

MEI NUCESQUE

A newsletter for Classics at the University of Dallas

Let There be Light ... on Latin Inscriptions

When I have the opportunity really to understand a few lines that have survived from antiquity in their original Latin tongue, I often get a great sense of privilege and insight. However, it seems that upon encountering a Latin inscription, I am rendered illiterate again and am fully a member of the vulgar crowd. At the sight of an ancient engraving, my knowledge of Latin, previously valued so highly, is revealed to be sorely inadequate for the task of deciphering any of this "real-world" Latin.

Am I to deem myself some hapless bookworm, ignorant of knowledge that the average guy on the streets of ancient Rome would have? Maybe. But I recently encountered a glimmer of hope in regard to this trouble, which I thought worthy of this issue of *M&N* and perhaps helpful to others in my situation.

The University of Dallas Classics Department's website is burgeoning with interesting and useful material. A page entitled "Websites Useful to Classicists" contains many gems, not the least of which is a link to a site for Latin inscriptions (the fourth link from the bottom of the page).^{*} Created by Bill Thayer, this site reproduces hundreds of Latin inscriptions, many of which are well-photographed, transcribed, translated, and explained.

In fact, the site is geared toward those who want to learn how to read inscriptions. The author gives the following explanation on the main page:

I'm assembling a sort of hands-on, self-paced course in epigraphy in three levels. Each level has its own collection of inscription pages, on which you will be presented with a photograph of an inscription and, in fairness, a few details about the location of the inscription, its size, and so forth, as if you had been with me when I saw it myself. Each of these pages is then linked to a solution. (Thayer)

Out of the three levels (easy, medium, and hard), there does not seem to be any inscription that does not require some head-scratching to read. It takes some self-control not skip to the solution right away by clicking on the "FIAT LUX" button.

However, for anyone wishing to gain some competent skills in epigraphy—especially those who want to be able to read inscriptions in foreign lands during the Rome semester—this website would be a great resource. Of course, the website does

^{*}This page can be found directly through the following link:
<<http://udallasclassics.org/classicists.html>>.

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not take the difficulty out of the learning process, but, after all, patience lies within the garden of virtues that students of the classics must strive to cultivate.

Sources:

Maurer, Karl. *UDallasClassics.org*. N.p., Jan. 2011. Web. 11 Apr. 2011.
Thayer, William P. "Latin Inscriptions on this Site." *LacusCurtius*. Bill Thayer, 28 May 2005. Web. 11 Apr. 2011.



Bill Thayer's site of Latin inscriptions features an engraving from the Arch of Titus. Image taken from Wikipedia.org:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Titus_hh2.jpg>. 30 March 2011.

Friedrich Nietzsche on Classical Philology

from the end of the Preface to The Dawn or Daybreak

<http://udallasclassics.org/whyClassics.html#n>

Besides, we are friends of the *lento*, I and my book. I have not been a philologist in vain—perhaps I am one yet: a teacher of slow reading. I even come to write slowly. At present it is not only my habit, but even my taste—a perverted taste, maybe—to write nothing but what will drive to despair every one who is "in a hurry." For philology is that venerable art which exacts from its followers one thing above all—to step to one side, to leave themselves spare moments, to grow silent, to become slow—the leisurely art of the goldsmith applied to language: an art which must carry out slow, fine work, and attains nothing if not *lento*. Thus philology is now more desirable than ever before; thus it is the highest attraction and incitement in an age of "work": that is, of haste, of unseemly and immoderate hurry-scurry, which is so eager to "get things done" at once, even every book, whether old or new. Philology itself, perhaps, will not so hurriedly "get things done". It teaches how to read well, that is, slowly, profoundly, attentively, prudently, with inner thoughts, with the mental doors ajar, with delicate fingers and eyes. My patient friends, this book appeals only to perfect readers and philologists: learn to read me well!

Ruta, near Genoa, Autumn, 1886.
(Added to the 1881 Edition)

A POEM FROM JACOB BALDE.

Translated by Dr. Karl Maurer.

Ode III, II. Ad D. Virginem Aetalensem.

Cum ex Tyroli in Bavarium profectus
illac praeveheretur.

Montium Praeses, nemorumque Virgo,
Cuius Aetae meminere valles,
Silva cui circum viret, et comanteis
Imputat umbras,
Quam tuam laetus propiore passu
Eminus visam venerarer aedem!
Sed viae tardant, neque lentus audit
Currus habenas.
Ergo, quod solum superest amicis,
Quos iter iungi vetat: O et absens,
Ter quater pulcris cumulanda votis,
Sic quoque salve.
Tu quoque absentem iubeas valere
Mutuas ut dum damus atque voces
Reddimus sacrae per opaca silvae
Insonet Echo.

Ode 3.2. To the Divine Virgin of Ettal

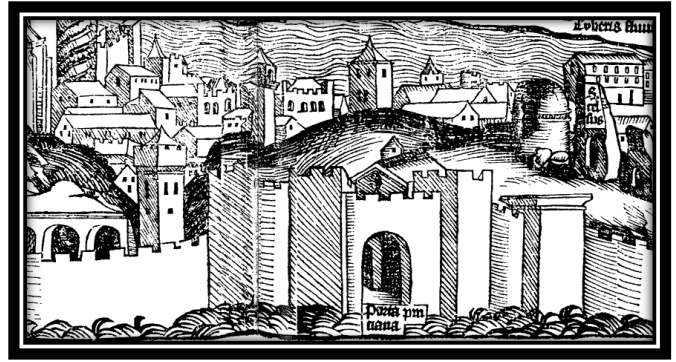
When having left the Tyrol for Barvaria
the author was approaching her.

Mountain protectress, Virgin of the Woods,
whom valleys of Ettal are mindful of,
round whom a forest greens, to whom it owes
its deepened shadows,
how happily, as my footsteps draw near,
your church I worship, seeing it from afar!
But the roads slow me and this stubborn team
deaf to the reins.
So what alone is left for friends, whom roads
forbid to join: O even absent, Lady
worthy of three and four heaps of my prayers,
even thus -- Hello!
You too, though I'm not there, bid me fare well,
and while we call each other thus and answer,
inside the darkness of a sacred forest
the echo sounds!

Latin Grammar Corner

Connective relatives

One must have a good grasp of pronouns when learning any language, and especially relative pronouns when reading Cicero. "A relative pronoun (or adverb) often stands at the beginning of an independent sentence or clause, serving to connect it with the sentence or clause that precedes. This arrangement is common even when another relative or an interrogative follows. The relative may usually be translated by an English demonstrative, with or without *and*" (A&G 308f). *Romulus patrum auctoritate consilioque regnavit. Quo facto primum vidit iudicavitque ...* (Cic. Rep. 1.14-15.1), "Romulus ruled with the fathers' authority and council. When this had been done, first he saw and judged ..." *Quo* is a connective relative here and serves to link the previous sentence with the one that follows.



Greek Grammar Corner

Enclitics and Proclitics from Dr. Maurer's Greek Grammar Handout

(IX) Unaccented words are "proclitic" ("leaning forward") or "enclitic" ("leaning on"). They are called that because a proclitic is often felt as part of the following word (e.g. the article, e.g. ὁ νήπιος, "the fool"); an enclitic, as part of the preceding word. (Thus, an enclitic can even cause the preceding word to receive a second accent; e.g. νήπιός τις, "some fool", "a certain fool". For, since νήπιός τις is felt as a single word, to write "νήπιος τις" would violate the rule that one of a word's last three syllables must be accented.)

Proclitic are (1) the definite article, masc. or fem. nominative: ὁ, ἡ, οἱ, αἱ, (2) the three prepositions ἐν ('in'), ἐκ / ἐξ ('from'), εἰς ('to', 'into', 'towards'), and (3) the words εἰ, ὡς and οὐ / οὐκ / οὐχ (= "if", "so that" and "not").

Enclitic are: (1) personal pronouns, μου μοι με, σου σοι σε, and (epic/archaic) οὐ οἱ ἐ, (2) the indefinite pronoun τις τι in all cases, (3) the indefinite adverbs που, πη, ποι, ποθεν, ποτε, πω, πως, (4) four particles, viz. γε, τε, τοι, περ, and (5) two verbs, viz. εἶμι and φημι, when they have two syllables and are in the present indicative.

SPECIAL RULES FOR ἐστί: accent it ἔστι (A) if it is the first word; (B) when it means "it is possible" (ἔξεστι); (C) in the phrases ἔστιν οἱ, ἔστιν ὅτε etc. ("there are those who" = "some people", "there are times when" = "sometimes"); (D) if it follows οὐκ, μή, εἰ, ὡς, καί, ἀλλά (ἀλλ') or τοῦτο.

COMPOUND VERBS (Sm. § 426) have recessive accent, except that: (A) the accent cannot precede augment or reduplication (e.g. ἀπῆν, εἰσῆλθον, ἀφύκται); (B) the accent cannot precede the 2nd syllable of a 2-syll. prefix (e.g. περιθεις) or the 2nd of two prefixes (e.g. συγκάθεις); and (C) accent remains unchanged in infinitives (e.g. παρεῖναι, not πάρεναι), participles (e.g. παρών), aoist & pf. passive.

WORD BEFORE AN ENCLITIC: if it has antepenult. accent, add acute to ult, e.g. ἀνθρωπός τις, ἀνθρωποῖ τινες. If penult. acute accent, it stays unchanged, e.g. λόγος τις; but if the enclitic is disyllabic, you accent its second syllable: λόγοι τινές. If penult. circumflex, add acute to ult, e.g. χειρά τινα, χειρός τινες. If ult. accent, it stays unchanged: τιμαί τε, τιμών τινων, ἦν τις etc.

IF ENCLITICS FOLLOW ONE ANOTHER, each except the last gets an acute (always on its first syllable), e.g. ἢ νύ σέ που θεός ἴσχει, "Surely now some god, I guess, possesses you". †