

LOREM IPSUM:
LATIN AS A PLACEHOLDER FOR DARK MAGIC IN
CHILLING ADVENTURES OF SABRINA (2018)

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INTRODUCTION

Bathed in blood red, deep black, and gold, and accompanied by images of fangs, dripping blood, and hand-drawn titles reminiscent of a 1980s monster film, the opening credits of the 2018 supernatural horror web teen drama *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* suitably establish the tone of a gritty *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* reboot. Set in an indeterminately old gothic Greendale, Massachusetts and immersed in post-production lens blurs and fisheye warping, this dimly lit, cool-toned Netflix show based on the comic book series by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa follows in the path of classic portrayals of young witches like *The Craft* (1996), *Practical Magic* (1998), and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1996-2003). Drawing upon popular understandings of witchcraft, Wicca, and Satanic worship, and most of all, the Latin language, *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* creates a persuasively fantastical world whose witch inhabitants are obviously empowered through a relationship with the cultural and historical influence of Latin.

In this paper, I will attempt to record, classify and evaluate each instance of Latin in the 11-episode first season of the Netflix Original series *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*. First I have transcribed the Latin spells or incantations based on what I am able to auditorily comprehend from my viewing of each episode in addition to what is rendered in the subtitles of the show.¹ Then I have translated them literally insofar as they are truly translatable Latin. Then, to better understand the presence and significance of Ecclesiastical and Classical accents, I have denoted my interpretation of these in addition to the speaker of each piece of dialogue. I have also

¹ In all episodes but the first, "Chapter One: October Country," the Latin is transcribed, with dubious accuracy, in the subtitles. I transcribed the first episode's Latin to the best of my ability and was able to find a source for the third quote which begins, "*Vos omnes ministri odehy.*"

considered the episode in which each fragment of Latin appears and the director and writer who contributed to them. Finally, I have evaluated the quality of the Latin dialogue by classifying it as one of four varieties of Latin: “Good Latin,” that is, Latin without any grammatical errors; “Passable Latin,” or Latin with some grammatical errors that is still mostly translatable and whose premise is still comprehensible; “Bad Latin,” or dialogue which is composed of mostly Latin words but which is so grammatically or syntactically unsound that it is difficult to translate, and finally, “Dog Latin,”² that has non-Latin words and contains serious errors which render it impossible to understand. My goal is threefold: to determine if the Latin used in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* is predominantly good or bad, to determine why Latin was used for the show, and to explore whether the impact of Latin usage was changed by the accent and style of its delivery in the show.

ANALYSIS

“Dominus, Pater. Respice ad mea. Ego creo faciem.” - Madam Satan/Lilith³

“Lord, father. Regard my [sic]. I create the visage.”

In the first episode of *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, “Chapter One: October Country,” the first instance of incantational Latin appears when Madam Satan (Michelle Gomez)—later shown to be the figure from Jewish mythology Lilith—kills a teacher named Mary Wardwell in Greendale, thereafter casting a spell to assume her identity in an attempt to have access to one of

² A phrase borrowed from TVTropes, which describes the inclusion of bogus Latin in popular culture.

³ Lee Toland Krieger, “Chapter One: October Country,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

her students, Sabrina Spellman. In this scene, Madam Satan, in the form of a lost young girl (Rachel Renaud) uses classical Latin, noted in her pronunciation of the “c” in *respice* as “k” (IPA: k). However, upon assuming the identity of Mary Wardwell, whose name will hereinafter be used to refer to both characters so as to be consistent with the source material, she appears to use Ecclesiastical Latin, most evident in her pronunciation of the word *faciem*, in which “c” is pronounced like “ch” (IPA: tʃ). In my evaluation of the phrase she utters, there is one major grammatical issue which would render this particular dialogue “Bad Latin.” Pre-transfiguration Wardwell says, “*Respice ad mea*,” which correctly utilizes the second-person singular present active imperative of *respicere*: *respice*, “(You) look to,” but unfortunately concludes with “*mea*,” the feminine singular declension of the possessive pronoun “*meus*.” In effect, Wardwell implores Satan to “Look to my,” rather than, “Look to me,” which would perhaps be better translated as “*Respice ad me*,” or “*Respice mihi*.” Additionally, in the phrase “*Ego creo faciem*,” the word “*ego*” is in fact unnecessary and could easily be understood through the verb “*creo*.” Still, the intention of the spell is clear: Wardwell invokes Satan and hopes this will enable her to “create the visage” of her victim.

“*Absit omen*.” - Sabrina Spellman⁴

“*May omen be absent*.”

Not long after this scene in the same episode there is a perhaps singular instance of “Good Latin” in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*. In response to a bat crashing through her window pane and her obligatory putting the broken-winged creature out of its misery, Sabrina Spellman (Kiernan Shipka), the titular teenage witch, utters the phrase, “*Absit omen*,” after smashing it with

⁴ Lee Toland Krieger, “Chapter One: October Country,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

an antique book. The phrase, rarely used in English, is borrowed directly from Latin and is used somewhat like the phrase “God forbid” to suggest the speaker’s desire that whatever has just been implied or stated should not occur. In Sabrina’s case, this phrase, uttered in a general Latin style (hereinafter meaning in neither a distinctly Ecclesiastical nor Classical manner), hints at her aversion to executing the pest and perhaps to a witch superstition which would hold that a bat flying through a window equated to misfortune on the horizon. That this is an established and fairly common phrase in Latin, and a rare but familiar phrase in English as well, means that it was unlikely that the writers of *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* would have the opportunity to produce any “Bad” or “Dog Latin” here.

"Vos omnes ministri oday et destructiones et Seratore discorde. Et qui opera facitis et tracicibus, quod eat noce. Vos conjuræ idec nos conjuo et odid fiat mier alve, Sabrina." - Prudence Night, Agatha, Dorcas⁵

"All of you ministers (?) and destruction [sic] and sow [sic] discord [sic]. And those who do work and by pulling, who go, (you) damage. You conjure [sic] (?) we conjure [sic] and (?) trust [sic] (?) belly [sic], Sabrina."

In perhaps one of the most egregious examples of “Latin” on the show, and rounding out the end of the first episode is the curse uttered by the Weird Sisters, Prudence Night (Tati Gabrielle), Agatha (Adeline Rudolph), and Dorcas (Abigail F. Cowen), some of the secondary antagonists and/or anti-heroes in the series. The orphan witch sisters, raised by the show’s answer to the Catholic Church, the Satan-worshipping Church of Night, act as gatekeepers to the Academy of Unseen Arts where Sabrina is set to begin her studies post-Dark Baptism. In this particular scene, Sabrina attempts to summon a familiar in the Greendale woods and instead is accosted by the sisters. After voicing their distaste for Sabrina and their desire that she would not

⁵ Lee Toland Krieger, “Chapter One: October Country,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

attend the Academy, they begin an incantation that is the first example of Dog Latin on the show. Although there are no subtitles for the longer Latin incantations in the first episode, an internet search of what is discernible from their dialogue turns up a purportedly Wiccan incantation on a web page dedicated to Euchre Voodoo, or magic used to enhance the luck-based trump card game Euchre.⁶

The quote makes almost no sense and is an amalgamation of Latin-sounding words and other related tidbits. The first sentence falls apart at the fourth word, “*odey*” which does not correspond to any Latin word—or any word at all it seems. Then comes the word “*destructiones*” in the nominative (or vocative) plural, which does not follow the previous structure of the sentence, and “*Seratore*,” which like “*odey*” does not seem to have any meaning aside from a possible association with the Latin “*seretur*,” perhaps indicating that those invoked in this spell “sow” destruction and “*discorde*,” which itself should be inscribed as “*discordem*.” The next phrase is similarly composed of Latin-like words and overall seems to communicate that those invoked are doing some kind of work or trouble and are commanded to do damage. Finally, the last phrase is mostly nonsense words of varying origin. The word “*conjura*” perhaps a word created by working backwards from the word “conjure,” unfortunately without arriving at the Latin verb “*coniuro*,” or the noun “*coniuratio*,” which as a third declension noun would never end with “-æ.” The word “*conjuo*” does not track with any Latin words, nor does “*odid*,” or “*mier*,” thus making the final sentence largely untranslatable apart from “*fiat*” which refers to trust and “*alve*” which seems to be the vocative form of “*alvus*,” the word for “stomach” or “belly”—although it would be unlikely to appear in the vocative. As far as this Dog Latin quote is legible, it seems to be

⁶ “Euchre Voodoo,” Euchrelinks.com, 2007, <http://www.euchrelinks.com/fats4.html>. * Although this is the earliest instance I have come across this quotation online, I believe that it more than likely originated from some sort of book on Wicca and/or witchcraft and was altered or mistranscribed in this context.

pronounced in the Classical style, although the words “*destructiones*,” and “*discorde*” take on a Spanish quality.

*"Vola anima per æterna." - Ambrose Spellman*⁷

“(You) fly, soul, for eternity.”

In this selection, *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*’s episode “Chapter Four: Witch Academy,” returns to acceptable Latin, showing a short phrase used by Ambrose Spellman (Chance Perdomo), Sabrina’s warlock cousin who is under house arrest at the Spellman estate for allegedly plotting to destroy the Vatican, to enable him to astral project for a date. The second-person singular present active imperative of “*volo*” is used correctly to command the soul, which was somewhat incorrectly translated as “*anima*,” rather than “*spiritus*,” which would more accurately represent the movement of life force inherent to this portrayal of astral projection. However, the sentence is comprehensible and earns the designation of Passable Latin based on its lackluster translation. Perhaps because it is concise or because the writers were able to find the phrase in some Latin source material, this example stands out as one in which the attempt to leave a mystical “Latin” impression did not take precedence over the actual Latin phrasing, while the comprehensibility for those who do not speak Latin was not necessarily lost. At the very least, the word “*æterna*” should be familiar to English speakers who would recognize it as the origin of “eternity.” Ambrose Spellman’s pronunciation of this spell leans towards Ecclesiastical in that the “*æ*” diphthong is heard as (IPA:) “*ɛ*” rather than (IPA:) “*æ̃*.”

⁷ Rob Seidenglanz, “Chapter Four: Witch Academy,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

“Ex spiritibus enim sie te aeris. Qui omnipotentiam tuam parcendo clavem ad. Ostium ligate diabolum hunc! Hoc captionem, et dæmonium ab grandus cincinno.” - Sabrina, Hilda, Zelda, and Ambrose Spellman⁸

“From the spirits for (?) of air by you. That unlimited power of yours forebears against the key [sic]. (You all) bind this door of the devil. This trap, and demon by grand [sic] lock (of hair).”

Viewers will have to wait until the following episode for the next instance of Latin. Now midway through the season, the fifth episode, “Chapter Five: Dreams in a Witch House,” sees the Spellman household troubled by a sleep demon named Batibat whom Sabrina must defeat without the help of her magically comatose family. Upon realizing the presence of the demon, Zelda Spellman leads the other of the aunties, Hilda Spellman, in addition to cousin Ambrose and Sabrina in reciting a spell of protection that ostensibly prevents the demon from escaping the house. The spell starts off strong, but misses a beat with the word indicated in the subtitles as “*sie*,” a non-Latin word for which the intention is unclear. The implication of the following phrase is intelligible although “*Qui omnipotentiam tuam parcendo...*” is clearly lifted from *Theatrum Excellentiarum Ss. Deiparae* by Martinus Philippus Convelt. The last two words in the phrase, “*clavem ad*,” seem to be tacked on, producing a sentence that does not make grammatical sense but is likely meant to convey that the power of the aforementioned spirits should withhold the key to the lock the Spellmans are about to invoke. The next two phrases seem to have been broken up —perhaps in their transcription for the subtitles—due to the lack of verb in the second phrase, and they contain an interesting error that suggests the writers may have been using a dictionary or translation service without too much consideration as to the choice of words. The Spellmans are asking that the spirits trap the demon by means of a “great”—assuming the writers

⁸ Maggie Kiley, “Chapter Five: Dreams in a Witch House,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

were attempting to capture the sense of “*grandis*,” declined in this context as “*grandi*”—“lock,” or “*cincinno*” as in that of hair. The writers were likely looking for “lock” in the sense of “bolt,” as on a door, and should have used something like “*pessulus*,” for this spell. These kind of serious errors, despite the presence of mostly “real” Latin vocabulary, obscure the intention of the incantation and earn it the designation of “Bad Latin.” In this recitation, the Spellman family utilizes Classical pronunciation, with the “æ” diphthong of “*dæmonium*” heard as (IPA:) “æ̃.”

“Exilium? Exilium... is banishment.” - Sabrina Spellman⁹

“Banishment? Banishment... is banishment.”

Later on the fifth episode, Sabrina must search through the spellbooks in the house to find a solution to the sleep demon problem. She manages to locate a spell based on her knowledge of Latin, demonstrating in her hesitance that as a modern half-mortal she would have less familiarity with the contents of the family spellbooks than perhaps one of her full-witch relatives would, and helpfully defines—correctly!—for the audience the word “*exilium*” means banishment. The accent with which Sabrina speaks here is hard to place, as there are not any defining Ecclesiastical or Classical traits in this one-word declaration.

“Tu me misisti, et contentiones sint causa doloris mei.” - Sabrina Spellman¹⁰

“You have sent me, and the tensions would be the cause [sic] of my pain.”

The next spell encountered, again in the fifth episode of *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, delivered in a general Latin style, is used by Sabrina to attempt to banish Batibat. Now that she

⁹ Maggie Kiley, “Chapter Five: Dreams in a Witch House,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

¹⁰ Ibid.

has secured the spellbook and determined that the class of spells found under the designation “*Exilum*” must in fact be those used to induce banishment, Sabrina can attempt to utilize a spell that represents another example of “Passable Latin.” The intention of this spell is clear and readily translatable, although the phrase “*sint causa*” would better be inscribed as “*causantur*” or “*irritant*,” thereby removing some of the unwieldiness of the sentence. This particular spell seems to be interrupted by Batibat, who admonishes Sabrina for her lack of baptismally-granted dark power; in this way it seems that the “full” incantation may have made more sense, and that the tricky wording of what is spoken onscreen is simply a consequence of an interaction with a rude demon.

"Turpis et infernis in terris pariunt. Et furantur verba hæc locutus sum vobis Lætitia... (2) Punctum baculus parit malediction. Adiuro vos tamen hoc græcas munus." - Zelda Spellman, Sabrina Spellman¹¹

"Ugly and infernal [sic] in Earth they procure. And they steal the words I have spoken [sic] to you Lætitia. Point staff [sic] spawns curse [sic]. However, I swear you to this Greek obligation."

The final Latin spell in “Chapter Five: Dreams in a Witch House” treats the viewer once again to “Bad Latin.” The first two sentences are delivered in the Classical style in the beginning of the episode by Zelda Spellman, and all of the sentences are repeated again in Classical style by Sabrina, who at the end of the episode is aided by a spider-woven dreamcatcher in a final bid to banish Batibat. The thesis of the spell is difficult to comprehend based on its words alone. It is clear that the “*turpis*” and—what should be—“*infernus*” must refer to the demons like Batibat which the Spellmans are attempting to eliminate. However, the rest of the spell does not seem to follow this concept, and instead references a “Lætitia,” and a point staff that spawns a curse. Finally the last sentence binds “you,” presumably Batibat rather than Lætitia, to a “Greek

¹¹ Maggie Kiley, “Chapter Five: Dreams in a Witch House,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

obligation,” likely a reference to the “Acheron configuration,” the puzzle in which Batibat was imprisoned prior to this episode.

“Liberate tuteme(t) ex fuga, Sabrina!” - Ambrose Spellman¹²

“(You) liberate yourself from exile, Sabrina!”

Latin appears again in the following episode when Sabrina’s cousin Ambrose calls Sabrina back from her astral projection-enabled encounter with the demon Apophis. This phrase is another example of “Passable Latin” in that it is clear what Ambrose’s intentions are in casting this spell, and aside from a small error probably made in transcribing the Latin, the grammar and syntax are strong. Spoken with clarity in a general Latin style, and delivering the promised effect in terms of the magical action being described, this is among the better examples of Latin in the show.

*“Qui affecto protego, mixtisque iubas serpentibus et posteris meis stirpique(e).” - Sabrina Spellman^{13,14};
Sabrina, Hilda, and Zelda Spellman; Mary Wardwell, Nicholas Scratch¹⁵*

“Those who I strive to protect [sic], mixed and mane by serpent and my posterity for offspring. [sic].”

In the only other example of outright Dog Latin in the show, episodes seven, eight, and ten present the viewer with a protection spell in general Latin style that appears to be lifted from a website about Wiccan rituals, where it was also likely to have been lifted or adapted from

¹² Rachel Talalay, “Chapter Six: An Exorcism in Greendale,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

¹³ Viet Nguyen, “Chapter Seven: Feast of Feasts,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

¹⁴ Maggie Kiley, “Chapter Eight: The Burial,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

¹⁵ Rob Seidenglanz, “Chapter Ten: The Witching Hour,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

Wiccan literature.¹⁶ In "Chapter Seven: Feast of Feasts" and "Chapter Eight: The Burial," Sabrina uses this incantation to place a protective charm on her mortal boyfriend, Harvey Kinkle from the devious interference of the Weird Sisters (Ross Lynch). In "Chapter Ten: The Witching Hour," Sabrina, her "aunties" Hilda and Zelda Spellman, Mary Wardwell, and her peer Nicholas Scratch (Gavin Leatherwood) from the academy use this spell to protect the mortal residents of Greendale from the newly summoned Red Angel of Death and the resurrected colonial witch-hunt victims the Greendale Thirteen. The first three words which the objects of the incantation are the only approximately cogent part of the spell; they are followed by a series of words that do not seem to fit grammatically, and without knowing what the intention of the original author was, the literal meaning of this spell is impossible to ascertain.

"Hic ante circulum appareatis prudentiæ, Prudence. In pulchra figura humana, [et] tortuositate aliqua." - Sabrina Spellman

"You would appear before this circle of knowledge, Prudence. In beautiful human figure, and to some extent tortuosity [sic]."

The Latin in "Chapter Eight: The Burial" marks a return to "Passable Latin." On this occasion, Sabrina successfully summons the ringleader of the Weird Sisters, Prudence Night, for the purpose of discussing the other sisters' involvement in a mining accident that killed Harvey Kinkle's brother. This sentence is sound apart from the word "*tortuositate*," which appears to stand in for a word which means tortuosity, or propensity to torture. Sabrina, in what appears to be typical either for the character or the actress, delivers this spell in a Classical accent, foregoing the Ecclesiastical "ch" (IPA: tʃ) of the first syllable of "*circulum*" and the "eh" (IPA: ɛ) of the

¹⁶ "Spells in Latin: Rituals for the Ancient Gods," LoveMagicWorks.com, February 21, 2018, https://lovemagicworks.com/spells-in-latin/#Latin_protection_spell.

last syllable of “*prudentiæ*” in favor of the Classical “k”(IPA: k) and “ay” (IPA: ae_) respectively. The transcription error in the subtitles which incorrectly denotes the “*et*” in the second sentence as “and” lends credence to the idea that many of the errors in Latin in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* may simply come from erroneous subtitle generation based on potentially ambiguous verbal delivery. This is further strengthened by instances in which the content of the spell being cast is partially unintelligible to the viewer because of background noise, music, or other speaking and is instead clarified by subtitles.

“*Nos si vocare te. Aperi ianuam. Vita est vita.*” - Sabrina Spellman, *Prudence Night*, Dorcas

“*If we call [sic] you. (You) open the gate. Life is life.*”

The other Latin dialogue in the eighth episode of the series is also “Passable Latin.” Sabrina, Prudence, and Dorcas use this incantation in a general Latin style to invoke the “Hounds of Heaven, Hounds of Hell, Hounds of Earth, [and] Guardians of the Door” to resurrect Harvey Kinkle’s brother Tommy (Justin Dobies).¹⁷ While the phrase incorrectly utilizes the infinitive “*vocare*” instead of the first-person plural present active indicative “*vocamus*,” the rest of the spell is solid: the second phrase uses the imperative to ask that those who are being called would open the gate and the third phrase ends with the slightly nonsensical but nevertheless grammatical “*vita est vita.*” The spell maintains comprehensibility, an air of Latin mysticism, and evocative vocabulary for English speakers without compromising basic legibility.

¹⁷ Like other instances of unclear accent, I am ignoring the pronunciation of the letter “v,” which is pronounced by all characters as a voiced consonant “v” in the Ecclesiastical style rather than as the voiced labio-velar approximant “w” in the Classical style, *regardless of the pronunciation of the rest of the sentence.*

“Redi ad periculum tuum.” - Sabrina Spellman¹⁸

“(You) return to your danger.”

In the following episode, “Chapter Nine: The Returned Man,” Sabrina attempts to enter Purgatory using a spell provided to her by Ms. Wardwell. This incantation is another example of “Good Latin” in that there are no obvious grammatical errors. The only problem arises with Sabrina’s pronunciation of “*periculum*” which seems to omit the second vowel, producing “*per-cul-um*,” instead. The subtitles seem to clarify that the intended word here was of course the former. This incident is helpful in that it shows that the subtitles may represent the script provided to the actors rather than an individual’s interpretation of the dialogue of *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*.

“Ater ign(i)s, fuscæ fumæ. Te evoco ut potentium tuarum monstres. Cupidibus flammis hic veni. Caelo sub isto, ha(n)c arborem consumo. Lucem tenebrasque tuas monstra. Impetuum tuum evoco ad devorandum. Hanc arborem ac omnes hospitas devora.” - Sabrina Spellman¹⁹

“Dark fire, dim smoke. I evoke you as [sic] your potential you would show. More eager [sic] by flames (you) come. Under this sky, I consume this tree. (You) show your light and darkness. I evoke your attacks of consuming. (You) devour this tree and to all you host [sic].”

The penultimate Latin quotation used in *Sabrina* constitutes the final example of “Passable Latin,” in which the thesis of the spell being cast by Sabrina in “Chapter Ten: The Witching Hour” is obvious, especially considering the presence of words such as “*ignis*,” “*monstres*,” “*flammis*,” “*arborem*,” “*lucem*,” and “*hospitas*.” Even if errors such as the mis-transcription of “*ignis*” as “*ignus*” and “*hanc*” as “*hac*,” errors in word choice such as using “*cupidibus*”—ostensibly to indicate eagerness—and finally word order and declension which may

¹⁸ Craig William Macneill, “Chapter Nine: The Returned Man,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

¹⁹ Rob Seidenglanz, “Chapter Ten: The Witching Hour,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

altered to better indicate that the object of the devouring force is the the tree and all that *it* houses—an idea not demonstrated in the original sentence—are acknowledged, the impression of the spell is unmistakable. This is one of the most rhetorically effective of the “Passable Latin” spells because its delivery and the vocabulary used to construct it ensure that even though the Latin itself is at times equivocal, the purpose of the incantation is not.

“Carnis et ossa excede!” - Ambrose Spellman²⁰

“Flesh and bones (you) depart [sic]!”

In the final instance of Latin in the show as of December 14, 2018, and in the only instance of Latin in the holiday special “Chapter Eleven: A Midwinter’s Tale,” cousin Ambrose Spellman is startled by an apparition in the morgue brought on by the presence of the Yule lads—who themselves are ghosts who take advantage of an unlit yule log to haunt the Spellman household. Ambrose turns, and with his typical Ecclesiastical accent apparent in the “sh”(IPA: ʃ) of “*excede*” attempts to rid himself of her presence. This example seems to represent “Passable Latin,” inasmuch as Ambrose’s intentions are mostly understandable—although his desire for the specific flesh and bones of an obviously incorporeal apparition to depart seems misplaced. Supposing that the subject to which Ambrose is issuing the command consists of both the flesh and the bones, the imperative should be in the plural, “*excedite*.” Ignoring this small issue, the effectiveness of the spell in conveying the concept of disappearing, moving beyond or “exceeding,” as well as referencing two fairly easily understood vocabulary words, “*carnis*” and “*ossa*” makes this spell a valuable inclusion.

²⁰ Jeff Woolnough, “Chapter Eleven: A Midwinter’s Tale,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, December 14, 2018).

The accent and style of the Latin dialogue used in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* from the cases studied seems to indicate that the pronunciation of the dialogue is dependent upon the actor who delivers the lines: only Ambrose Spellman (Chance Perdomo) speaks with an Ecclesiastical accent, a fact which is surprising considering the existence of the satirical answer to the Catholic Church, the Church of Night, and its priest, Father Blackwood, who never utters a word of Latin. This implies that for what is shown of the magical world of *Sabrina*, Latin acts solely as a conduit for magic rather than as a means of liturgical communication. Ambrose's in-show backstory, which notes him as a contemporary of Aleister Crowley and implicates him in a plot to "blow up" the Vatican might also explain his preference for Ecclesiastical pronunciation. Although they raise questions about the relationship between the (Catholic) church of the "False God," and the Church of the "Dark Lord," namely what would cause the adoption of Latin as the language of magic, when it would have been established as such, and whether or not it had predecessors, the glimpses of Latin the viewers are permitted are quite informative even in just their accents.

A glance at Figures 1 and 2 should elucidate some other patterns gleaned from the analysis of Latin in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*. First, it is clear that some directors and writers are associated with more spellcasting; for example, while there are three instances of Latin incantations in the first episode, "Chapter One: October Country," directed by Lee Toland Krieger and written by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, there are four instances of English incantations in the same episode. While the same pair directs and writes the second episode, "Chapter Two: The Dark Baptism," there is no Latin to be found until the fourth episode, "Chapter Four: Witch Academy," directed by Rob Seidenglanz and written by Donna Thorland where there is but one

short phrase uttered by Ambrose. In “Chapter Five: Dreams in a Witch House,” directed by Maggie Kiley and written by Matthew Barry, there are four instances of Latin, three of which are spellcasting events, and no English spells.

The following episode, “Chapter Six: An Exorcism in Greendale,” directed by Rachel Talalay and written by Joshua Conkel and MJ Kaufman, sees an incantation each in Latin and English, as does the episode “Chapter Seven: Feast of Feasts,” directed by Viet Nguyen and written by Oanh Ly. “Chapter Eight: The Burial,” directed by Maggie Kiley—by now the director most associated with Latin-heavy episodes—and written by Lindsay Calhoun and Christianne Hedtke contains two Latin incantations and one English incantation, while “Chapter Nine: The Returned Man,” directed by Craig William Macneill and written by Axelle Carolyn and Christina Ham contains one Latin incantation and no English incantations. The final episode of the regular season, “Chapter Ten: The Witching Hour,” has one new Latin incantation, one previously introduced Latin incantation, and two English incantations. Finally, the holiday special directed by Jeff Woolnough and written by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa has one Latin spell for its three English spells.

All of this is to say that there is clearly a relationship between the styles of the directors and writers and the presence and chosen language of any incantations in a *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*. The name Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa seems to herald an episode that is heavy on incantations overall but particularly on English incantations. The involvement of Maggie Kiley on the other hand seems to indicate that Latin is more likely to be used as a language of magic. The overwhelming presence of English-based spells in the holiday special, “A Midwinter's Tale,” brings to light another possibility, which is that English may be chosen to reference certain

literary styles or works. The special seems to relate itself to Christmas stories such as “’Twas the Night before Christmas” with rhythmic and rhyming incantations such as that delivered by Ms. Wardwell in a bid to put out the Spellman’s yule log:

*“Warden of the longest night, fey things fear the Yule fire’s light. But Yule flame dead then portal’s laid bare now darkness comes to trick and to tear.”*²¹

This approach is evident in the three rhymes delivered by Sabrina in “Chapter One: October Country,” in which the incantations Sabrina uses seems to be referencing other, less worldly and Satanic portrayals of witches:

“If truly I am cursed today, let water wash the hex away.”

*“Spider, O Spider, pray why do you spin your pretty white web so fine and so thin?
To catch fat flies and make them into pies.*

*Spider, O spider, pray, do you not see? Here comes a big, buzzing, blundering bee.
He’ll spoil your fine net while you fume and you fret, but no mercy you grant, and no mercy
you’ll get.”*

*“Hickery Pickery, Hickery Pickery, where shall this girl go? She’ll go east, she’ll go west, she’ll go
to the crow’s nest. Hickery Pickery, Hickery Pickery.”*²²

In this way it seems that Latin may not be spoken to indicate the use of just any magic—which can clearly be produced by witches without needing to invoke the dead language—but any magic which seems to be associated more strongly with the image of black magic, summoning and entrapment—especially of demons—, and the devil himself. Indeed, while simple invocations to ancestors or wayward spirits needs only take place in English, attempts to capture demons, summon hellfire, enter Purgatory, or to protect against death must take place in a language which conveys power, history, and an association with the Dark Lord.

²¹ Jeff Woolnough, “Chapter Eleven: A Midwinter’s Tale,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, December 14, 2018).

²² Lee Toland Krieger, “Chapter One: October Country,” *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix, October 26, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The documentation, organization, and evaluation of the Latin phrases used in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* in addition to parallel uses of English in spellcasting has been helpful in speculating as to the role of Latin in the series. The considerable lack of “Good Latin” in favor of the “Passable,” “Bad,” and “Dog” Latin phrases used throughout the show demonstrate that the point of the language’s inclusion was not to give a sense of accuracy or “authenticity,” but to prey upon the popular conception of magic as arcane. While English is used when the characters in the show are performing palatable, mild magic, Latin is broken out for the rituals which involve the use of great power, death, crossing the barrier between worlds, and the like. It is clear that Latin, or what passes as Latin to an English-speaking audience, is a placeholder in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* for a contemporary audience’s understanding of magic and witchcraft, its existing associations with religion and history, as well as previous portrayals of witches on television and in film.

If I were to further develop this paper, I would like to be able to record the only Latin which was inaccessible to me as a viewer of this show: in “Chapter Ten: The Witching Hour,” when the Greendale Thirteen are standing in a circle in order to summon the Red Angel of Death. Due to the overlapping dialogue from Ambrose Spellman and his date in the woods, the lack of subtitles, and the distance between the parties implied through the audio engineering in this particular scene, the incantation was not possible for me to understand. The addition of another instance of Latin would only help in making my conclusions about the role of Latin as well as the effect of the writers and directors on pronunciation and language choice, and the consequent impression of the language. Additionally, I would read for comparison the entirety of

the comic book series of the same name upon which *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* is based. Here, I would look for the presence of Latin in addition to the English spells and I am certain I would be more likely to find based on both the tendency of Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa to favor English incantations reminiscent of the original *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*.

With this data I could better determine if it is the case that writers who appear to favor English spells, like the writer of the comics Aguirre-Sacasa, or performative “Latin,” like director Maggie Kiley. Finally, I might compare the show to a comparable show of comparable length from 2018, like *American Horror Story: Apocalypse*—which features the witch characters made famous in the 2013 season, *American Horror Story: Coven*—but overall is concerned with both witches and Satanism in much the same way as *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*. I would be interested to discover if the Latin in *Apocalypse* compared in terms of its “goodness” or grammatical and syntactical soundness, and whether or not conclusions could be drawn about the representation of witches, Wicca, and Satanism on television in 2018.

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