

11-21-2019

## Teaching Piccolomini's *Historia de Duobus Amantibus* in Intermediate Latin

Anne Mahoney  
*Tufts University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://crossworks.holycross.edu/necj>



Part of the [Classics Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Mahoney, Anne (2019) "Teaching Piccolomini's *Historia de Duobus Amantibus* in Intermediate Latin," *New England Classical Journal*: Vol. 46 : Iss. 2 , 46-58.  
<https://doi.org/10.52284/NECJ.46.2.article.mahoney>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by CrossWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in New England Classical Journal by an authorized editor of CrossWorks.

Keywords: Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *Historia de Duobus Amantibus*, Latin, Neo-Latin pedagogy

<https://doi.org/10.52284/NECJ.46.2.article.mahoney>

*NECJ* began publishing in an open access format in 2019. As part of this project, we are committed to making as much of our earlier content accessible as possible while releasing new issues. As we post earlier articles to our website, for each article we are aiming to include an abstract, keywords, a DOI for that article, and an updated works cited that includes DOIs for any works that have them. A digital object identifier (DOI) allows research to be linked across organizations to remain on record and open for use permanently. We include them for the journal, its contents, and citations as part of our efforts with [Crossref](#). The *NECJ* editorial team drafts an abstract and set of keywords for each article and then endeavors to collaborate with each article's author to further revise these items. In addition to the original works cited, we have added an updated works cited with DOIs at the end of the document. The article retains all its pages from its original publication in the journal; before the first page of the article, we add a new, unnumbered page with an abstract, keywords, DOI for that article and at the end we add unnumbered pages with the new works cited updated with DOIs. The new first page and the new works cited pages are unpaginated.

# Teaching Piccolomini's *Historia de Duobus Amantibus* in Intermediate Latin

Anne Mahoney  
Tufts University

**Abstract:** This article is a report on using Piccolomini's 15th-century novella *Historia de Duobus Amantibus* in an intermediate-level college Latin class. We consider the text itself, background students will need before reading it, editing the text for students, and class activities and assessments.

Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, wrote a short novel in Latin called *Historia de Duobus Amantibus* in 1444. It became one of the most popular books of the 15th and 16th centuries, widely read and translated into many vernacular languages. It's an amusing story of love, both marital and illicit; it's also partly narrated through the characters' letters to each other, making it an ancestor of the epistolary novels, in English, French, and other vernaculars, that become popular in the 18th century. At about 14,000 words, it's short enough to be read in one semester, but long enough to be substantial.

I've used this text with third-semester Latin students.<sup>1</sup> In this article I'll explain how I presented it and what supplements I needed to create to make it accessible, as a case study or experience report. The third semester of the college Latin sequence is challenging because, at least in our program, most of the students in the class are first-years, coming from a variety of different high-school programs. They have all learned roughly the same things, but from different points of view and with different emphases — and, in particular, aside from the most common words of Latin, their vocabularies may be quite different from each other. Hence it's useful to give them a text that isn't in any of the regular textbook series, one that's equally unfamiliar to all of them, but one that will hold their interest. Such a text, though, may not exist in a convenient student edition with notes and vocabulary: there is no such edition for the *Historia* for example. In that case, the teacher may need to fill in background for the students, and here is an example of one way to do so.

---

<sup>1</sup> The class was in Fall 2013. There were six students in the class, five first-years and a sophomore, two men and four women. Most of them took more Latin, even though this class completed the minimum foreign language requirement for graduation, three went on to major in classics, and two are now in graduate programs.

The *Historia* is about a woman named Lucretia and her husband Menelaus who live in Siena. One day the Prince and his army come to town. One of the Prince's officers is a noble young man called Eurialus. He and Lucretia fall in love at first sight, before they've even spoken to each other. The novel tells how he courts her, how they keep their affair secret from Menelaus, and what happens in the end.

You will have noticed that the name of the cuckolded husband is Menelaus — like the most famous cuckolded husband in classical literature, Helen's husband. As soon as we hear his name, we expect his wife to be unfaithful.

But the wife's name is Lucretia, like one of the most loyal and faithful wives in ancient history, the wife of Collatinus in Livy book 1. And her lover is Eurialus, like the young man in *Aeneid* book 9 who is an example of loyal and faithful friendship between men. To a clued-in reader, the names set up opposite expectations — will this Menelaus be like the Trojan War Menelaus, or will this Lucretia be like Livy's Lucretia?

Part of teaching this text, then, is to clue in the students to the implications of the characters' names. So I began the semester with simplified versions of the Nisus and Euryalus story from Vergil (*Aeneid* 9, via Vicipaedia Latina) and of the Trojan War story (from Dares, *De Excidio Troiae*). I also gave them the story of Lucretia in the versions by Eutropius (1.8–9, Valerius Maximus (6.1.1), and then Livy (1.57–60). And after these preliminaries, I also had them read the short articles in Vicipaedia Latina on Piccolomini and on the novel.<sup>2</sup>

I got to the *Historia* itself about half-way through the semester. Students loved the emotional letters; the scene where Lucretia ostentatiously tears up a letter from Eurialus in front of the messenger who delivers it, but then, as soon as she's alone, frantically pieces it back together; and the farcical scene in which Menelaus almost catches Eurialus in Lucretia's bedroom, but she tosses a box of papers out the window and Menelaus runs downstairs to retrieve them. Admittedly, they were disappointed by the ending, in which Piccolomini seems to realize suddenly that he shouldn't be glorifying adultery. But aside from that, the novella worked well in class.

The vocabulary is entirely classical, not surprising for a Renaissance text; almost every word is in the Lewis and Short lexicon,<sup>3</sup> though some of them are pretty obscure and won't be in a smaller dictionary. Aside from the names of the characters and the city where the story is set, Siena, which is Sena in Latin, there aren't many important proper nouns,

---

<sup>2</sup> In preparation for asking the students to read these articles, I tweaked them a bit myself, fixing a couple of typos and adding an illustration. For more about Vicipaedia Latina and its utility in the classroom, see Mahoney (2015).

<sup>3</sup> Since I was using a version of the Perseus tools, I had Lewis and Short conveniently available; the point is just that Piccolomini rarely uses un-classical vocabulary.

though students will have to be told that in this period “Caesar” refers to the Holy Roman Emperor. There are several words referring to parts of a house, like *fenestra*, *thalamus*, *paries*, *ostium* and *cellarium*, or to jewelry, like *monile* and *balteus*, and there are other words that aren’t rare but that students at this level probably haven’t run into yet, like *lena*. But the vocabulary is distinctly smaller than in the *Golden Ass* or the *Satyricon*, two other texts that members of my department have used in Latin 3 (sometimes in simplified versions). Apuleius’s text is just over 56,000 words long, or about four times as long as the *Historia*, and it has about 10,600 different words. Petronius’s is longer than the *Historia* and shorter than the *Golden Ass*, about 32,000 words, and it uses about 7,100 different words.

The syntax is also classical, rather than medieval. That is, Piccolomini uses noun cases in the classical way, rather than prepositional phrases; he uses accusative and infinitive rather than *quod* for indirect speech; he distinguishes temporal and circumstantial *cum* clauses, and uses other subjunctive clauses as you would expect; and his word order follows classical conventions. While medieval syntax may be easier for Anglophone students, a classicizing text is closer to what the students have seen in prior Latin classes. It’s also better preparation for most of what students will read in later classes.

Piccolomini not only uses classical words, but frequently takes whole phrases from classical texts, particularly Terence’s plays. He is not always alluding to the earlier text, just borrowing idioms: it’s not necessary to know Terence to understand what the novel is talking about. Sometimes, though, an allusion clearly is intended. For example when Lucretia first sees Eurialus and falls in love, we have *Saucia ergo gravi cura Lucretia et igne capta caeco, iam se maritam obliviscitur*; picking up *Aeneid* 4.1 where Dido, too, is *gravi cura saucia*. Later, as Lucretia is trying to resist the affair, she compares herself to Dido, also to Medea and Ariadne, as all three women fell in love with strangers, men coming from elsewhere, and all three were betrayed by them. All of these allusions tie the *Historia* to other texts the students will eventually read, or may have already read in English, and when time permits it can be fun to point them out.

Overall, the Latin is straightforward, not particularly ornate or convoluted in style. The dedicatory letters at the start are the most difficult part, as they’re in the florid style often used for dedications. But in fact it’s fairly common for the introduction or the beginning of a Latin work to be the hardest part: think, for example, of the elaborate sentences at the start of Cicero’s *Pro Caelio* or *Pro Archia*. A useful piece of general advice that I give to students is: skip two pages and pick up from there. If it gets easier, you know you can handle the text.

Here is an excerpt from the text, to give you the flavor, and some examples of the sorts of things I needed to explain, and observations one might make depending on the interests and background of the class. This passage is the first letter and its delivery, a vivid scene. Eurialus asks a friend to find him a messenger: it's amusing that the friend's name is Nisus. The letter itself is somewhere between fulsome and soppy. The messenger is a madam, a *lena*, and Lucretia knows who she is. She reacts indignantly: "how dare you show up at the house of a respectable woman like me?" She rips the letter into small pieces, drops them to the ground, and kicks them into the fire, threatening to do the same to the *lena* herself. The *lena* isn't fooled: she acts submissive, but she's thinking "I can tell you really want this guy, because you're trying not to show it." She reports back to Eurialus that Lucretia loves him, leaving out the part about tearing up the letter. Instead she says Lucretia has showered kisses on the letter. And in fact, that's exactly what does happen: as soon as Lucretia is alone, she grabs the shredded bits of paper, reads the letter, and does indeed kiss it thousands of times. She replies, and the love affair is off and running.

Haec ubi firmata sunt, lenam quaerit cui ceras ad nuptam ferendas  
committat. Nisus huic fidus comes erat, harum rerum calidus magister.  
Hic provinciam suscipit mulierculamque conducit cui litterae  
committuntur in hanc sententiam scriptae:

Salutarem te, Lucretia, meis scriptis, si qua mihi  
salutis copia foret. Sed omnis tum salus, tum vitae  
spes meae, ex te pendet. Ego te magis quam me amo,  
nec te puto latere meum ardorem. Laesi pectoris iudex  
tibi esse potuit vultus meus, saepe lacrimis madidus, et  
quae te vidente emisi suspiria. Fer benigne, te precor,  
qui me tibi aperio. Cepit me decus tuum vinctumque  
tenet eximia, qua omnibus praestas, venustatis gratia.  
Quid esset amor antehac nescivi, tu me cupidinis  
imperio subiecisti. Pugnavi diu, fateor, violentum ut  
effugerem dominium, sed vicit meos conatus splendor  
tuus, vicerunt oculorum radii quibus es sole potentior.  
Captivus sum tuus, nec iam mei amplius compos  
sum, tu mihi et somni et cibi usum abstulisti. Te dies  
noctesque amo, te desidero, te voco, te exspecto, de  
te cogito, te spero, de te me oblecto, tuus est animus,  
tecum sum totus, tu me sola servare potes solaque  
perdere. Elige horum alterum et quid mentis habeas

rescribe. Nec durior erga me verbis esto quam fueras oculis quibus me colligasti. Non peto rem grandem: ut alloquendi te copiam habeam, postulo.

Hoc tantum volunt hae litterae, ut quae nunc scribo dicere possim coram. Hoc si das, vivo et felix vivo. Si negas, extinguatur cor meum quod te magis quam me amat. Ego me tibi et tuae commendo fidei. Vale, animae mi et vitae subsidium meae.

Has ubi gemma signatas accepit lena, festino gradu Lucretiam poscit, eaque sola inventa: “Hanc” inquit “epistulam tibi tota caesarea nobilior et potentior curia mittit amator utque sui te misereat magnis precibus rogat.”

Erat lenocinio notata mulier, nec id Lucretiam latebat permolestoque tulit infamem feminam ad se mitti atque in eam versa: “Quae te” ait “scelesti in hanc domum audacia duxit? Quae te dementia meam adire presentiam suasit? Tu nobilium aedes ingredi, tu matronas temptare potentes et violare audes legitimas faces? Vix me contineo quin capillos involem tuos. Tu mihi des litteras? Tu me alloquaris? Tu me respicias? Nisi plus quod me decet attenderem, quam quod tibi convenit, efficerem hodie ne posthac umquam tabellas amatorias ferres. I ocus venefica tuasque litteras tecum defer, immo da ut lacerem potius ignique dedam.”

Accipiensque papirum in partes diversas scidit et calcatam saepe pedibus atque consputam in cinerem coniecit. “At sic de te” ait “sumi supplicium lena deberet, igne quam vivo dignior. Sed abi ocus, ne te vir inveniatur meus, et, quas tibi remisi, de te poscat poenas cavetoque admodum ne ante conspectum redeas meum.”

Timuisset alia mulier, sed haec matronarum noverat mores et intra se inquit: “Nunc vis maxime quia te nolle ostendis.”

Moxque ad illam: “Parce,” ait, “domina, putavi me benefacere tibi que complacitum iri. Si secus est, da veniam imprudentiae meae. Si non vis ut redeam, parebo: tu quem despicias amatorem videris.”

Atque his dictis e conspectu recessit Eurialoque invento: “Respira,” inquit, “felix amator, plus amat mulier quam amatur. Sed nunc non fuit rescribendi otium. Inveni maestam Lucretiam, at ubi te nomino tuasque litteras dedo, hilarem vultum fecit milliesque papirum basiavit: ne dubita, mox responsum dabit.” Et abiens vetula cavit ne amplius inveniretur, ne, pro verbis, referret verbera.

Lucretia vero, postquam anus evasit, fragmenta perquirens epistulae, particulas quasque suo loco reposuit et lacera verba contexuit iamque legibile chirographum fecerat, quod, postquam millies legit, millies quoque deosculata est tandemque involutum sindone, inter pretiosa iocalia collocavit. Et nunc hoc repetens, nunc illud verbum, maiorem horatim bibeat amorem Eurialoque rescribere statuit.

This passage gives a fair idea of the style and the grammar of the piece. The first sentence includes both a relative clause of purpose and a gerundive, though the most difficult thing here is probably the use of *cera* to mean not literally “wax,” nor even “writing tablet made with wax,” but “writing” in general — the letter with its wax seal. The diminutive *muliercula* is contemptuous, referring to the *lena*; this isn’t unusual for diminutives, of course, but may be a new idea for some students.

The letter itself uses all the best clichés of love poetry. Eurialus says his life is in Lucretia’s hands; he never knew what love was until he saw her; for him, she shines like the sun; and so on. The last line, *ego me tibi et tuae commendo fidei*, calls to mind the poems where Catullus talks about love with terms like *fides* and *foedus* — these are in particular poems 76, 87, 109 — though in fact Piccolomini’s line is taken not from Catullus but from Terence’s play *Eunuch*. Piccolomini uses *tum ... tum* where Cicero might have preferred *cum ... cum*, not just in this letter but frequently. The sentence *fer benigne, te precor, qui me tibi aperio* is a bit odd; this is *fer* in the sense of “put up with,” and the relative clause is its direct object.<sup>4</sup> We might paraphrase *concede ut me tibi aperiā*. The many instances of *tu, te, tuus* in the letter are emphatic, and meant to grab Lucretia’s attention.

The scene between Lucretia and the *lena* at the start of this passage is full of lively dialogue. Lucretia’s first speech uses anaphora effectively, starting two questions with *quae me* and three more with *tu me* or *tu mihi*. The short clauses show her indignation. The *lena* hasn’t named Eurialus, but Lucretia seems to know the letter is from him, given how eager she is to read it once she’s alone. On the other hand, she seems genuinely insulted that he would send such a person as this to carry the message for him. She tells the *lena* to get

<sup>4</sup> Hersant prints *quod* rather than *qui*, which is easier.



lost, not once but twice: *i ocius* followed by *abi ocius*. Piccolomini tells us what the *lena* is thinking: she's a little bit afraid of Lucretia's anger, but she's seen this sort of behavior before. When she then politely apologizes to Lucretia, we know she's not as submissive as she sounds. She confidently tells Eurialus that Lucretia loves him — though she also stays out of his way after this, since she has lied about some of the details. Piccolomini's *ne, pro verbis, referret verbera* is clever word-play, hard to duplicate in English — maybe “lest she be flogged for the fibs” would do.

As soon as the *lena* is gone, Lucretia does reassemble and read the letter. The word *chirographum*, “handwriting,” is a Greek loanword that Cicero uses, and *sindon*, also from Greek, is a delicate cloth, suitable for wrapping up something valuable; we find this word in Martial. Although *horatim* is not attested until the middle ages, it is a regularly formed derivative with the fairly common *-tim* suffix, like *paulatim* or *nominatim*.

You can see from this passage that the novel is fun to read.

In order to teach the *Historia*, I needed an edition I could give to students. At the time, there was no suitable print edition, and to my knowledge there still isn't; the edition by Isabelle Hersant has a good introduction and some notes (and a translation), but it's in French, which most of my students would not be able to read. The text is readily available online, though, most conveniently from Biblioteca Italiana, an Italian website with the works of most of the important Italian authors in TEI form, a standard markup scheme that can be converted into other forms without much trouble.<sup>5</sup> TEI is an XML language similar to HTML, the language of web pages; it is documented in the *TEI Guidelines*. It is widely used in digital humanities projects, and in particular the tools of the Perseus Digital Library work with TEI files.<sup>6</sup>

Because Piccolomini lived at the very beginning of the Renaissance, his spelling follows medieval conventions rather than classical. This is much too difficult for low-intermediate students, so I modernized the text, writing a small computer program that could draw on the Perseus morphology tools.<sup>7</sup> I also adjusted the punctuation to modern American conventions, by hand. For ease of reading, I broke the text into 28 chapters for which

<sup>5</sup> Biblioteca Italiana is at <http://bibliotecaitaliana.it>. Its files are available under Creative Commons licenses, suitable for classroom use but not commercial use. The edition of the *Historia* they supply is taken from Doglio and Firpo (1973).

<sup>6</sup> The Bibliotheca Augustana, <https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/augustana.html>, has a plain HTML version which may be more convenient if you want to use a word processor or other non-structured tool.

<sup>7</sup> This is similar to the work described by Rydberg-Cox (in Terras and Crane, 2010, 135–150), though not as elaborate. In particular, I had the luxury of starting from an already-digitized text, with abbreviations expanded. The original Perseus morphology analyzer is described in Crane 1991, though the version distributed with the downloadable Perseus source code is rather different; see <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/opensource/download>.

I supplied titles (in Latin of course). Finally, I added a couple of dozen footnotes glossing classical allusions and the most unusual vocabulary: *efflagitasti*, *spurius frater*, *screatus*, *cumulus*, *sagum*, *faenum*, *poenosus*. I should also have noted *pitissavit*, especially as most dictionaries list the verb as *pytissare* with “y.” I could have added much more commentary if I’d had more time. I then formatted the text as a PDF, 48 pages long, and let the students download it from our learning management system.

I exploited the TEI form at two points in this process. First, I loaded the text into a Perseus installation on my own computer so that I could use the vocabulary and morphology tools. Second, I used a standard stylesheet tool to convert the text from TEI to PDF form. The program that converted medieval spelling to classical norms did not exploit the markup of the text, and everything else — punctuation, chapter headings, footnotes — was done by hand. In other words, it’s not necessary to learn TEI before trying to work with neo-Latin texts. Nonetheless, it is often convenient to have structured markup; I now describe how I worked with this text.

This is a sample of what the TEI text looks like. It is exactly as I downloaded it from Biblioteca Italiana, except for the addition of the chapter heading.

```
<div2 type=chapter n=5>
<head>Lucretia, lena, epistula prima</head>
<p>Haec ubi firmata sunt, lenam quaerit cui ceras ad nuptam ferendas
committat. Nisus huic fidus comes erat, harum rerum calidus magister. Hic
provinciam suscipit mulierculamque conducit cui litterae committuntur
in hanc sententiam scriptae:

<quote type=letter><p>Salutarem te, Lucretia, meis scriptis, si qua mihi
salutis copia foret. Sed omnis tum salus, tum vitae spes meae, ex te
pendet. Ego te magis quam me amo, nec te puto latere meum ardorem.
...
</quote>
<p>Has ubi gemma signatas accepit lena, ...
```

The markup gives the structure of the text, not the layout: the chapter heading is labelled as a header, with the `<head>` element, and the letter is marked as a quotation of a particular type, `<quote type=letter>`. Here is a bit more marked text:

Nam niger a viridi turtur amator ave et variis albae iunguntur saepe columbae, si verborum memini quae ad Phaonem Siculum scribit Sappho.<note>Sappho poeta fertur Phaonem iuvenem pulchrum amare; inter <title>Epistulas Heroidum</title> Ovidii est epistula Sapphonis ad Phaonem.</note>

This section shows one of the footnotes I added, marked <note>, and the title of another text, labelled as a <title>. Any structural feature can be marked up; the TEI language is designed by humanists and includes the kinds of features we care about when we edit texts. Separating structure from appearance is a powerful technique that allows great flexibility: from a single TEI file, it is straightforward to create versions in HTML, PDF, or even Microsoft's RTF. There are several standard sets of tools that can be customized for this sort of transformation, such as stylesheets written in XSL, the extensible stylesheet language, or the old but highly flexible CoST, the Copenhagen SGML tool.<sup>8</sup>

To convert the spelling to classical norms, I wrote a program using the Perseus morphology analyzer. It works as follows. I went through the text a word at a time, ignoring TEI tags and punctuation. For each word, I checked the form against the morphology database. If it's there, then it is a correctly spelled Latin word. If it's not there, I checked it against a list of known corrections, such as *mihi* for *michi* or *cum* for *quum*. Otherwise, I tried changing *e* to *ae*, then to *oe*; medieval and early Renaissance authors regularly level those diphthongs, so that *Caesar* appears as *Cesar*, or *foedus* as *fedus*. Of course, this can produce false matches: for example, *equus* could be "horse," in which case the word in the text should be left alone, or it could be "equal" (which must be changed *aequus*). The results need to be proofread.

Digital humanities tools make this kind of work easier, though they are not actually required. Given patience, one could simply edit the text by hand, and use a word-processor rather than structured markup. Writing a program to verify the spelling, though, means that every word can be checked; if it's not known to the Perseus tools, and if it can't easily be converted, the program can flag it for manual attention. And separating structure from appearance makes it much easier to produce different versions for different purposes.

---

<sup>8</sup> For more detail about TEI, see the website of the TEI Consortium, <http://www.tei-c.org>, which contains the *TEI Guidelines*, introductions and tutorials, and descriptions of various projects using this markup language. The chapters of Burnard, O'Keefe, and Unsworth (2006) also give examples of how TEI can be used; see in particular Robinson (74–92) on medieval texts.

During class, I tried as much as possible to work through the text in Latin; I would ask them questions about what they'd read, and as necessary explain, paraphrase, or act out bits they didn't understand. Their written homeworks generally came directly from the reading. For example, their nightly verb synopses started with particularly common verbs like *ago*, *venio*, or *gero*, but later in the term I would have them choose their own verbs from those they'd had to look up. Early in the semester I gave them exercises on derivation within Latin, for example identifying that *captor* is the agent noun that goes with *capio*, or that *utilitas* is "the quality of being *utilis*." Later on, I could call their attention to derivatives and compounds in the *Historia*. A favorite exercise is to assign one section of the text to each student and ask them to write comprehension questions for their sections. They hand in the questions and answers to me, and give just the questions to their classmates; the next night's assignment is to answer everyone else's questions. The better students phrase their questions in decent Latin, though the questions themselves may be fairly superficial. I also assigned sentences adapted from the *Historia* to be manipulated in various ways: rewrite an ablative absolute phrase as a clause with a finite verb, change between active and passive, or between direct and indirect quotation, and so on.

For assessment in lower-level language classes like this one, I use 10-minute reading quizzes, unannounced. Typically I manage to do about 10 of these in the semester, which comes to the same amount of time as two full-period midterm exams. The advantage of the quizzes is that they give both me and the students frequent checks on their progress, and they don't encourage students to spend days cramming and getting stressed. A quiz consists of a passage the class hasn't seen before, with some grammar questions and some comprehension questions. The comprehension questions are generally phrased in Latin, though I might write more complicated ones in English. Students can answer in either language, though I tell them just copying a Latin phrase from the text will receive no credit. In this semester, the average scores were about 15 or 16 out of 20 points, or 75 to 80 percent, which is not bad given that most of them had not been asked to read at sight before this term.

Here is an example of a quiz, from mid-semester, right around the time the class began reading the *Historia*. The range of scores was from 14 to 20 out of 20 points.

Olim erat leo qui speluncam in montibus habitabat. Noctu cum dormiebat, mus quidem adveniebat et capillos iubae leonis rodebat. Leo e somno experrectus, iratus, murem capere conabatur, sed mus in cavum iam abiverat.

Leo tandem cogitavit, “Ille mus tam parvus est ut numquam possim eum capere. Fortasse opus est mihi animale parvo.” Felem ergo invenit quem ad speluncam attulit. Quandocumque murem audivit, “Ecce mus! Cape!” feli dixit; felem fovit et laudavit. Mus, qui felem magnopere timuit, e cavo non exit. Leo, iuba intacta, feliciter dormiebat.

Pluribus diebus interiectis, mus quam maxime esurivit. “Nisi cibum invenio, mox moriar,” putavit, et e cavo prope capillos leonis evenit. Feles autem murem vidit, cepit, comedit.

Leo, qui nunc murem nec audivit nec vidit, felem non iam laudavit nec etiam feli cibum dedit. Re vera, felis oblitus est. Feles sine cibo mox moritus est.

Grammar questions: Choose two of three. Parse the underlined words.

Content questions: Choose three of five; answer in English or in Latin.

1. Quid faciebat mus, quod leoni non placebat?
2. Quare voluit leo felem habere?
3. Quid fecit feles? Num leoni placuit?
4. In extrema fabula, quid accidit muri? Quid accidit feli?
5. In the Sanskrit story collection from which this fable is adapted, the moral of the story is “Servants should never let their masters become independent; if their masters no longer need them, the servants will fare like the lion’s cat.” What does that mean and how does it relate to this text?

During the semester, students had trouble with the idea of reading rather than translating, but that is of course normal for the first course in which they’re asked to do that. They were not comfortable with Latin pronunciation, but that’s normal too. They were also still learning how to manage time, also normal: after all, they’d only just started college.

I chose the *Historia* because I thought it would be fun for the class. Other neo-Latin texts would also be suitable at this level, depending on the instructor’s interests and the students’ needs. Because Renaissance Latin writers return to classical norms, the Latin is similar to that of Cicero, Livy, or Tacitus, rather than to medieval Latin (and verse texts use the classical quantitative forms, like elegiac couplets, rather than accent and rhyme). Thus reading a neo-Latin text will not give students a distorted view of the language, or train them in un-idiomatic Latin: students will have no problem going on to classical texts.

Neo-Latin also has advantages in its contents and subjects. The early modern world is somewhat less foreign than the classical Roman world; readers of neo-Latin texts don't need to know about aediles and consuls, centurions and tribunes, or provinces and governors. In the broader history of European literature, some neo-Latin texts are only slightly less canonical than classical Latin. Some have been influential and remain well known, for example Thomas More's *Utopia* or Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*. Others, like the *Historia* itself, were widely read in their time even if they are less popular now. Many authors well known for their vernacular writings also wrote significant works in Latin, for example Petrarch, Milton, and Pascoli, and others (such as Byron and Baudelaire) wrote at least a little. Students are often curious about the Latin writings of authors they know from other contexts. Several handbooks of neo-Latin give overviews of the field, and it's increasingly easy to find texts online.<sup>9</sup>

To sum up, then, the *Historia de Duobus Amantibus* has everything you'd want in an intermediate-level Latin text, except for strictly controlled vocabulary. The story is interesting, the text is well known (as much as any neo-Latin text is), and the Latin is classical and not terribly difficult. My students enjoyed the challenge.

---

<sup>9</sup> Three recent handbooks are Moul (2017), Knight and Tilg (2015), and Ford, Bloemendal, and Fantazzi (2014); Ijsewijn and Sacré (1990, 1998) is still worth consulting. Dana F. Sutton maintains a comprehensive list of on-line neo-Latin texts at <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/bibliography/index.htm>.

## Works Cited

- Burnard, Lou, Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, John Unsworth, edd. *Electronic Text Editing*. New York: MLA, 2006.
- Crane, Gregory. "Generating and Parsing Classical Greek," *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 6 (1991), 243–245.
- Ford, Philip J, Jan Bloemendal, Charles Fantazzi, edd. *Brill's Encyclopedia of the Neo-Latin World*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.
- Ijsewijn, Josef, and Dirk Sacré. *A Companion to Neo-Latin Studies*. Leuven: Leuven University Press 1990–1998.
- Knight, Sarah, and Stefan Tilg, edd. *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015.
- Mahoney, Anne. "Vicipaedia Latina: Encyclopedia and Community," *Classical Outlook* 90.3 (2015), 86–90.
- Moul, Victoria, ed. *A Guide to Neo-Latin Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017.
- Piccolomini, Aeneas Silvius (Pius II). *Historia de Duobus Amantibus*, ed. Maria Luisa Doglio and Luigi Firpo. Turin: Utet, 1973.
- , ed. Isabelle Hersant. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012.
- Terras, Melissa, and Gregory Crane. *Changing the Center of Gravity: Transforming Classical Studies through Cyberinfrastructure*. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2010.

Works Cited (Updated with DOIs)

Burnard, Lou, Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, John Unsworth, edd. *Electronic Text Editing*. New York: MLA, 2006.

Crane, Gregory. "Generating and Parsing Classical Greek," *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 6 (1991), 243–245. <https://doi.org/10.1093/lc/6.4.243>

Ford, Philip J, Jan Bloemendal, Charles Fantazzi, edd. *Brill's Encyclopedia of the Neo-Latin World*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Ijsewijn, Josef, and Dirk Sacré. *A Companion to Neo-Latin Studies*. Leuven: Leuven University Press 1990–1998.

Knight, Sarah, and Stefan Tilg, edd. *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199948178.013.21>

Mahoney, Anne. "Vicipaedia Latina: Encyclopedia and Community," *Classical Outlook* 90.3 (2015), 86–90.

Moul, Victoria, ed. *A Guide to Neo-Latin Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139248914>

Piccolomini, Aeneas Silvius (Pius II). *Historia de Duobus Amantibus*, ed. Maria Luisa Doglio and Luigi Firpo. Turin: Utet, 1973.

\_\_\_\_\_, ed. Isabelle Hersant. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012.

Terras, Melissa, and Gregory Crane. *Changing the Center of Gravity: Transforming*

*Classical Studies through Cyberinfrastructure*. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2010.