

## Introduction

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### **The name of the book**

*Reading Medieval Latin* is designed to follow on from *Reading Latin* (P. V. Jones and K. C. Sidwell, Cambridge University Press, 1986). But it can be used by any student who has learned the basic morphology and syntax of Classical Latin taught in *Reading Latin* sections 1–5.

### **How the book is arranged**

The book is in four parts, each part being divided into five sections. Part one presents texts to illustrate the culture in which Medieval Latin (ML) developed and the sources on which its writers were nurtured. Part two presents selections of Latin written between c.500 and 1000. Parts three and four give fuller treatment of the Latin writing of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. A list of sources can be found on pp. xi–xvi.

Each part, section and text has introductory material, with suggestions for further reading. Each text has a commentary with help on language and content. In most cases, reference to text is by line number. However, reference is sometimes by numbered paragraph (e.g. in section 3). The linguistic help is keyed in to two brief appendices on Orthography and Grammar, which are referred to by O.0 etc. and G.1 etc. respectively. Other grammar references are to *Reading Latin: Grammar, Vocabulary and Exercises* (RLGVE) or *Reading Latin: Reference Grammar* (RLRGr), found at RLGVE pp. 448–56.

For vocabulary, the reader is advised to use a Classical Latin dictionary (say Cassell's) in the first place. The word-list at the end of the book aims to help with items not included there and with non-classical spellings. Names of people and places are in the main glossed in the commentaries. See further Note on vocabulary (pp. 376–7).

### The texts

The texts have been printed as found in the sources (see pp. xif.), without changes of spelling. This means that there is no consistent convention for the consonantal vowels, which are written u or v, i or j according to the policy of the editor of the source. Vowel length has not been marked, but unclassical quantities in poems using classical metres are indicated by the use of  $\bar{\quad}$  and  $\check{\quad}$ .

The texts have been selected for their intrinsic interest and for the way they illustrate important aspects of medieval culture, history, philosophy, religion, literature or language. The book may be used as a historical introduction to ML writing in its cultural and historical context, or excerpted as a reader to accompany courses on philosophy, history or literature.

The texts are not arranged in order of difficulty, but the commentaries are designed to give the same level of help at every point. Hence the book may be begun anywhere and selections made on the basis of the reader's specific interests. Readers interested in classicizing poetry are strongly advised to read the verse selections and metrical explanations in *Reading Latin* section 6 before moving on to this book. Those looking for the simplest passages to begin with are advised to start with section 3 (the Vulgate). Some very difficult passages (e.g. section 7.1(a)) have been inserted (with appropriate help) to underline the fact that much ML writing is highly complex and sophisticated.

In general, an attempt has been made to avoid passages already anthologized.

### Medieval Latin

Ludwig Traube once said: 'There is no such thing as Medieval Latin. Consequently there will never be a dictionary or a grammar of Medieval Latin.' He meant that ML has no separate *linguistic* existence. It is *Latin*, learned from late classical grammars, with variations in spelling, occasional errors in morphology, a syntax influenced by external phenomena (e.g. other languages, or the creation of equivalences between different CL conjunctions (*dum* for *cum* etc.)) and a vocabulary expanded to meet the needs of a changed environment, both external and intellectual.

In this book, for this and for purely practical reasons, ML is treated as a series of divergences from CL, whether in orthography or grammar. The principle is *discitur ambulando*. No consistent attempt is made to give an account of the reasons for changes. For that the reader is referred in the

first place to E. Löfstedt, *Late Latin*, Oslo, 1959. A fuller account of divergences without a linguistic explanation can be found in A. Blaise, *Manuel du Latin Chrétien*, Turnhout, 1955 (now available in English, tr. G. C. Roti, *A Handbook of Christian Latin: Style, Morphology, and Syntax* Georgetown U. Press, Washington, D.C., 1992). For dictionaries, see the Note on vocabulary, pp. 376–7.

**Further study**

Some of the texts have been taken from sources such as the Oxford Medieval Texts series, which are accompanied by facing-page translations. These are a good next step from this anthology.

There are series of ML texts specifically designed for students. Particularly useful and accessible are:

Toronto Medieval Latin Texts (published for the Centre for Medieval Studies by the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto)

Reading University Medieval and Renaissance Texts (published now by Bristol Classical Press, a subsidiary of Duckworth)

Study of the material by genre will be made easier by a forthcoming anthology by F. A. C. Mantello and A. G. Rigg, which will accompany the new *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide* replacing McGuire and Dressler, *Introduction to Medieval Latin Studies*, Washington, D.C., 1977.

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-44747-8 - Reading Medieval Latin  
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Excerpt  
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## PART ONE

### *The foundations of Christian Latin*

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The term ‘Christian Latin’ has no linguistic validity. There was no ‘special language’ which only Christians used, distinguished clearly from that employed by pagans. The various registers of Latin, from ‘vulgar’ at the lowest end to the sophisticated and complex language of high literary products at the other, were always clearly distinguished from each other as far as their function was concerned, whether used by pagans or Christians. The only linguistic feature which united the registers as employed specifically by Christians was the specialized Christian vocabulary (e.g. *baptizo* ‘I baptize’; *sinaxis* ‘Divine Office’). This was also the only feature which distinguished pagan writings in the various registers from Christian. The possibility of making such a distinction soon vanishes anyway, since the decree of the emperor Theodosius in 394 which made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire also led inexorably to the Christianization of all Latin writing.

The usefulness of the term lies in its definition of a cultural phenomenon. After the final dissolution of its centralized secular power structure in the fifth century, the Western Roman Empire was supplanted as the ‘universal empire’ by the Catholic Church. As an expression of this continuing universality, the Church adopted and retained Latin. This, then, was the language of its sacred texts, its liturgy, its ecclesiastical administration, and therefore of its education system. To maintain this universality, it was necessary to keep unbroken the links with the vital core of Christian thought. This was expressed by the inspired writings of the Bible and the Fathers of the Church. It was essential continually to praise God through the *opus Dei* (‘Divine Office’), whose central texts were the Psalms. These factors combined to ensure the survival of Latin as an unchanging language. Unchanging, that is, in its morphology and, by and large, in its syntax. Its vocabulary was added to constantly as new needs arose (e.g. *bombarda* ‘cannon’, in the fifteenth century), or words changed their meaning (e.g. *rotulus* CL ‘little wheel’; ML ‘roll’ – see section 15.3),

or were transferred from the vernacular language (e.g. *sopa* ‘shop’).

Children – male and (early on especially) female (for ‘in Christ there is no male and female’, Galatians 3.28) – learned Latin if they were dedicated to the Church. What they studied, after the painful process of basic grammar learning was over, were, on the whole, Christian texts. What they produced, if they ever gained enough proficiency, were works in one way or another associated with the propagation of the Church’s message. These factors were always central. There were increasingly moments when the secular power began once more to use learning as a tool to propagate its own agenda (e.g. during the ‘Carolingian Renaissance’ – see section 9), and this pattern led eventually to a more secular use of Latin, both as an administrative tool and for other purposes. Even so, until the advent of ‘humanism’ in the fourteenth century in Italy there was no idea of a Latin education which was not firmly based upon the centrality of the core Christian texts.

What we call ‘Medieval Latin’ is Latin written after the end of the Roman Empire until the Italian Renaissance (fourteenth–sixteenth centuries), when we change to the term ‘Neo-Latin’. There is vast diversity within this corpus of writing, because it covers a period in which enormous political and social changes occur and a geographical region which incorporates many ethnic groups with diverse approaches even to Christianity. Nonetheless, Latin and Latin learned through and with the foundation texts of the monastic rules, the liturgy, the Bible, the Church Fathers and the legacy of earlier Christian writing, binds it together. So this first part focuses on what most medieval writers would have known and expected their audience to know, and attempts to illustrate the impact of Christianity on the formation of new literary genres.

## Section 1

### Education

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The Roman education system was geared to producing speakers. In both its practical and theoretical aspects, it reflected a world where the word and its presentation were central to civic life. Even under the imperial system, where real power was effectively removed from the aristocratic élite which had frequented the oratorical schools, the basis remained the same. In the late first century AD, Quintilian (*Institutiones*) attempted to argue for an oratorical education which was essentially encyclopaedic and general. But rhetoric was losing its practical usefulness. It was not until the fifth century that educators tried to push things in a different direction. For the first time the seven liberal arts are set as the basis for the new school curriculum: Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric (later known as the *Trivium*), Music, Geometry, Arithmetic and Philosophy (or Astronomy – the later *Quadrivium*). The first treatise of this type was Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae* 'On the marriage of Mercury and Philology', revised a century later by the Christian rhetorician Memor Felix. In the sixth century, Cassiodorus wrote the *Institutiones*, to provide a safe equivalent of traditional education – both Christian and pagan – for his monks. Both treatises were immensely influential during the Middle Ages, along with the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville (602–36).

Works like those of Cassiodorus and Isidore were models for later educators' expanded compilations. In the first part of his work, Cassiodorus gives a sort of bibliography of biblical studies. When he moves to the liberal arts, he gives a précis of knowledge derived from various authorities. For example, in the section on Logic (*Dialectica*) he gives an outline of the *Isagoge* ('Introduction') of Porphyry, the *Categoriae* ('Categories') of Aristotle, the *De Interpretatione* ('On Interpretation') of Aristotle, and so on. Isidore's compilation gives the definitions and origins of words (often highly fancifully). For example:

Mare est aquarum generalis collectio. Omnis enim congregatio aquarum, sive salsae sint, sive dulces, abusive maria nuncupantur, iuxta illud: Et congregationes aquarum vocavit maria. Proprie autem mare appellatum, eo quod aquae eius amarae sint.

(*Etymologiae* 13.1, ed. W. M. Lindsay, Oxford, 1911)

A sea is a general collection of waters. For every congregation of waters, whether salt or fresh, is called a sea, inaccurately, on the following authority: 'And the congregations of waters he called seas' [Genesis 1.10]. Now *mare* is properly so called because its waters are *amarae* (bitter).

It must be said, however, that what actually happened in schools did not fit the theoretical structures envisaged by the manuals. A child (normally a boy, though nuns were in some traditions required to know some Latin – see sections 2.4, 7.4, 10.4, 17.5) would enter a monastery as an oblate at seven. In the later period, he might instead attend a cathedral school. He would begin with an elementary course which aimed to teach reading and writing in Latin, singing (*cantus*) and calculation (*computus*). The first texts to which he would be exposed were the Psalms, which doubled as a chant textbook. The *computus* was not only an introduction to basic arithmetic, but also included the study of time and especially the annual and liturgical calendars. This elementary curriculum was followed by the intensive study of *grammatica*, which was pursued with the help of the late Roman textbooks by Donatus and Priscian. Here they learned, for example, that the perfect passive could be *lectum est* or *lectum fuit*, the pluperfect *lectum erat* or *lectum fuerat* (Donatus *Ars Minor* 4.361), and that the passive has two participles, a past (*lectus*) and a future (*legendus*). There are many examples of these Late Latin forms in this book. Later, new compilations were composed, such as that of the Mercian Tatwine (d. 734), from which the following passage comes:

DE COMPARATIONE

Comparatio est eloquutio quae ex alterius conlatione alterum praefert; nam de uno numquam dicitur 'doctior' nisi ad alterius comparationem respiciatur. Comparatio autem aut auget aut minuit et ipsud quod minuit ad sensum auget, ceterum ad sonum minuit, ut 'doctus, doctior, doctissimus': ecce hic auxit; item 'stultus, stultior, stultissimus': minuit, sed tamen auxit, ut si dicas 'mendicus' qui parum habet, 'mendicior' qui minus habet, 'mendicissimus' qui minimum: sed tamen auxit sensum, nam paupertatis augmentum per gradus creuit.

(*Ars Tatuini*, chapter 26, ed. M. de Marco, CCCM CXXXIII, p. 13, Turnhout, 1968)



## COMPARISON

Comparison is a way of speaking which expresses a preference for one of a pair by comparison with the other; for the word 'more learned' is never used of one person unless it refers to comparison with a second. Comparison either increases or diminishes and that which it diminishes it increases as regards the sense, but diminishes as regards the sound, for example 'clever, cleverer, cleverest': here, as you see, it has increased it; likewise 'stupid, stupider, stupidest': it has diminished it, but yet it has increased it, as if you were to call 'mendicant' him who has little, 'more mendicant' him who has less, and 'most mendicant' him who has the least: but nonetheless it has increased the sense, since the increase in poverty grew by stages.

As this excerpt shows, *grammatica* was an analytical tool as much as a linguistic aid, and it dominated the way in which language was perceived and used. Fluency in both speaking and writing Latin was aided by puzzles (see section 7.1(b)), jokes, set speeches and dialogues like this colloquium written for his school by Aelfric, abbot of Eynsham from 1005:

- MAGISTER: Fuisti hodie verberatus?  
 PUER: Non fui, quia caute me tenui.  
 MAGISTER: Et quomodo tui socii?  
 PUER: Quid me interrogas de hoc? Non audeo pandere secreta nostra.  
 Unusquisque scit si flagellatus erat an non.
- MASTER: Were you beaten today?  
 PUPIL: No, I wasn't, because I was careful.  
 MASTER: And what about your friends?  
 PUPIL: Why are you asking me about that? I don't dare reveal our secrets.  
 Each one knows whether he was beaten or not.

Those who were able then pursued a further course of *grammatica*, which included the study of Roman poets such as Virgil, Horace, Lucan, Ovid and Juvenal, early ML poets such as Claudian, Prudentius (section 5.2) and Venantius Fortunatus (section 8.4(a)–(b)), and prose authors. The method was pedestrian. The master would read the text and analyse it word by word, explaining the grammar and the references and commenting on the meaning. The texts read covered the fields of law, rhetoric and logic, though the fact that they often led into other areas such as geometry or medicine allowed discussion of those too. The focus did not stay the same throughout the Middle Ages. Grammar dominated the curriculum of the

ninth century, while dialectic became predominant in the twelfth. Rhetoric was not important until Alcuin of York's time (see section 9.2(b)).

The goal of this training was the preservation and propagation of the Christian religion. As a decree of Charlemagne (see section 9 Intro.) put it, 'there must be schools in monasteries or cathedrals consisting of boys who study the psalms, orthography, chant, *computus* and *grammatica*, and well-corrected catholic books'.

The repositories of learning during the early Middle Ages were the monasteries. In these often isolated fastnesses, books were hoarded and copied, and new books written (especially commentaries on the liberal arts or on parts of the Bible). What could be known was entirely a matter of which books the monastery's library possessed. Later, the monasteries were joined by the cathedrals. We have some catalogues from the later period, like the twelfth-century list from Durham. Here is a sample of its contents:

1.2. Vetus et novum testamentum in duobus voluminibus et 3.4. item vetus et novum testamentum in duobus minoribus voluminibus. – 5. Iosephus antiquitatum. – 6–9. duo paria decretorum Ivonis. – 10. epistolae Ivonis. – 11. decreta pontificum. – 12. excerpta canonum. ... 14. epistolae sancti Ieronimi. – 15. Ieronimus super Isaiam. – 16. Ieronimus super duodecim prophetas...

1.2. Old and new testament in two volumes and 3.4. Likewise an old and new testament in two smaller volumes. – 5. Josephus' *Antiquities*. – 6–9. Two sets of the decrees of Ivo [of Chartres, who wrote on Canon Law: see section 16.3 Intro.]. – 10. Ivo's Letters. 11. Papal decrees. – 12. Excerpts from the canons. – 14. St Jerome's Epistles. – 15. Jerome on Isaiah. – 16. Jerome on the Twelve prophets...'

The list is dominated by copies of the sacred texts, biblical commentaries, ecclesiastical law and the Church Fathers. Now and again, pagan classical texts occur and in some places they may even form a significant portion of the collection. It is rare, however, for this proportion to be more than one fifth of the whole. Throughout our period, the work of God is at the heart of the library as of the rest of the educational establishment.

See further: P. Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West, Sixth Through Eighth Centuries*, tr. J. J. Contreni, Columbia, S.C., 1976 and *Les écoles et l'enseignement dans l'occident chrétien de la fin du Ve siècle au milieu du XIe siècle*, Paris, 1979; R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries*, Cambridge, 1954.