Glosses in Latin?

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Ita vērō! Central to the pedagogical method of *Animalia* is the assumption that it is better whenever possible to engage with the text in Latin. Although English glosses are quicker and easier, they are also much more forgettable; how many times have you or your students quickly looked up or glanced at an English definition only to forget it a moment later? English glosses also insert an "intermediary" between the Latin word and the concept it represents. Latin glosses, by contrast, keep your students in the same world as the concept they are explaining. The student is thus mentally engaged in Latin while reading the story.

Many teachers – myself included – were never exposed to the comprehensible input or direct method of teaching Latin either as students or in teacher training. As such, the prospect of teaching without English notes can be intimidating. Here are several principles to keep in mind as you consider how best to implement the Latin glosses of *Animalia*:

I. **Festīnā lentē:** Teaching a text solely in Latin will go slower than if you use simple translation. This is unavoidable and not something to be feared. A deep engagement with a smaller amount of Latin is superior to a superficial engagement with slightly more text. The direct method is easier in the long run because you can keep your brain in the target language. A second language can be more difficult when you keep jumping back and forth to English, especially when English syntax is so different. As you and your students proceed in this way, the pace will quicken naturally.

II. **Aurea mediocritās:** Just as your students will grow into the habit of direct engagement with Latin, you as a teacher must be patient with yourself as you develop these new instructional methods. *Something is better than nothing*: if at first you need to incorporate a mix of English and Latin in your discussion of the text, that is fine. If your students are really stuck, it is okay to use English to "dig" them out and then return to the Latin for something easier. It may make sense for certain sentences to be approached with both English and Latin. As you proceed, you will better be able to determine when to use the direct method and will grow more comfortable with its application.

III. **Parvīs magna:** Reading these texts in Latin will be easier if you and your students lay a foundation before you start. Prereading strategies are key: before beginning the story, you can engage the students with the key vocabulary in Latin with some of the strategies listed below. Likewise, you can provide an outline of the story in simple Latin and walk students through the Latin glosses. The glosses are written in simple and accessible Latin to aid student comprehension. We have

tried whenever possible to use intuitive synonyms in our definitions so students can make educated guesses about the meaning of words while still staying in Latin.

To that end, we offer the following (non-exhaustive) list of strategies as tools to aid you and your students as you strive to teach the stories of *Animalia* in Latin.

1. Pinge!
Drawing pictures on the board is enormously helpful to students. If you are teaching the introduction to the lion (I.A), for example, the phrase *Leōnēs habitant in dēsertīs plānīsque* can easily be illustrated on a whiteboard.

As you work through a story, you can keep adding to your drawing to illustrate the changes in the plot and new characters. You can develop the storyboard yourself or with the help of students. They will enjoy the chance to add to the picture and demonstrate their knowledge!

2. Age!
If a student gets stuck on a word, a helpful strategy is to ask another student who gets it to act out the concept. For example, if you are reading the story of Androclus and the Lion (I.E) and a student is stuck on the meaning of *vēnātiōnis*, turn to another student who understands and say, "Age vēnātiōnem!" The student will then stand up and likely imitate throwing a spear, shooting an arrow, etc. You can ask two students to "Agite vēnātiōnem" and have the second pretend to be a wounded animal. Make sure everyone applauds afterward.

3. Ita aut Minimē?
A series of yes-or-no questions is an excellent way to draw out the meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence. These can often be a springboard into more complex questions.

If, for example, you are teaching the Bees, Drones, and Wasp (II.C), you could have the following discussion on this sentence:

> *Apēs in altā quercū favōs fēcerant, quōs fūcī inertēs dīcēbant esse suōs.*

Magister: Discipulī, quae sunt fūcī?
Discipulī: [nīl respondent]
M: Discipulī, suntne fūcī "apēs?"
D: Minimē!
M: Suntne fūcī īnsecta?
D: Ita!
M: Suntne fūcī similēs apibus?
D: Ita!
M: Sed, faciuntne fūcī mel?
D: Minimē!
M: Rēctē. Cūr tamen fūcī favōs esse *suōs* dīcēbant? …

Yes-or-no questions help you tease out the differences between bees and drones, which is of course central to this story. This simple back-and-forth naturally leads to a discussion of why the drones are lying and how the case will proceed.

4. Synōnyma et Antōnyma

Synonyms and antonyms are a great way to convey the meaning of a word or phrase. Take, for example, this phrase from the same story above:

> *"Nōn inconveniēns est corpus, et pār est color, ut plānē rēs in dubium meritō vēnerit."*

M: Discipulī, quid significat "inconveniēns?" Inconveniēns significat "dissimilis." Intelligitisne?

D: Ita!

M: Ergō, sī corpus apis et fūcī *nōn* est inconveniēns, suntne eōrum corpora similia aut dissimilia?

D: Similia!

M: Bene factum. Nunc, eōrum color est "pār." "Pār" *nōn* significat "dissimilis." Iōannēs, quid significat "pār?"

I: Similis? [looks at gloss on opposite page] Īdem?

M: Bene factum. Color apum et fūcōrum est īdem. Si apis est flāva, estne fūcus flāvus?

D: Ita!

5. Glossae

Our book provides copious glosses on vocabulary and syntax written in straightforward Latin. These glosses are designed to be accessible to the intermediate Latin reader and are handily available on the facing page of the text. Going slowly through the gloss with any number of the strategies above is a helpful prereading activity.

See this example from the Dolphin and the Monkey (III.B).

> The line from the story is: *Tum sīmius, ipsum dē homine loquī arbitrātus*,
> The gloss is: *sīmius cōgitat Pīraeum esse hominem, nōn locum!*

M: Discipulī, quid est Pīraeus?

D: Portus Athēnārum.

M: Rēctē, est locus. Quid tamen sīmius Pīraeum esse arbitrātus est? Quid significat "arbitrātus"? Ecce, glossa.

D: Arbitrātus significat "cōgitat."

M: Bene, sīmius tamen cōgitat Pīraeum esse hominem. Estne Pīraeus homō?

D: Minimē!

M: Estne sīmius mendāx?

D: Ita!

M: Eritne delphīnus laetus cum sīmiō?

D: Minimē!

These and similar strategies greatly aid in student retention of vocabulary and comprehension of the story in Latin. It is good, once you have completed your section of the story for the day, to conclude class with a Latin summary of the plot, a review of key vocabulary, or even just rereading the story in Latin once again.

Teaching in Latin can be an intimidating prospect. One of the goals of *Animalia* is to bridge the gap between more traditional instruction in translation and the direct method. These stories, the Latin glosses, and any of the strategies listed above can help you begin to incorporate comprehensible input instruction in your classroom at your own pace and in a way which you and your students will enjoy. Happy reading!