

## Imagining Nelson Mandela in Ancient Rome: A New Approach to Intermediate Latin Prose Composition<sup>1</sup>

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For the past three years I have been designing a series of exercises in English to Latin prose translation to complement a third and fourth semester university reading course in Latin prose and poetry. In the last year I have begun to extend my work to cover the first two semesters as well, an area which intersects with the high school curriculum. Although I have designed a fair complement of traditional military and political passages and material based on social history, I expect students to translate an increasing number of texts which are either unexpurgated or subject only to minor adaptations. For this reason I tend to ‘mine’ much of what I read—or would like to reread—for its suitability for translation into Latin prose. Each of the pieces ultimately chosen is meant to engage an idea as well as to illustrate various issues of syntax and style, but some encapsulate my overall approach more fully than others.

A favorite page from Nelson Mandela’s *Long Walk to Freedom* is perhaps the most striking illustration of the changes in both Classical scholarship and the world as a whole since the publication, nearly a century ago, of the textbook which I used to use. In this passage Mandela describes the polling station where he voted for the first time in South Africa in 1994:

The images of South Africans going to the polls that day are burned in my memory. Great lines of patient people snaking through the dirt roads and streets of towns and cities; old women who had waited half a century to cast their first vote saying that they felt like human beings for the first time in their lives; white men and women saying they were proud to live in a free country at last. (617-18)

Moreover, Mandela, by raising questions about the nature of justice and human progress, has allowed me to reflect on the role of a Classical education in contemporary society. Ultimately, these questions are more important than the exceptional suitability of Mandela’s work in others respects, for which the fact that Latin was an obligatory component of legal

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<sup>1</sup> This paper began as a presentation at the 2005 CAMWS conference and for this reason retains some informality of style. The author would like to thank the organizers of that conference for providing the impetus for this paper and the other presenters in the session for important insights. She would also like to thank the Office of the Vice-President Academic and the Dean of Arts Office at Wilfrid Laurier University, as well as Joann Freed and Chris Simpson as chairs of the Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies, for their support of the project upon which the paper is based. Elena Crupi, Caitlin Henderson, Hai Huang, and Ryan Hughes kindly volunteered to answer the sample question on short notice. Finally, the author would like to thank Charles Lloyd and the anonymous reviewers of *CPL Online* for their valuable suggestions, which have improved both the paper and the book.

education in his youth almost comes as an aside. The actual problems of turning his writings into Latin (“an irreverent member of the press” and “pirate voting stations” can be rendered as *inuerecundus scriptor actorum diurnorum* and *subditicius* or *subdituus locus suffragii*, respectively, although the former lacks the zing of Mandela’s English) even more of a byway.

I started designing exercises on Latin prose composition after I inherited a fourth-semester university Latin class in which the prose composition book had not been ordered for any part of the year due to an oversight. Although I needed to rectify the situation, I was concerned that most of the intermediate-level exercises currently available for English-speaking undergraduates are out of date in terms of both methodology and subject matter; they emphasize translating events from military or political history into the style of Julius Caesar, Livy, Cicero, or Tacitus (e.g., Charles E. Bennett, *New Latin Composition* 1912). The requirements of students have changed: they tend to need more assistance in Latin grammar and syntax, even in the second year of language instruction, but on the other hand, they are likely to have a broader education in the sciences, humanities, and social sciences; in particular, they tend to possess a more sophisticated understanding of social history, as is consistent with overall trends in Classical Studies. I also felt that the formatting could be more user-friendly. Unfortunately, newer books suitable for the second-year undergraduate Latin student (e.g., J. Morwood, *A Latin Grammar* 1999, and M. Minkova, *Introduction to Latin Prose Composition* 2001), while of an excellent standard, lack sufficient exercises.

I ordered a grammar book and modern composition guide for my students and then set out to provide suitable exercises grouped according to points of grammar and syntax. I started with what is now section II. Despite the practical considerations, my initial concerns were the philosophical and ethical ones I have suggested. When I took over the Latin class, I happened to have on my desk a copy of Wilfred Owen’s poem “*Dulce et Decorum Est*,” in which he uses Horace’s *Odes* III. 2.13 as a counterpoint to his description of a man dying of a poison gas attack in the trenches of World War I:

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
 and watch the white eyes writhing in his face...  
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
 The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*  
*Pro patria mori.* (22-28)

Leaving aside the issue of whether Owen understood Horace’s poem as an *apologia pro patria sua* or whether he was objecting to familiar interpretations of Horace,<sup>2</sup> Owen’s poem

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<sup>2</sup> The most plausible interpretation of this passage is to take it as Owen’s more mature reflection on the naively idealistic view he held of ancient history in poems such as “Urconium,” written in 1909:

Have they yet learnt  
 The precious truth distilled from Rome's decay?  
 Ruins! On England's heart press heavily!  
 For Rome hath left us more than walls and words,

epitomizes the need to challenge unquestioned assumptions about the Roman empire as a military model for our own time. In order to do this, it is necessary to see how previous generations of Classics students have approached the question, and what the consequences have been. Whether those with a Classical education wish to use the model of Roman imperial success or failure (or, for that matter, the consequences of Athenian imperialism during the Peloponnesian war) as a paradigm for the modern world is their own business; my goal for my students is for them to consider these issues in a thoughtful way.

As a result, my first objective was to provide a broader focus for the traditional passages on the Roman military. I balanced a number of conventional sentences with the language and syntax which students need to learn with at least an equal number of passages discussing warfare and imperialism from different vantage points. (See the Appendix for a cross-section.) The latter came to include well-known passages from Classical Greek literature, such as selections from Pericles' "Last Speech" at Thucydides II.64.6, his description of the oligarchic coup at Athens in 411 B.C. at VIII.3-5, and Xenophon's description of the fall of Athens (*Hellenica* II.3-4). Modern passages suitable for translation at the intermediate level include a selection from the Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech of Lester Pearson, who was to become Prime Minister of Canada later on, and a transcription of Winston Churchill's radio address of June 4, 1940: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender." The longest of the twentieth-century passages are two from Classically-trained intellectuals writing during World War I, the final section of Owen's "*Dulce et Decorum Est*" and Sigmund Freud's lament in his book *On Transience* that the war "destroyed not only the beauty of the countryside through which it passed and the works of art which it met in its path but also shattered our pride in the achievements of civilization, our admiration for many philosophers and artists and our hopes for a final triumph over the differences between nations and races" (14:307).

Once I had selected or composed passages on military history and related political speeches, which form approximately a third of the fourth-semester assignments, I added suitable material of both my own composition and external sources in the social sciences, including social history and women's studies, literature, and law. In particular, I devoted much of one section to the translation of several articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which are shown in the Appendix to this paper. I added a broader range of philosophical topics, from Aristotle, Maimonides, and Averroës (a selection from chapter 1 of *On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*, which is not otherwise translated into Latin), in the first phase of my revisions. Using a combination of an Internet search engine to screen

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And better yet shall leave; and more than herds  
Or land or gold, gave the Celts to us in fee;  
E'en blood, which makes poets sing and prophets see. (106-112)

Such an understanding of "*Dulce et Decorum Est*" treats "the old Lie" as advice given to the young (Furbank 209-11). While this does not necessitate a belief on the part of the speaker that *Dulce et decorum est/Pro patria mori* is Horace's last word on the subject, the scathing tone of "my friend" (25) and "children" (26), which echo Horace's *amicus* (1) and *puer* (2), suggests that Owen takes the beginning of *Odes* III.2, at least, at face value. A patriotic interpretation of *Odes* III.2 was common in Owen's day and is accepted by some commentators today (e.g., Nisbet and Rudd 27, with notes on the background to the interpretation of this passage). See also Stallworthy (90) on the ironies in "Urconium," when read through the lens of Owen's poems from the *Somme*.

for various syntactical constructions and a list of thinkers whose works I wanted to consider, I had little difficulty finding a wide range of Medieval and modern writers whose works were suitable for intermediate translation, if one allowed glosses for particular cruces. Most of these quotations could be verified through conventional means; four or five were eventually replaced with similar passages, usually from the same author, owing to problems with locating the exact source, and four are, as of this writing, listed as “attributed.” (A summary of all of the authors selected is included in the Appendix.)

In general, I have looked for Western and non-Western sources which represent a variety of viewpoints and which could be successfully juxtaposed with passages on completely different topics as a way of illuminating the grammar of the lesson. Some of the writers will be familiar to students, others probably not; for this reason I have now provided an appendix with dates and four to six line biographies of all authors translated, and I occasionally give further information in notes to particular passages. As a way of testing for diversity of perspectives, I gave part of the manuscript to a family member, who recoiled in surprise at some of my selections, as I had hoped. In order to avoid the complexities of translating from a third language to English and then to Latin, I have selected as many passages originally in English as possible, or at least passages whose English version has taken on a life of its own (e.g., Anne Frank’s *Diary of a Young Girl*). However, given the need to include a reasonable selection of classical Greek authors and to provide geographical diversity, I have used a number of passages in English translation. Depending on the original language and the suitability of the English version for my students’ efforts, I have either used standard versions or written my own, tailored for the purpose at hand.

I realized at the outset that, by taking my students outside of the predictable areas of translation, I would sacrifice the repetition of familiar vocabulary which can be beneficial to learning. On the other hand, because students are exposed earlier to a broader ‘canon’ of Latin to English translation than was the case a generation or two ago, both the benefits and drawbacks to diversity are a constant. To some extent, I tried to ease the burden by glossing unfamiliar terminology at the bottom of each sentence, much as I did with the syntactical problems that arise for intermediate students translating unexpurgated texts. An example of my approach is Article 27.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose syntax is analogous to sections 3, 18, and 19, which I have included in my text:

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

- to participate... to enjoy... to share: a literal rendering of these words requires the genitive of the gerundive or gerund. Although the gerund can be used in such circumstances, the gerundive is often preferred; cf. the discussion of the gerundive at Section I, Exercise 5. Another solution is to adapt the entire passage to require result clauses rather than making a literal translation, as if it read, “Such a right is granted to every person that he can participate...” (*Unicuique civi ita ius impertitur ut...*). While this is the more idiomatic

- participate in: this phrase is trickier than it first appears. The most common translation of ‘participate’ is *esse particeps*, (gen. *participis*), but unfortunately *esse* does not have the gerundive form required here. Another possible translation, *communico* (1), is the most natural rendition of ‘share,’ which is required below. The most viable solution may be a form of *uersor* (1) + abl.
- cultural: use the genitive of *humanitas*, *-tatis*, f. or *urbanitas*, *-tatis*, f., or, to avoid a pile-up of genitive nouns, the adjective *humanus*, *-a*, *-um* or *humanissimus*, *-a*, *-um*.
- community: *ciuitas*, *-tatis*, f., or use the adjective *ciuicus*, *-a*, *-um* to avoid a superfluity of nouns.
- share: *communico* (1). Since *communico* ordinarily takes a direct object, simply omit the word ‘in’ and have ‘advancement’ and the gerundive agree. If the gerund is used, ‘advancement’ will be a direct object. Another possibility for ‘share’ is to use a form of the idiom *fruor* (*frui*, *fructus*) *una cum ceteris* + abl. of the thing enjoyed, although cf. the note above about repetition of vocabulary.
- scientific: although *physicus* literally means ‘scientific,’ the genitive of *scientia*, *-ae*, *-f.* in the phrase *rerum naturae scientia* is the most idiomatic.
- advancement: *progressio*, *-nis*, f. or *progressus*, *-us*, m.

For the purposes of this paper, I posed this question to volunteers in the third-semester course who had just finished learning about the gerund and gerundive. My own answer sheet includes several possibilities, with some variations based on suggested renderings. Not all of these actually make use of the gerund and the gerundive:

idiomatic: *unicuique ciui ita ius impertitur ut uitam ciuicam humanissime cultam libere agent, artibus fruuntur, et progressionem scientiae rerum naturae et beneficia eius communicent.*

with gerundive: *omnes ius habent uitae humanae ciuitatis libere uersandae, artium fruendarum, et progressionis scientiae rerum naturae et beneficiorum eius communicandorum.*

with gerund: *omnes ius habent uita human ciuitatis libere uersandi, artibus fruendi, et progressionem scientiae rerum naturae et beneficia eius communicandi.*

Several members of the class submitted responses. None of them took the idiomatic approach, which has been typical in my experience except in some answers to the full-page

translations at the very end of the book. One student used infinitives instead of either the gerund or gerundive, which again is not uncommon with beginners. The others attempted either the gerund or gerundive, with errors in case use in different parts of the sentence. Two answers turned out to be particularly typical of what I expected to receive:<sup>3</sup>

1. Omnes iurem habent uersandos in uita humanitatis, fruendos artes, et communicandos progressionem rerum naturae scientiae et commoda eius.
2. Omnibus habet ius liberalis ad participandus in uita culturalis ciuitatis, fruendus artes, et communicare in progressae scientiae et beneficiae suae.

Student #1 has turned *iurem* into a masculine noun, a perennial problem and one shared with other students doing this exercise (cf. the final example below). Aside from this, the main question is why the gerundives are in the accusative plural, when the genitive is required. Is it possible that they are meant to modify *omnes*, which is understood (correctly) as the subject of *habent*? Once the student has learned how to apply the gerundive in the correct case, there should not be major issues with other sentences of this type. (Student #1, like the others in this sample, does not have major difficulties with Latin to English translation.) Student #2 has difficulties in case use other than the gerundive and seems to have mixed parts of the constructions *unicuique cui ita ius impertitur* and *omnes ius habent*; in addition, the infinitive *communicare* takes the place of the gerundive. While this response is not as strong as that of student #1, it is nevertheless illustrative of a genuine attempt to grasp the difficulties of a passage which is a ‘reach’ for third-semester students.

The final response, and perhaps the most interesting, attempts both the gerund and gerundive:

Quisque iurem libere faciendi in uitam humanitatis ciuitatis habet, gaudendorum in artibus atque communicandae progressionem scientiae, et beneficium eius.

This last student appended the note, “I think I am totally off track here.” However, the results are not as far off track as might be supposed. The gerund and the gerundives are all in the genitive, which is an excellent start. When this student encounters similar passages in a few months’ time, I will more than likely find fewer of the smaller infelicities (e.g. *in uitam*, where the ablative is required), a firm decision on behalf of either the gerund or the gerundive, and perhaps concord between *communicandae* and *progressionis* (assuming the gerundive is used), although fitting *beneficium* (sic) into the loop might escape the purview of even a student of high ability.

All of these students have benefited from several years of revision to my materials. I was not quite as sanguine earlier on. To my relief, the work with the initial group of fourth-semester students was successful in two areas: there were fewer complaints of boredom and irrelevance (or, at least, I heard fewer complaints), and their performance on conditions requiring the subjunctive and extended indirect statement showed a demonstrable improvement. However, I had underestimated the amount of help that they would need with

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<sup>3</sup> Except for corrections of minor misspellings, all answers in this section are copied verbatim.

apparently straightforward vocabulary. Furthermore, although I was aware that modern students require more overt assistance with sticky points of grammar than their predecessors, the problem turned out to be more intractable than I anticipated. Fourth-semester students have fewer problems than the third-semester volunteers with the gerunds or gerundives in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but the issues by no means disappear. They may get one passage right and misconstrue the same construction three lines later. In terms of impenetrability, the single most difficult modern passage has turned out to be an indirect question tucked inside an indirect statement at the beginning of Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening:" "Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the village though" (224). The unexpected location of the main clause in the middle of the sentence causes the bulk of the difficulty, but some students have problems even if the passage is turned into standard English prose. The second most difficult passage is "Something there is that doesn't love a wall," from Frost's poem "Mending Wall" (33); again, word order is the biggest, but not the only, culprit. It is small consolation that my students have had even more difficulties with the previous textbook.

However, the most serious question remaining after the first experiment was how to bridge an elementary textbook with the fourth-semester material, ultimately in a way compatible with any of the major grammar books available. Most elementary Latin books in current use (we use Wheelock) leave a substantial gap before students are ready to read, let alone write, the connected Latin prose of the late Republic and early Empire. In the end, I decided to begin my book with the introduction of the subjunctive (chapter 28 in Wheelock) because it has turned out to be the most expeditious way to consider the syntax of the Latin verb as an integrated whole. After using such topics as the resumptive relative pronoun to approach the Latin paragraph as a unit of thought, students proceed to work on the sequence of tenses within indirect statement, in particular conditions within *oratio obliqua* and mixed indirect statement and question. Although I do not neglect philosophy and military history, I have a special thematic emphasis on the social background of Cicero and his period, given that Ciceronian orations are now more common than Caesar for course material. Other material, such the daily work of a chef, introduces a wide range of subject matter and vocabulary, while at the same time using humor to heighten interest. In the third semester I do not feel that students are ready for the tricky syntax and idioms of unexpurgated English writings for their main assignments; instead, I have composed exercises to fit particular problems and have given direct quotations as optional exercises. In my latest round of revisions these supplementary exercises have been included at the end of each chapter in both sections.

Inevitably, bringing in any modern material forces one to confront the limits of Latin prose to describe life as we now know it. In the interest of having students translate passages suitable for the Latin prose style of the late Republic and early Empire, I decided to eliminate Latin neologisms from all assignments except the final week of the last semester, in which I provide a choice of excerpts about a page in length from a variety of modern thinkers. I have needed to make only one exception; not surprisingly, the word is 'Australia,' required to translate Jill Ker Conway's moving description of her departure from her homeland for North America. However, this decision has come at a price: science and sports are both underrepresented in the main body of the text. Fortunately, Stephen Hawking has a

consummate ability to express questions of physics and ontology in non-technical language, as in

So long as the universe had a beginning, we could suppose it had a creator. But if the universe is really completely self-contained, having no boundary or edge, it would have neither beginning nor end: it would simply be. (140-41)

Likewise, sections of Jon Krakauer's account of the disaster on the summit of Mount Everest in May of 1996 are in a form redolent of Livy's description of Hannibal crossing the Alps in Book XXI of *Ab Urbe Condita*: "In the morning, on the way up, I'd made a point of continually studying the route on this part of the mountain, frequently looking down to pick out landmarks that would be helpful on the descent, compulsively memorizing the terrain: 'Remember to turn left at the buttress that looks like a ship's prow. Then follow that skinny line of snow until it curves sharply to the right'" (200).

For the shorter translation passages it has been easier to find linguistically suitable and self-contained material from recent non-fiction than fiction. Not only are there the usual stumbling blocks of names and inventions, but it has proved difficult to divorce part of a page of a novel from its surrounding context. The experimental nature of much contemporary fiction also makes it more suitable for graduate students. Perhaps the most striking exception is John Gardner's *Grendel*, which recounts the story of Beowulf from the viewpoint of the eponymous monster. Its subject matter and straightforward style recommend it to any instructor needing a passage for translation on short notice, especially for students who enjoy Vergil and Homer. The other exception I have found to date also derives from a tale of conflict, but this time the source is Billy Pilgrim's advice to his children in *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Vonnegut's character, like the novelist himself, becomes an eyewitness to the horrors of the destruction of Dresden in World War II from his vantage point in a camp for Allied prisoners of war. Reliving his memories over and over again, Pilgrim warns:

I have told my sons that they are not under any circumstances to take part in massacres, and that the news of massacres of enemies is not to fill them with satisfaction or glee.

I have also told them not to work for companies which make massacre machinery, and to express contempt for people who think we need machinery like that. (19)

Although the unconventional style and language of *Slaughterhouse Five* put much of the novel out of bounds for second-year students, this passage is too effective an example of the use of jussive noun clauses (indirect commands) to pass up as an extra credit question.

The problems with modern idioms are not always in the contemporary passages; for example, the sentences, "You do love me, don't you? You aren't planning to marry someone else, are you?", initially chosen to illustrate the use of *num* and/or *nonne* (and for women, *nubo* + a dative complement) are straightforward inasmuch as the discussion is about arranged marriages in the Roman world. Male same-sex marriages can also be incorporated quite easily, since there is evidence for *nubo* + dative in Martial *Epigrammata* 12.42 (c. 101CE) in reference to a marriage ceremony (without legal validity) between two males (Frier 2004);



however, we are out of luck when we look for language describing same-sex ceremonies between two women.

“Out of luck” also applied at one point to permission to republish one of the extended passages which I provide at the end of the fourth semester. I give students a choice of several pieces ten to twelve sentences long on a variety of topics; these include, in addition to the Nelson Mandela passage cited earlier, Bono on AIDS, Amartya Sen on the economics of development, Daniel Libeskind on architecture, and Kristin DeBoer on wolves and the environment. (See the Appendix for fuller details.) I also wanted to include an extended selection from the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize address of the Iranian scholar Shirin Ebadi, the first Muslim woman to win the award. Unfortunately, at the time I was working on this section of the book a regulation from the U.S. Treasury’s Office of Foreign Asset Control had been interpreted to prevent much scholarly translation and publication in the United States from citizens of Iran; the memoirs of Shirin Ebadi were the most famous casualty. Neither my students nor I were happy with this limitation on our academic freedom, but, as I intended to seek publication with American presses, I had little recourse but to refer them to the passage I had written about Socrates on obeying the law and remove Ebadi’s work from the material I had already e-mailed to them. Mercifully, the Treasury has since revised its ruling.<sup>4</sup> Ebadi’s memoirs were published in May of 2006, just in time for me to include a selection in my prospectus for publishers. I chose a selection describing the period in which the Iranian authorities imprisoned Ebadi for her work on behalf of her jailed clients. (165-66)

Now that the draft of my second year prose composition manuscript has reached a critical mass in the past year, the temptation to branch out into first year Latin has become overwhelming. In this area my interests will no doubt intersect with colleagues teaching at the secondary level. Because beginners find the prospect of vocabulary which is not in the textbook daunting, this project is necessarily less ambitious. While I am loath to draw general conclusions at this early stage, elements of my second-year approach seem viable. At the very least, I have made sure that students encounter crying babies, who are still inexplicably absent from a number of elementary university-level textbooks for both Latin and ancient Greek. In fact, in the area of students’ life experience, it may be that a reasonable amount of additional verbiage is to their advantage. A student recently came into my office with a concerned expression on her face. “Is there some prerequisite to this course (Latin 101) which is not in the university calendar? I mean, most people don’t begin a language by learning about gates (*portae*), political entities (e.g., *patria*), and punishment (*poena*). They usually start with family members and household pets.” No doubt my high school colleagues would find this anecdote amusing, but I am not convinced that any of us (myself included) have made as much use of social history as is possible.

I initially feared that I would not find unexpurgated quotations suitable for extra credit questions, but “Call me Ishmael” from the beginning of Melville’s *Moby Dick* is at the level of chapter 1 of Wheelock. Martin Luther King’s vision, “I have a dream,” or Sojourner Truth’s trenchant lament of “And ain’t I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have

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<sup>4</sup> For the history of the restrictions against Ebadi and others, see Rachel Donadio, “Essay; Is There Censorship,” *New York Times*, December 19, 2004, Edward Wyatt, “Government Eases Rules on Writers in Sanctioned Nations,” *New York Times*, December 16, 2004 and now Ebadi with Moaveni 211-13.

ploughed and planted...”<sup>5</sup> are but two of a number of political statements which are both well known and easy to translate for high school students. I have given this year’s beginning students several controversial utterances by U.S. presidents, past and present, including “I am not a crook” (President Nixon), “I did not have sexual relations with that woman” (President Clinton), and “Mistakes were made” (Presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush); these quotations were selected to illustrate, respectively, the predicate nominative, the ablative of accompaniment and the use of *ista*, and the nuances of the passive voice. Since students may find some of the scandals involved as familiar as Tammany Hall, context is provided. Depending on the climate in a particular high school, these remarks might not be possible subjects for translation, but there are surely others that are. In addition, depending on the context, quotes from athletes, rock musicians, and Hollywood actors which are perhaps too straightforward for a postsecondary audience might work well in high school. (Readers will note a relative dearth of such figures on my list; it is not for want of trying.) But literature may still be our most fruitful source. The student who wanted to learn about household pets will find, when she gets to chapter 12 of Wheelock, an excerpt from T.S. Eliot’s *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*: “Old Deuteronomy’s lived a long time;/ he’s a Cat who has lived many lives in succession (“Old Deuteronomy” 1-2).” (I pass over the fact that *feles* is an *i*-stem noun, as only the nominative singular is needed, and provide the relative pronoun.) Eventually, first year university students should be able to tackle material longer than a sentence, whether of the instructor’s own design or from an outside source.

In part because the extended passages are the only ones with significant numbers of neologisms, they give students the most difficulty, although my results have generally been successful. Both before and after I started the new book I graded my assignments on a scale of 1 to 10; a typical sentence might be worth one point, with increments of 0.05. This makes some direct comparisons possible. Overall, average marks have gone up by seven to eight percentage points since I introduced my own material; students at all levels of proficiency have done better, despite the fact that they have had to look up more words on generally more sophisticated material (I now have an English to Latin vocabulary with the most important items, but the nature of the book prevents this from being comprehensive). At best only half of the change is due to an overall improvement of the quality of the upper-year students in our programs. Despite practical difficulties in assessing changes in reading abilities, I have found noticeable improvements in two areas: the transition from the elementary textbook to connected Latin prose and students’ interest in the broader intellectual context of what they are translating. I would like to hope that a good proportion of this is due to targeted exercises in the first instance and a greater emphasis on context in the second. Student satisfaction is harder to gauge, since students are unlikely to complain directly about a faculty member’s own work; however, even with an incomplete text, I do not receive the complaints I did before I began my experiment. Finally, I have also had more students attempt verse composition. (While verse composition is beyond the purview of my prose composition book, I have a separate list of suitable poems.) As for me, if students derive pleasure from translating Mandela’s account of his country’s “overwhelming victory for democracy and justice” into Latin, I will be more than satisfied.

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<sup>5</sup> delivered 1851, Women’s Convention, Akron, Ohio; cited in *Modern History Sourcebook*, available on line at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth-woman.html>.

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## Appendix

1. Writers whose short or medium-length passages are chosen for translation or adaptation into Latin (as of October 2006): Aristotle, Averroës, Johann Sebastian Bach, Eaven Boland, Julia Child, Winston Churchill, Confucius, Jil Ker Conway, Marie Curie, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Albert Einstein, Anthony Fauci, Anne Frank, Sigmund Freud, Robert Frost, Francis Fukuyama, Mahatma Gandhi, John Gardner, William Gates, III., Temple Grandin, Stephen Hawking, Michael Igantieff, William James, Martin Luther King, Jr., Maxine Hong Kingston, Jon Krakauer, ps.-Longinus, Maimonides, Nelson Mandela, Jeffrey Mousaieff Masson, Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Margaret Mead, Golda Meir, Wilfred Owen, Lester Pearson, Adrienne Rich, Eleanor Roosevelt, Albert Schweitzer, William Shakespeare, Shantideva, Mary Taylor Simeti, Margaret Thatcher, Lewis Thomas, Thucydides, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Hone Tuwhare, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Frank Lloyd Wright, Xenophon, William Butler Yeats

2. Passages up to a page in length from contemporary thinkers and Edward Gibbon (students select one):

1. Nelson Mandela (1993 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, former President of South Africa)

2. Bono (= Paul David Hewson) (musician and development advocate)

3. Kristin DeBoer (ecologist)

4. Daniel Libeskind (architect)

5. Shirin Ebadi (lawyer, 2003 Nobel Peace Prize laureate)

6. David Suzuki (biologist and philanthropist)

7. Mary Ann Glendon (international lawyer)

8. Amartya Sen (winner of the 1998 Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences)

9. Edward Gibbon on the excesses of the reign of Caracalla (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol.1, I.vi)

N.B.: A biographical appendix supplies information about all figures cited in sections 1 and 2 above.

3. Examples of ancient and cross-cultural material on the military and imperialism, and political speeches on issues of war and peace. These passages come from different parts of Section II. Although all of them are annotated for student use, selections F, G, and H require major glossing of complex vocabulary and, at least to some extent, constructions.

A. The Great Wall of China was constructed in such a way that it could not be circumvallated or scaled with ladders; nevertheless, it was captured by bribing the guards.

—specially designed passage

B. Things were not so bad for the Persians that they executed the Greek spies; rather they sent them around the kingdom under guard so that they could tell of Persian power.

—loosely adapted from Herodotus 7.146-147

C. “With the Paralus having arrived at Athens at night, the disaster was reported, and a wailing ran from Piraeus through the long walls to the citadel, one man passing on the news to another; and so no one slept during that night, everyone mourning, not only for the lost, but much more still for themselves, thinking that they would suffer such things as they had inflicted on the Melians, colonists of the Lacedaemonians, after reducing them by siege, and upon the Histiaeans and Scionaeans and Toronaeans and Aeginetans and many others of the Greeks. The next day they convened an assembly, at which it was resolved to bank up all the harbors except one, and to repair the walls, and to station guards, and in all other respects to prepare the city for a siege.” —Xenophon, *Hellenica* II.2.3-4 (literal translation by the author of this article, designed to facilitate work in Latin)

D. If in some smothering dreams you too could pace

Behind the wagon that we flung him in,

and watch the white eyes writhing in his face...

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest

To children ardent for some desperate glory,

The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*

*Pro patria mori.* —Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum Est” (22-28), with reference to Horace, *Odes* III.2.13

E. “We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.” —Sir Winston Churchill, radio broadcast on June 4, 1940, adapted

F. “A year later the war broke out and robbed the world of its beauties. It destroyed not only the beauty of the countrysides through which it passed and the works of art which it met in its path but also shattered our pride in the achievements of civilization, our admiration for many philosophers and artists and our hopes for a final triumph over the differences between nations and races. It tarnished the lofty impartiality of science, it revealed our instincts in all their nakedness and let loose the evil spirits within us which we thought had been tamed for ever by centuries of continuous education by the noblest minds.” —Sigmund Freud, discussing the outbreak of World War I in *On Transience* (Standard Edition 14:307)

G. “The choice, however, is as clear now for nations as it was once for the individual: peace or extinction. The life of states cannot, any more than the life of individuals, be conditioned by the force and the will of a unit, however powerful, but by the consensus of a group, which must one day include all states. Today the predatory state, or the predatory group of states, with power of total destruction, is no more to be tolerated than the predatory individual.” —Lester B. Pearson, Nobel Peace Prize Address, 1957

H. “They imagined that the revolutionary party was much bigger than it really was, and they lost all confidence in themselves, being unable to find out the facts because of the size of the city and because they had insufficient knowledge of each other... Throughout the democratic party people approached each other suspiciously, everyone thinking that the next man had something to do with what was going on. And there were in fact among the revolutionaries some people whom no one would ever have imagined would have joined in an oligarchy.” —Thucydides VIII.66.3-5, on the oligarchic coup in Athens, 411 B.C., Rex Warner, trans. (p. 576 of translation)

I. “Do not send embassies to Sparta, and do not be clearly weighed down by the present toils.”—Thucydides II. 64.6 (Pericles' “Last Speech;” translation by author of this article)

#### 4. Examples of selected passages from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

A. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. — Article 1

A. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms. —Article 4

B. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality, or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage, and at its dissolution. —Article 16.1

C. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. —Article 18

The other Articles included are 17.2 and 19.

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