Latin 3a 2025 Word Study Compilation 1

As you read through each word study, evaluate each element on the following scale:
1=100% (truly excellent) I'm humbled and amazed
2=92% (pretty good—there was something great that got my attention)
3=84% (neither here nor there—got the job done but barely)
4= 76% (**not** a good job— there was something poorly done that got my attention in a big way)
5= (68%) evaluation element is extremely poor or missing entirely
DO NOT give overly-inflated evaluations on this assignment or earn a blue comment. I, your trusty Latin teacher, will also be providing feedback as well.
Feedback from all of us SHOULD **accurately** reflect the work and thought put into each study.

Do NOT evaluate your own word study!
Skip the rating grid and leave the comment box completely blank for YOUR word study. Proceed with caution.

Evaluations must be completed xxx

Oct 14 by 7 pm ET

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These are the things you'll be ranking:

- **Provided good examples so that I better understand how the word is used**
- **Provided good, useful, and accurate translations and citations so that I can go and find it**
- **Defined the word clearly based on examples (adapted well to the data presented)**
- **Analysis of the word was helpful -- made good observations and drew relevant and appropriate conclusions**
- **Final overall impression of this word study – a "gut feeling" response to this work**

On the survey form there is a "**Free Response**" section for each essay. Provide a couple specific sentences of written feedback to help each writer improve his or her word study next time. Such comments should be primarily polite and useful critiques not fluff like "this is really great." Feedback is anonymous to allow you to be professional. Do not take this as an opportunity to be unduly harsh or to mitigate your feedback with smiley faces or other feel-good elements. The goal is honesty for the sake of learning and improvement. By no means should there be any personal comments about the author's abilities or intellect. To this end, you should include *at least* one positive about the study and one thing you believe needs improvement, but this is the bare minimum. Do not limit yourself to only one point if you see others that deserve comment.

Note: I changed formatting on some word studies to bring them in line with the formatting instructions. The reason for these strict guidelines is to help these all fit and be uniform and so reviews are based on content not appearance.

Word Study 1

On *Septentrio*

Septentrio, as opposed to *septemtrio*, means many things, among those is north ("Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, a Latin Dictionary, Septentrĭōnes"). It is used in Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, where Caesar explains the locations and borders of many Gallic tribes. Specifically, Caesar says: *uergit ad septentriônês* (Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 1.14-8). This can be translated as: It bends toward the north. A more interesting definition of the word *Septentrio* stems from its etymology. *Septentrio* can be broken into two words, *Septem,* and *trio. Septem,* which means seven, and has cognates in such varying languages as old English and Sanskrit, and *trio,* which means an ox. Then *Septentrio* would mean the seven oxen. In the context of *Septentrio* meaning north, as many examples show, these seven oxen would refer to the constellation Ursa Major or *Ursa Maior* in Latin, commonly referred to as the big dipper. This would mean that the romans, in saying north, were really saying "in the direction of a particular constellation." This nuance would mean *uergit ad septentriônês* could mean "It bends towards Ursa Maior."

It does seem strange that seven oxen are suddenly changed to the constellation Ursa Major. However, there is evidence that these two things are related, because the ancient author Hyginus, in *De Astronomia*, mentions *trio* when talking about a constellation called Boötes that follows Ursa Major. He says: *De VII trionibus ille enim dicit...* (Hyginus, *De Astronomia* 2.2 8). This means: Truly he speaks about the seven oxen. This is part of a much larger passage where Hyginus is talking about previous Greek stories that relate to the constellation Boötes and goes on to talk about how these Greek stories were talking about Ursa Major. The explanation could be that these seven stars appear to roam across the skies, in a way not unlike oxen.

Now the definition of *Septentrio* includes both north, its common meaning, and Ursa Major, the origin of the common definition. Another meaning that it could have, is the north wind. This is because adding *ventus* is not very useful, so many authors choose to simply say "the north." This would lend a more interesting meaning to *uergit ad septentriônês.* Instead of meaning "it bends to the north," it could mean "it bends to the north wind" which is a much more poetic meaning.

Septentrio has survived into multiple languages. It has a version in Italian, where it is *settentrione*, meaning north. In Spanish, *septentrión* means north, more specifically on a compass. In Romanian, English, and French, it is all the same word *septentrion*, meaning north, the north and the adjective northern, and north again, respectively. In English, this word is sadly obsolete. In Portuguese, it is *sententrião*, which, like Spanish means north on a compass. However perhaps the most interesting descendent of *septentrio* is in Catalan, a language spoken in Catalonia, Spain. In Catalan, *Septentrió* means both north and the north wind. Catalan uses the exact word and two of the more common meanings of *septentrio*. Catalan is spoken in what was, in Roman times, the province of *Hispania Tarraconensis*, which makes a lot of sense, Catalonia having been conquered in the third century BCE, and having been made a province in the second century BCE. The history of the word *septentrio* can be traced from its origins in the stars and legends of the skies to modern-day usage in a historic province of the Roman Republic. A word that originated thousands of years ago as a description of a constellation has spread across the world in its descendants in modern languages. It was one of the very words that were used in the description of the conquering of a people, who would later go on to be one of many who spread that very word across the globe.

Obrizum: A Golden Latin Word Study

The Latin noun *obrizum, obrizi*, while usually translated as "pure gold," when studied in context of the Latin literature it resides in, a more complex meaning begins to emerge. This study will examine the word *obrizum* from its origin as a Greek word into its Latin use in *Pliny's History* and *The Vulgate*. These texts, by tracing the word's etymology and meaning in context, argue for a definition of *obrizum* far more precious than the simple definition of "pure gold."

The Latin word *obrizum*, sometimes spelled *obryzum*, originates from the Greek word *ὄβρῠζον*, or *óbrŭzon,* also meaning "pure gold." The word is related to the similar Greek adjective "ὄβρῠζος, or óbrŭzos, meaning "having come through a fire test" or "pure" when referring to gold. A similar Latin loanword, the adjective *obrussus, obrussa, obrussum*, has a similar dual meaning of both "pure gold" and "refined" or "assayed." This origin allows us to clearly see that *obrizum*, from its inception, was a word referring to a specific kind of "pure gold." That is, one that had been tested for quality and "pureness." It was not simply "pure" but *exceptionally* so.

An excerpt from Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia* exemplifies *obrizum*'s use as a particular kind of remarkable gold. He writes: *nec pondere aut facilitate materiae praelatum est ceteris metallis, cum cedat per utrumque plumbo, sed quia rerum uni nihil igne deperit, tuto etiam in incendiis rogisque. quin immo quo saepius arsit, proficit ad bonitatem, aurique experimentum ignis est, ut simili colore rubeat ignescatque et ipsum; obrussam vocant.*, "It [gold] is not preferred over other metals by the weight or good nature of material, since it yields to lead in both respects, but because nothing perishes from it by fire—it is safe even in fires and on funeral pyres. Indeed, the more often it has burned, the more it improves in quality; and the test of gold is fire, so that it may redden and glow with a similar color; they call it 'obrussa'" (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 33.19). We can see by the text's refusal to say "gold" outright, except for the mention of *auri*, the more common Latin translation of gold, by the end, that the word is itself more precious than the Latin noun *aurum, auri* meaning gold. The use of both terms in different contexts throughout the passage clearly separates the two. *Obrussa* or *obrizum* can withstand fire, and become even more beautiful after having done so, while *aurum* can be used to describe a "test of gold" in more general terms. *Obrussum* must stand by itself.

We see the word *obrizum* directly in the later Latin text *The Vulgate,* where a new facet of the word is transformed from a simple noun into an adjective-like noun that stands on its own. The passage reads: *"Non dabitur aurum obrizum pro ea, / [...] Non adæquabitur ei aurum vel vitrum, / nec commutabuntur pro ea vasa auri."* , "Pure gold will not be given for it [wisdom], [...] Gold or even fine glass will not be made equal to it, / nor will vases of gold be sold for wisdom (*Vulgate*, 28.15*)*." Here we can see how *obrizum* has evolved from a slightly different, and more special, version of gold to a noun that is able to modify *aurum*, placing it as the word denoting the gold is "pure." In the rest of the passage, *aurum* is referred to on its own, highlighting the importance of *obrizum* in specifying the exemplary nature of the gold in the first sentence, but also the important descriptive work it is now able to do on its own, separate from *aurum*.

In conclusion, the Latin word *obrizum* demonstrates a change in meaning across centuries of literature. While it began as a simple term meaning "pure gold" that had been assayed by fire, the context in which it appears across centuries show that it is a rare word that eventually was used to describe

extraordinary quality. *Obrizum* evolved into a noun—and eventually almost an adjective—denoting the gold's exceptional quality, and eventually standing on its own to signify remarkability.

Word Study 3

Word Study 1 – Bearing in Mind the Uses of Fero!

Fero, *ferre*, *tuli*, *latum* is one of the most important and commonly used irregular verbs in Latin. *Fero* can have several meanings when translated into English such as bear, carry, endure, report, say. Its principal parts are very irregular, making it one of the most interesting verbs to study. It can also be and is mainly used with prefixes such as *-pre*, *-pro*, and *-ad* in Latin poetry and prose. These next few examples will illustrate this.

Ei qui te percutit in maxillam praebe et alteram et ab eo qui aufert tibi vestimentum etiam tunicam noli prohibere, To he who strikes you, offer the other side of the jaw, and from he who takes away/steals your robe, do not prevent your tunic (Matthew 5.39-40). In this case, even though *aufert* does mean take away, the more well-known way to translate *aufert* would be steal. For instance, somenone would choose to say, the robber stole all my money, rather than the robber took away all my money. The robber technically did take away the money, but English likes to come up with additional words to differentiate between general ideas. Another interesting thing about *aufert*, is that the original prefix is actually *-ab*. Over time, *abfert* became *aufert* because of inflection. A similar thing happened to the word *affert*. Originally it was *adfert*, *-ad* plus a form of *fero*. Again because of inflection, the *-d* eventually got swapped out with an *-f*. Throughout Golden Latin, *adferre* was more commonly used by classical authors, but in late Latin, the assimilated form *afferre* started gain a lot of popularity among authors. Notice that take is not one of the original meanings of *fero*. Sometimes in Latin, especially when dealing with verbs that have several meanings, you need to slightly alter the meanings while translating. Otherwise, the resulting English translation can become quite messy.

Bonus homo de bono thesauro cordis sui profert bonum et malus homo de malo profert malum ex abundantia enim cordis os loquitur, A good person brings forth good from the good treasury of his heart, and an evil person brings forth evil from the evil treasury, for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Luke 6.45). Like in the example above, oftentimes Latin should not be translated exactly as it is written. For instance, take the word *habeo*. It is generally translated as I have, but always translating it like that can reduce the accuracy of your translation as it has many other possible meanings such as I possess and I consider to name two. Here, the only direct translation of *fero* that partly fits the context is I carry. Saying, a good person carries forth good things from the good treasury of his heart, is not technically wrong, but it is grammatically better to translate it as bring instead of carry. Then there is the prefix *-pro*. Translating literally, *profert* would be bring forward, but translating *-pro* as forth here fits the context much better.

Et altera die protulit duos denarios et dedit stabulario et ait "curam illius habe et quodcumque supererogaveris ego cum rediero reddam tibi," And the next day he brought forth/took out two coins and gave them to the tavern owner and said, "Take care of him; and whatever you pay out on, when I return, I will repay you" (Luke 10.35). Because of *fero's* irregular principal parts, it is sometimes difficult to figure out whether a word is indeed a form of *fero*, or some other word. *tulit* is the perfect example of this, as at first glance it looks nothing like *fero* itself. Only when you take into consideration the principal parts, would you be able to figure out that *tulit* is indeed a form of *fero*. As shown above in the second example,

the best way to translate *protulit* would be brought forth, looking at the context of the word in this particular sentence however, brought forth would work, but there is a better way to translate it. In English you would prefer to say he produced/took out two coins rather than he brought forth two coins. Both are correct, but the first one is what you are more likely to see written somewhere.

Adeo moverat eum et primi periculi casus a quo nihil se praeter errorem insidiatoris texisset et subuenda dimicatio totiens quot coniurati superessent ut pacis condiciones ultro ferret Romanis, He was so moved by the first case of danger, from which he had been protected by means of nothing but the mistake of the conspirator, and having to undergo assault as many times as the conspirators remained, that he voluntarily offered the Romans conditions of peace (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 2.13). Technically King Porsena carried/brought the Romans conditions of peace, in other words a peace treaty, but offered fits the context better here.

Longum est altius repetere nec refert quemadmodum acciderit ut homo minime familiaris cenarem apud quendam ut sibi videbatur lautum et diligentem ut mihi sordidum simul et sumptuosum, It takes long to repeat more deeply, nor does it matter how it happened that I dined at the home of a man I was not at all familiar with, who, as it seemed to himself, was elegant and economical, but as I thought, was at the same time filthy and extravagant (Pliny, *Epistulae*, 2.6.1). In this short passage, *fero* takes a very interesting form as the impersonal verb *refert*. *Refert* is basically a compound of *res* and *fero*. *Res* is generally translated as thing or matter, and *fero* is best translated here as carry/bring. So *refert* holds the idea of something carrying a matter or carrying its own matter. In other words, it holds its own importance.

Fero is probably the most common and most versatile irregular latin verb. It comes from the greek word *phero*. Not only can it have a wide range of meanings such as bear, carry, report, say, endure, and bring to name a few. It is one of those words whose meaning varies distinctly based on the context. Some of its meanings sound quite unrelated. For example, it is hard to picture both carry and say being translations of one verb. Another interesting thing about *fero*, is that it can be combined with many prefixes to create compound verbs. Some examples of this include *transfero*, *refero*, *confero* and *profero*. Overall *fero* is a very unique and interesting word to work with. Its limits are really just what we, the translators, set them to be.

Word Study 4

On Emptiness

Vanitas is a Latin word that has several meanings: emptiness, futility, and vanity. This paper aims to examine these meanings and other cognates that have appeared over time. The first example is this excerpt from the Vulgate. The Vulgate is a late 4th century AD translation of the bible translated by Eusebius Hieronymus, known as Saint Jerome. He was commissioned by the pope to work on providing a clear translation as the current translations had many variants. *Verba Ecclesiastæ, filii David, regis Jerusalem. Vanitas vanitatum, dixit Ecclesiastes; vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas. Quid habet amplius homo de universe labore suo quo laborat sub sole* (Jerome, *Vulgate* 1.1-4). Words of Ecclesiastes the one who addresses his fellow citizens, son of David, king of Jerusalem. "Vanity of emptiness," says Ecclesiastes the one who addresses his fellow citizens: "Emptiness of emptiness and all is emptiness. What more has a human than his work, which he is accustomed to work under the sun? In this passage, *Ecclesiastes* refers to a speaker in the assembly, and the word *vanitas* refers to emptiness. It references

that all is emptiness. The next line is crucial as it facilitates the point that there is no gain for a human than his work. *Vanitas* here provides the sense of futility in work, remarking that life is like a repetitive cycle of useless things.

To examine the word *vanitas* and its cognates better, it is essential to look to the earliest known times of the usage of this word. This leads to the third example. This is an excerpt from *Carmina*, which is a collection of poems written by the poet Catullus in the period of 62-54 BC. Specifically, this is poem 64, which includes a narrative about the demigod Theseus. *nam velut in summo quatientem bracchia Tauro quercum aut conigeram sudanti cortice pinum indomitus turbo contorquens flamine robur eruit (illa procul radicitus exturbata prona cadit, lateque cum eius obvia frangens), sic domito seavum prostravit corpore Theseus nequiquam vanis iactantem cornua ventis* (Catullus, *Carmina* 64.105-1). For just as the oak tree in the highest Taurus shaking its branches or the coniferous pine tree with its sweating bark was ruined by an untamed whirlwind the oak agitating by a gale (this far off having been agitated fell prone at the roots, and lies hidden shattering with his in the way), therefore Theseus by his tamed body laid low the sea in vain throwing his horns at the winds. The important point of this is the situation Theseus is in. Theseus was in a whirlwind to no avail. Catullus uses the word *vanis*, a cognate, to emphasize the word futility, which means uselessness in this case. This is different than emptiness because he is not empty, he is lamenting that he cannot do anything. So, while *vanis* is related to the two words emptiness and uselessness, in this case, uselessness is the meaning.

The next example is a part of a collection of correspondences between Cicero to Atticus in the years leading to the fall of the Republic from 68 to 44 BC. Cicero was a famed politician, and these letters gave great insight into his moral character. In this part, Caesar had invaded what is now called Italy, so strife was in the air, and Cicero was worried for the individual Oppii, the city Terentius, and a politician Curio. *tu Oppios Terentiae delegabis. Iam enim urbis vanum periculum est. me tamenconsilio iuva, pedibusne Regium an hinc statim in navem, et cetera, quoniamcommoror. Ego ad te statim habebo quod scribam simul et video Curionem* (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 10.4.12.1-3). You will delegate the Oppii to Terentius. For indeed the city is in vain danger. Nevertheless help me with plans, lest I go to Regium by foot or immediately from here by ship, etc, because I am delaying. I will have to you immediately because I will write at the same time and I will see Curio. The choice of words here is curious because Cicero uses the word *vanum*. This could be associated with the idea of empty or useless danger, but this does not make sense as the situation is indeed dire. A politician Curio died trying to fight Caesar, and evidently Cicero is worried. His use of the word *vanum* indicates his use of sarcasm saying that Terentius is in empty danger, when in fact it is not.

The opposite example is a cognate of *vanitas*, *vanus*, which has the translation empty, vain, false, and sometimes silly. The point of this example is to the curious use of the word "silly" which generally is not associated with emptiness. This is from the *Carmina Burana*. This is a preservation of 13th century poems and plays by the German composer Carl Orff. It highlights joyous and melancholy aspects with pleasurable rhymes. *Primo pro nummata vini-- Ex hac bibunt libertini; Semel bibunt pro captivis, Post haec bibunt ter pro vivis, Quater pro Christianis cunctis, Quinquies pro fidelibus defunctis, Sexies pro sororibus vanis Septies pro militibus silvani* (Orff, *Carmina Burana*, 196.230-237). First for rich wine -- from this the carousers drinks; once they drank for captives, after this they drink three times for the living, 4 times for all Christians, 5 times for faithful dead, 6 times for silly sisters, 7 times for soldiers of the forests. This is a drinking song as the word *bibunt* indicates. The curious part here is that *vanis* does not mean the typical emptiness or uselessness. The playful manner of words suggests a calmer interpretation

leading to silly. However, silly is not a word too far estranged from emptiness. By thinking of silly as something devoid of thought or knowledge, which works well in this aspect, we relate to a form of emptiness, specifically emptiness of thought.

Another example of the term *vanus* as meaning silly is this excerpt from the Epistulae Morales. The Epistulae Morales is a collection of letters by Seneca the Younger between 62 to 64 AD centering on philosophy. This specific part centers on the idea of fear. *Nemo dicit: "Vanus auctor est, vanus haec aut finxit aut credidit." Damus nosaurae ferendo* (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, 13.13.6-7). No one says: "The author is silly; he either created or believed these vain things." We give the knowledge to be suffered." The use of wording is crucial here because the ideas composed from *vanus* are both different. In the first use, Seneca refers to an author who is tormented by fears of the mind, the creation and belief. The translation of *vanus* should be silly. Seneca is not mentioning that this author is empty or useless, but that it is silly for him to have this fear. Now the next use of *vanus* is different because of the word things. This references empty rumors or gossip, so the meaning of *vanus* is empty.

Closing off the analysis, this is the sixth example. This is another Latin cognate, but it is used as a verb: *vanescere*. The translation is to vanish or disappear. This is very closely related to the root *vanus,* meaning empty or void. This excerpt is also from Carmina as in the third example discussing Theseus. *quae quoniam verae nascuntur pectore ab imo, vos nolite pati nostrum vanescere luctum, sed quali solam Theseus me mente reliquit, tali mente, deae, funestet seque suosque* (Catullus, *Carmina* 64.198-201). Because the truth is born from the deepest heart, you do not suffer our grief to vanish, but of what kind of mind only Theseus left behind, of such a mind, goddess, may destroy himself and his own. These lines reflect on Ariadne's curse on Theseus. Theseus was once promised to be with Ariadne, who helped him defeat the Minotaur, but he left her. In return she doomed him to be destroyed. The word *vanescere* in the second line means to vanish or quite literally that Catullus is communicating Theseus's emptiness in leaving Ariadne.

Vanitas and its cognates have several different translations such as futility, vanity, emptiness, and silly. However, a key idea in each use of *vanitas* is its relationship to the idea of emptiness. This may be emptiness in the first example, uselessness in some efforts in the second and third examples, silliness in the fourth and fifth examples, and vanishing in the sixth example. To differentiate between each use, context clues in the surrounding paragraph should be used such as Theseus's situation in the second and sixth examples. From the time frames, we can posit that the earliest uses of the word vanitas (and its conjugates) related to the idea of emptiness and futility as evident in Cicero's and Catullus's writings centering around the 50s BC. Over time, this word's meanings may have evolved to possibly mean silly at times as in the fourth and fifth examples at later times in comparison to the other examples. However, there are few examples that back this possibility up, and if more information can be found, there will be a better relationship. The modern use of the word *vanus* is vain, which means having no meaning and draws on similar ideas from the Latin.

Word Study 5

Similitudo: A Story of Similarity

In Book III of *Metamorphoses*, the author Ovid recounts the story of a nymph named Echo. Cursed by Hera for her incessant chatter, Echo can only repeat the words that others last spoke into eternity. Humans have always pondered their own echoes and likenesses, and the Romans were no

different. The Latin word *similitudo* is a mirror into the huge variety of self-examination which permeates Roman literature. On a literal level, *similitudo* concerns imitation, both in reality and in art; on a metaphorical level, however, *similitudo* is associated with metaphysical commonality, lies, and even fables.

Similitudo is the noun equivalent of the adjective *similis*, meaning similar or same. According to the 1828 *An Etymological Dictionary of the Latin Language*, *similis* (and, thereby, *similitudo*) is derived from the Greek word *ὁμαλὸς*. On a literal level, *ὁμαλὸς*, according to Liddell's *Ancient Greek Lexicon*, means equal or level. Using the Greek root as a guide, it is possible to assume that *similitudo* originally denoted a quantity, perhaps a measure of grain or a jar of wine, in the marketplace or court. Liddell, however, also states that *ὁμαλὸς* can be used idiomatically to mean middling or unremarkable. This means that, if the correspondence between the Greek root and the Latin word remained consistent as it transferred across languages, *similitudo* could have carried a nonliteral meaning. *Similitudo*, like *ὁμαλὸς*, might have been used to describe something average or tiresome. Analyzing the root through *An Etymological Dictionary of the Latin Language* and Liddell's *Ancient Greek Lexicon* suggests that *similitudo* would have denoted both a literal and abstract meaning as it evolved.

Similitudo retains a literal meaning throughout Roman history, understood best as an imitation of one object to another. At the end of the Roman Republic, Cicero (106 B.C.-43 B.C.) uses *similitudo* in his treatise *De Natura Deorum* (*On the Nature of the Gods*) to describe the connection between reality and the theoretical. Cicero writes, *mihi Balbi ad veritatis similitudinem videretur esse propensior*: Balbus seems to me to be more inclined to the likeness of truth (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 3. 95). Through *similitudo*, Cicero states that Balbus, the Stoic, is closer to the truth than his interlocutors. Cicero, whose philosophy was influenced profoundly by Platonism, regards Truth as a divine Form, something that is unattainable in reality. By naming the *similtudo* of truth, Cicero implies that, though the abstract quality of Truth is impossible to attain, the earthly replicas of it may be ascertained. Cicero exemplifies the late Republican use of *similitudo* to refer to the relation of the earthly with the intangible.

The era of transition between the Republic and the Roman Empire, however, sees a metaphorical use of *similitudo* as well. *Similitudo*, in its idiomatic sense, can mean a commonality among objects, as Virtuvius (Virtuus) Pollio (died 15 B.C.) exemplifies in his work *De Architectura* (*On Architecture*). Virtuvius Pollio writes, *Iunoni, Dianae Libero Patri ceterisque diis qui eadem sunt similtudine*: to Juno, Diana, and to the Free Father and the other gods who are the same in a common feature (Virtuvius, *De Architectura*, 1. 2.5). For Virtuvius, *similitudo* refers to the commonalities that delineate the divine from the human. As the 1968 *Oxford Latin Dictioary* states, *similitudo* is the common nature among objects, the essence which unites them. Virtuvius focuses on the abstract qualities which unite beings, not mere imitation. His work centers on the relationship between objects, not the participants in that relationship. *Similitudo* refers to ideas, but it also denotes the correlation between them.

Another idiomatic use of *similitudo* is its relation to art. Artistic inspiration is derived from what is real; thus every piece of artwork is a likeness, an imitation, of what already exists. The Romans encapsulated this when they connected *similitudo* with painting and statuary. Seneca the Younger (4 B.C.-A.D. 66), the great Roman philosopher, writes, *Nemo, quamvis paratos habeat colores, similitudinem reddet, nisi iam constat quid velit pingere*: No one, whether or not he has the colors prepared, makes a piece of art unless what he desires to paint is consistent (Seneca, *Epistulae*, 71. 2). Seneca uses *similitudo* to mean a piece of art, implying that every artwork is by nature a likeness. Without an object of imitation, art cannot be a *similitudo*, and thus cannot exist. The essence of *similitudo* is reflection, and the word's

use in describing artwork further supports its unique role in the Latin language. The application of *similitudo* as art further grounds it as imitation.

In fact, *similitudo* can even be used in the crafting of verbal art: the appearance of truth. This use of *similitudo* bears a more specific meaning than a mere lie; it is a falsehood which is modeled after the truth and diverges from it only slightly. In his *Annals*, Tacitus (A.D. 56- A.D. 120) employs this meaning of the word when he writes, *Nos saeva iussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium et easdem exitii causas coniungimus, obvia rerum similitudine et satietate*: We, by fierce order, gather constant accusations, lies against friends, destruction of the innocent, and the same causes of death, in a way of things in similarity and in abundance. Here, Tacitus states that the Romans invented the supposed causes of death that ended the lives of those executed by the state. *Similitudo* acknowledges the connection between the truth and the lie; the lie is a twisted image of the truth. Tacitus' work suggests that *similitudo* encompasses not just art, but imitations which seem to reflect the truth and warp it to fit one's motives.

As ecclesiastical Latin emerges, the meaning of *similitudo* generalizes to mean a story, not a lie specifically. In the Vulgate, Saint Jerome (A.D. 342- A.D. 420) employs *similitudo* to mean parable or analogy. An analogy (and, by extension, a parable) creates a parallel between subjects, just as *similitudo* reveals the similarity between two objects. To introduce one of Christ's parables, therefore, Saint Jerome states, *Dicebat autem illis et similitudinem*…: But He spoke a parable to them… (Matthew, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 7. 3). By the time the word is found medieval Latin, *similitudo* is almost entirely idiomatic. It has come to mean a parable or a fable, drawing an analogy between two subjects to better illumine both. Throughout its long history, *similitudo* retains its meaning of likeness or similarity, but its application to such parallels varies immensely across eras.

Similitudo reveals the richness in a single Latin word. On a literal level, it means likeness or imitation. Metaphorically, however, it is associated with art, fabrication, and even with parables. Ovid writes of Echo, *inde latet silvis nulloque in monte videtur omnibus auditor / sonus est, qui vivit in illa*: thus she lies on the mountain, and is not seen in the forest by anyone, she is heard by all; it is the sound which lives in her (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 3. 398-399). So, too, does *similitudo* continue to whisper throughout the terraces of art, philosophy, and literature, preserving the glory of Latin for generations to come.

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Word Study 6

How the Bells Rang in Rome

Tintinnabulum was used frequently in Ancient Roman Latin, but the meaning changed over time.

In the first century AD, Phaedrus translated Aesop’s fables into Latin, using the word *tintinnabulum* as a symbol of irony. Muli gravati sarcinis ibant duo:/Unus ferebat fiscos cum pecunia,/alter tumentes multo saccos hordeo./Ille onere dives celsa cervice eminens/clarumque collo iactans tintinnabulum/comes quieto/sequitur et placido gradu./Subito latrones ex insidiis advolant,/interque caedem ferro mulum lancinant:/diripiunt nummos, neglegunt vile hordeum./Spoliatus igitur casus cum fleret suos,/"Equidem" inquit alter "me contemptum gaudeo./Nam nihil amisi, nec sum laesus vulnere"./Hoc argumento tuta est hominum tenuitas,/magnae periclo sunt opes obnoxiae. Two mules loaded with sacks were going. One was carrying baskets with money; the other was carrying sacks swollen with much barley. That first one, happy to carry a wealthy load on his high neck, was tossing a jingling bell on his throat; his companion followed with a quiet and gentle step. Suddenly, robbers flew out from hiding places, and in that time, they cut the mangled mule with a sword. They plundered the money, but neglected the cheap barley. Thus, when the despoiled mule grieves over his fate, the other mule says, “Truly, I rejoice that the robbers despised me; For I lost nothing nor am I injured with a wound.” By this argument, the poverty of men is safe, but the rich are subject to great danger (Phaedrus, *Fābulae* 2.7.4).

In this passage, Phaedrus describes the *tintinnabulum* as a bell jingling as the mule walks. The bell is a significant detail included in the passage to show that it is one of the accessories that draws attention to the mule, which is eventually ransacked by robbers. The bell is a symbol of the mule’s pride and desire to flaunt the wealthy load that he carries. The jingling and loud sound of the bell are initially what catches the attention of the robbers, for if the mule had not drawn attention to itself and what it was carrying, it probably would not have been robbed, so the bell plays a significant role of symbolism in Phaedrus’ short tale.

Additionally, the Phaedrus uses the bell to highlight the irony in this passage. In ancient Rome, it was believed that a *tintinnabulum* warded off evil spirits and unwanted eyes. They were often made of pure copper and contained four small bells which hung from the Roman god, Fascinus, who was thought to keep away evil things and bad luck (Parker 58-9). Although a *tintinnabulum* was sometimes just referenced as a regular bell, it was most commonly known to be a talisman of good fortune, hung on doorways and animals. The mule walks around with a jingling bell upon its lofty neck, and ironically, the bell, which is supposed to *ward off* evil and bad luck, actually ends up bringing it upon the mule.

Now, it would be possible to refine the meaning of the word to a normal bell, not a talisman that wards off evil things. If it were a regular bell, the noise would still draw the unwanted attention of the robbers to the rich load. However, the *tintinnabulum,* being used as a bell that keeps away bad luck, adds a sense of irony and humor, which helps to develop the moral of the story, which tells readers that the rich will not be safe because they flaunt their wealth in pride, but the poor will be safe because they have nothing *to* flaunt.

Juvenal, an ancient Roman satirist, wrote his work, *Satires,* around the first to second century AD, and uses the word *tintinnabula* as an example of a common bell. Uerborum tanta cadit uis,/tot pariter pelues ac tintinnabula dicas pulsari./iam nemo tubas, nemo aera fatiget:/una laboranti poterit succurrere Lunae./inponit finem sapiens et rebus honestis. Such a great force of words falls, it may be said that so many drums and bells are being struck all at once. Now let no one wear down the trumpets, let no one wear down the cymbals: She alone will be able to help the laboring moon. Even the wise man puts an end to respectable things; (Juvenal, *Satires* 6.441-2).

The *tintinnabula* in this passage is used to show the impact of the words of an orator, not describing the literal clang of bells but of figurative ones. Juvenal, the satirist, compares the woman's speech to that of the clamoring drums and bells to highlight the loudness and ridiculousness of the speech of the woman that he is listening to. He does not agree with her and thinks that her ideas are nonsensical; therefore, comparing them to the deafening clamor of bells highlights the fact that women should not speak in public, but also that the force of their words is so great that everyone goes silent. He is not praising the speech of the woman but mocking it.

Tintinnabula could not be refined to mean a talisman of keeping away evil in the context of Juvenal's passage because it would change the meaning and would not make sense. Juvenal uses the word *tintinnabula* as a regular bell, in a satirical context, and does not mean the word as a talisman of warding off evil. This demonstrates the different uses of the word, one that can mean a symbol of keeping away bad luck, and one that can mean a regular bell in different contexts.

Additionally, Apuleius, in his *Metamorphoses,* which was written in the late second century, uses the word *tintinnabulis,* which can be interpreted as either a common bell or a talisman.
me phaleris aureis et fucatis ephippiis et purpureis tapetis et frenis argenteis et pictilibus balteis et tintinnabulis perargutis exornatum ipse residens amantissime nonnunquam comissimis affatur sermonibus, atque inter alia pleraque summe se delectari profitebatur quod haberet in mel. He himself sat on me, would speak to me lovingly and with playful conversation, having decorated me with golden coins, dyed saddles, purple cloths, painted belts, and brightly jingling bells, and among other things, he often said how greatly he loved owning me (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 10.18.3).

Since talismans were often hung around the necks of animals for good luck on a journey in ancient Rome, it would be probable that the *tintinnabulum* is used this way in the context. However, it would also be possible that the *tintinnabulum* was just a decoration, one to show the appreciation of the donkey's master. Both meanings of the word would be acceptable in the context of *Metamorphoses.*

In conclusion, a *tintinnabulum* is a bell that was often used as a common bell in Ancient Roman Latin, or as a bell that warded away evil. The word survives in English today but has gained a religious connotation over time, and is now used in Catholic churches and Basilicas as a symbol of the Pope's arrival, a tradition beginning in Medieval times ("The Tintinnabulum, or the basilica bell, is another distinctive feature of a basilica"). Because there are so few appearances of the word in Medieval Latin and after, it can be deduced that the meaning changed. So while the *tintinnabulum* technically still means a bell, it is used quite differently than it was in Ancient Rome.

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Word Study 7

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Modus à la Mode

The Latin word *modus* can mean a measure, limit, mode, way, manner, rhythm, meter, and even melody. *Modo*, an adverb derived from *modus*, can mean now, recently, only and merely. What could these different meanings have in common?

Modus originally meant a measure or an amount of something. An example from Cicero reads, *Etenim ex eo, quantum cuique satis est, metiuntur homines divitiarum modum.* Because from that, how much and for whom it is enough, men measure [one's] measure of riches (Cicero, *Paradoxa* 44). In this sentence, Cicero is talking about how a man's wealth is measured relative to his needs. Here *modus* must mean the amount of riches being measured. A slightly different use of *modus* is seen in this passage: *…[A]it… maximam autem eius custodiam esse, si magna imperia diuturna non essent et temporis modus imponeretur, quibus iuris imponi non posset.* He said that… his greatest responsibility, however, was, if there were not great long lasting reigns and a measure of time was set, [matters] of law could not be set by anyone; (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 4.24.4) In this example, *modus* means a measure, but it means specifically a maximum. Interestingly, *modus* could also signify a different meaning of the English word measure, as used by Boethius: *[C]armina qui quondam studio florente peregi, / flebilis heu maestos cogor inire modos.* I who once finished poems with blossoming desire, / alas, tearful, I am compelled to begin mournful measures. (Boethius, *Consolatio Philosophiae* 1.M1). This shows that *modus* could mean a

measure of poetry, perhaps because *modus* also had meanings of melody, rhythm, and meter in the context of music and poetry.

Modus can also mean a mode or type. Cicero said in his *de Oratore, Comparationis autem duo sunt modi: unus, cum idemne sit an aliquid intersit quaeritur... alter, cum quid praestet aliud alii quaeritur.* Therefore, there are two modes of comparison: one, when it is asked if it is the same thing or it differs [from] something... the other, when it is asked what other thing is superior to another (Cicero, *de Oratore* 3.117). In this context, *modus* describes a way or manner to compare things. *Modus* often just means the way to achieve a goal, but here it seems more likely that Cicero is describing how these are fundamentally different processes. There is an even greater distinction when he says, *[C]onsituunt enim in partiendis orationum modis duo genera causarum.* For in dividing types of language they establish two categories of causes (Cicero, *de Oratore* 2.133). Here the words *partiendis* and *genera* makes it clear how the *modis* are being divided into different groups. So by context, *modis* must mean types.

Modus has an adverbial form, *modo,* which means now, recently, or only. An example from *Gesta Romanorum* is, *Modo trewge nobis date sunt per dominum i.e. cristum.* The truces have now been given to us through the lord, that is, Christ (*Gesta Romanorum*, Hermann Oesterley edition p. 657). Here it is not completely clear what *modo* means, because it could either mean only or now. It seems likely to be best translated as now or recently, because the author is expressing how the truces have been offered to us, and how we should appreciate them; he is not diminishing their value. In the play *Amphytron*, it is less ambiguous: *Apage, non placet me hoc noctis esse: cenavi modo;* Away with you, it does not please me to be in this [time] of night: I have dined recently (Plautus, *Amphytron* 310). In the context of the quote, he is referring to how it does not please him to eat, as he has already eaten recently. *Modo* can also be used correlatively. For example: *[M]odo ait modo negat.* Now he says it, now he denies it. (Terence, *Eunuchus* 714). In English, these can both be translated as now, though literally, he means that at *one time*, he said it, but at another he denied it. These meanings of now and recently are all very similar, but we see a different sense from Quintillian: *Nec audiendi quidam... qui tris modo primas esse partes volunt, quoniam memoria atque actio natura non arte contingan[t].* Those people are not to be heard... who maintain that there are only three primary parts since memory and action happen by nature not art (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 3.3.4). This describes how some people think that the art of oratory only has three true parts, because the other parts are natural. Translating *modo* as now would not make any sense because they would be making a point that would be true throughout time.

Modus was a very frequently used word in Latin, so it has several different descendants. In Latin, *quomodo* means how, in what manner. *Quomodo* comes from the Latin phrase *quo modo*, by what method, or with which mode. *Modus* also has many descendants in English. The Latin phrase *modus operandi* means the method of things to be done. This phrase is now commonly used to mean one's own way of doing things, specifically that of a criminal. *Modulus,* the Latin diminutive of *modus,* is used in math, specifically modular arithmetic, and is the root of module. From *modus*, the French *mode* means the fashion or trend, which is the source of the English word mode, and the French *à la mode* means in the fashion. Probably the most commonly used English descendant is modern, which comes from *modo,* through Latin *modernus.*

In summary, *modus* originated as meaning a measure, but came to mean several other things, including manner, method, way, and even meanings related to rhythm and poetry. The common thread through all of these different meanings is the idea of rhythm and measures. Measuring things is fundamental to poetry meter and measures, and meter is also a style of poetry, or a manner in which to

write. *Modus'* adverbial form, *modo*, meant only, now and recently, and is even the root of the word modern. This is connected to *modus* by the idea of a limit or measure.

Word Study 8

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Aufero Word Study

One unique Latin word that has received a good amount of attention by the ancients on account of its unconventional nature is the verb *aufero, auferre, abstuli, ablatum*, generally translated as to take off or bear away. It is originally formed by the preposition *ab-* with the irregular verb *fero*. However, over time, the hard *b* in *ab-* was abbreviated to *au-* to make for smoother pronunciation and a sound more pleasing to the ear. Pronouncing the *b* fully creates a brief, unpleasant pause in speech that breaks up a phrase. Thus the resulting word is *aufero*. This etymology is unique, as Cicero writes in his book *The Orator*, because *aufero* is one of just two occurrences of this shortening in common Latin (Cicero, *Orator*, 47.158). The only other word that uses this form of *ab-* shortened to *au-*, according to Cicero, is *aufugio*.

This conclusion of the unique etymology found in *aufugio*, however, is not unanimous. A scholarly writing from the 20th century investigates this claim made by Cicero. John C. Rolfe points out in his text that many Latin prepositions were originally drawn from the Greek equivalents (Gel. 15.3). Though *ad-* is one common preposition, Rolfe points out some Greek words found even in popular literature like Homer's *Illiad* which use prepositions directly resembling *au-*. Because of this, Rolfe posits that perhaps *au-* in fact has its own origin. That would be a reasonable explanation for the infrequency of *au*-based compound words in Latin.

Returning to the meaning of the word itself, the primary place we we have seen *aufero* used in our Latin 3a translations so far is in passages from Luke in the Vulgate. In his passage about the Sermon on the Mount, Luke writes that Jesus instructs us to *omni autem petenti te tribue et qui aufert quae tua sunt ne repetas,* give, rather, to all seeking from you; and do not seek back the one who steals what is yours (Luke, *Vulgate* Lk.6.30). In my translation here, I interpreted *aufert* as steal, building on idea imparted by the literal English translation of *au-ferre*, to carry from or carry away. This translation implies that the "carrying off" is something done to the original holder of the property, without their consent. But even in this passage, *aufero* could convey a gentler meaning, especially if we translate *repetas* in a different sense and join it more closely with the first clause in the sentence. For example, we might translate the passage as "share, indeed, [with] all seeking you, and do not reclaim what is yours [from] the one who bears [it]." Thus the tone of the passage becomes more of describing a communal relationship, with less of an emphasis on the concept of strict property, ownership, and theft. In this way, we can see that *aufero* can be interpreted with several different meanings even within a single sentence.

This has been a very brief survey of just a few elements of complexity in the verb *aufero*. However, even having discussed only a couple different meanings of the word, we can see that this and other Latin words have great depth and complexity. For *aufero* specifically, I recommend taking a longer time to consider what meaning best fits the context of the sentence, like in the example above. This is especially true given the complex variety of meanings in the base word *ferre* as well.

Word Study #1 - Egredior - Following Departures

Egredior is a Latin verb with interesting different definitions, meaning to set out, leave, depart from life, or exceed. From *gradior*, meaning to step or walk, and the prefix *ex-*, meaning out, *egredior* has been a part of Latin literature as early as the third century BC and continued until the gradual decline of the language around the 600s CE. The word has several definitions, from a simple "leaving" to departing from life. Although *egredior* is not derived from a Greek form, it has many English cognates.

In the Latin Vulgate, a Medieval Latin Bible for the common people written in 382 CE, *egredior* is used in the story "The Prodigal Son." The past participle form, *egressus*, is used in the literal sense of leaving the house, *pater ergo illius egressus, coepit rogare illum* the father therefore went out and began to ask him (*Vulgate Luke* 15.25-28). The father is not only leaving his house, but he is moving to comfort the older brother and beg him to play nice and celebrate the return of the younger brother. Another example from the Latin Vulgate is *et bajulans sibi crucem egressus est in eum, qui dicitur Calvariae locum* and carrying the cross for himself, he set out to that place, which is called Calvary (*Vulgate John* 19.17). This phrase uses *egredior* again in the perfect tense, meaning leaving, but in this case, there is more symbolism of Jesus going to be crucified, adding spiritual depth to *egredior*.

Although the Vulgate is late Latin, there are examples of *egredior* in Classical Latin. Caesar, in his *De Bello Gallico*, used the word *egredior* in several ways around 50 BC. While his troops are disembarking from a ship, their enemy tries to prohibit them, *reliquis copiis subsecuti nosotros navibus egredi prohibebent* The remaining forces had followed us, and were preventing us from leaving our ships (*De Bello Gallico* 4.24.1). When Caesar describes a land battle, he uses *egredior* to signify leaving or marching out of a camp: *Vercingetorix ex arce Alesiae suos conspicatus ex oppido egreditur* Vercingetorix, having seen his own people from the castle of Alesia, sets out from the town [with his army] (*De Bello Gallico* 7.84.1). Caesar shows that in a military context, *egredior* can mean disembark from a ship or move the army out of camp.

Cicero, around 50 BC, wrote his work *De Legibus*, a book on his political views and the laws of the Roman Republic. During a conversation between two of his characters, they get sidetracked, and one character suggests they leave their discussion and get back on track. Cicero, interestingly, uses *egredior* to signify ending the conversation and moving on: *Sed si uidetur, considamus hic in umbra, atque ad eam partem sermonis ex qua egressi sumus reuertamur.* But if it seems so, let us sit in the shade, and let us return to that part of the speech which we had left (*De Legibus* 2.7). Cicero also used *egredior* to describe Catiline's departure from Rome.

The earliest sources of *egredior* being used are from Plautus's plays, specifically the play *Epidicus*. The word is used literally as going out or leaving: *Atque aliquantó lubentius quam abs te sum egressus intus* And I am to some extent more glad than how I came from you (*Epidicus* 3.2). Throughout the thousand years that *egredior* has been used, its basic meaning has remained the same, with some variations in meaning for military or spiritual contexts.

Egredior is only one of several *-gredior* verbs in Latin. The family includes *ingredior*, to enter; *progredior*, to advance; *congredior*, to meet; and *transgredior*, to step across. After the Latin language ceased to be commonly spoken, *-gredior* verb families were adapted into other languages, eventually making their way into English. Some examples include egress, meaning to go out or leave, transgression,

meaning something that is against the law, and other words like congress, aggression, progress, and ingredient.

In conclusion, *egredior* might have one basic translation, but with context, the word develops complex, unique meanings, ranging from departing from a ship to ending a conversation. As Latin aged with the Romans, *egredior* grew more definitions to fit how each author wished to convey their thoughts, with Caesar and Cicero adding many metaphorical meanings. This verb has survived the hundreds of Latin authors and the transition into modern languages, giving rise to many English descendants, many of which are used every day. The journey of *egredior* shows how language evolves and the complex meanings that one simple word can convey.

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Word Study 10

The Many Faces of the Word *Persona*

The origins of the Latin word *persona* are murky and widely debated. There are two main conjectures on where the word *persona* comes from, both ultimately tracing back to Proto-Indo-European. The first conjecture is that *persona* originates from the Greek word πρόσωπον, which means face or mask. This Greek word itself has direct cognates in Tocharian B and Sanskrit that link it to the Proto-Indo-European word *proti-h,k"-, which likely means eye. The second theorized origin comes from the Latin word *personō,* meaning 'to sound through'. Gavius Bassus claims that because the head and face are closed in on all sides by the *persona* (mask) and there is only one passage that a voice can pass through, the sound is made clearer and more resonant. He claims that the word *persona* is named after this fact. The words which *personō* comes from, *per* (through) and *sonō* (to sound), both trace back to Proto-Indo-European words of similar meanings.

One early use of the word *persona* in Latin is in a poem by Phaedrus. *Persōnam tragicam forte vulpēs vīderat / Ō quanta speciēs," inquit, "cerebrum nōn habet!"*, A fox was seeing a tragic mask by chance / "Oh how great an appearance," he said, "it doesn't have a brain!" (Phaedrus 1.7) In this passage, a fox sees a type of *persona*: a tragedy mask. Masks were used in theatre, with two prominent types being the tragedy mask and the comedy mask. The fox comments that while the mask looks incredible, it is unable to think. This exemplifies how the word *persona* often refers to theatre masks.

The word *persona* appears again a few decades later in the writings of Martial. *Non omnes fallis; scit te Proserpina canum: / personam capiti detrahet illa tuo.* You do not decieve everyone; Proserpina knows you dog: / that woman pulls the mask from your head. (Martial 3.43) In this passage, Laetinus, a swan, disguises himself as a crow. Proserpina sees through his trick and pulls the *personam* from his head. Here, *personam* is not a literal theatre mask, but rather a disguise.

One other example of the word *persona* in Latin is in one of Martial's epigrams. *Sum figuli lusus russi persona Batavi,* I am the amusement of the potter, the mask of a red-haired Batavian. (Martial 14.176) This line implies that in this case the *persona* is made from clay. This was a common material for masks, along with wood, as it was readily available and easily molded.

In Latin, the word *persona* is most often used to refer to masks, as seen in poems by both Phaedrus and Martial, especially masks worn in the theatre. As Latin evolved into other languages, the meaning of the word *persona* also evolved, eventually coming to mean person. There are words in English today

descended from *persona*, such as person and the English word persona. The word *persona* has also persisted in many Romance languages such as Italian, Spanish, and French, all with similar meanings to each other.

Word Study 11

The word *vanitas* has always been quite intriguing to me since the times I read portions of the Bible as a little kid, especially Proverbs (where "vain"or "vanity" is used 11 times). I found the variety of meanings it seemed to hold very interesting, ones of futility, emptiness, and or even boastfulness, and I was glad I could dive deeper into this word for this assignment. The word was used in our second translation Vulgate, where King Solomon writes, *Vanitas vanitatum, dixit Ecclesiastes; vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanita* (Vulgate, Ecclesiastes 1.2), which can be translated as "Vanity of vanities, said Ecclesiastes; vanity of vanities," and all (is) vanity. The uses of "vanity" in the setting are defined by a sense of futility, in this specific example addressing the futility of human life as well as how the pursuits of man, no matter how grand or impressive, are ultimately useless and stand as nothing compared to time or the creation of god.

Obviously, humans often keep their tendencies; v*anitas* was used in a very similar way by the the Romans a couple hundred years before, as seen when Seneca, who also did extensive exploration into the meaning of life, says *vanitatem, in qua homines occupantur, ostendere volo* (Seneca, *De Vita Beata* 11.1), which translates as "I want to show the vanity in which men are occupied." Despite the time difference, the two sources build upon each other as individuals wrestle with the meaning of human life. In a different, less philosophical context, Tacitus describes some situation among the Roman legions in Germany, using *vanitas* to describe a lack in physical presence.. He describes the leader's plans as *multa vanitate et inanis iactationis plena erant consilia* (Tacitus, *Annales* 1.68), which translates as "The plans were full of much vanity and empty throwing around." The way *vanitas* and *iactatio* are paired critiques the way the plans, although showy, as having no value or weight, highlighting how Romans used these words almost interchangeably to describe something empty and ineffective. Another way *vanitas* is used in the Bible, especially in the New Testament which was originally written in Greek (more will be said about that shortly), was to emphasize arrogance. This was also mirrored by the Romans, and example being in Curtius Rufus' writings, who wrote *vanitas hominum eo processerat ut deos similes sibi crederent* (Curtius Rufus, *Historiae Alexandri Magni* 4.14.14), meaning "The vanity of men had advanced there so that they were believing the gods were like themselves." This is clearly a different meaning, with *vanitas* taking a meaning almost of pride or hubris. Comparing this to the earlier religious, philosophical, or even historical uses, the use of the word for the Romans encompassed a variety of issues with people's views, whether it be the lack of meaning in life, the emptiness in actions, or hubris and arrogance.

My final definition of *vanitas* would be something that has a lack of value of substance, even if the appearance might seem significant. Ecclesiastes and Seneca use it to show the futility of human life and pursuits, Tacitus pairs it with *iactatio* to describe emptiness of actions, and Curtius Rufius extends its meaning to describe boastfulness as people compare themselves to gods. The etymology supports this, as *vanitas* derives from *vanus*, meaning "empty, void" which is a reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European root wano-, or eue- meaning to leave or give out. The word has many origins in Biblical Hebrew from the word breath, implying a quality of being fleeting or purposeless. Greek philosophies later mixed in more

ethical qualities and added the meaning of emptiness. I could not find where the meanings of arrogance first came into Roman literature though. Ultimately, the word *vanitas* has had a remarkable change across time, with a versatile array of meanings as already shared. Studying this word has brought me to really consider how I see human nature, its meaning, value and pride, and how it may compare to those who we now study.

Eymonline. "Vanity - Etymology, Origin & Meaning." Accessed October 3, 2025. https://www.etymonline.com/word/vanity.

Wikipedia contributors. "Annals (Tacitus)." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Last modified September 29, 2025. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annals_(Tacitus).