorization and hard work. Ten students, both undergraduate and graduate, were enrolled in that class, and we had much more limited resources available to us. For that much smaller banquet, I issued an invitation in Latin a few days before the event, and students responded with an original composition. We translated several of Apicius' recipes as a class, and, after we examined modern adaptations of ancient recipes, the students each chose one recipe to try. On the appointed day, I decorated the front table with purple cloth and artificial garlands, and, to set the mood, I projected a dining scene from a Roman painting onto the screen at the front of the classroom. Everyone presented his or her dish to the class together with a label prepared in Latin which described it. On the white board at the front of the room, we wrote the complete vocabulary entries for the Latin featured on the buffet table. With these new words, students attempted to use some conversational Latin about the food as they ate. I projected the Latin texts and translations of a few passages from Latin literature which included material about food and dining, and we discussed them together. A few students recited Latin passages they had chosen for extra credit, and we all voted to choose a winner for the best recitation. Thus, students enjoyed a break from the demanding daily routine of an intensive class but still learned new material.

In a college-level Latin or Greek class which moves at a less accelerated pace or in a high school class, it would be possible to incorporate a *convivium* into the course by focusing on one element of it every week or two, with the banquet itself serving as a finale to a semester-long project. At the beginning of the term, an instructor might distribute a simple invitation for students to translate which features vocabulary and grammar the students already know or are in the process of learning. After the instructor shows students a few examples of ancient letters, he or she might teach students appropriate new vocabulary and help them compose short responses to the invitation as an in-class activity. Students could investigate various aspects of food production, cuisine, and dining and then present their findings to the rest of

⁷ For a comparable discussion of using French cuisine to enhance language learning in French classes at various levels, see Abrate.

the class, perhaps teaching their fellow students five or ten new vocabulary words as part of their presentations. Everyone in the class could prepare dishes and short recitations for the actual *convivium*, which would take place during the final few weeks of the term. A *convivium* also could form the basis for an entire course or unit for students studying Latin or Greek at a more advanced level, with the banquet itself again serving as the culminating event. Over the course of a term, students could translate selections from texts which focus on food and dining, and, as they are working their way through these passages, they could collect ancient images of food and dining and research related cultural topics to share with their classmates. Of course, smaller college departments which do not have resources such as graduate students and high school programs could hold a department-wide or program-wide banquet similar to our *convivium* as a potluck dinner, with members of the faculty and students all contributing food, performances, and materials to display about ancient cooking and dining.

CONCLUSION

Our annual *convivium* has been an excellent way to incorporate active, first-hand learning into elementary and intermediate Latin and Greek classes. Students learn additional vocabulary and new grammatical constructions in context as they learn more about classical culture and the field of classics. The event allows for the multifaceted approach to foreign language education which is encouraged by the Standards: students experience the mechanics of Latin and Greek as part of a larger cultural tapestry, learning through the interwoven threads which contribute to successful language acquisition. In addition to enhancing Latin and Greek classes, the *convivium* has infused new energy into our language programs. Recently, I taught our course on Vergil's *Aeneid*, which serves as a gateway course to the Latin major, and most of the students who were enrolled in the class had participated at least once in the annual banquet. During the first week of the term, students started asking me for details about the next *convivium*. By the fourth week of class, the students themselves started organizing a class performance of a scene from the *Aeneid* for the event. I asked what students felt they had learned by participating in previous banquets, and students reported that they had learned more about Roman and Greek culture and literature. A few students said that they had become much more inter-

ested in ancient Greek after hearing students' recitations in that language. Students also said that they had learned a significant amount of Latin by participating in the competitions and that they had learned new vocabulary at the event itself. Other instructors in the department have reported that students in their elementary and intermediate classes now regularly ask about the banquet and express excitement about sampling the food and competing in the various contests.⁸ In the end, the *convivium* has allowed our department to provide a richer education for students learning Latin and Greek.

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⁸ In the future, we hope to measure the effect of our *convivium* on enrollments and retention, although to this point such a study has not been carried out.

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Oil for the Wheels in Teaching Caesar: Yesterday and Today¹

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ABSTRACT

This article examines some ways of enlivening Caesar's *De bello Gallico* in the classroom. It begins by considering the pedagogical methods of Mary E. Harwood, a Latin teacher in the early 1900s. Since Ms. Harwood's students often found Caesar to be a boring, irrelevant text, she developed some creative teaching methods to lessen her own sense of frustration and to help her students better understand, visualize, and appreciate the text. The author argues that even though some of Ms. Harwood's early twentieth-century strategies would not necessarily work in twenty-first-century Advanced Placement classrooms, her general philosophy of teaching Caesar is still quite germane. In addition to considering Ms. Harwood's suggestions for teaching Caesar, the article also offers some examples of how the author approaches the challenges of teaching Caesar in his own AP class, in particular by drawing upon popular culture and current events.

KEYWORDS

Advanced Placement, Caesar, *De bello Gallico*, pedagogy, film

If you were to think about the Latin teachers of the early 1900s, you would probably imagine rigid grammarians and stern taskmasters who resisted any sort of progress and innovation. After all, this was some seventy years before the development of textbooks like *Cambridge* and *Ecce Romani*—books that take a kinder, gentler approach to Latin—and by today's standards, these early twentieth-century teachers covered an astonishing amount of material: all basic Latin grammar in the first year, Caesar in the second year, Cicero in year three, and Vergil in year four. We see these types of instructors depicted in films set during this time period, teachers like Mr. Hopkins in *The Happy Years*, hammering his students incessantly on gerunds and gerundives, and Mr. Chipping in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, stubbornly refusing

¹ An earlier draft of this article was presented as a paper at the 111th Meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, Boulder, CO, March 28, 2015. I am grateful to John Gruber-Miller and the anonymous referees for their valuable feedback.

to make any changes to the status quo and dismissing progressive pedagogy as “pop-pycock” (Sellers).

Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Chipping, however, are fictional characters. In the real-world classrooms of the early 1900s, there were actually many Latin teachers who were less than thrilled with the prospect of frogmarching a bunch of fourteen-year-olds through fifty lines of *De bello Gallico* every day. An article published by Arthur Tappan Walker in 1912, as a matter of fact, makes it clear that frustration with Caesar was common: “In recent years, the perennial dissatisfaction with Caesar as the second-year Latin text seems to be finding expression more often and more strongly than usual. There is scarcely a classical association meeting or a paper on second-year Latin work without its attack on Caesar” (234).²

One of these dissatisfied teachers was a woman named Mary E. Harwood, a Latin teacher at The Girls’ Latin School in Baltimore, Maryland. In April of 1908, at a meeting of the Classical Association of the Atlantic States, Ms. Harwood presented a paper on the difficulties of teaching Caesar, a paper she later published as an article in the *Classical Weekly*. In the article, she explains that her students found Caesar to be complicated and tedious, and it was often hard for them to see the text as anything more than “an endless confusion of camps, marches, and grammatical constructions.” She characterizes the disconnect between Caesar and her students as a seemingly “hopeless” situation, and she punctuates her frustration with a bit of tongue-in-cheek hyperbole: “I determined that if anything could be found to create an interest and lessen the drudgery, I would find it or die!” (98).

One hundred years later, teachers of the twenty-first-century [Advanced Placement Caesar syllabus](#) still face the same essential challenges encountered by Ms. Harwood. How can we teach *De bello Gallico* to modern-day teenagers? How can we keep Caesar relevant and interesting? How can we push students through all of the lines required by the curriculum while still keeping them motivated and engaged?

I will begin by examining Ms. Harwood’s suggestions for coping with these challenges. Since she desperately wanted her students to appreciate Caesar, she developed some creative teaching strategies to give her students a break from the daily grind of grammar and translation, to appeal to different styles of learning, and to help her students see *De bello Gallico*, not simply as a boring jumble of obscure Celtic tribes and thorny indirect statements, but instead as a “moving picture of

² Wyke summarizes the state of Caesar in American schools in the early twentieth century (21-46).

thrilling dramatic action.” I will then offer some examples of how I practice this same philosophy of teaching Caesar in my own classroom, in particular by employing the very technology which Ms. Harwood imagines but which she would not have had at her disposal in her classroom in the early 1900s—the moving picture.

STORIES AND PROJECTS

To begin with, one of the simplest strategies Ms. Harwood employed to break up the monotony of grammar and translation and to help her students visualize life in ancient Rome was the time-honored educational practice of story time. In fifteen-minute segments, she would read her students stories about the typical daily routine of a Roman senator in the late Republic:

The scene, laid in the home of an old Senator of the late Republic, and the story opening with the scurry of slaves in the morning, cleaning the house as the first beams of the sun strike the statue of Jupiter in his great *quadriga* on the Capitol, take them into a Rome full of life. They follow the old Senator and his friends to the Forum, the senate, the chariot-race and the bath; they see him reading and writing in his library, giving a banquet and attending the funeral of one of his friends. (98)³

Although reading the students a story might seem like an antiquated teaching method, modern educational research supports the practice of reading aloud to students as an effective technique for capturing their attention and developing their vocabulary (Kindle 202).⁴ Moreover, in recognizing the value of a continuous storyline about everyday Roman life, Ms. Harwood was actually more than a half century ahead of her time; textbooks such as *Cambridge* and *Ecce Romani*, of course, would later be written according to this same model. She was also well ahead of her time in what today’s educational jargon would classify as “integrated teaching”—i.e.,

³ “I read to them during the first semester, what they are pleased to call a story. It is on Roman life, with a few characters strung together for a thread of narrative” (98). Ms. Harwood does not offer any sort of citation for the story in question, so it is not clear whether she was reading from a published source or from something of her own creation.

⁴ Although this practice is primarily associated with the elementary school classroom, it can also be an effective strategy in the content-specific courses students take in middle school and high school (Ivey and Fisher 32 ff).

encouraging students to recognize the parallels between academic disciplines—for she would ask the English teachers in her school to allow the students to write their required compositions about Roman life, thereby reinforcing the material they were learning from her stories.⁵

When Ms. Harwood finished the stories about the Roman senator, she gave her students a concise overview—“in one-syllable English,” as she puts it—of the political situation in Rome during the late Republic, and then she began reading them stories about the life of Julius Caesar.⁶ She wanted her students to develop a comprehensive understanding of what she calls Caesar’s “wonderful personality,” an understanding that is difficult for students to glean from *De bello Gallico* itself, since Caesar characterizes himself in such a decidedly impersonal fashion. Her stories were designed to help the students see Caesar, not just as the disembodied narrator of an ancient war journal, but as a skilled politician, soldier, and orator, a man who was capable of “changing a panicky army, terror-stricken at the reports about the ferocious Germans, to enthusiastic legions wild with desire to get at the enemy” (99).

In addition to story time, Ms. Harwood also employed a variety of project-based learning activities to help the students visualize the things happening in Caesar’s commentary: designing and wearing Roman military costumes; dressing up dolls like Roman soldiers; constructing maps of Gaul; building models of Roman camps; designing battlefields with sand, twigs, chalk, and match-stick soldiers; recreating the naval battle against the Veneti in a pool of water.⁷ She even had her students measure out a thousand footsteps across campus in order to give them a small taste of Roman military marching and to help them avoid embarrassing mistranslations of the phrase *milia passuum*: “True, I get distances varying from one-fourth to three-fourths of a mile only, for like Ascanius, they trot along with childish steps, but I find it likely to fix the idiom” (99).

In considering the feasibility of incorporating Ms. Harwood’s methods into the modern AP Caesar classroom, there are some important factors to keep in mind. First of all, Ms. Harwood was teaching in the early twentieth century, long before the advent of the technological innovations (and distractions) that our twenty-first-

5 Such integrated approaches to teaching often improve student motivation and academic performance (Drake 9).

6 No source is provided.

7 Helle et al. give a good overview of the characteristics and potential benefits of project-based learning (288-297).

century students have grown up with. Second, she actually implemented these activities in Latin One in order to prepare her students to read Caesar the following year: “Perhaps this paper,” she explains, “should have been entitled ‘Preparations for Studying Caesar,’ for a great deal of interest can be aroused, I find, during the first year of Latin, and it is here that I count on making real progress” (98). Thus, Ms. Harwood’s students were quite a bit younger than today’s AP Latin students, most of whom are juniors or seniors in high school. Third, Ms. Harwood admits that she did not have enough class time for these special activities, so she worked them in on an extracurricular basis. If her students seemed reluctant to attend these after-school or Saturday morning sessions, she would bribe them with “the magic word refreshments . . . or, in extreme cases” by offering them “a club pin.” And finally, it is important to remember that Ms. Harwood was teaching in an all-girls school, and at least one of her projects—dressing up dolls in Roman costume—certainly seems to have been designed with a single-sex classroom in mind.

Therefore, some of Ms. Harwood’s teaching methods would probably work in the modern AP classroom; others would need to be adapted to meet the sensibilities of twenty-first-century students. But even though I would not necessarily adopt all of her specific ideas, I absolutely agree with the larger point that she makes in her article—namely, that we have to do some things in the classroom to make *De bello Gallico* interesting and relevant for our students, and we have to help them visualize the things described in Caesar’s text.

THE MOVING PICTURE

Whereas Ms. Harwood tried to achieve these objectives through old-fashioned storytelling and project-based learning activities, I try to achieve them, at least in part, through the use of videos. As Martin Winkler explains in the introduction to *Classics and Cinema*, film can be an effective resource for bridging the gap between the ancient civilization of the Greeks and Romans and the popular culture of modern-day American students: “At a time when humanities in general and classics in particular are no longer the bedrock of education they once were, the use of film within a traditional and largely nonvisual curriculum can provide an excellent means to reach students” (11). In fact, as Winkler points out in a later book, *Classical Myth and Culture in the Cinema*, even educators in the early twentieth century—Ms. Harwood’s time period—recognized the potential pedagogical value of the motion picture (5-9). B.L. Ullman, for example, made this argument in 1915, just a

few years after Ms. Harwood wrote her article about teaching Caesar: “Moving pictures are an excellent means of showing that the Classics are not dead. The classical teacher not only makes Latin and Greek alive, but makes the Greeks and Romans seem like living beings . . . Here is where the cinematograph plays its part” (201).

To be clear, I don’t want to give the impression that I burn a lot of time in class showing movies. As all AP teachers know, there are a lot of lines on the syllabus, and class time is valuable. This was the case for Ms. Harwood, too, as she points out that “one of the great difficulties of the Caesar year is lack of time” (98). Therefore, I usually only show videos that are about five to ten minutes in length—brief clips that are long enough to offer some visual stimulation and provide a much-needed respite from the intensive translation work that AP Latin requires, but at the same time short enough to hold the students’ attention and avoid impeding our progress through the syllabus.

For example, in Book Four of *De bello Gallico* (4.24 and following), Caesar describes his initial landing on the southeast coast of Britain. As the *Britanni* are defending their shoreline against the Romans, they are comfortable and confident: they are fighting on dry land, they don’t have to carry any unnecessary equipment or baggage, they are in a familiar environment, and they have the benefit of fighting with horses and war chariots. The Romans, on the other hand, are at a significant disadvantage:

Erat ob has causas summa difficultas, quod naves propter magnitudinem nisi in alto constitui non poterant, militibus autem, ignotis locis, impeditis manibus, magno et gravi onere armorum oppressis simul et de navibus desiliendum et in fluctibus consistendum et cum hostibus erat pugnandum. (4.24)

This led to extreme difficulties, because the ships were too large to be beached except in deep water, while the soldiers, ignorant of the land, their hands full, weighed down by the size and weight of their weapons, at one and the same time had to jump down from the ships, find their feet in the surf, and fight the enemy. (Hammond 82)

As a result, the Roman soldiers are absolutely terrified, and they are completely incapable of functioning with their usual efficiency and enthusiasm.

This passage always reminds me of the [opening scene](#) in [Saving Private Ryan](#), which I like to use in class as a complement to Caesar's narrative.⁸ The beginning of the film depicts the Omaha Beach landing of an American squadron during the D-Day operation of World War II. (The Allies, of course, were crossing the same body of water as Caesar in *De bello Gallico*, only they were going in the opposite direction.) Just as the Romans in Caesar's text, the Americans in the film face the daunting challenge of maneuvering through the water while encountering heavy resistance from the defenders on shore. And just as Caesar helps his terrified soldiers by stepping in to provide decisive leadership in the heat of the battle (4.25), an American captain (portrayed by Tom Hanks) plays the same role for his men in *Saving Private Ryan*. To be sure, this scene is incredibly violent, but it helps the students visualize the adversity faced by Caesar's men. It also underscores one of the most important—but, at the same time, most understated—themes of *De bello Gallico*: the brutality of warfare.

In Book Five, the AP syllabus turns to the episode involving the Roman legates Quintus Titurius Sabinus and Lucius Aurunculeius Cotta (5.26–5.37). These men are in charge of a Roman winter camp (*hiberna*) located in the territory of the Eburones in northeast Gaul. Isolated from Caesar and the other Roman legates, Sabinus and Cotta are facing the threat of annihilation, not only from the rebellious Eburones nearby but also from the menacing Germans across the Rhine River. As conditions for the Romans continue to deteriorate, a Celtic leader named Ambiorix makes the legates an offer: if the Romans abandon their camp, he will—as a personal favor to Caesar, who has treated him generously in the past—guarantee them safe passage to another Roman camp in the area (5.27).

A vigorous debate between the two Roman legates then ensues (5.28–5.31). First, Cotta argues that they should reject the offer of Ambiorix (5.28). Calm and pragmatic, he explains that there is no reason for the Romans to make a rash decision, and as a loyal lieutenant in Caesar's army, he emphasizes that nothing should be done without the explicit instructions of their commanding officer. Sabinus, on the other hand, endorses the proposal of Ambiorix. Instead of appealing to logic and reason, though, he relies on pure emotion. He literally shouts down Cotta during the

⁸ The scene begins at the 4:35 mark and continues all the way to 28:30. However, I usually just show the first five or ten minutes.

debate (*clamitabat*, 5.29, and *clariore voce*, 5.30), and he supports his argument by terrifying the soldiers in the camp with images of isolation, starvation, and death (*reieci et relgati longe ab ceteris aut ferro aut fame intereant*, 5.30). The two legates are polar opposites, and the episode makes for a fascinating examination of contrasting styles of leadership.⁹

The Sabinus-Cotta debate certainly makes for one of the most interesting parts of the AP Caesar syllabus, but it also makes for one of the most difficult. The syntax is confusing—long, protracted indirect statements that keep going and going and going—and the students often have a hard time keeping the two Roman commanders straight. In my class, the solution is to refer to Cotta as “Mr. Cotta”—as the verb *docebant* suggests, he is, in a manner of speaking, a teacher, explaining his position in the debate clearly and logically:

Lucius Aurunculeius [Cotta] compluresque tribuni militum et primorum ordinum centuriones nihil temere agendum neque ex hibernis iniussu Caesaris descendendum existimabant: quantavis magnas copias etiam Germanorum sustineri posse munitis hibernis docebant . . . (5.28)

Cotta, together with a number of the military tribunes and leading centurions, thought that nothing should be done on the spur of the moment, and that they should not leave their winter quarters without orders from Caesar. They argued that the German forces, however large, could be held off if their winter camp were fortified. (Hammond 103)

Showing some ridiculous [scene](#) from the 1970s program [Welcome Back, Kotter](#)—or “Cotta,” as John Travolta’s character always pronounces it—serves to cement the association, and from that point on, the students usually have no problem remembering which Roman legate is which.

On a more sophisticated note, I also like to employ video to draw parallels between the argument of Sabinus and Cotta and modern-day political debate. When I was teaching this syllabus for the first time, in fact, it was the fall of 2012, and

⁹ For a detailed analysis of this episode (and the Pullo-Vorenus scene later in Book Five), see Brown (292-308).

President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney were in the midst of their three presidential debates. After we finished the debate of the Roman legates (concluding in 5.31), I took a few minutes to show some clips from the [first Obama-Romney debate](#) and then asked the students to draw some comparisons.¹⁰ They quickly noticed that the forceful, aggressive Romney (qua Sabinus) seemed much more magnetic and persuasive than the aloof, professorial Obama (qua Cotta), and just as Sabinus wins the debate in the Roman camp, most journalists and pundits agreed that Romney won the first presidential debate easily.¹¹

After Sabinus wins the debate, the Romans abandon the security of their camp, accepting Ambiorix's promise to give them a free pass through barbarian territory (5.32 and following). Just a couple of miles into the march, though, Ambiorix and his men ambush the Romans. Caesar's description of the violent attack is vivid and terrifying. The Romans are caught completely off guard, and their usual system of well-disciplined organization breaks down into total chaos and hysteria:

Praeterea accidit, quod fieri necesse erat, ut vulgo milites ab signis discederent, quae eorum carissima haberet, ab impedimentis petere atque arripere properaret, clamore et fletu omnia complerentur. (5.33)

Another consequence, inevitably, was that soldiers everywhere started to abandon their standards, and all hurried to look for their most treasured possessions among the baggage and hold on to them. Shouting and weeping filled the air. (Hammond 105-106)

A few survivors manage to slip away, but most of the Romans, including the legates Sabinus and Cotta, are killed:

Interim, dum de condicionibus inter se agunt longiorque consulto ab Ambiorige instituitur sermo, [Sabinus] paulatim circumventus interficitur. Tum vero suo more victoriam conclamant atque ululatum tollunt impetueque in nostros facto ordines perturbant.

¹⁰ The debate took place at the University of Denver on October 3, 2012.

¹¹ As the *New York Times* put it, "The president at times acted more as if he were addressing reporters in the Rose Garden than beating back a challenger intent on taking his job."

Ibi Lucius Cotta pugnans interficitur cum maxima parte militum. (5.37)

In the meantime, while they negotiated terms, Ambiorix deliberately dragged out their discussion: Sabinus was gradually surrounded and killed. Then indeed they proclaimed the victory after their own fashion by raising a howl, made an attack on our ranks, and scattered them. There Lucius Cotta fell fighting, together with most of our soldiers. (Hammond 107)

To my knowledge, this specific episode of the Gallic Wars has never been depicted in film, but there is, however, an uncannily similar scene in [The Last of the Mohicans](#), when a British regiment leaves the security of their camp during the French and Indian War, only to suffer a gruesome massacre at the hands of a duplicitous tribal leader named Magua.¹² Showing this clip in class helps AP students visualize the military tactics used by Ambiorix, and it gives them a clear sense of the terror that would have swept through the ranks of the Roman soldiers.

Later in Book Five, when the narrative shifts to the camp of Quintus Cicero, we meet the centurions Titus Pullo and Lucius Vorenus—the same characters whom the HBO [Rome](#) series elevates to a position of historical prominence that Caesar never could have imagined (Cooke):

Erant in ea legione fortissimi viri, centuriones, qui primis ordinibus appropinquarent, Titus Pullo et Lucius Vorenus. Hi perpetuas inter se controversias habebant, quinam anteferretur, omnibusque annis de locis summis simultatibus contendebant. (5.44)

In this legion were two centurions, both men of great courage, and close to reaching senior rank. Their names were Titus Pullo and Lucius Vorenus. There was always a dispute going on between them as to which had precedence over the other, and every year

¹² The negotiations for surrender begin at the 1:04:28 mark. The attack on the unsuspecting soldiers runs from 1:14:10 to 1:21:10.

they clashed in fierce rivalry over the most important posts. (Hammond 110-111)

In Caesar's commentary, both men are supposed to be defending the camp against a barbarian attack. Pullo, however, in an attempt to outshine Vorenus and demonstrate his superior *virtus* once and for all, rushes outside of the fortification, plunging himself into the thick of the enemy line. Vorenus, concerned that the other men in the camp will question his courage, quickly follows his rival. On the battlefield, the two centurions manage to put aside their rivalry to help each other survive against the Gauls, and when they return to Cicero's camp, they are immediately received as triumphant heroes (*summa cum laude sese intra munitiones recipiunt*).

The [first few minutes](#) of the first episode of the HBO *Rome* series are based directly on Caesar's narrative. Just as in *De bello Gallico*, the scene begins with Pullo, in a zealous effort to kill as many barbarians as possible, breaking formation in battle. As in Caesar's commentary, Vorenus follows Pullo out, but a key difference is that he follows, not as an eager colleague, but as a stern commanding officer. Vorenus reprimands Pullo for his careless disobedience—"Get back in formation, you drunken fool!"—and when Pullo retaliates by punching him in the face, Vorenus has him escorted back to the camp where, in the subsequent scene, he is flogged for insubordination. The HBO version of this episode, therefore, offers the students a different perspective on Caesar's text, and the adaptation makes for an interesting class discussion on the expectations of Roman soldiers. The students often observe that the "fictional" HBO scene, in which Pullo is severely disciplined for his irresponsible bravado in battle, seems, in many ways, more realistic than the "historical" Caesar version, in which the author spins the recklessness of Pullo (and Vorenus) as a laudable manifestation of *virtus*.

Immediately after the Pullo and Vorenus episode, Caesar gives us a chilling description of Roman captives being tortured by barbarians right outside of the Roman camp: *quorum pars deprehensa in conspectu nostrorum militum cum cruciatu necabatur* (5.45). This is a very similar scenario to the one depicted in [The Road Warrior](#), a classic dystopian siege movie about a group of virtuous Australians who work hard to defend an oil refinery from an onslaught of leather-clad barbarians.¹³ Just as the Nervii dangle captured Roman soldiers right outside of the camp of Quintus Cicero, torturing them within sight of the Romans on the inside, the barbarians

¹³ The film was released as *The Road Warrior* in North America. In Australia, the original title was *Mad Max 2*.

in *The Road Warrior* employ the same gruesome [intimidation tactics](#).¹⁴ In this same scene, it's also interesting that the Lord Humungus, the leader of the barbarians in the film, makes the inhabitants of the camp a very similar offer to the one offered to Sabinus and Cotta by Ambiorix: "There has been too much violence, too much pain. None here are without sin. But I have an honorable compromise: just walk away. . . . I'll give you safe passage in the wasteland. Just walk away, and there will be an end to the horror." The besieged Australians in *The Road Warrior*, however, are not as gullible as the Romans in *De bello Gallico*, and they wisely refuse the offer.

Finally, as we approach the end of the AP Caesar semester, I assign the students a more in-depth film study project that I call "Cinema Caesarea." I divide them into groups and assign each group some film of relevance to *De bello Gallico*. Instead of films like *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Last of the Mohicans*, in which only certain scenes have parallels to *De bello Gallico*, I try to focus on films with a more direct overall connection to Caesar's text. The students have to watch their assigned film on their own time and then prepare a fifteen-minute class presentation, during which they show some clips and explain the parallels to *De bello Gallico*. Some of the titles I've assigned for this project include: [Asterix the Gaul](#), the classic animated [film](#) that presents the war from the Celtic perspective; [Druids](#), a French film about the life of Vercingetorix; [The Wicker Man](#), an unintentionally hilarious Nicolas Cage movie about neo-Celtic human sacrifice (by means of the eponymous structures, described by Caesar in 6.16); and [Terry Jones' Barbarians](#), an entertaining documentary from a former member of the Monty Python comedy troupe that challenges traditional stereotypes about both the Romans and the so-called "barbarians" they conquered.¹⁵ All in all, the Cinema Caesarea project helps the students see *De bello Gallico* through the lens of popular culture, and it makes for a fun, informative activity at the end of the semester when everyone's energy level is low.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

Of course, these videos and activities that I use in my Caesar class are in no way meant to replace or diminish the demanding requirements of the Advanced Placement syllabus. As Ms. Harwood is careful to emphasize in her article, these

¹⁴ The scene runs from 28:31 to 34:42.

¹⁵ The original version of *The Wicker Man* (1973) stars Edward Woodward and Christopher Lee. I assign the ridiculous Nicolas Cage remake to provide some much-needed late-semester comic relief.

¹⁶ In the appendix, I've included a more detailed list of instructions for this project and a suggested rubric for grading.

sorts of innovative methods should be used simply as “oil for the wheels” and “not at all as substitutes for the unceasing work in forms and translation so necessary” (100) to meet all of the required objectives. In the day-to-day grind of the rigorous AP curriculum, however, where the work often does seem to be “unceasing,” it’s easy for the students to lose sight of the big picture, the things that I ultimately want them to take away from the experience of studying *De bello Gallico* . . . things like the meaning of leadership, the ramifications of warfare, and the implications of cross-cultural encounters. If taking a short break from the “unceasing work” of grammar and translation does provide some “oil for the wheels” and enables the students to better understand, visualize, and appreciate these important themes in Caesar’s narrative, then the small amount of class time this requires is time well spent.

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APPENDIX. CINEMA CAESAREA

Instructions for Students / Grading Rubric

1. Each group will be assigned one of these films:

- *Asterix the Gaul* (1967)—An animated film depicting the war in Gaul from the French perspective.
- *Druids* (2001)—A movie about Vercingetorix. Stars Christopher Lambert (from *Highlander* fame).
- *The Wicker Man* (2006)—With Nicolas Cage. Enough said.
- *Terry Jones' Barbarians* (2008)—A documentary that explores common perceptions of “barbarians” and why these perceptions are flawed. You should focus on the episode called “The Primitive Celts.”

2. Class presentation:

- Video presentation (ca. 5-10 minutes in length). Choose a clip that is relevant and appropriate to be shown in class. (In other words, no nudity. Check with me first about language and violence.)
- Oral presentation (ca. 5-10 minutes in length). Each member of the group should play an active role in the presentation. Suggested distribution of labor:
 - One person can give a general summary of the film.
 - One person can talk about the specific clip(s) you will show to the class.
 - One person can explain the relevance of the film to the themes we've been exploring in class (Caesar, the war in Gaul, *De bello Gallico*, the Roman military, leadership, warfare, Celtic society, etc.).

I am tentatively planning to have these presentations the last two weeks of the semester. I will develop a more specific schedule as this time period approaches. This will be a quiz grade out of 50 points. It will be graded according to the following criteria:

Visual impact of video clip(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Overall summary of film	1	2	3	4	5
Explanation of clip(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Explanation of connections to <i>De bello Gallico</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Overall impression of presentation	1	2	3	4	5

Everyone in the group will receive the exact same grade.

Companions of Aeneas: Gamifying Intermediate Latin

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ABSTRACT

In order to increase Roman cultural content in an intermediate Latin course on Vergil's *Aeneid* at Earlham College, the author introduced elements of role-playing games into an otherwise traditional translation class. Students developed individual characters whose details were informed by weekly research projects on different aspects of Roman culture. An additive grading system was also incorporated to enable students and their characters to track progress in terms of "leveling up." This paper explains the implementation and mechanics of this gamification and concludes that the addition of some gamified courses into classical curricula would prove beneficial; the strengths of gamification (increased cultural content and student motivation) compare favorably to its weaknesses (decreased language content, increased preparation time), especially in departments that have limited course offerings.

KEYWORDS

gamification, role-playing, *Aeneid*, Latin, translation

INTRODUCTION

When I last taught the *Aeneid* to a second year Latin class, I tried something different;¹ I incorporated elements of role-playing games (like *Dungeons & Dragons*) into the course as a means of encouraging students to delve further into Roman culture. The standard regimen of assigning a passage for homework, then reviewing the passage in class with close attention to grammar, style, etc., tends to emphasize philology over culture to such an extent that the context and content of the literature itself is often subordinated to more technical concerns, e.g. the double dative and Vergil's uses of the Greek accusative. In response, I decided to take a risk and gamify² my *Aeneid* course in such a way that in addition to translation, students

1 This paper is based in part on a presentation given in conjunction with Sarah Landis and T. H. M. Gellar-Goad at the 2015 annual meeting of the Society for Classical Studies.

2 "Gamification" is a term used broadly to describe the addition of game-like qualities to an activity not traditionally conceived of in terms of a game, typically as a means of encouraging increased

would create classically inspired characters whose attributes would develop based both on students' achievements throughout the course and through regular research projects that focused on specific aspects of Roman culture.

My model in this endeavor was Ted Gellar-Goad, whose innovative work in gamifying his Latin prose composition class prompted me to consider how I could use game concepts as a means of introducing additional cultural content.³ Although Gellar-Goad significantly reconceptualized virtually every aspect of his class to work within a nuanced game setting, I was not ready for such an immersive experience yet still wanted to experiment with gamification. In this paper, I will explain how I incorporated comparatively simple gamification elements into a pre-existing Latin translation course by making minor adjustments to the syllabus and without using any specialized software. I will assess the strengths and weaknesses of the course as I taught it and offer my overall reflections on the endeavor.⁴

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gamification, as opposed to Game Based Learning, is the incorporation of gaming elements into non-gaming situations, whereas Game Based Learning requires students to actually play a game (Pike 2015). For example, credit card use has been "gamified" such that users now frequently earn points every time they make a purchase; enough points and the user might earn a plane trip, or a gift card. Classroom gamification works on a similar premise: students score points and unlock achievements/awards/badges as they complete course materials, master skills, etc. Conversely, having students play Math Blaster to improve basic addition skills would be an example of Game Based Learning (and not the subject of this article).

However, since the intent of classroom gamification is to realize some of the pedagogical benefits intrinsic to game playing, it is important to understand what those benefits are. According to Pike (2015), gaming environments create learning opportunities by 1) increasing students' intrinsic motivation and mastery through personalization, 2) improving their resilience and confidence in taking risks, 3) en-participation in that activity.

³ On Gellar-Goad's course, see Thomas' 2013 "The Challenge of the Sphinx" or Poovey's 2014 "Ted Gellar-Goad and the Secret of the Sphinx."

⁴ I would offer the caveat that the results discussed in this paper are not the product of a course purposefully designed to assess the efficacy of gamification. I approached this course as an educator interested in innovative pedagogy and am sharing the admittedly anecdotal conclusions drawn from my experience teaching a gamified course on Vergil's *Aeneid* to a class of seven students at Earlham College.

hancing students' creativity, and 4) promoting collaboration and social awareness. Since successful gameplay (either in an immersive game or simply in a gamified context) depends on voluntary participation, Pike notes that gamification promotes an intrinsic motivation that feeds into a student's growth mindset,⁵ thereby encouraging students to take personal ownership of their part in the pedagogical process and to become more motivated to master the material. These observations are corroborated by Hamari, Koivisto and Sarsa (2014), as well as by my own experiences: increased student motivation and willingness to pursue independent research are some of the chief strengths of the course I describe.

The thesis of Jim Gee's *What Video Games Have to Teach Us* (2003) is that successful video games operate along the principles of good learning, and that players learn a great deal in addition to the base content of a given video game. Depending on the game, players might learn to interact socially with other players ("affinity groups"); to "read" and "write" within the game's "semiotic domain" (i.e. to read context clues and react accordingly); to explore different identities; and to think in ways formerly alien from themselves (i.e. to view themselves/their character as a moral entity, or an immoral one, or as a problem solver, etc.). Gee states that exploring those different identities is the means by which players become invested in the game and start to engage actively and independently in a way that fosters both creativity and internal motivation to continue. That internal motivation is observable in players' willingness to experiment with trial-and-error, wherein players test a hypothesis about how the (video game) world works. When that initial hypothesis inevitably fails, players readjust and try a different approach until they eventually succeed and move on to the next obstacle. This resilience is cited as an integral part of successful independent learning. Although the elements of role-playing games that I incorporated into my class are quite distinct from video games, both capitalize on players'/students' propensity to "buy in" to their avatar's identity and thereby increase their internal motivation.

The educational uses and benefits of gamification and Game Based Learning have also been discussed at some length on *Extra Credits*, a bi-monthly online

⁵ The concept of the growth mindset was pioneered by Carol Dweck (2007). Its basic premise is that a fixed mindset attributes success to "fixed" innate traits (intelligence, strength, etc.). A growth mindset attributes success to behaviors such as hard work and persistence. Those with a fixed mindset often experience failure as an unalterable result of their own lack of ability ("I'm not smart enough"), whereas those with a growth mindset are prone to experience failure as a step on the path toward success ("I should try harder, or use another technique").

informational video series written by James Portnow that focuses on various aspects of video games and the gaming industry. Several videos in the series are explicitly focused on pedagogy; in one (“Gamifying Education,” May 2011), Portnow addresses the psychological and motivational benefits of the additive scoring systems found in most video games. With an additive scoring system, the player starts at zero and earns points by playing the game, thus being rewarded for her successes; in the standard classroom, a student begins with 100% and loses points throughout the course, thus being penalized for her failures. While there is little mathematical difference between losing three points on a ten point assignment (7/10) and gaining seven points on the same assignment (7/10), the psychological difference is significant, as detailed in several case studies throughout Lee Sheldon’s *The Multiplayer Classroom* (2012). Portnow also stresses that games are at their most pedagogically affective when played voluntarily (“Games in Education,” 2013), and can spur players/students toward tangential learning, i.e. the pursuit of knowledge indirectly linked to material encountered in the game (“Tangential Learning,” Mar. 2011).

Despite these potential benefits to gaming and gamification, Young et al.’s (2012) survey of the usage of video games in the classroom warns that the nature of video games makes comprehensive studies quite complicated and that “perhaps no single experimental manipulation (independent variable) can ever be defined to encompass the concept of video games writ large. Furthermore, given the diversity of student learning goals and abilities, likewise perhaps no singular outcome (dependent variable) from video games should be anticipated” (84). It is precisely because of these difficulties that this article does not seek to be broadly applicable but limits itself to an assessment of the particular gamification elements I employed in one specific course. That said, based on the available data, Young et al. were able to suggest that games have high pedagogical potential—especially in the field of language study—for encouraging “deep understanding” but come with the cost of “efficiency and curriculum coverage” (81), a trade-off I noted in my classroom and will discuss in greater detail below.

METHODOLOGY

The premise of this course was that, in addition to the standard intermediate Latin pedagogical goals, each student would create a “companion of Aeneas”—a fictitious character making the journey with Aeneas from Troy to Italy, whose traits and characteristics would develop as a direct result of the student’s performance in

the class (attendance, translation, exams, etc.) as well as from weekly “character quests” in which students conducted independent research on aspects of Roman life. In addition to the character quests, the course was gamified in two distinct ways: 1) using an additive rather than subtractive grading system, and 2) “reskinning” the syllabus and course terminology to create an overarching class narrative.⁶

Despite this gamification, all of the standard course elements remained; students still spent the majority of each class working through their translations, they read most of the *Aeneid* in English and discussed the text as a work of literature, and there were regular exams and a culminating final project. In fact, in any given class period, minimal time was spent on gamification. Most of that work (both on my part and on the students’) was done outside of class as homework. There were occasional in-class announcements regarding character advancement (requiring no more than three minutes), and we did devote one entire class period to elections to public office as the culmination of the quest-line on Roman politics, but otherwise the day-to-day workings of the course did not differ much from the norm.

While the classroom experience remained principally the same, *outside* of class students were conducting weekly research projects on aspects of Roman culture to help them develop their individual characters (sometimes referred to in gamification literature as “avatars.”) These weekly character quests accounted for 10% of the student’s overall grade in the course. As an example, the first week’s project was for students to choose names for their characters. This meant not only conducting research on Roman naming conventions, but also considering the significance of the name they chose. By leaving character quests fairly broad, I enabled students to direct the development of their characters—and thus their own research—as they saw fit; one student chose a Greek name to reflect her status as a former slave, another chose the praenomen Decimus to indicate his status as the youngest of ten siblings. As the semester progressed, students researched more details about their characters: their occupation, clothing, religious practices, house design, etc., and in the process of completing these quests to develop their characters, students learned far more about life in ancient Rome⁷ than they typically do in a standard translation course.

6 The term “reskinning” refers to minor cosmetic changes (usually regarding software) that result in no *real* differences but drastically alter the feel of a game or program. Typical examples include changing the color pallet of an email program, or switching a video game character’s gender; the visual difference may be striking, but the utility remains unchanged.

7 Given the rampant cultural amalgamations present in the *Aeneid*, students fashioned their own characters on Roman models (broadly understood) despite their characters’ putative Trojan origins.

Furthermore, to better reflect the growth of students' characters through quests, I used an additive grading system in which students started with a grade of 0% and earned points for their successes instead of the typical system where students start at 100% and lose points for their mistakes. With additive grading, many of my students reported feeling a greater sense of accomplishment as well as more motivation to succeed.⁸

This additive grading system provided a better framework for neatly mapping students' in-class accomplishments onto their avatars since it parallels character-leveling systems utilized in many role-playing games wherein a player's character improves as she completes various tasks, defeats enemies, etc. Character improvement in these games is typically tracked by "experience points," and at certain specified increments, a character will "level up" and gain a modest increase in power and/or abilities. In practice, this meant that as students completed coursework, they earned points that directly corresponded to their character's "level"; the higher the student's grade, the higher the character's level (and vice versa).⁹

When a student's character leveled up, the student received a notification (via email) detailing an achievement specific to her character. At low levels, the awards were small; characters would perhaps discover a trinket, or strengthen a social connection. At higher levels, the achievements became more prestigious: a warrior character might earn a promotion in the army, or a merchant might purchase a ship. Even though these achievements were awards, they were in essence yet further opportunities for independent cultural research: the first student needed to research military organization to determine his new rank, the second researched and sketched the merchant vessel he wished his character to have. So although these achievements were essentially new assignments with no graded value, students still treated them as rewards and were genuinely excited about pursuing them.

⁸ Anecdotally, this had a palpable impact on student complaints regarding participation grades. In my standard courses where students lose points for absences or lackluster class participation, there are invariably a handful of complaints regarding the number of points lost. In courses where I have employed an additive system, this is surprisingly not an issue. There seems to be a clear understanding that students do not lose points due to their absence, they simply cannot earn points when they are not present. The end result (a daily participation grade of zero) remains the same, but student attitude is quite different.

⁹ *The Multiplayer Classroom* runs through a number of interesting systems for combining a student's grades with their character's level, and I adapted from there a 1000 point system that made grade calculation simple for myself and my students (See Appendix 1). Overall, Sheldon's text was particularly useful for many technical aspects of my course.

Because the gamification of the course all but guaranteed this class would be significantly different from the rest of the students' courses, it was important to convey this disparity early on. In the first place, I did not want students to be surprised by any aspect of the course's operation, and in the second I wanted to quickly establish that the role-playing element was an integral part of the class. To do this, I "reskinned" the syllabus such that familiar grading categories were reclassified to fit with the class's overall role-playing theme: translation became "Exploration," exams became "Enemies," etc. As an example, the syllabus' section on attendance reads as follows:

Time at Sea (Attendance)

As a companion of Aeneas, you are on a journey across the sea, traversing the Mediterranean in search of Rome. Sometimes, showing up is half the battle. Also, since language acquisition works best through frequent and repeated exposure to the target language, consistent attendance is essential to this course—especially since we only meet twice per week. Students who come to class on time and stay through the duration of the class will thus earn five points every day. (Late arrivals/early departures will earn fewer points.) In the event that a student does miss class, it is her responsibility to complete any homework assigned and learn any material covered.

The title is different, as is the addition of the italicized flavor text and the additive grading language, otherwise this section is much the same as on my other syllabi. These changes are simple, but their incorporation on a document as important as the syllabus quickly set the tone for the class and made it clear that this course would be markedly different than most.

I should also note that throughout all of this, I utilized no special software. Assignments and character level / student grades were tracked through the college's course management software (i.e. Moodle), and communications to students about character development were conducted either through Moodle or email. More advanced and interactive software is certainly available (e.g. Classcraft)¹⁰ but unnecessary. For a first-hand account of how Classcraft has been used in an introductory Latin course at Be-

sary, and for those piloting the type of gamified classroom discussed here, the time requirements of learning new software on top of managing the extra layer of role-playing may be an unwelcome burden.

COURSE STRENGTHS

The most tangible benefit of the course was that students demonstrated a substantial increase in knowledge of Roman culture as compared to my other intermediate Latin courses without gamification elements. They researched and synthesized material about Roman naming conventions, geography, occupations, family structure, clothing, religion, historical exempla, domestic architecture and commemorative literature (see Appendix 2 for sample prompts and responses), then presented the results of their research at the end of the semester in the form of a biography of their character. In class evaluations, student responses overwhelmingly cited increased cultural exposure as a positive aspect of the course (see Appendix 3 for a representative sample of student remarks).

This increase in Roman cultural content, while clearly not comparable to a classical civilization course, is still of considerable merit—particularly in departments that are not large enough to offer a full complement of classes that focus exclusively on either language or culture, or in high school classes. The role-playing element allowed our department to introduce more cultural content to a class that did not traditionally include it, meaning that our majors benefited from the additional Roman cultural knowledge and our non-majors left the Latin language sequence with an increased appreciation for Roman culture.

By gamifying what was essentially a series of independent research projects (i.e. casting them as character quests, or as rewards for levelling up), there was a notable increase in student motivation. Since this research directly correlated to the development of their characters, students often went above and beyond in the execution of their projects.¹¹ The freedom of the assignments also enabled them to pursue avenues of inquiry that most appealed to their own interests. For example, on the loit College, see Matthew Taylor's blog *Adjunct Provocateur*: <https://adjunctprovocateur.wordpress.com/>.

¹¹ This enthusiasm carried into other aspects of the course as well. When class discussion turned to more esoteric queries such as, "What physical evidence exists for the Carthaginian worship of Juno?" or "What is the earliest reference to the *Argo's* ability to speak?", we often continued the conversation beyond the classroom because I was able to offer "side quests" in which students could be awarded bonus points (roughly 1-5) in exchange for providing the swiftest, most accurate, detailed, and well-cited response. I often had answers within the hour.

project regarding Roman professions, students clearly needed to research viable jobs for their characters, but could direct that research into areas they personally found interesting, e.g. soldiery, legal work, or farming. As far as levelling up, the design of the course functioned such that when students earned enough points that their character's level (and thus their own grade) increased sufficiently, their reward was an opportunity to do more research—which they often carried out with enthusiasm.

Importantly, this style of gamification is fairly easy to incorporate. It requires little in-class time, no special software, and no specific knowledge of role-playing games. It is, in essence, a re-contextualization of standard coursework with an addition of independent research assignments. The innovation is in the framework and the over-arching narrative structuring the coursework.

COURSE WEAKNESSES

The greatest weakness of this course was that the additional content, no matter the benefits to student engagement and increased Roman cultural knowledge, came at the cost of time spent translating Latin. Although this loss is notable, it was limited; I estimate a 15-20% reduction in the amount of Latin we could have covered had I not introduced a role-playing element. As noted above, this was not due so much to in-class demands on time as recognizing that asking students to complete weekly research projects would necessarily impact their available time for translation and other readings. For most students this was a welcome tradeoff.¹²

As with any assignment or lesson plan (no matter how traditional or innovative) some students will simply be averse to it; this gamification proved no different: when asked to rank on a scale of 1-10 (with 1 the worst and 10 the best) the level of benefit yielded by the gamification element, six of the seven enrolled students responded with 8, 9 or 10, while only one reported a 2. Based on that one student's remarks throughout the semester, his dissatisfaction stemmed largely from the sheer length of the endeavor. (This student would have been happy with a gamified week or two, but found the semester-long gamification excessive.) This fortunately did not impact the day-to-day routine of the class, but it is something to be aware of for those considering adopting this model. Even though the gamification element is clearly articulated on the syllabus, a critical mass of students who do not "buy in" to the game could make for a difficult learning environment. That said, to my

¹² On the final evaluation, one student did report feeling that any time spent not working on grammar or translation (including time spent discussing the *Aeneid* as literature) was wasted. Even so, this did not impact the student's full participation in the course.

knowledge, no professors have needed to abandon or significantly modify a gamified classroom for this reason.

The final issue to be aware of is that even though this is a comparatively simple gamification, time and creativity prove to be necessary resources. While this is designed to attach neatly to an existing course, converting to an additive grading system, reskinning the syllabus and coming up with regular character quests that fit within a larger course-specific narrative takes a considerable amount of preparation time before the semester begins. During the semester, most of the onus (other than assessment) is on the students, except when the instructor needs to craft character-specific awards of varying import for each student. While this is an opportunity for creativity and engagement with students' characters, it has the potential to become rather time consuming with high course enrollments.

FINAL ASSESSMENT

I do not advocate for introducing role-playing elements into every course; it necessarily diminishes the time spent on the target material, has the potential to be off-putting for some students, and requires more work from instructors than standard courses. Still, the benefits provided—additional cultural content in language courses (especially in small departments), and increased student motivation to conduct independent research—are compelling reasons to incorporate role-playing elements into a small number of courses.

In future iterations of this course, I would suggest making a few alterations:

- 1) Personalized, character-based rewards for leveling up are appreciated and provide good alternatives to the default incentive of “bonus points,” but intersperse them with other types of rewards (e.g. in-class recognition, badges) to increase their value.
- 2) Incentivize positive group dynamics, as discussed on *Extra Credits* (Portnow May, 2011). Offer points (or other in-game rewards) to the entire class contingent on all students meeting certain benchmarks, e.g. when everyone comes fully prepared to translate, or when no one scores below 80% on an exam. This would, ideally, encourage students to help one another succeed, either in the classroom or during independently organized study groups.

- 3) Add a minor software component beyond the college's course management system to further student buy-in. Classcraft appears easy to use, and the ability to interact visually with the program (i.e. tracking progress via status bars, customizing avatars, etc.) will likely increase student motivation and participation.
- 4) Make use of "achievements"/"badges" (symbols of goal-accomplishment modeled on marks of achievement in video games) to publicly reward students and incentivize progress toward specific goals.¹³

I would encourage instructors curious about piloting such a program to try it for themselves. The risks involved in testing this in a single course are minimal and will be offset by the variety the pedagogical approach presents to both students and instructors within a department's traditional course offering.

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¹³ Badges/Achievements can be used in a myriad of ways, limited only by the creativity of the instructor. Examples include one-off badges for specific goals (earning 100% on a quiz/exam, turning in an assignment the day before its due date) or incremental badges for more long-term goals (coming to class every day for eight weeks, scoring above 80% on ten quizzes). With incremental badges, providing students with status updates toward their badge completion (e.g. "four of eight weeks completed" or "six of ten quizzes above 80% completed") can incentivize positive long-term behavior.

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APPENDIX 1: ADDITIVE GRADING SCALE

Final Grades and Character Levels will be based on the following scale:

<u>Points</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Grade</u>
0— 99	1	
100—199	2	
200—299	3	
300—399	4	
400—499	5	
500—599	6	F
600—669	7	D
670—699	7	D+
700—729	8	C-
730—769	8	C
770—799	8	C+
800—829	9	B-
830—869	9	B
870—899	9	B+
900—929	10	A-
930—969	10	A
970—1000	10	A+

As is evident from the chart (taken from the course's syllabus), the point ranges correspond directly to the standard grading scale employed by Earlham College and many other institutions (F: 50%-59%, D: 60%-66%, etc.).

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE RESEARCH PROMPTS AND RESPONSES***Character Quest, Week 2: Everybody Comes from Somewhere***

Choose a birthplace for your character.

Consult the map below for cities/regions. Once you've picked a few possible places, do some basic research about the terrain and/or local mythology (if applicable). How does this affect your character? How did your character make it from that place to Troy?

Sample Student Response: Although like my father I was born in Troy, my family is said to be originally from the countryside surrounding Mount Ida and the temple of Apollo at Gergis. Mount Ida was the area where Troy's founder Teucer is said to have settled. My ancient grandmother used to tell two stories that I personally believe to be apocryphal. The first is that our family arrived with Teucer from Crete following a family where my great-great grandmother served as a handmaiden to Teucer's daughter Batea. Her other story was that my great-grandfather served as one of the guards whom Zeus himself purposely made ill to help facilitate the abduction of Ganymede. I believe it more likely that we were a family of shepherds tending our flocks before the shadow of the mountain (like Paris) before my grandfather traveled to Troy as a young boy to become a soldier. Such stories were therefore invented to portray our family in a more ancient and heroic light.

Character Quest, Week 6: Toga! Toga! Toga!

Your character desperately needs to find some clothes.

There are several websites below. Consult them, among others of your choosing. Pick out an ensemble you think suits your character. (You should have good reasons for every decision in this process.) What clothing are you wearing? Is it dyed? How? Any jewelry? What about shoes? Hats?

I would like a physical description of your character's getup, as well as an explanation behind each article. If you are the artistic type (I am not), you may also draw your character's outfit in lieu of describing it, but you should still provide an explanation of each of the bits and pieces.

Sample Student Response: *Viridis, as per his name, wears a great deal of green. His tunica is green, his sandals (although when marching he wears boots) are green, his shield and armor are painted with bands of green over the bronze and wood and leather. As there is no Rome yet in which to be a citizen, he does not wear the toga. In ritual he wears a chiton and himation. His shield and armor both bear gorgonic eyes, and his corselet also bears a full gorgon-face emblem on the breast. His helmet is both horned and crested. Regarding the colorful clothing, the Romans ("Trojans"), like the Greeks, favored the same riotous colors as their neighbors, a fact often elided by the bleaching effects of the sun and the aesthetics of later ages.*

APPENDIX 3: REPRESENTATIVE STUDENT EVALUATION SAMPLES

Positives

- “I like additive [grading] far better...”
- “I was satisfied [with additive grading]—it helped because it was a motivator.”
- “The role-playing element of the class was engaging and fun and let us use our imaginations for the class.”
- “I really like this approach to teaching culture. That way, different people can learn about their interests.”
- “[Character quests] increased our knowledge of culture and I found them extremely engaging—and fun!”
- “[Character quests] helpfully broke up the occasional monotony of the translation. I would recommend them further.”

Negatives

- “[Additive grading was] stressful at the start of the year but ultimately I was satisfied with it.”
- “I was indifferent [to the additive grading]. It made calculating my grade a little more difficult, that was a minor complaint.”
- “I could not get motivated for the character quests and found them to be busy-work.”
- “While the format of the course was interesting, it was ultimately a distraction that hampered my primary objective of learning Latin.”

The *Tirones* Project: Mentoring New Teachers

Mary Pendergraft
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Teacher attrition is a significant problem nationally. For a decade, retention of teachers has been a greater challenge than teacher recruitment (Johnson 3). For even longer, at least ten percent of first year teachers in public schools have failed to return for a second year; by the fifth year, nearly another ten percent have left (Gray and Taie 3).¹ Novice teachers leave at a much higher rate than do more experienced ones, at least until they approach retirement age (Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley 185). While specific statistics about Latin teachers are hard to find, it is reasonable to believe that their attrition rate is similar to what studies of teachers across the country have revealed. In order to support new Latin teachers as they make the transition from novices to experienced educators, the National Committee for Latin and Greek has launched the *Tirones* Project.²

Why is this issue important? Constant turnover of teachers is expensive, because school districts use dwindling resources to recruit, hire, and train new faculty. The annual total costs of teacher turnover for Chicago public schools, for example, were estimated at over \$86 million nearly a decade ago (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future 3). Teacher turnover undermines student performance, too, and is felt throughout the whole school. In fact, high faculty turnover is a good predictor of poor student performance (Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff 22). Because their earliest years in the classroom allow teachers to become increasingly competent, when they leave while they are still honing their skills, students miss the benefits of the greater proficiency that would come with time. Teacher attrition rates, moreover, are greatest in schools with high numbers of students living in poverty (Brill and McCartney 754), that is, with high numbers of the very students who most need stability and experienced, highly skilled instructors. Initiatives that encourage teachers to remain in the classroom, it is clear, could be beneficial for both students and school systems in many ways.

¹ Ingersoll 15 and figure 4 cites a considerably greater rate of attrition. On the other hand, Hanna and Pennington 2015 find less reason for anxiety.

² The NCLG is a standing committee of the American Classical League; our website is www.promotelatin.org.

Teachers leave the profession for such varied and individual reasons that no single solution will stop the high attrition rates, or guarantee better instruction. Higher salaries, for example, do predict better retention but do not improve the quality of teachers (Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley 194). One consistently useful strategy, though, slows teacher attrition and improves the quality of instruction: offering new teachers a formal induction and mentoring program (Ingersoll and Strong 25). Even better: it's cost effective (Villar and Strong 14-15).

Much has been written about the characteristics of the best such programs, and *Tirones* can implement only some of them. We cannot provide in-building face to face mentors, or release time for beginners to meet with mentors, or classroom observations followed by suggestions for improvement.

Instead, we've undertaken two initiatives. The first aims to offer a small scale mentoring opportunity through a series of free webinars presented by master teachers on a variety of topics. Piloted in spring 2015, the series had two sessions focused on preparing students for the A. P. exam, Dawn LaFon addressing writing essays and Jill Crooker, literal translation. The final webinar of the semester was called "Evaluating this year, planning for the next: Things I wish I'd known in my first years of teaching"; in it Keely Lake and Linda Montross reflected on their own experience as teachers and things they had found valuable. In fall 2015 Maureen Lamb shared her strategies for employing technology and Vicky Jordan explained how she teaches her students the skills for reading complex prose. The audiences asked specific questions, or sought advice for applying new ideas in their own teaching. Participants were invited to offer comments after each session and they ranged from expressions of appreciation for the usefulness of a talk's utility to quite moving responses, like these: "It was a good reminder of the nobility of the profession," and "As an isolated Latin teacher, I am surprised how much the enthusiasm and sound judgment reflected in the voices of the presenters affected me." All six presenters willingly shared their email addresses, paving the way for ongoing relationships. It's hard to say what the line is between friendship and mentoring; as Latin teachers we all have the ability to provide one another support and assistance even over great distances, and one goal of *Tirones* is to facilitate the growth of a community of teachers.

Our second activity has been to sponsor panels at professional meetings, focused on personal experiences of having a mentor or acting as a mentor for someone else. The collection of papers that follows represents the first such panel, at

CAMWS in Boulder, CO, on March 28, 2015. The presenters were Alison Orlebeke of the University of Colorado, Kendra Henry of Colorado College, Daniel Leon of the University of Illinois, and Ben Burtzos of the Thomas MacLaren School. While the experiences they described were varied—directing a teaching methods course, team-teaching with a senior or junior partner, learning Latin while teaching school—each speaker emphasized the intergenerational nature of the mentoring process, beginning with a tribute to his or her own mentors, and sharing a sense of responsibility to their own students and of gratitude for the generosity of their teachers. The panel resembled a family reunion; Kendra, a skilled and experienced teacher, and Dan as a post-doctoral fellow had taught a class together; Dan in turn had been Ben’s mentor. I’d like to quote here a paragraph from Kendra’s presentation, where she gives an example of the reciprocity involved in mentoring.

In a professional relationship we all have much to give to a colleague and we learn from each other. For example, my co-panelist, Dan Leon, asked me as a “seasoned” teacher, to observe him in a class we co-taught at Colorado College. I was really looking for ways to help him, but I think I ended up receiving the benefit. His guidelines to students for their oral presentations were excellent and his idea of having the students write a continued story in Latin was a new one for me. The stories are passed around for corrections and a new group adds to the story. Mentoring is a **reciprocal** activity.

All the reflections were thoughtful and inspiring; I am very grateful to John Gruber-Miller for making them available to a wider audience. The participants’ enthusiasm has been contagious. The final paper in the collection, presented at the 2015 ACL Summer Institute, is a status report on a new mentoring project in California: Katie Robinson describes her collaboration with Katherine Chew to develop a mentoring network through their regional classics organization.

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Mentoring and the Latin Teaching Methods Course

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Teaching Latin is hard work, but it is also very rewarding work. It is exhilarating to pass on our love of the beautiful Latin language to a new generation. Teaching Latin is also creative work. I always promise my Latin teaching methods students that when, not if, they become Latin teachers themselves, they will never be bored.

In the classroom, Latin is most definitely a living language: not only do we watch our students grow and move on, but our teaching methods themselves evolve; so do our textbooks and the tests we give. We also change; like our students, we grow, we get better, but we also go through ups and downs, just like our students. I do not think I know any educator who does not experiment, or who teaches the same lesson or the same text twice in exactly the same way. By the time many Latin teachers retire, if not sooner, they have virtually written their own textbooks.

As a result of this creativity and experimentation in teaching, in addition to the uplifting successes, there are also errors and failures. Miscalculations, misunderstandings, and mistakes are a normal, even essential, part of the job of being a teacher. Here is just a small example: a methods student who designed a lesson on the passive imperative told me that she could hardly believe how many times she had to print out her handout; each time she looked at what she had printed, she found a new mistake. And yes, there were still mistakes on her handout. This realization, both the frustration and the acceptance of flaws, was itself part of the lesson.

Becoming and being a teacher requires a powerful belief in oneself and one's abilities in spite of mistakes. It also requires self-affirmation in the face of frustration over circumstances over which one has no control. A Latin teaching methods course that treats students as members of a team rather than as competing individuals can help to remove that fear of failure, particularly of making a public mistake. I am especially excited about my methods class this year, an equal mix of undergraduate and graduate students, because they do not just rely on me to be "the sage on the stage" or constantly seek my approval, but are very comfortable correcting and receiving corrections from each other. Unlike regular Latin classes that often focus exclusively on one's ability as a translator and facility with grammatical terms, a

methods course has a dual identity as both a Latin class and an education course. This double role is a challenge to manage, but I believe that a methods class has the obligation to nurture the confidence of a future educator, confidence which, to be honest, has sometimes been shattered in the language-focused classes. For example, I find that students are actually eager to translate a passage if I first project it in front of the room and guide the whole class in an open discussion about salient features, from the topic and context, to thematic vocabulary and surprising syntax. After this dialogue, all participants feel equally primed to tackle a precise word-for-word translation. My personal teaching theme for my classes this semester, both the first-year Latin class and the methods class, is “no fear.” I communicate this theme to my students often, and results are increased enthusiasm and engagement.

In this perspective, I will focus on the psychosocial aspect of a teaching methods class. I believe that one of the important qualities that such a class can pass on to our future teachers is empathy. This quality, more than anything else, will show our students that we care about them, we care about their learning Latin, and we believe in their ability to become teachers themselves. This quality of empathy is one which I would like my Latin methods students to carry into their own classrooms because only in the Latin classroom are future Latin teachers born. There is a poster in our department here at CU Boulder that says, “Why study Latin?” All of the familiar enticements are listed: improve your vocabulary and critical thinking skills, score well on standardized tests, get into law school, medical school, etc. But there is one really important item missing which I would like to add: become a Latin teacher: you will have a fabulous, exciting career. Convincing people to make that commitment, to become a teacher, especially in a discipline that many consider to be optional or even frivolous, is another function of a Latin teaching methods class. As Kenneth Kitchell proposes at the end of the opening article in *Latin for the 21st Century*, titled “The Great Latin Debate: The Futility of Utility,” it is the *experience* of studying Latin that will ensure the survival of our discipline (13).

One of the ways that a methods class can nurture new teachers is through mentoring. And I do not just mean that I am the mentor. Students make wonderful mentors to each other, and I too can introduce them to and encourage them to find other mentors. Mentoring is commonly defined as a developmental relationship that is embedded within a career context. Note that this simple definition does not necessarily indicate any kind of differentiated status between the parties. I consider myself a mentor to all of my students, even my first year Latin students, and to me

that means that I am a partner and a facilitator in their learning. You cannot force someone to learn vocabulary, but you can show someone the myriad ways that it can be done. You can provide praise even for small successes. I do not use the common classroom greeting, “*salvete, discipuli*,” but prefer “*salvete, comites*.” I tell my students that the greeting, “Hail, fellow travelers!” means that the study of Latin takes us all on an incredible journey together. I also consider my students as my mentors. Because I am open to this possibility, every day they teach me how to be a better teacher. For me, the best kind of mentoring relationship is one where the two parties behave as co-mentors, where each person has something truly valuable to offer to the other.

When I began to think about this topic, I went to the source, as many have done: Homer. Yes, everything goes back to Homer. And yes, the idea and the name of Mentor goes back to *The Odyssey*. Athena disguises herself, first as Mentos, then as Mentor, in order to guide and advise Telemachus, the son of Odysseus. What can the goddess of wisdom teach us about the project of mentoring? The first thing that Athena does at the beginning of *The Odyssey* is to confront authority, Zeus, on behalf of her beloved humans. She reveals herself as an advocate for a particular Ithacan family, Odysseus, Penelope, and Telemachus, who are all stuck in one way or another. Throughout the opening books of *The Odyssey*, Athena shows us that a mentor must work hard to be an ally and even a defender and protector of those she cares about. As any educator can tell you, we must be ready to serve in the same role for our students.

Young Telemachus sits, helpless and unhappy, among his mother’s suitors, daydreaming about what his father would do to punish them, if he ever came home. After a small hesitation, he takes the initiative and approaches a visitor, who happens to be Athena disguised as Mentos, king of another island. Telemachus is polite, but he is also incapacitated. He has no idea what the future has in store for him. He is not even sure he is the son of Odysseus. For all of his young life he has been surrounded by men who are determined to diminish him in every possible way. Some of our students are not unlike Telemachus, though we might not even know it. Athena as Mentos gives the young man hope that Odysseus will return, praises him and tells him how like his father he is: “But you must be, by your looks, Odysseus’ boy? The way your head is shaped, the fine eyes—yes, how like him” (8).¹ She does not

¹ All quotations from *The Odyssey* are from the translation of Robert Fitzgerald. Numbers in parentheses are the page numbers in the Vintage Classics edition of 1990.

evaluate his worthiness or put him to the test or demand that he prove himself. Her assumption is always of his innate worthiness.

At first Telemachus resists the praise; he questions again whether Odysseus is really his father, wishes he had a different father, and declares that his father is dead. Athena/Mentes listens and expresses empathy for Telemachus' difficult situation, calling the suitors "arrogant... gluttons" (8). Telemachus again insists that Odysseus has died and denies his paternity. He sees no future for himself. In spite of Telemachus' negativity, Athena/Mentes does not give up. Instead, she tells Telemachus an inspiring story about his father and offers him a way forward. She gives him a concrete multi-step plan of action: call an assembly, make a speech, get a boat ready, visit your father's friends, and gather information so that you can make a decision whether to wait for his return or not. Next, she gives him an example of a peer, Agamemnon's son, Orestes, who avenged his father. She ends with an encouraging compliment, "you are tall and well set-up, I see; be brave...and men in times to come will speak of you respectfully" (10). Finally, she models appropriate behavior: "Now I must join my ship; my crew will grumble if I keep them waiting" (10). Homer's narrator sums up Athena's visit: "But as she went she put new spirit in him, a new dream of his father, clearer now" (11). In her role as mentor, Athena is a good listener. She allows Telemachus to express his doubt and frustrations. She does not judge, but is persistent and kind. She knows that what Telemachus needs is someone who will affirm his identity, boost his self-esteem, envision a different future, and articulate a way to get there.

The positive influence of Athena/Mentes brings about a remarkable and immediate change in Telemachus. When Penelope scolds the minstrel for singing about homecomings, Telemachus shows a new capacity for empathy. He now realizes that he is not alone and not the only one grieving. Penelope is amazed at the transformation. When Telemachus argues with the suitors, who are astounded at his new confidence, he manages to hold his ground. In the assembly the next day, Telemachus now has the courage to speak out in public about the injustices of the suitors. He defends his mother and warns the suitors that they will get the punishment that they deserve. After the prophet Halitherses interprets a pair of eagles as a sign of Odysseus' imminent return, one suitor insults the seer and declares that Odysseus is dead. But Telemachus remains "clear-headed" (25) and announces his intention to travel to Pylos and Sparta for news of his father. When Odysseus' old companion, Mentor, castigates the assembly for not lifting a finger to help Telemachus, he too

is put down by a suitor, who suggests that even if Odysseus did come home, they would kill him. As for Telemachus, he is not even capable of going abroad. Perhaps Telemachus' first public speech has not been entirely successful, but at least he now knows that he has two advocates, the prophet Halitherses and Mentor, who will stand up for him. That knowledge is enough to keep him going. When Athena hears his prayer for further support, she adopts the human form of Mentor. Her work as ally and guide is not finished. Once again, she praises the young man for his spirit and good sense. She reaffirms for Telemachus that he is Odysseus' true son and possesses his fine qualities. She assures him of safety on his travels and promises doom for the suitors, naysayers whom he should just ignore. She even says that she will find the ship and crew and sail with him, and instructs him to gather provisions. Nobody ever said that being a mentor is easy.

At home, Telemachus shows for the second time that the support of a mentor has given him confidence. When a laughing suitor tells Telemachus, "Come on, get over it, no more grim thoughts, but feast and drink with me, the way you used to" (28), the young man replies assertively, "Antinoos, I cannot see myself again taking a quiet dinner in this company. Isn't it enough that you could strip my house under my very nose when I was young? Now that I know, being grown, what others say, I understand it all, and my heart is full" (28). At this point, the goddess of wisdom does something remarkable; she disguises herself as her protégé, taking on Telemachus' own form as she secures a ship captain and crew. She puts a spell on the suitors so they fall asleep and then returns as Mentor. She tells Telemachus that all is ready and to get moving. Homer's narrator describes the scene: "Pallas Athena turned like the wind, running ahead of him. He followed in her footsteps down to the seaside, where they found the ship...Telemakhos, now strong in the magic, cried: 'Come with me, friends, and get our rations down!'" (31). Once on the ship, he sits beside Mentor as they row away side by side. Athena provides a wind and Telemachus issues commands. A mentor is a guide, a model, and a partner.

Telemachus, a young man who has never left home, has literally been launched. And yet, Athena's work as Mentor is not finished. What more can she do? She has given Telemachus a new belief in himself and a plan; now she must provide contacts and introductions. As with human mentors, Athena cannot always be there herself, but she can build a network of other relationships. Telemachus and Mentor reach Pylos in the middle of a nine-bull sacrifice. When Telemachus sees this incredible scene, for all his progress, he is intimidated and refuses to get off the

boat. Again, Athena/Mentor is not critical; she simply reminds him why he came on this trip and tells him to approach Nestor “with courtesy” (35). He replies, “‘Mentor, how can I do it, how approach him? I have no practice in elaborate speeches, and for a young man to interrogate an old man seems disrespectful.’ But the grey-eyed goddess said: ‘Reason and heart will give you words, Telemakhos...’ so she went on quickly, and he followed her” (36). The strangers are welcomed as guests and served. After the meal, Mentor, as the elder visitor, is asked to pray. After praying, “She passed the beautiful wine cup to Telemakhos, who tipped the wine and prayed as she had done” (37). This beautiful sentence conveys the essence of mentorship: a mentor offers her own practice as an example worthy of imitation. Telemachus has much more to learn, but he is no longer the boy simultaneously believing that his father is dead and daydreaming that he will return after nine years at sea. Through the influence of Mentor, he is becoming someone who could deal with the suitors on his own, or perhaps with support from his newfound friends. Athena/Mentor’s final instruction is that Nestor send Telemachus on to Sparta, where he will make more important connections. She transforms herself into a seahawk that all recognize as divine and flies off. Nestor assures Telemachus that Athena has been with him and all will be well. He plans another sacrifice to honor her.

I suggested earlier that the mentor/mentee relationship is a partnership. How does that fit with the picture in *The Odyssey* of a powerful goddess disguised as an older man coaching a tyrannized young man with no clue and no resources? To this I respond simply that gods and humans are in a reciprocal relationship. If humans were not around and willing to worship them and make sacrifices to them, the gods would not be here either. Though as a teacher I am in a position of authority, a sort of goddess over my students, and required to evaluate their performance and give them grades, I would not be here if my students were not here. We need the support of our students just as much as they need ours, because if we do not give them heart, as Athena does for Telemachus, we will not have any students to teach.

How can a Latin teaching methods class fulfill the functions of mentoring I have been looking at through the lens of *The Odyssey*? First, the instructor of a course on teaching must be especially aware of her significance as a model for teaching. For example, pronunciation of Latin should be correct. Assignments should be clear and well developed. Class time should be organized and valuable. Second, the methods course should introduce students to the professional expectations of our field. We do this through a study of the *Standards for Classical Language Learning*,

the *Standards for Latin Teacher Preparation*, and our state language teaching standards. We also study the AP Latin curriculum guide, the National Latin Exam, and ALIRA, the Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment. Third, the course should help future teachers begin to form their identity as teachers. I do this by having students read, report on, and express their opinions about a wide variety of Latin textbooks, new and old, that use a wide variety of methods. At the end of the course, they write their own statements of teaching philosophy. Fourth, the methods teacher should strive to create a positive, optimistic, and affirming atmosphere where students are not judged but encouraged to talk about their own challenges with the Latin language, the challenges of teaching this language, and to share their experiences and make suggestions. For example, a collaborative project as simple as breaking up a Latin passage into gradable syntactic segments (in imitation of the grading of the AP Latin exam) encourages students to reflect on and share their concerns about subjectivity in grading and the fairness (or not) of various kinds of assessments, including the AP Latin Exam. Fifth, the methods course should provide ample opportunities for students to be creative while practicing their skills and getting feedback. My students do this through mini-lessons on morphology and syntax and by analyzing and presenting passages of Caesar and Virgil to their classmates. In the course of the mini-lessons, students learn that listening with respect to their fellow presenters is just as important as doing a presentation themselves. Sixth, a methods class exposes future Latin teachers to new ideas about how to teach Latin, so that they are not stuck in old ruts using outdated methods. They do this by reading and discussing pedagogical articles by other teachers about how they teach Latin. When students discuss the articles in pairs and plan together how to present information to the larger group, they are beginning the process of becoming mentors to those who are their future colleagues in the profession. Seventh, the methods class can provide contacts, introductions, and additional role models. I achieve this by inviting local teachers to come to our class to talk about the details of running a Latin program. I also introduce the next generation of teachers to the broader community that exists to support them, our state Colorado Classics Association, the American Classical League, the National Committee for Latin and Greek, CAMWS, and SCS.

In conclusion, I wish to thank my students, who teach me so much, and my mentor, Barbara Hill, an extraordinarily wise person who, like Athena, embodies the meaning of mentorship. Becoming a mentor, and being mentored, is truly life changing. I would not be where I am today were it not for her.

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Mentoring from the Middle

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Readers of this journal are not likely to offer much resistance when I write that teaching is extremely challenging, both in terms of practical skills for designing and managing classes, and in terms of the sheer amount of energy and sustained emotional effort it requires. As a result, mentoring is especially important for new teachers who are often overwhelmed by a multitude of factors, but particularly by the experience of being in charge of a classroom for the first time, an environment that probably seemed comfortable and familiar until it became their responsibility. Much of what follows will be applicable to the teaching profession generally, not just Latin, although I will address in some detail a particular experience that happened in a Latin classroom towards the end of this paper. The main goal of this discussion is to show how mentoring, like teaching, can happen in both formal and informal contexts. A ‘mentoring moment’ can arise as unexpectedly as a ‘teaching moment,’ and it is a crucial part of a teacher’s job to watch out for such moments so as to turn them into productive interactions. In particular, I will emphasize that the role of ‘mentor’ can be taken on quite early in one’s career, since the contributions of potential mentors are so varied.

All of us pass between a number of different social roles and it can be easy to think of yourself as more or less permanently entrenched in one role, even if you are attempting to move into another (as in the case of moving from student to teacher). Mentoring programs are usually specifically designed to manage such transitions, and they are often highly structured as well, involving a formalized pairing of mentor and mentee that lasts for a defined period of time and may even cover defined issues such as time management or work-life balance. I have been the beneficiary of many such relationships, and I will address them in due course, but I am particularly interested in a less formal kind of mentoring that happens regularly but often without the participants even realizing what they are doing. Things as simple as a conversation over lunch with a friend, or a passing remark from a senior colleague in another department, if they occur at the right time and in the right way can be immensely helpful, especially if the person in need of advice is ready to receive it. An area where many of us could improve is in recognizing such interactions for what

they are: mentoring. Without the intentionality of a mentoring relationship, miscommunications can easily arise on both sides, as I will discuss below, ultimately diminishing the value of those interactions.

The following story about teaching illustrates what I mean. I can remember with great clarity the very first class I ever taught. It was in January of 2004, and it was a discussion section for a Greek mythology class. I was a 23-year-old first-year graduate student and I had received precisely one day of training before walking into that classroom, but, all things considered, I was pretty confident. Then class actually started. I went through a few procedural matters, did a little ice breaker activity, and began to cover the day's material. I remember a lot about that first class: names, faces, the horrible green tile walls, but the thing I remember most is my own reaction when I saw students writing down what I was saying. All my preparation to that point had been focused on simply getting through the experience. How would I fill up the time? What would I do if a student asked me a question I could not answer? How would I make the students like me? But when I saw those students taking notes, it suddenly came home to me that I had a real responsibility to them—that, as improbable as it seemed to me, they saw me as an authority figure and a person from whom they could expect to learn sophisticated skills and concepts. My preparation changed after that, and I began to focus more on what my responsibilities were, what my students needed from me, and how I could make sure that as many of them as possible got what they needed. In short, I became much more aware of what I was doing at the head of the classroom and, as a result, much more intentional in how I approached it.

These were good changes and in the long run have made me a much better teacher, but my immediate strategy for dealing with the sudden realization of my new role as teacher was distinctly unhealthy. I was terrified that I would fail in my task, and I compensated by drastically over-preparing for every class meeting. This level of preparation seemed like virtuous self-sacrifice at the time, but it was undeniably destructive. I was working late into the evening almost every day, my own course work suffered, and the whole idea of work-life balance was close to non-existent. Although my supervising professor was very nice and approachable and obviously willing to help—and for all the help he gave me in our meetings I am extremely grateful—at the time I was still fresh out of college myself and totally intimidated by all professors. I had a hard time getting up my courage to talk to them about anything, and most often I just avoided it if at all possible, even when I

knew I needed help. I was not ready to receive the help I am sure they would gladly have given. So I turned to fellow graduate students instead for advice on all kinds of things and in their generosity they responded warmly. In this case, I did not have a formal mentoring network set up, but I was fortunate to be surrounded by people who were not only knowledgeable, but willing to give extensively of their time. They became a network of ad hoc peer mentors for me.

Those are people that I reached out to for help, but there were others, too, who saw me struggling and offered unsolicited advice that made a real difference for me. In particular, I remember two senior graduate students who, on separate occasions, saw me working late in the library and encouraged me to go home and get some rest, assuring me that everything would be fine even if I made a mistake in class and reminding me that all of us do better work when we are well rested and happy. Because those graduate students seemed to me like more successful versions of myself, I followed their advice and began to limit my working hours. I still have a tendency to be a bit of a workaholic, but I have gotten much better about it and my improvement started with those people I respected and admired going out of their way to give a little guidance when they saw it was needed. In this instance, informal, unstructured mentoring—taken in small impromptu doses—had a big impact on my ability to do my job properly, and also to do it in a sustainable way. In short, my ad hoc mentors, whether they knew it or not, prevented me from burning myself out just as my career was getting started, a well-known danger for early career teachers (Chang).

More recently, from 2012 to 2014, I held a post-doctoral fellowship in Classics at Colorado College, where my duties entailed teaching, research, and broad participation in the life of the department and the college. In this fellowship, and at Colorado College in general, mentoring is an extremely prominent element. I had a formal mentor assigned to me at the college, no less authoritative a person than the Associate Dean of the Faculty; and I was sent to a professional development conference each year where faculty and administrators from other colleges critiqued my job application materials and talked with me about ways to establish myself in academia. Back at Colorado College I had other de facto mentors as well: the chair of my department regularly visited my office to see how things were going, observed my teaching, and offered advice where needed; my other colleagues in the department also periodically checked in with me; the dean's office invited me to events specially designed for junior faculty; and so on in that fashion. This is a normal

feature of life at Colorado College. All the formal mentoring has created a sort of mentoring culture in which people go out of their way to try to help new young faculty, or at least that was my experience. Senior faculty from other departments reached out to me so that I got a diversity of perspectives both on the college and on the academy in general, junior faculty in other departments showed me the ropes in other ways and gave me a social outlet, and before long I had a large network of people I could approach for advice on a wide range subjects. Most importantly, I felt entirely comfortable doing so.

In such an environment it can be difficult to make a distinction between talking about work with a colleague and ‘mentoring.’ Nevertheless, I think it is important to point out that a sense of intentionality, an awareness of one’s possible role as mentor, is a key factor in making sure you are giving good advice, and, when you are on the receiving end, in making sure you are interpreting advice in the right way. If you are just talking about work with a colleague, you might end up blowing off steam and saying things you do not really mean, or only partially mean, but if the person you are talking to looks to you for advice on a regular basis, how are they to know which of your complaints are genuine and which are merely the verbalizations of a frustrating day? Misunderstandings can easily occur, and in an unguarded moment you could end up hindering the professional development of a person you would prefer to help.

This distinction (informal mentoring vs. unmarked conversation) is something that did not occur to me at all until I was asked to participate in a panel at the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South *as a mentor*. It had never crossed my mind to think of myself as such. I consider myself an early-career scholar, someone who is still in need of good mentors and ready to take the advice of more seasoned teachers and scholars. But I have been teaching for 11 years and there are plenty of people in the profession who are newer than me, so it should not seem strange to me that they look to me for advice just as I looked to more experienced people (and still do). It was like that first day of class all over again—a sudden realization that I have to watch what I say and what behaviors I model. I try to maintain a professional demeanor in general, but who knows how often I have let my guard down and missed an opportunity to help someone who needed it just because I was not thinking of myself as a potential mentor at that particular moment? Who knows how often I have blown hot air while someone was seeking serious advice? Intentionality and awareness as they relate to mentor-

ing need to be bigger features of my professional conduct going forward, and I am already working on that.

The invitation I just mentioned arose from an experience I had in the summer of 2014 when I was teaching introductory Latin at Colorado College, the last class I taught there. This class was a great example of the back-and-forth of mentoring. I co-taught it with Kendra Henry, who is a master teacher of many years' experience from whom I knew I would be able to learn a lot. When we first started planning the class I fell comfortably into the role of mentee and listened when she talked about what had worked for her in introductory Latin in the past. She was very generous in providing such advice, and teaching materials as well. I taught the first half of the class and she taught the second, and during my half Kendra came by once just to meet the students. Ultimately she decided to sit in for a session. I was happy to be observed by someone so knowledgeable, and after that session I asked for her opinion of how I had conducted the class that day and we had a productive correspondence. Working closely with Kendra benefited me in many ways, but one of our students, Ben Burtzos, added an uncommon element to the class.

Ben is a Colorado College alumnus who had asked to sit in on the class entirely because he wanted the challenge of learning a new language, but he teaches at a school that offers Latin and after he made this arrangement with us the school found itself in need of another Latin teacher. Since Ben was planning to learn Latin anyway, his principal saw an easy solution to that problem. As a result, what started out as a fun summer project turned into an intense program of professional development for Ben: learning Latin in June and July in preparation for teaching it in August. Because of this professional motivation (and his natural disposition as well) Ben was an eager student. He regularly did large amounts of extra work so he could get the practice and he also regularly met with me outside of class. During these meetings, we certainly talked about Latin, but our conversations often turned to teaching as well. I had a lot to say about what Latin students struggle with and how I like to teach the language, but Ben is an experienced teacher himself. He had taught history and literature for two years at that point, and we traded a lot of stories and tips and theories pertaining to running a successful class, often focusing on our shared experience of being relatively young teachers.

As I describe it now, it sounds a lot like a mentoring relationship, wherein I was the slightly senior partner. I did not recognize that at the time, but Kendra did and it was her suggestion that we present our experiences in a mentoring panel that

opened my eyes to what I had been doing. The conversations Ben and I had were, I hope, beneficial to us both, and the advice I was able to give from my experience in the Latin classroom hopefully contributed to what has been a successful transition for him, as he moved from his roles as a Latin student and teacher of non-Latin subjects to Latin teacher. My mentoring network temporarily extended quite a bit through the accidents of that summer Latin course. For a time I gained a new mentor in Kendra and a mentee in Ben who also functioned for me as a peer mentor. The flexibility and temporary nature of the relationships (since I was about to move to a new job in Illinois) underscore the complexity of a good mentoring network. The roles one takes on in such a network can overlap and complement each other in productive ways, but the more aware you are of the roles you are playing, the better you are able to play them.

This experience worked out well in spite of my imperfect recognition of the roles I was playing, in large part because the personalities of all the people involved meshed nicely. But the idea of a mentoring network—one that involves people who are more senior than you, less senior than you, more or less on the same level as you, and all contribute to the network in different ways—brings with it a powerful need for awareness of the multiple roles that can be played by the same person. Everybody knows that mentoring is important. New teachers are often encouraged to seek out mentors; senior colleagues are generally aware that it is part of their job to help out the younger members of the profession; but for those of us who stand in the messy, grey middle between those two poles, it is all too easy to be oblivious to our ability to help our less experienced colleagues. If we extend the concept of mentoring beyond formal pairings to include a whole range of social and professional interactions, it will quickly become clear how often ‘mentoring moments’ arise. These informal, temporary forms of mentoring are every bit as important as more structured ongoing relationships—often in ways that are quite distinct from the training provided by a formal pairing—and the more aware we all are of how such interactions work, the easier it is to put them to good use in the service of building a strong new generation of teachers. And that, of course, is a goal we all share.

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My Own Private Ithaca: *Mens*, Mentor, and My Stumble into the Classics

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I am an accidental Latin teacher.

By that I don't mean that my existence is somehow questionable. I mean that, although perhaps logical at each step along the way, the path to my being here and speaking to you now is idiosyncratic to the point that, had I not lived it, I would have doubted its likelihood myself. Yet here I sit, tasked with speaking about mentorship in classical education. I do not intend to revolutionize the way that educational mentorship is thought of, since my own experience in the Classics world is still in its infancy. I feel that the best I can do is to tell you my story, and hopefully along the way, share some of the truths that I have learned in the process.

I graduated from The Colorado College in 2011 with a degree in Political Science and English. Although I studied some classical literature, particularly Homer, I left college fairly ignorant of the ancient world. After graduating, I spent a year in Chicago doing college prep with bright kids from rough neighborhoods. That year, my involvement with the classics was limited, at best; much of my job involved event planning and volunteer coordinating. The students at my school were wonderful, but I wanted to be in a classroom full-time, so after one year I decided to look for something new.

In the fall of 2012, I took a position in Colorado Springs at the Thomas MacLaren School. MacLaren is a public charter school, and its curricular focus is very much in line with traditional great books programs. Several things about teaching at MacLaren are unusual; first, the whole faculty shares one office. I was leery of this arrangement initially, since I often prefer solitude and like to prepare my lessons on my own, not packed like a sardine into a room full of grammarians plotting their lessons while humming and crunching on granola bars. But the culture of the faculty as a whole has consistently functioned to preserve a peaceful working environment. Instead of being ostracized as the "new guy," I was immediately welcomed into the faculty room. Second, and more pertinently, the faculty and administration

at MacLaren consistently place a great deal of focus on establishing a productive culture within the walls of our school. To that end, the faculty are presented not just as teachers, but as lifelong learners. We like to say that our school is dedicated to the good, the true, and the beautiful. It's one thing to say that phrase, but something else entirely to live what it means over three years; in my time at MacLaren, I have become convinced that the only reason twenty-seven highly opinionated people can share a noisy faculty room without wanting to kill each other daily is that we are all genuinely interested, not in gossip, but in ideas and ideals that are truly worth pursuing. Last year, for example, the whole faculty read Dante's *Inferno* and conducted a series of seminars. This isn't just our "professional development"; this is an integral part of how we interact on a daily basis.

Perhaps as a result of this faculty culture, every summer since I've been back in Colorado I've set a particular goal for myself to accomplish—kind of a flexibly-enforced project of self-improvement. Two years ago, for instance, I read a book per week for the duration of break. Somewhere around May of 2014, while I thought about what my new project would be, an idea struck me at the best possible time—over a beer. I go to a pub trivia contest once a week, and several of my teammates over the past couple of years have been Colorado College professors, including Dr. Daniel Leon. This particular night, Dan mentioned that he was teaching a Latin I course over the summer, along with Kendra Henry. After some discussion, Dan agreed to let me audit the class.

This is where my life started to get a little bit weird. The first day of classes also happened to be my last day of work for the school year, so my head of school needed to approve of my missing meetings to attend class. No luck on missing meetings, but "Ben," she said, "if you're taking Latin this summer, how do you feel about teaching it in the fall?" I was somewhat taken aback by this, but as I said before, this is a close-knit faculty. If my head of school needed me to teach Latin, then a Latin teacher she would get. The class thus became less of a summer "project" and more of a summer "learn an entire language with some level of mastery so that letting you teach 6th graders won't be a huge mistake." Less than two months after starting my own Latin studies, I stepped into my classroom as the teacher instead of the student. Thankfully, I had the guidance of our two resident Latinists at MacLaren to help me continue to learn and to pass along this language to my students. (An aside—on a faculty of twenty-seven, we have six Latin teachers. It is an unusual school.)

Over the past twelve months, I have had some time to reflect on what it means to be both a teacher and a student, or, to use the more formal terms, a mentor and a mentee. In fact, before I even go on, I'd like to take a moment to analyze that term "mentor" itself. Its earliest usage, of course, refers to Homer's Mentor, the grizzled old adviser to Telemachus, and the temporary avatar for Athena on Ithaca. Athena, though she clearly knows exactly what has happened to Odysseus, does not tell the young man; rather, she encourages Telemachus to venture and to discover for himself. The role of Mentor here is not simply empty words. Telemachus must learn not by hearing, but by doing.

Since I've spent the last ten months or so speed-learning Latin, it's also very difficult for me not to think of the word "mentor" in a manner reminiscent of *mens, mentis* in that language. The English word "mind" is fairly apparent here, as is the word's association with the MENSA organization. I think both of these connections are appropriate. Isn't, after all, one main role of a mentor to communicate knowledge? to improve the student's mental capabilities? However, I also want to emphasize another connotation that *mens, mentis* can have: courage. Like Telemachus setting out in search of truth, all who pursue wisdom possess a certain courage. They are sailing into uncharted waters, and by virtue of the act alone should be commended.

I realize that I'm playing pretty fast and loose with the etymology of "mentor" here. My hope is not to impose some fussy literalism onto the word, but to ask you to remember, when you find yourself in a mentor position, that yours must be an active role. Your task is to welcome your ward into the great conversation you help lead—a conversation that is lofty and worthwhile, and difficult. At its core, the act of mentoring is necessarily an inclusive undertaking. The relationship between mentor and mentee resembles far less that of a master and an apprentice, and more that of a guide and his less-experienced companion. As a teacher, I do not aim to teach students to be exactly like me; rather, I try to help them develop into equals, capable themselves of leading me to a greater understanding of the true, the good, and the beautiful.

I do not, however, place one hundred percent of the responsibility for a successful working relationship on the mentor, not by a long shot. Think for a moment about the thought process involved for a student who truly cares about a subject and has sought out help: first, the student must admit ignorance, which I can attest is not always the easiest thing to do. Second, the student must possess the curios-

ity and passion to improve herself – more on that in a moment. Finally, she must demonstrate that courage of which I spoke earlier; the strength to venture and to risk failure.

I spend a good deal of time answering one question posed to me by students and parents: “Why does this school require students to study Latin?” I have a number of (rote and uninspiring) answers to that question; I could tell them that studying Latin teaches precision and study skills, that it helps in learning other languages, that the study of Latin has a positive correlation with higher test scores, and so on. But these answers have never seemed totally convincing to me, since I had no utilitarian purpose in mind whatsoever when I decided to learn Latin. It just plain seemed like fun, and although teaching it is now part of my job, that’s still how I try to think of it.

When I was a freshman or sophomore in college, one of my advisors told me about a student she had worked with who was struggling. He couldn’t write a cohesive paper to save his life, but he knew baseball inside and out. I mean, he loved the game, went to dozens of games every year, and played for the club team. She told him, “Write about baseball.” And he did. Every essay for the rest of that year was at least tangentially about baseball. Not only did the student receive better grades, but he learned how to write an essay. This is an extreme example, of course; it is easy to be passionate about a game like baseball, which is, even by non-fans, often considered “fun.” But that’s not really the point.

The point is this: it doesn’t matter what a student has passion for. As long as he or she has passion, the roles of both mentor and mentee are clear: the student will strive to improve in the direction of his interests, and the mentor works to ensure that the student is welcomed into the great conversation. Because that passion—that courage, that desire to learn—is an integral part of humanity. So whether you are teaching a student to read Ovid or to write an essay, or simply to be more awake and alive to the world every day, you are helping to bring one more considerate, thoughtful voice to the universe.

It is more clear to me than ever that my work as a student is not over, nor is my understanding of my task as a mentor. In fact, I hope the day never comes where either of those situations occurs—as Heraclitus would remind us, the river of our life is ever-changing, and there is no end to the experiences we can have if we choose to continue stepping into it.

We are bounded only by our temporality. One of my favorite poems is T.S. Eliot’s “Little Gidding.” In it, he gives us this thought:

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

When I read this verse, I am reminded that in the comparatively brief moments of sentience we have, it is our responsibility to venture, to explore and to examine, both within and without ourselves.

I want to leave you with just a few final thoughts.

To the potential mentors (that is to say, all of us): remember that superior knowledge can only take you so far. A student who seeks out your guidance, who asks tough questions, who writes the difficult paper instead of the easy one, who works hard not for the grade but for the process itself has already shown humility, courage, and passion. Make an active effort to engage, to understand, and to empathize with this student. You may be nearing the end of your particular odyssey, but before you set out to plant your oar, take a moment to help another begin her journey.

To the potential students (that is to say, all of us): It is not enough to rely on your teachers, your professors, and your advisors to provide the answers. Like Telemachus, you must seek out your own path to the truth. But if you allow the right person to help you along the way, your own private Ithaca can be brighter than you've ever imagined.

Latin has a particular quotable quality, and since studying Latin is, after all, how I've arrived here, I hope you'll indulge me in closing with one pithy phrase of my own devising:

Mors mentis mors animi est.

The death of the mind, of courage, is the death of the soul.

The California Mentoring Project¹

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PREFACE (ROBINSON)

I have always enjoyed teaching and have long sensed the importance of connecting and sharing with other teachers on a regular basis. Over the years, I have acquired many new methods, activities, and resources from colleagues whom I have met at meetings, conferences, and less formal gatherings. I quickly realized that this sharing and mentoring went both ways and was not dependent upon the person's age, longevity, or even the specific language they taught. I learned that if I stayed open to new ideas and, more recently, to emerging technologies, I could bring new energy and more effective methodologies into my classroom. Lately, as I have been approaching retirement age and have become quite intent upon finding a skilled, enthusiastic, and energetic teacher to take over my program, it has become even more clear to me that California would benefit greatly from two things: a way to encourage more Classics graduates to become teachers, and a mentoring program with sufficient breadth and depth to support these new teachers, as well as our current Latin and Greek teachers and their programs. I wanted to become involved in achieving these worthy goals.

Last year, when Dr. Mary Pendergraft spearheaded the [Tirones website](#) as an initiative of the National Committee for Latin and Greek, I watched with interest. This year, she challenged me, "Katie, I know you are worried about the future.

¹ Katie Robinson presented an earlier version of this report at the American Classical League's 2015 Institute at the University of Connecticut, as part of a panel on mentoring led by Dr. Mary Pendergraft, Chair of the National Committee for Latin and Greek. Katie Robinson is a sub-committee chair on the NCLG and her colleague Dr. Kathryn Chew is a Professor of Classics at California State University, Long Beach, where she has been directly involved in their Latin teacher credentialing program for many years.

Why don't you see if you can help develop a mentoring program in California?" So I pitched a basic plan for mentoring newly credentialed teachers to Dr. Kathryn Chew to see if she would be interested in collaborating. I knew that she would be a strong partner and would bring many years of experience in teacher training to the project. Not surprisingly, her immediate response was, "Thumbs up! Yes, I think we should do that!" From that point, our project has been met with support and assistance from many in the greater California Classics community, and our goals have broadened considerably. As Dr. Conrad Barrett, current President of CCA-South, put it, "I doubt (there is) a more timely and vital topic."

THE CALIFORNIA MENTORING PROJECT PLAN (ROBINSON & CHEW)

There are several models for mentoring, each with strong points and drawbacks. For our demographic, the California Mentoring Project needed to quickly connect new teachers in California with mentors, provide appropriate and specific advice effectively, and conduct everything within a safe environment. Potentially, a new teacher might suddenly need help finding a new angle on a current lesson, as well as want some advice in planning for a long-term project or field trip. These needs would certainly change many times over the course of the year, and so we wanted to design a system that would allow maximum flexibility. We needed a means by which new teachers could request advice at any time about any topic and get fairly immediate feedback from a knowledgeable mentor. Thus we initially decided upon scripting a web-based electronic request form. Teachers could send a separate request for each need, and the program would provide them with the best mentor for each particular situation. In this way, new teachers would have the benefit of a large pool of mentors with a wide range of expertise.

With the assistance and support of the California Classical Association, both North and South, we sent out an email blast to their combined membership. In this way, we were able to quickly spread the word about the California Mentoring Project and make an initial call for volunteer mentors from around the state. Within this email, we also included a long list of typical areas in which teachers might want advice from a mentor. Within one week we had 16 volunteers from all levels of education and more followed later. We also knew precisely what the interests and skills of each mentor were. From this information we created a spreadsheet of mentors, areas, and contact emails. The response to this initial call for mentors was much

more than we expected, and we were certainly encouraged by all of the supportive remarks of the volunteers.

We discussed alternative types of request forms, but decided to post a Google Form on an existing Classics website. Through submitting this form, any Latin or Greek teacher in California will check off the topic they need advice about, give a few additional details, and provide their preferred contact email. The data coming from the Google Form will be automatically collected in a spreadsheet shared only with the Mentoring Project monitors. These monitors will then forward the request on directly to appropriate mentors. The mentor will contact the teacher at their earliest convenience (hopefully, in less than 24 hours) with a brief reply and follow up later with more advice, or plan as needed. After this point, the mentor and teacher can communicate in whatever manner they see fit, depending on the need and their relationship.

Potentially, some teachers might develop ongoing conversations and keep in touch with a single mentor teacher over a period of years. It is also conceivable that younger teachers might begin to share in return with their mentors from their own expertise in areas such as new technology. These are both beneficial forms of professional networking that we hope and imagine will eventually occur. The goal of our specific program, however, is to support those teachers who are new to the field or who are teaching a brand new course or grade level with immediate, specific advice, from the best mentors we have in the program.

Both the type of message forwarding we have chosen and the necessary oversight by personal monitors should maintain a certain level of privacy and a safe environment for mentors and mentees. We feel that this privacy is critically important. Within discussion groups and fora, a participant's questions and comments are public. For many new teachers, this vulnerability can be intimidating. Despite the caliber of participants within these groups and their expertise in many areas, the volume and variety of responses can be overwhelming for someone posing a question. Many new teachers have told us that they would prefer a more private and tailored approach to getting advice when they are dealing with such things as differentiated instruction, aligning with standards, student recruitment, or relationships with administrators. In the end, we decided to opt out of using any kind of social media as a part of the California Mentoring Project. No mentoring program can be successful if teachers are reluctant to use it.

Now, with a request system and a pool of mentors in place, the final piece will be advertising the mentoring program to new teachers. First, we plan to contact anyone receiving a California teaching credential in Classical Languages. We realize, however, that many who become Latin and Greek teachers in California do not go through any credentialing program. We will therefore try to reach all students graduating with Classics degrees by contacting university departments and through consulting the membership rolls of Eta Sigma Phi chapters in California. We also hope to personally announce the program at regional meetings. Brief announcements will be sent out which could be included in various university department newsletters.

It must be emphasized that the position of Monitor is a key role in our Mentoring Project. Although the authors of the program will take on this responsibility initially, it would seem wise that for the long term the California Classical Associations, North and South might consider taking on general oversight. This could be accomplished by having two Members at Large associated with or included in the Board who would volunteer to be Champions or Liaisons for the Mentoring Project. They could monitor the mentoring requests themselves, or ensure that two Monitors are always in place. Moreover, as Champions or Liaisons, they would become the face of the program. They would promote mentoring by making announcements at meetings, by communicating with university departments, and by making sure that all new teachers are aware of the mentoring resources available to them in California.

This is a brief introduction to the program. We will certainly learn a great deal as this first year progresses. We will be working to fine-tune the whole process and will be eager for feedback from all of those teachers and mentors involved.