

Latin III's Dirty Little Secret --Why Johnny Can't Read

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I The Problem

We have all had the experience. The student who is ending Latin II knows his or her endings, does well on individual tests on specific points of grammar and usage, and can translate with some ease the made-up texts in the earlier parts of the textbook. But this same student will flounder when, near the end of the Latin or at the beginning of Latin III, real Latin is introduced. There is increasing difficulty in translating the sentences and once translated they make little sense. Why is this so? The basic skills have certainly not disappeared and neither has the essential intelligence level.

The reasons, of course, are many. One might be that the difficulty level jumps too rapidly, or it may be that early on the text book offers little or nothing by way of continuous readings, confining itself for the most part to short sentences or sententiae chosen more for their grammar than their ability to impart translation skills.

Or if there are stories in the texts, they may be small, disjointed tales where unnamed farmers stand in incredibly drab fields looking for unrelated puellaequam as they laborant. Or, while the stories might be interesting in and of themselves, they might not effectively prepare the students for the longer and more complex periodic sentences of Roman prose or the tortuous and (to a student) seemingly whimsical word order of Roman poetry. This is a charge leveled at many of the more modern, "reading method" textbooks. to fetch them

All of these problems interfere with the students in their quest to be able to read "real" Latin facilely and each of us has tried to solve such problems when we teach upper division Latin classes. But having read and pondered the material E.D. Hirsch offers concerning how we learn to read, I have come to the conclusion that a student's relative unfamiliarity with ancient cultural schemata, what I call the issue of "classical literacy," plays a great role in this problem.

II. Hirsch Background

The year 1987 saw the publication of E.D. Hirsch Jr.'s Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know.[\[i\]](#) The book coined the term "cultural literacy" and created quite a stir in popular and scholarly journals alike. The main tenets of the book spoke to that ever debated question of "what is wrong with our nation's classrooms" and its answers variously enthused, gratified, and enraged educators. It will be prudent, first, to go over what the book has

to say, and move on from there to its possible ramifications for us in the upper division Latin classroom, for quite without intending to do so, Dr. Hirsch has put his finger on one of the greatest problems facing the Latin classroom today.

E.D. Hirsch, Jr. is a Professor of English at the University of Virginia. His research in the past had centered on the intriguing questions of how we read and how we remember what we have read --- in short, how we learn. Such interests led him to the works of specialists in such allied fields as educational psychology and convinced him of the seemingly contradictory statement that knowledge of the content of a piece of writing is often needed for us to understand what it says. To understand texts properly, he claims, people must have "world knowledge" or, in his words, "cultural literacy the background information, stored in their minds, that enables them to take up a newspaper and read it with an adequate level of comprehension, getting the point, grasping the implications, relating what they read to the unstated context which alone gives meaning to what they read."[\[ii\]](#)

Hirsch is saying that often, in order "to grasp the words on a page we have to know a lot of information that isn't set down on the page" [\[iii\]](#) and that this information can be either culture-specific or content-specific in nature. It is a basic concept, but one that at first sounds fairly radical to those of us who live our lives learning by reading. Yet its truth is demonstrated by trying to understand the following passages excerpted from a report on a recent important cricket match.

Zimbabwe booked their place in the final of the NatWest Triangular series after a comprehensive 70-run victory over the West Indies at rain-sodden Canterbury, maintaining their 100 percent record in the tournament after three matches.

Guy Whittall, Alistair Campbell and Neil Johnson struck half-centuries as Zimbabwe plundered 256 for 4, but a dramatic collapse - which saw skipper Jimmy Adams and Brian Lara dismissed in consecutive balls - saw the Windies meandering to 186-8 from their fifty overs.

Franklyn Rose offered some resistance with a belligerent 30 from 31 balls before he was trapped leg before.

Campbell sustained the tempo with another measured innings of 77 not out as Zimbabwe[\[iv\]](#)110700canterbury.html). reached 256 for 4 from their allotted overs.

Clearly all of us reading this piece are quite fluent in English, yet few could follow what actually happened during this game because we lack the requisite background information to understand it. In short, vocabulary, morphology, and grammar are not enough. Hirsch cites the work of Steffensen, Joag-Des, and Anderson wherein two letters describing weddings were read for comprehension and subsequently tested. Both letters were in English, but one described an American wedding and one in the land of India. Each letter was of equal linguistic complexity and the groups were carefully balanced for such variables as age, sex, and ethnicity. But the unfamiliarity of the culturally-specific items (e.g. items of dress) and local customs rendered

understanding and comprehension difficult for the readers of the opposite culture. The conclusion seems obvious, but, as I hope to demonstrate later, it is one most of us have been overlooking in our Latin classrooms. In order to understand a text, even at its most basic levels, you have to understand -- be literate in-- the culture which produced it.

A final example will demonstrate that not only national or ethnic information is involved in reading comprehension. The content itself, that is, the subject under discussion, can bring about similar results.

Second, the foregoing suggests that metacognitive abilities, that is, universal rather than cultural thought patterns may be essential to comprehension. Possibly classroom practice and reader protocols should assign value to any student perception of textual organizations that reflects the passage's macro-relationships.

or

Data from L2 studies of vocabulary gains from reading longer texts...should be distinguished from vocabulary research on short texts....Such brevity necessarily relocates a reader's encoding concerns from apperception of macro- to micro-structures.[\[v\]](#)

It is highly ironic that this excellent article has as one of its aims a study of how we understand what we read, for language such as this is clearly aimed at those "in the know," at people who are "literate" to the jargon employed. We will return to this concept below, but it is well to repeat, before we return to outlining Hirsch's arguments, that basic understanding and comprehension often depend on a prior knowledge of the material being discussed, be it specific to the culture or the topic at hand.

Hirsch uses this insight to stress the fact that basic reading skills are not at issue here. Most readers could use phonics and an innate sense of the structure of our language to recite these passages. This is a basic form of reading -- turning the printed symbols into culturally agreed upon sounds. But Hirsch is emphatic in saying that possessing mere acquisition of decoding or encoding skills does not equate to literacy and he points an accusing finger at our schools with their tendency toward content-neutral readings and cafeteria style, non-core curricula. The result of such trends, he says, is that children emerge from their education lacking a common stock of shared cultural information which only a short time ago was naturally expected to exist in every person educated at the high school level.

Another book offers chilling confirmation for his beliefs. Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn, Jr. conducted extensive tests across America to see what level of competency our high school graduates were attaining in literature and history. They tested 7,812 eleventh graders carefully chosen to represent the entire population.[\[vi\]](#) The results were depressing. Only 32.2% could place the Civil War into its proper 50 year period on a multiple choice question. Only 56.2% could identify the god Mars and two in five could not name Midas as the king whose touch turned objects to gold. This is not the place to elaborate examples, however. It is their

conclusions which are important, for they tie in with Hirsch's theory and with the point I hope to make in this article.

As the authors state, "the most disturbing finding of the literature assessment was...the cumulative impression that students do not know many of the common allusions, especially those drawn from the Bible and mythology, that regularly appear in serious literature." [\[vii\]](#)

Hirsch appreciates this trend and in his book makes a clear and strong case that we must address the problem of cultural literacy at a very early age. Basing his arguments heavily on the work of Jeanne Chall, he shows that before grade three, when reading skills are more mechanical than they are interpretive, United States students perform equally well with other countries. It is in the later grades, when, he says, the readings increasingly presuppose basic, shared, cultural information, that our students fall far behind. Likewise, disadvantaged first graders in America perform equally well with middle class children in the mechanical processes of sounding out letters and simple words. According to Chall, it is at the fourth and fifth grade levels that the gap widens and disadvantaged students fall behind. Their handicap, Hirsch believes, is in their unfamiliarity with mainstream, shared, cultural information which enables readers to understand more complex texts.

Hirsch lays all this out in his first chapter. His second chapter is equally and somewhat more difficult to follow, but is potentially very important for the way we teach our upper division Latin courses. Hirsch first discusses memory, focusing on the question of how we remember what we read. Our short term memory, it turns out, is a very weak vessel, being able to hold no more than about four to seven separate items. [\[viii\]](#) The mind quickly gives these disparate items a structure and files them away for future reference. In terms of language, 7 or 8 individual words will be grouped into a single idea or image and then stored. We do not, as a rule, file away long strings of information for verbatim recall at a later date. The mind rather processes incoming information in a general fashion. Thus, the basic sentence "The window is not closed" may not be stored verbatim, but the gist of the sentence, i.e. a picture or image of an open window, is retained. As Hirsch sums it up, "we have bad memory for words but good memory for meaning." [\[ix\]](#) This basic insight, I think, can have a great impact on what we do in our classes.

Hirsch next demonstrates that the raw materials the mind uses for processing the incoming information are "mental models we have in our minds on the basis of prior knowledge and the words of the text as we read them" and adds that "to make sense of what we read, we must use relevant prior knowledge to form a model of how sentence meanings hang together." [\[x\]](#) He adduces tests and studies to show that the most simple of passages can be unintelligible unless we have some idea of its context and can therefore bring our "mental models" into play to help interpret the words we are reading.

Read, for example, the following instructions

The procedure is actually quite simple. First you arrange the items in different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities that is the next step; otherwise you are pretty well set.

The activity in question is "Washing Clothes" [\[xi\]](#) and if you were to reread the passage now, it makes immediate sense. On this second reading, the "facilities" pop into your head. You have a picture of them. You know them. The sorted groups are even clear --- some are dark, some white. Some need bleach, some can not have bleach. All this is in the text, but none of it is stated in the text. You are supplying the information from your "mental models" which psychologists have variously called prototypes, frames, theories, constructs, models, and scripts. Hirsch prefers to call them "schemata" (singular "schema") following Anderson. [\[xii\]](#)

The foregoing example shows how meaning can be lost without appropriate schemata. A later example, which he uses for another purpose, can be used also to demonstrate the overtones and "environment" if you will of a text. Read the following three simple sentences.

1. The baby kicked the ball and laughed.
2. The golfer kicked the ball and laughed.
3. The punter kicked the ball and laughed. [\[xiii\]](#)

These are very simple sentences, and bear very little descriptive material. Yet you can easily answer these questions: "What shape is the ball in each case?"; "Which ball is the smallest?"; "Which of the kickers is the happiest?" (they all are laughing!); "Which is the angriest?"; "Who has the most people watching him kick?"; "Who has the fewest watching him kick?"

So it is easy to see how schemata let us "read between the lines." We know why babies kick balls and why golfers do so. One is happy, the other angry. The punter is just doing a job and his laugh may be defiant or exultant. All this is in the text. The author expects us to have these schemata, to know about babies, and the games of golf and football and their rules. All this in seven words each!

Yet think what the sentence would mean to a native of New Zealand who was trained in British English in a small school somewhere away from American television. He or she would have a sense of "ball" of course, but not of "punter" unless as a slightly derogatory word or as referring to someone who propels a boat with a pole. Even if he were told that one of the games were "football," he would have entirely different culturally determined views (schemata) of what was going on since "football" to such a person is our "soccer."

Finally, schemata can be national in character. A simple example might be the everyday phrase, "The meat was tough tonight." To most Americans "meat" would instantly become "beef," even in these cholesterol conscious days. A Greek would think mostly of lamb and a South Seas islander of roast pig, something of which a Near Easterner would never conceive. Other phrases are referential in nature and here I will part with Hirsch and call these simply "allusions" or "references." Thus "Father of the Country" means one thing to an American, but another to a citizen of China and, of course, quite another to a Roman living ca. 5 A.D.

Chapters 3 and 4 deal with anticipating charges that the demand for a nationally accepted canon of cultural literacy is exclusionary and biased. Beginning with Chapter 5 Hirsch asks why our students do not possess the requisite store of common, shared knowledge which would allow each student to be truly literate. He places the blame on our schools, claiming that their curricula have been eroded of their traditional content by the progressive education movement to the extent that an author can no longer safely assume that his or her references will be noted by the reader or that author and reader share any appreciable common ground.

Of course, this ultimately leads Hirsch to the matter of curriculum reform and, inevitably, into deep and troubled waters in his final chapters. Believing as he does that it is after the fourth or fifth grade that students fall behind and that the needed ingredient to prevent this is the store of common held information needed for comprehension, he proposes that our youngest students be given vast stores of this information in their formative years. They need not be given a scholar's depth of information, just enough to enable them to communicate with a given author on the level the author intended. Thus, they only need know that an "Achilles heel" means an unsuspected vulnerability and not every aspect of the mythology of Achilles or the Trojan War.

At the end of his Cultural Literacy book, then, Hirsch collaborated with others to produce a 64 page list of material needed to insure cultural literacy. This was, he proclaimed, a preliminary list, and it was followed in 1988 by his Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, 546 pages of terms to be known. [\[xiv\]](#)

Reaction was immediate --- and vehement. Amid the heat of battle, most of the theoretical groundwork Hirsch had so patiently laid was totally ignored. Hirsch was accused of promoting a white, elitist culture, although he had cleverly and forcefully met the objections beforehand in the book itself. [\[xvi\]](#) Others felt he was quantifying knowledge, setting us and our classes up as targets for more inane tests to be used as mindless guides to the success or lack of it in our individual schools or systems. He was called an assassin of imagination in that he stressed mindless memorization over learning in context. Mostly, his approach was seen by world-weary teachers as yet another quack cure for education; another quick fix which would have its day and pass the way of other fads and crazes. There is some truth in all of this, of course, but there is equally a large element of myopia and self centered overreaction. The subsequent reviews, articles, and even entire volumes devoted to cultural literacy and the resultant rebuttals by Hirsch himself proved as informative as it was entertaining. Nor was all reaction negative.

Hirsch found his defenders, of course, and his quick acceptance by scholars such as Diane Ravitch [\[xvii\]](#) put him in the heady company of educational reform writers like William Bennett and Alan Bloom. To this extent alone, as a weapon in the "back to basics" movement, Hirsch certainly must have had a positive effect on the study of classical antiquity, once the most basic "basic" of all.

III Hirsch and "Classical Literacy"

But it is in the most infrequently mentioned contributions of Hirsch, viz., his contributions to understanding how we read and how we remember, and in his basic insight that cultural matters affect how we understand what we read, that there is a gold mine of information which

can help us teach our students Latin more effectively and with more lasting effect. It may even, I feel, help us with the perennial problem of upper division enrollment and the rate of dropouts which so sorely affects schools between Latin II and III.

The first step is to remember at all times that Latin is a language. I do not mean to be flippant here, but too many of us forget this very basic fact and end up teaching the language as if it were a code composed of equal parts grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. As a language, Latin is subject to the constraints of every other language, even our own. It might be a dead language in that we do not speak it with anyone, but as soon as we read it, it comes alive and immediately is subject to the many problems associated with reading that enter into the reading of any language. In short, it is time to examine what Hirsch has to say about reading and retention and to apply his findings to how we teach our students to read the Latin language.

I will begin with a story. One of my first "jobs" in teaching Latin was tutoring a poor, lost child who was struggling manfully but vainly with one of the Catalinarian speeches of Cicero. I took him under my underpaid graduate student wing and began where I felt he needed the most help. We reviewed forms, chanted declensions, drove in grammar rules designed to help him make his way through the morass of Ciceronian prose, and we patiently learned how best to attack a Ciceronian sentence. To my surprise, he was not all that bad in his basics. He knew his endings, had pretty fair translation skills and had enough grammar to be doing better than he was. The key to his failure to read Cicero came one day when he suddenly asked me, "What is Cicero so angry about, anyway?."

He had no idea. "Who is this Catiline fellow?" I asked. He did not know. "What is the big deal if Catiline had a plot? What difference would it make?" None, to him. In short, he had no idea of what was going on in his text. He was worse off than those people mentioned above who read the text on the Indian marriage, because they at least got to read their selection in their own language. It is no wonder that he was floundering, and anyone in this room with more than one year's teaching experience knows what the odds are that he enrolled in Latin IV. We also know the odds that he encouraged his children (for this was so long ago that by now he surely has some) to take Latin in their schools.

This student, and scores like him in third year/semester Latin was, in the words of Hirsch, well versed in "elementary decoding skills," [\[xvii\]](#) but was stymied by the cultural information which informs the text and without which it might make little or, sometimes, no sense. This, I propose, lies at the heart of much of the difficulty third year Latin students encounter when moving into the reading of Latin authors.

Elementary level readings demand few schemata or, in good text books, have them built in. It does not take, for example, a lot of background information to understand a mythological tale of Heracles or a generic tale such as "Lucius Pilam Amitit" in which one only needs to know that boys play ball and sometimes lose them. [\[xviii\]](#) This is a common (if uninspiring) human experience and nothing gets in the way of understanding the story and of learning the attendant grammar, in this instance personal pronouns and possessive adjectives. More recent text books such as the Cambridge Latin Course, The Oxford Latin Course, and Ecce Romani, also rely on common experience in the early stages and it takes little explanation to grasp e.g., who the

family members are, what a cook does, or what school is generally like. Indeed, these textbooks are careful to weave directly into the story itself any other material which is less immediately "cross-cultural," such as what a slave does or what a Roman banquet looks like. Here we must applaud the use of illustrations in the newer texts, for these provide immediate cultural context.

I could multiply the examples, but the fact is that a vast majority of our elementary Latin texts, whatever their other flaws, allow our beginning students to concentrate on vocabulary, syntax and grammar -- Hirsch's basic decoding devices. Our beginning Latin students remind me of Hirsch's beginning reading students, that is, America's 1st through 3rd or 4th graders. Their readers also require little by way of cultural background. It is only, I remind you, when they begin to move beyond the basal reader stage that there is a clear need for cultural information in order to understand the text.

This is exactly the case with our late Latin II or beginning Latin III students. When a student begins to read Cicero, Vergil or even Caesar, an author picked for his "easiness," he or she is moving into a totally different situation. For Caesar, Cicero, and Vergil were writing for Romans. It is a fact too easy to forget, but as Hirsch points out over and over again, an author has essential schemata in mind in almost every line. And I may add that the more literary the author the more schemata he implies in his learned audience. Let me give three examples, basing them upon three commonly mentioned levels of reading -- the literal, the interpretive, and the evaluative.

At the literal level, a missed schema might cloud understanding, but will generally not prevent it. An excellent example comes from Pliny the Younger's commonly read description of the cloud his uncle saw coming from the cone of Mt. Vesuvius. Pliny says it resembled a pine tree, a reference which baffles modern students who would more readily call it a mushroom cloud. That is because their schemata are nuclear and Pliny's was the umbrella pine, a tree which an average Roman saw every day of his or her life. Now such a reference does not block or preclude understanding in our students because they still have a schema of what a volcanic cloud looks like since a volcanic cloud is not culturally linked even if the plant used to describe it is.

This brings us to the next level of reading -- the interpretive -- where the reader goes beyond the merely literal as we did in our "kicked the ball" examples above. Most of us expose our students to Catullus 101, the farewell to his brother which begins "Multas per gentes et multa per aquora vectus." [\[xix\]](#) The poem is readily understandable as read. It is a tale of brotherly love and devotion for which most of us have either a personal or a vicarious schema. Yet the student can never fully interpret the depth of the love Catullus is demonstrating unless he knows about ancient ships and the location of Bithynia. An ancient Roman immediately appreciated the length of the poet's journey and the discomfort he had endured to come to this far off place. Likewise, the ancients knew from first hand experience the futility to be experienced as one addressed mute ashes ("et mutam nequiqam alloquerer cinerem") without even today's opportunity to view the body and say goodbye. So much of what Catullus is trying to convey, you see, is immediately dependant upon culturally specific material; material as alien to our culture as an American wedding ceremony is to a native of New Delhi.

And yet this is the least disturbing part of looking at advanced Latin texts through "Hirschian" eyes. For the Pliny description or the Catullus poem is still essentially comprehensible without such knowledge. It might be less appreciated, but the average student with sufficient elementary decoding skills can still tell what is going on.

There exist countless examples however, where this is not the case, for lack of shared schemata between a Roman author and a late twentieth century young American audience can often spell disaster. This is sometimes true at the interpretative or even literal level but is commonly true at the third level, the evaluative.

I will attempt to illustrate this fact by using examples from textbooks which students are using today. I mean no specific condemnation of any of these textbooks. Several example, in fact, are taken from books which I admire. I am merely attempting to point out the manner in which the difficulty of the text can be measured by the number of culturally specific items it contains. But first I must make a request.

As you read through these texts I will ask you purge your mind of most of its acquired schemata. Throughout the years you have become expert in these matters. You have, as Hirsch would have it, become culturally literate in things Roman. Try to scrub your minds to the state of your third year students and to put yourself at their particular level of "classical literacy."

Try, then, to look at this text with the "classical literacy" level of a 17 year old, remembering that, on average, only 49.8% of them know who Odysseus was and some 48.5% think that Prometheus was chained to a rock because he married a beautiful woman and then boasted about it.[\[xx\]](#) Again, I am not attempting here to condemn either the students or their educational system. That is another battle. My only aim is to get us to see the difficulty of the text through their eyes. Whatever the cause, much of the text is wondrously strange to them and, in an educational climate where "across the country, even now, interest groups are pressuring local school boards to remove myths and fables and other imaginative literature from children's readers and to inject the teaching of creationism into biology" it is hardly likely to get better very quickly.[\[xxi\]](#)

Let us look first at one of the more commonly read passages from Ovid, the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha. This selection is from the third year Jenney text [\[xxii\]](#) and would, conventionally, be laid before our 17 year olds. It describes Deucalion's first landing on Mt. Parnassus and comes from Book 1 of the Metamorphoses:

Separat Aonios Oetaeis Phocis ab arvis

terra ferax, dum terra fuit; sed tempore in illo

pars maris et latus subitarum campus aquarum.

315

Mons ibi verticibus petit arduus astra duobus

nomine Parnasus, superantque cacumina nubes.

Hic ubi Deucalion, nam cetera texerat aequor,

cum consorte tori parva rate vectus adhaesit,

Corycidas nymphas et numina montis adorant,

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fatidicamque Themin, quae tunc oracula tenebat.

Non illo melior quisquam nec amantior aequi

vir fuit, aut illa metuentior ulla deorum.

The text itself begins with a barrage of "culturally loaded" information. I offer a literal translation of the text:

Phocis separates the Aeolian from the Oetaean fields -- a harsh land, as long as it was land. But at that time part of it was sea and its flanks were an expanse of sudden waters. There, a lofty mountain, Parnassus by name, reaches to the stars with twin peaks and its spires overcome the clouds. This is where Deucalion made land, for water covered everything else, borne along with the consort of his couch on a small raft. They worship the Corycian nymphs and the spirits of the mountain as well as fate-speaking Themis, who then was in possession of the oracles.

The number of culturally linked references is staggering and viewing these 2,000 year old references with our newly found 17 year old eyes is a revelation. Nor are Jenney's notes very useful. Does it really help today's youth to tell them that the Aeolians were "Boeotians?" [\[xxiii\]](#) And what good is it to tell our students that Phocis is "The section of Greece where Delphi is located"? Does the name alone have solid enough connections in their minds? Similarly, to attempt to help today's students by pointing out that "Corycium is a cave on Mt. Parnassus" is to offer no real help at all.

But note well that Ovid expected such references to strike resonances in our minds. They are not mere window dressing. The relatively obscure name for the Boeotians is chosen because Aon was a descendent of Neptune and since his descendants are currently failing their swimming test, the reference is ironically humorous. Similarly, Parnassus is chosen because it overlooks Delphi. Anyone "classically literate" has his or her ears prick up at this point. "Caveat lector!" says Ovid. Something significant and holy is about to happen. This is not just any mountain or any site, but one of the most sacred in the entire country. It is little wonder that this passage, so rich and so rewarding to us, is more prone to bring frowns of frustration to our upper division students.

This is why only the most diligent student can make his or her way through a passage such as this. It requires reading it first strictly as a grammatical code. What adjective goes with what noun? Which nouns with which verbs? And it requires that this be done without the normal crutches we have for our own language of contextual clues since the context lies hidden by "classical literacy." Our tireless student then must read all the footnotes. Sometimes, as in the case of "Aonios" the student must even go further (e.g. to an atlas to find Boeotia). Then this information must be remembered long enough to last through a re-reading of the text in which he or she attempts to wed grammar to cultural context. This is all simply to get full meaning out of the text. If we are to go to the third level of reading, the evaluative, then a further reading is surely called for in which the student analyzes why this or that allusion is used and what it has to tell us about how the author is constructing his text.

This is a lot to ask. Most of us, to be blunt, know that it is too much to ask. I do have some practical suggestions to offer concerning this problem, and will suggest ways in which we can combat them. But before I get to that I would like to look at one or two further examples.

For one I need no text whatever. I will simply give an snap quiz. Where are the Belgae located? The Haedui? What was special about the tenth legion? What exactly were the duties of a centurion? A legatus? How far can a soldier hurl a javelin? How heavy is infantry armor? Why is Caesar not in Italy, anyway? Why is he not in Rome trying to become emperor? I could adduce others, but you get the point. Such information was readily available to most of Caesar's audience. They were attuned to the "cultural literacy" of the day which for us, and our students, has become "classical literacy." And yet without such information at one's fingertips, reading Caesar can be a dull event indeed.

I turn now to *Per Saecula*, a book which tells us it is specifically designed "to bridge the gap between the 'made-up' or 'adapted' Latin of the course book and the complete text of a Latin author appropriate to progress in reading at the next stage." [xxiv]. I repeat that I am not out to malign any given text. My only aim is to show the difficulties involved with certain texts when we understand the principle of "classical literacy" and then to offer some possible guidelines to the selection and teaching of upper division Latin texts.

This passage in question need not be reproduced in Latin. It will be sufficient to translate the first few lines:

Augustus was born when M. Tullius Cicero and C. Antony were consuls, 8 days before the Kalends of October, a little before sunrise, in the region of the Palatine, near the Ox-Heads, where he now has the shrine that was established a little after he died. As an infant the cognomen "Thurinus" was given him in memory of the origin of his ancestors or because his father Octavius had successfully completed a campaign against runaways in the region of Thurii. After this he took the cognomen of Gaius Caesar and then of August. In his fourth year he lost his father.

The passage is a perfect example of the perils of "classical illiteracy." Suetonius supposes that his readers will be quite familiar with historical figures, Roman dating systems, Roman naming systems, the geography and topography of Rome, the position of Thurii, and the reasons Octavian took various names throughout his career. This is for mere comprehension. For "resonance" or "subtext" we are supposed to remember that 63 BC, the year of Cicero's and Antonius' consulship, was the beginning of the Catilinarian problem, a revolt whose lessons were not lost on Augustus.

Or what are we realistically to make of Horace, Odes 2.14, found in textbooks throughout the years and now part of the AP curriculum? [\[xxv\]](#) Rather than go through the poem line by line, I would ask you simply to look at the number places a piece of cultural background is necessary for understanding two particularly difficult stanzas. I have indicated these places with bold print.

Frustra cruento Marte carebimus
fractisque rauci fluctibus Hadriae
frustra per autumnos nocentem
corporibus metuemus Austrum.

Visendus ater flumine languido
Cocytos errans et Danai genus
infame damnatusque longi
Sisyphius Aeolides laboris.

Or call to mind the stunning array of allusions Vergil built into Dido's doors, Aeneas' armor, or his sightings in the Underworld. And if this is true of Horace and Vergil, what are we to make of the selections set out in textbooks from less traditional sources? What sort of background can we expect our students to have, for example, for Widukind's history of the Saxon race or the murder of Thomas à Becket? [\[xxvi\]](#) How are they to relate to Boethius, Francis Bacon or a Latin life of Alessandro Volta? [\[xxvii\]](#) Even if the Latin be lucid, we can be sure comprehension will be muddied by culturally specific information.

IV. Practical Suggestions

If we grant that it has been demonstrated that what I have called "classical literacy" is one of the factors, perhaps one of the main factors, hindering our students' facile transition to the realm of translating authentic Latin texts, what can we do to overcome it?

There are really only two basic approaches to the problem. We can abandon the ideal of reading authentic Latin texts as the main goal of learning Latin, or we can remove the hindrance. It is well to consider both seriously and then, as always, to compromise.

Should we, then, abandon the reading of classical authors as the goal of most basic Latin curricula? This has recently been suggested by Daniel Carpenter who favors restructuring our entire curricular focus. [\[xxviii\]](#) No less an authority than George Kennedy has forcefully suggested that while this goal should not be abandoned, it should definitely be relegated to second place behind a primary goal of serving as "an introduction to the nature of language, to concepts of grammar, to etymology, and to cultural concepts conveyed through words," especially for the "average student." [\[xxix\]](#) Kennedy bases his argument on the nature of today's students as well as the fact that "except for the very highly motivated and the linguistically gifted, it usually takes years of study to be able to read Latin with any facility." [\[xxx\]](#) As much as the words may jar, there is much of truth here and recent discussion on revamping the upper division courses shows that it is a "hot" issue. [\[xxxi\]](#)

What of the second option of removing the hindrance? That, I submit, is not entirely possible. We can no longer expect the students coming to us to have the same sort of background knowledge which those of our parents' generation obtained. There was a time when basic Greco-Roman mythology and a general knowledge of the plots of the great classics could be assumed. A bit further back in time, it could also be assumed that the average high school student had already studied world history in such a way that the major events from antiquity had been encountered in prior years. The work of Ravitch and Finn demonstrates clearly that this is no longer the case. We have no way to put all this information back in their heads if we are also to teach them Latin.

If, then, we can not improve our students and can not teach reading skills to most of our students in two years, what should be done? I certainly would not go so far as to rule out reading all ancient authors in our upper division, but I do have a series of suggestions which might ameliorate the situation.

Curiously, little has been written of a practical nature on how to apply Hirsch's findings on the problem of cultural literacy to actual foreign language classroom activity. [\[xxxii\]](#) Thus, many of my ideas are tentative. The recommendations are basic and fundamental. They seek both to keep the age old goal of reading the past masters in the original [\[xxxiii\]](#) and to eliminate some of the problems our current students face as a result of their "classical illiteracy." They will not compensate entirely for poor grammar or weak vocabulary, but will, I feel, go far toward making the upper division Latin experience a more pleasant one for teacher and student alike.

A. CHOOSING THE AUTHOR AND THE TEXTBOOK

All too often a class will complain that their cohorts in French or Spanish can read so much more than they as Latin students are able to read and will, as a result, feel inadequate. The sad truth is that this charge is true. But it is not so much a reflection on the abilities of the students as it is of the texts they read. A comparison with the textbooks used in contemporary modern language courses can be very enlightening here.

With the help of a colleague I recently scanned a variety of Spanish 3 and 4 textbooks. The readings are enviable. They are primarily from modern authors and most often deal with 20th century problems or those of universal applicability. Pieces, prose or poetry, tend to be short and self contained, able to be finished in one or two lessons. Pictures and prereading activities help prepare the reader for the actions and settings of the story.

Our students are not so lucky. First of all, there are few texts of this description remaining to us. Not being "great literature," they did not survive the transition from antiquity to the present. Most of our remaining texts are long, or if short, like Horace, tend to demand an abnormally high level of classical literacy for understanding. Some authors who do tell straightforward, short tales are generally seen as "unworthy" of serious time since they do not meet the criterion of "high literature," the reading of which has been seen as the ultimate goal of reading Latin for centuries.

As you may know, there is some active debate currently over what should form the basis of our third and fourth year courses. Is it fair, some ask, to read Cicero in the third year and Vergil in the fourth? Would we give Milton to fourth semester ESL students? This is a battle which I do not wish to join at this time. Recent reading, however, has afforded me no small pleasure as I have found that this debate was raging almost 100 years ago and that the basic arguments have changed but little. [\[xxxiv\]](#)

In any case, the question is somewhat moot. Advanced Placement courses are often all that keep an upper level Latin course in a school and that curriculum is standardized. Let me offer, then, a few compromise suggestions about choosing the text.

The first step is to analyze the nature of the support notes. It is not enough to have a student read a 69 page introduction prior to reading Cicero's first Catilinarian. [\[xxxv\]](#) The material there is too dense, too complex, and is out of context. Compare, when you get a chance, this deluge of information with the terse but relevant information with which the Longman Cicero reader begins. [\[xxxvi\]](#) Here the bare minimum of information is given. Enough to get the reader going, but not enough to bog him or her down. Relevant explanations and expansions can be made on the lines and phrases where they are required.

The next step is to determine the cultural literacy quotient. This is, of course, a made up name, but it does reflect a valid working principle. When scanning a text for my upper level students, I run a proportion of the number of words or lines devoted to notes to the actual number of lines of text. There is no magic number to obey, but if the notes involved with clarifying culturally-dependent issues are as long or longer than the text itself, you are being sent a message that the text will be difficult for your students. A recent Horace AP text offers an excellent example. Routinely, throughout, 10 to 15 lines of actual text are surrounded by one and one half

pages of notes, many of which pertain to culturally linked material. For example, Odes 3.1.15-30 has notes explaining sortition, Damocles, Zephyrus, the Vale of Tempe, Arcturus, and the constellation Haedi. [\[xxxvii\]](#) This is a sign that poem will be culturally challenging for our young readers.

As you run such a scan, be sure to include notes which should be present but which are not. Thus, if a text should have 15 notes but only has five, you are being sent a different message, but one with the same result – this will prove to be a difficult text for your students.

An excellent application of this technique is found in the Longman Vergil volume. [\[xxxviii\]](#) It focuses first on the Dido and Aeneas story which, as a love story, is a sort of universal schema. It chooses its selections wisely and links them with lucid plot summaries in English. There is also an effort, I feel, to choose selections which further the plot and to eliminate those which are best understood by professors and Augustan Romans. Thus, the admittedly beautiful and surely important, but frighteningly referential section where the Trojans admire the art work on the doors of rising Carthage is omitted as being beyond the "classical literacy" level of most students.

The message -- the bottom line, as it were-- is "be judicious." View the text as carefully for "classical literacy" as you would for grammar or vocabulary. If the "Classical Literacy Quotient" is too high, either make accommodations or move on until it is not.

The next factor readily under a teacher's control is that of pacing. It is my firm belief that no student can feel successful by reading only 4 or 5 lines a day or by taking a year or semester to finish a single oration. Skipping and summarizing sections or gisting and paraphrasing can give a sense of accomplishment while at the same time covering most of the text in question. Likewise, having the student read significant portions of the author in question in English (see below) has must to recommend it. Of course, such an approach is not for all days and some might find it distasteful. But next time you read a book, pay attention to your speed patterns. Do you not run quickly over some passages and linger over others? Our students, if they are to become fluent in Latin, must be given the same option.

There is also much to be said for varying what is read in a 3rd or 4th year course. Some older texts do this to try to offer a survey of all Latin literature. I prefer, rather, to vary the readings based on difficulty of understanding, attempting in this way to vary the pace, to help the students' confidence, and to pique their interest. The Latin of Asterix Gallus is excellent Plautine Latin, but its comic book format allows many pages to be read at a sitting and the presence of pictures encourages intelligent guessing and gisting. Likewise, the Latin of Tela Charolottae is excellent, but my Latin III students breeze through it, reading far more pages of it per class than they do of Cicero or Caesar. One reason is that the schemata here are their own, not those of the Romans.

I am not suggesting an entire year of such works. But as readily accessible texts, they have much to recommend them as counterweights to the standard canon of Latin greats.

When the great works are read, some of the more culturally dependent sections can be read in English with great profit. One teacher I know requires her students to read the entire Aeneid before they attempt any of it in Latin. This is an excellent ploy, for did not the average Roman know most of the story -- certainly its main schemata -- before he or she heard Vergil's version? Such an approach has been adopted by the Cambridge Latin Course to great effect.

An excellent example of this is to be found in the CLC's fourth book. [\[xxxix\]](#) The poem is Catullus 11, and is filled with allusions to classical geography. To appreciate the poem the student has to understand where Persia, Scythia, and Parthia (to name a few) are. He must know what the Parthians bear arrows and what Caesar did in the Alps. And he or she must have all this in mind while making his or her way through the Latin. The CLC noticed this and gives the first four stanzas in English. The last two, which deal specifically with Catullus' feelings for his love and which contain nothing requiring "classical literacy," are given in Latin. The effect justifies the approach. Since the poem turns on a bit of a joke -- the message is dangerous not because of the journey but because of Lesbia's temper and the message is hardly the one we think it might be when we begin to read -- proper understanding of the first four stanzas is crucial to understanding the last two. By reading the first four in English, the students are prepared to understand the punch line of the poem. Their efforts can be concentrated upon their Latin and upon understanding the poem as a whole, and not spent in a frustrating search among classical trivia. I would also point out that the Longman's textbook for the Catilinarian conspiracy does an excellent job of interspersing English and Latin, all the while keeping the story going. [\[xli\]](#)

B. VARIED METHODS OF TESTING COMPREHENSION

That there are numerous ways in which we learn language is a given. Why, then, are we in the Classics generally locked into the assignment-preparation-translation method of testing comprehension in Latin? It is a perfectly satisfactory method of testing comprehension, but it is not the only one. Neither does it reflect how we came to learn our native language or how we learn a foreign language.

The first technique is to encourage gisting. An example from my recent leisure reading will make this clear. An excellent little mystery story entitled *The Middle Temple Murder* has its British protagonist staring at a sealed box. We are told that "it reminded Spargo irresistibly of the locker in which, in his school days, he had kept his personal belongings and the jam tarts, sausage rolls, and hardbake smuggled in from the tuck-shop." [\[xli\]](#) The average American reader does not know exactly what a jam tart looks like and is not all that sure what hardbake or a tuck-shop is. The overall sense of the passage -- its gist -- is totally clear and few of us would bother to stop our reading to look up these arcane words. Yet how many of us are guilty of asking just this level of diligence from our Latin students on matters of equal or even greater irrelevance?

For when we learn a living language, be it our own or another people's, we do not, as we use the language, have the leisure to look up every word and a precise translation is often secondary to a sense of being able to understand the gist of what is going on. As a frustrated Timothy Long

once said: "We are the only field in foreign languages... which forces a student to look up every word he doesn't know in the dictionary. It is killing our discipline." [\[xlii\]](#)

For example, the modern Greek word for the strap of a purse is "louri." Likewise, the word for a fan belt is also "louri" as is the word for the rein on a horse. Yet I have never looked this word up and never took a vocabulary test on the three uses. I rather learned them in context, first while buying a purse for my wife, then while watching my bus driver make repairs, and finally while reading a Greek comic book with characters from the American West. The point is that there are as many ways to test comprehension of a text as there are ways to comprehend a text, and the mechanical recitation of a set translation is not always the best choice. Moreover, all of us know that method should be changed periodically if for no other reason than to alleviate boredom and to insure that we are addressing the learning styles of all our students. In much the same manner, we should be varying our approaches to texts depending upon their "classical literacy" complexity.

Let me suggest a few of these alternate methods, beginning with our oldest friend, formal translation. The truth of the matter is that most of us are in a rut. We assign a certain number of lines to be translated and the next day call on various people to go through the text, translating and explicating as they go. This is valid, and is, indeed necessary. But it is not valid for all texts and is a severe handicap if used all the time.

The benefits of prereading should be considered. It does no real harm to preread a text in class before you send the students home to work it out grammatically. This is especially true if it is a passage rife with culturally based references. Prereading is not the same as translating and is different from in-class translation practice. You do not aim to give them a word for word translation of the paragraph. You can summarize the action for the students, pointing out the lines or sections where main events take place, explaining the cultural background as you do so. So, in the case of the Ovid text we have been using, you could tell them at what point of the story they are entering, and might give the students the translation of the more difficult lines, but only roughly sketch out the lines they will translate at home. It need take no more than a portion of actual class room time, but may save the student literally hours at home.

The teacher can lead the class in general, culturally relevant discussions. If the subject matter is Catullus 101, the teacher could initiate discussion, prior to assigning the poem, on how the students would feel if they lost a brother or sister. What if their favorite sibling died many miles away? How strongly would we, in the 20th century, feel about paying respects at the grave? How would we get there and what would we do there? This sort of activity engages them in the material before they attempt to read it. It simultaneously transcends cultural differences and gives the student a better chance of reading the text as a Roman did. prior to assigning translation.

For the same poem, one student could prepare a brief cultural report (prior to reading the actual poem) on Roman burial practices and another about Roman beliefs in an afterlife.

Also, as the students prepare the assignment for the next day, they could be required to keep a journal or diary of the terms, phrases, or references which they did not understand. The next

day the teacher could answer some or classroom time could be devoted to allowing the students to use in-class reference works such as The Oxford Companion to Classical Studies or The Oxford Classical Dictionary to answer their own questions. The completed journals would then be passed in. The student has learned a few things and the teacher has a student-generated list of the obscure material in this given passage which he or she can then use for a future class.

Comprehension can be fostered, and, indeed tested, if need be, by the simple expedient of rereading. It is very useful to begin each session with a quick -- and I stress quick -- rereading of the assignment due the previous class. It need not be translated. A summary will serve both to give context and to reorient the students to the context of the story.

If a paragraph is extremely complex and filled with classical allusions, perhaps it can merely be summarized in class by the student. This approach, designed to raise horror in those for whom Latin is more a code to be cracked than a language to be learned, is, in fact, not a new idea. It is refreshing to read that the Greek subcommittee of the 1893 report mentioned above believed that as additional practice a student should be allowed to give merely the substance of a passage and stated that "the reading of the text should precede any attempt at translation, and it would have a clear distinction made between the determination of the meaning of a passage and its translation." [\[xliii\]](#)

If in-class summarizing is not acceptable, or if a different approach is sought for variety, I suggest passing out comprehension questions to be answered as the student attempts to make sense out of the passage. Many admirable texts have such questions, but they invariably seem to follow the text. I submit that they might have more use before the text. Thus, to use the Ovid example from above, the students would go home with the assignment, not of translating, but of filling out the following sheet which allows them to "gist" the passages demanding the most "classical literacy" and to translate those least impeded by such issues.

I. Read for comprehension and answer the following questions on lines 313-23

1. Where did Deucalion finally land?

2. What were he and his wife riding at the time?

3. Are they religious people or not?
How can you tell?

II. Translate for recitation tomorrow lines 325-35. This is the section where Jupiter sees that there are one good man and woman at least left

on earth and decides to drain off the flood and give the world a second chance.

This is not an onerous task for the teacher, but it does have several positive aspects to it. It first frees the student from the morale-crushing experience of slogging through a set of lines where it is not the amount of Latin he or she knows that is slowing him or her down, but rather a lack of "cultural literacy." Secondly, it lets the class cover larger sections of text, yielding a sense of greater accomplishment.

CONCLUSION

There are many more ideas one could offer along these lines, [xliv] but perhaps it is enough to have raised some questions which may cause us all to think about the issue of "classical literacy" as it affects the issue of why our Latin III classes seem so difficult these days. It is certainly not the panacea for what ails our upper division enrollments, but it is, I think a large, and generally overlooked, element of the problem.

[ii] E.D. Hirsch Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987).

[iii] The term "world knowledge" is that of Jean Chall as cited by Hirsch (note), 2.

[iii] Hirsch, (note), 3. The sentiment is reminiscent of one commonly propounded by the great scholar of all things Greek, Eugene Vanderpool, who was very fond of saying about Greek inscriptions, "You have to know what they say before you can read them." Most lately related by John Traill in the memorial lectures to Vanderpool, *Anamneseis* (Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton, NJ, 1989), 15.

[iv] Chris Harris, "Zimbabwe Book Place in Final," Sports.Com, July 11, 2000 (<http://sl-cricket.sports.com/england/news/>)

[v] Janet K. Swaffar, "Readers, Texts, and Second Languages: The Interactive Processes," *MLJ* 72(1988), 129, 132.

[vi] Diane Ravitch, Chester E. Finn, Jr. *What do Our 17-Year-Olds Know?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 44.

[vii] Ravitch and Finn (note), 215.

[viii] Hirsch (note), 34.

[ix] Hirsch (note), 37-9.

- [x] Hirsch (note), 39-40.
- [xi] Hirsch (note), 40.
- [xii] Hirsch (note), 51.
- [xiii] Cf. Hirsch (note), 52. I have added the phrase "and laughed" to each.
- [xiv] E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, James Trefil, *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988).
- [xv] Hirsch (note), 22ff.
- [xvi] Ravitch and Finn (note), 18.
- [xvii] Hirsch (note), 27.
- [xviii] B.L. Ullman et al. *Latin for Americans: First Book* (New York: MacMillan, 1981), 175-6 (approximately half way through the first book).
- [xix] Found, for example in B.L. Ullman et al, *Latin for Americans: Third Book* (New York: MacMillan, 1983) 264.
- [xx] Ravitch and Finn (note), 94-95.
- [xxi] Diane Ravitch, "Multiculturalism," *The American Scholar* (Summer, 1990), 337.
- [xxii] Charles Jenney, Jr., R.V. Scudder, D. Coffin, *Third Year Latin* (Newton: Allyn and Bacon, 1987 reprint of 1963), 333.
- [xxiii] Ravitch and Finn (note), 52, inform us that, given a multiple choice map question, only 65.8% of their audience located France properly. In fact 22.1% of them thought it was Spain.
- [xxiv] Hugh M. McArdle and Geoffrey Suggitt, *Per Saecula: Part One-Prose* The passage from Suetonius below is found on pp. 54-55. (White Plains: Longman, 1973), 7.
- [xxv] The text presented is from Charles Jenney, Jr. and Rogers V. Scudder, *Fourth Year Latin* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1980), 383. Most recently see Ronnie Ancona, *Horace: Selected Odes and Satire 1.9* (Chicago: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1999).
- [xxvi] Jenney, Scuddard, and Coffin (note), 364-5, 370.
- [xxvii] Lillian M. Hines and Ruth B. Howard, *Our Latin Heritage. Book III.* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1967) 332, 365-66.

[\[xxviii\]](#) Daniel Carpenter, "Reassessing the Goal of Latin Pedagogy," CJ 95(2000), 391-95.

[\[xxix\]](#) George Kennedy, "The History of Latin Education," in Latinitas: The Tradition and Teaching of Latin. Helios 14,2(1987), 7-16.

[\[xxx\]](#) Kennedy (note), 15.

[\[xxxi\]](#) For example, Meyer Reinhold, "The Latin Tradition in America," Latinitas: The Tradition and Teaching of Latin. Helios 14,2(1987) 123-39 and James F. Johnson, "Alternative Approaches for the College Elementary Latin Sequence," CJ The modern reader, though, might be surprised to hear that the same issues were raised in 1893 by a blue-ribbon committee, part of the famed "Committee of Ten," to analyze the way Latin was then taught. Charles W. Eliot, et al., Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies (New York: American Book Co., 1894), 55-6, 74, where it is expressly stated that Caesar's Gallic Wars is "altogether too difficult" for this level and calls for curricular reform. (1987)246-55.

[\[xxxii\]](#) Virginia L. MacDonald and Andrew F. MacDonald, "Cultural Literacy and English as a Second Language," Clearing House 62(1989), 314-18. Guenter G. Pfister, "High School Foreign Language Programs: A Renewed Challenge," ibid. 309-13. The technique offered here of creating a "cultural inventory worksheet" seems, to this reader, of extremely limited practical applicability the way it is proposed. Chadwick B. Hilton, "Cultural Literacy and Business Students,: ibid.Brooklyn," Clearing House 62(1989) 289-92. 306-08. John J. Byrne, "E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Is Alive and Well and Living in

[\[xxxiii\]](#) The ACL's own report of 1921-23 stated that "Latin should be learned in order to be read and understood." Quoted by Reinhold (note) 133. In 1982, the editors of Living Latin still list as the purpose of their book as being "to provide students with a tested linguistic approach which will enable them to read Latin writers readily and intelligently." Clara Ashley, Teacher's Manual and Key. Living Latin, A Contemporary Approach. Book One, (Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co., 1982), 2.

[\[xxxiv\]](#) Eliot et al. (note), 62ff. Andrew F. West, ed., The Value of the Classics, More recently, Johnson (note). (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1917), 14ff.

[\[xxxv\]](#) Jenney, Scuddard, and Coffin, (note), 1-69.

[\[xxxvi\]](#) E.J. Barnes and John T. Ramsey, Cicero and Sallust: On the Conspiracy of Catiline (White Plains: Longman, 1988).

[\[xxxvii\]](#) Henry V. Bender, A Horace Reader for Advanced Placement, (Newburyport, MA: Focus, 1998), 88-89.

[\[xxxviii\]](#) Jane Harriman Hall and Alexander G. McKay, Selections from Vergil's Aeneid: Dido and Aeneas (New York: Longman, 1988).

[\[xxxix\]](#) Cambridge Latin Course: Unit IV, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 211-12.

[xli] Barnes and Ramsey (note).

[xli] J.S. Fletcher, *The Middle Temple Murder* (NY: Dover, 1980 reprint of 1919), 75.

[xlii] Prof. Long was advocating vocabulary facing the text, but his words are equally apt. He was quoted by Martha C. Taylor and Gilbert Lawall, "American Philological Association: Greek and Latin Textbook Survey," CO (May/June, 1984), 108.

[xliii] Eliot et al. (note), 83-4, cf. the Latin subcommittee's encouraging of "understanding at sight", pp. 70-71 and "skimming" p. 72.

[xliv] For further suggestions about reading advanced Latin, see David M. Karsten, "Teaching Comprehension," *Didaskalos* 3(1971), 493-506, John Gruber-Miller, "A Reading Approach to College Latin," in *Latin for the 21st Century. From Concept to Classroom*, ed. Richard A. LaFleur, pp. 162-75, and B. D. Hoyos, *Latin: How to Read It Fluently* (Amherst, Mass.: CANE Instructional Materials, 1999).