

Latin in Small Packages: Expanding and Varying Advanced Latin Curricular Options

This panel is devoted to exploring ways in which advanced Latin curricula (whether at the college or secondary level) can be expanded and varied to meet the interests and needs of today's Latin students and teachers. The panelists will show how coherently organized Latin selections chosen by noted scholars can be used successfully to introduce students to particular authors, genres, or topics. These "small packages" of Latin allow for expanding and diversifying current curricula beyond traditional material.

1. Latin in Small Packages: A Series Editor's Perspective

This paper will discuss the rationale behind a new advanced Latin textbook series that introduces students to authors, topics, or genres through carefully chosen and introduced selections (about 600 lines total) in volumes authored by scholarly experts in the field. I will argue that Latin "in small packages" can be used alone or can be mixed and matched successfully with other "small packages" or with standard traditional readings in the Latin curriculum to expand and vary what we teach at the advanced level. (While aimed at the college market, this series has already been seen with interest by secondary school teachers looking to design their own courses, especially since the demise of the second AP Latin course.) Several curricular scenarios will be presented for how these volumes can be used in teaching, including examples from Satire, Apuleius, and Roman Comedy from courses taught at my own institution.

This series emerged from a year-long discussion among a group of college teachers and representatives of a major Classics press about what new Latin textbooks needed to be produced for the college market. That discussion culminated in a lively session at CAMWS in 2005, which clinched the notion that brief scholarly introductions to authors, genres, and topics were not sufficiently available. It seemed appropriate, then, to share at CAMWS once again some of the concrete results of that discussion six years, including ways in which these introductory volumes could free us as teachers to incorporate more flexibility and variety into our teaching options.

2. Latin Epic

Epic stood at the pinnacle of the classical hierarchy of genres. Its subject matter—the establishment and maintenance of divine and human order—was felt to be the most important material for commemoration in verse and therein lay its prestige. Classical antiquity identified Vergil, in the *Aeneid*, as the supreme exponent of epic at Rome, but the names of some twenty other hexameter poets (several of whose works are no longer extant) are also recorded by ancient authorities. The *Bolchazy-Carducci Reader in Latin Epic* introduces advanced students of Latin to the wide range of epic poetry composed in ancient Rome and complements the Bolchazy-Carducci Latin Reader on Lucan as well as the press' other volumes on Vergil and "silver" Latin epic. Studying Vergil's poetry in the context of other Latin epic poets' work allows students to

appreciate his innovative artistry as well as his influence by assessing his work within the epic tradition.

The introductory lines of all classical verse (and prose for that matter), and especially of epic poetry, offer the audience important information—thematic, poetic, political—about the stance of the epic poet and the aims and contents of his poem. A number of such passages, called “proems,” are included in this reader to illustrate both the variety of possible approaches to opening a long narrative poem, and the impact of Vergil’s proem on his successors’ (Lucretius 1.1-43; *V. Aen.* 1.1-11; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.1-20; Lucan 2.1-15; Silius 1.1-28). Other scenes conventional to classical epic poetry include:

1. ecphrases, in which the poet describes an object, often a work of art (Catullus 64.51-93; *V. Aen.* 6.14-31, 8. 625-634);
2. duels, often between rival heroes (e.g., Aeneas/Turnus, *V. Aen.* 12.698-724; Eteocles/Polynices, Statius, *Thebaid* 1.401-427) but also between hero and beast (e.g., Perseus or Hercules/sea-monster, *Ov. Met.* 4.706-34; Manilius, *Astronomica* 5.577-611; Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 2.497-537);
3. the hero’s abandonment of a woman (e.g., Theseus’ abandonment of Ariadne, *Cat.* 64.51-93, *Ov. Met.* 8.159-82; Aeneas’ of Dido, *V. Aen.* 6.456-466);
4. pitched battles and the felling of trees for the pyres of war-dead (Ennius, *Annales* 175-8 Skutsch; *V. Aen.* 6.179-82; *Ov. Met.* 8. 743-779; *Stat. Theb.* 6.90-117);
5. storms and the shipwrecks (*V. Aen.* 1.148-156).

In addition to conventional scenes, epic typically employs rhetorical devices such as similes and epigrams, which are also illustrated in the passages in this volume.

Vergil’s *Aeneid* furnishes ten selections, more than any other epic represented in the volume, and the selections themselves exhibit the most extensive literary interconnections, both intertextually (i.e., with other passages in this volume) and intratextually (i.e., with other passages in Vergilian epic). In part this reflects Vergil’s central and preeminent position in Latin literature generally and epic in particular. The first selection is the proem to the *Aeneid*, which sets out the national and literary themes of Vergil’s epic. In these lines, we see Vergil laying claim to the role of a Roman Homer as he takes up the story of a Homeric hero, Aeneas, and refashions him as the founder of the Roman people. The second selection, a simile likening Neptune calming the sea to a Roman statesman calming the plebs, illustrates Vergil’s central interest in Roman society as it informs his evocation of a Homeric world.

Four selections chart the progress of the doomed love affair between Aeneas, destined to be the founder of Rome, and Dido, the founder of Carthage, whose Mediterranean empire would grow to challenge that of Rome. In the first, Venus introduces Dido and details her family history of betrayal and bloodshed as the backdrop to her successful foundation of Carthage (1.338-368). The second illustrates Dido’s incipient love for Aeneas as she struggles to fulfill her duty to her people and remain faithful to her dead husband Sychaeus (4.1-30). The third describes the ill-starred “wedding” of Dido and Aeneas, sheltered during a storm in a lonely cave with only supernatural powers as witnesses (4.160-172). The last contains Aeneas’ confrontation with Dido in the underworld, in the aftermath of his departure from Carthage and her resulting suicide (6.456-466).

The remaining four selections pick up thematic foci familiar from earlier Latin epic. Two passages illustrate Vergil's famous ephrastic artistry: the illustrations of Cretan myth on the doors of Apollo's temple at Cumae (*Aen.* 6.14-31), which takes up the subject of Catullus 64.51-93 and is in turn taken up by Ovid (*Met.* 8.159-182). In a passage from the end of the eighth book of the *Aeneid*, Vergil confronts Homeric ephrasis directly in a description of the shield of Aeneas. The passage is clearly modeled on the shield of Achilles in *Iliad* 18, but also draws on Ennian subject matter in recounting early Roman myths (*Ann.* 34-50, 72-91 Sk). Two final passages show Vergil reworking famous Homeric scenes of funerary tree-felling (*Aen.* 6.179-82) and the heroic duel (*Aen.* 12.698-724) respectively.

3. Suetonius Segmented

A key question in Latin pedagogy is how, when time is limited, best to introduce students to long and complex texts (such as Vergil's *Aeneid*) or to authors with an extensive corpus (e.g., Tacitus). A standard approach, familiar from graduate reading lists, is to assign one discrete unit (e.g., book 1 of Lucan). This paper explores, with reference to Suetonius, an alternative, now being fostered by the B-C Latin readers, namely the teaching of *segments* drawn from across an author's whole work. What are the opportunities here, what are the challenges, and how can these challenges be met?

Suetonius has not been taught much in advanced Latin classes—largely, one suspects, because of lingering distaste for his seemingly 'colorless' style, and a preference for the more obviously wonderful Tacitus. Yet he has much to offer this generation of Latin teachers. His outspoken, often entertaining collection of imperial biographies, *Lives of the Caesars*, played an important part in the development of the art of biography, a still-flourishing genre (cf. Hamilton 2007). His work also lights up a momentous era, the transition in Rome from the Republic to rule by the monarchical Caesars; Suetonius' writing foregrounds increasing interest in the individual, and contemporary efforts to come to terms with individual destiny, through astrology, physiognomy, dream analysis, and biography itself (Wallace-Hadrill 1983). He is an excellent author to boost students' confidence in reading Latin: his syntax is not too involved but reinforces major constructions; his subject matter facilitates vocabulary-building; and his works are easily broken down into sections. Famously, Suetonius abandoned in his *Lives of the Caesars* a chronological model of biography, and instead organized much of his material by topic (e.g., the emperor's spectacles, the emperor's military abilities). Such an arrangement facilitated comparison of one emperor against the next.

Various editions exist of individual Suetonian lives, some suitable for teaching, most notably Donna Hurley's superb *Divus Claudius* (2001). But if students focus on one life, they miss key features of *Lives of the Caesars*, namely that it is serial in nature and that it covers a long stretch of history. An alternative is to assign segments from all the lives in Suetonius' masterpiece—something for which the work is, in a sense, ready-made—and this is the approach taken in the B-C *Suetonius Reader*. In my paper I will explain in detail what selections were made, and why. Particular goals were to include a sample of all the constituent parts of an imperial life (e.g., family background, death and omens preceding it), segments that illuminate one another by similarity of content or by contrast, and segments that were especially entertaining. An explanation will also be given in the paper of why the *Life of Horace* preserved in manuscripts of the poet and based closely on Suetonian material is included in the reader.

Also discussed in my paper are ways to enrich the material included in the *Suetonius Reader* and to incorporate it into a semester-long course. Given Suetonius' cultural significance and also the prominence of cultural approaches in current Classical scholarship, one real opportunity is to work in discussion of such topics as dreams in antiquity (e.g., Price 1986), and how they figure into Suetonius' work in particular. Much valuable work on the construction of imperial image (e.g., Saller 1980) is another rich vein to tap. Selections from Suetonius would fit very well into a course on biography, on imperial biography in particular, on imperial prose, and many others. I will discuss my own experience teaching a class on imperial biography in fall of 2009 (which also included works of Nepos and Augustus' *Res Gestae*, along with selections from Pliny the Younger, the *Historia Augusta*, and Einhard's life of Charlemagne) and share a detailed syllabus.

Finally, there will be consideration of some of the pitfalls in teaching selections of Suetonius and ways around them. One question raised by the *Suetonius Reader* is its inclusion of several graphic passages from the life of Tiberius, which may offend students; these must be prepared for carefully, and placed within an intellectual consideration of what purpose they serve in Suetonius and of the social construction of obscenity. Perhaps a larger question is how, when only segments of individual texts are taught, to insure that students appreciate the unity of an individual life. Here I will share several strategies, including one tested in fall of 2009, the writing of a joint-authored commentary on the life of Tiberius.

Works cited

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4. Seneca for Students: Six Suggestions

Seneca the Younger (c. 5 BCE–65 CE), the author, philosopher, and statesman, represents both a challenge and an opportunity for the Latin student and instructor. A challenge, because Seneca may seem out on a limb—linguistically, conceptually, and historically—from authors of the Republican and Augustan periods that the student reads. An opportunity, because a student who gets to know Seneca will discover Seneca's unique and influential style in both prose and tragedy, will learn to engage with his portraits of moral experience (from extreme tranquillity to furious passions) against the backdrop of Stoic philosophy, and, by following the ups and downs

of Seneca's career under Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, can learn much about the lives of Romans in the time of the emperors. My goal in this presentation is offer the instructor some strategies for introducing students to Seneca—for helping them to discover how Seneca's style, thought, and biography fit into the broader terrain of Latin literature.

I first introduce two brief passages that illustrate the form and content that distinguish Seneca's writings. I unpack these passages in combination with a brief overview of recent Senecan scholarship and textbooks, identifying some of the most useful primary and secondary resources available for addressing general and specific topics in the classroom. (Many materials are provided in a handout.)

I then make six practical suggestions for framing Seneca in the classroom. These are guided in part by my recent experience of teaching a Seneca course to advanced undergraduates, in conjunction with preparing the *Seneca Reader* in the new Bolchazy-Carducci Latin Readers series. My suggestions, however, are meant to be adaptable to any teaching situation, whether a whole course or only part of a course is devoted to Seneca. The suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive, but each of them offers the instructor options for presenting materials:

(1) Build a Biographic Framework. (There are some useful options for articulating Seneca's relationship to his family, including Seneca's father (Seneca the Elder), mother (Helvia), and nephew (Lucan), and for correlating individual works with the successive stages of Seneca's career within Julio-Claudian history, working with the biographic sketches in Tacitus and Cassius Dio.)

(2) Focus on the Advising Scenario. (There is good potential for "dramatizing" each of Seneca's literary works as an advisor engaging with an advisee (successfully or not) using Stoic methods, and for emphasizing the conceptual common ground between the prose works and the tragedies.)

(3) Read Whole Works. (It is useful to read the "beginning, middle, and end" of works (whether in Latin or through supplementing with English translation), developing awareness of overarching structure and narrative, and of the function of the whole.)

(4) Exploit Controversy. (There are excellent possibilities for showing how Seneca provoked criticism, and for analyzing its function: he registers his opponents' attacks in his own work *On the Happy Life*, and the controversy can be traced from Quintilian through to Petrarch, and beyond.)

(5) Read the *Octavia*. (This anonymous drama portraying Nero's divorce of one wife and marriage to another, written sometime after the death of Nero in the style of a Senecan tragedy, offers rich material for reflecting on the extremes of the Neronian era, including the role played by Seneca both as a statesman and as an author.)

(6) Combine Seneca with Others. (Seneca's versatility makes it instructive to read him alongside one or more of several authors: for example, Cicero, to see how Seneca developed prose style, and Tacitus, who represents a further development beyond Seneca; Virgil and Ovid, to see how Seneca alludes to, but also transforms, Augustan poetry; or Lucan and Petronius, to examine the variety of the "Neronian renaissance.")

These suggestions should help the instructor to incorporate Seneca in a variety of teaching situations, making students' experience of reading this author as rewarding as possible.

5. A Cicero Reader

I must confess that, when the series editor approached me about authoring a Cicero Reader for this new series, I was more than a little skeptical. The amount of original Latin contained in the readers was to be limited to 600 lines of text. I wondered aloud to her how anyone could possibly represent adequately the huge Ciceronian corpus, embracing so many varied types of writing, in a mere 600 lines. And even if it were possible to select a number of passages wisely, effectively, and coherently, where would such a reader find an audience? Even in an intermediate reading class, 600 lines might be too few to fill an entire semester; while a more advanced class would consume the volume in a few weeks. Then there is the inherent problem that Cicero's works (except for selected letters) tend to be fairly long works—wouldn't most teachers want to expose their students to a complete work of Cicero if possible?

She did not flinch at these difficult questions. On the contrary, she explained to me the philosophy upon which the series was envisioned, and suggested some pedagogical situations in which such a selection might be the perfect choice. I was intrigued by our discussion and agreed to think on it for a few days. As I contemplated it further, the possibilities became more and more exciting, and I became more and more enthusiastic about giving it a try. The reader that has resulted will, I hope, provide teachers and students with a number of options as they endeavor to improve their Latin reading skills and learn more about Rome's greatest orator.

One of the most crucial aspects of the reader, in my opinion, is the selection of passages. They are arranged chronologically and drawn from all the sorts of writings that characterize the Ciceronian corpus. With the exception of one or two excerpts, the selections are not those that are most well-known. On the contrary, they endeavor to show Cicero in all his dimensions— orator, statesman, philosopher, man of letters, father and husband—and employing all registers of style, with some special emphasis on a few of his favorite themes, viz., the value of liberal studies and the necessity of a comprehensive, universal education for the orator/statesman; the importance of the state and Cicero's identification with it; and the melancholy situation of the Republic in its waning years.

Given these selections and their themes, the reader can be used effectively in several pedagogical circumstances. For students who are just making the difficult transition from grammar and shorter readings to lengthier passages, several of these selections can be used to practice extended prose reading and to drill points of grammar and syntax. In an intermediate class, the Cicero Reader could be combined with one or more others in the series, to illustrate or emphasize any number of themes. For example, one of Sallust's chief works is dedicated to telling the story of the Catilinarian Conspiracy, in which Cicero was pivotally involved; Caesar, an exact contemporary of Cicero, illustrates a different approach in both politics and style from Cicero; Tacitus, the Empire's foremost historian, displays a terse, energetic style that presents an interesting contrast with Cicero's more usual periodic style. It would also serve as a nice prose

companion to another contemporary's work, the poet Catullus, who was acquainted with Cicero and mentioned him in one of his poems. In a more advanced situation, the selections might serve as a general introduction to Cicero and his writings, in preparation for reading a complete work or longer, extended passages from the Ciceronian corpus. I piloted the reader in precisely this way during the fall of 2009. In a seminar of junior and senior classics majors, we devoted the first two to three weeks to reading these selections, covering all genres and styles, while setting the historical and literary context of first-century BC Rome. The generous annotation and vocabulary aids assisted the students in acclimating themselves to Ciceronian prose, and proved an excellent preparation for subsequently reading the entire *Pro Archia*, most of *De Amicitia*, as well as extended selections from *De Oratore* and the Letters.

These possibilities will be explored and expanded during this presentation.