

BROWN UNIVERSITY
Department of Classics

Literature at the Court of Charlemagne

Latin 1110H

Spring, 2016

MWF 2:00-2:50 P.M.

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AIMS: In terms of pure quantity, the Carolingian literary achievement far outdistances the Augustan age, yet precious little (critical) attention has been paid to it. This course attempts a remedy by surveying the enormous literary output in Latin generated by the Carolingian settlement. We will read primarily in poetry, but not to the complete neglect of prose. The aims are to survey the major authors and genres and to communicate a sense of the intellectual, spiritual, and emotional issues informing Carolingian literary activity. A secondary goal is to suggest profitable ways to read later Latin literature and the intellectual assumptions that support its production. Where possible, we will pay attention to the social and historical forces shaping this production, including the classical inheritance, education, patronage, and Christian humanism (to name but the most obvious).

METHODS: The course will run as a seminar. Students will read the assigned texts for each class and the class as a group will discuss them, paying attention to all manner of literary activity in them: meter, diction, grammar and syntax, thematic and symbolic ambits, authorial intent, etc. This is, then, a discussion-centered course. We will not go around the room translating. I assume you can read Latin. We will pay attention to translation, needless to note, in dealing with meaning, but never as an exercise unto itself. There is simply not enough time to examine the wealth of literary works otherwise.

REQUIREMENTS: The two most important requirements for this course are a commitment to read and a willingness to discuss the assigned works. The reading load is steady but never onerous. Additionally, one oral report, two essays, and a final project are required. Topics for the essays (c. 5 pp. each) will be distributed one week before the essay is due; you will choose a topic of your liking from a dozen or so options. Essays will be due in early March and April (see schedule, below). Students will design their own final projects, subject to the instructor's approval. These projects must be written: either a research paper, an interpretive essay, a commentary, etc. (more on that at the appropriate time). Finally, each student will prepare an oral report to the group treating a prose work written by one of the authors set for discussion (see schedule below).

PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE/GRADING: It goes without saying that regular attendance, dedicated reading, and (honest) participation in discussions are required for full credit. If you dislike courses geared to seminar-style discussion, then you probably will find this course not to your liking. I would add that "participate" does not only mean "talks a lot." I do not take attendance. I reserve the right, however, to factor in attendance, for better or worse, in determining borderline grades. The two essays, the final project, and the oral report will each comprise 1/4 of the final grade.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

N.B.: All Latin texts are provided by the instructor in PDF format. It is likely we will get behind schedule; the below has several days built into it to accommodate tardiness. Nonetheless, we *should* be able to read all of the works herefound, in this order, should this matter for purposes of planning your work for the semester.

JANUARY

- 27 Introduction to Course: Aims, Methods, Requirements
- 29 Some Thoughts About Carolingian Latin Literature

FEBRUARY

- 1 Angilbert (c. 760—February 18, 814)
"Ad Carolum Regem"
- 3 Angilbert, "Ad Carolum Regem"
- 5 Peter of Pisa (c. 744—c. 799)
"To Paul the Deacon" (*Nos dicamus . . .*)
- 8/10 Paul the Deacon (c. 720—April 13, 799)
"Reply to Peter of Pisa" (*Sensi, cuius verba . . .*)
Report on *De significatu verborum*
- 12 Alcuin (c. 735—May 19, 804)
Carm. 11, 61
- 15 *Carm.* 11, 61 (cont.)
Report on *Epistulae*
- 17 Theodulf (c. 755—December 18, 821)
Carm. 44 (*Carmina saepe mihi . . .*), "Battle of the Birds"
- 19 "Battle of the Birds" (cont.)
Report on *Libri Carolini*
- 22 **NO CLASS: Long Weekend**
- 24 Hibernicus Exul (fl. 8th cent.)
"In Praise of Poetry," "A Master to His Pupils"
- 26 "In Praise of Poetry," "A Master to His Pupils" (cont.)
First Essay Topics Distributed
- 29 Modoin (c. 770—c. 843)
"Eclogue"

MARCH

- 2 "Eclogue" (cont.)
- 4 **NO CLASS: First Essay Due**

- 7 Walahfrid Strabo (c. 810—849)
"The Bone of a Doe" (*Arboris est altrix . . .*), "On Friendship" (*Cum splendor lunae . . .*), *De cultura hortorum: cucurbita*
- 9 *De cultura hortorum: cucurbita* (cont.)
- 11 *De cultura hortorum: cucurbita* (cont.)
- 14 Gottschalk (c. 808—October 30, 867)
Ut quid iubes
- 16 Hrabanus Maurus (c. 780—February 4, 856)
Veni, creator spiritus, "On Writing" (*Lex pia cumque . . .*)
- 18 *Veni, creator spiritus*, "On Writing" (*Lex pia cumque . . .*) (cont.)
Report on *De universo*
- 21 Paschasius Radbertus (c. 785—865)
"Eclogue of Two Nuns"
- 23 "Eclogue of Two Nuns" (cont.)
Report on *Vita Adalhardi*
- 25 Taking Stock: From Charlemagne to His Successors
Second Essay Topics Distributed

March 26—April 3: Spring Break**APRIL**

- 4 Dhuoda (c. 803—843)
Manualis Liber
- 6 *Manualis Liber* (cont.)
Report on the Preface and Prologue of the *Manualis Liber*
- 8 **NO CLASS: Second Essay Due**
- 11 Sedulius Scottus (fl. c. 855)
"Debate of the Rose and Lily"
- 13 "Debate of the Rose and Lily" (cont.)
Report on *De rectoribus christianis*
- 15 Radbod (c. 850—917)
"A Swallow"
- 18 "A Swallow" (cont.)
- 20 Notker Balbulus (c. 840—April 6, 912)
"Sequence for the Feasts of Holy Women"
- 22 "Sequence for the Feasts of Holy Women" (cont.)
Report on Notker's *Vita Carolini*

25 Beyond Carolingian Literary Culture

27 Summation and Final Thoughts

MAY

20 Final Project Due