

# The Cambridge Latin Course

## Second Edition

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### Revolution: virtues and vices

The publishing of the 1st edition of the *CLC* in the early 70s<sup>1</sup> brought a revolution in the teaching of Latin. Text-books have become much more attractive and better produced. Cultural realism and sections on background work have become common features. Continuous stories have replaced sentences as the principal means of practising new linguistic points. None of these elements is unique to the *CLC*, but the Project reacted to a powerful impetus for change and generated the revolution. As John Sharwood Smith said, 'it has transformed our notions of what a Latin course should be, and made obsolete all previous Latin courses.'<sup>2</sup> It has also become a benchmark against which new Latin and Greek school coursebooks can be measured.<sup>3</sup>

From the start, however, doubts were expressed about the *CLC*'s aims. Many of these doubts, of course, were raised by those who were in any case resistant to change. The Project did little to calm the fears of the die-hard traditionalists: indeed in retrospect the pamphleteering tone of the 1st edition Teacher's Handbooks seems almost designed to arouse fears (e.g. 'It is of the utmost importance that *no comment* about the new feature should be given in advance.'<sup>4</sup> The mention there of Chomsky<sup>5</sup> and the linguistic notation (Q=A? quod + Sii QABV)<sup>6</sup> must have raised the hackles of many classroom teachers.<sup>7</sup> The revolution produced a new vocabulary of its own. Away went terms like 'predicative dative'. In came 'paralinguistic', 'morphology' and – most controversially – 'Form C'. It is not difficult to see why the *CLC* spread alarm in some quarters.

Yet the fact remains that most of the aims of the revolutionaries were in principle right. Times had changed. Latin was being taught to a wider range of pupils than before. And, to quote John Sharwood Smith again, 'above all, there was the crisis of comprehensivization which made obsolete many of the traditional assumptions about education, and threatened to eliminate the teaching of Latin in the maintained and voluntary-aided schools unless Latin could acquire a more attractive image.'<sup>8</sup>

Latin's position was no longer unquestioned, even in the independent schools. It had been too easy with the older courses to ignore planning and lesson preparation – vital ingredients in professional teaching. Traditional methods and/or their practitioners were not 'delivering the goods': they were frequently failing to attract, interest and recruit pupils. Too often the much-trumpeted 'rigour' of traditional courses was nothing more than *rigor*

*mortis*. Perhaps the most serious charge against traditional courses was that, by concentrating exclusively on language, they were omitting so much of the content that was interesting, e.g. Pompeii, Lesbia, gladiators, Catiline or Hannibal, who made at most an occasional colourless appearance in a brief translation passage. In the *CLC* Teacher's Handbooks, on the other hand, words like 'interest' and 'motivation' were on almost every page. Traditional courses were excellent at equipping the occasional high-flying scholar with the training to turn in his Oxbridge scholarship composition pieces, but only a very few very able pupils, working for a very long time, developed a really high level of achievement. Though it was controversial at the time, few now, I suspect, would argue with the analysis, 'Some pupils, though probably only a minority, find sufficient interest and motivation in the study of the language itself, but the majority hope to find interest in what the texts say.'<sup>9</sup> The new course was, above all, interesting.

However, even among supporters of the *CLC*, two important doubts were raised as early as 1972. Malcolm Ricketts summarised them:

1. 'The assumption that the learner will gradually acquire a personal competence in grammar by his own unaided efforts has been proved unduly optimistic.'
2. 'Those who are familiar with the course complain of the concentration of new morphology and syntax in Unit III, which is excessively exacting of the pupils and retards the speedy progress to which they have become accustomed.'<sup>10</sup> (This was, of course, the result of problems within the Project Team caused by the production schedule of the draft material in 1968-9.<sup>11</sup> That these problems in Unit III were not solved in the published 1st edition was probably the single most important factor leading to a 2nd edition.)

### The revolutionaries take stock

These and other comments received from teachers led in 1976-7 to a full-scale evaluation exercise involving a questionnaire answered by a total of 377 teachers and to two conferences in 1978 in London and Manchester. In 1980 Robin Griffin was appointed as Revision Editor with the task of reconsidering the whole course and, where appropriate, rewriting. He was on secondment from Manchester Grammar School, full-time to 1984 and then part-time to 1988. The bulk of the revised material was written in Stockport and then circulated to an advisory panel of teachers and others round the country. Additional mater-



ial was written by practising teachers and a number of scholars were called upon for advice. The final version was subjected to rigorous checking by the Project Team in Cambridge before submission to C.U.P. Unit I was published in Summer 1982 and other units have followed at intervals; Unit IVB is expected in Summer 1988. The later units, which required more substantial revision, necessarily took longer to write.

### Aims and principles

The main aims of the Course remain:

1. To help pupils towards reading Latin literature with understanding, interest and enjoyment.
2. To teach them something of the nature, quality and importance of Roman civilisation.

The following principles were retained from the 1st edition:

1. The objective is reading skill not composition.
2. Examples of new language points should come *before* explanations.

To quote the revised Unit I Teacher's Handbook, 'the principles on which the course was designed remain the same, ... except that in the present edition the learner receives fuller explicit comment on the language and is given more practice in manipulating it.'<sup>12</sup> In short, the language gets a higher profile.

### New features: Reading material

1. Units I and II (now split into IIA and IIB) survive largely intact, but shorter.
2. A more even 'gradient' of difficulty is produced. The old Unit III has been divided into Units IIIA, IIIB and IVA. The Stages are shorter. The fiendishly difficult old Stages 29-31 have been greatly simplified and shortened. Different material has been added. A little original Latin is used in Unit IVA, with selections from Martial and Ovid.
3. Unit IVB replaces old Units IV and V and has been completely rewritten, only very small sections of Pliny, Catullus, Ovid and Tacitus surviving the revision. It consists entirely of original or adapted Latin. However, much more help is given to the pupil than in the 1st edition.
4. The length of reading material has been shortened (from 5410 to 4874 lines). However, Units IVA and IVB are now integral parts of the course, instead of in practice being regarded by teachers as optional.<sup>13</sup> It is therefore increasingly necessary to follow the new Handbook's advice that 'it is essential to spread ... omissions fairly evenly over the course as a whole,'<sup>14</sup> rather than losing whole Stages later on, a practice particularly prevalent among users of the 1st edition.<sup>15</sup>
5. There has been some simplification, e.g. of stories where too many difficulties coincided, especially on the introduction of a new linguistic feature. Some stories have been subdivided. Line numbers are included and macrons added.
6. Two C60 cassettes replace the old reel-to-reel tapes.<sup>17</sup>

2. Language notes in the text are more plentiful, easier to understand and contain more examples. Full summaries and additional examples are given in the Language Information Pamphlets (Language Information Sections in Units IVA and IVB).

3. Noun paradigms revert to 'Kennedy' names and order (genitive before dative) and are presented vertically rather than horizontally.<sup>17</sup>

4. Many language points are properly covered, instead of being left to the pupils to pick up as best they can, as was previously the case, for example, with the endings and uses of the subjunctive.

5. Several features are introduced progressively instead of all in one go. For example, participles occupy three stages, excluding the ablative absolute, indirect statement four.

6. There is a great increase in the number of exercises, especially later in the course, and more variety, including some more demanding types of manipulation, e.g. actives to passives and multiple-choice English into Latin. A Project working party is engaged on the devising of exercises using the computer.

### Vocabulary

1. The total vocabulary has been reduced by 17½% from 3828 words (Units I-V) to 3159 (new Units I-IVB).
2. A target of 1200 words was picked to form the basis of the O-level (and now the GCSE) vocabulary.<sup>18</sup> These appear in checklists at the end of each Stage and are asterisked in the Language Information. As a basic rule of thumb, a word appears in the checklist of the Stage where it makes its third appearance, but some words that occur only once or twice (e.g. *metuere*, *sagitta*) have been added and some occurring more than three times (e.g. *murmillo*, *polyspaston*) omitted.
3. From Unit IIIA onwards, nouns, verbs and adjectives are listed in the traditional way in Language Information and checklists, though genders are omitted in the checklists.

### Background, Art Work, Filmstrips

1. The term 'paralinguistic' disappears.
2. Much of the background has been rewritten and several new subjects are covered, for example *recitationes* and chariot-racing. Cross-references to the stories are made wherever possible.
3. Abstract and difficult vocabulary has been excised, especially in the earlier Units (e.g. 'renunciation of the good'<sup>19</sup>).
4. Some minor amendments have been made to artwork in earlier Units (e.g. the slave in Stage 13 no longer stabs himself in the back with a pickaxe) and there is a major expansion in later Units of line drawings, maps and photos.
5. Four filmstrips replace the slides: the first three are almost entirely a selection from existing frames;<sup>20</sup> the fourth will consist of completely new material.



but as a storehouse of suggestions and ideas on how to teach the Course. This represents, I believe, a major shift by the Project in its view of the rôle of the Handbooks.

2. The design remains closely based on individual stories and language notes, with extra information on the characters and background for each Stage. New linguistic and vocabulary synopses and attainment tests appear at the back.

### The 2nd edition in practice

How successful has the 2nd edition been?

Parental reaction to the 1st edition always started favourably and then tended to tail off, even where pupils were good at the language. Comments from parents like 'much more interesting than the Latin I did at school' turned into 'He used to like Latin but now he doesn't seem to understand what's going on'. The change was inevitable in view of the unsatisfactory presentation of grammar and vocabulary and the difficulty of Unit III. This decline has now been checked and Latin seems generally to remain favourably regarded by pupils and parents throughout the course.

At Manchester Grammar School we moved over from the 1st to the 2nd edition as quickly as we could. The first group to be brought up entirely on the 2nd edition, but using draft versions of the later Units, is now in the first-year sixth. As it happens, this generation was also the first not to have had to do Latin as a compulsory subject to O-Level, but to have had a free choice of seven out of twelve or thirteen subjects at the end of the fourth year, by which time they had done four years of Latin on a not over-generous time allocation and reached the end of Unit IVB. Two-thirds chose Latin as one of their subjects and this proportion was maintained in the following year. Sixth form numbers are also the highest for many years.

O-level grades in 1987, when the exam was for the first time taken by those who had been taught entirely on the 2nd edition, showed on average a slight rise. The results are not strictly comparable with those of 1st edition pupils, of course, since the 1987 candidates, unlike their predecessors, had chosen the subject and had not been conscripted. On the other hand, we had switched to a new, and in our view harder, Mode 2 exam. Whatever the results may show, the general impression is that both motivation and achievement were very much improved and that, although the text-book is by no means the only reason for this, it played a significant part. No longer could faults in the text-book be blamed for pupils' misunderstandings; they could see what they were supposed to know and everyone could work towards achieving this goal. Much of the dissatisfaction felt by teachers has disappeared too, except perhaps among the English-to-Latin enthusiasts. Too much time under the old dispensation was spent on producing exercises, work sheets, vocabulary lists and even grammatical tables. This is now freed for planning and lesson preparation, the real professional tasks which the Project was preaching in its 1st edition Handbooks that teachers should do, but hindering them from carrying out by leaving to them so many of the functions ordinarily performed by the textbook.

In the classroom there are several differences observable. I spend less time now reading solidly and much more on explicit language work, using the language notes and Language Information, rather than home-made worksheets and off-the-cuff explanations. Reading passages can be covered much more quickly and there is less sheer guesswork by pupils than there was. There is more variety now: background and visual material can be used throughout the course. But the quantity of material and wide range of possible teaching methods create a difficulty over the length of time needed to cover the course. The temptation to read every story is hard to resist; I usually get round this by translating the odd passage myself, with the pupils following the Latin and translating just the occasional phrase containing a new construction or important piece of vocabulary. Overall the gradient is much more comfortable and there do not seem to be any stages where by common consent the climb becomes a scramble up a sheer rock face. But since in the 1st edition one tended to miss such stages out, the effect has been, again, to lengthen the course. Units IVA and IVB are excellent in content and as an introduction to language points. However, they are much less flexible than the old Unit IV, where one could pick and choose which pamphlets to use. We have found it necessary to omit a number of passages from Unit IVB, but it has to be admitted that this is harder to do than it was with old Unit IV. Overall planning is absolutely essential if one is to avoid getting behind in earlier units and prevent a panicky rush in the pre-GCSE year. Prudent cuts are as essential in Unit I as they are in Unit IVB.

It is also necessary to plan hard for revision. There is much useful material in the Language Information, but it is tempting not to use it in one's eagerness to push on with reading. Pronouns are a prime example. One can very easily assume that pupils have understood them, until a fourth year pupil asks what *hunc* means. This haziness, I believe, is not because the Course omits explanation, but because it is easy for teachers to underuse the Language Information, or even not buy the pamphlets at all.<sup>21</sup>

Use of the Handbooks is even more essential than before. The Project seems here to respect the teacher much more and to give him or her ideas rather than instructions. Almost all the advice is based on classroom experience. Malcolm Ricketts commented of the 1st edition Handbooks that 'they should, I think, be consulted less and less frequently as the teacher becomes familiar with the course; too great a reliance on the handbook retards rapid progress in the reading and restricts the freedom of the teacher in his individual approach to the subject.'<sup>22</sup> This is not true of the 2nd edition. I find the handbooks increasingly valuable as time goes on: there is always a danger that the teacher may become too familiar with the course and get into a rut; the handbooks often come up with some new idea to vary the work and make planning and teaching it more interesting. However, it is true that one wants to dip into the handbooks rather than read them from cover to cover.

Much of the above is inevitably anecdotal and until Unit IVB has been published and used, we shall not be ready for another evaluation exercise like that of 1976-7. But the



omens are good, as are the figures of sales of the Course.

### Sales

Sales of the 2nd edition Unit I should top 100,000 by early 1988. The one-volume edition has proved much more popular than pamphlets, production of which is now being phased out. Sales of all the Units have been much higher and have remained high for longer after publication than everyone expected. The earlier Units not surprisingly achieve higher sales – the end of Unit IIB coincides for many pupils with the GCSE choice at the end of the third year. Nevertheless, Unit IVA has been selling encouragingly. One factor is the popularity of the North American version of the course, which now accounts for about 40% of sales. But in view of the insecure position of Latin in British schools, the continuing high level of British sales has been astounding. It now seems likely that the *CLC* is the most widely-used Latin text-book in the U.K. The 'revolution' has taken root.<sup>23</sup>

### The future: forthcoming publications

Unit IVB (with integral Language Information section) is expected to be published in Summer 1988. Consideration is also being given to the possible publication of a 'Cambridge Latin Grammar', designed for pupils in the GCSE year or the early stages of an A-Level course before the transition is made to a more advanced reference grammar. The exact nature and content of the Grammar, however, will depend on the future shape of the *CLC* GCSE exams.

The North American Edition of Unit I has just been published and work is proceeding on later Units. The text is almost exactly the same as the 2nd edition, but there are more grammatical tables and some of the explanations and examples are noticeably American ('Tomorrow I'll hit three homers.'). The book is lavishly produced, with hard covers and extensive use of colour. An interesting innovation is the 'Word Search' etymological exercises after each vocabulary checklist. It is to be hoped that the Project will convert into slides many of the book's excellent colour photographs, e.g. the picture of the front door of the House of Caecilius.

### The future: the GCSE year

An important priority in my view must be to get the final GCSE year right. The two *CLC* GCSE exams presently available are set by MEG and NEA. MEG's exam is really an adapted version of the SUJB O-Level, with three shorter set texts (Pliny, Libellus/Catullus, Virgil/Tacitus), an unseen/comprehension and background questions on topics from Units IIIA-IVA. The NEA's exam has two set texts (using old Unit V *Dido et Aeneas* and *Nero et Agrippina*), an unseen/comprehension and background questions on prescribed topics from Units I-IIB. An interesting and pleasing innovation here is that the whole text of *Dido et Aeneas* with vocabulary is available to candidates in the exam room, giving the opportunity of asking more searching and wideranging questions.

In my opinion neither exam can survive very long in its present form. The MEG's exam has changed very little

from the old SUJB O-Level, which was always open to the objections that the set-text questions could be answered by learning a translation by rote and that the unseen/comprehension was inadequate as a measure of linguistic competence. The NEA's exam will have to change when supplies of old Unit V run out; the board has already stated that the set-texts will change from 1991. In both exams the background section is based principally on the English material at the ends of the stages and not on the Latin stories. It is noteworthy that Robin Griffin questioned this as early as 1979 and restated the *CLC*'s conviction 'that the study of the Latin language and the study of Roman civilisation are indissolubly wedded, so that the cultural background should be studied primarily through the Latin stories and only secondarily through the peripheral paralinguistic material.'<sup>24</sup>

Two further problems with the present GCSE course remain. Firstly, the Cambridge Latin Texts series is seriously deficient from the pupil's point of view, with no introduction or notes. This inevitably tends to encourage the teacher to provide dictated or photocopied notes/translations which the pupils regard as the official 'crib'. Like *The Intellectual Revolution* and *A World of Heroes*, where however the vocabulary is much more systematically dealt with, the Cambridge Latin Texts are useful for quick reading with the first-year sixth, but they are not suitable for GCSE as they stand.<sup>25</sup> There are, however, at present no plans to revise them.

Secondly, the GCSE course as it stands, even with the shorter set-texts, is still too long. The new Unit I Handbook suggests that 'two or three lessons a week are not enough; four should be the minimum.' It goes on to assume a four year course:

Year one: Units I, IIA and IIB

Year two: Units IIIA and IIIB

Year three: The rest of the course (i.e. Units IVA and IVB)

Year four: The (GCSE) syllabus.

'A three year course,' it continues, 'would similarly devote the final year to the external examination syllabus, but begin Unit IIIA well before the end of the first year.... Two-year courses to (GCSE) depend so much on a school's individual circumstances that no general recommendation can be made. It can be said, however, that without a very generous time allowance, such a course should not even be attempted.'<sup>26</sup> Yet many teachers will not have available a minimum of four periods a week for three or four years.

In his brief but important *Causidicus* article,<sup>27</sup> Peter Jones put the case for making the whole course book (in this case *CLC* Units I-IVB) – or selected stages of it – the set text, thus integrating language, literature and background and shortening the course. This needs very serious consideration in view of the introduction of the National Curriculum, which at the time of writing (January 1988) seems likely to make two-year courses and/or courses on reduced time allocations increasingly common. It might perhaps be possible for those who have done, say, Units I-IIB only, to take GCSE but not to have the full range of grades available to them. A less radical possibility would



be to amend the present GCSE exams by keeping one separate set book (say, Virgil) but replacing the other by an integral set-text taken from Unit IVB, though this shortens the course less and means using the unsatisfactory unrevised Cambridge Latin Texts. Another consideration is the possibility of placing more emphasis on course work and less on set texts. Whatever the final outcome, it is clear that GCSE Latin requires substantial rethinking as a matter of urgency.

### Conclusion: Is the CLC dangerously revolutionary?

John Sharwood Smith said of the 1st edition, 'Regretfully it must be admitted that if the Cambridge Latin Course were an aeroplane it would by now have fallen out of the sky.'<sup>28</sup> No Classics teacher in the 1980s can afford the luxury of a text-book that will let him down. If he ditches over the ocean, the 'sharks' in other departments are waiting to gobble up his pupils and his period allocation. So does the 2nd edition 'fly'?

My belief is that it does. Robin Griffin's dictum about teaching methods, 'the only criterion is the pragmatic one, 'If it works, it's good'',<sup>29</sup> should hearten those who believed that the 1st edition was all theory and very little practice. No Latin course can be easy – the language is simply too challenging – but the CLC has made the journey pleasant and the 2nd edition has rendered the gradient reasonably even. Pupils will not flounder around, as they did in the past.

Of course, no course is perfect,<sup>30</sup> but I do feel when I look at the alternatives that I am moving back to a strange, pre-revolutionary era. The CLC 2nd edition is the Latin course for the 1980s and early 90s.<sup>31</sup>

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### NOTES:

- 1 Dates: Unit I Oct. 1970, Unit II Dec. 1970, Unit III Jul. 1972, Unit IV Feb. 1973, Unit V Oct. 1974 (texts only; for full list see C. Greig and W. A. Reid 'Proposals and Possibilities in Curriculum Development: a Study of the Cambridge School Classics Project' *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 1978 vol. 10, no. 4, 329-348).
- 2 J. Sharwood Smith *On Teaching Classics* (RKP 1977) p. 39.
- 3 The debt is acknowledged in *Athenaze*, M. G. Balme (1979) p. iii-iv. See also *Reading Greek*, J.A.C.T. (C.U.P. 1978) p. xiii. *The Oxford Latin Course*, Maurice Balme and James Morwood (O.U.P. 1987), claims (back cover) to 'combine the best features of both modern and traditional methods of Latin teaching'.
- 4 Unit I Teacher's Handbook p. 12 (their italics): this becomes in the 2nd edition: 'No comment about the new feature should be made in advance.'
- 5 p 113
- 6 for details see 1st ed. Unit I Teacher's Handbook pp. 41-3.

- 7 For a discussion of Chomsky and the linguistic basis of the CLC, see T. R. A. Reader 'The CLC: linguistic principles and course design' *Hesperiam* 1 (1978) 56-73.
  - 8 *op. cit.* p. 34.
  - 9 1st ed. Unit I Teacher's Handbook p.2.
  - 10 *Didaskalos* vol. 4 no. 1 (1972) p. 168.
  - 11 For a fascinating insider's view of the 'scandal', see C. Greig and W. A. Reid *op. cit.* It has to be admitted that the 2nd edition did not use some of the lessons learnt from the 1st. The production schedule has been frustratingly slow, partly because of lack of manpower (especially in view of extra pressure to produce the North American 3rd edition) and partly because of an understandable desire on the part of all those involved to 'get it right this time'.
  - 12 p. 94.
  - 13 The 1976-7 evaluation exercise showed the following percentages of pupils reading part or all of each pamphlet in Units IV and V:
- |                       |     |  |  |
|-----------------------|-----|--|--|
| Bithynia              | 84% |  |  |
| odi et amo            | 79% |  |  |
| domi                  | 76% |  |  |
| mira arte             | 50% |  |  |
| vivite mortales moneo | 47% |  |  |
| Dido et Aeneas        | 20% |  |  |
| Nero et Agrippina     | 18% |  |  |
- 14 2nd ed. Unit I Teacher's Handbook p.10.
  - 15 The 1976-7 evaluation exercise asked teachers 'Do you intentionally omit any of the material in Units I-III, whether parts of stages of whole stages?'
- |                         | none | parts of stages | whole stages |
|-------------------------|------|-----------------|--------------|
| Unit I                  | 89%  | 10%             | 1%           |
| Unit II                 | 84%  | 15%             | 1%           |
| Unit III (Stages 21-25) | 72%  | 26%             | 2%           |
| Unit III (Stages 26-31) | 46%  | 30%             | 24%          |
- 16 The 1976-7 evaluation exercise revealed that 73% of teachers possessed the tape of Unit I, 69% Unit II, 62% Unit III. It was less clear how often they were used. The new cassettes are reviewed by John Hazel in *JACT Review* 2/2 (Autumn 1987) 38.
  - 17 Because the Americans use a different order, noun paradigms appear only in the Language Information (where there is a separate American edition) and not in the text.
  - 18 cf. traditional courses, which aimed at an 'active vocabulary of 1500-2000 words by O-Level and a recognition vocabulary of over 2000. Latin courses nowadays work to much greater timetable constraints, however.
  - 19 Stage 19 p. 16.
  - 20 See further my review of *Cambridge Classical Filmstrip 3: Rome* in *JACT Bulletin* 73 (Spring 1987) 12-13.
  - 21 C.U.P.'s sales figures for Language Information Pamphlets were initially about two-thirds to three-quarters of those of the texts, where they are published separately, although the gap has narrowed in recent years.
  - 22 *op. cit.* 170.
  - 23 I am indebted to C.U.P. for making available details of the sales figures.
  - 24 *Hesperiam* 2 (1979) 56, section 11.
  - 25 The 1976-7 evaluation exercise showed that only 14% of teachers regarded them as 'entirely satisfactory'. In an unguided 'any comments' section about half (26 out of 55) of those replying mentioned lack of notes.
  - 26 2nd ed. Unit I Teacher's Handbook, p. 9.
  - 27 *JACT Review* 1 (Autumn 1984) 10.
  - 28 *op. cit.* 39.
  - 29 *Hesperiam* 2 (1979) 46.
  - 30 I particularly regret the absence of the ablative from the Unit IIIA L.I.P., because I like to get pupils to learn paradigms in the traditional fashion by then. The Revision Editor (wrongly, in my view) regards this as unnecessary and, except for a minority of pupils, unhelpful.
  - 31 I am indebted to Robin Griffin for a very great deal of help with this article. I have given some assistance with the preparation of the 2nd edition, but have written here entirely in a personal capacity.



# The Revised Edition of *Ecce Romani*

Marion Baldock

*Ecce Romani*, the Latin Reading Course produced by the Scottish Classics Group, was first published during 1971 and 1972. It then comprised six pupil's books, two reference books and teacher's handbooks. The first volume of the revised edition was produced in 1982 and the new series was completed in 1986. This second edition has five pupil's books (all somewhat longer than their original counterparts), each with an accompanying book of teacher's notes, plus two student's companions and a Roman Studies handbook.

The *Ecce Romani* course has always appealed to those who want a reading based Latin course but who prefer to deal with grammar and constructions in a slightly more formal manner than that of the *Cambridge Latin Course*. On taking up a new post in 1977 I was presented with a *fait accompli*, a pristine set of *Ecce Romani* recently purchased by my predecessor after his unsuccessful transition from the *Approach to Latin* to the *Cambridge Latin Course*. This was my first experience of using *Ecce Romani* but I have remained faithful to the course ever since, gradually phasing in the new edition from 1984. I have found its combination of extended reading passages, grammatical exposition and exercises, interspersed with descriptions of Roman life and customs, an excellent foundation on which to base my Latin teaching. I have used it successfully with both able and rather less able pupils. Two years of Latin, or Latin with Roman Studies, is compulsory at my school and the *Ecce Romani* course makes this a satisfying and enriching experience even for those with limited linguistic aptitude.

The series follows the adventures of a Roman family of senatorial rank c. A.D. 80 as they move from their country house to Rome. The background material arises naturally from the reading passages and each supports the other well. Book 1 deals with the Roman family, housing and slavery; Book 2 tackles travel, the city of Rome and chariot racing; Book 3 focusses on dinner parties and education; Book 4 includes the baths, more about the Circus, the Colosseum, gladiators, coming of age, weddings and funerals; Book 5 explains the army and political system.

Grammatical and syntactical points are covered systematically, being introduced in a reading passage, reinforced by explanation and examples and practised by means of a variety of types of exercises. In Book 1 the first four chapters are written solely in the third person singular and plural but by the end of the eighth chapter all the person endings have been encountered and a table is presented showing the paradigm of the present tense of *parare*. Similarly, case endings and uses are gradually introduced and explained. The content of the new series can be summarised as: Book 1 – present and imperfect active tenses of verbs; nominative, accusative, genitive and

ablative cases of nouns first to third declensions; Book 2 – perfect, future and pluperfect active tenses of verbs, adjectives; dative case; nouns of fourth and fifth declensions; *hic* and *ille*; Book 3 – relative pronoun; passive voice; participles; comparison of adjectives and adverbs; dependent verbs; Book 4 – subjunctive mood; more participles; infinitives; indirect statement; indirect question; result clauses; indirect command; purpose clauses; Book 5 – gerunds and gerundives; predicative dative; impersonal verbs; conditionals.

The greatest changes are to be found in Books 4 and 5 of the second edition. Gone are the eight pages of revision stories, some of which were rather too easy and which taken en masse were somewhat indigestible. No longer are there endless chapters in which at the slightest pretext Cornelius, Sextus, Marcus, Eucleides or Cornelia utters the dreaded phrase: '*ego vobis fabulam narrabo..*' or the question '*cur non fabulam nobis narras?*' I am in favour of stories about the life and achievements of the Romans but found this method of introducing them in the old version rather clumsy and unsubtle. (Both the phrases quoted above elicited groans from even the most enthusiastic Latin students at the second or third encounter!) The new Book 4 is really an abridged version of the earlier Books 4 and 5. The scenes from Plautus' *Rudens*, which always seemed rather stilted in class, have been removed, as has all the background information about the Roman theatre. I appreciate the reasons for the latter's removal but regret its loss. The rather limp fables about the deer's legs and the lion and the mouse have mercifully failed to gain a place in the revised edition, but the story of the werewolf is sadly missed. In the first edition Book 4 ended with the story of Horatius Cocles and some adapted extracts from Livy's account of the Punic Wars, thus immersing the students in military vocabulary for the first time in the course. This transition from everyday family life to military matters always seemed rather uneasy, especially as the old Book 5 then went straight back to an account of uncle Titus' visit to the baths. The new version omits the military material at this point.

The problem with the new Book 4 is that constructions are introduced at rather an alarming pace and teachers may feel the need to interpose extra exercises and reading as reinforcement. In the old version the system of introducing a grammatical point in a story and then explaining it occasionally broke down. These lapses have not been entirely remedied in the new version, notably in the case of indirect questions. Indirect questions are cursorily dealt with on p. 50 of the new Book 4; seeking to develop the point further I asked my pupils to turn back to the preceding story and see how many examples of indirect questions they could find. The answer was one! Nonetheless



less the new Book 4 retains the best of the old Books 4 and 5 and proves to be a more coherent and satisfying volume.

The revision becomes even more radical in the case of the old Book 6 and the new Book 5. Somehow I was never very inspired by the old Book 6. Pupils always enjoyed the long introductory story – 'The King's Treasure' – a rather incredible tale but one with enough gore and suspense to maintain the reader's interest and which provided excellent practice in newly learnt constructions. After that Book 6 was rather a struggle, the reading passages seemed to become shorter and the grammar notes longer. Notes on topics such as 'People at Work' (nouns ending in -tor and -sor), 'Word Families' and 'Prefixes' all seemed rather late and superfluous at this stage. Consequently I tended to concentrate on reading set texts and practising unseen translations and comprehensions from other books. The revised Book 5 is completely different, except for our old friend 'The King's Treasure' at the beginning. The course team have now introduced authentic Latin, with copious notes opposite each page of the text as well as vocabulary at the foot.

Their selection is a wide and interesting one, substantial extracts from: Caesar, *Gallic Wars*; Cicero, *In Verrem*, *In Catilinam* and *Pro Milone*; Pliny, *Letters*; Livy, Books XXI and XXII; finally, passages from Medieval Latin authors and from the *Vulgate*. This is the sort of book which one might dip into with any class of pupils of GCSE standard Latin, regardless of the course pursued beforehand. The transition to military vocabulary is still a little awkward for those who have only read the earlier Ecce Romani books, but it is made for a purpose, to read Caesar, and once made there is no regression to synthetic Latin stories of everyday life. Moreover, the condensing of the old Books 4 and 5 means that one embarks upon the new Book 5 earlier in the course and with time to savour it to the full.

A criticism of the old series was the rather childish tone of the earlier books and its slightly '*quam stultae sunt omnes puellae*' attitude (although that line is unfortunately retained even in the new version of book 2). As I use the course with 12-16 year old girls I am delighted that an effort had been made to remedy these shortcomings in the second edition. One has only to look at the illustrations in Book 1 to see that the children are now shown as somewhat older and likewise their adventures in the first chapters are not quite so ridiculous. The '*puellae timidae*' of chapter 2 who ran away from cows have been excised and Cornelia has become the heroine of the first story in Book 2 'Arrival at the Inn'. A comparison of the two versions reveals:

(1st edition)  
*"timet Cornelia et exclamat 'hi canes me mordere volunt, in caupona pernoctare nolo. domum redire volo.' in via stat immobilis et lacrimat."*

(2nd edition)  
*statim fugit Sextus, stat immobilis Marcus. Aurelia perterrita exclamat. Cornelius ipse nihil facit. Cornelia tamen non fugit sed ad canes manum extendit.*

*'ecce, Marcel!' inquit. 'hi canes latrant modo. nullum est periculum. ecce, Sexte! caudam movent.'*

Similarly, in the 'Rainy Day' story, old Book 5, new

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Book 4, Cornelia no longer says: "*pupam meam amo. puto pupam esse pulcherrimam*" and weeps when Sextus snatches it from her. The doll in the new version is a present for the daughter of the slave Davus. Most satisfying of all for female students is that Cornelia 'gets her man' in chapter 53, rather than ending up as Valerius' disgruntled bridesmaid! The story now serves as reinforcement of the cultural point about the abrupt transformation of a Roman girl from child to wife, often to wife of an older man whom she may have scarcely met.

The new series of *Ecce Romani* is an improvement on the earlier version. The new vocabulary lists at the back of each volume are a great help to the pupils and the

additional exercises, both in the pupil's books and in the expanded teacher's notes, will be welcome to teachers. The books are sturdy and well presented, with clear type and attractive illustrations. The wealth of primary sources in the section on civilisation topics and the suggestions in the *Roman Studies* handbook also make the series a valuable resource for those teaching non-linguistic Roman Civilisation. The skilful integration of the social and historical material with the language study results in an ideal course for those teaching Latin for GCSE.

MARION BALDOCK

Burgess Hill School for Girls

## The Oxford Latin Course

R. G. Allibone

This is certainly the course for anyone who requires a fresh approach and attractive presentation, yet still wishes to preserve the traditional values of grammatical analysis and attention to detail, so noticeably absent from the courses of the last decade. The content and format are exciting and stimulating for teacher and pupil alike. Good, interesting pieces of narrative for translation, which are rarely childish as in the early '*Ecce Romani*' books, are helped considerably by having the less familiar vocabulary listed in the right-hand margin alongside the text. More common vocabulary for thorough learning is introduced systematically and very clearly presented with a clever form of visual contrast, whilst at the end of the books, in addition to general vocabularies, there is a very clear summary of grammar.

The course is divided into 3 parts, although at the time of writing Part III has not been published. At Tonbridge, where we draw boys from a wide range of prep. schools, brought up on a variety of courses, we have been using Parts I and II at different levels in 8 sets since September, and it has met with almost unanimous approval. The course aims to provide an introduction to the language, culture, and literature of the Romans. Not only does it succeed in this, but it also provides a wealth of insights into the history and culture of Greece. The illustrations are copious, with outstanding photographs and maps, and

the only features that have aroused adverse comment have been the poor quality of drawing in the many cartoons which are employed (quite effectively) to introduce and reinforce vocabulary and inflections, and the fact that the general vocabularies at the back are not fully comprehensive.

Part I and Part II each consist of 20 chapters, taking the form of a narrative which tells the story of the life of Horace, known throughout as Quintus. Part I (largely fictional) covers his boyhood in Venusia and schooling in Rome, with digressions into stories from the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*. Part II is based increasingly on historical sources and covers the rest of Horace's life – his time in Greece as student and soldier, his return to Italy, his work as a clerk in the treasury, his friendship with Virgil and Maecenas, his life on the Sabine farm, and his relations with Augustus.

Following the regular pieces for full translation in each chapter, there is a variety of lively exercises dealing with word-building, sentence-completion, derivations, comprehension, and straightforward sentences for translation into Latin. In addition, at the end of every chapter generous space is given to background material, with simplified but informative summaries on a whole list of topics of Roman and Greek life. At the start of Part II, for example, there is an astonishingly compact yet complete



summary of Greek history 'From Agamemnon to Alexander' encompassed in less than 5 pages which include five large and clear illustrations. The next chapter has  $2\frac{1}{2}$  pages devoted to Athens, and contains excellent photographs of 3 different temples and a scene from the Parthenon frieze. Each of these topics has questions appended, of various degrees of sophistication, which are ideal in giving variety and stimulus to the imagination. I particularly enjoyed the lively debate entered into by my set, prompted by the question 'If you had lived in Roman times, would you have been a Stoic or an Epicurean?' at the end of chapter 3.

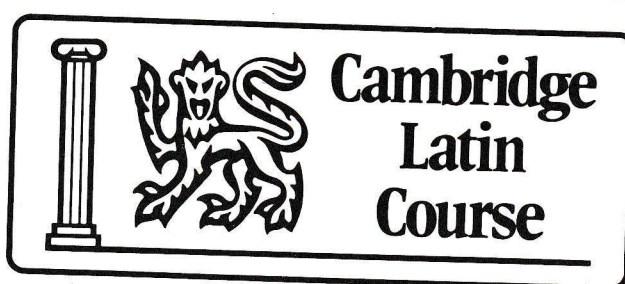
Those familiar with Maurice Balme's earlier achievements such as 'Aestimanda' and 'Athenaze' will not be surprised by the quality of original thinking and the depth of scholarship underlying the course. The wide range of material covered is impressive, and innovations in the presentation of the language work are challenging and welcome. I approve of the omission of the Supine in Part I from the principal parts to be learned; in Part II, where the concept of the passive is introduced, the fourth part of each verb is given as the perfect participle for transitive verbs and the future participle (marked with an asterisk) for intransitive verbs. I must, however, admit that the consequent deprivation of many an English derivative has proved infuriating to more than one of my colleagues! Any course is bound to contain irritants, particularly for those of us who have been going our own ways for more than a quarter of a century; the astounding feature of this course is that there are so few. There is the apparent intention in sentence 3 on p. 131 (Pt. I) that 'rogo' should be used with

an infinitive, and I bridled at the use of 'impero' with the infinitive on p. 173 (Pt. I); the printer and proof-reader had obviously grown sleepy on the previous page, allowing a stray semi-colon to make nonsense of sentence 4, but unlike so much in modern printing, such examples are rare. Indeed, exceptional care seems to have gone into the presentation of these volumes.

The first two parts cover virtually all the GCSE prescription for Latin apart from the set books, the only major points of grammar left to Part III being conditional clauses with the subjunctive, gerunds and gerundives, and the relative with the subjunctive. They also contain, both in the Latin story and in those splendid background sections, much useful material for anyone using the GCSE Civilisation syllabuses. To accompany the course there is a very useful but expensive Teacher's Book, which clearly sets out the aims of the authors, and provides a running commentary on each chapter, with much helpful advice on method. In addition, full details of the excellent illustrations and the many recommendations for wider reading make it a valuable aid for anyone with the time to follow up the digressions.

I look forward very much to the coming of Part III which we are told consists of extracts from authors of the late Republican and Augustan periods, and I suspect that it will not be long before at least one examining board is prescribing set texts from that selection.

R. G. ALLIBONE  
Tonbridge School



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# Sero Sed Serie: Reading Latin

Lorna Kellett

Some time ago, even before GERBIL, TVEI and MSC, a fellow teacher, whose name should be Cassandra, mentioned to me his great concern that within a few years Latin language teaching might exist only in the post-16 and adult sectors of education. Certainly in many parts of the country in the maintained sector that prophecy is rapidly becoming a reality. Of course there are, and hopefully always will be, schools where Classics at all levels flourishes, but the fact has to be faced that in the present climate many schools and local authorities are no longer able or willing to support the relatively small and uneconomic sets which have always been necessary for the survival of Latin and other minority subjects. Moreover a recent DES publication states, 'The study of a second foreign language pre-16 will be limited, given the pressures on the curriculum and the need to concentrate on improving the uptake of a first [modern] foreign language.'<sup>1</sup>

However all is not entirely doom and gloom. Reorganisation of post-16 education and the increasing numbers of tertiary and sixth form colleges plus the growth in numbers of those taking A level Classical Civilisation and Ancient History, have opened a new market. Indeed in one sixth form college 10% of all students are taking classical subjects, including languages, at all levels from general studies to GCSE to A and AS level. In addition there is a growing number of adult students, as evidenced by the attendance at weekend and summer schools and a variety of evening classes nationwide. These students are keen to return to and develop the Latin they learnt at school, often many years ago, or to learn the language they have not previously had the opportunity to study. All of them, whether of sixth form age or older, make a positive decision to learn Latin, often in conditions of considerable difficulty; they have a refreshing enthusiasm and motivation sometimes lacking in school pupils, together with a mature approach to learning which enables them to go faster and further than younger students.

Until 1986 there was readily available no course specifically designed for the needs of these particular students. The advent of *Reading Latin*<sup>2</sup> has provided that course book, aimed at mature beginners in the sixth form, universities and adult education who want to learn classical or medieval Latin. The course consists of two volumes, Text; and Grammar, Vocabulary and Exercises (GVE).

The Text is continuous Latin from the outset. Part I is based on Plautus, obviously greatly adapted but keeping closely to the spirit of the original; Part II moves on to the demise of the Roman Republic, concentrating on Verres (Cicero) and Catiline (Sallust), using progressively less adapted Latin. The final section, Poetry and Politics, has extracts from Catullus, Cicero's correspondence with

Caelius, Caesar (*de Bello Civili*) and finally short selections from Lucretius, Vergil, Horace and Ovid. All of this is accompanied by a helpful commentary and excellent illustrations, setting the literature in its social, historical and cultural context, so that the student finishes the course not only with the experience of having read and understood unadapted Latin of many styles and genres, but with an appreciation of the society and culture in which that literature was written and its links with later literature and language.

The large and somewhat unwieldy GVE which accompanies the text has full and complex explanations of all linguistic features, a total vocabulary, learning vocabularies for each section, many exercises of various types, and a reference grammar (more concise and much clearer than Kennedy) as well as *Deliciae Latinae* and an appendix on the Latin language and the development of Romance languages.

The authors suggest that *Reading Latin* should be treated as a two-year course on a time-table of three to four hours a week. On that basis, or for determined and enthusiastic students in a hurry and with only one year available, it is possible to cope with the demands certainly of GCSE at the end of the course. More importantly *Reading Latin* provides a solid linguistic foundation which enables students to read full texts fluently and with understanding and appreciation.

The text is divided into fairly short sections each introducing several new grammatical points. The authors' suggested method works well – first with the help of a teacher and/or the section vocabulary (listed alphabetically in GVE) the student should read and translate the text, with the teacher guiding the student to formulate the grammar set to be learnt for that section. Next the student *must* learn by heart the learning vocabulary for that section. 'The extent of pupils' vocabulary is one of the main factors determining success ... in each aspect of language.'<sup>3</sup> Finally the grammar set for the section should be reviewed and learnt thoroughly and some of the exercises completed. There are very many varied exercises in each section, including some English into Latin, and the authors stress that these should be regarded as a pool out of which teachers/students should select what is most helpful. It is to be hoped that the possibility of an answer book or computer programme for the exercises will soon become a reality so that students learning on their own or with infrequent teacher help (for whom this course is already almost ideal) will be able themselves to monitor their progress.

To those brought up entirely on eg the *Cambridge Latin Course*, *Reading Latin* might seem almost reactionary in its stress on formal grammar, both in terminology (explained



in a glossary at the beginning of GVE) and in its insistence from the outset on the necessity of learning by heart (eg 'The different forms of the cases are of absolutely vital importance in Latin and must be learned by heart until you know them to perfection' Page 10 GVE) The rate of input of linguistic points is very rapid; Section IA, the first proper lesson, introduces all six persons of first and second conjugation verbs, nominative, accusative and genitive, singular and plural of first and second declension nouns, some prepositions, a total vocabulary of over 150 different words or forms, a learning vocabulary of over 30 words and an explanation of parsing – 'Take each word as it comes and define its job in the sentence' (page 15 GVE). Each successive section proceeds in a similar way and at a similar rate.

This may sound incredibly daunting and my own initial reaction was that too much was expected of students too soon. However it must be remembered that this course is designed for mature students who have chosen to learn Latin for a variety of motivating reasons. Experience shows that linguistic formality and stress on structure is positively welcome and helpful to them, and the intrinsic interest and enjoyment of the continuous text with its clever repetition of vocabulary and grammatical points carries them along almost of its own volition so that they are willing to face the necessary learning by heart. One of the greatest assets of *Reading Latin* is that it is enjoyable for both student and teacher.

The course has been in use now for two years, in the published version, in universities, summer schools, weekend courses and schools and has succeeded in more ways than perhaps originally envisaged. *Reading Latin's* lively but formal approach has proved useful in the first term or so of an A level course for students who need to consolidate their grammar and gain experience of a variety of authors before reading set texts. Adults returning to Latin after a gap of some years enjoy using the later sections as a revision course and reader to reintroduce them to the delights of full length texts of both classical and medieval Latin.

What of the future? It is hoped that a GCSE Latin (Mature) based on *Reading Latin* will be in operation by 1990. There is a need for a version of the exercises to be produced in book or computer form so that students can monitor their own progress. The follow-up volume, *Reading Medieval Latin* is well on the way to completion. Madingley Hall at Cambridge run several weekend

courses each year which use *Reading Latin* as the core book. To assist those who cannot find formal class teaching JACT is compiling a list of tutors willing to help students on an individual basis, either in person, by post or over the telephone, and will be producing a leaflet indicating some of the places where Latin is taught by adults in evening classes, weekend courses or summer schools.

The current position of Latin in schools is certainly difficult but the future is perhaps not as gloomy as some might suggest. *Reading Latin* provides a course for students who are unable to benefit from what in the past has been the traditional pattern of learning Latin; it is up to classicists who value their subject to ensure that potential students know about the opportunities that are available to study Latin and that the structures exist to enable the language to be taught and to flourish.

LORNA KELLETT

### Footnotes

1. Modern Languages in the School Curriculum – A statement of policy Section 21
2. *Reading Latin* by P. V. Jones and K. C. Sidwell CUP 1986
3. Modern Languages in the School Curriculum Section 52

### NOTE ON THE LATIN COURSES

The Latin Courses discussed in these articles include: **The Cambridge Latin Course, Second Edition** published by the Cambridge University Press, with teachers' handbooks, filmstrips and cassette tape recordings.

**Ecce Romani, Revised Edition** is published by Oliver and Boyd Ltd of the Longman Group.

It includes reference books and teachers' handbooks.

**Reading Latin** by P V Jones and K C Sidwell, is a new course, in two parts, for older beginners, and is published by the Cambridge University Press.

**The Oxford Latin Course**, by M G Balme and J H W Morwood, in three parts, is published by the Oxford University Press.



# Latin Prose Texts at A-Level and Beyond: The Narrator's Explicit Comments

Mollie Dixon

## Introduction

In helping students to read Latin literature it must be high on our list of overall aims to lay the grounds for a personal and felt response. This is not a mere invention of 'modern' criticism – far from it. Indeed, we can assume that this would be precisely what a Latin writer might expect of his original readers and we can even track down pieces of evidence that that was the case.

There's a rather nice example in Aulus Gellius of how Roman readers responded. He describes how Favorinus felt whenever he read Quadrigarius's account of the single combat between the ferocious, giant Gaul and the unlikely victor, the much smaller, very correct Roman officer, Titus Manlius. *Quem locum ex eo libro philosophus Favorinus cum legeret, non minoribus quati adflicque animum suum motibus pulsibusque dicebat quam si ipse coram depugnantes eos spectaret.* This reader is certainly reconstructing the scene for himself, re-living it; this is *personal* and *felt* response.<sup>1</sup>

However, our felt response to the world presented by the story-teller or 'historian' is, as I said in the conclusion to my previous article, only half the story of looking at any narrative text.<sup>2</sup> I want to turn now to the other half, from the reader to the narrator. It is the narrator's feelings and view of life which shape the way the story world is presented. Thus, as readers we need a 'double vision', as Ruthrof calls it; a constructive attention, tuned to both the 'presented world' and the 'presenting consciousness'.<sup>3</sup> The narrator will certainly be helping us as readers to construct the feelings, moods and attitudes of the protagonists – this is not surprising. But in presenting these, may she/he not also comment on the action? What evidence should we be looking for of *the narrator's* attitude and stance to the events being presented?

In order to shape our enquiry we need a set of questions such as the following:

- does the Roman historian allow himself to comment explicitly?
- what is the nature of such comment: is it simply matter-of-fact, or are the writer's own passions and feelings involved? Can we detect various types of comment?
- what range of features in the text indicate explicit comment? What kinds of evidence exist in the language?

In trying to answer these questions, I have found that the five chapters in Tacitus' Histories which I used in my earlier article form a very productive passage to study.

These are the chapters (II. 46-50) culminating in the suicide of Otho.

## The historical context for explicit comments

Before we start our analysis, let's remind ourselves that this writing of Tacitus has a particular property: it is an example of historical writing by a man with a *direct relationship to the experience* he is presenting. He actually lived through this particular frightening time – the struggle between Otho and Vitellius. And he was at a very impressionable age – probably in his middle teens. The general atmosphere must have been one of great alarm, suffering and passion; of horror at the news coming in. What's more, years later, at the time when he was writing the Histories there were good reasons why recollections of these months of bitter struggle over the succession might break out in Tacitus. After the tyranny of Domitian Tacitus was living under the comparatively weak and inexperienced Nerva, with the powerful Trajan in the wings: would the pattern of civil war be repeated? It should not surprise us if we seem to find Tacitus looking back and seeing past events with an effect magnified by current apprehensions.<sup>4</sup>

I have already discussed Tacitus' implicit views – how his sympathies and antipathies are revealed in the actions and qualities he chose to highlight in his protagonists, leaving his readers to make the judgements. Let's now make a search in the text for any words, phrases or sentences where we suspect, as we read through, that Tacitus is commenting *explicitly* on the protagonists or the action; let's make a broad, tentative grouping of what we find and see whether a pattern of clues emerges which helps us to demarcate the author's commentary from the presented world.

## Commentary which corrects bias or adjusts attitudes

Before we get very far into this episode, we are held up in the account of the soldiers' actions by the words:

*neque erat adulatio: ire in aciem, excitare partium fortunam furore quodam et instinctu flagrabant.*

(46, lines 6-7)

The contrast in the language colour of the two halves of this sentence is striking. On the one hand, *adulatio* is a strongly disparaging word: it is used by Cicero of dogs fawning on their *domini*; by Livy of prostration as an act of homage (*humi iacentium adulationes*). It carries the ambience of obsequious, cringing, servile flattery. This is



not, Tacitus says, the attitude of Otho's soldiers. He rejects the word, and goes further by setting against it a positive picture in terms of powerful enthusiasm. *Flagrabant* is Tacitus' interpretation of the soldiers' feelings, the metaphor of fire picking up the earlier ardor and giving the notion of 'fierceness'. With *furore quodam* he adds the notions of violence, possession, frenzy, passion, fury; and, with *instinctu*, the possibility of (divine) inspiration.

There are other places where Tacitus holds up the action in order to reject one explanation and replace it another.

- while recounting that several soldiers committed suicide beside Otho's funeral pyre, he makes the interpolation: *non noxa neque ob metum, sed aemulatione decoris et caritate principis*

- in a very brief summing up of Otho's life he says, of the status of Otho's mother's family: *maternum genus impar nec tamen indecorum*.

There is a pattern here of 'It wasn't... but...' or 'not... yet not...'. One interpretation is rejected and another replaces it. What we are seeing each time is the correcting of a possible misconception about Otho's position, an adjustment which stops the picture of Otho being dismissive. There is a hint that the readers'/listeners' current expectations at these points might well be negative. Tacitus, then, interrupts the flow of the narrative for a specific purpose, to give *his* explicit correction: this was not *adulatio*, but blazing enthusiasm; not guilt before Otho or fear of Vitellius, but love of the emperor; Otho's mother had not the status of a Salvian, but her family was not unworthy.

### Clues in the text to this type of comment

We find in these three examples a *clausal* structure:

*neque* followed by a statement which is contrasted by asyndeton

*non* followed by an opposing *sed*

*impar* (incorporating a negative) followed by *nec tamen*

The structure of negated statement followed by a contrasted position – a '*non...sed*' structure in the language – is a clue to authorial commentary of a 'correcting' type.

### Commentary which shows evidence of commitment

The three examples we have looked at above had a particular clausal structure, but all were characterised in addition by the giving of *prominence* to words or phrases. I want to investigate this further. Let's return to our first example – *neque erat adulatio; ire in aciem, excitare partium fortunam furore quodam et instinctu flagrabant* – and take a second look at the *words* in the light of the three main ways in which I suggested (in my earlier article) that prominence was given:

- deviant position in the word order;

- placing for contrast;

- emotive force of the word or phrase itself.

*Adulatio*, as we have already seen, has strong emotive force and it is given further prominence by its immediate juxtaposition – for contrast – with the following phrase.

*Ire in aciem* and *excitare partium fortunam* are in themselves strong active phrases; their verbs are made prominent by their deviant position, and the galvanised activity – getting back into the action, fiercely enthusiastic – is thus stressed. *Instinctus* too is a powerful word which saves *flagrabant* from being a 'dead' metaphor. I suggest that Tacitus is using the linguistic device of 'prominence' to underline his own antipathy to *adulatio* and his sympathy with the troops' fierce loyalty to Otho. Picking this up again in the suicides out of *caritas principis* – these words given prominence by their position at the end of the sentence – he seems to be stressing an attitude to a *princeps* which could contain a total loyalty grounded in *caritas* rather than *adulatio*.

Similarly, in the brief reference to Otho's mother, we find the end-of-sentence weight given to *nec tamen indecorum*. *Nec indecorum* may seem to be comment on the micro-scale – Otho's not unworthy mother – but, given prominence as it is, it operates a wider level too and emerges as the view of Tacitus that what is going on should be regarded as *decorus*.

However, a further example is perhaps our strongest evidence of explicit authorial comment – and in a form that suggests passionate commitment. This occurs at the point when the advance guard from Moesia have brought news that fresh legions have reached Aquileia, implying that war could be renewed:

*ut nemo dubitet potuisse renovari bellum atrox, lugubre, incertum victis et victoribus.*

I learned in my Sixth Form days from a great reader of Livy that 'a Latin sentence if constructionally complete must *ipso facto* be at an end' and that 'every departure, however small, from the normal order is of the highest importance if we are to understand the meaning aright'.<sup>5</sup> This sentence we are now considering could stop at *renovari bellum*. But there follows a string of epithets which, by virtue of their position, are given prominence and strongly direct the reader's attention. *Atrox* may be the conventional, almost perfunctory, term for *bellum*, but there are two very striking additions: first, the impassioned *lugubre*, a word burdened with sorrow and mourning. (We find it used with *bellum* in Horace Odes 2.1.33 *quae flumina lugubris ignara belli?* – the Ode whose headline is *motus civicus* and which does not hide the *impia proelia* and the *cruor* it brings). There is a 'personal' tone in Tacitus here, 'bringing home' the message. Then the phrase *incertum victis et victoribus* (perhaps the ludus Fortunae of the Horace Ode) spells out with icy clarity that no-one wins in this war (in any war?).

This has been a very brief interruption, an interpolation, in the narrative. It seems unprepared rather than deliberate; the narrator's comment has, as it were, *erupted emotionally*. In going beyond the more conventional *atrox* to *lugubre* and *incertum*, Tacitus seems to have gone beyond giving prominence to what Otho did, beyond an implicit evaluation of *his* conduct as heroic abnegation. We are drawn to read these words as a deeply felt judgement and moral position in Tacitus himself, brought in very powerfully, explicitly present. By predicting in general terms the nature of the potential outcome, creating a sense



of how awful renewed war would be, Tacitus intends to give his contemporary Roman audience a frisson of the fear they all have *now* for civil war. The very brevity – he returns quickly to the narrative – makes the comment stand out.

### Commentary as retrospective summary

We find a third type of commentary in the brief summing up of Otho's life (just over thirty words) that follows the narrative proper. This is a retrospective summing up of a life in terms of general stages (*origo, pueritia, iuventa, fama*), given in a run of very simple statements, almost in the style of an inscription:

Origo illi	e municipio Ferentino
pater consularis	avus praetorius
maternum genus impar	nec tamen indecorum
pueritia ac iuventa	qualem monstravimus
	duobus facinoribus
altero flagitiosissimo	altero egregio
tantundem apud posteros	meruit bonae famae
quantum malae.	

The simplicity here suggests relaxation of tension after the scenes at the pyre and leaves time for the reader to reflect. But there is something more significant. In a passage so summary and selective, there must be a degree of interpretation determining what was selected for inclusion and what descriptive words were chosen. Two stand out: *flagitiosissimo* and *egregio*. *Flagitiosus* is a loaded word, often found in combination with such words as *turpis*, *foedus*, *calamitosus*, *perfidia*; used of both Vitellius and Otho earlier (Hist. 2.37, line 10) but probably here referring less to their joint responsibility for *civile bellum* than to Otho's part in the murder of Galba – the *facinus* utterly shocking to Rome's decent feelings. Tacitus strongly condemns this act, but counterbalances it by assigning to the decision to abandon the war a Roman term of highest praise, *egregius*, the accolade for proper conduct.

### To sum up here our discussion of prominent words

The linguistic device of prominence may signal three types of comment:

- in a 'correcting' type of comment it strongly reinforces the narrator's own view (for example, his rejection of *adulatio* in favour of *caritas*, or of what is *flagitiosus* in favour what is *egregius*);
- it may signal an eruption of a personal, passionate commitment (for example, against civil war as *atrox*, *lugubre*, *incertum*)
- it may, in an otherwise simple account, highlight the qualities and actions the narrator praises or blames.

### A question of tense

The normal way in which writers signal to readers that they intend to insert commentary into the narrative of past events is a change of tense, from past to present. Sometimes the inserted comment continues for a whole paragraph, sometimes for a sentence. Readers of English literature are accustomed to this, particularly perhaps in

the nineteenth century novelists. As it happens, this episode of the Histories does contain an example of such signalling by change of tense:

*ut nemo dubitet potuisse renovari bellum.....*

The present tense of *ut nemo dubitet*, following the narrative *nuntiabant*, detaches the clause from the narrative of events, takes us away from any judgement by participants in the scene and signals a time-of-writing, authorial comment.

### The person of the verb

The use of the first person is another obvious pointer to a narrator's own commentary. Thus, in the summing-up of Otho's life, the inserted *qualem monstravimus* indicates the presence of Tacitus and confirms that this is *his* endorsement of a reputation which Otho has gained by the time of the writing of the Histories. (The word *qualem* shifts this phrase from being a merely 'editorial we' on the lines of *ut supra memoravimus* or *ut suo loco memorabimus* which we find earlier in the work.)

We may note in passing that up to our present passage the only significant appearance of *ego*, apart from its use in the first chapter of the whole work, occurs during another passage pondering on civil war. In II. 37 Tacitus considers whether the ordinary soldiers of Otho and Vitellius might have renounced the war (*posito certamine..... bellum deponere*). Though he grants that a few might have chosen *quies* rather than *discordia* (*ego ut concesserim – ego*, by position, emphasising *his* hopes), he concludes with a strong denial of the possibility in a *corruptissimum saeculum* (*ita neque ...reor...neque...*). This confirms a consistent line of commentary in Tacitus. As I argued when we looked at commentary indicating commitment, a personal attitude is being stressed – his opposition to *bellum civile*.

### The next stages

In conclusion, we have to stress that the direct evidence for narrator's commentary in our present passage consists not of whole paragraphs or even whole sentences of comment, but a single word or two. This is a measure of Tacitus' authorial reticence and equally of his single-minded focus on the events he is trying to evoke and present.

However, since direct comment is held back in Tacitus, we shall have to look all the more carefully for any more indirect ways in which the writer's stance is revealed. I am thinking particularly of the ways in which the spoken words of the participants are reported, whether in direct or in indirect form – always likely to offer telling evidence of the reporter's bias and stance.

In addition, when we have become aware of a Roman historian as commentator, we are inevitably drawn into another set of questions, probably the most important ones. These adjustments of balance were made, and the prominent words used, in a particular time and in a particular society. The direction of the adjustments, the emotional tone carried by the words at that time, and any changes of meaning that were taking place, indicate what people in that society (or a given group of its members) were prepared to praise or blame. These evaluations of



past events are to some degree conscious, as we have been seeing; but there are other, less conscious, signs in a text of the way events are socially structured and valued. In further articles, therefore, I want to look in detail at the reporting of spoken words and at historical writing as 'an expression of a society and its culture'.

MOLLIE DIXON

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## NOTES

- 1 Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, IX.13.5. Later, discussing Cicero's speeches against Verres, he notes the power of *sola verba*. He finds the words – victims stripped and tied up, sticks got ready – so moving and horrific that you really do see it all happening:  
– *Iam haec mediis fidiis sola verba: 'nudari ac deligari et virgas expediri iubet' tanti motus horrore sunt ut non narrari quae gesta sunt, sed rem geri prorsus videas.* (X.3.10)  
– *Animum hercle meum, cum illa M. Ciceronis lego, imago quaedam et sonus verberum et vocum et eiulationum circumplectitur* (X.3.8)
2. 'Reading a highlighted episode within a narrative text', *JACT Review*, Second Series Number 2, Autumn 1987, pp. 24-28.
3. Horst Ruthrof, *The Reader's Construction of Narrative* (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd 1981), p. 14. 'To read a story is to construct the double vision of presentational process and presented world, not as technical discovery, but as perceptive performance of any narrative text.'
4. See Sir Ronald Syme, *Ten Studies in Tacitus* (Clarendon Press 1970). He sees the political events and arguments of 97 behind the Histories, and describes the work as a 'murderous story of civil war and despotism'.
5. H. Darnley Naylor, *More Latin and English Idiom* (CUP 1915), p. 4, for a succinct summary of the rules of normal order.  
See also Norma P. Miller's very helpful chapter 'Style and Content in Tacitus', in *Tacitus*, ed. T. A. Dorey (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1969) pp. 99-116. Her analysis of the account of Augustus in Annals I.9-10 includes word order ('a virtue of an inflected language'), emotional connotation of individual words and a wealth of other comment.  
Ronald Martin, *Tacitus* (Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd 1981), p. 221, considers the type of sentence where 'the centre of gravity is displaced to appended, syntactically subordinated elements'. In his view this is 'not simply a mannered anti-classical reaction; rather it reflects a different attitude to history..... (Tacitus is) more interested to try to understand why it had so happened..... These comments typically analyse motives.' I want to stress that Tacitus is, rather, working through to his own comment and stance.

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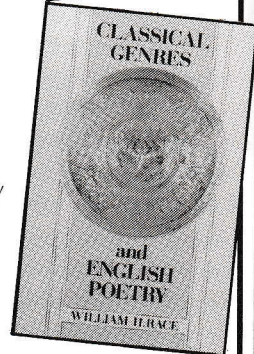
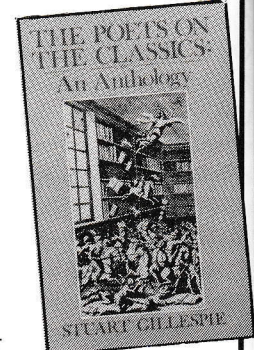
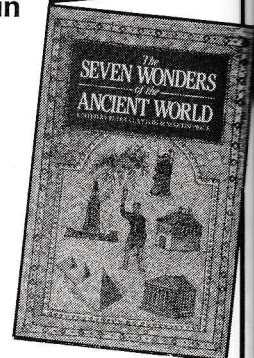
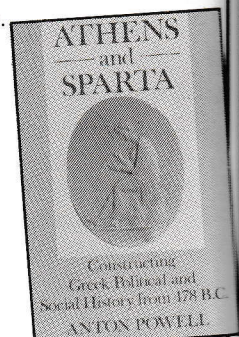
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