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Inclusive Latin in Non–Legal Contexts

The use of non–sexist English has few parallels in classical Latin. All Roman authors assume that any group of men and women can be designated by a grammatically unmarked masculine term. Yet several Roman literary sources explicitly mark the presence of women when it is grammatically unnecessary to do so. In this paper I document the presence of inclusive Latin and offer several literary and social explanations of its use and relevance. Strictly legal and religious instances (e.g. *di deaeque*, *de servo servave*) are not examined, because their great frequency results from the shared interest of Roman law and religion in formulaic inclusivity. In general, inclusive Latin, unlike inclusive English, emphasizes the marginality and social limitations of women rather than their opportunities and contributions.

Boolean wildcard searches of the Latin corpus unearth several dozen instances of inclusivity in two major forms: the repetition of a noun, pronoun, or adjective in both genders (e.g. *eos easque*), or the use of an inclusive phrase (e.g. *uterque sexus*, *seu mas seu femina*). Many instances are due to the authors interest in preserving the legal tone of their historical topic (Liv. 39.14; Suet. *Aug*. 31.4; Suet. *Tib*. 35.2; Sen. *Apoc*. 10; Plin. *Ep*. 7.18.2; SHA *Tac*. 10.7). Most of these emphasize punishment or limitation rather than womens' legal rights. The frequency of these quasi–legal examples suggests that Latin inclusivity is often due to the male authors' regulatory predilections.

Inclusive Latin also reinforces the individual stylistic traits of certain authors. Cicero only uses inclusivity as a rhetorical tool to denigrate his opponents by styling them either as friends of low women (*mimi et mimae*, *Phil*. 2.67, 2.101, 8.26, 10.22) or as enemies of weak women (*pupillos et pupillas*, *Verr*. 2.1.131). Martial's inclusivity emphasizes sexual perversion (*tantos et tantas*, 6.54) and female physical limitation (11.71.7). Ovidís focus on the gendered world appears in his use of *natos natasque* (*Met*. 6.302) and *natas natosque* (3.134, Teubner ed.). This last example uniquely reverses the natural masculine–feminine order endorsed by Quintilian (*Inst*. 9.4.23). None of these non–legal examples praises women in their own right; instead, the inclusion of women reinforces their socially inferior status.

A few authors explicitly include women in an approving way (Plin. *Ep*. 5.14.4 *dileximus omnes fere quos aetas nostra in utroque sexu aemulandos tulit*). More often, however, apparently positive examples of inclusivity simply indicate the male author's surprise at the presence of women in an unusual context (Apul. *Pl*. 1.4; Gell. *NA* 19.9.4). No Latin author maintains inclusive language for long; Pliny's two references to his coeducational *alimenta* mention the girls only once (*Ep*. 7.18.2 vs. 1.8.10).

Not even the strongest female characters in Latin literature use inclusive language (but cf. Juv. 6.284 *homo sum*). Women can even be praised for their linguistic self–abnegation (contrast Corneliaís *tuus parens sum* with the male voice of [Quint.] *Decl*. 6.25 *adeste, universi utriusque sexus parentes*/). Since most modern authors who challenge the

linguistic gender system are women (Livia, *Pronoun Envy* 2001,21), it is unsurprising that our male Roman authors showed little interest in subverting linguistic norms.

Rather than helping women, inclusive Latin tends to mark their otherness and to emphasize their social responsibilities rather than their social freedoms (Plaut. /Trin/. 78; Plautusí undermining of the comic speaker does not undermine the social values the speaker expresses). In this emphasis on social limitation Latin inclusivity functions in a diametrically opposed way to inclusive English, which predominantly stresses the active and positive role of women in society. Latin literary inclusivity is not a sign of Roman cultural inclusivity, and this fact supports the feminist belief that the linguistic gender system contributes actively to the occlusion (Gardner, *ECM* 1995, 399; Gibbon, *Feminist Perspectives on Language* 1999, 37–39) and derogation of women.