

TCL

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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.

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Guidelines for submission may be found at

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

Ave atque Vale

As I prepare to hand over the editorship of Teaching Classical Languages to Yasuko Taoka of Wayne State College, I just want to take a moment to highlight some of the accomplishments of the past five years of Teaching Classical Languages. Special sections on “Spoken Latin” (6.1), “The Tirones Project: Mentoring New Teachers” (7.1), and “Using Pop Music in Latin Pedagogy” (10.2), along with a Special Issue, the “Revised Standards for Classical Language Learning” (9.1), have provided readers multiple perspectives on a timely topic. Articles have covered a wide array of topics, from Erasmus to Vicapaedia, from beginner Latin novellas to teaching the Old and New Testaments to students of Greek and Latin simultaneously, from Movie Talks to learning (and teaching) Latin verb tenses.

The quality of submissions, moreover, continues to increase as those submitting see more high quality examples of articles focused on the scholarship of teaching and learning Latin and Greek, and authors become more comfortable utilizing quantitative and qualitative measures to support their conclusions. As regular readers of TCL know, the journal is intended to appeal to K-12 teachers and post-secondary instructors who are looking for ways to improve their teaching of Greek and Latin based on active experimentation and rooted in solid research. Both groups have been well represented as authors in TCL. Likewise, the journal actively attempts to find referees from both groups to evaluate each article (see below).

Over the past five years, 68% of submissions have been published, always through multiple revisions, 21% have been rejected, and 11% are in the Revise and Resubmit phase. Over that same time period, authors of published articles have been 50% women and 50% men. Women and men have submitted in equal proportions (50% each). Reviewers who served were 45% women and 55% men.

As my second five year term comes to an end, I want to express my gratitude to the many teachers, grad students, college faculty readers who find Teaching Classical Languages inspirational, stimulating, and provocative. I am deeply indebted to the generosity of those who have been willing to referee articles. I especially would like to praise my hard-working and responsive Editorial Board members and Editorial Assistants, Meghan Yamanishi and Keely Lake. Finally, I wish my successor, Yasuko Taoka, Dean of Arts and Humanities at Wayne State College in Nebraska, my best wishes for continued success with the journal.

REFEREES FOR TEACHING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES, VOLUMES 6-10

Teaching Classical Languages would like to express its appreciation to the following referees who volunteered their time and expertise to help assess submissions and improve the content of volumes 6-10.

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Learning (and Teaching) Latin Verb Tenses: Applying Second Language Acquisition Research and Analyses of Verb Uses in Context¹

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ABSTRACT

This article uses research from Second Language Acquisition and from analyses of tense and verb uses in Latin authors to shed light on how students acquire verb tenses, especially past tenses, and to show how to enhance student learning of Latin verb tenses. I argue that 1) only one tense and one translation/use of a tense should be taught at a time; 2) the simple past meaning of the perfect should be the first past tense taught, then the stative use of imperfect, followed by the past progressive use, the present perfect, and pluperfect; 3) it makes a difference what verbs are used in teaching a tense; there are different semantic categories of verbs, such as stative, based on their inherent meaning, and tenses are acquired best with the category of verb that best matches the tense aspect; the combination of category of verb and tense can also sometimes aid in distinguishing translations of tenses; and 4) tenses occur in typical semantic and syntactic contexts, and these contexts are important to enhance acquisition and to aid in distinguishing different tense uses/translations. Finally, I provide teaching suggestions, sample exercises, methods for adapting and supplementing textbooks, and a review of textbooks in relation to teaching verb tenses.

KEY WORDS

Verb tenses in Latin, perfect tense, imperfect tense, pluperfect tense, Caesar, Vergil, lexical aspect

Many of today's Latin textbooks present the imperfect as the first past tense, often at the same time as the future, and the perfect tense after the imperfect, sometimes together with the pluperfect and future perfect. They also often teach all the translations/uses for a tense at once. Some textbooks use the same one verb as the

¹ Thanks to my readers and colleagues, including Amy Norgard, Greg Richter, Tom Capuano, Masahiro Hara, James Hammerstrand and Tim Farley for sharing their expertise and/or for their comments and advice, and especially to John Gruber-Miller for his suggestions. Thanks also to Keely Lake for all her work converting formatting. Any remaining errors are mine.

standard in paradigms and in presenting new tenses. These practices seem to have little theoretical basis other than tradition or an assumed ease or efficiency in learning.

In this paper, I argue that only one tense and only one translation/use of a tense should be taught at a time. Further, the first past tense that should be taught is the simple past use of the perfect. After this should be the stative use of the imperfect, which regularly expresses an on-going physical, mental, or sometimes emotional state with (stative) verbs such as *sum*, *iaceō*, *putō*, or *amō*, then the past progressive use of the imperfect, followed by the present perfect use of the perfect, and finally the pluperfect. Second, I argue that the choice of verbs used in examples in teaching a new tense can aid or impede acquisition; tenses are acquired best with the type of verb whose inherent meaning best matches the tense aspect, such as *currō*, an activity, for the progressive use of imperfect. Third, the acquisition of verb tenses within characteristic contexts, such as with associated adverbs, and often certain other tenses, or in certain syntactic constructions, such as a relative clause, etc. is also important in acquiring tenses and developing appropriate expectations for reading.

These arguments rely on two strands of research. First, I reviewed the research findings from Second Language Acquisition (SLA)² related to acquiring tenses, especially past tenses, to see how the findings can apply to and enhance teaching Latin verb tenses. In the first part of this article, I present some basic findings and summarize five underlying principles from SLA. Second, I created my own corpus analysis of tense and verb uses in four Latin authors. My research is based on an analysis of uses of indicative tense verbs from a sample of Latin texts, including book 1 of Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, Cicero's *De Amicitia*, books 1, 2, and 4 of Vergil's *Aeneid*, and Plautus' *Mostellaria*. I chose these as a representative sample of different genres and types from authors that students are likely to read. I also used Oldsjö's analyses of tense uses in Caesar. The emphasis in this study is on indicatives, usually the first forms taught.

These two strands of research provide the empirical evidence for the three major topics in this article.

1. The order of acquisition of past tenses and the factors enhancing or impeding acquisition.

² I use the term SLA in this article to refer to research studies on acquisition by immersion or by instruction or in combination.

2. The categorization of verbs into four semantic types based on their inherent meaning, and the relationship between the semantic category of verb and tense aspect. The combination of type of verb and tense can enhance (or impede) student learning of a tense and can also sometimes aid in distinguishing uses of tenses and translations of verbs and in translating indirect statement.
3. The characteristic contexts for each past tense in Latin so that teachers can provide authentic, quality input for instructional examples and exercises, and so that students can learn to predict and interpret the verbs met in reading.

After discussing the characteristic context results, I then go through each tense in Latin in the recommended order (simple past use of the perfect, stative imperfect, past progressive use of the imperfect, present perfect use of the perfect, and pluperfect) with suggestions for teaching, including sample exercises. Finally, I provide suggestions for adapting and supplementing textbooks and a review of textbooks in relation to teaching verb tenses and aspect.

I will begin with the summary of some basic background findings from SLA research.

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION RESEARCH: BACKGROUND

Developing an understanding of the temporal system of a second language takes time. It is more than the sum of the individual parts, and it evolves gradually and is revised as more tenses and observations are added (Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 95). The temporal system includes temporal markers, such as adverbs, as well as verb morphology. There are also limits on the memory and processing ability of language learners. Below are summaries of five underlying principles that will recur in discussions of one or more of the three major topics of this article: 1) stages of temporal acquisition, 2) the One to One Principle, 3) processability and Pienemann's teachability hypothesis, 4) the distinction between explicit and implicit knowledge, and 5) the importance of quality input in instruction. I will then discuss applications of SLA research to the common practices of teaching 1) multiple translations/uses of a tense and 2) multiple tenses at the same time as a preliminary to my first major topic, the order of acquisition of past tenses.

1) *Stages in Temporal Acquisition*: SLA research has shown that when people learn a language, whether by immersion or instruction 1) they rely first on the order in the narrative for temporality, i.e. assuming chronological order; then, 2) they use lexical clues from adverbs, prepositional phrases, etc.; and 3) finally, the morphological forms are learned and used (Ortega 126; Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 111, 414-15, 420-21; Ellis and Sagarra 590).

2) *One to One Principle*: Andersen's study of learners' limited processing ability and concept development shows that as second language learners try to construct a consistent system, they initially follow what he termed the One to One Principle: one form equals one translation/use, that is, learners need a one to one correspondence as they are first learning (Andersen 77-95).

3) *Processability and Pienemann's Teachability Hypothesis*: Some features of language, such as vocabulary, are variational in that they do not have to be learned in a certain order. Other things are developmental and are acquired in a certain order (Lightbown and Spada 177-78). For these developmental features, Pienemann has argued that there are certain stages and sequences of learning; learners must learn certain concepts before they are ready to learn the next (or a later) stage in the sequence. This is the Teachability Hypothesis.

4) *Explicit vs. Implicit Knowledge*: There is a difference between explicit knowledge and implicit learning or understanding and how they are used. It is the difference between what one may **know** vs. what one can **do**. For example, I had students come into intermediate Latin who could identify the tense of a verb form (in isolation) or complete a paradigm (explicit knowledge), but could not translate the verbs correctly in context (implicit understanding). Explicit and implicit knowledge are dissociated in separate parts of the brain and do not always interface (Cintrón-Valentín and Ellis 201). As VanPatten has argued, it is implicit knowledge that is used in reading and comprehension; explicit instruction is not necessarily applied, though it may facilitate learning (VanPatten 29-35, 58-59) when it is provided in teaching a tense that is ready by processability theory to be learned. See more below in the discussion of *Interaction with Input, Salience, L1 Influence and the Role of Explicit Instruction in Temporal Acquisition*.

5) *The Importance of Quality Input in Instruction*: The quality of the input and intensity of interaction are factors of critical importance that can enhance the speed of (or impede and delay) acquisition (Ortega 141-42, Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 432-33). Authentic or appropriate input is the basis for the development (over time) of the full implicit understanding of each tense and the distinction between that tense and others (VanPatten 29-35, 58-59). Components of input that will be discussed include the frequency of occurrences, the salience (how easy it is to notice the form)

and interaction with input, the semantic aspect of the verbs themselves and the relationship between the verb semantic type and tense aspect, and the various features of context including such things as associations with certain words, syntactic constructions, and other tenses.

Applications to Common Teaching Practices

1) Argument against Teaching Multiple Translations/Uses at the Same Time - One to One Principle and Processability:

Does teaching all the translations/uses of a tense at the same time enhance acquisition? This practice goes against the One to One Principle, which shows the need for one tense form - one translation at first in the development of the temporal system (Ortega 127; Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 425-26). While exposure to the concept that a form does not necessarily have one equivalent translation is important, and a preview of the different uses can give a big picture view, which can benefit certain types of learners, learners initially establish one meaning/translation, which should be the basic, most common one, as their default in working memory. For the Latin perfect, this basic translation is the simple past, which is the first past tense acquired in the order of acquisition, as discussed below; by processability the present perfect use should not be taught until later, after the imperfect and past progressive. Learning a language is like getting directions to a place you have not been. One initial set of directions for the basic route is useful; variations can be confusing at first. With experience, alternatives for special situations, such as rush hour congestion or rain, make more sense and can be processed and remembered more easily.

2) Arguments against Teaching Multiple Tenses at the Same Time:

SLA research also shows that it is best to teach only one tense at a time. One reason is that teaching complete tense systems, such as the perfect, pluperfect, and future perfect together, or the imperfect and future together, can be confusing because of memory overload and confusion of similar forms. Words and forms that are similar in phonetic/orthographic form are more apt to be confused with each other, especially if they are taught at the same time (Sommers and Lewis 83-108; Laufer 153). Differences that are only a different vowel in the same syllable position in words are especially apt to cause confusion (Laufer 146-48). Confusion (by cross association) is also apt to occur when the words are similar or opposites in semantic idea (Schmitt 147; Nation 47). Both problems apply to teaching the imperfect and future at the same time: non-present (essentially similar in being “opposites” of

present and of each other); new tenses marked by a morpheme beginning with “b” in the same syllable differing only by the vowel. Similarly, the pluperfect and perfect tense are both past tenses, with the third person plurals similar except for one vowel and the quantity (and thus the accent): *ērunt* vs. *erant*. The future perfect, another non-present tense, is also similar to the pluperfect, except for the vowel in almost all the forms.

So, if possible, it is better to teach the imperfect and the future tenses separately, and, similarly, the perfect, pluperfect and future perfect separately.³ Nation suggests that presentation of such words or forms should occur weeks to months apart to allow sufficient time after the first form is firmly settled before introducing the second similar word or form; the time needed varies for individuals (Nation 47). If one needs to teach multiple tenses with similar orthography, such as imperfect and future, at the same time or closely together, using illustrative pictures with captions can help reduce the confusion (Schacter, Israel, and Racine 1-24). Mnemonic methods do not work as well with phonologically or orthographically similar words unless the keyword uses a distinguishing characteristic (Hulstijn 203-24). I have used as examples: for the imperfect, -ba- = wa(s) (___ing), vs. future, -bi- = wi(II), and “Will Bo or Bill bunt the ball to advance the runner from first to second base [conjugations]?”; and for the pluperfect, “If the ERA had passed, women . . .”

A more fundamental reason for not teaching multiple tenses simultaneously is that, by processability theory, teaching the pluperfect together with the perfect does not follow the order in which past tenses are acquired. Textbooks that present the tenses in batches to get through the material as quickly as possible and get to reading real Latin inhibit their goal by their method, which can result in possible confusion and explicit rather than implicit learning, which is needed for processing and reading. The instructional emphasis should be on what students can **do** (implicit knowledge) in reading, rather than on what they **know** (explicit knowledge),

3 Insufficient research has been done for the acquisition of the future tense relative to the different past tenses. The future is one of the basic tenses, in Donatus (see below under Suggestions for Instruction) and in SLA research. It is used more frequently in speech than in narrative. The future perfect makes up only about 1% of all verb tense forms, and also occurs most often in subordinate clauses, especially conditions and temporal clauses (Mahoney 102; Haverling 381). Since English does not use a future in subordinate clauses, the most common translation in English is, in fact, not the actual future perfect “will have ___ed,” but a “present” or perfective “have ___ed” (see also Wigtil 682, 685). Thus, the future perfect is best learned with or after conditions.

commonly emphasized in grammar textbooks and traditional testing.⁴ The most effective instruction follows the order that students need in order to learn, with adequate time for acquisition, which is my first major topic.

ORDER OF ACQUISITION OF PAST TENSES

The order of acquisition of past tenses is a developmental feature that follows the Teachability Hypothesis. SLA research has shown that the simple past is the first past tense acquired, with the stative use of the imperfect next, appearing much later (Ortega 127-29; Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 114, 227, 419-22; Andersen and Shirai 559). After these come: 3) past progressive tense (if it is present in the language) or use of the imperfect (with the iterative and habitual developing later); 4) present perfect; and then 5) pluperfect (Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 115, 117, 419-23, 429; Ortega 127). SLA research also shows the following points: 1) This order of acquisition of past tenses of verbs is consistent across languages, including the learning of English and other Germanic languages (German, Dutch, and Swedish), and the Romance languages, including French, the closest to Latin in terms of tenses, as discussed below. 2) This order is consistent whether acquisition is by immersion or by instruction or a combination. 3) The order of acquisition is not affected by the order in which the tenses are taught; instruction can change the rate of learning, but not the order of acquisition of tenses (Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 111-12, 405-06). In particular, learners have been found to acquire and show a real understanding of the concept of the simple past form first, even when other tenses have been introduced (Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 111-12). Bardovi-Harlig attributes this consistent order of acquisition to the order of development of concepts based on Pienemann's teachability hypothesis (*Tense* 392-95), which explains why it holds even when tenses are taught in a different order.

Factors Affecting the Rate of Acquisition

There are also factors that SLA research has identified that can influence the rate of acquisition, either to enhance and speed up learning or delay or impede learning a tense (Ortega 140-42, Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 432-33, Lightbown and Spada 48). These include: 1) the complexity or clarity of the form; 2) the frequency; 3) the quality and intensity of interaction with input; 4) the salience of input; and 5)

⁴ See my article "[Exercises for Developing Prediction Skills in Reading Latin Sentences](#)," *TCL* 2.1 (Fall 2010): 1-30.

the similarity or difference between the first (L1) and second language. I will first discuss the complexity of form and then the frequency. I will show in the third major section on characteristic contexts that teaching the simple past use of the perfect before the imperfect in Latin also enhances acquisition because of the salience of the unmarked use of the simple past, and the regular use of the imperfect in context with the perfect (discussion with Table 6), meaning the imperfect cannot be used in appropriate, authentic input contexts without the perfect. In addition, as discussed below in the **Suggestions for Instruction**, the lack of a separate stative imperfect form in English L1 can cause confusion when the imperfect is taught first before the simple past use of the perfect because of the translations, e.g. “was,” often being the same.

1) Ease of Form: One common assumption for teaching the imperfect as the first past tense in Latin is the “ease” of the form. However, the “ease” of the form is not the primary consideration in learning tenses, and, in fact, irregular forms of basic tenses are learned before regular ones. Easier forms can speed up learning the forms themselves, but they do not affect the order of the acquisition of tense concepts (Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 112, 420-21). Research in French and Spanish, where the preterite morphology is more difficult or complicated (involving stem changes, etc.) than the imperfect, similar to Latin, shows that the simple past is still acquired first before the imperfect (Bardovi-Harlig, “The Place” 28-29). The simple past, the first past tense acquired, is actually the most often inflected, whereas other tenses may involve paraphrases with auxiliary verbs or similar (Andersen and Shirai 561), reflecting their less basic nature.

Thus, the assumption that the imperfect should be taught first before the perfect in Latin because the imperfect form is easier in that the morphology is consistent and new stem(s) do not have to be learned is not supported by SLA research. Learning the morphological form is not the same as learning the tense concept, and the development of the tense system is implicit, not explicit knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 112, 421; VanPatten 22, 42, 58-59). Students can memorize forms and complete paradigms (explicit learning), but if that tense is not what is needed for the first or next tense in the development of the temporal system, the knowledge will not be integrated and used in processing or reading. In particular, students can give/“translate”/identify forms of the imperfect and do exercises using explicit knowledge, or even imitate without really understanding, but they cannot truly acquire the imperfect until they have learned the simple past (Fraser, Bellugi, and Brown 121-35).

2) *Frequency*: A second factor that can speed or delay learning a tense is the frequency in input. The perfect is the most frequently used past tense according to Oldsjö's study of Caesar (using his data for indicative tenses) and is corroborated by my study of indicative verbs in Caesar, Cicero, Plautus, and Vergil. I also include here in Table 1 Mahoney's comprehensive analysis of tense frequency use in the larger corpus of Latin literature in general, which, however, includes all moods (including participles and infinitives, etc.), but excludes irregular verb forms (Mahoney 102).

	Present	Perfect ^a	Imperfect	Pluperfect	Future
Overall (including all moods, but not irregular forms) (Mahoney 102)	54.0%	29.6%	7%	2.2%	6.3% (+ Future perfect: 0.9%)
Caesar <i>BG</i> (Oldsjö 310)	940 ^b (= 28%) (+ 200 ambiguous present/perfect = 6%)	955 (= 29%) ^c (+ 200 ambiguous present/perfect); (890 simple past = 27%; 65 present perfect = 2%)	774 (=23%)	463 (= 14%)	NA
Caesar <i>BG</i> 1	147 = 26% (+ 34 ambiguous present/perfect = 6%)	196 = 34% (+ 34 ambiguous present/perfect) (193 simple past = 34%; 3 present perfect = 1%)	131 = 23%	66 = 11%	0 ^d
Cicero <i>De Am.</i> 1.1-9.32	204 = 62%	79 = 24% (54 simple past = 16%; 25 present perfect = 8%)	24 = 7% (48 total in the whole <i>De Am.</i>)	7 = 2% (10 total in the whole <i>De Am.</i>)	13 = 4% (+ 2 future perfect)
Plautus <i>Most.</i> (lines 1-531)	355 = 63%	116 = 21% (78 simple past = 14%; 38 present perfect = 7%)	9 = 2% (19 total in the whole work)	5 = 1% (10 total in the whole work)	69 = 12% (+ 10 future perfect)
Vergil <i>Aen.</i> book 1	355 = 58% (+ 4 ambiguous present/perfect = 1%)	137 = 22% (+ 4 ambiguous present/perfect) (120 simple past = 20%; 17 present perfect = 3%)	45 = 7% (134 total in books 1, 2, and 4)	17 = 3% (42 total in books 1, 2, and 4)	51 = 8% (+ 2 future perfect)

Table 1: Relative Frequency of Tenses in Latin

- a. As in Table 4 and Table 7, data for the perfect does not include all of Cicero's *De Amiticia*, Plautus' *Mostellaria*, and books 2 and 4 of Vergil's *Aeneid* because of the sheer number of perfects and the impracticality of using search functions to check that all are accounted for. For the imperfect (Tables 5 and 6) and pluperfect (Table 8), the numbers are totals for the whole work or book(s) indicated. I also include the total figures for imperfect and pluperfect in this table in part to indicate how much more frequently the perfect tense is used.
- b. Oldsjö only gives figures for the historic present use, not all present tense verbs. He also does not include the future.
- c. For main clauses, which is what learners would be seeing most initially, Oldsjö also gives figures for indicative (and historic infinitive) uses for five different historical authors, with Caesar (BG & BC) the lowest at 33.7% perfect (compared with 21.4% imperfect and 5.6% pluperfect) compared to 61.3% perfect for Livy, 63% for Florus, 79.5% for Velleius Paterculus, and a high of 94.3% for Eutropius (278-80).
- d. There were no future indicatives in my analysis. There were future infinitives (and subjunctives) in indirect statement.

Even with the present perfect uses of the perfect accounted for (see the table above), the simple past use of the perfect is still used more frequently than the imperfect, which is, in turn, used more frequently than the pluperfect. Thus, the order by frequency corresponds in general to the order of acquisition of past tenses in SLA research and supports teaching the perfect tense before the imperfect in Latin and teaching the simple past use of the perfect first before the present perfect. The different uses for each tense will be discussed more below.

3-5) Interaction with Input, Salience, L1 Influence, and the Role of Explicit Instruction in Temporal Acquisition:

Salience, another factor in the rate of acquisition, is important in getting learners to notice and acquire information. If learners can get away without learning something by relying on other features, they will (Ortega 126; Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 111, 414-15, 420-21; Ellis and Sagarra 590). As indicated above, the use of chronological order and lexical adverbs, etc. precede the third stage of acquisition, the use of the verb forms themselves. In order to acquire the verb tense form – meaning associations and gain implicit knowledge, learners must pay attention to the verbs.

Ellis and Sagarra's study shows that this preference for lexical temporal cues, such as *herī*, over morphological form, such as *cogitāvī*, applies to the learning of Latin. The study also showed that there is influence from the L1, which, as indicated, is another factor that can enhance or impede acquisition. English L1 learners showed more reliance on temporal adverbs and less on verb morphology than Russian and especially Spanish L1 learners, who had experience with more similar verb morphology in their L1.

Cintrón-Valentín and Ellis then performed a follow-up study to ascertain which method of explicit instruction and/or implicit exposure to input was most effective in overcoming the attention bias to lexical cues and the blocking effects of the use of such cues on learning verb morphology in Latin. The research was based on an experiment with three activities, using three temporal adverbs, *hodie*, *herī*, *cras*, and the first, second, and third person singular forms of *cogitō* in the present, perfect, and future. There was also monitoring of eye-tracking. Their results showed that the control group (with no training other than the feedback, “correct” or “incorrect” plus the correct temporal reference, during the first activity, which involved identifying the temporal reference of adverb-verb/verb-adverb pairs as past, present, or future), as predicted, relied on the lexical adverbs and did not direct sustained attention to or learn the verb forms. Two other groups showed increased reliance on and knowledge of the verb morphology, but with a lower rate of learning the lexical adverbs as shown in subsequent activities, which the authors attributed to limited working memory in processing.⁵ The first of these groups had an introductory grammar lesson of four slides (without practice) on the formation of the verb morphology, including the use of blue color for “tense markers” and red for (subject) “agreement markers.”⁶ The second group had attention directed to the morphemes through highlighting of the inflection with bold and red font during the first activity. The most balanced learning of both the lexical vocabulary and verb morphology (for all three tenses including the future) happened in the third group. This group first had a short multiple choice pre-training session of feedback (“correct” or “incorrect” plus the correct translation) on the present and perfect (but not future) verb forms and their translation (for each of the six verb forms six times in random order) (Cintrón-Valentín and Ellis 203-04, 207-10, 217-18, 223, and 229-32).

Cintrón-Valentín and Ellis’ follow-up study confirmed that explicit instruction with practice, especially for formations that are different in the second language than the first, must come before exposure to meaningful input to allow the learners

5 In the second activity, they were given the individual adverbs, individual verbs, and adverb-verb/verb-adverb pairs, which could be matched or mis-matched in time. They were again asked to identify the temporal reference (past, present, both past and present, etc.), but without feedback. This was followed by the third activity asking for written production of translations from English to Latin of just adverbs, just verbs, and adverb-verb sentences (e.g. “Yesterday he thought.”) without feedback. (Cintrón-Valentín and Ellis 209-10).

6 I have used similar color highlighting when teaching verb tenses, but I use different colors for the tense markers and subject endings. I use blue for the subject endings, since I also use blue for the nominative case endings. I use green or yellow for the imperfect/future tense inflection marker, and pink for perfect (active) stems. For example, currēbam, vocāvit.

to integrate the processing of both the new forms and new lexical vocabulary (229-32). Thus, presenting the forms and their meaning with practice can enhance learning, if done when the learner is ready to acquire that tense. Knowledge of both the verb forms and context clues, including lexical vocabulary, is important, especially in Latin, as shown below in the third major section on characteristic contexts.

MATCHING OF TENSE ASPECT AND VERBAL SEMANTIC ASPECT (QUALITY INPUT AND ONE TO ONE PRINCIPLE)

When teaching the verb forms and their associated tense meaning, an important component of the quality of input that has been found to enhance (or delay) acquisition of tenses is the choice of verbs in input, in particular, matching the type of verb used with each tense, which is my second major topic. This is the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis developed by Andersen and Shirai, based on the work of Vendler and extended by others. They distinguish two kinds of aspect: 1) One is based on the grammatical verb tense, including the traditional punctual or aorist, (the simple past use of the Latin perfect), the imperfective, the progressive, and the perfective (with a resulting state) (Latin present perfect use of the perfect). 2) The other kind of aspect is that related to the semantic meaning of the verb itself, the inherent lexical aspect. The four basic semantic categories of verb types originally identified by Vendler, based on whether the inherent verb meaning: expresses punctuality or duration; has a set end point (telic) or not (atelic); and is dynamic (requires energy) or not, are shown in Table 2 (Andersen and Shirai 531-32; Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 193, 214-23, 425):⁷ For each category, I include examples of verbs in Latin that are frequently used and common in textbooks that would be a good match in teaching.

Semantic Category of Verb Type	Characteristics	Prototypical Tense Match	Common Latin Verbs
Achievement	punctual (instantaneous event as a whole); telic; dynamic	simple past	<i>inveniō; relinquō; dō; mittō; (ad)veniō; vocō; reperiō; ponō</i>
Accomplishment	durative; telic; dynamic; (completion of a process or action with set beginning and end and an outcome)	present perfect	<i>interficiō; claudō; faciō; occidō; discō; liberō; intrō; parō</i>

⁷ For a five category situation aspect, including more sentence components, see Bachvarova 124-25. See also Oldsjö 161-65, 170-75, 227, 439; Haverling 288-310; and Miller 18-19, 23-24.

Activity	durative; atelic; dynamic	progressive (use of imperfect)	<i>dūcō; currō; scribō; cōgitō; eō; audiō; legō</i> (“read”); <i>dicō; teneō; portō; trahō</i>
Stative	durative; atelic; not dynamic	stative (use of imperfect)	<i>sum; possum; habeo; vivō; putō; timeō; iaceō; sedeō; taceō; amō; crēdō</i>

Table 2: Lexical Aspects of Verbs

Both achievements and accomplishments have an inherent end point, or are “telic,” and can be used with an ablative of time, but not an accusative of duration. Achievements express an instantaneous event as a whole and cannot be used with “stop” or “continue” doing it, while accomplishments express more the completion of a process (or action) with a set beginning and end (and an outcome) (Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 215-16; Haverling 305; Andersen and Shirai 531-32; Ortega 127). Verbs of activity, which match most closely with a progressive tense, express a homogeneous process which requires continuing energy. Unlike accomplishments and achievements, they have no set end point and they may be used with an accusative duration of time (Bardovi-Harlig 215-16, 223; Andersen and Shirai 532).

Stative verbs inherently persist over time without continuing energy and without a set end point. Like verbs of activity, they can occur with an accusative duration of time, but unlike activity verbs, they do not tend to occur in the imperative mood, and they are not used in the progressive tense (in languages that have a separate progressive tense) or a progressive use of the imperfect tense. If a state ceases, a different new state becomes (Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 215-16, 223). Note that included in the stative verbs in the table above, some verbs of emotion and mental verbs may express states.⁸ Second conjugation verbs are also especially common as intransitive states.

SLA research, especially by Andersen and Shirai, on first and second language acquisition, including classroom instruction and multiple languages, has shown that tenses are acquired first and best with the semantic category of verb that matches most closely with the aspect of the particular verb tense. The lexical aspect type that matches also has the highest frequency with that tense in authentic

⁸ For more on mental states, see Bardovi-Harlig 219 and Oldsjö 438-39.

input, since the correspondence of categorization of verbs with tense also reflects the normal distribution patterns of verbs by tense in the language. This “prototypical” matching is related to the One to One principle: each tense is initially associated with the one lexical category it (cognitively) matches most closely (Andersen and Shirai 548-55). Thus, the match of verb type and tense is important in the examples and sentences/passages when teaching. This means that when presenting a new tense, one should choose example verbs (from the verbs that students have had or are currently learning) from the category that best matches that tense in semantic aspect, such as *mīsit* (achievement) for the simple past use of the perfect, in order to enhance student learning.

Verb Types in Indirect Statement: Note that for indirect statement, the concept of categories of verbs is also useful in understanding when English can “fudge” the tenses of infinitives with secondary main verbs and when not. For example, for perfect infinitives, “He said that he sent (*mīsisse*) it” (achievement), will work instead of the more literal “that he had sent it,” but for *vīxisse* (stative), “He said that she lived” will not work for “that she had lived.” Conversely, for present infinitives, (*mittere*) “He said that he sent it” will not work for “that he was sending it,” but for *vīvere*, either “He said that she lived” or “that she was alive/living” will work.

Extension of Tenses by Verb Types: After learners acquire a tense with the prototypical type of verb, they then may extend their understanding of the tense through the acquisition of other lexical categories of verbs in order, as shown in the table below:

Simple Past:	Achievement	Accomplishment	Activity	Stative
Imperfect:	Stative	Activity	Accomplishment	Achievement
Progressive:	Activity	Accomplishment	Achievement	(xx: no stative)
Present Perfect:	Accomplishment	Achievement	(activity/stative) ^a	

Table 3: Acquisition of Lexical Aspect Types by Tense

Sources: Andersen and Shirai 529-30, 555-59; Ortega 114, 127-28; Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 94, 227, 422-30, 434.

a. The sources do not give an order for the extension to verbs of activity vs. statives.

Note that the order of acquisition is the opposite for the simple past and the imperfect. This reflects the correlation between the natures of the verbs and the tenses. For teaching new tenses, using examples of verbs of the type that are learned last (or not used) for that tense do not aid in learning, such as the stative *amāvit* for the simple past. Thus, the same verb that the textbook uses as the standard in its paradigm may not fit well for the particular new tense or new translation being

taught. In general, verbs of activity, such as *dūcō*, match best with the most tenses for a paradigm.

As indicated, after verbs of achievement, the simple past is extended in acquisition to verbs of accomplishment and later of activity, and gradually to stative as the temporal system is developed and refined based on input (Bardovi-Harlig 423; 429; Andersen and Shirai 559). The present perfect is associated most closely, as indicated, with verbs of accomplishment (and achievement) (Ortega 127; Andersen and Shirai 559). Since both uses of the Latin perfect - simple past and present perfect - occur most often with the same two categories of verbs, accomplishment and achievement, the context is the best guide in translation, as discussed below under context uses (Table 7).

The use of the secondary extended verb types often include contextual markings and differences in meaning or tense use. For the imperfect, as indicated, the prototypical match is the stative, then activities (Ortega 114, 128; Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 94, 227, 422, 424, 426, 429, 434; Andersen and Shirai 559). The extension of the imperfect to verbs of activity corresponds initially and most commonly to the progressive use of the imperfect, especially for languages like Latin that did not add a separate progressive tense formation, and it follows the order of acquisition of tenses: first stative imperfect, then progressive. Verbs expressing an activity, which match most closely with the progressive, are the most frequently used type of verb in the progressive use of imperfect in Latin in my analysis. The category of verb, in fact, functions as a guide in the most likely choice of translation of the imperfect: activity as progressive, stative as stative imperfect. When the simple past translation is included for the imperfect in textbooks, it should be noted that it is used mainly for stative verbs and is not the most likely translation for other types of verbs.

Extended Uses of Verbs, Verb Types, and Tense Uses: Another way of looking at the extension of verb types used in tenses is that verb types may sometimes be extended to other tenses that they are not the prototypical match for. These less frequent extended uses are often distinguished by context and/or meaning/tense use, or by voice (as *videō/videor* below). There are often differences when verbs of activity, which match most closely with the progressive (use of imperfect), are used in the perfect. For example, in my analysis, when *currō* occurs in the perfect, there is usually a prepositional phrase, “*per* _____,” giving an end point, and the use is often metaphorical with an abstract subject (e.g. *tremor*, *fremor*, *calor*) (e.g. Vergil *Aen.* 2.120-21).

Another example of such extended use is that of achievement and accomplishment verbs, which match most closely with the simple past use of the perfect and the present perfect. In the imperfect, such extended use tends to express iteratives (cf. Oldsjö 227), the repetition of an action by an individual or multiple individuals, or habitual actions. For example, the only example I found of *inveniō* in the imperfect (compared to five perfects in Caesar, two in Cicero, one in Plautus, and nine in Vergil) was iterative (Caesar *BG* 2.16.1 *cum . . . , inveniēbat ex captīvīs* plus an indirect statement).⁹ Thus, the type of verb is an important indicator of the iterative or habitual translation for the imperfect.

Verbs can also sometimes belong to more than one category, depending on the meaning or narrative context use (situation aspect), e.g. with a direct object vs. intransitive, or whether the object is concrete or abstract (Bachvarova 125; Oldsjö 151, 165-70).¹⁰ *Videō* is an example of a common, but more complex verb. In my analysis, in the perfect it regularly expresses its basic meaning of physical sight; the uses of *videō* in the imperfect are regularly mental perception (stative), usually with an indirect statement (or an abstract object, such as *ventura* in *Aen.* 2.125), or occasionally iterative (e.g. Vergil *Aen.* 8.360 marked by *passim: passimque armenta vidēbant . . . mugīre*), or are most often passive (meaning “seemed,” 75% of the imperfects in Cicero, 48% in Caesar, and 40% in Vergil), and are then stative.

Conclusion: The extension of the concept of tenses to include these other semantic types of verbs and uses are part of the gradual expansion and refinement of the development of the temporal system and also sometimes of the vocabulary of the verbs themselves, such as *videō*, and their varied meanings and uses. Such extension is acquired by implicit learning from input when the learner is ready for the next stage; instruction can aid acquisition by providing appropriate input contexts and/or directing attention to them as needed, such as by asking leading questions, which is often more appropriate when students encounter them in reading actual texts. It is like learning to predict a storm based on previous observations of seeing the clouds getting dark, the wind picking up, and hearing rumbling in the distance or seeing lightning.

This variability emphasizes the need for quality input in terms of appropriate contextual usages in examples, exercises, and readings. As argued above with the One to One principle, initial input with the most common use in their characteristic

9 Similarly, the only occurrence of the simple verb *mittō* in the imperfect in all of Caesar *BG*, Cicero *De Am.*, Plautus *Most.*, and Vergil *Aen.*, is an iterative in *BG* 5.45.1 (*Quanto . . . tanto crebriores litterae nuntique ad Caesarem mittebantur*).

10 For more on the historical development, complexities, and/or studies on a particular author, see, for example, Oldsjö (on Caesar and as compared to other Latin historians) and Haverling.

context is important: verbs of achievement, such as *inveniō*, for the simple past use of the perfect; stative verbs, such as *sum*, for the imperfect; verbs of activity, such as *legō*, for the progressive use of the imperfect; and verbs of accomplishment, such as *interficiō*, for the present perfect use of the perfect. Less common secondary uses, such as the iterative use of the imperfect, or meanings need to be in their characteristic contexts in order for learners to integrate these later and to develop appropriate expectations. As shown, knowledge of the semantic types of verbs is sometimes useful in distinguishing different uses of tenses in translating. The flexibility in verb meanings and tense uses in Latin may be related to the relatively late position of the verb in Latin clauses, and the role of context in distinguishing these uses also highlights the importance in Latin of reading in order, rather than hunting for the verb first, as is sometimes recommended. Jumping to the verb bypasses the clues from the gathering storm clouds, etc.

CHARACTERISTIC CONTEXTS

My third major topic is what the characteristic contexts are in which each of the different tenses most commonly occur and their relationship to tense uses and semantic verb types. The contexts support the order of acquisition of tenses and can help a reader anticipate what tense a verb will be and/or, as indicated, interpret which use of a tense or the translation of a verb may be. They are based on the findings from my analysis of Latin authors and that of Oldsjö on Caesar. Table 4 below shows the context uses of the simple past verbs, the first tense in the order of acquisition. The context uses of the present perfect use of the perfect will be discussed below (Table 7), after the imperfect (Tables 5 and 6), and lastly the pluperfect (Table 8), following the order of acquisition of tenses.

Simple Past Use of the Perfect

Compared to the other past tenses, the simple past use of the perfect, as the basic past tense, does not generally need or have characteristic context markers, making the verb more salient.

	Caesar <i>BG & BC</i> (Oldsjö 310, 321, 331, 333, 339)	Caesar <i>BG</i> 1	Cicero <i>De Am.</i> 1.1- 9.32	Plautus <i>Most.</i> lines 1-531	Vergil <i>Aen.</i> book 1
Main Clause	1436 = 89% (+ 335 ambiguous present/perfects)	176 = 91% (+ 29 ambiguous present/perfects)	26 = 48%	54 = 69%	92 = 77%
Subordinate clause	178 = 11% (+ 30 ambiguous present/perfects)	17 = 9% (+ 5 ambiguous present/perfect)	28 = 52%	24 = 31%	28 = 23%
Relative	50 regular + 4 other relative	4 (+1 ambiguous present/perfect)	19	10	8
Temporal	90	11 (including 9 <i>ubi</i>) (+ 3 ambiguous present/perfect)	3	8	17
Other	38	2 (+1 ambiguous present/perfect)	6	6	3

Table 4: Contexts of Simple Past Use of Perfect Indicative Verbs

For use in subordinate clauses, the frequency of relative clauses reflects the general frequency of relative clauses in Latin, with *qui/quis* being second on Diederich's list of Latin words by frequency (Diederich 115). The relatively higher percentage of subordinate clauses in general for the simple past use of the perfect in Cicero compared to the other authors reflects the relative complexity of his style. Of the 97 occurrences of simple past verbs in a subordinate clause in my analysis of Caesar, Cicero, Plautus, and Vergil, only five of these verbs (in four sentences), had an imperfect verb in the main clause (*erat* in three sentences and *videbatur* in one). The imperfect, by comparison, as shown below, is regularly used in context with a perfect tense verb, which supports teaching the simple past use of the perfect before the imperfect.

Imperfect Tense Uses and Their Characteristic Contexts

As indicated above, the imperfect is the second most frequently used past tense in Latin and includes the prototypical stative and then progressive use, which are the second and third past tenses acquired in SLA. As shown in Table 5 below, the stative is the most frequent use of the Latin imperfect in my analysis of Caesar, Cicero, and Plautus, and second most frequent for Vergil. The habitual and the

iterative uses tend to occur in clusters, so the data by clause rather than by number of verbs would probably reflect a smaller percentage of uses for the habitual/iterative use consistent with the order of frequency and SLA order of acquisition. Cicero's philosophical dialogue, *De Amicitia*, also probably has a higher proportion of habitual/iteratives than his speeches due to the characters, setting, and discussion content. The progressive use is the least common (by number of verbs) in Caesar, Cicero, and Plautus, probably due to Caesar's more informative style and Cicero's more philosophical style; it is the most common in Vergil and may be related to batching and to his higher percentage of uses in main clauses and his poetic tone of narrative.

	Caesar <i>BG</i> 1	Cicero <i>de Am.</i>	Plautus <i>Most.</i>	Vergil <i>Aen.</i> books 1, 2, and 4
Stative Imperfect	100 = 76%	24 = 50%	9 = 47%	38 = 28%
Progressive use	9 = 7%	6 = 12.5%	2 = 11%	81 = 60%
Habitual/iterative use	22 = 17%	18 = 37.5%	8 = 42%	15 = 11%

Table 5: Uses of the Imperfect Indicative Verb Forms

In all four authors the verb *sum* is the most frequently used verb in the imperfect (twenty-four times = 18% in Caesar *BG* 1, ten times = 21% in Cicero, six = 32% in Plautus, and thirteen = 10% in Vergil), consistent with the relatively high frequency of the stative imperfect use. The next most frequently used verbs in Caesar are also stative: *possum*, compounds of *sum*, *habeō*, and mental verbs of thinking. Cicero also has mostly stative (and habitual activity, as shown below) verbs after *sum*, with three times each for *habeō*, *putō*, *videor* (and *videō* one time) and *dīcō*. Vergil has *teneō*, *dō*, *ferō*, *trahō*, and *eō* for his next most frequently used verbs in the imperfect, reflecting his higher percentage of progressive uses with verbs of activity.

My analysis shows how the context and/or verb type may aid in anticipating an imperfect tense and/or distinguishing between these different uses/translations of the imperfect. Some uses and/or contexts are also more common to certain authors and/or genres.

	Caesar <i>BG & BC</i> (Oldsjö 310-11, 315-16, 331-39)	Caesar <i>BG</i> 1	Cicero <i>de Am.</i>	Plautus <i>Most.</i>	Vergil <i>Aen.</i> books 1, 2, and 4
Main Clause:	1,013 = 64%	75 = 56.5%	25 = 52%	14 = 74%	106 = 79%
causal: <i>Nam(que)/enim</i>		6	1	0	7
<i>Iam(que)/tum/temporal adv.</i>		1	4	3	25
demonstrative/connecting relative		27	6	3	9
<i>hīc/place connector</i>		0	0	1	6
Verb of saying (usually iterative/habitual) or thinking, etc. + ind. statement		20 (+3: <i>oportebat</i> , <i>volebat</i> , <i>habebat</i> + acc. + inf.)	4 (+1: <i>volebat</i> + acc. + inf.)	4 (<i>aieba[n]t</i>)	2
(especially progressive) with pluperfect in same (or coordinate) clause		2	0	0	9
summary <i>talīs</i> , etc.		0	0	0	15
adversative <i>autem/immo/at/ sed/vero/tamen</i>		1	6	1	1
<i>autem</i> (moreover)/ <i>etiam</i>		6	1	0	0
existential <i>sum</i> (+ dative(s))		4 (1)	1 (0)	0 (2)	4 (2)
With inverse <i>cum</i> clause		0	0	0	12 ^a
<i>ecce</i>		0	0	0	4
Other ^b		15	7	2 (habitual)	23
Subordinate clause:	573 = 36%	57 = 43.5%	23 = 48%	5 = 26%	28 = 21%
relative	263 = 46%	29 = 52% (including 2 with existential <i>sum</i> + dat.; 2 with plu- perfect; 1 <i>praedicabant</i> + ind. statement)	13 = 54%	1 = 20%	16 = 57% (including 1 with existential <i>sum</i> + dative)

(relative) noun		2 (including 1 <i>volebat</i> + acc. + inf.)	1	1 = 20%	0
<i>quia</i>	0	0	3 = 12.5%	0	2
causal <i>quod</i>	193 = 34%	16 = 29% (including 1 with pluperfect and 1 <i>volebat</i> + acc. + inf.)	3 = 12.5%	0	0
Adverbial <i>ut</i>	28 = 5%	0	2 = 8%	0	0
<i>etsi</i>	24 = 4%	1 (<i>videbat</i> + ind. statement)	0	0	0
<i>dum</i>	1	0	0	0	5 = 18%
<i>quā</i> (where); <i>ubi</i> (where); <i>unde</i>	6 = 1%; 5; 1	2 <i>quā</i>	0	0	3 <i>quā</i> ; 1 <i>unde</i>
<i>cum</i> (+ indic.)	3	1	0	2 = 40%	1
<i>postquam</i>	4	0	0	1 = 20%	0
Other	45	6 (3 in <i>quod</i> noun clauses [2 with ind. statement]; 2 comparative clauses; and 1 condition)	1	0	0

Table 6: Contexts of Imperfect Indicative Verbs

a. This use is characteristic of Vergil. Cf. Williams (162 note *ad* 36-7).

b. For the main clauses, some have more than one characteristic context, so they may add up to more than the total. The “other” category includes clauses coordinate with or sentences continuing on after a clause with a characteristic context(s), and some iteratives/habituals, which tend to occur in bunches, as shown below, and miscellaneous others (e.g. with *ideo*, *itaque*, *quidem*).

An important thing to note about the imperfect tense is that it is regularly used in contrast with the simple past, often providing background information (cf. Andersen 89-90, Bardovi-Harlig *Tense* 311-16). Thus, imperfects regularly occur after or with a perfect (simple past) verb (or narrative historic present). When an imperfect verb is used in a subordinate clause, the most common tense for the main verb is the perfect in Caesar, Cicero, and Vergil;¹¹ for Plautus, the main verb is pres-

¹¹ Caesar: 30 (+1 present/perfect) vs. 12 imperfect main verbs; Cicero: 9 (+ 5 *meminī*) vs. 2 imperfect; Vergil: 10 vs. 5 imperfect.

ent tense for three and perfect for two. The imperfect occurs more often in the main clause than subordinate clause in Plautus and Vergil, probably reflecting in part the poetic genre, and slightly more often in Caesar; it is about evenly split between main and subordinate clauses in Cicero. Even when used in a main clause, there is usually a connection indicated with the preceding (or following), as discussed below.

Use of the Imperfect in (Background) Relative Clauses:

When the imperfect is found in a subordinate clause, they are most commonly (or tied as most common in Plautus) in a **relative clause**, usually providing background information, as indicated with imperfects in general. The kinds of imperfects reflect the general frequencies of use in each author. In Caesar, twenty-five of the twenty-nine (86%) relative clauses with the imperfect have stative verbs. In Cicero, ten of the thirteen (77%) relative clause verbs are stative; the remaining three are iterative/habitual. In Vergil, they are more evenly divided regular imperfect, progressives with verbs of activity, and iteratives/habitual. For example:

- Item Allobroges, **qui** trans Rhodanum vicis possessionesque **habebant**, fuga se ad Caesarem **recipiunt** et **demonstrant** sibi praeter agri solum nihil esse reliqui. (Caesar *BG* 1.11.4) (Note the historic present main verbs.)
- tum **est** Cato **locutus**, **quo** **erat** nemo fere senior temporibus illis, nemo prudentior; (Cicero *de Am.* 1.5) (Note the perfect tense main verb.)
- **Constitit hīc**, arcumque manu celerisque sagittas corripuit, fidus **quae** tela **gerebat** Achates; (Vergil *Aen.* 1.187-88) (Note the perfect main verbs)

Background Causal/Explanatory Use of the Imperfect:

The imperfect is also often used to give a background cause or explanation, often with a stative, giving a background state of affairs as it were. According to Oldsjö, the imperfect is the most common tense for expressing cause in Caesar (Oldsjö 336). Caesar is unusual in not using the conjunction *quia*, but only *quod*, which, I believe, has influenced textbooks and led to overextended and uncharacteristic uses.¹² Besides **quia** and **quod** subordinate clauses, the cause is often marked

¹² For example, Wheelock replaced an original *quia* with *quod* in Caput XI, *Sent. Ant.* 4 (Pliny), and *Thirty-Eight Latin Stories* (Groton and May) has *quod* for an original *quia* in #36, line 1 (Petronius) and #40, line 22 (Livy). In my research, *quod* in general is more limited and is used especially with verbs of emotion (cf. OLD s.v.); its causal use is almost always after the main clause, except in Caesar, where it may interrupt the main clause. Sentence initial uses are not characteristic of Latin authors and can lead to inappropriate default expectations. There is not room for a full discussion here. Cf. Fugier and Bokelstein.

in main clauses by *Nam(que)* or *enim*. Following his general use, Vergil has more in the main clause, with mostly stative verbs and progressive verbs of activity. For example:

- Sed ut in Catone Maiore, qui est scriptus ad te de senectute, Catonem induxi senem disputantem, quia nulla videbatur aptior persona . . . (Cicero *De Am.* 1.4)
- Caesar, quod neque conloquium interposita causa tolli volebat neque salutem suam Gallorum equitui committere audebat, commodissimum esse statuit omnibus equis Gallis equitibus detractis eo legionarios milites legionis decimae, cui quam maxime confidebat, imponere, ut praesidium quam amicissimum, si quid opus facto esset, haberet. (Caesar *BG* 1.42.6) (Note *volebat* + acc. + inf.)
- Caesar loquendi finem facit seque ad suos recepit suisque imperavit ne quod omnino telum in hostes reicerent. Nam etsi sine ullo periculo legionis delectae cum equitatu proelium fore videbat, tamen committendum non putabat . . . (Caesar *BG* 1.46.2-3) (Note also the imperfect in the background *etsi* clause and the indirect statement with the imperfects in both clauses.)
- Dissimulant, et nube cava speculantur amicti, quae fortuna viris, classem quo litore linquant, quid veniant; cunctis nam lecti navibus ibant, orantes veniam, et templum clamore petebant. (Vergil *Aen.* 1.516-19)
- tum breviter Barcen nutricem adfata Sychaei, namque suam patria antiqua cinis ater habebat: (Vergil *Aen.* 4.632-33)

Other Connections of Imperfect with the Main Narrative:

The imperfect may also show a connection with the main narrative with a temporal adverb or clause, a connecting place indicator, an adversative or concessive (cf. *etsi* above), or an adverbial *ut* clause. These have a similar distribution of

stative imperfect, progressive, and habitual/iterative uses. See below for temporal adverbs with progressives. Vergil frequently uses a summary **talis**, **tantus**, etc. For example:

- Latonae tacitum **pertemptant** gaudia pectus:
talis erat Dido, **talem** se laeta **ferebat**
per medios, instans operi regnisque futuris. (Vergil *Aen.* 1.502-04)
- “. . . demoror, ex quo me divum pater atque hominum rex
fulminis adflavit ventis et contigit igni.”
Talia perstabat memorans fixusque **manebat**.
(Vergil *Aen.* 2.648-50)
- **Tantos** illa suo **rumpebat** pectore questus: (Vergil *Aen.* 4.553)
- **obstupuit** retroque pedem cum voce **repressit**.
improvisum aspris **veluti** qui sentibus anguem
pressit humi nitens trepidusque repente **refugit**
attollentem iras et caerulea colla tumentem,
haud secus Androgeos visu tremefactus **abibat**.
(Vergil *Aen.* 2.378-82)
- **hic** Hecuba et natae nequiquam altaria circum,
praecipites atra ceu tempestate columbae,
condensae et divum amplexae simulacra **sedebant**.
(Vergil *Aen.* 2.515-17)

Existential Use of the Imperfect:

One use of the imperfect in a main clause in Caesar, Cicero, and Vergil is that of the existential (“there was” instead of the linking) use of *sum* at or near the beginning of a sentence; there was no such use in Plautus’ *Mostellaria*. When it connects with the preceding and does not start a new paragraph, the existential *erat* is usually in its “regular” initial position. However, in my analysis it occurs more often at the beginning of a new paragraph and sets up an extended background description or temporal setting for a following action, again often with **perfect tense** verbs. The paragraph break is marked by the lack of a connecting adverb or particle and the initial new **subject**, not just a change to a different, but to a previously unknown one

– “a ____” vs. “the ____.” Note that in these the existential *sum* is thus moved out of initial position and is often between the subject and an adjective that is not a complement, in my observations. In poetry, the non-initial order is also *metri causa*. When it is plural, however, in my analysis it often sets up following sub-group(s), with the existential verb in its “regular” initial position and the subject after.¹³ For example:

- **Erat** inter Labienum atque hostem . . . flumen . . . (Caesar *BG* VI.7.5 continuation of the paragraph with Labienus the subject of the previous sentence and *hostes* also old information)
- **Planities erat** magna et in ea tumulus terrenus satis grandis. . . . **Eo**, ut erat dictum, ad colloquium **venerunt**. (Caesar *BG* 1.43.1-2 beginning a new paragraph; note the position of the attributive adjective)
- **Tempus erat**, quo prima quies mortalibus aegris incipit, et dono divum gratissima serpit.
In somnis ecce ante oculos maestissimus Hector **visus [est]** adesse mihi largosque effundere fletus,
(Vergil *Aen.* 2.268-71 new paragraph)
- **Erant** omnino **itinera duo** quibus . . . **unum** . . . **alterum** . . . (Caesar *BG* 1.6.1-2 beginning a new paragraph, but note the initial plural *erant* and following subject setting up the following sub-groups)

Caesar: Imperfect Verbs of Thinking:

As indicated above, mental verbs of thinking (with indirect statement) are among the most frequently used verbs in the imperfect in Caesar. Joseph shows how Caesar contrasts imperfect verbs of thinking with perfect tense verbs in *BG* I.7 by having a paragraph of perfect tense action verbs and beginning of the next paragraph with historic present tense verbs followed by multiple verbs of thinking in the imperfect to slow the pace and thus express the careful, deliberate, and thorough thought process of Caesar (155-56). Compare a similar use also above under the *Background Causal/Explanatory Use of the Imperfect*.

¹³ Cf. new paragraph initial plural present *sunt* in Vergil *Aen.* 6. 893-95 (***sunt*** *gemmae somni portae, quarum altera . . . altera . . .*). I did not find any examples with the plural imperfect *erant*, which could not be initial *metri causa*, in Vergil.

Progressive Use of the Imperfect:

Besides in other contexts characteristic of imperfects in general, as above, progressives also occur in several specific characteristic contexts. When an imperfect is joined with a preceding **pluperfect** in the same clause (or a coordinate) clause, it is often a **progressive**, especially with **iam**.¹⁴ For example:

- inde in Allobrogum fines, ab Allobrogibus in Segusiavos exercitum ducit. Hi **sunt** extra provinciam trans Rhodanum primi. Helvetii **iam** per angustias et fines Sequanorum suas copias **traduxerant** et in Haeduum fines **pervenerant** eorumque agros **populabantur**. (Caesar *BG* 1.10.4-11.1)
- Ter circum Iliacos **raptaverat** Hectora muros, exanimumque auro corpus **vendebat** Achilles. (Vergil *Aen.* 1.483-84)

In general, **iam(que)** or other **temporal adverbs**, such as **interea**, may anticipate a **progressive** use for an activity verb or, less often, a verb of accomplishment or achievement, following the typical lexical matching. These often indicate a shift to a more vivid narrative. For example:

- Corripuere viam **interea**, quā semita monstrat. **Iamque** **ascendebant** collem, . . . (Vergil *Aen.* 1.418-19; note the perfect tense before)
- . . . huic cervixque comaeque **trahuntur** per terram, et versā pulvis **inscribitur** hastā. **Interea** ad templum non aequae Palladis **ibant** crinibus Iliades passis peplumque **ferebant** (Vergil *Aen.* 1.477-80)

Vergil regularly uses **ecce** with a progressive in a main clause. For example:

- . . . Stetit illa tremens, utroque recusso, **insonuere** cavae gemitumque **dedere** cavernae; . . . **Ecce**, manus iuvenem **interea** post terga revinctum pastores magno ad regem clamore **trahebant** Dardanidae, . . . (Vergil *Aen.* 2. 52-53, 57-59)

¹⁴ Note that in Caesar *BG* 1.40.15, the *et . . . et* marks the imperfect as a non-progressive use.

Iterative and Habitual Uses of the Imperfect:

Iterative or **habitual** uses of the imperfect typically occur in a context indicating multiple individuals or multiple repetitions, especially of a verb of activity, such as *dīcō* or other verb of saying (with **indirect statement**), or of achievement, as *inveniō* above, or accomplishment. Sometimes an **adverb** such as *saepe* or an extended time setting serves as a marker. Note also that a number of these verbs often occur together in the same passage. For example:

- Qui se ex his minus timidos existimari volebant, non se hostem vereri, sed [se] angustias itineris et magnitudinem silvarum . . . aut rem frumentariam . . . timere dicebant. (Caesar *BG* 1.39.6) (Note the relative noun clause setting up a group of persons and *volebant* with **accusative + infinitive** and the iterative *dicebant* with **indirect statement**)
- Genus hoc erat pugnae, quo se Germani exercuerant: equitum milia erant VI, totidem numero pedites velocissimi ac fortissimi, quos ex omni copia singuli singulos suae salutis causa delegerant: cum his in proeliis versabantur, ad eos se equites recipiebant; hi, si quid erat durius, concurrebant, si qui graviore vulnere accepto equo deciderat, circumstisiebant; (Caesar *BG* 1.48.4-6 of the habit of the enemy as trained)
- Laelius: Audite vero, optimi viri, ea quae saepissime inter me et Scipionem de amicitia disserebantur. Quamquam ille quidem nihil difficilius esse dicebat, quam amicitiam usque ad extremum vitae diem permanere. Nam vel ut non idem expediret, incidere saepe, vel ut de re publica non idem sentiretur; mutari etiam mores hominum saepe dicebat, alias adversis rebus, alias aetate ingravescente. Atque earum rerum exemplum ex similitudine capiebat ineuntis aetatis, quod summi puerorum amores saepe una cum praetexta toga ponerentur. (Cicero *de Am.* 10.33) (Note the habitual *dicebat* twice with **indirect statement**)
- Discō, hastīs, pilā, cursū, armīs, equō Victitabam volup, . . .

...

Optimi quique expetebant tum a me doctrinam sibi.

(Plautus *Most.* 152-53,155) (Note also the frequentative suffix on *vicitabam*)

- dixit, et extemplo (neque enim responsa dabantur fida satis) sensit medios delapsus in hostis.
(Vergil *Aen.* 2.376-77 the Greek, Androgeos, amid Trojans, whom he had mistaken for Greeks) (Note the plurals expressing multiple persons and their responses)

Summary: Contexts and Uses of Imperfect:

In summary, the (stative) imperfect tense is often used to provide background, usually in context with a simple past use of the perfect (or historic present). Thus, it is best taught after the simple past use of the perfect. When the imperfect is used in the main clause, there is often an explanatory causal connection or, especially for progressive imperfects, a temporal adverb indicating a shift from a simple past narrative to a more vivid highlight. Even the existential use of *sum* usually introduces an ecphrasis or temporal setting, which as a whole provides background. The most common subordinate clauses, relative clauses and causal clauses, also provide background, as do the temporal clauses, giving the situational context. The imperfect of *sum* (and other stative verbs) are the most frequently used verbs in the imperfect, expressing the first use acquired. The progressive and iterative or habitual uses are marked by context and by the lexical types of verbs, with verbs of activity most frequently as progressive, and verbs of accomplishment (and often achievement) or sometimes activity as iterative/habitual. Progressives are more common in Vergil, as are summative imperfects with *talis* or similar. Vergil and Plautus have fewer imperfects in subordinate clauses, probably indicative of the relatively lower proportion of subordinate clauses in general in poetry.

Present Perfect Verbs and Their Contexts:

The verbs occurring in the present perfect tense use, as expected, were usually verbs of accomplishment or achievement, such as *occīdo*, *facio*, *(ad)venio*, *do*, *reperio*, *invenio*, or sometimes verbs of activity. In my analysis, all the occurrences of the present perfect use were in direct speech (or literary dialogue) or as authorial comments. It occurs more often in main clauses in speech and in subordinate clauses in authorial comments.

	Caesar <i>BG</i> & <i>BC</i> (Oldsjö 310, 319-21, 333)	Caesar <i>BG</i> 1	Cicero <i>De Am.</i> 1.1-9.32	Plautus <i>Most.</i> lines 1-531	Vergil <i>Aen.</i> book 1
Main Clause	22 = 21%	0	5 = 20% (+ 2 <i>meminī</i>)	30 = 79%	10 = 59%
Subordinate Clause	85 = 79%	3	20 = 80% (+ 1 <i>meminī</i>)	8 = 21%	7 = 41%
Relative clause	56	1	11	1	2
Adverbial <i>ut</i>	25	2	3 (+ 1 <i>meminī</i>)	0	0
Causal (esp. <i>quoniam</i>)	3 (<i>quod</i>)	0	1 (<i>quoniam</i>)	3 (<i>quoniam</i> , <i>quia</i> , <i>ut</i>)	0
Condition		0	2	0	5
Temporal		0	1	4	0
Concessive		0	2	0	0
Other	1 (<i>quo</i>)	0	0	0	0

Table 7: Contexts of Present Perfect Indicative Verbs

Thus, as shown in Table 1 above, the present perfect use is relatively more frequent (33% of the perfect forms are present perfect according to my analysis) in Plautus' *Mostellaria* than in the other authors. Of these, fourteen (37%) were first person, six (16%) were second person, and eighteen (47%) were third person, which, contrary to expectation, was about the same as for the simple past use of the perfect in Plautus, which had 36% first person, 16% second, and 49% third. Cicero's literary dialogue has 32% present perfect. Book 1 of Vergil's *Aeneid*, which includes a mix of narrative and direct speech, is next highest (12%), with all the present perfects in direct speech. For Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, Oldsjö identifies only 7% of the perfects as present perfect, all of which he characterizes as authorial (first person) comments, with 79% occurring in subordinate clauses (almost all relative or adverbial *ut*)(Oldsjö 310-11, 315, 319-21, 333). For example for an authorial comment:

- Cassivellaunus, *ut* supra demonstravimus, . . . (Caesar *BG* 5.19.1)

In direct speech, a characteristic context is in conjunction with a (non-historic) present tense verb. Other possible markers are *nunc*, *iam*, *nuper*, or other present impact modifiers (cf. Wigtil 684), or *adhuc*, *numquam* or other negatives. These often indicate the recent change expressed by the present perfect: *iam*, "now"

vs. before, or “not”/negative until now or as of now. *Quoniam* (< *quom-iam*), according to my research, is also especially used with the present perfect of past tenses and predicts a present perfect translation of the perfect. For example:

- [Fannius] Istuc quidem, Laeli, ita necesse est. sed *quoniam* amicitiae mentionem **fecisti** et **sumus** otiosi, . . . (Cicero *De Am.* 4.16)
- [Laelius] Plus apud me antiquorum auctoritas valet, vel nostrorum maiorum, . . . vel eorum qui in hac terra fuerunt magnamque Graeciam, **quae nunc** quidem **deleta est**, **tum** florebat, institutis et praeceptis suis erudierunt, . . . (Cicero *De Am.* 4.13) (Note *tum* setting up the change to imperfect tense, *florebat*)
- Recordatus multum et **diu** cogitavi
. . .
id **repperi iam** exemplum. (Plautus *Most.* 84, 90)
- [Laelius] Quod si tanta vis probitatis est ut eam vel in iis **quos numquam vidimus**, vel, quod maius est, in hoste etiam diligamus, quid mirum est, . . . ? (Cicero *De Am.* 9.29) (also with present tense verb)

Another context, especially common in Vergil, is in *conditions*, often with an *indefinite* and/or a *negative*. For example:

- . . . “Heus, . . . iuvenes, **monstrate**, mearum **vidistis si quam** hic errantem forte sororum. . .” (Venus, disguised as a maiden, to Aeneas and Achates; Vergil *Aen.* 1.321-22)
- “**Nulla** tuarum **audita [est]** mihi **neque visa** sororum.”
(Aeneas’ reply; Vergil *Aen.* 1.326)
- [Laelius] Nihil mali accidisse Scipioni puto, mihi **accidit si quid accidit**. (Cicero *de Am.* 3.10)

The present perfect also sometimes occurs in context with a pluperfect verb (in a different clause, as opposed to progressive use imperfects joined with a preceding pluperfect(s) in the same clause, as above), as shown in examples in the following section on the pluperfect.

Pluperfect Contexts

The pluperfect tense is also used in contrast with the simple past and sometimes the present perfect, often providing background information, especially in a relative clause, more so even than the imperfect (cf. Table 6).

	Caesar <i>BG</i> & <i>BC</i> (Oldsjö 310-11, 315-16, 331-39)	Caesar <i>BG</i> 1	Cicero <i>de Am.</i>	Plautus <i>Most.</i>	Vergil <i>Aen.</i> 1, 2, and 4
Main Clause	271 = 30%	7 = 11%	4 = 40%	5 = 50%	24 = 57%
<i>Nam(que)/enim</i>		0	0	0	5 (2 with <i>nondum</i>)
<i>iam</i>		2 (with imperfect)	0	0	0
adversative <i>verum, sed</i>		0	0	0	2
verb of saying after direct quotation		0	0	0	7
(connecting) demonstrative		3	0	0 (1 with pronoun)	0 (2 with pronoun)
(continuing) <i>autem</i>		1	1	0	0
<i>nondum/necdum</i>		0	0	0	3 (2 with <i>nam</i>)
Other		1 (with <i>etiam</i>)	3 (1 = <i>memineram</i>)	5 (3 in direct question)	7 (6 with imperfect; 1 in vivid contrary to fact condition)
Subordinate Clause	629 = 70%	59 = 89%	6 = 60%	5 = 50%	18 = 43%
Relative	424 = 67%	42 = 71% (1 with <i>nondum</i>) (+ 3 noun clauses)	5 = 83%	3 = 60% (1 = noun clause)	17 = 94%
<i>quod</i> causal	93 = 15%	5 = 9%	0	0	0
adverbial <i>ut</i>	41 = 7%	6 = 10%	1 = 17%	1 = 20%	0
<i>cum</i>	7 = 1%	0	0	0	1 = 6%
<i>ubi</i> (when)	4	0	0	0	0
<i>ubi</i> (where); <i>quō</i> ; <i>unde</i>	11 = 2%; 7 = 1%; 4	2 <i>unde</i> = 3%	0	0 1 <i>unde</i> = 20%	0
Other	38	1 (condition)	0	0	0

Table 8: Contexts of Pluperfect Indicative Verbs

Note also that the pluperfect verb often occurs in reverse chronological order in sentences (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 110-11). For example:

- Ubi per exploratores Caesar certior **factus est** tres iam partes copiarum Helvetios id flumen traduxisse, quartam vero partem citra flumen Ararim reliquam esse, de tertia vigilia cum legionibus tribus e castris profectus ad eam partem **pervenit** **quae** **nondum** flumen **transierat**. (Caesar *BG* 1.12.2) (Note the preceding perfects and also **nondum**)
- **fecit** idem, **quod** xx annis ante apud nos **fecerat** Coriolanus. (Cicero *De Am.* 12.42) (Note the preceding perfect tense in the main clause)
- “. . . **quod** **promiseram** tibi dono, **perdidisti**.” (Plautus *Most.* 185) (Note the present perfect in the main clause in direct speech)
- [Dido] “**Vixi** et **quem** **dederat** cursum Fortuna **peregi**, . . .” (Vergil *Aen.* 4.653) (Note the present perfects in the main clauses in direct speech)

The pluperfect is also used to express a background cause, though less often than the imperfect. As with the imperfect above, so with the pluperfect, Caesar again prefers causal **quod** (and not *quia*) subordinate clauses (Oldsjö 310-11, 315-16, 337), while Vergil prefers main clauses marked by **Nam(que)** or **enim**. There were none in my sample from Cicero and Plautus. For example:

- Caesar singulis legionibus singulos legatos et quaestorem **praefecit**, uti eos testes suae quisque virtutis haberet; ipse a dextro cornu, **quod** eam partem minime firmam hostium esse **animadverterat**, proelium **commisit**. (Caesar *BG* 1.52.1-2)
- Cui mater media sese **tulit** obvia silva,
virginis os habitumque gerens, et virginis arma
Spartanae, vel qualis equos Threissa fatigat
Harpalyce, volucremque fuga praevertitur Hebrum.
Namque umeris de moreabilem **suspenderat** arcum
venatrix, **dederatque** comam diffundere ventis,
nuda genu, nodoque sinus collecta fluentis. (Vergil *Aen.* 1.314-20)

- Tum Iuno omnipotens longum miserata dolorem
difficilisque obitus Irim **demisit** Olympos
quae luctantem animam nexosque resolveret artus.
Nam quia nec fato merita nec morte peribat,
sed misera ante diem subitoque accensa furore,
nondum illi flavum Proserpina vertice crinem
abstulerat Stygioque caput **damnaverat** Orco. (Vergil *Aen.*
4.693-99) (Note **nondum** and the causal *quia* with the imperfect)

It is also common in **adverbial ut** clauses, especially in Caesar (for Caesar: Oldsjö 310-11, 315-16, 339). For example:

- Eorum qui domum redierunt censu habito, **ut** Caesar **imperaverat**,
repertus est numerus milium C et X. (Caesar *BG* 1.29.3)
- . . . **Ut** forīs **cēnāverat**
Tuos gnatus, postquam **rediit** ā cenā domum,
Abīmus [= perfect] omnēs cubitum.
(Plautus *Most.* 484-86) (temporal *ut* clause)

There are also some variations by author. For example, in Vergil, about a third of the pluperfects in main clauses are a formulaic marking of the end of a **direct quotation**. For example:

- “ . . . aut quae machina belli?”/ **dixerat**. (Vergil *Aen.* 2.151-52)
- “ . . .”/ Vix ea **fatus erat**, cum circumfusa repente
scindit se nubes et in aethera purgat apertum.
(Vergil *Aen.* 1.586-87)

Conclusion: Characteristic Contexts and Instruction:

In summary, note that some of the characteristic contexts, especially relative clauses and causal main or subordinate clauses, and adverbial *ut* clauses, are the same for the imperfect and pluperfect, and that especially in relative and main clauses, either or both tenses can occur in the same clause. This shows the need for attention to both verb forms and context. Hence, while Latin, with its late position of the verb and its relatively greater flexibility in verb meanings and uses, tends to rely more than some languages on context for setting up tense expectations, there is

still need to learn and use the verb morphology. This means that instruction needs to have quality input with authentic characteristic contexts but also ensure that there are activities with practice where the verb form is salient to prevent relying on only context clues.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTION AND SAMPLE EXERCISES

The need to learn the verb forms and their tense uses in the appropriate order with appropriate input contexts and instructional support brings us to the final section.

1) *Simple Past Use of Perfect*

As shown above, the simple past use of the perfect should be the first past tense taught in Latin, before the imperfect. Note that the use of the term “perfect” can itself be confusing for English-speaking students because of its use in English for the present perfect. Given the learner’s need for one translation per form initially, however, the present perfect use, which is “marked,” and less common, should be taught later, where it would occur in the order of acquisition of tenses. This possible confusion in name is worth pointing out to students. One can mention, for those students that have had Spanish, that the simple past use of the perfect corresponds to the *pretérito*, which got its name from Latin. One can also use the Latin name for the tense and explain the etymology. Bardovi-Harlig recommends using the L2’s own terms for tenses to avoid such assumptions that the L2 tense is an exact equivalent to the English L1 grammatical tense (*Tense* 101). A useful source is Donatus, who taught in Rome in the fourth century AD and was the author of the earliest (extant) and one of the most influential Latin textbooks. In his *De Partibus Orationis Ars Minor*, Donatus asks (in the standard question and answer format) about the tenses of verbs, “*Tempora verbōrum quot sunt?*” The answer: “*Tria.*” He continues: “*Quae? Praesens, ut legō, praeteritum, ut lēgī, futūrum, ut legam.*” (Keil 360).¹⁵ Note that this also shows that the perfect was considered the basic past tense.

As shown above, Latin textbooks that present the simple past use of perfect tense as the first past tense can provide authentic examples of past time narratives and individual sentences using only the perfect tense. The fact that reading based

¹⁵ Donatus then goes on to distinguish three past tenses in the *declinatio* of verbs: “*praeteritum imperfectum, ut legēbam, praeteritum perfectum, ut lēgī, praeteritum plusquamperfectum, ut lēgeram*” (Keil 360). Cf. Isidore Origines 1.9.2: “*Grammaticorum [verborum] in tria cadunt tempora: praeteritum, instans, futurum, ut fēcit, facit, faciet.*”

textbooks tend to introduce the perfect tense first more often than the grammar based textbooks reflects this point. The imperfect, however, as shown above, regularly occurs in contexts also containing perfect verbs and has characteristic context markers, often indicating a change in tense from the simple past. This means that textbooks that teach the imperfect tense prior to the perfect often cannot provide sentences or narratives without omitting relevant context text (including perfects) or including perfects with glossing. This does not help learners develop sensitivity to the markings and contexts for the imperfect or to develop appropriate expectations. If using such a textbook, one can adapt the order of tenses, as discussed below, or supplement by providing oral background information or written notes.

As an additional benefit, learning the perfect tense sooner allows students to understand the third form of the principal parts sooner; they also have fewer verbs from previous chapters to learn the perfect stems of. The *Oxford Latin Course* does a good job of grouping verbs by perfect stem types (e.g. –s perfects, reduplicated, lengthened stem vowels, etc.) for learning (Balme and Morwood *Part II* and *College Edition: Grammar*). See also my [Cogitatorium](#) website page on types of perfect stems.

2) Imperfect with stative verbs and 3) progressive use of imperfect

The second most frequently used tense in Latin is the imperfect. Given that the stative use of the imperfect tense is acquired before the past progressive (and iterative/habitual) according to SLA research and given that the stative imperfect use is more frequent in Latin than the progressive in most authors, it would seem best to teach the stative use first. Given that *sum* is the verb most frequently found in the imperfect in Latin (and the learning of irregular before regular forms), as indicated above, it would also seem best to teach the imperfect of *sum* (and *possum*) first and explain the concept of the imperfect tense as an ongoing state (that is not ended). Then the *-ba-* formation could be taught and the progressive use taught with verbs of activity, which are the first type acquired in the progressive. The progressive use would also help reinforce the concept of the imperfect as continuing and not completed. Using the *-ba-* only for progressives initially would preserve one form - one translation: (irregular *sum*) for stative imperfect vs. *-ba-* progressive. Instructing students about the different kinds of verbs and the characteristic contexts can also help them learn to distinguish the uses and translations of the imperfect. The iterative and habitual uses are best left for later, as they would be acquired later based on studies on the order of acquisition.

The imperfect tense is also an example of the lack of a one to one correspondence between Latin and English, and this difference between the L1 and L2 can impede acquisition of the imperfect. The idea that there is not always a one to one correspondence is an important concept for students to learn. English, like other Germanic languages, does not distinguish in form and translation for many verbs between the simple past and the stative imperfect (e.g. “was” for both *fuit* and *erat*) as they do in some other languages (see Table 9 below). For the concept of the imperfect, one can note the correspondence with the imperfect tense in Spanish, *imperfecto*, or Italian, *imperfetto*, or French, *imparfait*, for students that have studied those. Of the Romance languages, French is closest to Latin in having an imperfect, but not a separate (paraphrastic) past progressive, which Spanish and Italian have added, though they continue to use the imperfect also sometimes as progressive. A table can help visualize the differences:

Latin	Perfect		Imperfect	
French	Present Perfect	Simple past	Imperfect	
Spanish and Italian	Present Perfect	Simple past	Imperfect	Past Progressive
English	Present Perfect (“has ___ed”)	Past (“___ed”)	Habitual/iterative (“used to ___”/ “would ___”/ “kept ___ing”/ (“often,” etc.) “___ed”)	Past Progressive (“was ___ing”)

Table 9: Comparison of Languages and their Tenses

Thus, the Latin perfect tense coincides with both the (present) perfect and the regular past of English, which also overlaps with the imperfect of Latin. The Latin imperfect tense, in turn, coincides with the English past, as well as the past progressive, etc.¹⁶ The fact that the translation for the imperfect of many stative verbs, e.g. *habēbat*, “s/he had,” *amābat*, “s/he loved,” is the same in English as the simple past (Bachvarova 124) is a greater problem when the imperfect is taught first before the simple past. Teaching the imperfect tense before the perfect can thus

¹⁶ In general, English is more complex than Latin in the number of ways of expressing the tenses, including progressives, emphatics, etc. Wigtil in his article describes the complexities of the possible translations in English and some context markers of different Latin tenses; this can be helpful for more advanced students, teachers, and for composition. It is less useful in providing guidance for the basic uses and translations for beginning students.

result in a conflation of these tenses and cause confusion for students. I have had students come in who translated all imperfects as simple past, at least some of whom I know had learned the imperfect before the perfect.

If the simple past use of the perfect is taught first and is already established, the similarity in translation for stative verbs should not be a great problem. The concept of the imperfect is inherent to stative verbs, so the distinction with the simple past really becomes an issue only when contrasted with perfect uses of stative verbs, which are not as frequent, and stative verbs come last in the acquisition of the perfect/simple past tense. The distinction between the imperfect and the simple past for stative verbs is a nuance in reading or an issue only for composition or translation from English to Latin.¹⁷ Part of acquiring tenses is learning to distinguish them from other tenses (Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 186).

One way to extend understanding of the Latin perfect tense (as simple past) to stative verbs and to introduce and/or reinforce the concept of the stative imperfect vs. simple past is to give comparative sentences with perfect and imperfect verbs and have students answer questions to help them learn the difference for themselves.¹⁸ For example:

Exercitatio I. Imperfect by comparison with perfect:

Read the following sentences. Although the verbs may be translated the same in English, the tenses in Latin are different. Given that the perfect tense, the simple completed past, comes from *per-faciō* “to (do through), complete,” as you have learned, what would the im-perfect, represent? What is the difference in each of these?

1 A. Urbs antiqua **fuit**. (*There was an ancient city.*) (Did Carthage still exist when Vergil was writing?) (Vergil *Aen.* 1.12)

B. Pompeius tum **erat** consul. (*Pompeius was consul then.*) (What does the *tum* do for the temporal reference?) (cf. Cicero *de Am.* 1.2)

2 A. (Epitaph) **Vixit** annōs IIII mensēs VI. (*He lived 4 years, 6 months.*) (Was he still alive?) (cf. CIL 6.12156)

¹⁷ Rosi’s book shows that this can be an issue; native German speakers (compared to native Spanish speakers who have an imperfect tense) overextended the use of perfective past verbs in production in imperfect contexts when learning Italian.

¹⁸ For more on the use of the perfect (and imperfect) tense in Latin with stative verbs, with examples, see Haverling 455-58.

B. Quam bene Saturnō **vīvēbant** rege, . . . (*How well they lived, when Saturnus was king*) (Tibullus 1.3.35)

3 A. Nam . . . hostem vidēre nemō **potuit**. (*For no one was able to see the enemy.*) (of a later report of a battle that lasted until evening) (cf. Caesar BG 1.26.2)

B. Pugnāre nōn **poterant**. (*They were not able to fight.*) (because their overlapping shields were stuck together with enemy spears; part of an ongoing description of the battle) (cf. Caesar BG 1.25.3)

Progressive use of imperfect: After the stative use of the imperfect has been learned and one is moving on to teach the progressive use, one can help develop and practice and test the concept of the Latin imperfect/progressive vs. the simple past (and future) without requiring a translation by matching pictures with captions or using written scenarios. For example:

Exercitatio II. Matching the concept:

Choose the caption that best fits each picture.

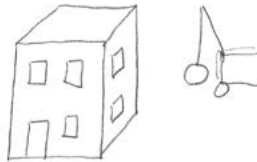
1. A) dēlēbātur

B) dēlēbitur

C) dēlētum est

[or for active: A) aedificium dēlēbant B) aedificium dēlēbunt C) aedificium dēlēvērunt]





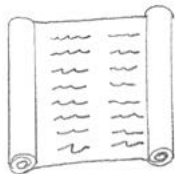


2. A) librum lēgit

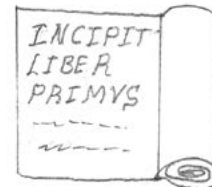
B) librum leget

C) librum legēbat

[or: A) librum scrīpsit B) librum scrībet C) librum scrībēbat]







Exercitatio III. Recognizing and understanding tenses Scenario: You want to discuss the end of a novel/movie with someone for writing a paper. You contact some of your friends. Read the results and tell which person you would follow up with and why.

Iordanus librum nōn lēgit.

Aemilia librum legēbat.

David librum leget.

Sandra librum lēgit.

Rewriting as a Practice Exercise: Having students take an earlier passage (or sentences) that were in the present and rewrite it/them in the past tense is also a good exercise, which can be done or started in class in groups or as an assignment, especially as a review for intermediate students or composition classes. This helps students think about which verbs should be perfect and which imperfect and about revising context adverbs, etc. as necessary. It also allows the focus to be on the verbs and more time can be devoted to them compared to straight English to Latin translation exercises of complete sentences. One could indicate which tense to use for elementary classes and/or for some of the more difficult (stative) ones or edit out some of the extended lexical aspect verb types. For example, one could use the first reading (“Scintilla in casa laborat”) in Balme and Morwood’s *Oxford Latin Course: College Edition: Readings and Vocabulary* (or the reading from Chapter 2 in the *Oxford Latin Course: Part I*, 2nd ed.), which would work well, or the first reading (“Pandora’s Box”) in Groton and May’s *Thirty-Eight Latin Stories* (with some possible editing/help).¹⁹ As Ortega has noted, while characteristic contexts in input help in the acquisition of a tense concept, reliance on the context slows acquisition of the morphological forms, so exercises involving production can “push” students to the next level (62-64).

4) Present Perfect

According to the order of acquisition in SLA, as indicated above, after the imperfect (both the stative imperfect and the progressive use), would be the most appropriate time to introduce the present perfect translation/use of the Latin perfect. Teaching the imperfect second, after the simple past use of the perfect, *i.e.* between

¹⁹ E.g. *saepe* in line 4 sets up an iterative imperfect for “*monet*.” There are also several stative verbs whose past translation (if part of the thinking process) could sound like a (simple past use of) perfect tense. Lines 10-11 would be a nice place to add a *iam* to mark a change from simple past (for *provolant*) to imperfect (for *errant*) (or even keep the present).

the two uses of the perfect, also helps learners preserve the one to one translation of the perfect longer to avoid confusion. Given that the present perfect occurs most often in direct speech, including some oral conversation or written dialogues for the present perfect could be helpful. For example:

- “Ivistīne umquam Rōmam?”
- “Numquam īvī.” or
- “Vīdistīne umquam mare?”

One can also give students sets of sentences with simple past uses of perfects and present perfects and ask students to think about what context clues may indicate a present perfect translation. For example:

Exercitatio IV: Perfect or Present Perfect?

Read through the following pairs of sentences with perfect verbs, one simple past (A) and one present perfect (B). What context clues help you know when to use a present perfect translation?

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. A. Rōmam īvimus. | B. “Ivistīne umquam Rōmam?” |
| 2. A. Deinde canem invēnit. | B. “Canem meum nōndum invēnī.” |
| 3. A. Itaque pēnsū confēcīt. | B. “Iam pēnsū confēcī.” |
| 4. A. Monstrum vīdērunt. | B. Nēmō id adhūc vīdit. |

One can also have students look at sentences in the textbook or that the teacher provides and have them consider what context clues the sentences have in common. How can one predict that the verb will be x tense/translation?

5) Pluperfect:

The frequent use of the pluperfect in relative clauses, as shown above, means it would be best taught after, or at the same time as, relative clauses. There are no reasons in its use in Latin to argue for moving the pluperfect up earlier than its order last in the acquisition of past tenses in SLA research. The pluperfect tense can also be difficult for students today, who do not always have a firm grasp of the pluperfect in English and do not always use it themselves. The pluperfect, expressing background information, as discussed above, also regularly occurs in non-chronological order in a narrative, e.g. following a perfect tense verb. (Bardovi-Harlig, *Tense* 110-11). One can give students two separate sentences that show chronological actions,

and then combine them into one sentence using a relative clause with the pluperfect, or v.v., break a complex sentence apart into two separate sentences in chronological order. For example:

Marcus epistulam scrīpsit. Gaius eam lēgit.

> Gaius epistulam lēgit, quam Marcus **scrīpserat**.

One can also have students practice by numbering sentences in chronological order without having to translate. For example:

Exercitatio V. Ordering by tense:

Number the sentences in chronological order (from most past #1 to future) based on the action of the verbs:

A. _____ Lucius librum legit.

_____ Gaius librum quaerēbat.

_____ (Nam) Marcus librum habuerat.

[One can include the characteristic *Nam* marker or not.]

_____ Aemilia librum habēbit.

B. _____ Amīcum iuvābit.

_____ Hoc dīxerat.

_____ Marcum vident.

_____ Gaius eum nōn audīvit.

Adapting, Supplementing, and Choosing Textbooks

One can also adapt and supplement textbooks as needed. If the textbook does not present the simple past use of the perfect first, one can introduce it earlier by adapting the textbook and/or supplementing with material from other textbooks or sources, adapting or glossing vocabulary as needed, or at least teach the simple past use of the perfect earlier in relation to the principal parts of verbs. For example, my students showed a better understanding of past tenses with Wheelock when I taught just the future (without the imperfect) in Caput V and then taught the perfect in Caput VI (after the present and future of *sum* and *possum*). I did this by rewriting some of the sentences in the perfect. I glossed the two imperfects in Groton and May's *Thirty-Eight Latin Stories* reading for VI and then picked up the reading for V, which already had five perfect tense verbs; I glossed the imperfect verbs and supplemented with content questions including perfect verbs. The reading for VII had two perfect verbs, and I again glossed the imperfect ones. I then taught the imperfect in Caput VIII, where it was presented with third conjugation verbs. Similarly, with

the first edition of Shelmerdine's *Introduction to Latin*, one could delay teaching the imperfect until chapter 11 (after the perfect in chapter 8), where 3rd conjugation verbs are taught.²⁰

If the pluperfect is taught together with the perfect, one can also delay teaching the pluperfect and gloss as needed until an appropriate time to teach it. One can also adapt sentences with an unmarked pluperfect in the main clause by adding a *nam* or another appropriate introductory marker, or perhaps, as an exercise, have students choose from a list of possible markers once they have seen enough examples and have achieved the first level of acquisition. For example, in *Thirty-Eight Latin Stories* #15, the story of how the Aegean got its name, it describes that the sails were black, not white on the return. "[Nam] stultus Theseus suum cōnsilium memoriā nōn tenuerat; vēla nōn mūtāverat." (Groton and May 26).

One can also delay teaching secondary uses of tenses, such as the present perfect for the perfect or the iterative for the imperfect. One can also supplement and adapt translations given in the book, e.g. by telling students that the simple past translation given for the imperfect is most frequently used for stative verbs and less frequently than the "was ___ing" for other verbs, or by clarifying that a description of the perfect as "recently" completed or translated as "has/have" is not the most frequent and applies to the present perfect use (to be taught later, if possible). As indicated above, one can use pictures and mnemonics to help, especially if one is teaching multiple tenses at the same time. The "v" mnemonic based on the "v" in some perfect stems and the "have" translation works for the present perfect use, but it can be overextended to the simple past use if not used with caution, especially if both uses are taught at the same time.²¹

If one is considering choosing a (new) textbook, the ones that present the tenses in the order that fits best with student learning tend to be reading based, as indicated above. In particular, *Disce!: An Introductory Latin Course* (Kitchell and Sienkewicz), Jones and Sidwell's *Cambridge Reading Latin*, and *Latin for Reading* (Knudsvig, Seligson, and Craig) present the tenses in the order that fits best with principles of SLA. The *Cambridge Reading Latin* has good, clear descriptions of the perfect (though with both uses) (in 2D) and imperfect (in 4A); it teaches the pluperfect and relative clauses in 4C. The future perfect is appropriately separated from the

²⁰ The second edition (2013) postpones the perfect to chapter 11 and moves the pluperfect and future perfect up from chapter 15, putting them all in the same chapter (before the relative).

²¹ I had a student that placed into Latin who translated all perfect tense verbs as "has/have ___ed" and said that he did not know that they could be translated as simple past.

pluperfect near the end, in 5C (Jones and Sidwell). In *Disce!*, the perfect is taught first (in chapter 8 in third person, then in chapter 11 for the other persons), though both translations, the simple past “___ed” and the present perfect “has/have ___ed” are given to be used. There are several chapters of noun material plus infinitives; then, although without much time for consolidating learning between new tenses, in chapter 16, the future tense is presented followed by present participles in chapter 17. Chapter 18 introduces the imperfect (as well as relative and interrogative pronouns), giving “used to ___” and “was/were ___ing” for translations, in that order. It discusses aspect and compares imperfect and perfect, though only in terms of continuing vs. single action without including in-completed vs. completed. It also gives some examples, perhaps providing too many details and exceptions at this stage (Kitchell and Sienkewicz 220).²² The following chapter (19) has the pluperfect, and the future perfect is next in chapter 20 (Kitchell and Sienkewicz). McKeown’s *Classical Latin*, though it teaches the imperfect (chapter 3 with the future) before the perfect (chapter 7, including the pluperfect and an introduction to the future perfect), has good examples and guidelines in chapter 7 for when to use which translation for the perfect and in differentiating from the imperfect.

CONCLUSION

In summary, it does make a difference in which order the tenses are taught and which verbs are used in instruction. The simple past use of the perfect should be the first past tense taught, before the imperfect. It takes time for students to acquire a temporal system, and the emphasis should be on developing implicit knowledge. Knowledge of both lexical and other context markers as well as verb morphology is important in Latin. Although teaching cannot change the order of acquisition, instruction can change the rate of learning. Students best learn one tense at a time and the basic, most common translation/use for each tense form at first. After these are firmly established, they can add other less common uses later through authentic contexts and instruction with questions or exercises drawing attention to them. Allowing time for processing and integration between stages, especially of forms that are easily confused because of similarity in orthography, is also important.

As indicated, one can adapt textbooks by rearranging the order, delaying/splitting up teaching certain tenses or translations, and adapting sentences to reflect

²² For example, instances where English uses a different tense/translation than the Latin, including in *dum* clauses, though *dum* is not a vocabulary word until chapter 33.

more authentic contexts, e.g. by adding appropriate markers or subordination, and glossing as needed. Exercises requiring attention to form, like matching with pictures, numbering in chronological order, or producing, e.g. composing based on pictures or rewriting passages, can help “push” students in their development.

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What can Taylor Swift do for your Latin Prose Composition students? Using popular music to teach Latin poetry analysis skills.¹

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a method for developing and practicing both close reading skills and compositional skills as used in an undergraduate Latin Prose Composition course. By using contemporary popular music, students can learn how to recognize, comprehend, and use as a basis for analysis rhetorical and literary devices found in Latin poetry as well as poetic compositional style. When students translate popular songs that they know and understand into Latin and then analyze them according to basic philological processes, they are able to remove barriers to understanding deriving from cultural differences between the Roman world and their modern world. Further, this assignment also offers a solution to the critical problem that many students have no facility with poetic analysis of poetry in their native language. In addition to seeing extensive development of philological methods in students performing this assignment, results were also seen in advanced reading Latin courses in the form of better class discussion and more mature term papers.

KEYWORDS

Latin, song, music, composition, literary devices, translation, close reading

One of the singular difficulties that I have had teaching the analysis of ancient poetry in an upper-level undergraduate Latin reading course is getting the students to understand — not just identify, but comprehend on a deeper level — that a poet's various stylistic techniques, especially devices such as *pleonasm*, *tricolon*

¹ This essay began as a presentation at the 2017 CAMWS Annual Meeting in Kitchener, Ontario, and thus retains an informal style. I would like to thank Theodora Kopestonsky, Justin Arft, and the members and audience of the panel "Finding a New Beat: Teaching Latin Poetry with Pop Music," of which this essay was a part, for their stimulating papers and comments. I would also like to thank my Spring 2016 Latin Prose Composition class at Austin Peay State University — Arian Finley, Rebecca Illig, Alexander Kee, Michelle Pletcher, and Etenia Mullins — for their inspiration and willingness to be prose composition guinea pigs. I am also particularly grateful to John Gruber-Miller and the three anonymous referees for their suggestions and advice on this essay.

crescendo, *zeugma*, and *anaphora*, are more than clever verbal games. Rather, they give poems important literary texture and enhance the poem's emotional and intellectual atmosphere. Indeed, I have seen sweat-drenched brows and horror-gaped faces too frequently when I ask a student to explain, for example, what effect *asyndeton* or *metonymy* have on one of Horace's *Odes* or why we care at all about the *chiasmus* in a Vergilian "Golden Line." This exasperation likely derives from the parallel struggle of learning to render Latin poetry into coherent and natural English while simultaneously transmitting Roman literary ideals or social contexts into 21st century ones. There are so many complex literary and cultural hurdles in learning to understand a Latin poem to clear at once that students get understandably flustered. These struggles are exacerbated by the common problem that many students are unfamiliar with or uncomprehending of the process of poetic analysis in their *native* languages; attempting the process first in another tongue certainly is putting the cart before the horse. With unfortunate regularity, we, as Latin teachers, have become the instructors of English grammar in our introductory classes. We should, it seems, get used to teaching basic poetic rudiments as well. The typical pedagogical strategy used in Latin courses for developing these skills — that is, the recognition and comprehension of structural devices like those just listed and their impact upon a poem — is to practice stylistic close reading skills with Latin poets. But the foreignness of these devices and multivalence of Roman poetry seems to intimidate the students too much for retention beyond a semester's end. A better, and ultimately more effective, option would seem to be to bring Roman poetry a bit closer to the comprehensible world of the students. This essay outlines the practice of the close reading of poetry as recently used in a Latin Prose Composition course in a novel way, through the lens of contemporary popular music, to overcome the difficulties of time and culture for our Latin students while also developing an understanding and facility for the most commonly used literary devices of Roman poets.² Further, the assignment outlined below demonstrated benefits in Latin reading courses with regard to teaching basic philological analysis skills and receiving more effective and productive literary critical term papers from the students.

2 The use of song in Latin classrooms has enjoyed a boom of sorts recently, resulting in some excellent articles on its use. See Irby-Massie, 2009; Moore, 2013; and Hallett, 2006 for different approaches to using song and music to dismantle learning barriers in Latin courses of all levels.

A FORTUITOUS FAILURE

The strategy for teaching philological analysis for Roman poetry outlined here developed out of a fortuitous failure during the Spring 2016 iteration of my Latin Prose Composition course at Austin Peay State University. I had come to the realization that, outside the Vatican and certain secret societies, composing Latin in good Ciceronian or Livian idiom is no longer the necessary skill that it once was, though Prose Composition courses still have tremendous effect upon a student's development with a language.³ As such, I planned to use my Latin Prose Composition course to solidify my students' feel for Latin grammar, especially more nuanced features like the intersection of grammar and an author's style, and to help them develop the close reading skills that are the hallmark of our profession and that would be applicable in our Latin poetry and prose reading courses.⁴ Interested in breaking the usual tedium of translating English into Latin and grammar review, I decided I would give my students an assignment that forced them to think more deeply about Ciceronian style, hoping that once they did this for Cicero, they could apply the learned strategies, *mutatis mutandis*, to other authors, other genres, and hopefully their own Latin compositions.

This is how that assignment worked: Over the course of two classes, we discussed the basics of rhetorical form, from the parts of an oration and their goals, like the *exordium*, *refutatio* and *peroratio*, to the different rhetorical styles, like "plain" or "grand," to a few specific literary devices, like *recusatio*, *praeteritio*, or *accumulatio*. Once they seemed to grasp these basics, we learned a sound process for analyzing Ciceronian style. As a guideline, I asked the students to use Timothy Moore's excellent "[Latin Prose Stylistic Analysis Checklist](#)," which leads the student through a series of analytical questions on issues like diction, syntax, and the effects of rhetorical tropes. I then asked the students to translate the first two OCT pages of the *1st Catilinarian* and build a coherent analysis of Cicero's style therein using the terms and techniques we had learned. The work I received from the students was uniformly successful. For the first time, it seemed, my students understood how Cicero built his narrative to make a persuasive argument. For example, one student,

3 The bibliography on the usefulness and worth of Latin Prose Composition and various techniques for including it in Latin classes of every level has grown exponentially since Ball and Ellsworth's challenge in 1989. Please see Saunders, 1993 for a coherent defense of Composition. I am firmly in the "Prose Composition is useful" camp.

4 See Davis, 1990 for a useful strategy to teach critical reading that leads to more productive term essays.

applying one of Moore's questions about diction (i.e., "what choices has the author made between synonyms?") noted,

*"The diction that Cicero uses here emphasizes to the audience how Catiline's actions are to be condemned. After his initial interrogation of Catiline, Cicero uses verbs that fit his persuasive purpose and make others seem more sympathetic than the wrongful Catiline. For example, when Cicero is questioning which of the men on the senate Catiline thinks is unaware of his actions, Cicero uses *ignōrāre* ("to be ignorant") instead of other options such as *nescīre* ("to not know"). The importance of nuance can be seen through Cicero's use of *ignōrāre*, which has a stronger implication of negativity and, importantly, misunderstanding, as he is accusing Catiline of believing that some of the men on the senate are possibly blind or even mindless of his actions."*

The students discussed Cicero's vocabulary, the basic structure of his oration, his use of literary devices, and even subtler techniques like humor. I was encouraged enough by their work to try the assignment again with Caesar two weeks later. The students were given the famous opening passage from Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* I, a short conversation on the difference between oratory and historiography, and a week to complete a five-page written analysis. The positive results of the first Ciceronian assignment were repeated. I received comments such as: "[Caesar] also chooses to use the present active indicative with almost all of his verbs – only making a few verbs passive, yet still present – which helps draw the reader into the action of the events" and "[h]ere, clauses are strung together in a paratactic manner, because ideas are often short and placed together without much subordination. Caesar interweaves long and short sentences throughout this first chapter, as the lengthy sentences typically incorporate descriptive subordinate clauses."⁵ I was impressed that the students had picked up the philological method we had discussed in class, and that Moore's checklist encourages, so quickly.

The success of these assignments encouraged me to try this same assignment with poetic texts. After all, I thought, would the philological process be that much different for poetry than it was for oratory and historiography? I asked the students

⁵ These student quotes are directly responding to questions in Moore's checklist: I.A and III.C.2-4, respectively.

to perform this task one more time, this time with about 50 lines of Vergil's *Aeneid*, from Aeneas' narration of the fall of Troy in Book 2. We briefly discussed a basic list of literary devices often found in poetic contexts, such as *asyndeton*, *metonymy*, *personification*, and *anaphora*, and they went to work. But this assignment, which had worked so well for prose authors, failed catastrophically for poetry. The work turned in barely scratched the surface of the poetic passage — identifying a few devices with little discussion of effects and presenting a general confusion on how to tackle a poetic passage of any complexity; the students showed little of the impressive nuance they had offered in the discussion of the prose texts. I was confused, and the students were disappointed.

With an assignment autopsy having been performed, the failure of the poetry version of this assignment, in light of its success with prose, seems accountable to three things:

1. Poetic structure and word order is different enough from prose to obfuscate the stylistic structure. The students had trouble dealing with the ordered chaos and multivalent nature of Latin poetry, as opposed to the relatively straightforward narrative style of an author like Caesar. Confidence in their translations suffered accordingly and, consequently, they recognized fewer literary devices or at least were unable substantively to link stylistic devices to judgments of Vergil's style.
2. Stylistic analysis is strengthened by a critic's ability to understand an author's "references" or "cultural vocabulary." As one of these students noted later, "the nuances and figures of speech that an unfamiliar poet from an unfamiliar culture uses are the hardest part" because literature can rely upon a shared vocabulary, temporally and culturally located. Poetry is, of course, more dependent on metaphor, intertextuality, and subtlety than prose and, thus, is more foreign to the student whose contact with the Romans is relatively new.
3. It is particularly hard to analyze ancient literary devices when students are not sure if they are able to recognize them in English poetry, let alone poetry written two millennia ago in another language. It became abundantly clear that understanding the mechanics of the

literary devices prevalent in one's own language is a crucial first step to their comprehension in a foreign literary milieu.

CONTEMPORARY POPULAR MUSIC AS A TOOL FOR TEACHING LITERARY DEVICES

As our class contemplated the rubble of the Vergilian philological analysis assignment, the students proposed an activity to revive our class energy: they suggested that we treat Taylor Swift, Miley Cyrus, and a few other singers like ancient poets, put them into Latin, and then decide if their songs are any good. Put more formally, the two-part task to which we all agreed was: 1) to analyze popular songs, such as Taylor Swift's *Bad Blood* (1989. Big Machine Records, 2014), Miley Cyrus' *Wrecking Ball* (*Bangerz*, RCA Records, 2013), and Adele's *Hello* (25. XL Recordings, 2015) for literary devices that are also common to Latin poetry and 2) translate these songs into construable and attested Latin, as well as they could at their stage of skills development, paying careful attention to reproduce appropriate literary devices for a Roman form.

Originally, I had intended this project to last just one class period; it would serve as a fun respite from tedious grammar discussion. But our class's experience with this task demonstrated a greater pedagogical ideal at work. Allowing the students to learn poetic analysis with poetry they know much better, from a world that they know implicitly, encouraged the students to develop their comprehension of, facility with, and confidence with poetic compositional technique without the stress of translating another culture at the same time. In the end, this activity was wildly successful, as I will explain below, and will now feature prominently in my future Latin Prose Composition courses.

As a teacher attempting to make a learning opportunity out of this ungraded, for-fun activity, I insisted that we go about our task systematically, applying good philological method to our chosen texts. Likewise, I decided that the students needed to utilize Moore's checklist and experience failure with these concepts. In short, I continually encouraged the students to pay attention to process over product — we were playing the long game of skill-learning after all. What follows is the process I followed with this group of students. I would emphasize that the translations into Latin that follow herein are the actual translations produced by this class on the classroom's whiteboard without extended time or benefit of reference works, such as

Smith and Hall's *Copious and Critical English-Latin Dictionary* or prose composition handbooks.⁶ I have reproduced these uncorrected and flawed translations here specifically to underscore the sorts of interactions I had with these students (i.e., promptings like "what other syntactical constructions could you have used here?" and "what might have been a better dictional choice?") and the interactions one who was using this method would need to have with their students to develop the skill under discussion.

Our first step was to examine the lyrics to Taylor Swift's *Bad Blood*, trying to identify literary devices like those used in Latin poetry.

(chorus)

'Cause baby, now we've got bad blood 1
 You know it used to be mad love
 So take a look what you've done
 'Cause baby, now we've got bad blood, hey!

Now we've got problems 5
 And I don't think we can solve 'em
 You made a really deep cut
 And baby, now we've got bad blood, hey!

(verse 1)

Did you have to do this?
 I was thinking that you could be trusted 10
 Did you have to ruin what was shiny?
 Now it's all rusted
 Did you have to hit me where I'm weak?
 Baby, I couldn't breathe
 And rub it in so deep 15
 Salt in the wound like you're laughing right at me

Oh, it's so sad to
 Think about the good times

⁶ I did supply both Lewis and Short's *A Latin Dictionary* and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* for every class period.

You and I.⁷

Bad Blood (written by Taylor Swift, Max Martin, Johan Shellback)

As we analyzed the song, the students first recognized that the song's title was a metaphor, with the metaphor of "bad blood" representing conflict between two (former) friends. One student noticed that lines 1-9 were full of *anaphora* emphasizing the key theme of conflict and presenting a poetic flow similar to an emotionally charged conversation. Then we discussed extensively the grammar, syntax, and diction of the song's phrases, using Moore's checklist again. As we took Moore's questions one at a time, the students made the sort of observations that are fundamental and vital for good poetic analysis, like the alternation between first person plural and second person singular verbs in the song's chorus and how that structure affected the emotional dialogue between "Taylor" and her mysterious former friend: the song presents "we" when remembering good times and "you" when remembering bad ones.⁸ They also noticed that certain metaphorical phrases were especially fruitful for Swift's representation of emotional entropy, such as lines 11-12, "did you have to ruin what was shiny/now it's all rusted," which answer Moore's questions II.E and II.F (i.e., "To what extent does the author use metaphorical expressions?" and "Are there any expressions particularly effective in their imagery?" respectively). The students even recognized the importance of the repetition of certain lines for emotive emphasis and poetic shaping (i.e., lines 1, 4, and 8 each use the phrase "now we've got bad blood"). Without the stress of translating this song *out* of Latin *into* English — rather they could make their analysis in their native language and time period — the students were surprised how much they noticed.

Our activity's final step was to put the lyrics into a construable Latin construction and diction. In the discussion that follows, I will present examples of the class' translation of *Bad Blood*, unaltered and uncorrected, with the concepts I highlighted as we discussed their process and product. As I noted above, my goal was to teach the process; a perfect translation could be developed with more time and access to the full gamut of reference works.

When dealing with poetry and poetic composition and translation, the concept of translating for sense rather than for exact dictional matching and phrasing is

7 This is not the whole of the song. There are two more verses and corresponding choruses. The parts of the song shown here are only what was analyzable in one class period.

8 This observation was in direct contemplation of Moore's question III.C.10: "To what extent does the author use parallelism in arranging his clauses?"

crucial. This particular song gave us multiple examples to drive this goal home. For example, the name of the song itself, “Bad Blood,” a metaphor for rivalry or animosity in English, tempts one to use *sanguis* as the Latin equivalent and my class wished to do so. But, upon closer inspection, *sanguis* is unattested in this sense in Latin. After consulting Lewis and Short (and later Smith and Hall), the class and I recognized this problem and where the class originally had translated the song’s title as “*Malus Sanguis*,” they now could translate it as “*Simultates*.”⁹ To be sure, *simultas* rather than *sanguis* was less vivid as a poetic phrase, but as a rule we had to stay within the attestations. The class encountered a similar issue, and learned an important lesson about using reference works, with the concept of rusting metal as seen in *Bad Blood*, lines 11-12: “Did you have to ruin what was shiny?/Now it’s all rusted.” Originally the students used *robignum* to describe the shiny thing (i.e., their friendship) that had oxidized for “Taylor” and her friend. But *robigus* is only attested as *Robigus*, the Roman god of the rust blight and so could not be used. As a class we discussed the options: do we use, then, *robigo* (-inis, f.) as “rust” or do we use a verb that means “to become rusty” or “to become corroded”? After recognizing that the point of “Taylor’s” question was about corrosion and ruination, rather than specifically rust, the students agreed that a verb phrase, with applicable attestations, like *robiginem trahere, torpescere, or tabescere*, would construe the sense far better.¹⁰

A third example, which the students nailed right away and drove home the concept of getting the dictional sense correct over exact phrasing, dealt with the word “baby” in the first stanza:

Swift:

’Cause baby, now we’ve got bad blood 1
 You know it used to be mad love
 So take a look what you’ve done
 ’Cause baby, now we’ve got bad blood, hey!

My Class:

Quod, care, nunc malum sanguinem habemus. 1
Scis id fuisse insanissimum amorem

9 Smith and Hall, s.v. blood suggests *simultas* for the negative state of mind or passions that English refers to as “bad blood.” Lewis and Short, s.v. *simultas* 1 corroborates this using the word to represent “a hostile encounter between two persons, enmity, rivalry, hatred, etc.”

10 See Lewis and Short, s.v. *Robigus, robigo, tabesco, torpesco* and Smith and Hall, s.v. rust for these attestations.

Aspice ad facta a te

Quod, care, nunc malum sanguinem habemus.

*Ecce!*¹¹

5

The students specifically chose to translate Taylor's use of "baby" (here, in lines 1 and 4, but also present in lines 9 and 13) as *care*, instead of a more literal word like *infans*, because *carus*, as they had seen in Roman authors previously, most aptly communicated the emotional intimacy of the original. Justifying this choice, they argued that "Taylor's" relationship with her friend was not necessarily a sexual love, but certainly demonstrated deep affection.

Verse 1 (lines 9-16) of *Bad Blood* also proved apt for a discussion of the literary device of *anaphora* and the process for reproducing this in Latin:

Swift:

(verse 1)

Did you have to do this?

I was thinking that you could be trusted 10

Did you have to ruin what was shiny?

Now it's all rusted

Did you have to hit me where I'm weak?

Baby, I couldn't breathe

And rub it in so deep 15

Salt in the wound like you're laughing right at me

My class:

Faciendumne fuit tibi hoc?

Putabam me posse tibi credere.

Delendumne fuit tibi quod lucidum erat?

Iam nunc omnino id est robigum (sic).

Pulsandumne fuit tibi in quo infirma sum?

Care, spirare non potui.

Confricandumne fuit altissime tibi,

velut ad me rides, o sal in vulnere est!

¹¹ Again, please note that this is an uncorrected translation and *malum sanguinem* should be *simul-tates*.

Here, the students commented specifically on the string of questions and answers about the friend's compulsions to hurt "Taylor" and insisted on placing the gerundive parts of those passive periphrastics first in each line because it would emphasize "Taylor's" worry about her friend's compulsion to hurt her at the forefront, grammatically constructing *anaphora*.

This exercise also showed possible benefit upon later reflection of the assignment in the discussion of identifying the correct syntactical constructions in Latin. For example, at *Bad Blood*, line 6, we see "Taylor" express doubt over whether the problems the pair had with each other could be resolved: ".../And I don't think we can solve 'em." The students produced *[e]t nescio nos ea solvere posse* as their translation of Swift's line that day, rendering it with a simple Indirect Statement. But, in class, one could and should push them on the accuracy of this choice. "Taylor" is expressing doubt here, which is ultimately a question (i.e., "whether or not?"). Thus, in class, a teacher could lead their students to see that this would be better expressed with an indirect question or the use of "-ne" (e.g., *nescio num ea solvere possimus* or *possimusne ea solvere*).

POPULAR SONGS AND LATIN POETIC ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT

This classroom experience was so fun and productive in developing important philological skills that the students and I all agreed that we would do this activity again as a graded final assignment. I asked them to use the same process that we had just performed, but to produce something more formal than our class translation of *Bad Blood*. In essence, I wanted to combine the prose style analysis assignment from earlier in the semester, discussed above, with our impromptu song translation day. The assignment given to the students in lieu of a previously designed final translation assignment asked the students to translate one recent English-language song into construable, attestable, and idiomatic Latin, using the rules and techniques learned during the semester (see Appendix 1). As a final product they were required to offer an essay between 1200 and 2000 words that developed a thorough poetic analysis of their chosen song's structure, theme, and literary devices according to the philological analysis method we had learned. I explained to the students first that this assignment contained several distinct pieces that they would need to consider before beginning: 1) choosing a suitable song, 2) analyzing the structure and diction of the song's English, 3) determining the appropriate Latin constructions needed to construe the English, 4) choosing attestable and idiomatic diction to represent the

English ideas, and 5) analyzing how the Latin constructions intersected with the English ones. My goal with all pre-assignment instruction was to encourage the development of a careful and systematic philological habit. For example, I made it clear to the students that choosing the right song was crucial, as a poorly chosen text could paint the critic into an analytical corner. Specifically, they needed to be familiar enough with the song to understand some of the basic cultural context surrounding its themes. It was also important that they pick a song that gave them enough technical and syntactical material to make an informed and intelligent decision about the quality of the song's formal poetic composition. The specific parameters given to the students for choosing a song to analyze were:

- Your song should not have been translated into Latin before (i.e., not discoverable via internet search engine).
- Your song can be any genre (i.e., hip-hop, rap, rock, pop, country, metal, etc.). However, be aware that some genres are more reliant on music to set atmosphere than others. You must be able to view the song's lyrics as a poem, separate from the music.
- Your song should have at least 10 unique lines or at least two verses and a refrain.
- Your song should be appropriate in material and language. Do not choose a song that uses slurs or explicit sexual descriptions.
- Your song will have at least three recognizable literary devices or distinct syntactical features around which you can organize your analysis.
- Your song should be recent enough for you to understand its historical and social context.
- Your song should be a song that you know and like — it will help immensely both in translating and in discussing the theme and structure of the song.

In their written analyses, I asked that they take a carefully structured approach discussing in turn the song's diction, syntax, how diction and syntax work

together to develop tone and atmosphere, poetical devices and their effects upon the song, and any important cultural knowledge needed to understand the song and how the style of the song reflected that. As an example of the last aspect, I noted that The Guess Who's iconic song "American Woman" (*American Woman*, RCA Victor, 1970) is a Canadian response to the chaos of the 1960s in the USA.¹² This fact drastically affects the way we should interpret this classic anti-Vietnam War song. I challenged them to find similar stories about their chosen song that could offer their interpretation both context and credibility. Finally, I wanted them to make a judgment about the quality of the song — I left this aspect open to their own creativity. I did, however, warn them that their judgment had to be in the form of an argument in which the conclusion had to follow from their previous discussion. In grading this assignment, I used the rubric appended to this essay (Appendix 2), focusing on three skills: 1) the construability and fluidity of their Latin translation, 2) their ability to identify and analyze core compositional techniques in the song and 3) their ability to construct a coherent analysis of their song as a literary artefact.

As final submissions, I received translations and analyses of Adele's *Salve* (*Hello*, on 25. XL Recordings, 2015),¹³ Miley Cyrus' *Pila Perdens* (*Wrecking Ball*, on *Bangerz*, RCA Records, 2013), Simon and Garfunkel's *Sonitus Silentii* (*Sound of Silence* on *Wednesday Morning, 3am*, Columbia Records, 1965), and Nat King Cole's *Puer Qui Vitam Sensit* (*Nature Boy* on *The Nat King Cole Story*, Capitol Records, 1948). Having received this sort of assignment from students for the first time, I was extremely happy with the results. While some of the translating choices made by the students were not quite right and they missed a few of the more obscure literary devices, their attempts were valiant and effortful and their analyses light-years better than I had received for the *Aeneid* assignment. As one illustrative

12 Jim Kale, the Guess Who's bassist and co-author of the lyrics, made this clear in an [interview](#) in 1970: "The popular misconception was that it was a chauvinistic tune, which was anything but the case. The fact was, we came from a very strait-laced, conservative, laid-back country, and all of a sudden, there we were in Chicago, Detroit, New York — all these horrendously large places with their big city problems. After that one particularly grinding tour, it was just a real treat to go home and see the girls we had grown up with. Also, the war was going on, and that was terribly unpopular. We didn't have a draft system in Canada, and we were grateful for that. A lot of people called it anti-American, but it wasn't really."

13 I thank John Gruber-Miller for noting that Adele's *Hello* has been translated and recorded by [Keith Massey](#) on YouTube. I also thank him for the fantastic idea to have future students compare Massey's translation with the one produced for my 2016 Latin Prose Composition course. It, as I see it, could lead to significant discussion about word choice and poetic style.

example of the high quality work I received, here is the first stanza of my student Etenia Mullins' translation *Puer Qui Vitam Sensit (Nature Boy)*:

<p><i>Cole:</i> There was a boy A very strange enchanted boy They say he wandered very far, very far Over land and sea A little shy and sad of eye But very wise was he</p>	<p><i>Mullins:</i> <i>Puer,</i> <i>mirabillimus magicusque, fuit.</i> <i>Dixerunt animum pererravisse</i> <i>terram extremam atque ultimum mare.</i> <i>Non solum timidus paulus ac animus</i> <i>infractus</i> <i>sed etiam maxime sapiens fuit puer.</i>¹⁴</p>
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In her analysis of this translation, Etenia noted that part of the poetic nature of Cole's song was its use of repetition: *boy* at lines 1 and 2; *very far* twice in line 3. She also noted that Cole took advantage of parallelisms to set the imaginative and emotive scene (i.e., the juxtaposition of "land" and "sea" in line 4 to represent the whole world and the use of "but" to connect lines 5 and 6 in an adversative relationship). She made great effort to put these observations into her Latin translation. In her lines 1 and 2, she deals with the repetition of *boy* by means of an apposition and chiasmus which allows *puer* to play double duty and arranges the adjectives (i.e., *mirabillimus magicusque*) in a more poetic fashion. In her line 3, she ably deals with the repetition of *very far*, with the compound verb *pererro* behaving iteratively and the use of the adjectives *extremam atque ultimum* as a poetic representation of the *very-ness* of the boy's travels. In that same line 4, Etenia successfully used chiasmus to construct a more poetic feel, but also match the parallel construction of Cole's original.

In the end, the students enjoyed the assignment and I was pleased with the growth that they had experienced, specifically in their facility in close reading a poem. It certainly took more time, more lexicographical work, and more thought than a typical Prose Composition assignment, but the students were in agreement that they had not really understood ancient literary devices until they saw them in their favorite songs.

FURTHER BENEFITS

Not only was this assignment a success in assessing and affirming the semester's lessons, its effects have been felt ever since in other advanced Latin courses. While these students were slogging through their Latin Prose Composition course,

¹⁴ I thank Etenia for her permission to use her work in this article.

they were also taking a reading course on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (we were reading Book Ten, specifically). In many ways, the Ovid course served as a practicum for the methods and lessons of the close analysis of poetry we had developed. In that reading course and in subsequent semesters, the level of philological analysis offered by students in class discussions has been exponentially more mature. So, why was this?

I believe the Popular Song Translation assignment worked so well primarily because of the innate familiarity the students had with the cultural and linguistic vocabulary used in their respective songs. They, as angsty college-kids, understood "Swift's" friendship predicament in *Malus Sanguis* (or, *Simultates*, more correctly) and "Cyrus'" breakup in *Pila Perdens* implicitly. Because of this more deeply felt comprehension, as one student argued, "we were able to get a grip on the song's defining compositional qualities and the way her song worked so much more easily." Once they were able to pull apart the poem's structure — a poem they have streamed online innumerable times and a message they, perhaps, understood in their bones — and saw what sorts of verbal formulae the songwriter chose and how that strategy affected the literary texture of the song and gave it emotional punch, they could offer better analyses and more reasoned judgments on the quality of the song.

On a procedural level, this assignment allows the students to take the process of understanding and analyzing poetry one level at a time with familiar material: first, translation into construable Latin, then analysis of devices and tropes, then analysis of theme and context, then "putting it all together" into an informed judgment of quality. In this way, they were able to figure out what they were supposed to be doing as poetic analysts and gain confidence in their powers of observation and interpretation before jumping to more difficult poems from Horace or Propertius. I have always tried to teach my students that to truly "get" ancient poetry, you have to spend time with it, walk around in the poet's shoes a little — otherwise something like Horace's profound comments about ships of state in *Odes* 1.14 or the cruelty of his insults hurled at a woman in *Epode* 8 will evade them on an emotional and intellectual level. It is much harder to understand a poem's nuances when you are struggling with poetic idiosyncrasies. This assignment builds faith in the philological process and technique before the difficult questions of ancient aesthetics, especially nuance and context, become an issue.

Since my students spent time developing the skills needed to make this assignment work, I have noticed some important effects: 1) more effective classroom discussion in Latin poetry reading courses and 2) more mature term paper topics. In

their reading course on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the students' interpretation evolved from "he's quirky, but I don't know how to describe it" to "I like the way he structures his narrative as compared to the *Aeneid*."¹⁵ When developing paper topics, these same students matured to offer much more nuanced studies on the intersection of stylistics and theme. As an illustrative example, I offer the following thesis statement from my student Alexander Kee's final term paper, "Verbs Introducing Speech in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* X," which displays a more dictionally and syntactically appreciative approach than was the case previously:

*Ovid incorporates several different words and phrases of speaking that add specific meaning to the passage, such as āiō, dīcō, inquam, and loquor, just to name a few. However, each of these indicators of speech have various nuances that should be studied so that the reader can understand the content to its fullest. The goal of this paper is to fully explain each of these nuances and their effect on the overall meaning by surveying the form, placement, and usage of some of these different verbal expressions of speaking in Book X of the Metamorphoses and by using this information to delve deeper into a few mythological tales in Book X, such as the stories of Orpheus and Eurydice and Pygmalion and Galatea.*¹⁶

Alex, here, shows a new strategy for understanding the stories that present Ovid's deeper poetic purpose by means of a very close and tedious understanding of Ovid's compositional process. Whereas I used to receive term papers on vague and general topics like "Women in Vergil" or "Humor in Petronius," I have recently received term papers on "Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as Fable in Book 10," "Frequentative Verbs in Livy's Book One," "A typology of chiasmus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," and "The deeper meaning of personification in Horace's *Odes* 1."

While I have developed this set of assignments for an advanced university-level course, it seems that with a few adjustments the poetic analysis skills taught here could be adapted for a high school environment as well. And, it would be quite

¹⁵ Latin students at Austin Peay State University read selections of the *Aeneid* in the fourth semester Latin course.

¹⁶ I thank Alex for his permission to use this quotation in this article.

fruitful, I believe. As I noted above, many students rarely learn the basic rudiments and techniques of poetic composition in language arts classes anymore. While the high school students may not be ready for rigorous composition assignments, the process outlined above would likely help them learn to appreciate more fully what they are reading if they are taught how modern English poets and songwriters use the literary devices the students are encountering.¹⁷

Any student performing this assignment, of course, would still be developing their depth of erudition on Roman literature, but the manner in which they learn to read and analyze the works is exponentially better. In sum, I knew that Taylor Swift, Miley Cyrus, Adele, Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel, and Nat King Cole were immensely talented musicians and poets, but I never thought they would teach Latin poetry better than I could.

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¹⁷ I would like to thank the anonymous referee C for this point.

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APPENDIX 1: POPULAR SONGS AND LATIN POETIC ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT***TASK***

Please translate one recent English-language song into coherent and idiomatic Latin, using the rules and techniques learned this semester, and offer a thorough poetic analysis of its structure, theme, and literary devices according to the philological analysis method we've learned this semester.

GUIDELINES FOR PICKING THE RIGHT SONG

- Your song should not have been translated into Latin before (i.e., not discoverable by Google).
- Your song can be any genre (i.e., hip-hop, rap, rock, pop, country, metal, etc.). However, beware that some genres are more reliant on music to set atmosphere than others. You must be able to view the song's lyrics as a poem, separate from the music.
- Your song should have at least 10 unique lines or at least two verses and a refrain.
- Your song should be appropriate in material and language. Do not choose a song that uses slurs or explicit sexual descriptions.
- Your song will have at least three recognizable literary devices or distinct syntactical features around which you can organize your analysis.
- Your song should be a song that you know and like — it will help immensely both in translating and in discussing the theme and structure of the song.
- Your song should be recent enough for you to understand its historical and social context.

ONCE YOU'VE CHOSEN YOUR SONG...

- Translate the lyrics into idiomatic and construable Latin.
- Spend some time identifying important literary devices and syntactical constructions. Use the list of poetical and rhetorical devices you received in class as a reference, although remember that it is not exhaustive.
- Use the questions in Dr. Timothy Moore's [Stylistic Analysis Checklist](#) to guide your discussion of your chosen song; you must focus your discussion on your Latin translation rather than the English words themselves.
- In your analysis, you must discuss: diction, syntax, literary devices, theme, social and historical context.
- At the end of your analysis, please make a considered judgment of your chosen song's quality. Explain why you make this particular judgment.

NUTS AND BOLTS

- Length: Between 1,200 and 2,000 words
- 12 pt. font: Times New Roman or Calibri (NO Courier or Comic Sans)
- 1" margins all around
- Please have a Cover Page with your name and ID number on it. Your text should not start until page 2.
- Cite your sources. Cite whenever you quote the author or paraphrase what the author wrote. Quotes should be cited immediately after they are used and the exact place (e.g., page number) must be included in the citation.

- Citations should be done in the Humanities footnote version of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (16th edition).
- View the rubric used by Dr. Kershner to evaluate your work (posted with the assignment link on Desire2Learn). Consider how you can polish your draft to meet the objectives of the assignment.
- Please attach a file in .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf formatting to the submission page (i.e., please do NOT copy and paste your paper into the text box).

APPENDIX 2: RUBRIC FOR POPULAR SONGS AND LATIN POETIC ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT

Objective	Excellent	Good	Fair	Adequate	Did not attempt
Logistics: word count, font size & type, margins, spacing, cover page with ID#, submitted on time, according to instructions.	All assignment instructions and parameters were met perfectly. 10	Most instructions and parameters were satisfied. 7	At least half of instructions and parameters were satisfied. 4	Some instructions and parameters were satisfied. 2	No logistical objectives were satisfied. 0
Technical elements of Analysis Essay: grammar, style, organization, and references and citations.	Paragraphs are well structured. Transitions are natural. Paper is free of spelling errors, fragments, colloquial language. Citations are accurate and complete. 10	Most technical elements are well executed according to the assignment instructions. 7	Some technical elements are well executed according to the assignment instructions. Other technical elements are absent. 4	At least one technical element is well executed and according to the assignment instructions. 2	No technical element was satisfied at all. 0
Translation: Syntactical accuracy and construability of Latin translation of chosen song.	There are no grammatical, morphological, or syntactical mistakes. Dictional choices are well chosen and are poetically attested. 40	The translation has one or two grammatical or morphological mistakes. A word or two are poorly chosen. 30	Translation has several mistakes in grammar, morphology, syntax. Most words are well chosen. 20	Most syntax is incorrect or seriously flawed. Morphological mistakes abound. Most words are completely wrong for their usage. 10	The student made no effort to use Latin grammar and syntax to translate this passage. Looks like the student chose words at random. 0

Analysis (syntax and literary devices): Ability to isolate and describe key poetic features in the song (both before and after translation).	All literary devices and key syntactical features in the Latin translation were isolated, and thoroughly, insightfully described.	Most literary devices and syntactical features are isolated and described. Description is not complete or particularly insightful.	At least half of literary devices and major syntactical features in the Latin translation were isolated and described.	Attempts were made to isolate literary devices and syntactical features but were not particularly successful.	No attempt was made to isolate or describe literary devices or syntactical features in the translation.
	20	15	10	5	0
Interpretation: Ability to discuss the translation as a literary artefact as pertains to its basic poetic structure, literary devices, and themes.	Student develops an insightful argument on how the songwriter structured the poem's various parts to create a message. The student is able to use evidence from the translation as proof.	Most of the literary devices, syntactical features, and themes are explained accurately, with some insight. Some evidence used.	At least half of the literary devices and basic themes are explained accurately, but are not discussed insightfully. Evidence gestured at, but not discussed.	Attempts were made to describe and interpret the basic themes, but not literary devices, of the translation. The student was not particularly successful.	No attempt was made to interpret the Latin translation as a literary artefact. There is no evidence of anything, let alone thoughts.
	20	15	10	5	0
TOTAL / 100	+	+	+	+	=

Never Out of Style: Teaching Latin Love Poetry with Pop Music¹

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ABSTRACT

Students often struggle to interpret Latin poetry. To combat the confusion, teachers can turn to a modern parallel (pop music) to assist their students in understanding ancient verse. Pop music is very familiar to most students, and they already translate its meaning unconsciously. Building upon what students already know, teachers can reframe their approach to poetry in a way that is more effective. This essay shows how to present the concept of meter (dactylic hexameter and elegy) and scansion using contemporary pop music, considers the notion of the constructed persona utilizing a modern musician, Taylor Swift, and then addresses the pattern of the love affair in Latin poetry and Taylor Swift's music. To illustrate this approach to connecting ancient poetry with modern music, the lyrics and music video from one song, Taylor Swift's *Blank Space* (2014), are analyzed and compared to poems by Catullus. Finally, this essay offers instructions on how to create an assignment employing pop music as a tool to teach poetry — a comparative analysis between a modern song and Latin poetry in the original or in translation.

KEY WORDS

Latin poetry, pedagogy, popular music, music videos, song lyrics, Taylor Swift

INTRODUCTION

When I assign Roman poetry to my classes at a large research university, I receive a decidedly unenthusiastic response. For many students, their experience with poetry of any sort, let alone ancient Latin verse, has been fraught with frustration, apprehension, and confusion. Even for students of Latin, the switch to verse creates anxiety (though the dread tends to focus on scanning and identifying poetic forms

¹ I would like to thank my students in CLAS 252 and 384 at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, who were my test subjects, my colleagues, who have helped me work through these ideas, notably Justin Arft, Erika Zimmermann Damer, Jessica Westerhold, and my reviewers, who offered substantial assistance to make this article better. Any mistakes are my own.

rather than a general fear of poetry).² While most of my students know that they *should* be finding all sorts of interesting details, they just find the poetry awkward and baffling. In fact, this may be their only exposure to the poetry or even literature of the Classical world. As a result, they simply lack the knowledge of the cultural context to understand the rules and social constraints which govern the genre. After several attempts to drum up enthusiasm for class discussions on Latin love poetry in my classes, I realized that I needed to intervene and reframe my approach or else the poetry would remain dead to them. To this end, I decided to offer something familiar to demystify the past and its poetry: pop music.

Contemporary pop songs offer a perfect parallel because they follow recognizable patterns, reflect cultural trends, comment on society, and often focus on love. Everywhere we go, we hear pop music.³ It is familiar and students are accustomed to listening to a song and translating meaning unconsciously. Music is a powerful tool to “hook students, to lure them into reading a literature that they probably know nothing about, they usually do not want to know about, and they undoubtedly find difficult to comprehend” (Bellver 888). The value of music in the classroom is well attested for English (Fay), Modern Languages (Bellver, Irby-Massie 31), Sociology (Ahlkvist, Martinez), and even for ancient Latin or Greek composition (Hallett, Irby-Massie), so why not use pop songs to invigorate studies of Latin poetry? In this article, I provide ways of utilizing popular music in the Classics classroom to highlight themes and patterns which can be adapted for Intermediate/Advanced Latin.⁴ First, I discuss the rhythm of two Latin meters (elegiac couplets and dactylic hexameter) with musical examples to stress the beat. Second, I address important ideas shared by Latin love poetry and pop music, particularly as connected to a love affair. Third, I consider a songwriter, Taylor Swift, as a modern example of the constructed persona seen in Latin poetry in comparison to Catullus. Then, I provide an analysis of one of her songs, *Blank Space*, comparing the lyrics and video to the

2 I understand that some Latin teachers do not receive the same negative response as I have had. Nevertheless, the transition to verse from prose does tender anxiety and nervousness in many students, even if they do not vocalize it. Easing the way with a fun discussion can only turn the whole experience into a positive one. My own time in Intermediate Latin with Catullus was at first a scary one though, eventually, the poetry charmed me.

3 The choice of music is a deliberate marketing tool with effective application (Henard and Rossetti, Allan).

4 The concept can be applied to Greek poetry as well. I often play Little Big Town’s *Girl Crush* after presenting Sappho 31. The music video with its moody lighting and the singer’s longing looks at a dancing couple pair well with Sappho’s verse.

corpus of Catullus' poems about Lesbia. Finally, I suggest how to incorporate pop music in an assignment with adjustments for Intermediate and Advanced Latin students as well as non-Latin students.

POP MUSIC IN THE CLASSROOM: METER

Introducing pop music into a Latin (or general Classics) course requires some forethought and preparation. First, I introduce the concept of poetic meter, concentrating on the notion of a specific rhythm within a structure which is limited by the number of beats per line. I give examples of different types of meter, notably dactylic hexameter (- ∞ | - ∞ | - ∞ | - ∞ | - ∞ | - x) and elegiac couplets (- ∞ | - ∞ | - ∞ | - ∞ | - ∞ | - ∞ | - x / - ∞ | - ∞ | - || - ∞ | x), and tap out the beat (and sometimes dance to it).⁵ I correlate the concept of long and short sounds to our own idea of subdividing a measure, even up to the sixteenth note, with the whole foot being equivalent to a single measure. I link the long to a “dum” and the short to “diddy” or “boom” and “shaka” respectively.⁶ To get them on board with what seems a bizarre art, I often play a video about the conceptualization of “beats and bars” in rap music, that is, the breakdown of rhymes within (and beyond) measures ([Rapping](#)). Though not a perfect parallel, early rap (1980s and 1990s) with its spoken word and pared down musical accompaniment can act as a bridge between pop music and Latin meter. In Notorious B.I.G.'s 1994 hit, *Big Poppa*, one line can be finessed into a form of dactylic hexameter (well, technically tetrameter) when repeated in class. The cadence of “Ī lōve ĭt | whēn yoū | cāl mē | Bīg Pōppā,” fits the meter when a slight emphasis is thrown on the opening “I,” the vowels of “love it” where the e is ignored and the o is shortened, and “Poppa” is spoken as the brisker papa (1:08-1:10, 1:13-1:16).⁷ While not exactly accurate (alternatively, the whole line can be read as a series of spondees as the rapper does), this gloss 1) allows for an English version which hits variations of the correct meter and 2) shows how meter can be manipulated. I should warn that the rest of the song is not safe for a high school

5 Online resources for Latin scansion abound. For elegy, I have found Turpin's [scansion discussion from Dickinson College Commentaries](#), though it focuses on Ovid, particularly helpful with its YouTube videos. Another more general resource was uploaded by the Latin Library (“[Mr. A's Introduction...](#)”).

6 The latter was suggested by a member of the audience at the CAMWS annual meeting in 2017, where I first presented these ideas.

7 I thank Becky Cefaratti for bringing this line and song to my attention in our graduate level Greek course on Homer at SUNY-Buffalo. Unknowingly, she helped inspire my interest in modern song and meter in the midst of what seemed like endless translation.

classroom with its misogynistic lyrics, sexual undertone, and explicit language. In the college classroom, all of these issues can be discussed as part of the genre and parlance of a particular rapper/poet in an American context of the 1990s where rap music suddenly moves mainstream and represents a powerful social commentary ([Thompson](#), [Blanchard](#)). In this song (and others), students can see that constructs govern music and poetry in many different forms from antiquity to the present day. Each genre determines the rules by which the music or poet plays.

When reading the original Latin, the specific rhythm is even more important to understand. Again, pop music can offer an aural example.⁸ In the opening verses of [What Lovers Do](#) by Maroon 5 featuring SZA, the lead singer, Adam Levine, hits a series of spondees when he keeps repeating “Sāy sāy | sāy, hēy| hēy nōw | bāb̄y/ Ōh mā|mā, dōn’t | plāy nōw | bāb̄y” (0:08-0:15). While not in hexameter (there are only four feet), the accentuation of each vowel at a uniform rate emphasizes the equivalence of the each throughout the line. Moreover, the repetition of the two notes until the last beat highlights these spondees. The switch in note at the end of “baby” manages to stress the end of the phrase and the line much in the same way a Latin poet might have done in his recitation.⁹ Continuing with the same song, a series of sixteenth notes contrast with earlier spondee section in their speed. When Adam Levine rapidly beseechs, “tēll mē īf yōu lōve mē ōr nōt, lōve mē ōr nōt, lōve mē ōr nōt,” the short quality of the dactyl appears ([What Lovers Do](#) 0:25-0:29). Hearing these differences within a song, students are attuned to the relative differences in rhythm in modern music which correspond to the long-short paradigm of meter. In pop music, it is the length of the note which determines the rhythm rather than the quality of the vowel as in Latin poetry. At this point, a modern reading of Latin poetry offers a chance for students to listen to a skilled recitation, look at the Latin lines, and attempt to determine the scansion based on the audio. I have found that Catullus’ poems are received well by students and can be used to illustrate different meters. Keeping with Catullus then, poem 64.53-55 focused on the abandonment and heartache of Ariadne provides an example of love lost in dactylic hexameter:

nāmquē flū|ēntīsō|nō prō|spēctāns | lītōrē | Dīāē
Thēsēā | cēdēn|tēm cēlē|rī cūm | clāssē tū|ētūr

⁸ The choice of “What Lovers Do” by Maroon 5 featuring SZA is not random since it ties in to the greater focus of love poetry discussed later.

⁹ For additional discussion of pronunciation and accentuation of spoken Latin in the classroom, see Vollmann.

īndōmī|tōs īn | cōrdē gē|rēns Ārī|ādnā fū|rōrēs.

([Catullus: Poem 64](#) 0:29-0:43)

And gazing from the surf-pounding shore of Naxos

At Theseus departing with the quick fleet

Ariadne, bearing untamed rage in her heart, looks out.¹⁰

Deserted by her beloved, Ariadne's love for Theseus dies. As is typical with dactylic hexameter, the last syllable acts long and was probably held slightly longer. In the same way, Adam Levine accentuates "ba-by" at the end of the line in *What Lovers Do* and Notorious B.I.G. emphasizes "Pop-pa." In terms of elegy, Catullus 87 offers a parallel and introduces Lesbia with whom the students will soon become very familiar:

nūllā pō|tēst mūlī|ēr tān|tūm sē | dīcēre ā|mātām

vērē | quāntum ā | mē || Lēsbīa ā|mātā mē|a ēs.

nūllā fī|dēs ūl|lō fūīt | ūmquam īn | foēdērē | tāntā

quānta īn ā|mōrē tū|o ēx || pārtē rē|pērtā mē|a ēst.

([Catullus 87 in Latin](#))

No woman is able to say that she has been loved so much,

Truly, as much as you, Lesbia, have been loved by me.

No trust ever was so much in any other alliance

As much as was found from my side in love of you.

Several elisions appear in this poem which emphasize the spoken quality of the language. The seemingly fickle (but consistent) quality of the -m at the end of "quantum" and "umquam" is emphasized in lines 2 and 3 as it disappears in the scansion. Vowels collide together to create one sound as in the end of lines 2 and 4, where the -a is lost to the -e. As the students listen to the poem twice, they should begin to hear such adjustments. These quirks of Latin within verse are something that have to be learned. Before the students rebel in frustration, a reminder that native English speakers do similar and more complicated contractions (e.g. "shouldna" for should not have) would be appropriate at this point.¹¹ Beyond meter, poem 87

¹⁰ All translations of Catullus are the author's attempts to remain true to the Latin but also provide a helpful version.

¹¹ If students balk at elisions and think they are unwarranted, I suggest they try to dictate a phrase such as "I saw a clam and a can on the beach" to their phones or computer and see how well it identifies the words. Speech is filled with elisions, accents, and common contractions which are accepted

connects to the repetition present in verse and pop music. In confirming his love for Lesbia, Catullus repeats the negative “nulla” to reinforce the positive nature of his loyalty just as Adam Levine asks repeatedly about the continued (and likely inconsistent) love of his companion (e.g. “tell me if you love me or not, love me or not”). In these examples (Latin and otherwise), the issue of love and relationships are at the forefront and the story is told within the framework of poetic meter.

INTRODUCING MAJOR THEMES IN CATULLUS’ LOVE POETRY

First, the Latin poetry of love is elegy. While Catullus’ love poems and Lesbia cycle do not always follow elegiac meter, he does remain true to the themes present in the genre. With the students now excited to learn about poetry and to listen to music, I turn to those themes in Catullus (and in elegy) which I consider most important for this exercise: the effects of love, the prescribed progression of the affair between the lover and beloved, and the constructed persona of the poet as lover (*amator*) (Gibson 160-162; Kennedy). Contrary to students’ expectations, the love seen in the poetry of Catullus is not a happy, gentle, or romantic emotion. Instead, it is a powerful force of desire compelling the poet, usually with undesirable results such as emotional servitude, wounds, pain, suffering, and even metaphorical death. This contrast between ancient and modern conceptions of love needs to be addressed. At the heart of the portrayed relationship in Latin elegy is dominance, power, and inequality between the lovers (Fulkerson). Who is in charge? Ostensibly, the poet, the lover, loses control at the hands of the object of affection, the beloved, whose actions harm him unknowingly or deliberately. However, a poet like Catullus dominates the affair even as he claims to be a victim. Falling prey to his emotions or some sort of perceived abuse which can be as simple as being ignored, the poet suffers for his love and complains volubly. Catullus grumbles that because of Lesbia, “his mind has been brought down” (*huc est mens deducta tua*) and even “destroyed itself through (his/its) devotion” (*se officio perdidit ipsa suo*) (75. 1, 2). Other poets record even more volatile affairs which can turn outright vicious as if in a full-blown war (Drinkwater 199-202). Propertius’ mistress quarrels with him, knocking over the table (*mensam propellis*) and throwing cups (*proicis insana cymbia*) as well as wounding him (*mea vulnera*) during her assault (3.8.7-8, 21).¹² Love affects not only

and noted (e.g. I’m, you’re, you’ll, etc.).

12 Modern artists such as Jordin Sparks (2009), among others, have sung about love resembling a battlefield. In Ovid *Amores* 1.7, love turns into violence when the poet physically abuses his girl.

the mind, but also the physical body, even weakening limbs (Cat. 76.20-22). Love wounds the poet. In truth, however, the poet/lover controls the interaction; the whole affair is recorded from his point of view with the beloved functioning as a silent toy for the amusement of the poet. Love is a secret game to which the reader is allowed access by the poet.

The narrative of Latin love elegy begins with an active male poet/lover discussing his relationship with a beloved.¹³ In most cases, the beloved is a female and referred to as *puella*, girl, even if she is a grown woman, though a beautiful boy such as Juventius (e.g. Cat. 99) can also be the focus. Although Catullus' Lesbia is generally accepted to be modeled on a real woman, Clodia, most *puellae* are fictional and their status is difficult to determine (James 21-28; Miller; Wyke 18-31). When possible, the love affair as constructed in Latin poetry follows a progression, even if the poems in the collection are transmitted out of chronological order. The lover sees the beloved, desires and woos the object of affection, and exalts and suffers in the loving, before ultimately losing the beloved and becoming bitter. The blame for the destruction of the relationship falls firmly on the shoulders of the beloved who behaves contrary to the lover's wishes. Before the affair even begins, an acrimonious end is assumed. Nevertheless, the poet basks in the glow of love, seizing his blissful joy, even if it is brief. As recorded in his poems, Catullus' affair with Lesbia follows such a track where the beloved is observed (2a, 3, 51), wooed (5, 7), loved (70, 72, 75, 83, 85, 86, 87, 92, 104, 107, 109), and lost (8, 11, 36, 37, 58a, 76, 79). While simplified, this framework helps direct students when they begin to analyze poems. In setting the foundation, students can begin to recognize patterns which is a key element in learning (Caine, Caine, and Crowell 104).

All of these developments are driven by the poet, who himself is a contrived personality, a construction not unfamiliar to students' own experience with modern pop artists. Playing with perceptions of the reader, the poet creates an image of the *amator* experiencing love in a way determined by the poetic genre, not a true reflection of his own character and life. Such a misconception is understandable since the voice of the poet is clearly established in the poems (e.g. Catullus [5.7-9] firmly places himself in the narrative as the one demanding kisses). The disconnect between the poetic *persona* and the actual individual causes some problems for the poets' reputation as expressed by Catullus in poem 16, discussed in the next section.

13 The notable exception to this male construct is Sulpicia. For a concise discussion of Sulpicia, see Skoie or, more recently and extensively, see Batstone or Fulkerson 2017.

For Romans, the issue at hand is the damage to the lover's status and reputation. By relinquishing control to the weaker, feminine beloved, the poet becomes a passive victim in the poetry. It is this perception which Catullus so vehemently denied, asserting his control, dominance, masculinity, and agency. The poet performs in the poetry as this submissive lover, but he, in reality, cannot be so and retain his position in Roman society.¹⁴ Although the poet plays on the imagined or real identity of the lover, the poet is not he. This manipulation of a persona pushes preconceived notions of identity and makes us question what we think we understand about poetry and ancient society. In presenting poems as complex puzzles to be solved, they are transformed from dull verses to ones filled with secret codes and rebellious love.

With students intrigued by these texts, I have small groups read one poem in translation from Catullus, though other elegiac poets can be used, looking for the representation of love, the timing of the affair, their perception of the poet, and any other hidden messages. While most students are able to categorize the moment in the love affair, the subtlety of the character of love and the lover is still often lost (as evidenced by class discussion). When presenting this subtlety to a Latin class, I would wait until we have translated a poem before delving into these intricacies since my first focus is usually on the grammar and basic comprehension. Once translated, the poem can be analyzed. I ask the students: How does the poet feel? Where is the love? The loss? What words reveal his feelings? I help direct discussion with examples if the students are quiet. Catullus 8, though in choliambic,¹⁵ provides a contrast with his kiss poems and hits on several issues of the love affair. There used to be bright days (*candidi tibi soles*), those days filled with kisses, but now they are gone (8.3). Adjectives such as wretched (*miser* 8.1, 10) and powerless (*impotens* 8.9) emphasize the pain that lover suffers; he endures, or should endure, (*obdura*[t] 8.11, 12, 19) the loss. However, then Catullus becomes angry, calling Lesbia a wicked one (*scelesta*) or, in a modern colloquialism used for assertive women, a bitch (8.15).¹⁶ In Latin classes, the students tend to be more receptive to the specificity of language, but modern parallels are helpful for them to gain more confidence. For this reason, I turn to pop music so that the students can see these characteristics of Roman poetry in the lyrics, music, and video of a song that they know and understand. This

14 For discussion of the politics and society of Catullus' time, see Wiseman and Konstan.

15 This is a variant of iambic poetry with six feet as follows: ♩ - | ♩ - | ♩ - | ♩ - | ♩ - | ♩.

16 For a consideration of the *ego* of Catullus in poem 8, see Greene 2-8.

exercise, which I explain below, has the added benefit of building enthusiasm for future translations; they never know when I will show another music video in class.

Since pop music videos watched in entirety are an unusual aspect of a typical class day, even for me, I explain my reasoning for the inclusion to the students. Songs, just like poems, differ from casual speech in their syntax but they look very similar when transcribed (Bradley 14). The emotions, mood, visual cues, and strong rhythms heard and seen in a music video stress the points I want them to understand about poetics, language, and meter. People automatically respond to music and the images expand their understanding. “As visual media that support narrative, videos underscore the constraints of expressing songs’ stories in words alone” (Bradley 309). The music video illustrates the sung poem. When poets recited their works in private houses, the wall paintings might have acted in a similar fashion as illustrations of their mythological subjects. In articulating these ideas, my students take the following discussion more seriously, even if there is laughing.

MUSICIAN AS POET/CONSTRUCTED PERSONA: TAYLOR SWIFT

Turning to a songwriter who rivals Catullus, I now present Taylor Swift as a viable modern poet who uses a multimedia format. I set up the genre of the music video in which she works by discussing the artist as poet and noting the difference between the person who is singing and the story or character represented. In other words, I begin the discussion with considerations of the persona of the poet/musician.¹⁷ While many artists could be utilized, I have found that Taylor Swift works remarkably well. Whether they like her or not, the students are familiar with her reputation and music (and they most definitely have opinions). Swift is a talented singer-songwriter who is involved with the creation and imagery of her music from start to finish. Moreover, Taylor Swift has deliberately chosen to completely transition from the musical genre of country to pop with her album *1989* ([Eells](#)). As a result, her audience has increased and she has transformed herself into a leading pop star with commercial success (Gay 179).

In her album *1989* released in 2014, she creates multiple personae for herself through her first-person narrative and the images presented in her music videos all the while tackling themes of love, loss, stalking, and anger. In [Blank Space](#), which I will discuss in more detail later, Swift becomes a femme fatale, luring and losing

¹⁷ The connection between the persona of Catullus (or other ancient authors) and pop music has been considered by others, but most recently by Polt, who presents a history of the scholarship of the Catullan identity as well as an excellent exercise using the lyrics of Cher.

a man.¹⁸ As a mysterious phantom figure, she haunts a man in the dream-like video of *Style*. Her image appears through or transposed on dappled sunlight (0:10-0:18), mist (0:26-0:27), rain (2:49-2:50), storms (2:31-2:35), fabric (0:44-0:51), and mirrors (1:05-1:18). She expresses the anxiety of a relationship by channeling imagery of Little Red Riding Hood wearing a blue dress in her fairytale video for *Out of the Woods* (2015) where she runs or crawls through multiple landscapes, including a mystical forest (0:10-1:24, 2:20-2:32), snow-covered mountains (1:25-2:08), and a muddy swamp (2:33-2:58) chased by wolves as she searched for her lover but “found herself” (4:00).¹⁹ In *Shake it off*, she embodies a nerdy reject who does not concern herself with the criticism of others. In her video, she breaks conformity by moving in a different, goofy way from her back-up dancers. For example, she awkwardly bunny hops in a white swan tutu surrounded by ballerinas holding a modified dying swan position from Swan Lake (1:57-1:58), drops her pom-poms in a routine with the cheerleaders (2:37-2:38), and starts the chicken dance amidst modern dancers (3:01). As a secret agent (code name: Catastrophe) in *Bad Blood*, featuring Kendrick Lamar, she joins several other female bad-ass assassins (and famous actresses) with names like Arsyn (0:11-0:38), Slay-Z (1:30-1:32), Destructa X (1:36-1:40), Mother Chucker (1:52-1:57), and Cut Throat (1:58-2:02) to wreak havoc. In her nostalgic, and controversial, *Wildest Dreams*, Swift portrays a 1950s Hollywood star beginning an affair in her tent (1:11-1:23) while filming on the African savannah. The last video produced for the album, *New Romantics*, portrays her real life as a singer/songwriter on tour and interacting with her fans at public venues. In the seven of the sixteen songs from her album *1989* which have videos, Taylor Swift has transformed herself into a range of characters, some true-to-life and others complete fantasy.

In all of her songs, Swift is playing with identity and representation, concepts with which we know the ancient poets wrestled. Her music in combination

¹⁸ A literary examination of this video has also been done on YouTube; it focuses on the details of the imagery and lyrics (“[Rhetorical Analysis...](#)”).

¹⁹ The hunt/chase imagery of this music video is very much in line with the same motif in Latin poetry where the lover tracks down his beloved. In addition, Taylor Swift taps into this same concept in her song *I Know Places*, where she alludes to the paparazzi chasing her and her lover. In the chorus, Swift sings, “they are the hunters, we are the foxes/And we run/Baby/I know places we won’t be found and/They’ll be/Chasing their tails trying to track us down/‘Cause I, I know places we can hide” (0:43-1:11). In this case, the lovers are together, and it is the outside world stalking them for information about their relationship. Admittedly, this is a different kind of desire (celebrity gossip), but an equally powerful force.

with celebrity gossip have created a larger than life caricature of her. In fact, Swift composed *Blank Space* as a humorous response to the media's "sensational fictionalization of [her] personal life" ("[1989](#)" *Track-by-Track* 1:16-1:19).²⁰ She explains her reasoning as,

You know, they [the media] 've kind of drawn up this profile of this girl who is a serial dater, jet-setting around with all her boyfriends and then, you know, she can get 'em but she can't keep 'em because she is too emotional and she's needy, then she gets her heart broken because they leave and she's jilted so she goes to her evil lair and writes songs about it for revenge. It is just kind of this very complex profile of a person (["1989" Track-by-Track](#) 1:20-1:42).

She then considered this character and imagined the kind of song that she would write, creating *Blank Space* where she portrays a crazy, high-maintenance, minx on the prowl.²¹ Catullus faced similar misconceptions about his character. In his case, the criticism was that he was a weak or soft Roman man and he had to assert his masculinity (Manwell 116-125). He too struck back at his critics who thought that he reflected his own poetry arguing that "I will fuck you....you who think that I [have] little shame because my verses are soft" (*Pedicabo ego vos...../qui me ex versiculis meis putastis/quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum*, 16.1, 3-4). Catullus literally wrote a poetic "fuck you" insisting that he was a powerful, virile, dominant man, while Taylor Swift made a parody of herself and laughed at the joke with her fans "shaking off" the criticism of her "haters."

More recently, Swift explicitly took on her critics by releasing her album *Reputation* (2017), itself a commentary of people's perceived conceptions of her. In "[Look What You Made Me Do](#)," Swift re-asserts her agency as a powerful female after having been criticized by the public. The first imagery is an allusion to Cleopatra with Taylor sipping tea served by serpents on a throne inscribed "et tu Brute" (0:50-1:05). Although probably created in response to her feud with Kanye West,

²⁰ I was unable to track down the original interview but this quote has been recorded on YouTube video ("[1989](#)" *Track-by-Track* Descriptions by Taylor) and a full transcript is preserved in [Van der Veen](#).

²¹ Swift also reiterates these same ideas in *Shake it Off* by singing, "I go on too many dates/But I can't make them stay/At least that's what people say..." (0:16-0:25).

the video is full of references to her more innocent, younger self and other videos ([Chen](#); [Lang](#)). The subtext is that she has grown and no longer represents such simple characters. Swift, then, in *Look What You Made Me Do*, figuratively murders her weaker, younger self answering a phone, saying, “I’m sorry, but the old Taylor can’t come to the phone right now... Why? Oh, ‘cause she’s dead” (2:56-3:05). That her earlier reputation is dead is reiterated by a zombie-like Taylor walking by a tombstone engraved, “Here Lies Taylor Swift’s Reputation” (0:13-0:19). The break with her earlier *personae* is apparent at the very end of the song where a series of fifteen Taylors from earlier videos, performances, or appearances stand in front of a private jet arguing with each other (3:36-4:11). Which Taylor is the real one? We can only guess, unless she tells us, which she chooses not to do, at least overtly. Instead, Swift comments again on the excessive gossip about her and that, “It [the album] starts with the noise and how that makes you feel, and how it makes you feel when people are saying things about you that you feel, like, aren’t true and living your life sort of in defiance of that. In defiance of your reputation” ([Roth](#)). Without explicitly stating anything, the implication is that none of these characters are truly her.

This is then the beauty of the modern song. Unlike ancient authors, Swift is available to for us to interview, and she rejects her public *persona*: she is not the character in her songs. Like Latin poets, Swift works within a traditional framework, but, instead of poetic meter, it is the predictable structure of a pop song (verse, chorus, verse, chorus, bridge, and chorus) (Bradley 38-40). As a female songwriter, she has twisted the paradigm making herself the active member in the lyrics, dare I say the *amatrix*, and while she may be controlled by love, she directs the outcome — just like Catullus.²² As the singer and often the songwriter, she is quite literally the voice and the force constructing the narrative. Moreover, Taylor Swift is known for writing songs about her relationships and criticizing her ex-boyfriends in a not so subtle way ([Eells](#)).

Nothing encapsulates her unconsciousness adherence to the format and themes of Latin love poetry better than *Blank Space*. By analyzing the lyrics of this song, we can trace the affair between two individuals from its seductive beginning to destructive end. The gaze and approach of the beloved are chronicled as well as the desire for love and the craziness caused by it. The accompanying music video underscores the progression of the relationship. Once I have emphasized this

22 In many ways, Taylor Swift mimics Sulpicia who developed her own female voice while working within the constraints of Latin love elegy established by male poets. For a thought-provoking discussion of gender in elegy, see Wyke 155-191.

connection of Taylor Swift's music and this particular song with Latin love poetry, I ask my students to read over the lyrics and consider any parallels with the poetry we have read and then we watch the music video. Although I emphasize the similarities between the past and present, we do discuss how the situation and meaning differs from today. For this article, I will provide a progressive analysis of the video and lyrics of *Blank Space* composed by Taylor Swift, Max Martin, and Shellback compared with the Catullan corpus. This study provides a technique which can be utilized in any classroom.

COMPARING POP SONGS TO LATIN LOVE POETRY: TAYLOR SWIFT'S *BLANK SPACE* AND CATULLUS²³

To keep with the analysis that follows, I suggest that the reader open a tab with the music video and pause after the referenced times for each segment in order to see the progression. The music video begins (0:00-0:26) with the handsome male object of desire driving a flashy sports car and parking in front of a mansion. The attractive man immediately gains the attention, even the attraction, of the viewer. He is admired by the singer who exclaims, "saw you there and I thought/Oh my God/Look at that face/You look like my next mistake" (5-8).²⁴ The action switches to Swift, who is dressed in a lacey black dress, holds a small dog, and sits on a white bed bracketed by two white horses. She then descends a double staircase and holds out her hand to her admirer and says, "Love's a game, want to play?" (9). It is the singer who moves from a higher and more powerful position to 'hunt' her next victim. He agrees to her proposition tacitly. The nature of their upcoming relationship, a lyrical proem for the song, is expressed in four disyllabic words, "Magic, madness, heaven, sin" (4) which also happen to be paradoxes, a favorite device of hers ("[Rhetorical Analysis](#).... 3:28-4:03). The scene switches (0:27-0:30) to a romantic dinner in the mansion and then Swift comments on his status (new money) and outfit (suit and tie) (10).²⁵ He is not a whole but a sum of his parts, something desired only superficially. Catullus' desire is inspired, even increased by observing his beloved from afar like Swift. In reworking Sappho's famous poem, he looks admiringly at "that man who

23 Bradley argues that an ancient Greek would more easily recognize the lyrics to *Blank Space* as a poem than that of a modern poet such as John Ashbery (20).

24 To facilitate discussion, I have numbered the lines of lyrics from *Blank Space* which can be found in Appendix 1.

25 The latter observation seems to be a reference to another popular song of the same name by Justin Timberlake (2013).

seems to be equal to a god” (*Ille mi par esse deo videtur*, 51.1). He is imagining the pleasure that other man has in being so close to and gazing at the Catullus’ beloved. Continuing as a voyeur, Catullus notes, “Sparrow, delight of my girl, with whom she plays, whom she holds against her curves” (*Passer, deliciae meae puellae/quicum ludere, quem in sinu tenere*, 2A.1-2). Although he discusses and stares at the bird, the thing desired is what it touches (her body). Both poets look upon their beloved, but only see pieces or aspects of the person which spark their obsession.

In the next segment of *Blank Space* (0:31-0:48), a glamorous and playful courtship develops. They dance, Swift rides a bike and paints her beloved’s portrait. Swift observes that “...rumors fly/And I know you heard about me/So hey, let’s be friends” (12-14). She acknowledges the outside world but focuses on their growing relationship. Her scandalous reputation precedes her, but she hopes he overlooks it. In the same way, Catullus urges Lesbia to ignore the gossip of old men and focus on their love saying, “Let us live and let us love, my Lesbia/and all the rumors of rather serious old men/let us value at one penny” (*Vivamus mea Lesbia, atque amemus/rumoresque senum severiorum/omnes unius aestimemus assis*, 5.1-3). Both artists are encouraging this new relationship. For Swift, the good times continue to flow as the song continues.

The affair in *Blank Space* develops (0:38-1:31) and while the images are romantic — taking walks, riding horses, hanging his portrait, running through the gardens in designer clothes, going on a picnic, standing on a balcony, carving their names on a tree — yet there is a foreshadowing of bad things to come. The video emphasizes their black clothes while walking three fierce Dobermans (a contemporary Cerberus), the overcast skies with dark looming clouds, and a hallway filled with portraits of ex-lovers, one of which has an axe planted in it, as well as Swift’s dexterity with a knife as she easily inscribes the tree. The potential for a perfect love is there, but so is the potential for disaster. Swift sings, “so it’s gonna be forever/or it’s gonna go down in flames” (19-20). While she may be crazy, she loves the burn of love and discounts the signs of impending doom. Catullus remarks on the madness and loss of control caused by love when he responds to Lesbia that he needs endless affection. As many kisses, “as great a number [as] of Libyan sands... to kiss you so many kisses/and more is enough for insane Catullus” (*quam magnus numerus Libyssae harenae... tam te basia multa basiare/vesano satis et super Catullo est*, 7.3, 9-10). He desires to keep on loving even knowing that the beloved cannot be trusted bemoaning, “but what a woman says to her eager lover/it is appropriate to write in

the wind and running water” (...*sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti, in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua*, 70.3-4). According to the assertions of both Catullus and Swift, the love of a woman is inconsistent and fleeting.

At the height of the affair (1:31-1:51), while going on a picnic or separated as Swift stands on a balcony with her beloved below, the love still is fragmented. Even the lyrics of *Blank Space*, “cherry lips, crystal skies ... Stolen kisses, pretty lies” (35, 37) are chopped into the lyrics to show a shift.²⁶ Here, the beloved is distracted by his cell-phone while Swift consumes the candy heart ... symbolic of her devouring the love; she sees nothing else. The same state affects Catullus when he rejects everyone else but his notorious lover. “Lesbia is lovely, who is most completely beautiful, that one then stole all charms from everyone” (*Lesbia formosa est, quae cum pulcherrima tota est/ tum omnibus una omnis surripuit Veneres*, 86.5-6). We know that these love affairs have expiration dates and will never last. Swift’s is limited to the month where she can play her appropriate and contrived part. “Find out what you want/be that girl for a month” (39-40). Soon it will be over and the joy will be lost. Catullus knows well the loss of his love saying, “Truly the brilliant sun had shone for you/now already that girl does not want [you]” (*fulsere vere candidi tibi soles./nunc iam illa non vult*, 8.9-10). In this same poem, Catullus begins to turn from sorrow to anger, “you will suffer when you are not asked [for kisses]” (*at tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nulla*, 8.14). In the same way, Swift shifts the narrative to jealousy and rage singing, “wait, the worst is yet to come” (41).

In the video of *Blank Space*, suspicion intrudes on the lovers when Swift sees him texting and their love breaks (1:52-2:52). Swift fights with her beloved cautioning him that, “screaming, crying, perfect storms/I can make all the tables turn” (42-43). She then destroys his cherished possessions — dropping his cell-phone into a fountain and cutting up his clothing — and slashes his portrait. Wearing leopard print and with mascara running from her eyes, Swift writhes in front of a marble fireplace and a poor, innocent deer. Her outfit and audience, the deer, are both signs for the ‘true’ character of the woman revealed as a huntress. While she suffers for her love, her man also now feels the effects of her uncontrolled and unreciprocated desire. Whereas Swift shows her lover her unhappiness through destructive behavior, Catullus hears the spiteful words of his beloved, Lesbia, and is tormented.

²⁶ These one or two word descriptors often highlight a theme or shift in the verse as I referenced in lines 4, 10, and 42.

He curses her cruelty but is addicted to her type of volatile love and cannot leave this dysfunctional relationship:

Lesbia always speaks badly about me, she is never silent
about me: I will be damned unless Lesbia loves me.
By what proof? Because mine is just the same: I curse her constantly,
truly I will be damned, if I do not love [her].

Lesbia mi dicit semper male nec tacet umquam
de me: Lesbia dispeream nisi amat.
Quo signo? Quia sunt totidem mea: deprecor illam
assidue, verum dispeream nisi amo (92).

The love affair is over but the lure of the woman is formidable. When Swift sings in her brilliant lines, “I get drunk on jealousy/But you’ll come back/Each time you leave/‘Cause darling I’m a nightmare/Dressed like a daydream” (48-52), she echoes the conflict wrought by an addiction to a person or love that Catullus also feels. “My [mind is] not [able] to cease loving, if you [Lesbia] do anything (*nec desistere amare, omnia si facias*, 75.4). Even though Lesbia treats him poorly, Catullus (or his *persona*) is unwilling to leave her.

In the bridge (2:53-3:12), Swift transforms herself into an even more dangerous figure in *Blank Space*, a sorceress. Completely dominating her victim through sympathetic magic on an apple, she chastises, “boys only want love if it’s torture/Don’t say I didn’t, say I didn’t warn you” (53-54). Flipping the stereotypical paradigm, she tells him he wanted it. In her *persona*, she suggests that this torture is warranted for his supposed betrayal. Love has turned to hate. The apple clearly ties her to imagery of Eve, and Swift then becomes the iconic seductive and dangerous woman who leads to man’s fall. While powerful, Swift is also now the clichéd wronged woman who is seen as hysterical or lesser because of her emotions. Swift’s assertions about men’s conflicting desires seem to be confirmed by Catullus when he declares, “I hate and I love. Why do I do this, you probably ask. I don’t know but I feel it come to pass and I am tortured” (*Odi et amo. Quare id faciam fortasse requiris/nescio. Sed fieri sentio et excrucior*, 85.1-2). However, Catullus’ conflict soon turns to anger over what he sees as Lesbia’s fickle and heartless rejection. Feeling unjustly wronged, Catullus turns on her just as Swift did to her lover. Catullus then blames Lesbia for his problem of unquenched passion sneering that, “now I know

you: Therefore, though I burn more zealously, nevertheless, to me you are much more cheap and light (*nunc te cognovi: quare etsi impensius uror;/multo mi tamen es vilior et levior*, 72.5-6). He even suggests that she is really a whore who works on street corners. “[Lesbia] now at crossroads and alleys/strokes the descendants of brave Remus” (*nunc in quadriuiis et angiportis/glubit magnanimi Remi nepotes*, 58A. 4-5). In both cases, there really is “bad blood.”

Blank Space ends with the chorus and further destruction (3:12-4:00). Swift beats her lover’s car with a golf club, jabs a heart-shaped cake with a knife which then bleeds, and chops down the tree with their names. Finally, the beloved has had enough. He drives away in his destroyed car and a new man cruises in, ready to start the cycle all over again. With the third repetition of the chorus, Swift reiterates that the whole affair is a sport for her character. “Cause you know I love the players/and you love the game” (25-26). To emphasize this, she winks at the camera while draped over her victim saying, “But I’ve got a blank space, baby/And I’ll write your name” (33-34). The whole song focuses on how Swift’s persona feels — her dreams, desires, and emotions; the beloved is secondary to the narrative. Catullus hints the same reasoning about his own poetry alleging, “delightful [friend], I wrote this poem for you/from which you might perceive my pain (*hoc, iucunde, tibi poema feci/ex quo perspiceres meum dolorem*, 50.16-17). He wants others to know *his* suffering from love, and yet he too is playing with literary genre and contrived emotion. As much as Lesbia²⁷ figures in Catullus’ poetry, she is not his only beloved; He praises two other lovers Ipsiulla (32.1) and Juventius (48.1). His poems show a resilience and desire to be in love as much as he revels in his sorrow. These emotions are what resonate in Latin poetry and modern songs.

To recapitulate the connections between the two genres, there is clearly a constructed *persona*. The beloved is admired and wooed in a modern elite way with expensive, but romantic items such as a vintage car, white horses, fine clothes, a manor house, even an idyllic picnic. Love happens easily within this fantasy, exclusive world and the lovers love. Then everything goes wrong and love is lost. The lover becomes vicious and vindictive, suffering because of the betrayal. Although done in a novel format, the over-the-top video emphasizes the fictitious nature of the story. It is all really a game and is not Catullus playing too?

27 For a helpful discussion of the Lesbia poems, see Dyson.

ASSIGNING POP MUSIC AS A GRADED PROJECT

As I have shown, by presenting and evaluating a pop song like a poem that happens to have musical and video accompaniment, students learn the appropriate techniques which they can then return to the Latin poetry. As a final assignment, I ask the students to find another modern example (within the last ten years) and write a paper analyzing it within the structure of Roman love poetry, or more specifically elegy, use examples from the Latin poems to show parallels, and to consider the similarities. This also requires that students read more poetry as they search for parallels, which is also part of my dastardly plan. In addition, I also ask that they consider the differences based on context. As much as I argue that the parallels are significant and that we should look for similarities, it is important also for students to realize that American and Roman society are not the same. As I showed in my discussion of *Blank Space*, 1) the medium for modern music is different than Latin poetry, which allows for a more accommodating transmission of cultural ideas (i.e. different rhythms and scores of images in videos) and 2) Taylor Swift presents an active and dominant female directing a relationship that is more-or-less accepted in American culture but definitely would not have pleased the ancient Romans, though her behavior does conform to Roman stereotypes (e.g. Medea, Clodia, Phaedra, etc.). In examining their songs/videos for modern differences, I suggest they focus not on the details such as modern clothes or possessions, but rather the big-picture concepts such as the power dynamics, individual's roles, or social mores. Students can choose to follow a love affair within one song, as I have done, or focus on one aspect of a relationship emphasized in a single song. In essence, the students are writing commentaries on modern songs, considering the language, meaning, themes, and social context of the piece.

The student papers are insightful reflections on the form, meaning, and presentation of 'poetry' in the modern age and its debt to Latin poets. A well-written argument can transform almost any annoying pop song into a sophisticated commentary on the pitfalls of modern love. In the papers I have received, students compare Catullus to a range of popstars, notably female singers such as Selena Gomez, Rihanna, Ariana Grande, Adele, Lady Gaga, to name a few, which immediately changes the power dynamic of Latin poetry. Several students likened the jealousy, passion, and eroticism in Catullus's poems to Selena Gomez' *Perfect* (2015).²⁸

²⁸ The University of Tennessee is very strict about the use of student work and requires extensive permissions. Most of the students who turned in papers for this project have already graduated and

Summarizing these students' analyses, they found that Gomez chronicles her fear about losing her lover to another and wishes to become this other 'perfect' woman. In particular, they noted that she expresses her concern in the repeated chorus lamenting, "I can taste her lipstick and see her laying her across your chest/I can feel the distance every time you remember her fingertips/Maybe I should be more like her" (0:51-1:07). The singer feels that her lover is distracted and imagines watching him in an illicit relationship from afar which my students observed was similar to Sappho 31 and Catullus 51. When Gomez cries, "I can see her body rushing into you/crashing on your skin/Burning within, burning so deep, deep/On your skin, skin next to me" (2:41-2:50) and even thinking she can taste the other woman's lipstick on her unfaithful lover, the students identified the madness of love. They connect the singer admitting that she feels "twisted" (1:39) to Catullus worried about going insane (7.10).

Other students found parallels in Rihanna's [*Love on the Brain*](#) (2016), which nicely fits the *amator*'s dangerous infatuation with the beloved. Students saw how Rihanna voices her affection for her man multiple times, pleading with him. "Baby you got me like ah, ah/Don't you stop loving me (loving me)/Don't quit loving me, (loving me)/Just start loving me (loving me)" (0:48-1:05). When she becomes even more frantic in the middle of the song begging, "Then you keep loving me/Just love me, yeah. Just love me/All you need to do is love me, yeah" (2:01-2:13), students mentioned that Rihanna is as obsessive as Catullus in his demands for kisses (Cat. 5). It was observed that even Lesbia must have thought Catullus' behavior odd because he had to explain to her when he would have his fill. "You ask, Lesbia, how many of your kisses are enough and more to satisfy me" (*Quaeris, quot mihi basiationes/tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque*) (7.1-2). The implied answer reached by students was that nothing will satisfy him. Students felt that the sultry rhythm of *Love on the Brain* echoes the seductive feelings created by desire, but Rihanna suffers for her love, noting that it "beats me black and blue" (1:31-1:33). They saw how her whole self is consumed by her passion. "Must be love on the brain, yeah/And it keeps cursing my name (cursing my name)/No matter what I do/I'm no good without you/And I can't get enough" (1:38-1:55). One student also commented on the fact that, in the case of Rihanna, the song is also a catharsis about her own experience as a victim in a past abusive relationship. I would note that the violence connected to love and

I cannot track them down to gain permission. As a result, the songs provided were chosen by the students, but the analysis comes from general ideas inspired by students rather than direct citation of their actual papers.

controlling the beloved are sentiments Catullus would understand well as he lashed out against Lesbia for rejecting him (8.14; 37.11-14), but also suffered for loving her (75.1, 85.2) as Rihanna hurts.²⁹ Beyond Rihanna and Gomez, new songs are released every day which concentrate on amorous relationships. In searching for an appropriate song, students analyze the lyrics in a sophisticated manner and they bring a little of the Classics into the 21st century.

For Latin classes, this comparative assignment can be modified as a longer homework requiring a Latin poem be translated and paralleled with a pop song (Intermediate) or a more intensive commentary with the Latin translation and composition (Advanced). In both cases, the students should select a poem or selection from a poem which has not been read in class with a minimum line number (depending on skill level) and then find a modern song which reflects the same sentiment. For the Latin poems, students should scan it, identify poetic devices (e.g. alliteration, chiasmus, synecdoche, etc.), and then translate it into English. The lyrics for the modern song which parallels the Latin should be brought to class in whole with the relevant four to six lines highlighted. Either in discussion or in a short, written commentary, students should be asked to justify their reasoning for selecting their song and how it relates to their chosen Latin poem. Additionally, more experienced students should translate these limited English lyrics into Latin and provide an explanatory commentary for their adaptation. The benefit to this exercise is that it helps students work on their composition skills which in turns helps them consider grammatical and poetic issues of translation.³⁰ Any attempt to impose meter on these new Latin lyrics is, I think, asking too much, but one might offer extra credit for doing so. Still, the placement of words and word choices can be relevant and students can explain their choices (Kershner).

Though many of the songs referenced here are explicit and may not work in a high school setting, the reality is that this is the music students are hearing. I do allow students freedom in selecting poems and songs, regardless of expletives. In a classroom, some of the lyrics can be “cleaned” or only selections played. I want them to listen to music that they already enjoy and think about it in a new way, bringing Latin alive outside the classroom.

29 For a better parallel for the abusive relationship in Latin elegy, see Ovid *Am.* 1.7 and, more generally, Cahoon. In this analogy, Rihanna is harmed by the beloved, rather than being the controlling *amator*.

30 For a discussion of translating pop music into Latin, see Kershner.

CONCLUSION

As I have shown, music provides a gateway into the world of Latin poetry and meter. The familiar rhythms in pop music can be used to teach the different Latin meters. Notorious B.I.G., Maroon 5, and many other musicians provide an opportunity to enliven ancient meter. By demystifying meter and poetic terminology with contemporary music, poetry moves from the world of the elite and becomes accessible and relatable to all. In choosing Catullus to illustrate major themes in Latin love poetry and issues with the constructed persona, I have selected a popular author in the secondary and collegiate Latin curriculum whose poetry always incites a response.

Latin love poetry and pop music both exhibit consistent patterns in their structure and subjects. I have argued that a love affair can be traced, evolving in a relatively reliable fashion with observing, wooing, loving, and losing the beloved in Latin love poetry. Themes of power, control, and desire pervade the verse as the lover engages the beloved in a troubled relationship. These same topics arise in pop music. The struggle to find, to keep, and, at times, to end relationships as well as the jealousy, control, infidelity, and contempt which can destroy love are common subjects in current music. The way in which modern songs address this is through a verse/chorus/bridge story-telling formula with allusions to shared cultural references. Moreover, Catullus' issues with the audience not always recognizing the poet's constructed persona are paralleled with the struggles of modern celebrities such as Taylor Swift, who directly addresses the dichotomy of her own personality and her perceived character in several of her songs. Both authors complain about those critics who do not understand the game being played in their verses.

Such connections between ancient authors and modern songwriters reveal how appropriate pop music is for teaching poetry. To support this, I offered a detailed analysis comparing Taylor Swift's *Blank Space* to the Catullan corpus of Lesbia poems. By tracing a modern love affair in the lyrics and video, I demonstrated how similar sentiments were present in the verses of both Catullus and Swift. This exercise provides the paradigm for an assignment comparing Latin poems with the lyrics of a modern song that can be done in translation or utilizing the original Latin. In searching for a suitable song and Latin poems, students read more poetry and begin to consider verses analytically. Though I have chosen Catullus, Ovid would also be another popular, ancient author to consider for similar exercises. From my own experience, I can say that my students embraced this assignment. They did

create sophisticated commentaries on modern lyrics and discussed how these songs compare (or contrast) to ancient poetry. In their analysis, they began to read more carefully the verses of Catullus and modern singers. Songs are familiar, so students feel like they *can* say something insightful when they might be hesitant to speak about a Latin poem. As students deal with something familiar, they build confidence to delve into the unfamiliar, in this case Latin poetics. Once elegiac couplets are mastered, dactylic hexameter or hendecasyllabic verse seem less intimidating. Even if students cannot remember the rules of a specific meter or the name of a particular poetic device, they will understand the underlying principles of Latin verse. I consider that a successful lesson.

With these guidelines and examples, I hope that anyone can incorporate popular music into their Latin classes. Even if your knowledge concerning the canons of pop music is limited, students will undoubtedly find numerous new illustrations you can use in the future. As popular music evolves, more songs are released, different genres go mainstream, and earlier lyrics/melodies are referenced or sampled. With the help of our students, we can continue to engage with current popular culture and thus remain relevant for each new cohort. What many of these songs and poems have in common are commercial success, potent lyrics, and the universal theme of love, for someone or something. Through these connections, we can open a new discourse about the far-removed past with the familiar. The concept and specifics of meter can be tackled with modern music and melody. The power of word choice, placement, and emphasis — as well as big thematic issues such as control, relationship dynamics, or effects of love — become clear when listening to a song or viewing lyrics as a poem. By reconsidering the way we present poetry, we can help students change their perceptions and to look at the world (Caine, Caine, Crowell 10), modern and ancient, in a different way and, ultimately, value the poetic arts in whatever form they are preserved. Suddenly the poets of the past can become pop stars in the present, ready to write new lines in a blank space.

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APPENDIX 1

[Official Lyrics for Taylor Swift's Blank Space](#) Lyrics by Taylor Swift, Max Martin, and Shellback, 2014, Sony/ATV Tree Publishing/ Taylor Swift Music (BMI), MXM Music AB. (ASCAP) (All Rights Administered by Kobalt Songs Music Publishing, Inc.).

[Verse 1]		And you love the game	
Nice to meet you		'Cause we're young and we're reckless,	
Where you been		We'll take this way too far	
I could show you incredible things		It'll leave you breathless	
Magic, madness, heaven, sin		Or with a nasty scar	30
Saw you there and I thought	5	Got a long list of ex lovers	
Oh my god		They'll tell you I'm insane	
Look at that face		But I've got a blank space, baby	
You look like my next mistake		And I'll write your name.	
Love's a game, want to play			
		[Verse 2]	
New money, suit and tie	10	Cherry lips, crystal skies	35
I can read you like a magazine		I could show you incredible things	
Ain't it funny, rumors fly		Stolen kisses, pretty lies	
And I know you heard about me		You're the king, baby I'm your queen	
So hey, let's be friends		Find out what you want	
I'm dying to see how this one ends	15	Be that girl for a month	40
Grab your passport and my hand		Wait, the worst is yet to come	
I can make the bad guys good			
For a weekend		Screaming, crying, perfect storms	
		I can make all the tables turn	
[Chorus]		Rose garden filled with thorns	
So it's gonna be forever		Keep you second-guessing like	45
Or it's gonna go down in flames	20	Oh my god	
You can tell me when it's over		Who is she	
If the high was worth the pain		I get drunk on jealousy	
Got a long list of ex lovers		But you'll come back	
They'll tell you I'm insane		Each time you leave	50
'Cause you know I love the players	25	'Cause darling I'm a nightmare	

Dressed like a daydream

Chorus

[Bridge]

Boys only want love if it's torture

Don't say I didn't, say I didn't warn you

Boys only want love if it's torture 55

Don't say I didn't, say I didn't warn you

Chorus

Music, Meaning, and the Muses: Teaching Latin Intertextuality with Wild Nothing's "Paradise"¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how to utilize a music video to teach Latin intertextuality. It shows how to encourage students to be aware of the way authors and musicians establish connections between their own works and those of their predecessors. The video features "signposts" for allusive material and an extended quotation that enhances the meaning of the song. Similar effects can be discovered in the analysis of Latin poetry and a case study shows how intertextual echoes in Vergil adumbrate his own literary antecedents and his creative use of his source material. This instructional strategy not only assists students to see the larger context of the Latin poems and to delve into their poetics, but also illuminates how visual clues operate within Latin poetry.

KEYWORDS

Latin, video, pedagogy, music, intertextuality, allusion, Vergil

In order to teach Latin intertextuality, I often begin by talking about music with my students.² Musicians are always building upon, responding to, referencing, covering, and even sampling songs that have come before. Of course, not all of these are examples of intertextuality *per se*, but all of these traits position the music in a larger continuum of previous songs, genres, artists, keys, beats, and assume that the listener will be able to appreciate some of these references. This creates a relationship between the musician and the audience. No music is made in a vacuum

1 I owe thanks to John Gruber-Miller and the readers of TCL for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. I also want to thank Justin Arft, who gave me the idea to write up some of my ideas about this topic, and the other panelists at the CAMWS 2017 session "Finding a New Beat: Teaching Latin Poetry with Popular Music."

2 Helpful studies of Latin intertextuality include Hinds 1998, Edmunds 2001, and Hutchinson 2013. Although intertextuality has come to be a blanket term for any sort of borrowing, in this paper I will distinguish it from allusion in a more concrete manner. A nice collection of essays on connections between poetry and modern song writing is Robbins 2017.

and, likewise, no poetry can exist without previous poems.³ So, who determines the meaning? The audience or the author? This is one of the major divisions between allusion and intertextuality and forms part of the lesson that I teach with the song “Paradise” by the band Wild Nothing.

Broadly speaking, the term intertextuality refers to the dialogue between all types of texts/media and the meaning that is created by that very dialogue in the mind of the reader or listener (this is a strong “readerly” approach such as the literary critics Wolfgang Iser and Umberto Eco champion). As Andrew Laird helpfully clarifies, “Instances of irony, parody, or stylization in texts or utterances – which are manifestations of intertextuality – are notorious for not being evident to everyone... They are actualized only by readers or hearers with a certain competence” (1999: 38). Readers create the meaning and Latin authors clearly expected “Full-Knowing Readers.”⁴ Alternatively, allusion may be said to be the purposeful referencing of another’s material by an author (say, T.S. Eliot’s own notes to “[The Wasteland](#)”), in which the meaning is especially identified with authorial agency.⁵ For the purpose of this lesson, I try to make that distinction as clear as possible, and I find it can empower students to understand that their own interpretation of this dialogue can be as valid as what the author may have intended. Classical authors, of course, cannot be asked what they meant by a certain line or image (i.e. the “intentional fallacy,” which posits that only the author’s intention matters), but it would certainly be a strong misreading to read Seneca’s tragedies as panegyrics for tyrants or Juvenal’s satires as elucidations of Stoic physics.⁶

That classical authors were interested in placing themselves into a larger literary tradition is clear from the anecdotes related about their recitations, reading/writing habits, and claims in their work (such as Horace’s *exegi monumentum*, C. 3.30 and Ovid’s nod to it at the conclusion of his *Metamorphoses* 15.871-79). The concepts of *imitatio* and *aemulatio*, common in the rhetorical schools, show how important models were and how consciously writers imitated past works, often in the hope of surpassing them (West and Woodman 1979). The web of references

3 Even Homer’s *Iliad* is responding to previous oral traditions, e.g. Slatkin 1995.

4 As per the title of Pucci 1998.

5 See the introduction by Baraz and van den Berg to the special issue of *AJP*, “Intertextuality and its Discontents,” for a concise overview of the various theories.

6 cf. Bloom 1997 for such “misreadings” as part of the *Anxiety of Influence*, and Lethem 2011: 93-120 for the revisionist “ecstasy of influence” that, I would argue, is more helpful for students (and truer to the spirit of Latin intertextuality).

that can be present in any line of Vergil can be staggering – one need only lift one of Nicholas Horsfall’s weighty commentaries to sense this fact– and students often struggle to make sense of not only how these intertexts work, but also what they do for the larger meaning of the *Aeneid*. It is useful for students to realize also that their own music likewise has a strong intertextual tradition from [pop music](#) to [hip-hop](#). Bob Dylan looks back to Edgar Allen Poe (Rollason 2009), [Taylor Swift](#) references Shakespeare, and a Jay-Z/Kanye West track clearly evokes [Plato](#). An extreme example of this is DJ Danger Mouse’s [The Grey Album](#), a mash-up of The Beatles’ *White Album* and Jay-Z’s *The Black Album*, which exploits such creative appropriation in a way that students can immediately grasp.⁷ The “meaning” of Jay-Z’s music is blended with that of the Beatles in a way that creates something qualitatively different from either source yet still evocative of each. One can view its twelve songs much like the twelve books of the *Aeneid*, which graft aspects of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* onto the myth of Aeneas’ wandering and settlement in Italy. Using “Paradise” in my class has helped my students understand intertextuality and visualize this process of appropriation by adding a music video to the mix.

Music videos work to offer an interpretation of the song and have their own sophisticated forms of reference. The pastiche technique of Spike Jonze, which can hearken back to [Broadway musicals](#) or [Dirty Harry](#) films, proudly proclaims the tradition upon which it draws for both nostalgia and humor.⁸ Different genres of video such as “Pseudo-Documentary” and “Staged Performance” exist and often can be tweaked by subsequent bands, such as the [Red Hot Chili Peppers](#)’ homage to staged performances throughout the last 60 years.⁹ At times there can be a seeming disconnect between the song and its video, itself an evocative form of juxtaposition that can be easily identified by students when you ask if the actors from *Troy* or *Harry Potter* look the way you imagined when you read the book.¹⁰ I can only hear-

7 Fairchild 2014: 4 offers a readable take on this album and some of the intertextual issues involved, “over the last ten years or so a lot of other uses of music have also become theft, and in an increasing array of circumstances. Borrowing is theft. Appropriation is theft. Homage is theft. Allusion is theft. Derivation is theft. Quotation is theft. Even sharing is theft. *Sharing*.” (his emphasis).

8 For more on “pastiche” in music videos, cf. Goodwin 1992: 159-80 and Beebe 2007.

9 Such generic play is explored in Railton and Watson 2011: 41-65. See Vernallis 2004: 209-84 for close readings of three videos and Reiss 2000: 10-29 for a brief history of music videos and their ability to “harness...embedded and often deceptively sophisticated layers of texture and meaning into their veneer” which “elicit an open-ended response” (27).

10 Blondell 2009 humorously investigates the representation of Helen in her article ““Third cheerleader from the left”: from Homer’s Helen to Helen of Troy.”

ken back to my youth and that moment when I first heard Duran Duran's "[Hungry like the Wolf](#)" on Casey Kasem's Top 40 radio show; I certainly did not imagine a steamy Indiana-Jones-in-India love affair (as the video shows), but now that is all I can think of when I hear that song.¹¹ Students are often visual learners and, more and more, have a strong visual literacy for popular culture references and images. By tapping into the visual aspect of music videos, I believe this lesson helps to highlight various strategies for understanding intertextuality.

VISUAL AND AUDITORY INTERTEXTUALITY

A video from 2012 by the band Wild Nothing ("[Paradise](#)") is valuable for teaching some of primary tenets of intertextuality (I suggest you watch it now before reading the rest of this article). The video features the actress Michelle Williams flying from Australia to Niagara Falls, reading a book, and listening to her cassette Walkman (in itself a clever "archaic" nod indicating not only the band's musical influences but also a replaying of the past). The video as a whole is part of the "Narrative" genre, featuring a story tangentially related to the song, and it is shot in a way that evokes the 1980s through its color palate and videography. The song itself, heavy with synthesizers, evokes 1980s alternative music such as [Human League](#), [New Order](#), and [The Psychedelic Furs](#). The lyrics are relatively simple, aside from the long, spoken word section:

Dancer in the night
Playing with my eyes
Velvet tongue so sweet
Say anything you like

Crush me with the lie
And tell me once or twice
That love is paradise
That love is paradise

¹¹ Only later in life did I learn that Duran Duran were actually trying to be ironic in their glitzy videos, "Whenever we do something tongue in cheek, people think we're being more serious than we are. Like when we went to Rio to make that video on a boat, which we thought was a big joke, wearing silk shirts on a yacht, everybody thought Duran Duran was trying to put over a jet-set image." Quoted in Goodwin 1992: 164.

There are ways in which the video visually echoes these lyrics with Niagara Falls, a customary destination for weddings (especially in the 1970s and 1980s), and a shot of the main character on a dance floor. Her solitude and isolation are stressed throughout, however, in spite of the flash of an engagement ring during the video, which grants a degree of melancholy to the majority of the video. If love is to be understood as romantic love, “love is paradise” seems to be, primarily, a lie in the narrative context of the video.

What does this have to do with Latin intertextuality? In the course of the song, Williams performs a spoken word piece in which she conjugates the verb *amo*, *-are* and muses on its definitions and larger meaning:¹²

*Amo amas amat amamus amatis amant amavi amavisti
amavit amavimus amavistis amaverunt amavero amaveris
amaverit...Everything was love. Everything will be love.
Everything has been love. Everything would be love. Every-
thing would have been love. Ah, that was it, the truth at
last. Everything would have been love. The huge eye, which
had become an immense sphere, was gently breathing, only
it was not an eye nor a sphere but a great wonderful animal
covered in little waving legs like hairs, waving oh so gently
as if they were under water. All shall be well and all shall
be well said the ocean. So the place of reconciliation existed
after all, not like a little knothole in a cupboard but flow-
ing everywhere and being everything. I had only to will it
and it would be, for spirit is omnipotent only I never knew
it, like being able to walk on the air. I could forgive. I could
be forgiven. I would forgive. Perhaps that was the whole of
it after all. Perhaps being forgiven was just forgiving only
no one had ever told me. There was nothing else needful.
Just to forgive. Forgiving equals being forgiven, the secret
of the universe, do not whatever you do forget it. The past
was folded up and in the twinkling of an eye everything
had been changed and made beautiful and good. (Murdoch
1975: 298)*

¹² This is unique to the video and does not appear on the album version of the song. I often talk about such conjugation work as one of the building blocks for poetry itself and the lyrical musing here illustrates this point nicely.

This moment of Latin conjugation drew me to this song – after all, not many pop songs do this – but then I researched the spoken word piece further. This is actually an extended quotation from the very book Michelle Williams was reading on the plane, *A Word Child* by Iris Murdoch.¹³ The video features quick flashes of the book's cover, and even the page number of the quotation. I believe these are visual equivalents to so-called "Alexandrian footnotes"¹⁴ and while they are featured only briefly, they are telling for the song's larger meaning (in this way they have analogues in words such as *ferunt*, which can often pass by Latin learners without further thought). In essence, such "footnotes" help the reader understand that the author is referencing another work. These are obviously "allusions" as the director of the video (or the ancient poet) marks their appropriation through such a marker. What one makes of it, however, brings in the intertextual elements of the linkage. While this is a long quotation and most intertexts in Latin poetry feature merely a couple of words or an image that a later author recycles, I believe that this quotation forcefully shows the intertextual dialogue.¹⁵ Hearing the conjugation of the verb and settling on the definition "everything would have been love" highlights the changes in perspective on love in both the quotation and the song itself. This spoken word piece redefines the song, whose refrain is "love is paradise," and the stream-of-consciousness reflection on the definition of love certainly transcends the banality of the chorus. This is similar to the way that intertexts will inform the larger meaning of a poem, supplementing the language to explore its very polyvalency. If the song seemed before to be an 80s throwback dance floor description ("Dancer in the night / Playing with my eyes / Velvet tongue so sweet / Say anything you like"), the Murdoch quote explores love as forgiveness and as a larger connection with the universe. This is spoken as clouds disintegrate outside the window of the airplane, a visual reminder of the god's-eye point of view explored in Murdoch's reverie.

13 This book's protagonist, Hilary, is particularly adept at language and grammar, which he pursued at Oxford, and this moment touches on the novel's larger concerns of love, hope, and forgiveness, cf. Howard 1992.

14 Stephen Hinds' *Allusion and Intertext* mentions some signposts of allusion in Latin poetry such as *ferunt* ("they say") and *fama est* ("the story goes"), and other "Alexandrian footnotes" (Hinds 1998: 1-5).

15 For a critical view of quotation and intertextuality, see the remarks of Worton and Still 1990: 11 "the reader inescapably strives to incorporate the quotation into the unified textuality which makes of the text of semiotic unit. The reader thus seeks to read the borrowing not only for its semantic content but also for its tropological or metaphoric function and significance." Cf. Orr 2003: 130-67 for more on the theoretical distinction between quotation, intertext, imitation, and influence.

Forgiveness becomes paradise, paradise is somehow within our reach, and the heavenly visuals foster that interpretation.

I recognize that many students are visual learners and are particularly astute at interpreting visual media, and this exercise links the visual and the textual and encourages students to think of the text in somewhat visual terms.¹⁶ I would argue that Latin poets incorporate many other words and rhetorical devices to encourage the reader to pay attention and dig deeper. These can be placed in the poetic line in such a way to call attention to the poetic craft as well as to indicate that something “more” is happening. This can be important not only for issues such as concrete word order (or “word pictures” such as *Aen.* 8.369: *nox ruit et fuscis tellurem amplexitur alis*, where the land is embraced by Night’s dusky wings), but also for additional moments of poetic play (cf. the acrostics MARS at *Aen.* 7.601-4). The various visual signposts in this song not only hint at the generic influences at play in the music, but also the literary antecedents that are important to the songwriter. Another witty visual clue of the intertextual nature of the song is the tote bag that Williams carries, which says “[Shoplifters of the World Unite](#).” This refers to the famous song of that title by The Smiths, another band which often explores allusion, intertextuality, and even plagiarism (esp. in their song “[Cemetery Gates](#)”). The idea of allusion as theft is common in antiquity with the Latin term *furtum* used to denote such thefts. Suetonius tells us that Vergil’s detractors compiled books of the *Aeneid*’s *furta* which led to Vergil’s statement “Why don’t my critics also attempt the same thefts? If they do, they will realize that it is easier to steal the club from Hercules than a line from Homer” (*VSD* 46).¹⁷ Is Wild Nothing merely “shoplifting” 1980s street cred through the look of the video? Are they “shoplifting” Iris Murdoch? Was Vergil “shoplifting” Homer? Clearly, these artists create such connections in the hope their readers or listeners will appreciate their appropriation and deduce the larger meaning that is created by the fusion of material. By understanding these references, one can see how this video provides literary and filmic signposts for intertextuality. These highlight the various influences on the songwriter and his own attempts to fit his work into a

16 An analogous exercise that I often do is to bring in an early printed edition of the *Aeneid* that features [illustrations](#) and ask the students to interpret what they think is happening from the [illustrations](#) (especially from those books they *have not* read).

17 *VSD* stands for *Vita Suetonii vulgo Donatiana*, which is the life of Vergil that appears in Donatus’ commentary but may derive from Suetonius. Conte’s latest book on Vergilian imitation (*Stealing the Club from Hercules*) evokes this story.

line of particularly literate British pop songs as well as the British literary tradition, and these signposts can help students pick up on Latin intertextuality as well.

VERGIL'S INTERTEXTUAL POETICS

Articles and books about Vergilian intertextuality are widespread and have uncovered much about how Vergil read, understood, and redeployed the literary tradition.¹⁸ For my lesson, I try to detail how such signposts and incorporation of intertextual references imbue material that might seem rather trite with further significance. In “Paradise” the quotation of Iris Murdoch redefines the love scenario in the song and equates love much more strongly with forgiveness, not merely the lies we tell someone we meet at a club while dancing. When teaching Vergil’s *Aeneid* 8, I found that Vergil similarly enhances a moment that could be considered rather stale through such intertextual material. I often teach this book in a fourth semester Latin class and these lines appear near the start of the book, so this lesson often occurs early in the semester. I find it is a good introduction to the students to watch out for additional references within the work and to think about the notes (we use Gransden’s 1976 Cambridge commentary) as useful pointers to intertextual dialogue. This is the introduction to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 8:

*Talia per Latium. quae Laomedontius heros
cuncta videns magno curarum fluctuat aestu,
atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc
in partisque rapit varias perque omnia versat,
sicut aquae tremulum labris ubi lumen aënis
sole repressum aut radiantis imagine lunae
omnia pervolat late loca, iamque sub auras
erigitur summique ferit laquearia tecti.
Nox erat et terras animalia fessa per omnis
alituum pecudumque genus sopor altus habebat,
cum pater in ripa gelidique sub aetheris axe
Aeneas, tristi turbatus pectora bello,
procubuit seramque dedit per membra quietem.*
(Vergil, *Aen.* 8.18-30)

Such is the tally of Latium’s ills. Once Laomedon’s kinsman

¹⁸ Good places to start are Conte 1986, Farrell 1997, Thomas 1999, and Nelis 2010.

Drinks in this vision, the hero is swept on a swell of emotions,
 Scurrying thoughts into this or that channel of choice and decision,
 Surging in random directions, examining every perspective,
 Just as the shimmering light from a watery surface in bronze-lipped
 Cauldrons – itself but reflect sun, or the radiant, mirrored
 Face of the moon – ripples all round a room, leaps up through the yielding
 Air where it flickers on fretted beams paneled high on the ceiling.
 Night reigned; all across earth, sleep dulled living creatures' exhausted
 Consciousness, ruled all the various species of birds and of livestock.
 Under the cold sky's vault, on the river-bank, father Aeneas,
 Though sick at heart and confused by the outbreak of war and its grimness
 Lay down, permitting the rest he'd deferred to diffuse through his body.

(trans. Ahl, 2008)

A description of night. All the animals are asleep yet the hero cannot find rest. Both Seneca the Elder and Seneca the Younger remark that such descriptions of night are common rhetorical and poetic fodder, often overdone to the detriment of the author's reputation, and Gransden remarks that being "swept on a swell of emotions" is hackneyed (citing Aeschylus and Catullus).¹⁹ How does Vergil find a way to recuperate such generic material? In part he does so through intertextual and intratextual reinforcements. Vergil is a careful writer (and reader) and he carefully deploys language found in previous hexameter poets in this section to evoke the larger works of the Epicurean poet Lucretius and Apollonius of Rhodes. For instance, the collocation *alituum...genus* recalls Lucretius (5.801, 5.1039, 5.1078) and *per membra quietem* is found at Lucretius 4.907 where he writes how sleep cures anxieties. Intertexts to Lucretius do a variety of work in Vergil, here *alituum...genus* adds archaic flair to the description (like the Walkman in the video), and *per membra quietem* was found at a moment of Lucretius in which he urges his reader to pay attention to his language.²⁰ Does this admonition from the original context also lurk behind Aeneas' slumber? Should we also be paying particular attention to Vergil's appropriation of Lucretius' language? I ask my class whether this is one leap too far (after all, *per membra quietem* also appears at *Aen.* 1.691), but it is a move

19 Gransden 1976: ad loc. Sen. *Controv.* 7.1.27ff. and Sen. *Ep.* 122.11. Gransden underestimates how Vergil's use of this image for Dido at *Aen.* 4.522 complicates its employment here. The repetition actually points to numerous parallels between the scenes.

20 Bailey 1947: ad 909-11 remarks "The picturesque introduction followed by the emphatic appeal of the four following lines shows that Lucretius attaches great importance to this explanation of sleep."

that is not out of the realm of consideration for Augustan poets and interrogates the potential limits of intertextual hermeneutics.²¹ The question of how much of the source context to take into consideration is often debated in class – is Vergil also evoking Epicurean tenets through such Lucretian echoes and hinting at his own philosophical “affiliation”? I find that students enjoy considering what can be added to such interpretations through their own intertextual understanding of this material.²²

In addition, the intratextual repetition of *Aen.* 4.285-6 at *Aen.* 8.20-1 foreshadows the vision of the god, Tiberinus, and recalls Aeneas’ dalliance with Dido. Again, Vergil probably planned this (it is an allusion to his previous book), but readers can interpret it in a variety of ways (an extension of intertextuality). In *Aeneid* 4, these lines occur after Mercury appears to Aeneas and tells him to leave from Carthage, which incites the reader to compare the situations and characters involved. One may also think about the particularly “epic” resonance of such repetitions, which were common in Homer’s oral epics, but used sparingly in Vergil’s *Aeneid*.²³ It is notable that such repetition is also a constitutive element of pop music (with the refrain/chorus), and as the refrain of “Paradise” is ultimately redefined after the spoken word piece, so the repetition of Vergil’s own words in a new context will inevitably be altered in some manner.²⁴ Vergil always repeats himself for a reason and here the use of *versare* (*Aen.* 8.20) becomes charged with additional meaning as not only “turning back” to a previous roll of the text, but also a signpost of allusion and translation, which occurs with the subsequent Apollonius intertext.²⁵ Whereas

21 See, for instance, Thomas 1999: 227 where the Homeric and Callimachean contexts influence Vergil in such a way that “Homer’s Aeneas may be seen as already putting into action the Hesiodic-Callimachean program that poets claim for themselves. You do need your Homer to read the *Aeneid*, since Virgil constantly expects you to explore the original context and to observe its new life in his own poem.”

22 I often show them Silius’ *Pun.* 6.97, which also features this phrase and ask them if it is evoking Lucretius or Vergil or both (or neither) to help see how these phrases continue to resonate in Latin literature.

23 The very appearance of two identical lines from earlier in the *Aeneid* may itself act as a visual suggestion of the act of *imitatio* that Vergil is tackling.

24 For the repetition within pop songs, see Goodwin 1992: 79 “Repetition occurs at three levels – within songs, between songs, and across media sites. First, pop songs are based on the repetition of elements such as the verse and chorus within any given song, and on the repetition of lyrics, chord progressions, riffs, and rhythms.” These three levels *mutatis mutandis* may be seen in Latin poetry as well.

25 s.v. OLD 2b “to handle constantly (books or writing)” and OLD 7a “to vary the expression of (an idea).” The imagery that Vergil uses for thinking and “this or that channel of choice and decision” also touches upon language that Cicero used for dream interpretation and conjectures (*varias partis*,

most students understand the importance of Homer's epics for the *Aeneid*, the strong connections with Apollonius' *Argonautica*, especially the third and fourth books, are able to be introduced at this moment in the class. The famous simile of the light reflecting off water was, for Apollonius, indicative of Medea's worry for Jason (3.747ff.), whereas now Vergil exploits it for the political and military cares of Aeneas. The metrical grouping of lines *Aen.* 8.22-26 would also underline that Vergil wishes the reader (who would read aloud) to pay attention to this "carefully wrought passage."²⁶ However, the "further" voice of Apollonius, refracted through Dido's own Medea-like desire and disquiet (*Aen.* 4.522-32 describes a similar scene introduced with *nox erat* and concluding with *magnoque irarum fluctuat aestu*) shows how the rage and fury of Dido will be replayed in the war over Lavinia's hand.²⁷ In this way, the reader may intuit that Dido continues to haunt the epic, that their love could still be on Aeneas' mind, and that love will persist in being problematic for Aeneas and the epic as a whole (Putnam 1995: 27-49). In fact, one could infer this at the opening of *Aeneid* 7 and 8, where Vergil employs the uncommon verb *dido*, -ere with *rumor* (*Aen.* 7.144) and *fama* (*Aen.* 8.132) to continue to encourage the reader/listener to remember the Carthaginian queen.²⁸ As Lyne states, "Vergil shows us very pointedly that Aeneas repeats Dido's turmoil by giving him not only similar language and motifs but Dido's own allusive persona" (130). For the reader attuned to such intertextual and metaliterary reverberations, Aeneas' momentary insomnia during the witching hour blends echoes from various sources and characters, hinting at the discord and agony that stems from frustrated desires. While few would doubt that Vergil intended his audience to acknowledge his allusion to Apollonius' epic (and I would argue the metaliterary signposting is purposeful), it is up to the reader to diagnose how these connections create further ramifications for the epic. These connections can only find expression in the mind of the reader who is open to

Cic. *De Div.* 2.147).

26 Gransden 1976: 191-92 on the metrical "clusters" of Book 8. I think this would cause the reader to take notice and could be paralleled with beats and refrains from music. I often direct students interested in the sound of Latin poetry to the Barnard production of Seneca's *Thyestes* and tell them to think about the *quis...deorum* of *Thy.* 3 and Vergil's use of it when Aeneas addresses Palinurus in the underworld (6.341) – does Seneca enact the "return" signaled by Palin (πάλιν) -urus' name with the ghost of Tantalus here?

27 Note how Turnus' anger is compared to boiling water (*ira super...exsultantque aestu latites, furit intus...*, 7.460-66).

28 Gowers 2016 eloquently discusses the name of Dido but without drawing attention to the use of this verb.

hearing them recited aloud and seeing the words on the page. An intertextual reading of this passage highlights *how* the reader makes meaning through Vergil's text and *why* Vergil calls attention to his language in this manner.

CONCLUSION

The inclusion of the intertextual material will make the reader understand how love may be under the surface the second half of the *Aeneid* and help to point to the way that Erato is a fitting Muse for the second half of the *Aeneid* (*Aen.* 7.37, cf. Apollonius 3.1). Unlike in "Paradise" where love is refigured as forgiveness, love still haunts Vergil's Aeneas and evokes loneliness, misery, and violence for the characters who succumb to it in the epic. Johnson, Lyne, and Reed discuss what makes Apollonius important to this moment and that is the most apparent intertext,²⁹ but I would argue that the repetition of *Aeneid* 4.285-6 is particularly marked here and acts to call attention to the metapoetic potential of the word *versat*. As the flashes of the book cover in the video for "Paradise" take on additional meaning for those that explore the ramifications of Iris Murdoch for the song, so Vergil will often imbue language with additional expressive potential and hint at connections to be drawn. I have found the Wild Nothing video to be beneficial for teaching intertextuality and for encouraging students to probe Latin texts with an eye for their continual dialogue with previous works and authors. From a pedagogical standpoint, this method allows students to relate a complex Latin rhetorical practice to their everyday world without drawing directly on their knowledge of mythology or Roman history.³⁰ Students know countless lyrics by heart and can recognize the way that current hip hop or pop music manipulates their tradition, whether it is [Jay-Z](#) noting his own lyrical progress and how his lyricism differs from Common or Talib Kweli, or Belle and Sebastian dropping the title of a Bob Dylan documentary in their song "[Like Dylan in the Movies](#)." Music is to our students what poetry was to the educated Roman audience. By seeing the various ways that artists, even contemporary musicians, reference their influences and practice *aemulatio*, students come to view the Latin poets as, paradoxically, more creative, evocative, and (perhaps) "modern" in their compositional techniques and literary concerns.

29 Cf. Johnson 1976: 84-87, Lyne 1987: 125-32, and Reed 2007: 187-89.

30 Songs by Sunset Rubdown "[Apollo and the Buffalo and Anna Anna Oh!](#)" and the Mountain Goats "[Song for Cleomenes](#)" reference Anna Perenna and Gaius Verres, respectively. Bob Dylan's interactions with the Classics are well discussed in Thomas 2017.

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