

The Experrecta Series: Student Editions of Latin Texts Written by Women

The purpose of this workshop is two-fold: to promote the inclusion of more women into the Latin curriculum and to include students in the production of pedagogical resources. We'll be pursuing this double-goal of inclusivity by highlighting one particular project: a new series of editions of Latin texts written by women, co-edited and published by teams of students. In the first portion of the workshop, the presiders will explain the topic, goals, and methods of this series, followed by a question-and-answer period. Then several individual students who took part in the project will give short papers outlining their experience and what they learned from it, followed by another question-and-answer period. Workshop attendees can expect to get a better sense of the range Latin works written by women and how they might fit into the curriculum, as well as how to develop and carry out the publication of a Latin edition together with a group of students.

Most Latin curricula include few, if any, Latin texts written by women. And yet, women have written a multitude of Latin works of the highest literary quality and historical importance. These texts have rarely broken into classrooms for two reasons: first, the majority of these texts were written in the period of 1400-1700, while most Latin programs restrict themselves to Classical (and, to some extent, Medieval) literature; second, there are no editions geared to students for the vast majority of these texts. The Experrecta Series will produce editions of Latin texts from women of all eras and places, from Cornelia (c. 190-115 BCE) in ancient Rome to Sor Juana de la Cruz (1648-1695) in what is now Mexico. Each edition will include help with the author's vocabulary and grammar, as well as an introduction to provide historical background on

her life and works. The name of the series comes from Perpetua, one of the earliest female Latin prose authors, whose narrative recounts a series of visions, each of which ends with the phrase *Et experrecta sum* (“And I awoke”). This series will be populated by texts that have long been slumbering and are now waking up to a new dawn and a new readership in Latin classrooms.

Students might seem to be an unlikely resource in the creation of educational materials. After all, these texts are meant *for* students—surely that means that they cannot be *by* students? And yet, with the proper scaffolding, students can perform the fundamental work necessary for the creation of a pedagogical edition: namely, the creation of a glossary that includes all Latin words from a text, and the creation of a commentary that explains whatever parts of the Latin text are in need of explanation. In our own projects, each student has been responsible for a (roughly) 400-word passage of the text. It is entirely within their capability to, over the course of a semester, draw up a comprehensive and correct glossary and a helpful commentary. In doing so, students learn valuable philological skills and gain a more nuanced understanding of both Latin and textual editing. Each student then serves as a peer-reviewer for another student’s passage, and the instructor provides a final edit of the whole.

The Experrecta Series currently has one volume in print (*The Passion of Perpetua*, available open access online) and a second volume slated to be complete by June of 2022 (*Isotta Nogarola’s Defense of Eve*). This workshop will provide a forum for further discussion on the Latin texts written by women and the Latin curriculum, as well as further details on how to develop a pedagogical project that engages students in textual editing and the production of a new edition.