

# Exploring Archaeology and Trade in the Middle School Latin Class

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**Subject:** Latin

**Level:** Grades 7 and 8 (instructions roughly equivalent to Latin 1 at high school level)

**Length of Unit:** Thirty lessons ranging from five minutes to a six-hour field trip

**Readings:**

Cunliffe, Barry. *Fishbourne: A Roman Palace and its Garden*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.

Marx, Walter H. *Claimed By Vesuvius*. Reading: Independent School Press, 1979.

Richardson, Lawrence, Jr. *Pompeii: An Architectural History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

**Textbook:** *Cambridge Latin Course*: Unit 1 (stages 1–12), Unit 2 (stages 13–20), and unit 3 (stages 21–28). Note: In this textbook series, “stage” means “chapter.”

## PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Norwell is a solid middle-class community on the South Shore of Boston with a population of approximately 9,200. The Goldman Junior High School has a population of approximately 300 students and is a public coeducational institution. A small number of students leave the school system after the eighth grade to go to private high schools or regional vocational schools. The vast majority attends the public high school. After graduation, ninety-nine to one hundred percent of students continue their education at the post-secondary level at a variety of colleges and universities.

### THE CAMBRIDGE LATIN COURSE

Instruction in Latin for Grades 7 and 8 is based on three volumes of the *Cambridge Latin Course*, subtitled Units 1, 2, and 3. The Latin narratives in all three have to do with events in the early years of the Roman Empire. The narrative in each unit has a particular venue and cast of characters. Although the Latin in all three units is for students who are still new to the language, the stories and the details are sophisticated. Every effort is made to lead the students to the language through their interest in the subject matter of the stories.

A note about pictorial material and availability of slides for the classroom: The pictures—line drawings and photographs—for all three units were selected by the editors to reinforce points in the Latin stories as well as readings on cultural matters. Also available are slides published by Cambridge University Press and the North American Cambridge Classics Project. These are not very expensive, are designed specifically to reinforce the material, and will be easy for teacher to locate and order. The section, A List of Helpful Visuals, at the end of this teaching plan lists pictorial materials along with the topics to which they relate.

The story in the first unit takes place in Pompeii in a time period before the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. This story gives students insight into the various classes of the population in the wealthy suburbs. Students see all classes from the wealthy merchant-banker to slaves and freedmen. The narrative in the second unit follows the travels of a young refugee after the eruption of Vesuvius, first through Naples and Athens, then to Alexandria, and finally to Britain. Students meet members of the Greek ruling and mercantile class of Alexandria, witness the race riots of the Egyptian peasants, and observe the wondrous science and medicine of Alexandria. The narrative of the third unit occurs in Roman Britain where students see the conquered and enslaved Celts, the noble client kings, the middle- and upper-class Romans trying to climb the ladder to political success called the *cursus honorum*, and tribal leaders trying to ingratiate themselves with the Romans. Then the scene shifts to the city of Rome and the political intrigue that was typical of the period.

The bonus in using this textbook series is that not only do students get experience in both translating Latin and in the cultural-historic information in each chapter but also the people and settings are rooted in the archaeological record.

## PART TWO: THE TEACHING PLAN

### Elements in the Stories that Highlight the Archaeological Record and Evidence of Ancient Mediterranean Trade

In this section of my teaching plan, I will draw from selected Stages (chapters) in Units 1 and 2 elements which pertain to the archaeological record on which many details in the

## LESSON PLANS

stories were based. I will also point out details in the stories which allow for the discussion of ancient trade. My aim is to demonstrate how the study of archaeology, and of ancient trade, can reinforce and supplement the teaching of the Latin language and ancient culture. For references, Stage by Stage, to pictures (photographs and line drawings) as well as Cambridge Latin Course slides which are based on archaeological evidence, and/or pertain to trade, please see Part Two of teaching plan, below.

**UNIT 1, STAGES 1–12****Stage 1**

The main character is Lucius Caecilius Iucundus. How do we know about Caecilius? What did he look like? Did he really have a son named Quintus?

When his house was excavated in Pompeii in 1875, archaeologists found a realistic bust of Lucius Caecilius Iucundus. Set up on twin herms in the atrium of this house on Stabiae street, it was dedicated “To the Genius [spirit] of our Lucius by his freedman named Felix.” Giving us exact information about how Caecilius earned his living, an *arca* [chest] was uncovered in the second floor of his house. This contained over 153 wax tablets detailing his local business transactions as an auctioneer, well as documents indicating transactions in intercontinental trade involving the buying of Egyptian linen. The *arca* had crumbled to dust, but not the contents, which were taken to the National Museum in Naples and deciphered. One receipt dates back to A.D. 15 and another to A.D. 27. The rest are from the decade of A.D. 52–62, just before a great earthquake struck Pompeii.

We know about his son Quintus because of a political advertisement in the form of a graffito listing his name as an endorser of a candidate for office and also an inscription on an amphora of wine given by Quintus to his younger brother.

**Stage 3**

In the course of the Latin narrative we follow Caecilius through his daily routine as he goes to work in the forum. When Caecilius is looking for a new slave he goes to the harbor to meet Syphax, a Syrian slave merchant with a ship. The slave he buys is Melissa who is learning the Latin language. If Melissa is learning Latin and brought by ship, it would indicate she is probably from the eastern part of the empire where Greek was spoken. This opens discussion of shipping routes and the slave trade.

**Stage 4**

In the next chapter Caecilius makes a loan to Hermogenes, a Greek shipping merchant who approaches the Pompeian merchant and asks to borrow money, as he (Hermogenes) has a ship, already loaded, back in Greece, which he wants to bring to Pompeii. Caecilius asks him to put his ring seal on a wax tablet. When the Greek merchant fails to return the

money, Caecilius brings him to court.

This story illustrates typical shipping deals from the Hellenistic period through the Middle Ages. Therefore, students are informed that two or three partners were normally involved in this type of deal—the ship owner, the merchant, and the money lender. The story demonstrates a two-person deal in which the merchant and ship owner are the same person. A shipping deal involving only two parties means the profit is split between two rather than three people, but also means the participants take greater risk. If there is a shipwreck and one participant is both the ship owner and merchant, he loses everything—his ship and the cargo. We also discuss the contracts used, the collateral involved, and the legal recourse of the money lender.

**Stage 8**

The narrative has to do with the gladiatorial games given by Livineius Regulus when he was running for office. These games do not go well and end in a riot between the people of Nuceria and the people of Pompeii. The riot is mentioned by Tacitus and was investigated by the Senate at the request of the Emperor Nero. We also have drawings and frescoes of this particularly gruesome incident.

One of the bouts during these games is a beast fight involving lions. Since many Latin curricula contain units on gladiatorial games, beast fights provide a good opportunity for the discussion of one aspect of trade—the shipping of wild animals from Africa.

**Stage 12**

The last chapter in Unit 1 covers the actual eruption of Vesuvius about which we have large amounts of archaeological evidence in the excavations at Pompeii and in museums. In addition to the archaeological evidence, we have written evidence in the letters of Pliny the Younger.

**UNIT 2 (STAGES 13–20)****Stage 17**

With the destruction of Pompeii, the venue of the narrative moves eventually to Alexandria, this puts us in a perfect position to talk about intercontinental shipping not only to Italy, but in the other direction to India. Alexandria is set up for trade as evidenced by its lighthouse, harbors, and canals. The sociological background of trade in Alexandria is illustrated by a description of the Egyptian-Greek tensions which characterize life in the city. These were undoubtedly exacerbated by the fact that the wealth from trade did not filter down to common people.

In the narrative, Quintus goes to Alexandria to visit Barbillus, a rich man who used to do business with his now deceased father. The nature of their business relationship may be explained by the receipt for Egyptian linen found in Caecilius's records.

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We learn the Barbillus is buying gems from an Arab merchant, who is also trading in silk and ivory. These products provide the opportunity to discuss trade from Pompeii through Egypt and Arabia to China by land, to India by sea, and to Africa by both kinds of routes.

Throughout the narrative there are references to and pictures of amphoras commonly made in Pompeii and filled with wine or garum (Roman fish sauce), also manufactured in the Campanian region and exported. Roman glassmaking also plays a part in the Alexandrian portion of the story. Material evidence of all of the above exports has been found in sites in India, including Arikamedu on the east coast. After introducing students to all of the above information, we can use a map to show them how a product produced in Pompeii might be shipped to Alexandria and then be transshipped to the coast of the Red Sea where the ship captain would wait for the monsoon to carry him directly across the Arabian Sea to India.

**LIST OF HELPFUL VISUALS AND READINGS:**

The following pages represent a work in progress. The visuals either in or (in the case of slides) coordinated with the three textbooks- visuals which are taken directly from the archaeological record- are listed below as they occur in the various Stages (chapters). In some cases, references are also made to particular readings. I hope eventually to undertake a next step, identification of additional sources showing the parts of the archaeological record on which the visuals are based.

The information is listed as follows. First in each line is the location of photographs and plans in the three textbooks (Units 1, 2, and 3) which reinforce the material in the text. These are important as they are the easiest resource for teachers to use and involve no extra expense. In some cases, the second item listed is slides published by Cambridge University Press and the North American Cambridge Classics Project, which are not expensive and are designed specifically to relate to the textbook (for ordering information, see beginning of this teaching plan). Third in some listings are references to the books listed under Readings (by Cunliffe, Marx, and Richardson), which can be used to reinforce specific points in the text and accompanying visuals.

**Unit 1 (Stages 1–10)****Stage 1**

The Roman house—photograph in Unit 1, p. 15; NACCP slide set #1; Richardson

Caecilius, banking records—Marx, pp. 42–43, 127–130

Caecilius—bust, wax tablets in National Archaeological Museum, Naples

Quintus—graffiti in Marx, p. 51

Roman clothing—photographs of statuary and frescoes in Unit 1: pp. 12, 53, 61, 93, 95

**Stage 3**

City plan of Pompeii—see Richardson

**Stage 4**

The Forum in Pompeii—plan in Unit 1, p. 63; photographs on pp. 45, 53, 56, 64; Richardson

**Stage 5**

The theatre in Pompeii—photographs in Unit 1, p. 81; Richardson

**Stage 7**

Tombs and burial customs, death of Decens—photographs of Necropolis in Unit 1, p. 112

**Stage 8**

Amphitheater—photograph in Unit 1, p. 105; Richardson  
Gladiators' equipment—photographs in Unit 1, p. 120

**Stage 9**

Loaf of bread—photograph in Unit 1, p. 28  
The baths—plan of the forum baths in Unit 1, pp. 132, 144, 147; Richardson  
Oil pots and strigils—photograph in Unit 1, p. 137

**Stage 12**

Eruption of Vesuvius—letter of Pliny  
Excavation of Pompeii—Richardson

**Unit 2 (Stages 13–20)****Stage 15**

King Cogidubnus—photograph in Unit 2, p. 56 of inscription at Chichester

**Stage 16**

Fishbourne palace—Cunliffe  
Former Roman port and depot—Cunliffe

**Stage 17**

Alexandria lighthouse and harbors—photographs and plans in Unit 2, pp. 81, 92, 93  
Temple of Augustus (Caesareum) and Temple of Serapis—slides of remains in NACCP slide set #2

**Stage 18**

Alexandrian glass—photograph in Unit 2, pp. 100–101

**Stage 19**

Sistra—photograph in Unit 2, pp. 125, 135 of statuary and artifacts  
Processions of Isis—photograph in Unit 2, pp. 135, 136, of relief and paintings of ceremony

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Nile animal life (crocodiles and hippos)—photograph in Unit 2, p. 129 of mosaics and frescoes

## Stage 20

Medical instruments—photograph in Unit 2, p. 141, or artifacts

**Unit 3 (Stages 21–28)**

## Stage 21

L. Marcius Memor—photograph in Unit 3 text on p. 9 of statue base dedicated by Memor

## Stage 24

Roman roads and other infrastructure (bridges and water systems)—photographs in Unit 3, p. 65

## Stage 25

Legionary helmets, shields, equipment—photograph in Unit 3, pp. 73–74

## Stage 26

Agricola—photograph in Unit 2, p. 100, of inscriptions on water pipes and over forum in St. Albans

The Above material is a sampling, included here to illustrate the visual possibilities of this series.

**TEXTBOOK:** *Cambridge Latin Course*: Unit 1 (stages 1–12), Unit 2 (stages 13–20), and unit 3 (stages 21–28). For information about this series, contact the following offices:

Cambridge University Press  
40 West 20th Street  
New York, New York 10011-4211  
E-mail: [marketing@cup.org](mailto:marketing@cup.org)

North American Cambridge Classics Project  
3903 South Blvd.  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28209  
E-mail: [nacccp@charlotte.infi.net](mailto:nacccp@charlotte.infi.net)