

"Deleterious to the Cause" — or Not: A Different Approach to Transitional Latin
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This paper presents a new approach to the perennial problem of making the transition from first- to second-year college Latin. Among its novelties are: the choice of Caesar, *BG* as principal source of text material; intensive use of a kernel-and-expansion approach to displaying Latin sentence formation by means of a visually-oriented presentation of the "growth" of e.g. a simple SOV unit into a fully-developed set of phrases and clauses; and a comprehensive gathering of in-text syntactical examples to reinforce the fundamental grammatical features that cause difficulty in moving to continuous "real-Latin" prose. The choice of Julius Caesar as the gateway to "real Latin" was firmly established in the 19th Century and carried on to the middle of the 20th, as is seen in the plethora of elaborate high-school editions and in Gonzalez Lodge's *Vocabulary of High School Latin* (1912), which focuses exclusively on "The Big Three" (Caesar, Cicero, Vergil). Subsequent generations abandoned that focus, in a progression that perhaps culminated in Wheelock's famously dismissive footnote, "deleterious to the cause." But many factors independent of the "maps and chaps" mentality justify bringing Caesar's writing back to the fore: the centrality and pedagogical usefulness of his lexicon and plain, lightly repetitious style; the great rarity of a narrator who was also a towering figure in world history; the resurgent fascination with all things Celtic; and the appalling human tragedy of the Swiss migration, in which the death toll calmly observed by Caesar himself is eerily reminiscent of modern massacres.

The text material discussed here concentrates on a few substantial narrative segments: 1.1-12, 21-29, and 6.13-17 (where the style is noticeably more "literary" and offers a bridge to Latin verse); its total of 4000 words of text might seem small, but every sentence is presented first as an elemental kernel, which gradually expands phrase by phrase (with brief indicators at a right tabset to show what grammatical category is being added), until the whole expression has been reached. This method provides efficient practice in basic sentence structures that is surely more comprehensible for students than asking them to fight their way through thickets of full-length Caesarian periods.

There will be several handout pages to illustrate the main points of the paper.