

THE CLEARING HOUSE

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SCRIBBLERS, SCULPTORS AND SCRIBES

Scribblers, Sculptors and Scribes: A Companion to Wheelock's Latin and Other Introductory Textbooks (ISBN 0061259187) is an outstanding new anthology of thoroughly authentic, unaltered classical texts, selected and annotated for students who are just beginning to read Latin. Expertly edited by Richard A. LaFleur, the content of *Scribblers, Sculptors and Scribes* is divided into forty chapters specifically linked to corresponding lessons in the Wheelock curriculum, but may be used as an ancillary with any entry-level Latin course. LaFleur's introduction provides the context for this reader, which is to provide students with an understanding and appreciation for the writings of everyday Roman men and women, as well as the "movers and shakers" of the Empire. *Scribblers, Sculptors and Scribes* includes inscriptions by the common Roman armed only with a *stilus* or paintbrush (*graffiti*, electoral *programmata*), formal engravings on durable materials (such as architectural ruins, funerary monuments, coins, and artifacts) by amateur and professional workmen, as well as "quotable quotes" and excerpts from literary texts preserved by Roman secretaries and monastic copyists. Each chapter includes *Grammatica*, so that students know what morphology and syntax to concentrate on as they read and comprehend the Latin, plus helpful notes and vocabulary glosses.

The first chapter, CAPVT I, opens with "The ABC's of Latin" which introduces the new reader to two *abecedaria*, or Latin inscriptions consisting of the letters of the Roman alphabet, most likely scribbled by young schoolchildren, followed by some simple one line readings transcribed from Pompeiian graffiti. Line art reproductions and black and white photographs of many inscriptions are interspersed throughout the book, so that the student can examine the originals and compare them to LaFleur's edited texts, which provide "corrections" to the "mistakes" often made by the ancient writers. Inclusion of these preserved jottings give the reader a real sense of the language as once living, sometimes imperfectly used, yet still conveying understandable meaning. LaFleur emphasizes that these "mistakes" often give us clues as to how the Romans pronounced and used their language, either individually or regionally, at different times. I appreciate that he included them because I think it is good for beginning Latin learners to see that even the Romans made occasional, and sometimes even frequent, blunders in their native language. I think it takes some of the pressure off the beginning student to produce perfect Latin, and challenges them to try harder and not worry so much about the risk of making a mistake!

Scribblers, Sculptors and Scribes is a graded reader and as the learner advances through the chapters, the readings become longer and the grammatical structures emphasized increasingly more complex. Students progress from simple graffiti to the polished poetry and prose excerpted from the literary writings of Classical authors, including Cicero, Catullus, Sallust, Horace, Sulpicia, Petronius, Martial, Pliny, and Juvenal, as well as passages from St. Jerome's *Vulgate*. Teachers should be sure to direct their students to carefully read LaFleur's brief but informative introduction, which explains the instructional design, formatting, punctuation, and other conventions employed in the book. Appendices to assist the student include a SVMMARIVM FORMARVM, or summary of morphological forms, a bibliography with suggestions for further reading, a key to abbreviations, and a complete glossary.

Scribblers, Sculptors and Scribes: A Companion to Wheelock's Latin and Other Introductory Textbooks is published by Collins Reference, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers and joins three other volumes in the Wheelock curriculum: the main textbook *Wheelock's Latin, 6th Edition Revised* (ISBN 0060783710), and its ancillaries *Workbook for Wheelock's Latin* (ISBN 0060956429) and the intermediate anthology *Wheelock's Latin Reader: Selections from Latin Literature* (ISBN 0060935065). To find out more about the Wheelock Latin series, start by visiting *The Official Wheelock's Latin Series Website* at <http://www.wheelockslatin.com>, where you can find previews for each of the books, along with an extensive selection of additional resources, some free and online, while others are available for purchase. *Scribblers, Sculptors and Scribes* is available in trade paperback, listing at \$17.99 retail, as well as a variety of electronic formats (Sony, Kindle, ePub, etc.), generally priced at about half the cost of the print edition. To contact the publisher directly, visit <http://www.harpercollins.com/> or write to HarperCollins Publishers, 10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022, tel. (212) 207-7000.