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## A Digital Environment for Neolatin Studies

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**T**he 2005 annual convention of the ACH/ALLC to be hosted at the University of Victoria will have the intersection of multilingualism and humanities computing as a prominent theme. It is therefore the perfect venue for presentation of our work.

The graduate Institute for Latin Studies at the University of Kentucky, begun in 2000, strongly emphasizes the active use of the Latin language via pervasive oral immersion and rigorous assignments in written composition. The faculty conducts a sequence of graduate classes solely in Latin, and students meet spontaneously in various extracurricular venues for further practice. Equally against the grain, the Institute does not restrict its focus to Republican and Imperial Latin of the ancient world as Classical Studies departments typically do, but rather encourages an appreciation of Latin from *all* periods, from antiquity through early modern times.

This presentation will explore the many challenges and opportunities posed for humanities computing by the practices and emphases of the UK Institute for Latin Studies. These challenges fall into the general categories of availability of materials, interface design for a reading environment, and general computational infrastructure for the study of Latin.

Regarding materials, we are responding to a general lack of adequate resources for the active use of Latin as well as the diachronic study of the language. We have produced TEI-conformant XML editions of numerous Neolatin texts, including the *Moriae Encomium of Erasmus*, the *Orationes of Muretus*, the *Argenis* and *Icon Animorum* of Iohannes Barclaius, the *Eudemia* of Ianus Nicius, and the *Psyche Cretica* of Ioannes Ludovicus Praschius. We have begun to produce the world's only unified archive (in any medium) of all known Latin

colloquia, dialogues written expressly for the purpose of teaching people how to speak Latin. We are now completing work on electronic editions of colloquia by Erasmus, Corderius, Duncanus, and Vives, and have already identified many more examples from this genre for inclusion in our archive. We intend to have a constant stream of students writing (Latin) commentaries on the texts that we publish. As an example, last year a graduate student in our program made a selection from Erasmus' *Colloquia*, equipping the texts with introductions, notes and questions to help teachers guide students through texts that may be unknown to the teachers themselves. This kind of work will be important in advancing the utility of our text archive.

Another current digitization project that is related to our goal of keeping Latin learners' minds in Latin is our production of a TEI-XML edition of an all-Latin grammar, *Grammatica classicae latininitatis* by J. Llobera and E. Alvarez (Barcelona 1919). Also, with support from the UK Center for Computational Sciences, this year we are developing a separate grant proposal that would fund a multiyear project to digitize important all-Latin lexica by Forcellini and Du Cange.

We realize that most teachers currently lack experience in conducting their classrooms in spoken Latin, so we will also create our own web-based interactive dialogues (in audiovisual formats) of progressive sophistication. Such exercises in spoken Latin will facilitate students' understanding and will foster an immediate familiarization with the language.

All of the digitized materials we create will be freely available online and will carry appropriate Creative Commons licenses, permitting students and scholars worldwide to use them without cost or restrictions. Our repository will link with others via the Classical Text Services Protocol now being developed under the auspices of the Center for Hellenic Studies, broadening the selection of high quality marked up classical texts available worldwide, as well as allowing our other tools to operate, at least partially, on texts outside our project.

What we anticipate as an ultimate synthesis of all these activities is a digital reading and learning environment, built on the *Apache Cocoon* platform, that allows our own resources, and others flowing in from elsewhere, to be tied together and used selectively to meet the needs of a vertical spectrum of Neolatinists. For students we will associate well spoken versions of the source texts, allow them to click through to morphological and hence lexical data, connect them with grammatical and historical notes, show them a variety of translations, and perhaps even give feedback on their own pronunciations. More advanced scholars may be able to see photographs of manuscripts, automatically collate manuscript transcriptions according to their own stemmatological theories, or call up related commentaries and other scholarship.

Many of the individuals interested in later Latin are not professional scholars, but the Internet allows talented amateurs back into the academic market. How can we best manage the signal to noise ratio? Moreover, those professional scholars of Neolatin who do exist are scattered worldwide. We need to provide tools that not only give everyone access to rarer texts (and ancillary resources), but also harness the expertise and enthusiasms of the reading public to improve them. The work done at the University of Kentucky on the *Suda On Line* project showed how a web-based community of scholars could tackle a project too large for any one individual and gradually make real progress. Accordingly we plan on extending the results of that experiment with a framework for lexicography that enables the continuous improvement of our fundamental reference works by a distributed set of users.

## **Bibliography**

[No source references provided. Eds.]