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A Little Latin Reader

Mary C. English

Georgia Irby
College of William and Mary, glirby@wm.edu

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A LITTLE LATIN READER

MARY C. ENGLISH
MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

GEORGIA L. IRBY
THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY

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Our goal for *A Little Latin Reader* is simple: we want students to read as much authentic Latin as possible in their first few years of study. Unfortunately, many of the Latin textbooks on the market do not emphasize reading extended passages of unadapted Latin at the earliest stages of Latin instruction. As a result, students become experts at “textbook Latin” but find the transition to classical authors difficult and frustrating. In direct response to seeing even our best students struggle at this stage of learning Latin, we have collected over 200 lively passages, 2–10 lines in length, suitable for elementary and intermediate students who are still solidifying their knowledge of Latin grammar and syntax. Students who work their way through the entire reader (or at least a good portion of it) can become acquainted with major Roman authors – Catullus, Caesar, Cicero, Horace, Livy, Martial, Ovid, and wonderful Latin inscriptions that record the first-hand testimony of everyday life in the Roman world, from Pompeii to Roman Britain.

We have arranged the selections in this reader to emphasize the points of Latin grammar and syntax that the individual texts highlight. In very general terms, the passages unfold in order of increasing difficulty; we present sentences that emphasize simple infinitives long before ones that feature subjunctive clauses and gerundives. That said, we do believe that students should be challenged to confront the realities of “authentic Latin” early in their study of the language, and they should be encouraged to tackle unadapted Latin passages even before they have met every form or vocabulary word as part of their formal instruction. We have provided brief introductions for all the passages.
to give students some narrative context as well as extensive running vocabulary notes so that students can read the entries without needing to look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary. We have also identified the meter for all of the poetry selections, and we hope that students and instructors consult Appendix B on Latin meter and scansion so as to appreciate the beauty and intricacy of Latin verse.

The arrangement of topics and the length of the passages are intended to provide the highest degree of flexibility in the classroom: a single selection can provide additional practice in syntax and translation during the first or last few minutes of a class session; a series of selections can provide the foundation of an entire class meeting; selections can be used for practice and/or testing in translating at sight; or the entire reader can be used as the core text of a comprehensive review of Latin grammar. The final sections of the reader feature twelve extended passages (six prose and six poetry) from authors that are typically categorized as “intermediate Latin” (Livy, Petronius, Pliny, Vergil, Sulpicia, and Ovid) and “advanced Latin” (Sallust, Tacitus, Suetonius, Horace, Germanicus, and Statius). These selections can be used as “sneak peaks” or “previews” of work to be done at the next level of Latin, or they can function as an extra challenge for especially talented Latin classes. We have also included an Index of Latin Grammar and Syntax as well as an Index of Roman Culture (Appendices D and E) so that instructors and students can use this book as a resource for whatever classes and assignments they envision (e.g., some instructors may want to use Appendix D to find extra passages that feature ablative constructions; others may want to use Appendix E to create lessons on the Roman family or ancient science).

In formatting the reader, we have used the *Oxford Classical Texts* (OCTs) for the Latin text. To aid students in pronunciation and the identification of forms, we have included macrons for almost all of the passages in the text (Sections 1–46) and in the glossary, which features words appearing in more than one selection. We have followed the governing principle of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and marked all of the vowels that are long by nature. For the intermediate and advanced passages (Sections 47–50), we have omitted the macrons because students at this level should be confident enough in their pronunciation and identification of forms to proceed without them. For the inscriptions, we have retained the texts as they have come down to us. We have expanded all abbreviations, indicated by parentheses (e.g., 6.1), we have supplied text that eroded or has been chiselled off, indicated
by square brackets (e.g., 7.1), and we have provided notes for words rendered according to local pronunciation (e.g., *anc* for *hanc*, 34.4) as well as for all scribal errors in grammar and syntax. The major collections of inscriptions used in the Reader include *CIL* (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*), *ILS* (*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*), and *RIB* (*Roman Inscriptions of Britain*). We hope that students and instructors consult Appendix C on Latin Epigraphy for further information.

Finally, we would like to thank Charles Cavaliere, Shelby Peak, and Marie Flaherty-Jones, our editors at Oxford University Press, who provided many wonderful suggestions for this book. We would also like to thank Adam Hindin, William Hutton, and John Oakley for their advice and support. We owe a debt to our Latin students over the years who inspired us to undertake this project and who field-tested the selections in the reader (a special thanks to Georgia Irby's Intermediate Latin class at William and Mary, Fall 2010, who used an earlier draft of the reader as their primary text and provided us with crucial feedback, especially Tejas Aralere, Reese Kim, Tara Martin, Melissa McCue, Rebecca Obniski, Nicholas Reck, Michael Scuzzarella, Joshua Smith, Jessica Stayton, and Russel Walker). We would also like to thank the following people who reviewed the manuscript in various stages of development and provided invaluable feedback: Peter Anderson, Grand Valley State University; David Christensen, University of Arizona; Jane Crawford, University of Virginia; Victor A. Leuci, Westminster College; and Robert Luginbill, University of Louisville. Most of all, we would like to thank our families: Richard and Patricia Irby, Georgia Irby's parents, for their unceasing support and faith, and John Robinson, her nautical mentor and best friend; and Aditya and Theodore Arjuna Adarkar, loving husband and son of Mary English, and Howard and Mary English, her parents, who supported this project day after day and cheered it on to completion.

*A Little Latin Reader* provides a wonderful introduction to Latin literature and Roman history and culture. Enjoy these passages, read them aloud, and learn about ancient Rome from the Romans themselves!