OVERVIEW OF CERTAMINA

There will be two types of *certamina* in which students can engage Latin: *recitationes* (the recitation of a Latin passage) and *scriptiones* (the writing of a haiku in Latin). We hope that the topic for Copley Latin Day 2024 – "Classics and Science" – will inspire your students to participate in at least one *certamen*. We also hope to recognize excellence at every level of Latin.

Participitantes/petitores will receive a *praemium*. *Victores* will receive a *praemium* of their own as well as books and educational materials for their Latin program (to be selected by their *magister/magistra*).

We will provide hands-on support for *participitantes/petitores* as they prepare for the *certamina*, including:

- background informational resources
- recordings for pronunciation, delivery and style of the passages as models
- optional Zoom tutoring from our advanced undergrad and grad students with these benefits:
  - -help with comprehension of the passages
  - -practice pronunciation
  - -brainstorm ideas for staging a performance
  - -get to know a UM student

Deadline for receipt of *recitationes* and *scriptiones*: March, 27, 2024.

Send your entry to Gina Soter or upload it to this Google folder.

Details about each type of *certamen* are given below.

RECITATIONES

The purpose of this *certamen* is to engage students in reciting Latin aloud. Students are not required to recite from memory; however, special consideration will be given to students who do. Students may choose one of the two passages below: a prose passage from Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius*, which is suitable for students at all levels, or a poetry passage: from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is suitable for students who can recite in dactylic hexameter.

The recitation should be video-recorded and reviewed for the audibility of the sound before it is submitted..

1. Galileo *Siderius Nuncius* 1-6

Context: Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius* (*Messenger from the Stars*), published in 1610, was the first printed account of celestial observations made with the use of a telescope (*perspicillum*). In the excerpt below, Galileo recounts his discovery of objects rotating around the planet Jupiter. Thinking at first that the objects were stars (*sidera*), he eventually realized that they

were what we call “moons” (the word for which in this text is *stellae*). Note that the neo-Latin of Galileo’s pamphlet was the language in which works of literature and science were published across Europe as recently as 500 years ago. Today’s readers of Latin can understand Galileo’s text, adjusting for minor developments in the language over time. For example, *nuncius* is the same word as ancient Rome’s *nuntius*. Information about Galileo’s text can be found here.

Suggestions: One student could recite the whole passage (gestures and dramatization are encouraged). Or the passage could be divided between two students, with student A reciting sentences 1-3 and student B reciting sentences 4-6. In this approach, both students should be active during the entire time to bring the recitation to life. For example, as one student recites, the other draws the observations on a whiteboard; or one student mimes looking through a telescope and dictates to the other student, who records their notes; or one student lectures while the other responds as an audience member might on learning the scientific discovery.

Latin Text: Cum caelestia sīdera per perspicillum spectārem, Iuppiter sēsē obviam fēcit. Trēs illī adstāre Stellulās, exiguās quidem, vēruntamen clārissimās, cognōvī; quae, licet ē numerō inerrantium ā mē crēderentur, nōnnūllam tamen intūlērunt admīrātiōnem, eō quod secundum exāctam līneam rectam atque Eclipticae parallēlam dispositae vidēbantur, ac ceterīs magnitūdine paribus splendidiōrēs. [...] Statūtum ideo omnīque procul dubiō ā mē dēcrētum fuit, trēs in caelīs adesse Stellās vagantēs circā Iovem, instar Veneris atque Mercuriī circā Sōlem; quod tandem luce merīdiānā clārius in aliīs postmodum complūribus īnspectiōnibus observātum est; ac nōn tantum trēs, vērum quāttuor esse vaga Sīdera circā Iovem suās circumvolutionēs obeuntia.

2. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15.843-870

Context: In the opening lines of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid informs us that he will tell stories about transformations (*mutatae formae*) in chronological order, starting from the origin of the world (*ab origine mundi*) and concluding in his own time (*ad mea tempora*). These stories (there are over 250!) are full of marvels as humans turn into animals, trees, flowers, rivers, and constellations. The greatest marvel of all comes at the very end of the poem: the apotheosis of Julius Caesar (the excerpt below). This heavenly metamorphosis was signaled, it was said, by a comet racing across the sky in 44 BCE, a year after the dictator’s death and a year before Ovid’s birth. (Imagine if the Romans had had Galileo’s *perspicillum*!). It’s interesting to note that, following the account of the comet, Ovid calls attention to the divine and legendary ancestry that the Julian family claimed for itself: Venus, the *genetrix* of the *Julian gens*, shepherds Caesar’s soul to the sky. Her son Aeneas is invoked, as is his descendent Romulus alongside his divine father Mars. Augustus, Julius Caesar’s adopted son, also has a place in this episode, his future among the gods all but assured.

Suggestions: As with the Galileo passage, the *recitatio* may take a number of forms (see above). Try to make it lively!

Latin Text: Vix ea fātus erat, mediā cum sēde senātūs

cōnstitit alma Venus, nūllī cernenda, suīque
Caesaris ēripuit membrīs neque in aera solvī
passa recentem animam caelestibus intulit astrīs.
Dumque tulit, lūmen capere atque ignescere sēnsit
ēmīsitque sinū: lūnā volat altius illa,
flammiferumque trahēns spatiōsō līmite crīnem
stella micat nātīque vidēns bene facta fatētur
esse suīs māiōra et vincī gaudet ab illō.

SCRIPTIONES

The purpose of this *certamen*, which is is suitable for students at all levels, is to engage students writing in Latin with particular attention to the relationship between subject and form. The subject may be related to any aspect of "Classics and Science" (math, engineering, and technology are also suitable subjects). The form should be a Latin haiku (5 - 7 - 5 syllable lines). Students are not required to compose their haiku in meter; however, special consideration will be given to students who do. The haiku should be accompanied by a short discussion (up to a paragraph) of the inspiration for and/or idea behind the haiku. A student may submit up to 3 haikus.

The haiku and accompanying discussion should be typed and formatted as a .docx or .pdf file.

IMAGES that students may find informative or inspirational may be found at our small photo gallery. Students are welcome to submit an image of their own choice to illustrate their haiku.