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June Newsletter

Dear Friends of Lingua Latina,

This newsletter reaches you a little later than usual, and we blame the heat. The June heatwave has left us moving at the pace of a

medieval scribe on a sultry afternoon – but we certainly haven't been idle. In fact, we have three exciting things to share this month: a new podcast episode, a new guided reading, and a thoroughly revamped set of flashcards. So pour yourself something cold and read on!

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New Podcast Episode: Ad Fontes — Back to the Sources

Episode 3 of *Latin with Marina and Marcus* is now live on Spotify and available through our website – and this time, the story is Marcus's. After two episodes cast as the bewildered visitor to the modern world, Marcus finally gets a "home game": we walk straight into his own sixteenth century and its great battle cry, *ad fontes* – "to the sources."

This episode explores the humanist project of restoring classical Latin: the scorn for so-called "kitchen Latin," the reverence for Cicero, and the conviction that the exact form of words was not decoration but the road to truth. Marina, characteristically, plants her flag on the other side – defending medieval Latin as the most

successful working language in European history, one that was alive precisely because it kept changing.

The conversation moves through Erasmus and his Greek New Testament (printed in Marcus's beloved Basel in 1516), the revolution of the printing press, Aldus Manutius and his motto *festina lente*, and the great irony at the heart of the whole story: that the humanist method built to send Europe back to perfect Latin ended up carrying Scripture out of Latin altogether, into the vernaculars – and with them came the Reformation. The episode even circles back to Flacius, the Istrian scholar our listeners have met before, tying the humanist world into a single knot.

You can find the podcast on Spotify by searching for "Latin with Marina and Marcus" or listen directly through our website.

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This Month's Guided Reading: Liutprand's Disastrous Embassy

On the blog this month, we've published a guided reading from one of the most entertaining texts to survive from the tenth century: Liutprand of Cremona's *Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana*, his bitter and hilarious account of a failed diplomatic mission to the Byzantine court. Sent by Otto the Great in 968 to negotiate a marriage alliance, Liutprand instead endured four months of

deliberate humiliation at the hands of Emperor Nicephorus Phocas. The passage we're reading (chapters 19–21) captures the mission at its most excruciating: seated below an unkempt Bulgarian envoy at a ceremonial banquet, then sent off to dine with the servants, and finally consoled with a gift of goat from the emperor's own table – stuffed with garlic, onion, and leek, and drenched in fish sauce. Liutprand presents this pungent dish to his readers as evidence of Byzantine "sophisticated" cuisine, with withering sarcasm. Liutprand writes in a Latin that is classically educated but intensely personal – he quotes Virgil, sprinkles in Greek loanwords from Byzantine officialdom, and never hesitates to record his own indignation in the most vivid terms. This is upper intermediate Latin (B2), but even readers still working on their syntax will find the bishop's fury and dry wit come through immediately. You'll find the text, historical context, and detailed analysis in the Readings section of our website.

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Revamped Flashcards for All Three Booklets

Our flashcards have had a complete makeover! Following your feedback on the beta version, we've redesigned the flashcards for all three Latin Vocabulary booklets – Home & Family, Plants & Animals, and School & Work – with a more modern, user-friendly look and a wealth of new options.You can now study all twelve chapters mixed together or one at a time, click to include phrases, and shuffle or reset your deck as you like. Cards can be marked as learned or kept in your "continue learning" pile, and each entry indicates the word type. There's a browse option for scanning through vocabulary at a glance, and quizzes to test yourself once you're ready.The flashcards remain in beta and free on the blog under Resources – so please keep the feedback coming! We warmly welcome any bug reports or general comments as we continue refining them. From September, they'll be offered together with the booklets in the Store.

Thank you, as always, for being part of the Homo Legens community. Whether you're listening to the podcast, puzzling through Liutprand's misadventures, or drilling vocabulary with the new flashcards, we're delighted to have you with us. Stay cool, and see you next month!

Warm regards,

Marina Schumann

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