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THEME

LATIN ON THE MARGINS

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Cover image: The back panel of the Franks Casket - The Auzon Casket (early 8th century). London, British Library, 1867,0120.1, licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

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Editorial Note

The image on the cover of this second issue of JOLCEL shows a detail from the so-called Franks Casket, an early eight-century Anglo-Saxon chest made out of whale's bone, possibly designed to hold a psalter. This artefact constitutes a truly breath-taking nexus of cultural traditions, juxtaposing tableaux as varied as Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf, the mythical Germanic Wayland the Smith at work on his anvil, and the Adoration of the Magi. The scene which has been reproduced here depicts the consequences of the Roman emperor Titus' sacking of the city of Jerusalem. The inscription in the upper right-hand margin starts out in the Latin tongue and script: "hic fugiant hierusalim" ("Here flee from Jerusalem..."). This phrase is then continued vertically, still in Latin but rendered in Anglo-Saxon runes: "ƿǽlittƿǽrmlȝ," which can be transcribed as "(h)abitatores" ("...its inhabitants"). If we also were to take a look at the left side of this panel (not included here), we would encounter further runic inscriptions in Anglo-Saxon that describe the ancient siege itself. Clearly, Latin and its cultural past are being represented here as being part of a larger and more complex whole, a whole in which, at first sight, they do not even seem to occupy a central position.

This leads us to the present volume's overarching topic, 'Latin on the margins', which has its earliest origins in the *Telling Tales Out of School*-conference organised by RELICS in 2017. It might come as a surprise to the reader that, only having arrived at our second issue, we turn to the aspect of Latin on the margins. However, by placing these topics at the centre of our journal, and in dialogue with texts that are traditionally considered key texts of the Latin tradition, we seek to reconsider the aspect of centre versus margin in Latin literature, with a particular focus on how education in Latin played a crucial role in this.

Indeed, the three articles we present to the reader in this issue deal with texts that are generally viewed as examples of the use of Latin in the margins. The margins in question are either geographical ones (Tlatelolco in Mexico City) or chronological ones (nineteenth-century Sweden). This issue hopes to show that what we have come to define as 'marginal' is only a question of perspective. In the formation of writers that we consider today to be at the margin of the Latin tradition, Latin education still was—or had recently become—a central element.

Andrew Laird (Brown University) and Heréndira Tellez Nieto (Cátedras Conacyt), in their respective articles, draw attention to the College of Tlatelolco, located in Mexico City. The use of Latin for the instruction of the Nahua peoples was never regarded as a 'marginal'

phenomenon; on the contrary, Latin was a crucial medium to enhance mutual understanding, which in turn created a new and vibrant dynamic, far from Europe. This explains how Tlatelolco became a new centre for the study of the Latin language and its literatures, in interaction with the indigenous traditions of native Mexicans.

Chronologically and geographically, nineteenth-century Sweden is, undoubtedly, at the margin of the Latin tradition; but, as Arsenii Vetushko-Kalevich (Lund University) explores in his article, for someone like Carl Georg Brunius, author of the longest Latin poem ever written in Sweden, the attempt to rewrite Nordic mythology in classical Latin hexameters probably felt more like a natural reflex than as an anachronism. By reinterpreting the classical echoes in the epic *De diis arctois* as more than mere “metrical necessities,” Vetushko-Kalevich seeks to give new meaning to the poem.

Finally, in his illuminative response to the articles of this issue, Alejandro Coroleu (ICREA—Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) reflects more deeply on the consequences of this thinking in terms of what he calls “beyond Europe, beyond the Renaissance, and beyond the vernacular.” He makes a plea for the inclusion of these texts that are usually left out of the picture, in order to get a better insight in the aspects which make the Latin tradition a cosmopolitan one.

The second issue of JOLCEL focuses on texts from the (early) modern period, but intentionally goes beyond those of the Italian humanist ideals. The articles analyse the use of Latin in contexts where the idea of *translatio imperii* is at first sight no longer a logical one: the Latin tradition has to impose itself on already existing traditions, such as the Nahua mythology or Nordic sagas. Interestingly, this imposition soon shifts to a renegotiation of the hierarchy of traditions. Latin, then, becomes a medium in which new traditions emerge.

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