Latin Handwriting

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OBJECTIVES

You will be able to:
- use online resources to help you read Latin documents
- learn basic Latin grammar in order to determine relationships
- read Latin documents at a basic level

Usefulness

Latin has been the language of the Church for centuries and many records were written in Latin, either in toto or in part. Being able to read Latin gives you access to the information in many records.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Latin is an Indo-European language, which means that it is related to English, German, Russian, and number of other languages, mostly found in Europe and in a swath that reaches into India. It is the mother language of French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, and a few other languages, which we designate as 'Romance. English has borrowed thousands of words from Latin and the other Romance languages, especially French. This has changed the vocabulary of English tremendously and has led some people to believe that English is descended from Latin. Such is not the case. English is a Germanic language, mostly closely related to Dutch, Frisian, German, Afrikaans, and the Scandinavian languages. However, the borrowing of so many Latin-based words into English makes reading Latin much easier for the English speaker than it would have been had such borrowing not occurred.

Here is how to search a webpage for a specific word:

On a PC press the 'control' button and hold it down while you press the 'F' button. Depending on the browser you use, a box will appear at the top right, left, or bottom left. Type a word or any letter string, i.e. part of a word, into the box. That letter string will then be highlighted. If there is more than one occurrence of that string, such will be indicated and you can click the arrow to find each occurrence.

On a Mac it's the command and f button at the same time.

Dictionaries, word lists and other aides:

1- FamilySearch Latin Genealogical Word List
   https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Latin_Genealogical_Word_List

   This is the site to start with when looking for genealogical terms. It includes subsections for topical vocabulary items, such as numbers, key words, and abbreviations. The general word list is Latin to English.

2- Google Translate https://translate.google.com/

   This is an easy-to-use site. You can search either Latin to English or English to Latin.

3- How to decline personal names

   http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/latin/reference/how-to-decline-personal-names/

   This site shows you the many endings in all the cases of personal names. One caveat—in the first declension genitive and dative this site gives the simplified ending –e where you would normally see ae or æ.

4- Latin Dictionary   https://www.online-latin-dictionary.com/

   This is a wonderful dictionary with many terms. Of particular importance is that it gives the various declensions of the items, including given names. This will help you understand the grammar.

5- Lewis & Short: Latin-English dictionary
   Smith & Hall: English-Latin dictionary
   Döderlein's Hand-book of Latin Synonymes
   Horae Latinae: Studies in Synonyms and Syntax
      https://www.latinitium.com/smithhall?s

   This a very good set of dictionaries and other works that translate from English to Latin.

Other aides:

6- The Catholic Encyclopedia   http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/

   This encyclopedia will give detailed explanations of many terms dealing with the Catholic church. To increase your understanding of cultural items, see this encyclopedia.

You will often encounter various abbreviations in your documents. The following two sites will give the expansion of the abbreviations, which means that you will still have to translate the terms to a language that you understand.

7- Wörterbuch lateinischer und deutscher Abkürzungen des späten Mittelalters und der Neuzeit

   https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/58434-redirection

8- Dizionario di Abbreviature Latine ed Italiani This book appears on two websites. Try them both and see which you like more. The abbreviations and special symbols are arranged alphabetically. However, some symbols are not really letters, but they will be grouped with the letter that they most resemble. At the beginning of each letter of the alphabet there is a list of variant letters. Have a look at several letters to get an idea of how valuable this will be for you.

https://archive.org/details/CappelliDizionarioDiAbbreviature

http://hist.msu.ru/departments/8823/projects/Cappelli/index.php?sphrase_id=121340

9- Latin Language and Script: Gallery of Latin Abbreviations
http://sites.rootsweb.com/~chevaud/latin_abbrev.htm

This site gives a number of abbreviations and explains them in detail.

Part 1: Dictionaries, Word lists and other aides:

Activity 1

For this activity, find these words in the FamilySearch Latin Genealogical word list: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Latin_Genealogical_Word_List

Do a control F (or command f) search for these words and write all the different Latin words that you find for each English word.

Objectives of this activity:

1- You will become familiar with the FS Latin word list
2- You will learn how to search using the control F feature
3- You will learn many Latin vocabulary items

Death	mortuus, defunctus, obitus, denatus, decessus, peritus, mors, mortis, obiit, decessit
Godparents	
Marriage	
Mother	
Baptized	
Birth	
Child	
Witnesses	

Godmother	
Godfather	
Father	
Buried	
Wife	

Activity 2:

Objectives of this activity:

1- You will become familiar with the various word lists and dictionaries that you will need
2- You will learn many Latin vocabulary items

For this activity, look at the document and see if you can recognize any of the cognates. Can you more or less make out what is being said in this document?

Annus, mensis, dies.	Mors et sepultura.
1863. Mense Januario	Anno Domini millesimo octingentesimo *sexagesimo tertio* Die *trigesima, hora sexta vespertina* obiit aetate annorum *unius infans, Barbara, filia legitima Petri Hermann & Catharinae Kraemer, conjugum in Bettingen* et post *tres* dies in coemeterio *nostro hucate* sepulta est. In fidem *Garisch de Culmbergu* past.

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-S3QB-W?cc=27902684300-000201%2F1

Now, use these sites to look up each of the following words. You will not find all of the words in any one site, but will have to use both of them.

FamilySearch Latin Genealogical Word List
   https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Latin_Genealogical_Word_List

Latin Dictionary   https://www.online-latin-dictionary.com/

sexagesima	
vespertina	
filia	
nostro	
hujate	

Part 2: Grammar: Cases

Latin is what we call a synthetic, as opposed to an analytical, language. This means that Latin has a tremendous number of word endings. How a noun or pronoun functions in a sentence is indicated by word endings, not by word order, as in English.

Case	Use
Nominative	This is the subject of the sentence I baptized the child.
Genitive	This is the 'owner' of an item. In English, we often indicate this with 's or of… The child of Thomas and Mary (or Thomas' and Mary's child) was baptized)
Dative	This is the beneficiary of the action, i.e. the person for whom something is done For John and Mary I baptized the child.
Accusative	This is the receiver of the action I baptized the child.

Here are the most common endings for three of the five noun groups, which we call 'declensions.'

Case	1st decl.	2nd decl.	3rd decl.
Nominative	Maria Matthias	Petrus	Joannes
Genitive	Mariae Matthiae	Petri	Joannis
Dative	Mariae Matthiae	Petro	Joanni
Accusative	Mariam Matthiam	Petrum	Joannem

Activity 3:

Objective of this activity:

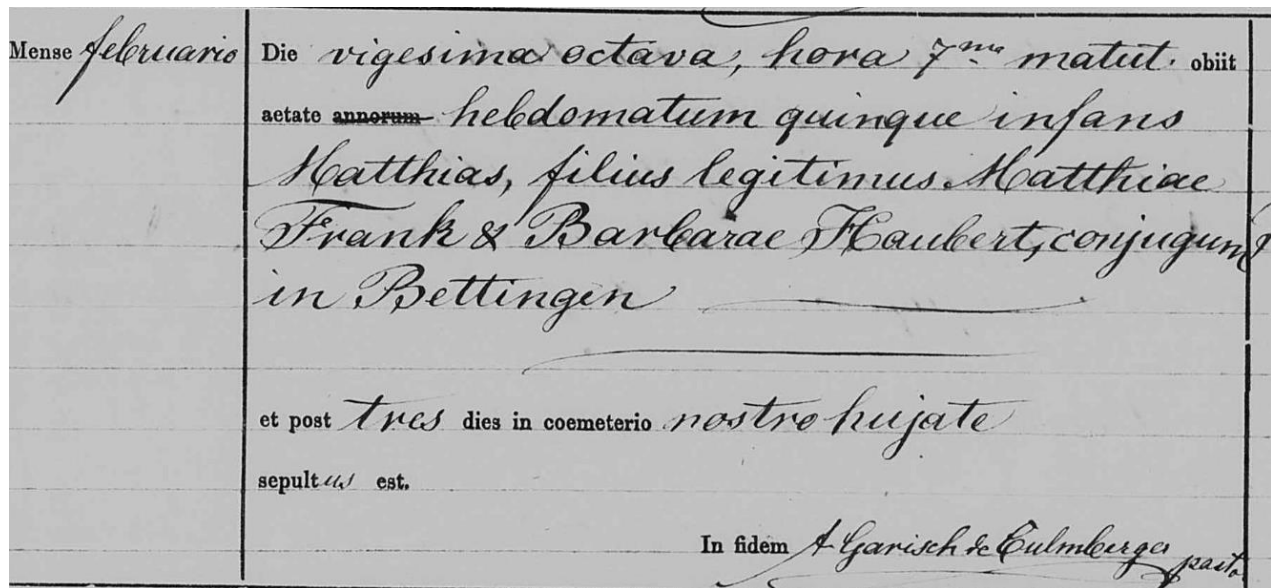1- You will become familiar with the use of cases in order to determine who is doing what to whom in the sentence.

From these two documents, look up the first two names in the box below and tell the case and function in the sentence of each one. A few extra names that are not in the documents have been added as well. Do the same for them. You can use the chart above (recommended) or these two websites, but you should familiarize yourself with these sites:

How to decline personal names http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/latin/reference/how-to-decline-personal-names/ One caveat—in the first declension genitive and dative this site gives the simplified ending –e where you would normally see ae or æ.

Latin Dictionary   https://www.online-latin-dictionary.com/

Name	Case
Example: Barbara	Nominative. Subject of the sentence. The person being baptized.
Petri	
Catharinae	
Joanni	
Matthiae	
Annam	

Activity 4 Translations and transcriptions:

For the following documents, use the skills that you have developed and resources that you have learned to translate and transcribe the following documents. The beginning document are easy to transcribe. Lines will be provided for your work.

When you transcribe or translate a document, you should stay true to the lines as they appear in the documents. This means that if there are seven lines in the original document, you should have seven lines in your transcription and, if possible, translation. If you are only extracting information, which you will often do, you do not need to stay true to the lines.

For these exercises do not get hung-up on the surnames and place names. Those will be dependent on the area in which you are researching. Do pay special attention to given names, though.

Document 1

If you are working with a baptismal record and you see the words *natus* and *renatus*, what do you automatically know about the person being baptized? What if you see *nata* and *renata*?

Mense _Martio_ Die _vigesima prima, hora 6ta matut_ obiit aetate ~~annorum~~ _hebdomad. decem infans Cathari filia legitima Nicolai Frau & Barbara Backes, conjugum in Bettingen_

et post _tres_ dies in coemeterio _nostro hujate_ sepult___ est.

In fidem _A Garisch & Culmbergu_ past.

Document 2

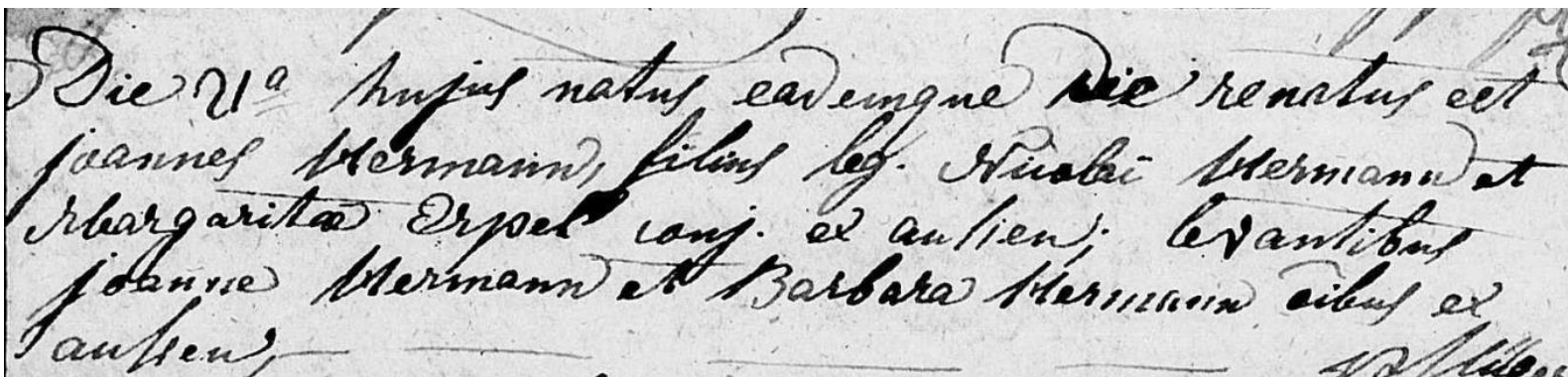| Mense *Aprili* | Die *trigesima, hora 9na vespertina* obiit aetate ann... *unius mensium decem infans Petrus, filius legitimus Petri Bernarding & Mariae Erbel, conjugum in Aussen;* et post *tres* dies in coemeterio *nostro hujate* sepult... est. In fidem *J. Garisch de Cubmberga pastor* |

Document 3

Annus, mensis, dies.	Infantes baptizati, parentes, levantes.
1891. Majus 31.ª.	Anno Domini millesimo octingentesimo *nonagesimo primo* die *vigesima secunda* c.h.s.m. mensis *Maji* natus est et die *Trigesima prima* mensis *Maji* baptizatus est *Nicolaus Angel* filius legitimus *Petri Angel et Annae Mariae Spang, conjugum in Aupen.* Levantes erant: *Nicolaus Tesse et Maria Spang ex Aupen.* In fidem: *J. Kaaspas.*

Document 4

NB! Look up -*que* in the Latin word list!

Document 5

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSTT-X968-9?i=249&cat=96811

Document 6

Die decimo tertio aprilis hora circa undecima vespertina pie obiit in Bettingen Gertrud Schneider aetatis quinquaginta quinque annorum uxor legitima Phillipi Quinten ex Aussen et postea die decimo quinto sepulta est in Bettingen. Clemens pastor in Bettingen

Document 7

Anno 1817 Die 21 Aprilis hora autem 10ma postmeridiana natus et die Sequenti baptizatus est Joannis filius legitimus Joannis Kleinkener et Margrethae Lenhof Conjugum ex austen. Levantes erant Joannis Nur et annemaria Lenhof ex Bettingen.

Clemens

Document 8

Before you translate the document, look at the numbers and letters in the right-hand column.
What do they mean; what is the date? Answer: Those are the date: 9th of September

Die nona Septembris factis de more tribus proclama- 9na
tionibus nulloque impedimento detecto in facie ecclesiæ 7bris
Matrimonium contraxerunt Philippus Matthes viduus
et civis in Lauschied et Maria Elisabetha Schneiderin
soluta, Mariæ Margrethæ filia illegitima ex Lauschied. testes
speciales erant Philippus Sibila conjugatus et Civis in Lau-
schied et Jacobus Ginser solutus ex Lauschied. Matrimo-
nio assistebat Fr. Palatinus Corneli qui supra.

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSTY-73TD-T?i=270

Document 9

Tribus proclamationibus in ecclesia parochiali rite factis nullaque
impedimento canonico detecto per honestas Haamen Schmidt,
filium legitimum Adami Schmidt et defunctae Gertrudis Wilhelm,
conjugum hujatum — et Annam Müller, fileg. Jacobi Müller
et Elisabethae Klein, conjugam similiter hujatum, die 11ma Junii
1869 coram me et duobus testibus Jacobe Camletti et Haamen
Ammann anhalus in Lister probantibus matrimonium
in facie ecclesiae solemnizatum est

ita testantur Schuster parochus

sponsas: Johann Schmidt
sponsa scribendi imperita signum manu suae X fecit.
testes: Jakob Comletti   Ammann

Document 10

Dosma Maji natus joanni Wilhelmo Laux, et Marie Joanne
Laux Conjugibus ex Leg filius foes Lause, et renatus 21a
ejusdem levantibus Joanni Mader et Clara Laux ex
Leg. ———

https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSTY-73YH-9

Document 11

Objective of this activity:

    1- You will become familiar with various works dedicated to Latin abbreviations.

To start this activity, read or skim this page well enough that you at least know generally what is there and can refer to it later when you need help. No one can remember all these things, but familiarity and knowing how to find information is valuable:

    http://sites.rootsweb.com/~chevaud/latin_abbrev.htm

Before you start with Document 11, refer to document 4 and look at the abbreviation that is the second-to-last word in the last full line. What is it? _____ Look that up in the one of the following works. For document 11, you are given a document that includes a number of abbreviations. Use these tools to expand the abbreviations that are underlined in the text:

    https://archive.org/details/CappelliDizionarioDiAbbreviature

    http://hist.msu.ru/departments/8823/projects/Cappelli/index.php?sphrase_id=121340

Choose whichever version of this book you like better. Remember to look at the beginning of several letter sections to see variant letter forms. You will need that in order to figure out some of the letters. Also know that not every abbreviation can be listed in any work. There are simply too many. But if you can find something that is close or partial, you may have found the meaning that you are looking for.

If you need help reading the text, look at the URL. But still look up the abbreviations in the book.

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