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CLASSIS

Sine Doctrina Vita est Quasi Mortis Imago

FEATURING

"A Case Study for the Laocoon: The Integration of the Arts and Humanities"

By Karen T. Moore

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Issue 3 | 2024

CLASSIS

A JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I
Headline Articles

06 ***Welcome Letter***
Devin O'Donnell

15 ***The Case for Classical Languages***
Tim Griffith

25 ***A Case Study for the Laocoon: The Integration of the Arts and Humanities***
Karen T. Moore

35 ***How to Fix a Broken Latin Program***
Tim Griffith

43 ***Who Killed Latin?***
Douglas Wilson

46 ***Whence Comes the Latin Teacher?***
Sean Hadley

52 **Climbing Parnassus*: A Book Review***
David Seibel

SECTION II
Commonplace

56 ***The Flaminio Obelisk***
Noelle Mooney

59 ***Botticelli's* La Primavera**
Lilly Ford

SECTION III
Old Voices

64 ***The Laocoon Group: A History of the Artwork***
Karen T. Moore

Friends, Colleagues, and Fellow Classical Christian Educators,

"The madrigore of verjuice must be talthibianised." So says the puppet leader of the N.I.C.E. in C. S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength.* As the Babel-like confusion ensues, we hear the Deputy Director attempt to regain order: "Tidies and fugleman — I sheel foor that we all — er — most steeply rebut the defensible." The nonsense strikes a comic note against the scene of terror in the novel's crisis, and one can't help but think Lewis had a great deal of fun writing this dialogue. But humor aside, there is great and serious insight in this climactic scene of the dinner at Belbury. Before the convocation falls into complete chaos, before the shouts of "Bundlemen, bundlemen," before the farcical speech, we see the slow disintegration of language in terms of sense and meaning. In other words, we don't start with "The madrigore of verjuice must be talthibianised." We start with little compromises to the truth in language.

It is possible to become so accustomed to minute changes in words—especially in euphemism, cliché, corporate speak, fake or contaminated academic jargon—that we almost don't notice the moment our speech no longer corresponds to human realities, much less divine ones. What may *sound* normal or reasonable may simply be the prologue to complete nonsense. The reason James Lindsay, for instance, can now rewrite a passage of *Mein Kampf* as intersectional feminism and publish it in an established academic journal is because the hollowing out of language had already been done by the charlatan teachers of "poststructuralism"—a silly and unclassical word in itself.

Roger Scruton cites a passage from the philosopher Gilles Deleuze: "social production is not contraction on a progressive, historical continuum or a subject-orientated linearity, but is a resonation of the virtual as a fractal attractor." Some may be bullied by the false authority of these words, but as one who studied languages in the classical Christian tradition, Scruton is not fooled. He knows you can't trust someone who talks like that. He writes, "Taken out of context that sentence is nonsense; but so, you will discover, is the context. On the other hand, it is futile to complain that the sentence does not mean anything, or that there is no way to refute or confirm what it says. For that is its point." In his work *Fools, Frauds, and Firebrands*, Scruton diagnoses the problem well:

> Newspeak sentences sound like assertions, but their underlying logic is that of the spell. They conjure the triumph of words over things, the futility of rational argument, and also the danger of resistance. As a result, Newspeak developed its own special syntax, which—while closely related to the syntax deployed in ordinary descriptions—carefully avoids any encounter with reality or any exposure to the logic of rational argument.

Thus, to borrow from Lewis' climactic scene in *That Hideous Strength*, it is only a small step from inane talk about "accepting the challenge of the past by throwing down the gauntlet of the future" to the further distended sentence, "The surrogates esemplanted in a continual of porous variations," to the final idiocy of sound and fury, signifying nothing: "Blotcher bulldoo." Though Lewis' point is more theological—"They that have despised the word of God, from them shall the word of man also be taken away"—there is a direct correlation to one's education in language.

This is in part Tim Griffith's argument in "The Case For Classical Languages," published in this issue of *Classis*. For those tired of having to explain why kids should learn Latin, this is a refreshing take. We've heard plenty of utilitarian arguments for why Latin matters. We've even heard good aesthetic arguments in favor of learning classical languages. But we have not had many theological or cultural arguments, and that is what we have to offer. Beginning with a theology of language, Griffith then proceeds to defend why Latin matters and how it can inoculate us against the corruption of the authoritative-sounding nonsense of newspeak. Language does not simply help us think; it is the very substance of thought. If our language is corrupted, then our thoughts will follow. That is why it is the glory of Latin that it does not move with the times.

But *why* we ought to teach Latin is one thing. *How* we ought to teach it another. For years the debate about Latin pedagogy has raged. What is best? The grammatical method, where students *actually* learn grammar, or the "natural method," where we speak Latin to "think" in Latin? In "How to Fix a Broken Latin Program" Griffith answers this question, offering *via media*, a middle way that harmonizes these two pedagogical approaches.

As Latin is the theme of this issue, it's important to consider what C.S. Lewis might have thought about teaching Latin. In "Who Killed Latin," Doug Wilson reminds us of Lewis' wise counsel, namely how to avoid making an idol of antiquity. For those seeking to find Latin teachers, Dr. Sean Hadley looks at helpful data that might better answer this question in "Whence Comes the Latin Teacher?" In addition, Dr. David Seibel reviews Tracy Lee Simmons' classic work *Climbing Parnassus*, which claims that one cannot have a "classical" education without Latin or Greek.

Last and far from least, I want to highlight the contribution of Karen Moore, who has not only written the excellent feature for this issue but also has curated some of the best selections for the "Old Voices" section, as well as provided two model student submissions for "Commonplace." In "A Case Study for the Laocoon," Moore teaches us the significance of the image which happens to grace the cover of this journal. More importantly, her article provides one of the finest examples of how teachers might combine research and discovery with art and beauty. Her archeological approach awakens students to the knowledge of old things, while also cultivating in them good taste and kindling a love of antiquity. We would do well to learn from her.

Welcome to the Spring issue of *Classis* 2024.

Non Nobis,

Devin O'Donnell, Editor-in-Chief

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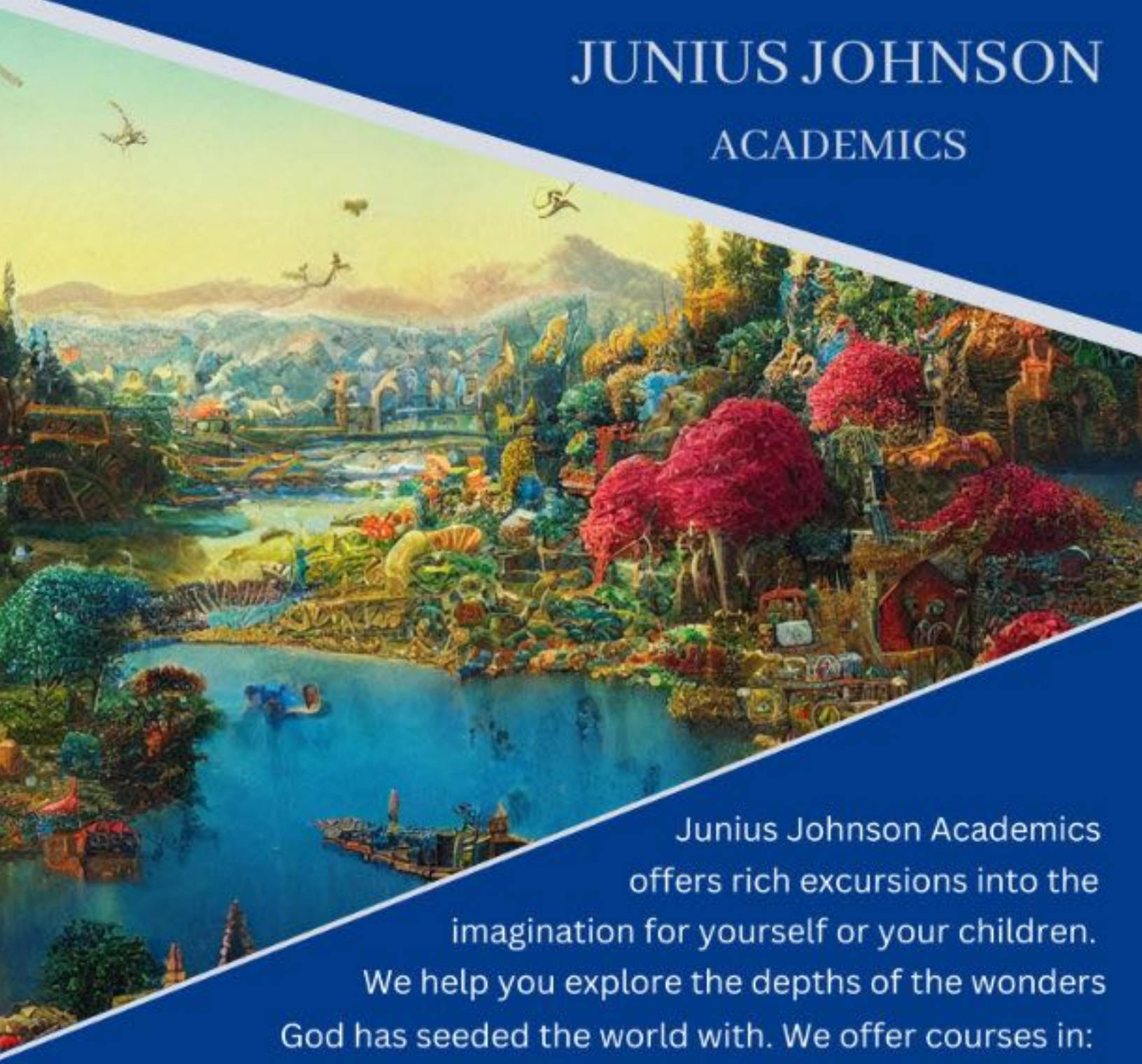

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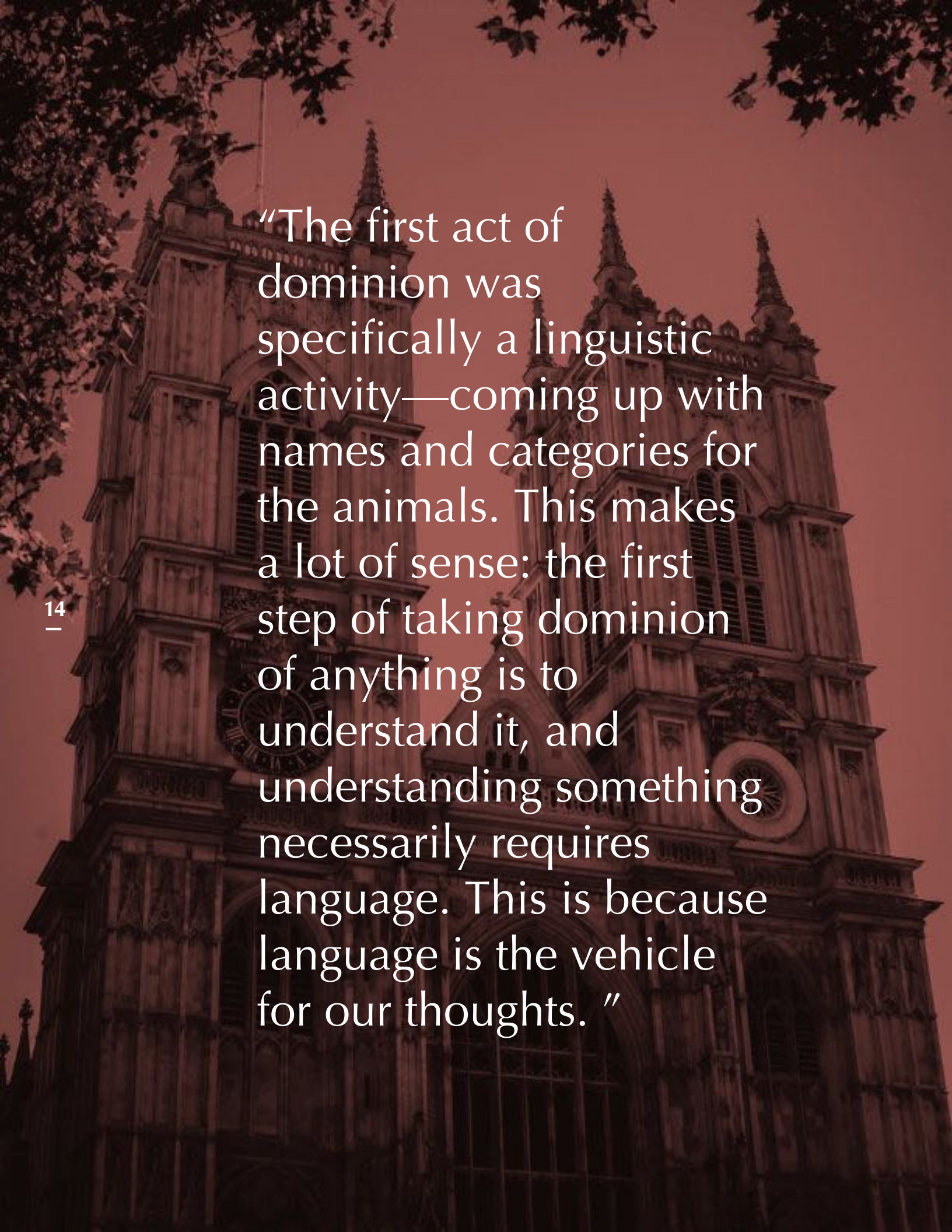

“The first act of dominion was specifically a linguistic activity—coming up with names and categories for the animals. This makes a lot of sense: the first step of taking dominion of anything is to understand it, and understanding something necessarily requires language. This is because language is the vehicle for our thoughts. ”

The Case for Classical Languages[1]

Tim Griffith, *New Saint Andrews College*

For Christians, language holds a unique importance. John tells us, "In the beginning was the *Word*," referring to the second person of the Trinity. In Genesis, God *spoke* the world into existence. God communicated his will to Moses at Sinai in the form of the written word on two tablets; and then, he communicated his inspired Word to all Israelite people in the form of the Hebrew scriptures and instructed them to write his words "on the doorframes" of their houses and teach them to their children. Later, he communicated the new covenant to Greek and Jew alike through the apostles in the form of written Greek. Thus, Christians from the beginning have been rightly called the "People of the Word" and the "People of the Book."

The first example of work that God gave Adam in the garden was to name the animals. And whatever Adam called the animal, that is what it was. The first act of dominion was specifically a *linguistic* activity—coming up with names and categories for the animals. This makes a lot of sense: the first step of taking dominion of anything is to understand it, and understanding something necessarily requires language. This is because language is the vehicle for our thoughts. If you try to have a thought without putting it into words even in the privacy of your own head, you cannot do it. A language incarnates the categories of the mind. If Adam was going to rule the beasts, then he needed to understand them, so he needed to have names for them. And what was true for this first task is true for every task that we do as humans. The first step in doing any work is to learn the terminology. Do you want to farm? Okay, this is field, this is seed, etc.

But language is even more important than this. Not only is language the vehicle for thought, but different languages cause thoughts to take different shapes and different forms. A language describes the world and everything in it—sort of like a giant jigsaw puzzle. Each word is an irregularly shaped puzzle piece that signifies a certain amount of reality in the world. But in different languages, even though the world being described is the same, the "pieces" are different and of different sizes. For example, there are only about 2,000 pieces in Hebrew, so they are necessarily big and (from our perspective) weirdly shaped. In Greek, there are 60,000 much smaller pieces, and (from our perspective) they are still weirdly shaped. In Latin, there are about 30,000 pieces with shapes that are more familiar to us than in Greek or Hebrew, but often different from what we see as normal from a modern perspective. When a person thinks in a language, the number and shape of individual pieces make a huge difference. In particular, the language (or vehicle of thought) constantly controls what he thinks of as the same or similar, and what he thinks of as different or unlike. And this changes everything.

To a degree, you can even tell *how* a culture thinks simply by looking at its vocabulary. The classic example of this is that some dialects of the Eskimo language have at least 53 words for snow. What does that tell you? It tells you that snow is an important part of their life and the *distinctions*

1. This article was adapted from a presentation entitled "A Spicy Manifesto on Classical Languages" given by Tim Griffith at the New Saint Andrews College Disputatio on March 20, 2024, in Moscow, Idaho. Accessed March 20, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UquUv7wzAgQ and https://nsa.edu/blog/a-spicy-manifesto-on-classical-languages.

between different kinds of snow matter to them. Because they need to *think* and *speak* about these distinctions, they need more words for them. This is true of every language on every topic.

So, to summarize, language gives form to thought. A specific language affects the specific structure and categories of the thoughts that can take shape. This is the order of things from Creation itself: to work as humans in the real world, we must be able to think about the world, and we must have the language to allow us to shape those thoughts in useful ways. Thus, language itself is not just central to education, but necessarily first. It is no coincidence that the Trivium, the foundation for classical education, is composed of three arts related to language: grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric.

But does any of this suggest that we must learn a *foreign* language? Why not just have students pour themselves into English? Is English insufficient to serve as the linguistic foundation for modern education? After all, it has a huge vocabulary and has served as the *lingua Franca* of the world for over two centuries now.

While it is true that English is a powerful and beautiful language, we must remember that it only became so through the influence of French and Latin. Before Alfred the Great (9th Century), what could a person talk about in English? Farming, sailing, chain mail, axes, and Danes. We can still see traces of pre-Latin English in monosyllabic derivatives from Old English, such as *pig*, *ax*, *farm*, *dung*, etc. There was a huge translation of ideas and words from Latin during Alfred's reign that made English capable of communicating about many complexities in the world for the first time. A few centuries later, there was a second giant influx of Latin (through French) beginning when the French-speaking Normans conquered England. English changed so dramatically during that time that we call it Middle English today, as opposed to the Old English of the centuries before. Once again, during the 16th century, there was a third influx of language from Latin when people were beginning to use English to produce works of theology, philosophy, and literature that before that time were almost entirely composed in Latin or Greek. This third transformation resulted in what we call Modern English, which derives no less than 85% of its total vocabulary and a good deal of its grammar from Latin in one way or another.

But why does any of this matter? Who cares how we got to modern English—now that we have it, right? Pretty much everything in the modern world has roots in something ancient. Do we have to learn things just because they came first?

Language itself is not just central to education, but necessarily first. It is no coincidence that the Trivium, the foundation for classical education, is comprised of three arts related to language: grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric.

In this case, it matters a lot. Languages do not always get better. Vocabularies do not always grow. Sentence structures do not always become more subtle, more versatile, and more capable of communicating thought clearly, powerfully, and beautifully. Even the greatest languages will languish if the speakers are not regularly fed a diet of great literature and great languages. Look at the high Middle Ages! Latin, which itself had become a powerful language through its interaction with Greek in the 1st century BC and has been called the most successful language in history, even Latin—through centuries of being cloistered up with monasteries with few teachers and small libraries—languished to a shadow of its former

self. By the 13th and 14th centuries, authors such as Thomas Aquinas were writing lifeless, simplistic prose you could almost call pigeon Latin. The glory had departed from Latin.

As modern English was being forged by true greats, such as Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton, Donne, and Dryden (the greatness of which was derivative from their readings of Homer, Vergil, Ovid, Horace, Cicero, Seneca, and the like), it was necessary to maintain this newly created modern English through regular interaction with Latin and Greek. Roger Ascham, Queen Elizabeth's tutor, at the end of the 16th century in his seminal work *The Scholemaster*, laid out a new program of education based on double-translation for the English elite classes in which schoolboys would spend most of their days translating the Latin greats into English and then translating them back into the original as precisely as possible. The British called this "doing your Latins" throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. It is very possible that Ascham was the primary culprit for killing Latin through this brutal method, but simultaneously he preserved the power and beauty of modern English. The English and English-speaking colonial elites became so used to the vocabularies and grammatical structures of the Latin originals through these harsh exercises, that the English language became deeply imbued with the spirit of Latin, so much so, that the prose of English authors such as John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, who himself probably never had the opportunity to study Latin, are nevertheless manifestly deeply Latinate. This was no less true of American authors. In the 19th century, Booth Tarkington, who wrote the hilarious *Penrod* stories, had failed to get his degree from Princeton because he was unable (or unwilling) to complete his Latin requirements. And yet, if you read the prose surrounding his rustic dialogue, much of his sentence structure and vocabulary choice looks like it was written by Cicero himself. Even a Latin flunky was possessed by the spirit of Latin as he wrote English about American rural life. Latin had trickled down into the English of everyday Englishmen and Americans.

However, as impressive as modern English has become, we must face the reality that it is now in marked decline and has been so for almost 200 years. When elite schools stopped studying classical languages in the mid-19th century in favor of "more practical" subjects, English immediately began to become simpler: sentences shrank and became less varied. Although technical vocabularies in modern English are bigger than ever, the general vocabularies of both elites and common people have become smaller. Go on Google Books and find a copy of any personal letter written by a farmer or a teenager in the 19th century and read it. If you can make out their cursive, you will immediately notice how eloquent their prose appears. Their sentences were long—joined together with subordinate clauses and participial phrases; their vocabulary was precise and varied. They demonstrate a copiousness that not many people today could replicate. Their letters often contained a complexity that we see now only in academic prose, but they had soul and communicated real meaning to real ordinary people—not just a handful of specialists who have dedicated themselves to an exclusive club of academics.

Even the greatest languages will languish if the speakers are not regularly fed a diet of great literature and great languages.

If you look at the literature written in that period, you will see the same but even more so. We have to take classes in school to understand English literature that was at one time popular

among common people without a formal education. Regular people (not just literature majors) used to read Charles Dickens during their leisure time of their own volition. We often had to consult *Spark Notes* to know what these authors were saying and take quizzes to make sure we understood. When we make miniseries of Jane Austen's novels for a popular audience, we have to simplify her language so they can follow the plot. When we make film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, the actors have to compensate for the antiquated language by over-acting everything and adding ridiculous gags (such as random flatulence) so the audience will know when to laugh). Why do the screenwriters do this? Because nobody but Shakespeare scholars knows what the characters are saying half the time. English is reverting slowly to the simplistic language it was before classical languages made it great.

Someone will object, "Don't we have examples of great literature written in English in the 20th century after the decline of Latin in schools? What about Orwell, Auden, Tolkien, Charles Williams, Lewis, Sayers, T.S Elliot?" Yes, yes, these authors have written some truly great works. But did Orwell study Latin in school? Yes, he did. Auden? Yes. Tolkien? Well, he probably knew more Latin by the time he was twelve years old than almost any Doctor of Classics today, not to mention Greek and other ancient languages. How about Charles Williams? Yes, he did too. Lewis? He was very well-versed in Latin and Greek and even wrote a series of letters in classical Latin to an Italian priest who knew no English. Sayers? Well, she admits that she did not know it very well, but she did study it for 20 years. But is their knowledge of Latin evident in their great works? In many cases, it is very evident. Tolkien crafted the greatest epic of our time and went to great lengths to make it English through and through. And yet, if you look at his work carefully you will find that his marvelously original work is reworked from the models of Homer and Vergil, and not just at the macro-level. He carefully crafted his English sentence structure to create a suspension that is unnatural in English, but essential in Latin and Greek. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, *Space Trilogy*, and *Till We Have Faces* (all of his fiction) draw heavily on the works of Apuleius, Ovid, and Phaedrus—to the point that you cannot read the originals of those works without being reminded of particular passages in Lewis. Without his Latin education, we probably would not have read any Lewis at all.

But as the decline of modern English progresses, even many of these works from just a few decades ago are becoming too difficult for a popular audience to read without the structure of a class and the coercion of a teacher. To say nothing of the general population, many of our students in classical Christian schools are finding Tolkien, the Vergil of the 20th century and our mother tongue, too daunting to read and instead prefer to coddle their brains with the easy images and sounds of Peter Jackson's dumbed-down, de-Christianized, de-poetrized, secular monstrosity. In doing so, they choose to cast aside a gem from their inheritance of English literature and leave Tolkien's works unread in favor of a director of horror films, who grew up on a steady diet of *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Conan the Barbarian*.

English is reverting slowly to the simplistic language it was before classical languages made it great.

The study of Latin is a hallmark of the best authors who write in English. Even many of the most notable *popular* English authors of our time studied it: Terry Pratchett, J.K. Rowling, and Susanne Collins to name a few. Okay, you say, that may be the case of literature, but what about

the spoken word? You will find that the same is true there. The most well-spoken and effective orators of our time also studied Latin: Theodore Roosevelt, Margaret Thatcher, Boris Johnson, and Winston Churchill. Where do you think their eloquence came from? Would Winston Churchill have been able to persuade the English not to give in to Hitler if it had not been for his education in Latin? Who can say? But the Germans certainly started World War II in part because they had stopped studying liberal arts and humanities and the classical languages in general and decided to raise a generation of technical specialists who were very good at building machines and figuring out how to blow things up, but forgot who they were, and where they came from, and the difference between right and wrong.

The modern English language was truly magnificent once. The study of classical languages made it so and kept it so for centuries. It is less magnificent now, but still pretty good. But if we love English, we should be passionate about preserving it and do our part to stem its decline. We should go further and strive to restore it to its former glory by feeding it with a serious study of classical languages and literature. If we love English, then we ought to be good stewards of it. We should study Latin and, if we still have time, we should study some Greek too. An education built on a linguistic foundation of English alone will not turn the tide, and unless we look to the languages and literature that made English great, future generations a few centuries from now will call the 16th and 17th centuries the "golden age of English", but our time "a period when English languished" and one to be skipped over.

Nevertheless, the study of classical languages and literature is not merely a program to save English, as worthwhile as that endeavor may be. We are not only citizens of the United States (or England or Canada)—we are citizens of the kingdom of God, and our loyalties must go back further. Our people began in a different time and were speaking and writing in archaic languages. Our mother tongue may be English, but our grandmother tongue is Latin, and our great-grandmother tongues are Greek and Hebrew.

Reading literature in ancient languages allows us to step out of our own time and our categories for a moment, so we can consider things from a historical perspective.

We all recognize the importance of studying history: those who do not learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat the stupid mistakes in history as well as to miss the opportunities to repeat the great successes in history. But what we forget sometimes is that in history we mostly learn what people have *done* and how it turned out. But when we read ancient literature in the original languages, we listen to the very voices of our forefathers. In doing so, we are thinking their very words after them, and thus we learn how they *thought* about the world. We learn to think in their terms, in their categories, in the structures of their thinking—not just about the big ideas that we cover in philosophy and theology classes. We learn to hear and see their thoughts and way of thinking on every topic: battle, clothing, food, housing, power, love, virtue, vice, good, evil, and beauty. Sometimes, we see that they think very differently than we do on those topics. Other times, we see that they thought exactly like we do on those topics.

But no matter how differently or similarly they thought on a given topic, we learn something. When we learn to follow their thoughts and think differently, we think, "Aha,

maybe there is a different way to look at this. I never considered that aspect of it before." Or, we might say to ourselves, "Oh, so that's why so-in-so in such-in-such a work says such-in-such a thing. I now understand what he meant." Conversely, when we see that the ancients thought of things in similar ways, we still learn something: "Maybe there is something to this idea since people have been talking exactly like this for two millennia now. Maybe we aren't crazy to talk and think this way. Maybe our predecessors did understand our current problems and maybe they have something useful to say about how to solve them." Either way, reading literature in ancient languages allows us to step out of our own time and our categories for a moment, so we can consider things from a historical perspective.

Someone who knows only one language only knows the world from a single perspective since he views things from a single set of categories and can only articulate his thoughts through a single medium. Someone who knows two languages sees the same world from two slightly different perspectives. It is like having two eyes—instead of just one. Together your eyes can see an object more fully because they see slightly different aspects of the same object. Even knowing a modern foreign language has this effect. The more foreign the language, the more dramatic the effect. Someone who knows Spanish will tell you how Spanish views things a little differently. But in the grand scheme of things, Spanish is very close to English, and the difference in perspective is not that large: they are both recent languages, born in Europe, based in word order, and built on a foundation of Latin. Spanish just has a different barbarian influence than English. But someone who knows Mandarin will have a very different perspective on the world. Asian categories, baked into their language, are very different from our own. Ask someone fluent in Mandarin how the Chinese would view any given concept (whether mundane or profound). Unless the concept itself is very recent, it is almost sure to be very different from our way of thinking. This is why we often do not get their sense of aesthetics or humor, and they often do not get ours: our categories are so different that we find different things beautiful, and different things funny.

But when you learn an ancient language, especially one like Latin or Greek, the perspective is not just different from our own—it is also historical. Our way of thinking in English was built on the model of Latin and Greek thoughts, so learning their way of viewing the world casts light on all our literature and institutions (the high and the low). Learning a very foreign language like Mandarin will certainly help you see the world in a different light. Learning Latin or Greek will help you understand who we are as heirs of the Western tradition, where we came from, and why we speak and think the way we do. Simultaneously, it shows us where modern thinking has departed from historical thinking.

We are The People of the Word and The People of the Book, so we read old books, learn old languages, and study the world as it once existed. We do not do these things because we are stuck in the past, but because we love our faith, our history, and our heritage.

Most importantly, as Christians, we are people of the Word and people of the Book. That word and that book took shape in the form of

Greek and Hebrew and partly under the rule of a Latin-speaking empire. Thus, learning to see the world as the Romans and Greeks did is extremely helpful in understanding the Scriptures themselves as the immediate audience did.

Although it is a wonderful thing that the Scriptures have been translated for us into modern English, the process of translation is itself necessarily a reorganization and recategorization of the original ideas—even when it is spot on. I am not just talking about the *Living Bible* or *The Word*—this applies even to the *King James Version*. Does this mean that we do not have real access to the Scriptures? No. Does this mean that we often misunderstand what the Scriptures are saying? In some places, yes. In as much as you cannot think in the same categories and structures of thought as the original, there will be both incorrect loss and incorrect gain in your interpretation. Think about what you thought a particular passage meant when you were a kid and how when you grew up and read the same passage again, you realized that it did not mean quite what you originally thought. When you read the Bible in the original languages, this happens all the time. Do we need to worry about our salvation now because we read the Bible in English translation? No. The Lord knew about the limitations of human language from the beginning and arranged accordingly for the Bible to be redundant in so many ways that His Word is preserved through all times and languages.

But now more than ever, when the world has changed so drastically and our categories for the world have shifted equally as much, it is critical that we actively pursue an understanding of the thought system found in ancient literature. When Christ says, "Love your enemy", did he mean "*hostis* (an enemy on the battlefield) or *inimicus* (a personal enemy)"? When Proverbs says, "It is not good for a man to eat too much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory." what in the world does that even mean? We learn the answers to those questions by learning classical languages and learning them for real—that is, to think in their categories.

Learning the systems of thought of the ancients through their languages is an essential part of the great conservation effort we call classical education. Without them we risk the complete or partial loss of comprehension of old language and concepts and run into an intellectual barrier between us and all the literature of the past—most dangerously the Bible itself. By studying them, we ensure that we and our children can understand the Bible, and gain or preserve the ability to read, love, and learn from old books of Homer, Vergil, Augustine, Shakespeare, and even Jane Austen. We are The People of the Word and The People of the Book, so we read old books, learn old languages, and study the world as it once existed. We do not do these things because we are stuck in the past, but because we love our faith, our history, and our heritage. What better guides could we ever hope for in such a shifting present and uncertain future?

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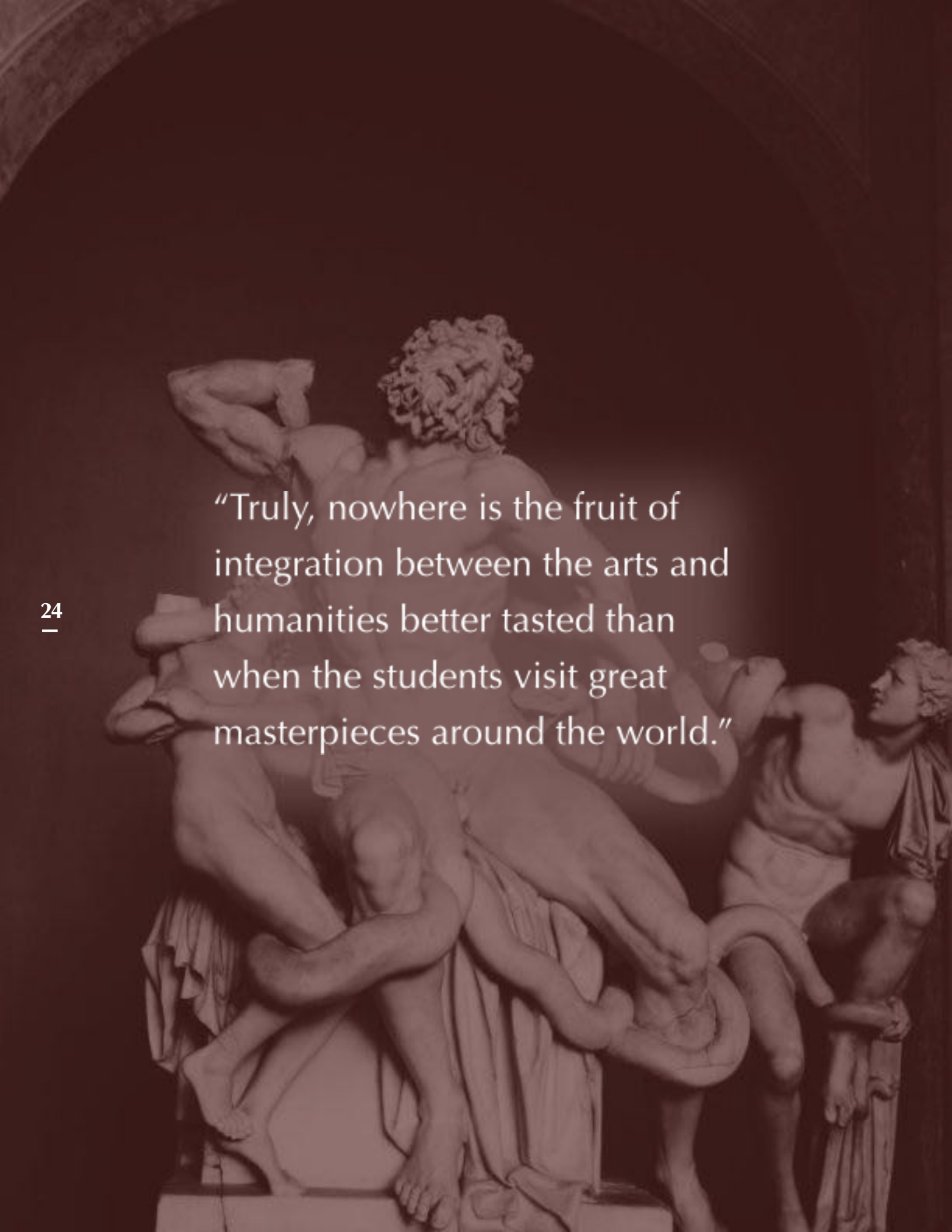

"Truly, nowhere is the fruit of integration between the arts and humanities better tasted than when the students visit great masterpieces around the world."

A Case Study for the Laocoon:

The Integration of the Arts and Humanities

Karen T. Moore, *Grace Academy*

Within our study of the Great Texts, we extol the divine triad of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. We rightly enjoy engaging our students in the exploration of these virtues as they journey through the pages of a book, occasionally stopping to savor the flavor of words and phrases that highlight poignant meaning. Such discourse not only dwells upon what is lovely and wholesome, but at times on the dark and twisted nature of the human experience. Even the latter speaks truth as we seek to understand those things which stand in contrast to what ought to be. In that sense it drives us towards the desire for what is truly good. In such writing we can celebrate the beauty of a well-turned phrase, exquisite imagery or even the rightly chosen word as apples of gold in settings of silver. In the exploration of beauty, we might even adorn the walls of our classroom with artistic depictions of the literature we read, whether historical or fanciful. Such works act on the imagination, inviting our students back into the story even as their eyes flit about the classroom.

The students look at such art illustrating their textbooks or classroom walls, but how often do they see past the surface? Our fine arts teachers train them to admire the technical skill of the artist: smooth lines, scintillating curves, the delicate features, the way the light or the position in the room change the way the viewer beholds the work. Teachers might even comment on the artist's reference to a story known from the curriculum. But to what extent do we explore the meaning of the artwork and what the piece is intended to say, particularly regarding the lessons before us?

Romans referenced works of art as *signa*, for they were not frivolous bits of prettiness meant to delight the eyes and nothing more.[1] These works were intended to convey a message and engage the viewer in conversation. This may be most readily seen in the great monuments to rulers such as the triumphal arch or the façade of an ancient temple. These speak to their power, might, and even their connection to the divine. However, the observer Pliny the Elder often uses the term *signum* in place of the word for a painting or statue even in reference to specific solitary images such as the Aphrodite of Knidos, one of the most famous statues from the ancient world. I would argue that we as teachers of the humanities would do well to learn from Pliny's example. Let us take the pictures off the walls for more than a moment of time. Let us invite the statuary to stand at the class lectern. The discovery may take a little digging; for centuries and even millennia later that meaning can be lost on the viewer, as the conversation has long been quiet. And yet, if we can guide our students in finding bits of the dialogue once spoken, we can renew the conversation, and gaze at an intrinsic beauty –

1. Pliny the Elder often uses the word *signum* (sign) for statues and paintings in his *Historia Naturalis*. See Book 36 chapter 6 of this work where the author uses the term specifically for the Venus of Cnidus (Aphrodite of Knidos) and then generally for other statues.

sometimes soft and gentle, but at other times fierce and furious. We may even find that our first impression of the artwork gives way to a deeper meaning of the textual studies before us.

Let us take the Laocoon Group as a case study for such an exercise. In the year A.D. 1506, the infamous serpents were drawn from the earth by a group of stone masons who were working on a site that later proved to be the ancient baths of Titus. The excavation halted to send for Italian sculptor Giuliano di San Gallo, who was found at breakfast along with Michelangelo. At this time in history, very few ancient sculptures had been found. The great Farnese Hercules and the lovely Venus de Milo both still slept under the earth. Thus, the pair of sculptors hastened to the site with great excitement. At first glance Michelangelo said, "That is the Laocoon of which Pliny speaks" (Goodyear, 222). In the first century A.D., Pliny the Elder had written his *Historia Naturalis*, a great work consisting of 37 books on various subjects of science from biology to geology to civil engineering. In a beautiful display of the natural relationship the ancients held between science and art, Pliny discusses the best examples of sculpture in his discourse on various types of stone. In the moment that Michelangelo beheld this statue group, he recalled Pliny's words:

> *sicut in Laocoonte, qui est in Titi imperatoris domo, opus omnibus et picturae et statuariae artis praeferendum. ex uno lapide eum ac liberos draconumque mirabiles nexus de consilii sententia fecere summi artifices Hagesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii.* (Pliny, 36.37)[2]

Here Pliny reveals to us, as he did to Michelangelo, the location (the house of Titus), the subject matter (the death of Laocoon and his sons) and even the names and origin of the three sculptors themselves (Agesander, Polydoros and Athenodoros of Rhodes). What Pliny does not seem to reveal is the *signum* or meaning of the statue group. What was its purpose? What story does it have to tell? If we search the pages of history and literature, we may uncover the answers. Let us begin with the clue Pliny leaves regarding the three sculptors and their connection to the Isle of Rhodes.

What was its purpose? What story does it have to tell? If we search the pages of history and literature, we may uncover the answers.

For years scholars have debated the relationship of the three sculptors' names. Nathan Badoud, professor at the University of Friborg, Switzerland, suggests that they are best called a group of artistic ambassadors. Rhodes was a tripartite city, a synecism from 408 B.C., which consisted of three communities known as Lalysos, Camiros, and Lindos. Rhodes chose these three sculptors, each an outstanding artisan from one of these three communities, to represent the synecism in presenting a diplomatic gift to the imperial family.[3] The key to Badoud's theory lies in Pliny's descriptive phrase for the sculptors' task, *consilii sententia*, a phrase found only once elsewhere in Latin, the Phocion of Cornelius Nepos.[4] Both uses of this phrase by Pliny and Nepos align well with the Rhodian legal phrase, βουλᾶς γνώμαι (by order of the council).[5] The phrase thus suggests that these three men were called upon by a city council for

2. See "Old Voices" for the English translations of all Latin passages in this article.

3. For a thorough examination of the relationship of these three sculptors, their work, and the communities they represent see Badoud (2019), 75-77.

4. Cornelius Nepos, Phocion 3.

5. Blinkenberg (1906), 47-54, 75-82; Badoud (2019), 72.

the purpose of collaborating on a single work that would represent the synecism of Rhodes. The occasion for this collaborative gift was the presence of Tiberius, who studied Rhetoric at Rhodes upon his return from Armenia in 20 B.C.[6] It was appropriate that Rhodes respond generously to his presence and patronage, as the son-in-law of the emperor and potential heir, with an appropriate diplomatic gift. This theory fits within the tradition of Rhodes, which was known for offering conciliatory gifts of a similar nature to other men of significant importance. The Rhodians had once presented Alexander the Great with a garment crafted by Heikôn of Salamis. In 50 B.C. they gifted the Roman consul P. Lentulus a head crafted by Chares of Lindos, the famed sculptor of the Colossus of Rhodes and student of Lysippos (Badoud, 81).[7]

This gesture to Tiberius as a member of the imperial family was of particular importance given Rhodes' standing with the new imperial dynasty. Rhodes had fallen from the good graces of Augustus when she sided with Mark Antony at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C., just a decade before. Generosity and excellence were required, and the Laocoon seems to have done its work; for it was not long afterward that the imperial family commissioned another work by this very same trio of sculptors known today as the Sperlonga group.[8] The names of these same three sculptors – Hagesander and Polydorus and Athenodorus – appear on one of the most prominent of the sculptures at Sperlonga, a depiction of Scylla attacking the crew of Odysseus.[9]

Pliny the Elder may have indicated the purpose of the Laocoon Group in his words *consilia sentii*, but why might the Rhodesian sculptors have decided on the figure of Laocoon's death for such a conciliatory gift? How might this scene from his story pay tribute to the Augustan dynasty? Here are questions worthy of class discussion! From the moment of its rediscovery in 1506, readers of the *Aeneid* have come to equate the statue with the tragic scene of the death of Laocoon and his sons in Book 1 of Vergil's *magnum opus.* The poet writes that the priest Laocoon, distrusting the Greeks and their reputation for guile, had admonished the Trojans to destroy the ominous horse. Laocoon had cried out: *timeo Danaos et dona ferentis* (I fear Greeks even bearing gifts), as he hurled his spear into the belly of the dreaded horse (Aeneid 2.49-52). Several verses later, we learn that Laocoon was chosen by lot to serve as Neptune's priest. While he performs his seemingly pious duties, a pair of ominous sea serpents attack him and his two sons:

> *. . . . illi agmine certo*
> *Laocoonta petunt; et primum parva duorum*
> *corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque*
> *implicat et miseros morsu depascitur artus;*
> *post ipsum auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem*
> *corripiunt spirisque ligant ingentibus; et iam*
> *bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum*
> *terga dati superant capite et cervicibus altis.*
> *ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos*
> *perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno,*
> *clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit*
>
> (Aeneid 2.212-222)

To the Trojans it appears as though the gods have silenced the priest in response to his own attack on the infamous wooden horse. Laocoon, therefore, is seen as a pious patriot who falls victim to the whimsy of the gods who have destined Troy for destruction; perhaps even a pawn within the divine politics at work on Mount Olympos. Indeed, this view of Laocoon's death coupled with

6. Plut. Brutus 2. 96 Suet. Tib. 9, 1; Cass. Dio 54, 9, 4–5.

7. See Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* 32.6 and Pliny's *Natural History* 34.18, for an account of these gifts.

8. The Sperlonga Group is a collection of life size and larger than life statue groups that were once on display in a dining cavern adjacent to an imperial villa on the shores of the Tyrrhenian Sea. It is believed the imperial family commissioned this group during the reign of Augustus or Tiberius. For a more detailed explanation of the Laocoon as a diplomatic gift from the *consilii sententia* of Rhodes and its relationship to the Sperlonga group see Badoud (2019).

9. The question of the connection between the sculptors of Laocoon, recorded by Pliny, and the sculptors' names inscribed on the Scylla has been debated since their discovery. To learn more about the compelling evidence that these are indeed the same three men see Badoud (2019), Bruno et al. (2015) and Stewart (1977).

the famed sculpture group by a trio of Rhodesian sculptors has inspired many political cartoons in the modern era. Take for example the patriotic image of America's Uncle Sam entangled by the schemes of political parties.

We as teachers would do well here to stop and ask our students, whether reading the poem in Latin or English, how Vergil's description agrees with the statue and where the two descriptions (poetry and stone) seem to disagree. Certainly, there are similarities between Vergil's poetic death scene and the Laocoon Group. The central figure of Laocoon is engulfed by the coils of snakes (*spirisque ligant ingentibus*) and his mouth, slightly agape, still raises silent shouts to the stars (*clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit*). The priest seems to grapple with the coils of one snake about his own head, though the head and neck of the serpent are not presently over the priest (*superant capite et cervicibus altis*). Apart from these similarities students may also find notable differences. In Vergil's poem the serpents kill the sons of Laocoon first (*primum parva duorum corpora natorum serpens amplexus*). The two young boys are dying or even dead by the time their father reaches them. Laocoon must also leave his altar as he runs, weapon in hand, to aide them (*post ipsum auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem / corripiunt*). The marble image shows Laocoon himself on the altar. While one son seems to have succumbed to the snake's death grip, the older boy is still very much alive – and just might escape. The sequence of the action and the location of the priest in the statue seem to depart from Vergil's scene. Perhaps the class might dismiss these discrepancies as the employment of artistic license, either on the part of the poet or the sculptors, depending on which work came first. If our class discussion, therefore, wants to link these two works, the question of time is worth exploring.

Throughout the ages historians have assigned a wide range of dates to the Laocoon Group, from the fourth century B.C. to the first century A.D. The publication date of Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, which provides a *terminus ante quem* for the work of A.D. 79, does not reasonably allow us to consider a date later than this. If we agree with Badoud that the artists to whom Pliny ascribes the Laocoon Group are indeed those whose names are inscribed on the Scylla of Sperlonga, then this brings the date of the work in question closer to Vergil's time. Samples taken from the statue of the Scylla in June 2010 date the marble to the Augustan era.[10] The marble of the Scylla, a type known as Docimium marble, does not appear to be in use before 20 B.C., but becomes highly popular, even gains international renowned, after this date.[11] This is the same year in which Tiberius himself is in Rhodes. The Laocoon, a single group, is most likely the work created first, as the diplomatic gift of Rhodes related to the patronage

10. Bruno et al. (2015), 10-16.

11. Bruno et al. (2015), 382; Fant (1989), 6-9.

of Tiberius. The Sperlonga collection, consisting of a variety of sculpture groups of enormous size, would not have been a gift, but an imperial commission. This collection was sculpted and assembled sometime after the Laocoon Group at the imperial villa on the shores of the Tyrrhenian Sea. Thus, 20 B.C. becomes another possible *terminus ante quem* for the creation of the Laocoon Group.

Consider that Vergil died in September of 19 B.C., the following year, while still finishing his great epic. Augustus ensured his *magnum opus* would be published as soon as possible. This places the publication of the Aeneid around the end of 19 B.C. or into 18 B.C., after Tiberius' time in Rhodes. It is possible that the sculptors gained an advanced glimpse of Vergil's work, but not probable. It is equally unlikely that Vergil would have had opportunity to view the statue

The Laocoon was an extravagant piece of Hellenistic Baroque art, a style imbued with passion and fury.

and consider it as inspiration for his scene. Nor was it necessary. The image of Laocoon and his sons entangled by serpents existed long before the age of Augustus.[12] The literary source of inspiration for both lies elsewhere. Neither the tale of Laocoon nor the Trojan Horse appears in Homer's war story. However, this tale does appear among the works credited to Euphorion, a Greek poet and favorite of Tiberius.[13]

Tiberius favored Greek myth and poetry. Suetonius records that the emperor found delight in conversation with men of learning on Greek myths and enjoyed assessing them on the various points of stories and origins:

> *Fecit et Graeca poemata imitatus Euphorionem et Rhianum et Parthenium, quibus poetis admodum delectatus scripta omnium et imagines publicis bibliothecis inter veteres et praecipuos auctores dedicavit; et ob hoc plerique eruditorum certatim ad eum multa de his ediderunt. Maxime tamen curavit notitiam historiae fabularis usque ad ineptias atque derisum; nam et grammaticos, quod genus hominum praecipue, ut diximus, appetebat, eius modi fere quaestionibus experiebatur: "Quae mater Hecubae, quod Achilli nomen inter virgines fuisset, quid Sirenes cantare sint solitae."*
>
> (Suetonius, 3.70)

From Suetonius we learn that Tiberius himself loves Greek literature, to the extent that he himself seeks to compose in the style of Euphrion and others (*Fecit et Graeca poemata imitatus Euphorionem*). He includes Euphorion's portrait and writings in the libraries (*scripta omnium et imagines publicis bibliothecis*). Finally, he loves to indulge in discussions exploring the mythological tales of these poems. What might better serve as a focal point for such discussion than a truly epic sculpture group? From Vitruvius' discourse on the decorations of Roman villas we also know that scenes related to the Trojan war and its heroes were a popular style of decoration in dining areas in the first century B.C.[14] The Laocoon was an extravagant piece of Hellenistic Baroque art, a style imbued with passion and fury. This was also the style of the Sperlonga group and the attic frieze of Tiberius' arch in Orange.[15] The style of

12. One such example is the engraved image of Laocoon and sons on a gem dated to the fourth century B.C., now on display at the British Museum. (A. Furtwiangler, Die Antiken Gemmen i (i9oo), pl. 64 no. 30; III, 205; Richter, The Engraved Gems of the Greeks and Etruscans (I968), 2o8, no. 851).

13. Euphorion of Chalcis, a highly regarded Greek poet and grammarian of the third century B.C.

14. Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 7.5.2.

15. Stewart (1977), 83. The Triumphal Arch near Orange, France, contains a dedicatory inscription to the Emperor Tiberius, dated 27 B.C. The arch is adorned with sculptural reliefs depicting naval battles, spoils of war, and battles between Romans and Gauls in graphic detail. The Sperlonga Group references mythological stories told in both the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*. See also footnote 8.

the Laocoon Group, the subject matter, and even the poet Euphorion all fit the known tastes of Tiberius.

Euphorion's poetry is lost to us, but his account of Laocoon's story survives through a commentary on Vergil's *Aeneid* written by Maurus Servius Honoratus, A.D. 1471. Servius tells us that Euphorion served as a source for Vergil in both his *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*. As a highly favored Greek poet, his work was familiar to the Rhodesian sculptors. As Servius' commentary reaches the lines of Laocoon's death scene in Book Two of the *Aeneid*, the commentator makes note of Euphorion's prior work:

> *ut Euphorion dicit, post adventum Graecorum sacerdos Neptuni lapidibus occisus est, quia non sacrificiis eorum vetavit adventum. postea abscedentibus Graecis cum vellent sacrificare Neptuno, Laocoon Thymbraei Apollinis sacerdos sorte ductus est, ut solet fieri cum deest sacerdos certus. hic piaculum commiserat ante simulacrum numinis cum Antiopa sua uxore coeundo, et ob hoc immissis draconibus cum suis filiis interemptus est. historia quidem hoc habet: sed poeta interpretatur ad Troianorum excusationem, qui hoc ignorantes decepti sunt.* (Servius, *Commentarius in Vergilii Aeneida* 2.201)

Now we have a new point of classroom discussion: in what way might Euphorion illuminate our understanding of the sculpture? Does he address the obscurities left by Vergil's scene? According to Euphorion, Laocoon violated the commands of celibacy imposed by Apollo, desecrating the altar of the god (*hic piaculum commiserat ante simulacrum numinis*). Servius cites Euphorion with the Latin word *piaculum*, which denotes a wicked crime that demands expiation.[16] Thus, in payment for his wickedness, Apollo's snakes attacked Laocoon along with his sons while at the altar (*cum suis filiis interemptus est*). Moreover, note that Servius states that this is the tale of Laocoon held by history (*historia quidem hoc habet*), meaning it predated even Euphorion. In fact, the Greek poet Arktinos, who writes nearly a half-millennium before Euphorion, also relates this same tale and further claims that Laocoon's elder son escaped the serpents' attack.[17] All of this – the simultaneous attack on Laocoon and his sons, the position of the altar, and the elder son's escape – are absent from Vergil's poem, but present in the work of the Rhodesian sculptors. Furthermore, Vergil is known to take ancient myths and adapt them for the purposes of his own narrative.[18] Servius suggests that Vergil knows this version held by history, but instead interprets the scene from the viewpoint of Aeneas and the Trojans (*poeta interpretatur ad Troianorum excusationem*) who would not have known of Laocoon's *piaculum* (*qui hoc ignorantes decepti sunt*). Perhaps Vergil expected his readers would have known the Greek story told by Euphorion and Arktinos as well.

From the view of Troy and Aeneas in Vergil's poem, the gods killed Laocoon to ensure the defeat of Troy. His was a tragic and perhaps patriotic sacrifice, not a punishment for impiety and sacrilege.[19] When Euphorion's tale is considered, a different meaning emerges from the stone. The death of Laocoon and his son was the expiation of a wicked sin against the god Apollo. Furthermore, Servius' commentary continues to remind his readers that it was by the hands of Apollo and Neptune, upon a fixed agreement with King Laomedon of Troy, that the impregnable

16. Vergil uses this same word *piacula* in *Aeneid* 6.569 as Aeneas describes the expiation demanded from the wicked in Tartarus, an idea carried forth by Dante in his *Inferno*.

17. Stewart (1977), 82-83. Arktinos is believed to have written poetry c.775 B.C., five hundred years before Euphorion. The work of both poets is lost and survives only in the words of others who admired them and carried forth portions of their work.

18. Such is the case with his account of the affair between Aeneas and Dido, which earlier myths claim involved not the Carthaginian queen, but her sister Anna.

19. Badoud (2019), 81-3.

walls of Troy rose from the earth. King Laomedon reneged on the payment. Thus, Apollo had grievance not only against the priest, but also against the city of Troy herself.[20] This changes the *signum* of the piece as our students might behold it. We must now consider with them how such a piece, viewed in this light, pays tribute to the Augustan dynasty.

Exploring the signum of a piece such as the Laocoon Group trains our students to see beyond the surface of a work of art just as we would have them look beyond the cover of a book to judge each on the deeper meaning of its content.

Less than a decade before Tiberius' visit to Rhodes and the creation of the Laocoon Group, Rhodes had sided with Mark Antony, and against Augustus, at the Battle of Actium. Mark Antony had once served as the right-hand of Julius Caesar, adoptive father of Augustus. Mark Antony had fought alongside Augustus to take vengeance on Caesar's assassins, most notably Brutus and Cassius. Later as they divided the empire between them, Mark Antony declared himself allied with Augustus, both in terms of politics and family as he married Octavia, Augustus' beloved sister. However, Mark Antony betrayed Octavia, Augustus, and Rome when he chose to call himself husband to an Egyptian queen and build her empire. The final confrontation between these two Roman leaders came off the shores of Actium where a temple of Apollo stood. Mark Antony lost. Not long afterwards he and his Egyptian queen lay dead. Rhodes found herself on the side of the loser in this fight, now known for wicked impiety against Augustus and against Rome.

Beyond the typical Trojan War genre for decoration, beyond the allusions to myth and poetry, the image of Laocoon's fate captured by the three Rhodesian sculptors reminds viewers of a real story, with a real warning. The Laocoon Group may convey a conciliatory message, even an apology, after Rhodes had fought against Augustus at Actium. The image of Laocoon is the image of Mark Antony, who betrayed both Augustus and Rome through an impious attachment to Cleopatra.[21] One of his sons paid the price for his father's betrayal; others of his children were spared.[22] This statue then bears a *signum* to its audience: the impiety of Mark Antony (Laocoon) against Augustus (Apollo, the emperor's patron deity) is justly met by divine vengeance.[23]

Exploring the *signum* of a piece such as the Laocoon Group trains our students to see beyond the surface of a work of art just as we would have them look beyond the cover of a book to judge each on the deeper meaning of its content. Each one informs the understanding of the other. Such lessons take time, but the greatest treasures are rarely found with ease. Even the incorporation of a very few select studies each year trains the eyes and minds of our students. The students not only gain a deeper understanding of a particular work of art, but the context of art within classical civilization and the relationship between artist and patron. They have explored Vergil's poetry more deeply in searching out just a fraction of his

20. Ovid retells the story of Troy's walls in Book 11 of his *Metamorphoses*.

21. Badoud (2019), 83

22. See Suetonius 2.17.

23. Laocoon is an apt image as Mark Antony violated his marriage to Octavia with Cleopatra. Augustus favored the god Apollo, building a temple to the sun god next to his home on the Palatine Hill. According to Suetonius, legend held that Apollo was the father of Augustus after appearing to his mother Atia in the form of a serpent (Div Aug, 94).

source material, realizing that he borrowed from a poetic tradition wider than Homer. Of course, this means that we as teachers must first make such discoveries so we can guide our students. That may seem a daunting task. Thankfully, we are not meant to take on such journeys alone. My own journey towards the exploration of relationships between written and material evidence came through discussions with an artist very dear to me, my sister. She inquired of me who might be the characters or what might be the symbols in a work of art. I would ask her what her trained eye saw in a work that mine were yet too dull to see. Together we sharpened each other's senses and in so doing found a more complete understanding of a piece we had before each seen only in part. This led to each of us researching further on our own so we could bring more to the conversation. This can be and ought to be the relationship that we as teachers of the humanities have with our co-laborers in the arts. As teachers we are not meant to be masters of all knowledge, but fellow sojourners along the path of life-long learning. We just happen to be a few steps farther along than our students. So let them see us engage with each other in the exploration; let them see us model the conversation.

So often, particularly in the grammar school years, the art teachers fill their lesson plans with work that complements the humanities classroom. This is certainly true of my dear friend and colleague of many years, Robin McLaurin. An accomplished artist herself, she guides our students in studying Greek pottery, the illuminated manuscripts of the Medieval period, the masters of the Renaissance (Michelangelo, Raphael, Botticelli) and the great works of the modern period (Dali, Matisse, Picaso). Each lesson carefully aligns with the period of history and literature studied in those years. She takes great care to curate lessons and student exhibits that demonstrate this connection. She inspired me not only to make use of the foundation she has laid with our students, but to return the favor. One step at a time, I began to build art-literature lessons such as the Laocoon.[24] I modeled the exploration, then I challenged my students to make their own.

Slowly they walk through museums and archaeological sites with eyes to see before them the various signa created by artists, men and women who had something to say in response to the literature and history that shaped their world. They can then take up the discussion with each other and with their teachers not only remarking on the marvelous skill the artist exhibited, but what signum the art expresses.

My humanities class must choose a work of art from a select list of works they will see when I take them to Italy in their senior year. Their term paper must discuss the chosen work in light of classical literature. They are now in the position of the discoverer, seeking the *signa* of the artist; and I have the pure joy of learning from them. I am delighted to share two such papers in Commonplace. Each one was inspired by a work that captivated the attention of the author while on her senior trip to Italy this spring.

24. As a resource for those who would like to embark on such discoveries, please see my course on Classical Art & Archaeology with ClassicalU where I explore the history and meaning of classical art in light of literature.

Truly, nowhere is the fruit of such integration between the arts and humanities better tasted than when the students visit great masterpieces around the world. They meet paintings and monuments as if they were old school friends and classmates. Slowly they walk through museums and archaeological sites with eyes to see before them the various *signa* created by artists, men and women who had something to say in response to the literature and history that shaped their world. They can then take up the discussion with each other and with their teachers not only remarking on the marvelous skill the artist exhibited, but what *signum* the art expresses. What of the proud obelisk with the detailed figures carved in ancient stone? What muse inspired the figures in Botticelli's paintings? What *signa* do such works on stone and canvas convey? We would do well to attune our students' eyes to hear the language of the artist and to awaken the conversation begun centuries before. Hopefully, one fine day these students will each stand before the Laocoon Group in the Vatican Museum. In that moment, in the presence of the work itself, they may also utter the words, "so this is the Laocoon of which Pliny speaks" and the conversation begins anew.

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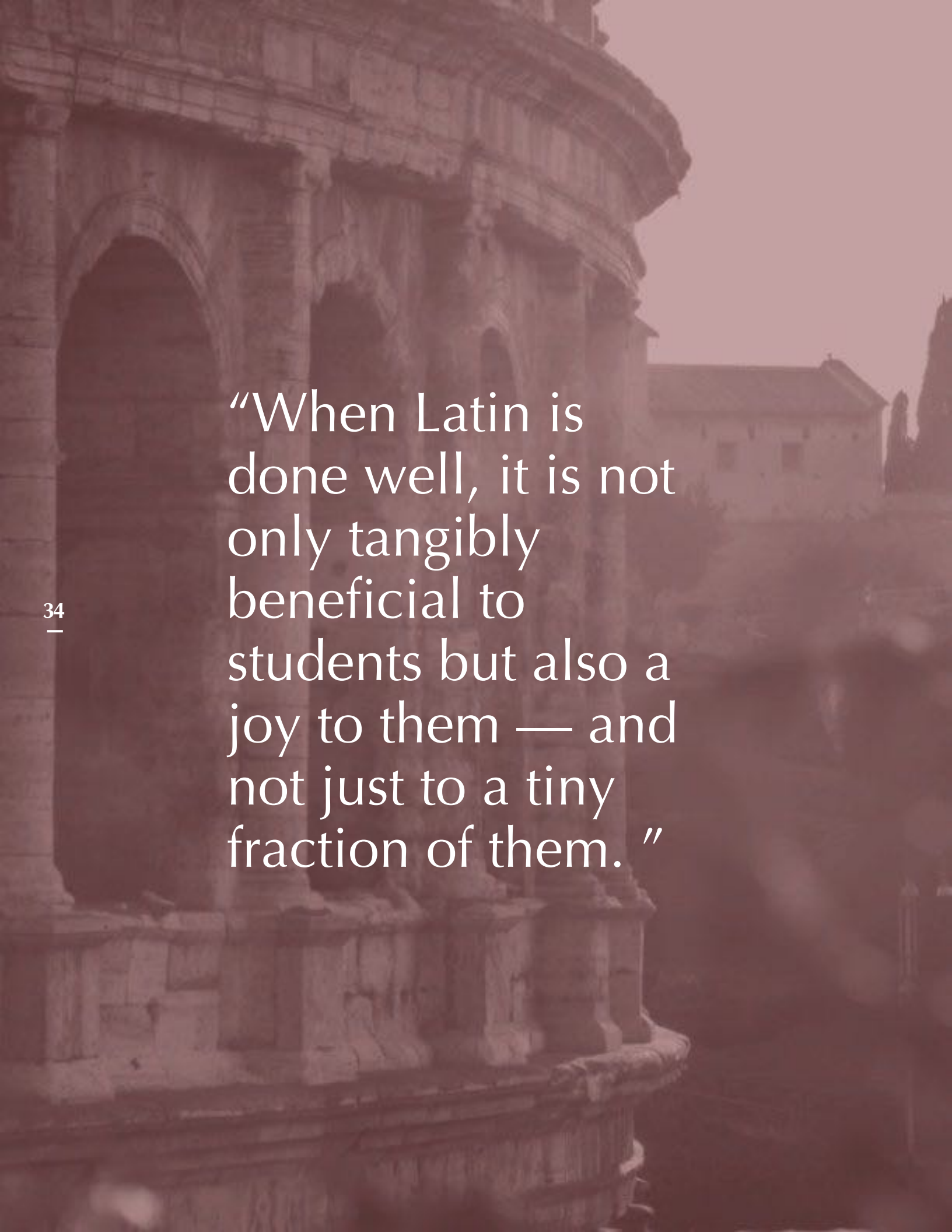

“When Latin is done well, it is not only tangibly beneficial to students but also a joy to them — and not just to a tiny fraction of them. ”

How to Fix a Broken Latin Program

Tim Griffith, *New Saint Andrews College*

The study of classical languages is an essential part of a classical Christian education. But what if your students study Latin for many years and never feel like they benefit from all that hard work? What if it is the least favorite subject in your school? Is this the way things are supposed to be? Should administrators, teachers, and parents constantly have to assure their students and themselves that Latin is worth the work? Actually, no. If this is what your Latin program is like, there is something wrong. When Latin is done well, it is not only tangibly beneficial to students but also a joy to them—and not just to a tiny fraction of them.

The truth is that, like an automobile, a Latin program is a complex machine that can break down in dozens of ways. When you hear a weird clunking coming from your Latin program, it needs to go into the shop. There are a few common issues that can be solved at an administrative level: 1) the school may not be able to find qualified or motivated Latin teachers; 2) a school might have three or more Latin teachers with no one in charge, so the teachers are working against each other; 3) the school may not make enough time for language in the schedule or have unrealistic homework requirements; 4) the administration may be making no attempt to assess independently whether students are learning year by year—no, course grades are not sufficient for this; 5) the school may have no effective system to integrate new students. Although these issues are common, they also have straightforward solutions: 1) pay to have your faculty take online Latin courses or tutoring—it is more affordable than you think; 2) put someone in charge of the whole program from elementary to high school, so all your Latin teachers are rowing in the same direction; 3) prioritize class and homework time for core subjects in your curriculum that build skills over time; 4) have your students take the *Universal Latin Exam* yearly to diagnose your program's health; 5) employ summer programs, tutor classes, or online programs to integrate new students with no prior Latin education instead of just dumping them into their target grade-level Latin courses.

But aside from these administrative concerns, Latin programs that are performing poorly often suffer from deeper, more philosophical problems related to methodology. These problems are more difficult to resolve and require that *both teachers and administrators* know something about how language is acquired. The truth is that the classical education world is far from unified on language pedagogy: the voices of the experts are many and disparate, each clamoring for its methodology. This is, of course, baffling for administrators, especially ones who do not know Latin. Which of the contradicting experts should they listen to? Confronted with this enigma, they often throw up their hands in frustration and listen to whomever they know personally or whatever seems easiest or cheapest.

But like other heated debates, the fact that there are so many opinions out there does not mean that there are no right and wrong answers. So, how do we distinguish which are which? The first step is for everyone involved to understand the field of opinions. Most contemporary classical language pedagogies fall into one of two camps. The first of these is often called the Grammar-translation Method.

Advocates of Grammar-translation believe that they are traditionalists and often see their method as the only "classical" one because it is the one laid out in Dorothy Sayer's *Lost Tools of Learning*. Most people who studied Latin in the 20th century learned this method, and it is the methodology employed in popular textbooks such as *Wheelock's Latin*, *Henle Latin*, *Latin for Americans*, etc.

In Grammar-translation, Latin is taught deductively and systematically—teachers present the language as a list of forms with English equivalents. For example, students might begin by learning a verb paradigm, such as *amō* ("I love"), *amās* ("you love"), *amat* ("he loves"), *amāmus* ("we love"), *amātis* ("you all love"), *amant* ("they love"). In some versions, students chant the forms without the translations: *amō*, *amās*, *amat*, *amāmus*, *amātis*, *amant*. Noun forms are taught similarly: *mēnsa* ("table"), *mēnsae* ("of a table"), *mēnsae* ("to a table"), *mēnsam* ("table"), *mēnsā* ("by/with/from a table"), etc. Alternatively, students may chant the noun endings with forms without translations: *a*, *ae*, *ae*, *am*, *ā*, *ae*, *ārum*, *īs*, *ās*, *īs*. Advanced grammatical constructions are taught through English formula: for example, a perfect passive participle is translated as "having been _____ed", so *amātus* is translated as "having been loved." Teachers have students identify forms by "parsing" them, that is, by seeing a word and giving its grammatical form: *amābāmus* ("imperfect, active, indicative, 1st-person, plural"), or *puellās* ("1st-declension, accusative, plural").

Vocabulary in the Grammar-translation method is taught through English equivalents: *fēmina* ("woman"), *nauta* ("sailor"), etc. Students sometimes chant out the equivalents in class: *fēmina*, "woman"; *nauta*, "sailor". Alternatively, they use flashcards with a Latin word on one side and an English equivalent on the other. One way or the other, students spend most of their vocabulary practice associating Latin words with direct English equivalents. Once students have learned the translations for forms and individual words, they proceed to whole sentences: *Fēmina nautam amat* ("The woman loves the sailor.") When a student runs into trouble in a complicated sentence, he is instructed to translate the verb first, then find the subject, and then find the rest.

The second camp is often called the Natural Method, Comprehensible Input Method, or Immersive Method. Advocates of this camp see themselves as the "scientific" ones and point to research that shows that total immersion is highly effective for learning languages—as if we needed research to demonstrate that! Members of this camp model their methodology on the way people naturally learn their first language. Infants spend their early years immersed in the language of their parents, and 99% of that early interaction with the language is *listening* to the language being used in immediate contexts. The term "comprehensible input" refers to the process in which infants hear the language of their parents used in intelligible contexts repeatedly. Infants associate words and phrases with those contexts. Eventually, they begin using the language themselves and stringing together more complicated sentences.

The Immersive-method camp attempts to replicate this natural process in the classroom: speaking only in Latin, teachers seek to introduce new vocabulary and grammar to students through context alone; they employ simple dialogues and simple stories that are immediately intelligible; they make extensive use of hand gestures, charades, illustrations, and props to assist the students in understanding new Latin words and phrases; at first, students only repeat Latin words and phrases they hear being used, but soon they are prompted with information-specific questions, such as *quis* ("who"), *quid agit* ("what is he doing"), *ubi* ("where"), *cūr* ("why"), and *quōmodo* ("how") to make association between endings and grammatical constructions. This question-and-answer exercise is usually the primary means

that students learn grammar; however, some teachers on this method will use Latin grammar names to lead students through analysis of the text as well. Some versions of this method avoid "sheltering" grammar, that is, they do not introduce grammar systematically but instead use whatever grammatical construction fits the context most naturally—they do not mind using different verb tenses or even subjunctives with beginning students, provided that the meaning is clear from the context.

Since this method goes to great lengths to avoid English translation, it rarely employs lists or flashcards to introduce or review vocabulary. Instead, vocabulary words are taught through specific contexts, usually through stories or props. For example, if a student learns the verb *pulsāre*, which is a general word used to indicate a broad range of violent physical force, he will learn it in one particular sense as appropriate for a particular context: *puer iānuam pulsat* ("a boy knocks on the door"). Review occurs through rereading or partial recitation of a story or in-class props. As students become more capable, teachers take them through progressively more complicated readings; however, they usually introduce readings by 1) presenting the text as a drama, 2) paraphrasing and simplifying the text, or 3) giving the students a simplified version of the reading. Then in the second stage, students encounter a more complicated version of the text.

Each of these two methodologies at first glance seems like it should work well. On the one hand, the Grammar-translation method is 1) systematic, 2) proceeds from the known (English) to the unknown (Latin), 3) inculcates a repeatable process for interpretation of texts, 4) has feasible methods for review, and 5) is friendly to classroom instruction. On the other hand, the Immersive Method 1) has students using the language as a *language* from day one, 2) incorporates all four learning pathways (hearing, speaking, reading, and writing), 3) stimulates the memory by associating Latin with sights, sounds, movements of the body, and 4) uses a process that we all know successfully taught us our first language. You would think that after many years of either methodology, students would be developing both skills and interests.

Real translation first requires the interpretation of a particular thought in a particular context that has taken form in one language. Once interpretation has occurred, you can proceed to hunt around for the English word or words to communicate a similar idea with a similar effect. So, in real translation, comprehension comes first; then the translation follows.

Nevertheless, despite appearances, neither of these methodologies works well in actual classrooms, especially over time. Although they do it in very different ways, each of these methodologies has critical weaknesses that translate into Latin programs performing poorly. In the Grammar-translation method, students fail to use the language as a real language, but instead treat it as a kind of cipher to be applied to a text mathematically. This undermines the entire goal and effort of learning Latin in the first place in several ways. But for the sake of brevity, here is one of them. It inculcates the idea that you can translate the parts of a sentence using a series of rules and equivalencies before you understand the entirety. To put it more simply, students learn with this method that they can translate into English before they know what the text means. This is a fundamental misunderstanding of both how language means anything and what real

translation is. Real translation first requires the interpretation of a particular thought in a particular context that has taken form in one language. Once interpretation has occurred, you can proceed to hunt around for the English word or words to communicate a similar idea with a similar effect. So, in real translation, comprehension comes first; then the translation follows. If you do it the other way around, you are just filling out an elaborate paint-by-numbers coloring page: every time you see the right prompt, you follow the rubric and replace it with the prescribed equivalent. This is not reading a language; this is not even a real translation.

The Immersive Method assumes that one teacher can immerse multiple classes of 15 students, in a sterile classroom, for 30 to 45 minutes a day. This is simply not enough input for most students to recognize or master the patterns or the vocabulary, especially if they are not ordered…there are too few teachers, too many students, and too little time in the day.

When students are required to do this in schools, they can be "translating" Vergil (although few get that far) and never be moved whatsoever by some of the greatest poetry ever written. They are not moved because they are not understanding Vergil directly. Instead, they are turning great literature into bad prose (or gibberish) by following rules slavishly. They might as well just use *ChatGPT*: it would decode the message better and (just like the student) feel nothing. And now that *ChatGPT* is around, this is exactly how Grammar-translation students will be doing their homework. Are there examples of students who have successfully learned this way? Actually, yes. The human mind is a marvelous thing. Some students are so smart with language and so persistent, that they spend enough time in the language to begin reading by context and see past the rigid replacements. This represents fewer than 5% of students, but frankly, if you had left these same students alone on a deserted island with a library of Latin and Greek books for a few decades, they would have figured it out on their own. These are usually the people who become Classics professors, but training Classicists was never our mission. What about the other 95%?

The trouble with the Immersive Method is not that it does not work—in fact, it can. But to work, it requires real immersion, and immersion requires real volume. The comprehensible input of an infant's native tongue is not provided by one teacher—it comes from dozens of native speakers every day, all day long, for years. The infant is not sitting in a classroom devoid of interesting things to talk about—instead, he is living life surrounded by people who are speaking the language about that life. However, with all that comprehensible input and all that immersion, it still takes a child five years to learn fairly complete English. Even then, he needs ten more years in school to learn the kind of complex English that we encounter in literature. The Immersive Method assumes that one teacher can immerse multiple classes of 15 students, in a sterile classroom, for 30 to 45 minutes a day. This is simply not enough input for most students to recognize or master the patterns or the vocabulary, especially if they are not ordered. It would be possible for one fluent teacher to immerse one student in three or four hours a day, especially if they were not cooped up in a classroom and could talk about real things in the real world. But very few of us could afford that kind of education. True immersion is

not compatible with the modern classroom because the math does not check out—there are too few teachers, too many students, and too little time in the day.

So, what is going on in Immersive-method classrooms? Frequently, the teachers become proficient mimes and act out the readings so dramatically that their students get an idea of what is happening in the text. This can be good entertainment, and students often like it; the trouble is that students are not doing the work of interpreting the text themselves—it is done for them. Instead of being taught to hunt worms on their own, the mother bird hunts the worms and drops them predigested into the open mouths of the chicks. Through this process, the teachers can get very proficient in Latin; but the students never learn to do much on their own. Most critically, they do not learn to use the grammatical forms to aid their understanding of the text and instead learn to guess the meaning of a text by context alone; even worse, they expect someone else to explain the meaning of the text for them. Do some people learn this way successfully? Yes, a few. But, again, it is just 5%, and these students are usually sneaking a peek at grammar rules and charts when the teacher is not looking.

So, if both camps of methodology are flawed, what method should schools use? Are there any good options? Thankfully, yes. We must recognize that each of the two major camps represents an extreme on the pedagogical spectrum: Grammar-translation relies almost entirely on theory and process; the immersive method, on imitation and example. Schools can retain the advantages of each and avoid the disadvantages of each by employing a mixture of the two methodologies and a dose of pedagogical common sense. The Grammar-translation advocates are not wrong that comparing Latin words and grammar to English equivalents can be very useful and speed up Latin education significantly. The problem is that this is all these teachers ever do. They never allow Latin to be a language that conveys real thoughts directly, and this is crippling. Students should use Latin to say and write things, and they should begin by reading texts simple enough that they can understand them without decoding. The Grammar-translation advocates are also not wrong to study grammar systematically. This adds both speed and clarity to the process, but the grammatical progression *must* be arranged such that it prepares students for meaningful stories and dialogues from the very beginning. If students have to wait for years to read anything, they will give up. Who can blame them?

Likewise, the Immersive-method teachers are not wrong that comprehensible input is essential to language acquisition. However, they are wrong to approach Latin grammar haphazardly—there must be an order of progression that helps students succeed. They are right to give their students easy texts, but they are wrong to interpret those texts for the students by always acting them out first. A teacher's job is to teach the students to learn to interpret on their own—not to watch a song and dance show. They are right that immersive exercises where English is forbidden are highly beneficial; they are wrong to forbid all English explanations and analogies in their classrooms. They are right to use Latin question-and-answer to discuss texts—it is a fantastic exercise, but they are wrong never to teach students to name the constructions they encounter—naming is the first step of dominion. They are right to do some dramatic versions of Latin readings, but they are wrong never to give their students a process to help students interpret Latin on their own.

Using a "Middle Method" is by no means a new idea. It is the tried-and-true way to teach classical languages. Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian talk about acquiring language through both theory and imitation. Throughout the Middle Ages, Latin education combined

total immersion in Latin-speaking communities (monasteries) and careful systematic study of Donatus' grammar. Erasmus, Vives, Cordarius, and others in the Reformation approved of a combination of grammatical instruction and copious immersive examples. Comenius in the 17th century taught grammar and vocabulary gradually and systematically. In the 20th century, W.H.D. Rouse perfected a method of teaching grammar and vocabulary gradually and systematically through illustrated context examples. Hans Ørberg wrote a textbook that introduces grammar systematically but through a continuous narrative of contextualized examples. C. S. Lewis recommends extensive immersive experiences in Latin in addition to the study of grammar. Even Dorothy Sayers strongly recommends using Latin to communicate like we do when learning foreign languages.

In short, the Grammar-translation Method and the Immersive Method focus too narrowly on certain kinds of exercises: one is like a gym that focuses on the arms and chest but skips leg day; for the other, every day is leg day. To be healthy, a Latin program needs to provide students with a balance of grammatical instruction and real use of the language that interprets or communicates meaningful thoughts directly. If your Latin program is unbalanced in its methodology in either direction, you need to balance it. If it leans too far toward Grammar-translation, take steps to introduce more immersive exercises to the students: 1) pay to have your teachers take online Latin courses that employ some immersive exercises; 2) introduce easy readings that pair well with their grammatical lessons; 3) use simple question-and-answer exercises to talk in Latin about the readings; 4) have students do simple compositions on personal whiteboards in class; 5) employ dramatic readings of the text after students have worked through them; 6) use Latin to talk about illustrations or props in the classroom directly.

On the other hand, if your program leans too far toward the Immersive-Method, introduce some Grammar-translation techniques: 1) have occasional discussions in English about how Latin works; 2) start with a small body of vocabulary and a few strategic grammatical concepts and introduce new ones gradually; 3) do not be afraid to compare English constructions with Latin ones—even while you avoid drilling into them a simplistic one-to-one comparison; 4) occasionally have students produce translations to or from English; 5) prepare students with vocabulary and grammar concepts before jumping into a reading, so they can do the heavy lifting on their own; 6) preserve immersive experiences by designating certain times or activities as Latine tantum ("Latin only"), but do not make this your only exercise; 7) give students a process for using grammar to divide and conquer a difficult sentence on their own.

Schools can retain the advantages of each and avoid the disadvantages of each by employing a mixture of the two methodologies and a dose of pedagogical common sense.

Achieving this balance may require some changes to your curriculum depending on the philosophy baked into your textbooks. For example, I use Hans Ørberg's *Lingua Latina Per Se Illustrata* for freshmen in college. The textbook provides outstanding readings suitable for high school and college students and is arranged with a systematic progression of grammar. So far, so good. However, by its very design, it provides no exercises in vocabulary or grammar to prepare students before each reading. Because I endeavor to teach my students to do the work of interpreting

the reading themselves—not needing me to digest it for them, I have my students spend a few days learning the vocabulary and grammar required for the next reading through illustrated mini-sentences. Students spend a whole class period proving to me that they can use the new vocabulary and the new grammar before encountering the reading. During this time, we do a mixture of Latin composition (on personal whiteboards) and oral composition with a focus on the new material. Students ask their questions about the new vocabulary and grammatical forms in English. I answer their questions and give tips on their compositions in English but carefully avoid using simplistic formulas or one-to-one equivalencies. Only then, after the students are well prepared to do the work on their own, do the students read the text. But they read it on their own without my help, and the vast majority of them understand the readings well. Then, I use Latin question-and-answer exercises to quiz them on the meaning of the readings. When a student says that they struggled with a word or sentence, I may use either Latin or English to walk them through how the word or phrase works, whichever is most suitable. Often, after explaining a difficult word or passage, I will ask students to compose their examples using the same features we just discussed. At the end of the term, I require students to translate from Latin to English and from English to Latin.

I am not proposing my practice as a model for other classrooms, but rather as one example of how to balance the deficiencies baked into a textbook. Hans Ørberg did not intend for me to use his textbook in the way I do. However, by pairing his textbook together with different kinds of preparatory exercises and evaluations, I believe I have reached a good middling balance: my students use the language meaningfully through all the pathways (reading, writing, hearing, speaking); they also learn grammatical names, forms, and structures; they acquire a process to help them reason their way grammatically through difficult passages on their own; students can translate text they have comprehended, but they do not translate the parts of a sentence by formula before comprehension.

If the Latin textbooks in your curriculum already include a good balance of material for grammatical and immersive exercises, you may not need to add anything. But if they do not, you may need to supplement your textbooks or find new materials. Every balanced curriculum will need materials that provide the following: 1) extensive readings that are easy enough and interesting enough for students to read and talk about in Latin on their own; 2) a systematic progression that allows students to focus on grammatical concepts one at a time, instead of all at once; 3) a method to review vocabulary and grammar forms. Without all these elements, it is nearly impossible to have a balanced program and for most students to learn Latin successfully.

If your students are generally not seeing tangible benefits to their Latin studies and are perpetually bored, do not assume this is how things are supposed to be. Look under the hood of your Latin program and see what is making the noise. If there are practical administrative issues, deal with them. If there are more philosophical issues, take the time to understand why the students are not learning and educate the whole faculty on how to work together to provide a balanced program. Latin is too important for classical Christian education to allow it to continue to proceed poorly at your school.

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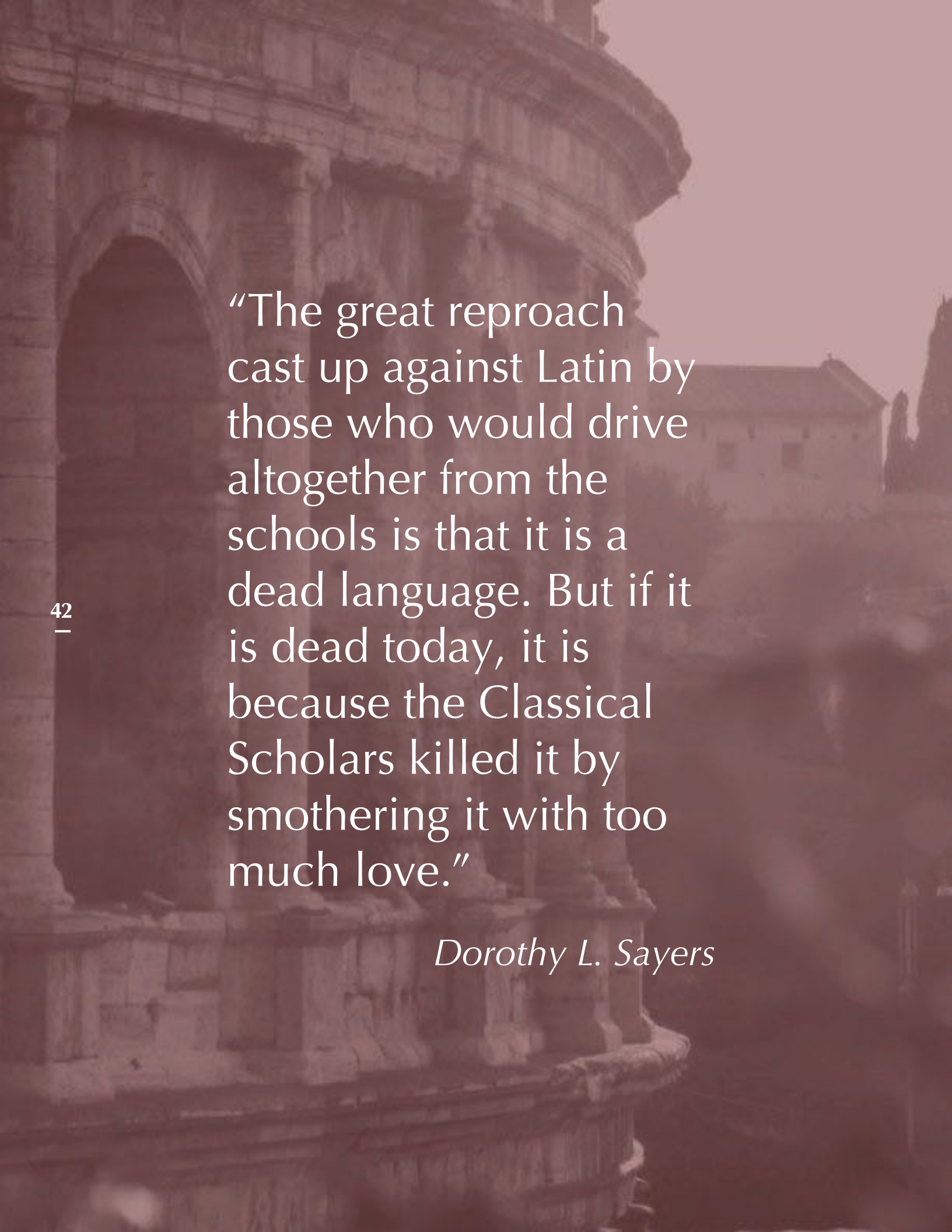


"The great reproach cast up against Latin by those who would drive altogether from the schools is that it is a dead language. But if it is dead today, it is because the Classical Scholars killed it by smothering it with too much love."

Dorothy L. Sayers

Who Killed Latin?

Douglas Wilson, *Christ Church and Greyfriars Hall*

Every attempt to recover or protect something valuable involves a true balancing act. The Hippocratic Oath comes to mind—"first, do no harm." We do not want to be the surgeon who declares that the operation was successful, although the patient unfortunately died.

We are part of a movement that is engaged in the task of trying to recover the meaning of a truly classical and truly Christian education. This entails many things, but one of the more obvious things entailed is the recovery of Latin in the curriculum. And if we want to do this, then we should want to do it well. But what does "do it well" actually mean? On the one hand, we don't want slapdash courses that spend a lot of time discussing *e pluribus unum* and *et cetera*, as though that kind of dabbling was sufficient. We don't want what C.S. Lewis once tagged as the "Parthenon" approach to language studies.

> "Ever since then, I have tended to use the Parthenon and the Optative as the symbols of two types of education. The one begins with hard, dry things like grammar, and dates, and prosody; and it has at least the chance of ending in a real appreciation which is equally hard and firm though not equally dry. The other begins in 'Appreciation' and ends in gush."[1]

But Lewis was also well aware of the problems that could attend a Gradgrind approach to the "Optative," as can be seen in numerous places throughout his works.

> "For in Calormen, story-telling (whether the stories are true or made up) is a thing you're taught, just as English boys and girls are taught essay writing. The difference is that people want to hear the stories, whereas I never heard of anyone who wanted to read the essays."[2]

We all know that recovering a truly worthwhile education is difficult, but this has led some to conclude that if it is difficult then it must be a truly worthwhile education. But this is to affirm the consequent—eating a bowl of driveway gravel is also difficult, but less educational than some would make it.

To have a successful school that provides a robust general education, you need to have specialists who believe in what they have specialized in. Because a school is an institution that takes full advantage of the division of labor, this creates the need for the aforementioned balancing act. You should want a Latin teacher who believes that a recovery of Latin is the most important thing in the world, a music teacher who believes the same thing about music, a history teacher who has come to the same

1. C.S. Lewis, "The Parthenon and the Optative" *Essay Collection & Other Short Pieces* (London: Harper Collins, 2000), p. 444.
2. C.S. Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy* (London: Harper Collins, 1982), p. 35

conviction about history, and so on. And the headmaster needs to be the kind of magician who takes full advantage of all of them, but without listening to any of them, and who can prevent them from killing each other. As I said, a true balancing act.

Those who are attracted to one discipline, and who are also entranced by it, are frequently tempted to become overly fastidious and demanding about their one true love. But there needs to be a way of being both demanding *and* balanced. In her essay "Ignorance and Dissatisfaction," Dorothy Sayers makes this pointed observation: "The great reproach cast up against Latin by those who would drive altogether from the schools is that it is a dead language. But if it is dead today, it is because the Classical Scholars killed it by smothering it with too much love."[3]

> "Up until the Revival of Learning, it was a living language, growing and developing like a living language alongside of its children and grandchildren and, like many a hearty and lively grandparent today, picking up much of their speech and slang as it went along. It is fascinating to watch it from the first century onwards, assimilating syntax and vocabulary from the vernacular Greek, weaving in Hebrew through the Vulgate—after the same manner, though perhaps not to the same extent, as Anglo-Saxon assimilated the Norman-French; to see it renewing itself by contact with its own Romance Languages as English renews itself by contact with American, become more analytic as they become more analytic, and developing a new vocabulary to express current ideas. Contamination and barbarism are one set of names for this sort of thing: another name is vitality."[4]

I bring all of this up because our classical and Christian movement is also engaged in an analogous revival of learning, *and we must take care not to make the same mistake*. In other words, if Latin is ever going to become more than a classroom museum piece, admired from behind a velvet rope, then we will need to figure out a way to speak of jogging, or toaster ovens, or Instagram, or a space cadet (*tiro in exercitu stellarum*). But there is a sort of fastidious excavator of the ancient ways who does not want to admit any modern vulgarities or references. But the end result is not a happy one.

> "They succeeded in killing the medieval Latin: but not in keeping alive the schoolroom severities of their restored Augustanism."[5]

The phrase to remember there is "schoolroom severities." Beware the schoolroom severities, which invariably resorts to a false standard.

> "It is largely to the humanists that we owe the curious conception of the 'classical' period in a language, the correct or normative period before which all was immature or archaic and after which all was decadent."[6]

One scholar from the time of this so-called "recovery" resolved never to use a word, or even the number and case ending of a word that could not be found in Cicero. This is a fanatical dedication to a false ideal of the pristine. And it had a predictable effect.

3. Dorothy L. Sayers, "Ignorance and Dissatisfaction." Address given to the Association for Latin Teaching, 1952.

4. Ibid.

5. Lewis, "The Parthenon and the Optative", p. 21.

6. Ibid.

> "A negative conception of excellence arose: it was better to omit a beauty than to leave in anything that might have the shadow of an offense."[7]

No matter what, the thinking went, avoid any solecisms. But this mentality creates a problem anticipated by Quintilian when he refers to the kind of wordsmithing that was equally free of blemishes and virtues. And this error will arise naturally and become widespread whenever there is a fierce dedication to a false or misplaced standard.

> "Dryden significantly takes it for granted (Epistle to *Rival Ladies*) that you must not do in English things which you were whipped at school for doing in Latin."[8]

In other words, Latin—and a very specific sampling of Latin—was assumed to be the benchmark against which all things were to be tested. If it was impossible to end a sentence in Latin with a preposition, then it should be forbidden in English. And so it was that this became a grammatical rule in English which, as Churchill once put it, was the sort of nonsense up with which we shall not put. In a similar spirit, because Latin infinitives are a single word (as with *laudare*, to praise), it is impossible to place an adverb in the middle of that one word. But English infinitives are made up of two words, so it is possible to place an adverb in between the *to* and the *praise*—e.g. "to loudly praise." But this was improper. You shouldn't do it in English because you couldn't do it in Latin. Okay then. But this is like deciding that a human skeleton is superior to a dog's, and then deciding to make your dog walk on its hind legs. This is nothing but turning teachers into gnat-stranglers, and one of the things we should know about gnat-stranglers is that they rarely make good teachers.

> "But the varnish and stucco of some neo-Latin work, the badness which no man could incur by sheer defect of talent but only by 'endless labour to be wrong' is a new thing."[9]

That was an error that has had a shelf life of some centuries. So our task is to recover the rigor of a young man in his strength, and not the rigor of a corpse in its *mortis*.

Douglas Wilson is the minister of Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho. He is a founding board member of both Logos School and New Saint Andrews College, and serves as an instructor at Greyfriars Hall, a ministerial training program at Christ Church. He is the author of numerous books on classical Christian education, the family, and the Reformed faith.

7. Lewis, "The Parthenon and the Optative", p. 21.

8. Ibid, p. 22.

9. Ibid, p. 24.

Whence Comes the Latin Teacher?

A Look at the NCES Survey and Its Implications

Sean Hadley, *University of Arkansas*

When Aeneas ventures to the Underworld in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, he relentlessly pursues knowledge of the future while amongst the shades. As Virgil tells it, "Thus, through the whole region, they freely range, in the broad, misty plains, surveying all. And when Anchises had led his son over every scene, and fired his soul with love of fame that was to be, he tells him then of the wars he must thereafter wage, and instructs him of the Laurentine peoples and the city of Latinus, and how he is to flee or face each toil."[1]

This descent gives Aeneas the inspiration he needs as he draws closer to the war that lay ahead of him. But a curious thing happens. Aeneas, whether because of his proximity to the River Lethe or because of the frailty of the human mind, cannot fully retain in memory everything Anchises shows him. When Venus provides Aeneas a shield made by Vulcan, with the images of his future descendants emblazoned on it, Aeneas "knows not the deeds" pictured before him. He does understand that they are significant, "uplifting on his shoulder the fame and fortunes of his children's children," but it is a far distant thing and abstract in a way that might make a lesser man question his obligation to a possible future.[2]

I'd like to suggest that there is a way of understanding these scenes comparatively with the Classical Christian Education movement and debates around the teaching of Latin. Like Aeneas, the Latin teacher must think about the future in a way that goes much further than many other teachers must do. For the study of Latin is a part of the very fabric of the movement, something without which the term Classical might not mean much comparatively with other Christian school models. The image works well for the CCE movement. Classical Christian Education, embodied in organizations like the ACCS and SCL, has sought to remember forward in a manner like that of Aeneas, not always understanding what will come next but knowing it is for a future generation yet unseen. This is natural enough for Christian education broadly speaking.[3] But it takes on an interesting perspective when it is specifically anchored to the retrieval of an older model of teaching, including but not exclusive to the teaching of Latin. According to the ACCS job board, 21 new Latin teaching positions have been posted since January 2024. Schools are constantly groping with questions about who will teach Latin, because it is often a foregone conclusion that Latin must be taught.

The ACCS announced at the Summer 2023 Repairing the Ruins conference that they were beginning a large data gathering project which would help schools in the long run. This kind of project offers school administrators a chance to

1. Virgil, Aeneid, in *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I–VI*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, ed. G. P. Goold, *The Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 6.886–892.

2. Virgil, Aeneid, in *Aeneid VII–XII, Appendix Vergiliana*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, ed. Jeffrey Henderson and G. P. Goold, *The Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 8.730–731.

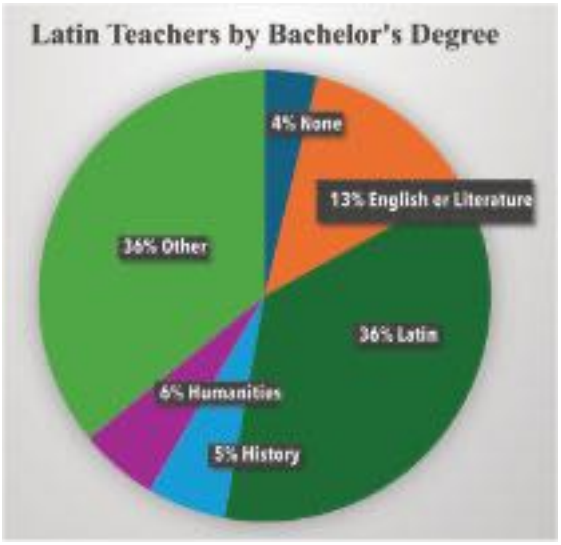
3. Deuteronomy 6:5-8 stands out as a prime example of the historical precedent of such a principle for Christian education.

look specifically at questions related to hiring Latin teachers, where they come from, and what is the best approach to providing them with a balanced workload. But until the data from that project is available, there are some other sources that can still yield interesting information for ACCS schools. The U. S. Department of Education conducts periodic surveys at a national level, compiling this information to provide data to schools and thus enabling them to make informed decisions about curriculum, hiring, etc. The National Teacher and Principal Survey are sets of questionnaires sent to public schools, charter schools, and private schools, regardless of religious affiliation. In the most recent dataset available, from the 2017-2018 school year, it includes ACCS schools.[4] By looking into these numbers, specifically focusing on data surrounding Latin teachers, a helpful picture emerges which could be of benefit to headmasters, teachers, and school boards when they ponder that perennial question: where will our next Latin teacher come from?

The Education of a Latin Teacher

For many heads of schools and principals, the question begins with the previous training of the Latin teacher. How many Latin teachers study Latin in college? And how many of them go on to study Latin at the graduate level? The old motto, "you only have to be one day ahead of the students," sounds manageable in a Math or Omnibus setting, but becomes almost completely overwhelming in a Latin or Greek class. And this presents tangible problems when so few incoming teachers have any real Latin experience. One of the first places to look when considering this is the education of a Latin instructor. After all, how many Latin majors can there be?

Of the 106 Latin teachers surveyed in the 2017-2018 NTPS Report, 36% graduated with a bachelor's degree in Latin while 13% earned degrees in English or Literature, the second largest category. About 6% of them majored in History, while another 6% majored in Humanities and Liberal Studies. The rest of the teachers were spread across a wide array of degrees, ranging from Business Management and Engineering to Art History and Music. So, upon an initial look, schools cannot expect to find many candidates with a Latin focus, but there are categories of study where Latin may easily have been something a new teacher studied sufficiently to get them started, and an English major makes a lot of sense.

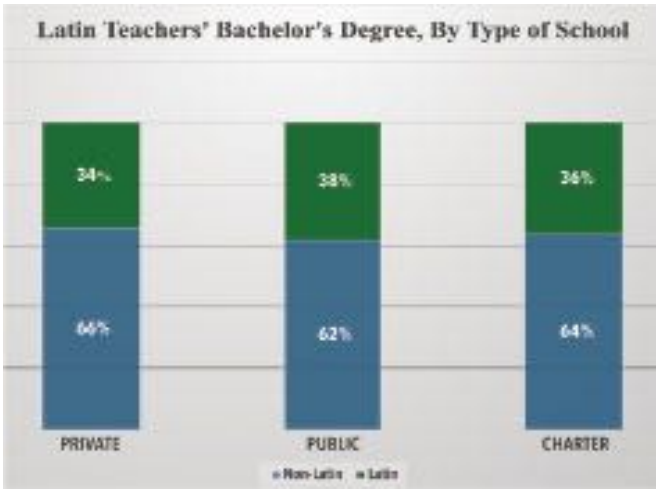


Things become even more interesting at the graduate level. Almost 65% of Latin teachers surveyed held a master's degree, with 29% of those teachers focusing on Latin in their studies and 19% studying Education at this post-baccalaureate level, replacing English as the second highest category for study. Noticeably,

4. *2017-2018 National Teacher and Principal Survey* (NTPS). U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntps/. All subsequent data is drawn from this report.

History falls in ranking as a postgraduate focus and Religious Studies emerges as a new category.

Of those teachers surveyed, 11% of them earned a doctorate, and 25% of those teachers continued to study Latin. In all, less than 3% of Latin teachers concentrated on the study of Latin from their undergraduate days all the way through to the end of their graduate programs. In other words, the chances are high that a Latin teacher will have little formal training in the language itself when the scope of collegiate study is considered. Curiously, the breakdown between Latin teachers from private schools, public schools, and charter schools reveals some interesting similarities and differences in terms of a teacher's education.



About two-thirds of Latin teachers at private schools received training in a different field, compared to 62% of public school instructors and 64% of charter school instructors. Most interestingly, Latin instructors from private schools registered 18 other concentrations from their undergraduate study, making it the most varied group. A public-school teacher with a background in Latin is more likely to teach the subject, whereas private schools are content with instructors who pick up Latin training "on the job" or as part of an in-house training system. Credentials in this respect are no guarantee of whether a private school teacher will or will not teach a Latin course.

The trends widen when looking at graduate study. At the master's level, the similarities and differences continue to be interesting. 62% of private school Latin teachers earned a graduate degree, with 32% of that group concentrating in Latin. Comparatively, 64% of teachers at public schools earned a graduate degree, of which 31% studied Latin. 81% of Latin teachers at charter schools earned a graduate degree, with only 22% of them electing to study Latin. The biggest educational differences emerge at the doctoral level, however. Private schools are more likely to have a Latin teacher who earned a PhD, with 18% of their teachers attaining a doctoral degree, 27% of whom specifically studied Latin. Comparatively, 3% of public-school teachers earned a doctorate, with 0% studying Latin, and 0% of charter school teachers earned a PhD.

What is true broadly of private schools is typically true of ACCS schools in this situation, namely that Latin teachers often come to the job with little to no Latin language experience and thus must learn how to teach it as they go. ACCS administrators already show a willingness to work with teachers who have training besides Latin, but it would be worth asking what level of training teachers most need to succeed?

The Training of a Latin Teacher

There is also the question of teacher training as it applies to Latin teachers. I've often heard it said that "classical educators don't grow on trees," meaning that teacher training must happen on the ground at CCE schools after they've hired someone. This comes with inherent risks, as a teacher might be great with students but a poor manager of their own time, creating problems on the administrative end of things. There are of course plenty of credentialing programs, but many ACCS schools are wary of hiring someone with training that is riddled with secular philosophy. As the data from the NTPS Report shows, this has a kind of immediate effect on technical teacher skills.

Latin teachers, due to the nature of their work, might be expected to have less training before entering the classroom. It's one thing to teach someone how to construct a math lesson plan or how to create an Art course syllabus. But it is something else to show someone how to plan a Latin class in a classical setting. This is evident in the contrast between private and public schools.

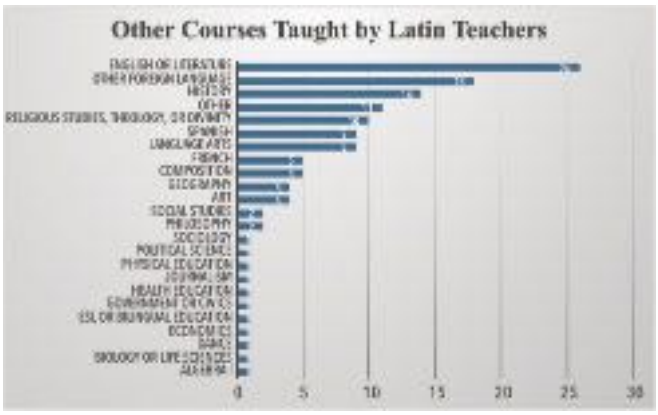
At the private school level, only 55% of teachers had received some kind of prior training in teaching methods. 88% of teachers at public schools received such training and the numbers for charter schools matched the private sector. Classroom management courses see a broad decline for Latin teachers, with 39% of private school Latin teachers receiving training, compared to 44% of public school teachers and 36% of charter school teachers. There is a slight increase for Latin teachers trained on how to plan a lesson, with 46% of private school teachers receiving training on lesson planning for the classroom, compared to 53% of public school teachers and 36% of charter school teachers. Interestingly, the numbers shift when it comes to training regarding assessment. 44% of Latin teachers in the private sector received some kind of training on how to assess their students, while only 41% of public school Latin teachers did. 45% of charter school Latin teachers had training on how to assess, the highest individual category for that specific group.

Private schools seem to be comfortable with teachers learning specific skills on the job, requiring fewer trainings prior to hiring. But it seems significant that of the three measured categories, assessment training is something that private schools value in their Latin teachers. ACCS schools should be sure to consider this specific category and look for ways to give Latin teachers the kind of unique training they need to be successful in the classroom.

The Teaching Load of a Latin Teacher

Since so many Latin teachers have training in other fields, it would seem expectant for Latin teachers to also teach other subjects outside of Latin. For a small school, this is perhaps borne out of necessity, but even a larger school might need to have a Latin teacher who can also teach a section of Algebra I or a Composition class. Looking at the numbers, this seems generally true, though most Latin teachers seem to spend a comfortable number of hours each week focusing solely on the language part of their job.

Looking at the schools surveyed, Latin teachers are called upon first and foremost to teach Latin, with 80% listing the language as their primary instructional area. The remaining 20% of Latin teachers primarily teach other courses, including English or another foreign language.



The bulk of Latin teachers are fortunately allowed to concentrate on language teaching. But there is also a strong sense that Latin teachers, given their diverse educational backgrounds, are asked to also teach numerous subjects outside of the field. Some interesting questions arise here, concerning pragmatism over idealism. Are Latin teachers called upon to teach multiple subjects, both in and out of field, because they have a higher capacity for these kinds of changes during the school day? Or is this purely borne out of the dearth of formally trained Latin instructors and the higher need at the private school level? ACCS schools would be wise to pay close attention to the course load given to a Latin instructor, who stands a high likelihood of not having Latin training or formal teacher training.

Conclusion

Working with the data from the NTPS is sufficient for now, but what ACCS schools really need is specific data from within the organization. How many ACCS schools offer Latin to how many grades? How many teachers teach Latin in addition to something else, treating Latin as a kind of add-on? Comparatively, how many schools have teachers who *only* teach Latin, regardless of their training? These kinds of questions are just scratching the surface. And they don't fully demonstrate how this kind of data sharing can grow the school. As more schools start up, there will be a greater need for Latin teachers. Schools that have already successfully navigated the process of finding, hiring, and training these teachers are able to share failures and victories with the newer school administrators and boards. Gathering the necessary data is only the first step.

Part of the purpose behind such a project is to avoid institutional memory loss, something that takes us back to the *Aeneid*. Virgil uses the word *immemores*, translated as "reft of memory," to describe the shades Aeneas sees in the realm of Dis.[5] We might be tempted to apply the term to ACCS Latin students as easily as it applies to the shades of Virgil's underworld, but the larger concern is that schools will forget the lessons learned over the years of finding good Latin teachers. The good news, however, is the data suggests that there are in fact teachers out there who not only have studied Latin but even *want* to teach it to the next generation of students. These are the kinds of Latin teachers that every school should desire.

Sean Hadley is a teacher, researcher, and writer who has taught classical education for 12 years. He has an MDiv from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a PhD from Faulkner University's Great Books program. He has taught at Trinitas Christian School in Pensacola, Florida, and is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Arkansas' Classical Education Research Lab.

5. Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6.750.

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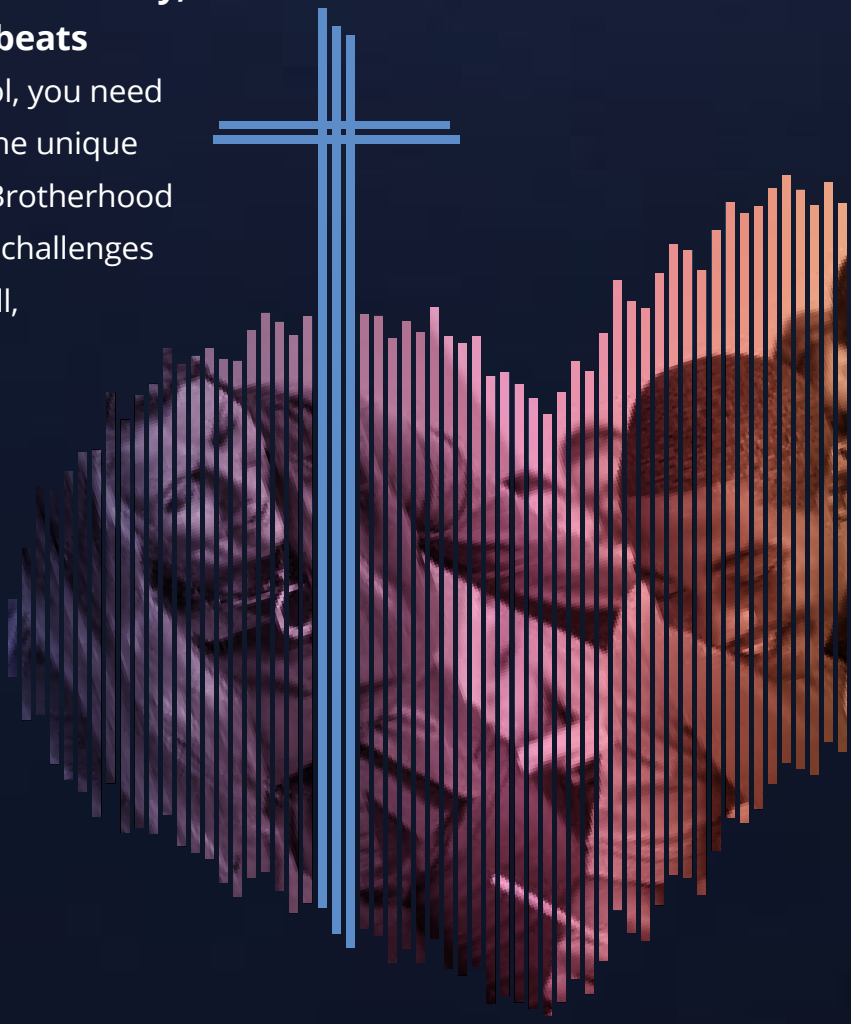

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Climbing Parnassus: A Book Review

David Seibel, *Corem Deo Academy*

In *Climbing Parnassus: A New Apologia for Greek and Latin*, Tracy Lee Simmons provides a passionate albeit idealized defense of a version of classical education with Latin and Greek as the foundation. His argument is simple and will be rejected by most yet should be seriously considered by some. If your school is not offering Greek and Latin, it is not classical education in Simmons' view. For Simmons, classical education is immersion in the Greek and Roman worlds, not reading *The Chronicles of Narnia,* Shakespeare, or *Paradise Lost*. In *Climbing Parnassus*, a classical school without Greek and Latin could be compared to a 'BLT' without the bacon, lettuce, and tomato, but man cannot live by bread alone! Simmons writes, "I argue for the full package, the deluxe deal — declensions, conjugations, syntax, lexicons, verse exercises, and all." Simmons argues that Latin and Greek have been the cornerstone of classical education's curriculum for centuries. For Simmons, Latin and Greek are both formative and culturally immersive for studying the best of Greek and Roman civilization. This review will consider his argument for classical education, affirm his passion, critique his idealism, and offer a few practical applications of his argument in the school curriculum.

First, readers must consider the distinct nature of his argument for classical education. Before he defends his vision for classical education, he defines it by asserting that classical education is immersion in Greece and Rome, and Greek and Latin are the formative means to truly access the humanizing culture and literature. According to Simmons, Latin and Greek are in the bloodstream of all of Western Civilization and are inseparable from classical education. Moreover, classical education was the cornerstone of America's educational foundation in the 17th century. The first school in America is generally considered to be the Boston Latin School, founded in 1635, where boys in the Massachusetts Bay Colony learned to become comfortable translating Virgil in Latin and Homer in Greek. These sorts of schools formed the founders. For example, James Madison, the fourth president of the United States and the Father of the Constitution, was formed by Latin and Greek in a curriculum similar to the Boston Latin School. James Madison co-wrote "The Federalist Papers" and also kept a commonplace journal in Latin.

Climbing Parnassus is not your pragmatic ahistorical 'Why Latin?' school pamphlet that says Latin is the language of law and medicine and that 60% of English words have Latin origins. Such pamphlets demonstrate Latin's benefits in areas like vocabulary acquisition, critical thinking, and communication skills. Instead, Simmons is a passionate humanist who extols the excellence of the language and its ability to maximize the potential of humanity. About the book's title, to climb Parnassus is to ascend the ancient peak near Delphi where the Muses dwell symbolizing the source of inspiration and eloquence. Simmons tells inspiring stories of Theodore Roosevelt who kept up his Greek and Latin while maintaining his hobby of big game hunting in the Western United States. He tells of the entrance requirements to the University of Virginia in 1819 written by Thomas Jefferson, "It should be scrupulously insisted on that no youth can be admitted to the university unless he can read with facility Virgil, Horace, Xenophon, and Homer: unless he is able to convert a page of English at sight into Latin: unless he can demonstrate any proposition at sight in the first six books of Euclid, and show an acquaintance with cubic and quadratic

equations." Simmons also tells of the founding of Harvard in 1635 where John Harvard, an exile from Emmanuel College Cambridge, donated his whole library which included Homer and Plutarch. Classical education, with Latin and Greek as the cornerstone, was a crucial part of the formation of Puritan ministers at colonial Harvard. Yale (1701), William and Mary (1693), and almost all of the colonial colleges and universities required Greek and Latin for entrance. Historically, the foundation for American education is classical, which is to say that Latin and Greek were the passwords to enter Ancient Greece and Rome. The educated, a very small percentage of the population, were being prepared for clergy and civic leadership and were steeped in Latin and Greek classics. The humanistic ideal was that exposing students to the best would help them to climb Parnassus.

Brian Williams, the Chief Editor of the *Principia Journal of Classical Education*, shows that Simmons' vision of classical education is not the only model in use. Williams writes on page 12 of the first edition of *Principia*, "It may be helpful to distinguish between 1) the long tradition of liberal arts education, 2) the field of Classics, and 3) the contemporary practice of classical education, which are sometimes confused." While Williams is comfortable distinguishing the categories of classical education, Simmons would likely have a greater hesitancy in that he hardly acknowledges contemporary classical education in his apologia. He seems to dwell securely in the middle of category two, the field of classics. Simmons maintains that some branches of the liberal arts educational movement that promote the Great Books may have nothing to do with the classical world (Greece and Rome) and many may be employing an 'unnecessarily promiscuous usage' of the term classical education. According to Brian Williams of *Principia*, the contemporary practice of classical education draws on the longer tradition of classical liberal arts education without attempting to replicate any one era in that tradition. Classical schools pull from the field of Classics, 'teaching classical literature and languages, but integrating these with texts, languages, the fine arts, new mathematics, and scientific discoveries that have emerged since the classical (Hellenistic) era.' For schools that call themselves classical Christian, this is an important distinction if we are to be historically accurate. Some label any non-public school as classical but this should not be named amongst us. Although names like Tolkien and Lewis and Sayers are important to the contemporary classical movement, they are a far cry from the vision that Simmons has in mind when he defends classical education. Those of us involved in the modern renewal of classical education are largely not trying to reenact the Boston Latin School or the education of James Madison or Theodore Roosevelt. Although most people will not bite on Simmons' argument hook, line, and sinker, much is to be gained from the passionate argument that Simmons is making.

Second, Simmons makes an impassioned plea for the language and literature of Greece and Rome that align with the humanizing motives of our renewal. English headmaster Thomas Arnold warned against cutting Latin and Greek from the curriculum saying we'd cut ourselves off from our inheritance as a civilization. Since industrialization and mass immigration along with the world wars, the consensus surrounding Latin and Greek has broken down and our cultural memory has suffered as a result. For centuries, the church has christened the classical tradition but this civilizational vision has mostly disappeared, and we are the ones that suffer for it. Since President Elliot introduced electives at Harvard, our educational vision has been both myopic and pragmatic; as a result, we have relied upon the English translations of the classics. Although we have many reliable translations of the Great Books that were originally written in Latin and Greek, a first-hand acquaintance with the classical languages is formative and culturally thickening for our students. While it may not be popular with all of our parents and may be challenging to recruit teachers with Simmons' vision, we would be enriched to have as robust and impassioned a

vision of Latin and Greek as Simmons. For many schools, Latin and maybe Greek are optional, not essential.

Third, Simmons' apologia is idealistic and unlikely to be implemented, even in some collegiate Classics departments. The book is more of a manifesto than a manual so it does not function as a curricular or pedagogical field guide for administrators or teachers. Simmons is cheerfully unconcerned with his argument's popularity or the likelihood of implementation of his arguments for Latin and Greek. His idealism is both a strength and weakness of the apologia. At times, he waxes poetic where he should offer a more reasoned defense. For example, Simmons asks at the beginning of his defense, "Why in the age of the internet and the global economy dwell upon the words and deeds of people long dead who spoke and wrote in tongues equally dead?" Although his book is the answer to this question, he does not directly answer in such a way that has broad appeal or clear implementation. He gives his opponents short shrift. He is comfortable saying that Latin and Greek are not for everybody and that democratic appeals have no place in defending classical education. He sets himself apart from Mortimer Adler in this way. Simmons does not meaningfully interact with those who are less passionate about Latin and Greek's role in classical education. He readily dismisses such arguments and is happy to fly the tattered flag of a lost cause. Simmons asserts that the American soil is not naturally fertile for the classics, because we are predisposed to the active life rather than the contemplative life.

Lastly, a few practical applications of Simmons' argument are in order. First, we must remember the preservative function of a library in communities of faith with the library functioning like an armory. At one classical Christian school, they have positioned the library at the rear of the Chapel as a reminder that our faith in Christ need not be separated from our pursuit of classical learning. We'd be wise to remember that the Protestant Reformation started in an academic setting and Luther was well-schooled in reading classical sources in Latin and Greek. Second, we should be suspicious of our own educational experiences if we went through the American educational system. Simmons' argument sounds foreign to most of us because our minds were stocked with cheap Ikea furniture in comparison to Simmons' well-furnished mind. We live in the wake of Andrew Carnegie who thought that learning Latin and Greek stamped the fire and energy out of young men intended for business. Our broader culture would rather build a skyscraper than climb Mount Parnassus. Our culture cares too little about formation, and we must be willing to be different. Lastly, Latin and Greek can be a means to an eternal end. Erasmus distinguished between two types of knowledge: words and truths. Our students' knowledge of the words in Latin and Greek is the avenue to which they can grasp hold of the truths of the Gospel. Latin and Greek can be redeployed to grab hold of an even more important civilizational inheritance than Greece or Rome. After all, the crossroads of Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome was the historical moment in which the incarnation of Jesus Christ took place. May our students take up and read … in Greek and Latin if possible.

David Seibel is Head of School at Coram Deo Academy in Carmel, Indiana. David aims to cultivate a generation of scholar-disciples who are passionate about learning. Husband to Brooke and father of two current and an additional two future Coram Deo Academy students, David holds a Doctor of Education from Southern Theological Seminary, an M.Div. from Southern Theological Seminary, an M.Ed. from Marian University, and a B.A. in Economics and Spanish from Wabash College.

COMMONPLACE

The following pieces are semi-formal essays intended to serve as the student's reflection upon a work of art she encountered during her senior trip to Italy. The paper explores the work of art in terms of its artistic attributes and its connections to classical history and literature. The essays served as the basis for art history presentations, which the senior class gave to the school community as a part of the annual Grace Academy Art Gallery.

The Flaminio Obelisk

Noelle Mooney, *Grace Academy*

Long ago, during the height of the New Kingdom in Egypt, two Egyptian pharaohs crafted a sacred monument, now known as the Flaminio Obelisk. Seti I commissioned this structure in 1300 B.C. to serve both as a monument to his victories and as an offering to the sun god Ra in the mighty city of Heliopolis.[1] However, it was his son Rameses II who completed the marvelous structure after his ascension to the throne, inscribing his own victories and his relationship to the divine on the obelisk in addition to those of his father. Although these mighty pharaohs of Egypt created the Flaminio Obelisk as an offering to the gods of Egypt, this beautiful monument now stands today in the heart of Rome as a symbol of power, a grand feat of engineering, and a work of art.

Obelisks were first created during the Old Kingdom to serve as monuments guarding ancient temples to the sun god. With their pyramidal tops, these obelisks represented the first rays of the sun that touched the earth when it was created.[2] The Egyptians erected these obelisks in pairs to represent the important Egyptian tenets of balance and harmony. They positioned these monuments carefully so the first and last light of the day would touch their peaks. This special position paid tribute to Ra and his trip across the sky every day.[3] The Egyptians quarried these obelisks from a single slab of granite using simple copper tools and volcanic rocks. The process of carving the stone and then raising the monument usually took seven months to complete. Often, the Egyptians designed special barges to carry these massive monuments to their final resting place.[4]

Although the Flaminio Obelisk was meant to rest at the entrance of the Temple of Heliopolis, it now resides in the Piazza del Popolo in Rome. The historian Pliny the Elder gives a detailed account of its journey from Egypt to Rome in his book, *Historia Naturalis.* In this work Pliny discusses the obelisks of ancient Egypt and their integration into Roman architecture and society. He describes these monuments as "blocks of stone, known as 'obelisks,' and consecrated to the divinity of the Sun…in resemblance to the rays of that luminary."[5] Afterwards, Pliny gives a brief history of obelisks stating that "Mesphres, who reigned in the City of the Sun, was the first who erected one of these obelisks, being warned to do so in a dream."[6] Following the example and designs of Mesphres, other pharaohs through the centuries used these obelisks to represent their piety and power.

These majestic monuments even drew the eyes of great rulers around the world such as Caesar Augustus. After his defeat of the Egyptian forces at the Battle at Actium, Augustus ordered the transportation of multiple obelisks to Rome as monuments to his victory

1. Nielson, Nicky. "Rome's Flaminian Obelisk: An Epic Journey From Divine Egyptian Symbol to Tourist Attraction." Ancient Origins. May 8, 2018. https://www.ancient-origins.net/artifacts-other-artifacts/rome-s-flaminian-obelisk-epic-journey-divine-egyptian-symbol-tourist-021895.

2. Cassibry, Kimberly . "Obelisks and Ancient Rome." Khan Academy. Accessed April 13, 2024. https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ancient-art-civilizations/roman/early-empire/a/obelisks-and-ancient-rome.

3. Mark, Joshua. "Egyptian Obelisk." World History Encyclopedia. November 6, 2016. Https://www.worldhistory.org/Egyptian_Obelisk/.

4. Ibid Cassibry

5. Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis,* translation by Bostock and Riley, 36.14.1

6. Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis,* translation by Bostock and Riley, 36.14. 2-4

and power. Augustus took two of these obelisks from a temple in Alexandria that Cleopatra had dedicated to her lover, Julius Caesar.[7] One such prize was the Flaminio Obelisk. In his writings, Pliny describes this undertaking as follows: "the most difficult enterprise of all, was the carriage of these obelisks by sea to Rome, in vessels which excited the greatest admiration."[8] A boat specially designed for this monumental journey carried this two-hundred-ton obelisk from the sandy lands of Egypt to the sprawling imperial city of Rome. Pliny explains that Augustus was in awe of the great vessel and declared it a marvel of engineering.

Once the obelisk arrived in Rome, Augustus set it upon a granite base which still bears his inscription today.

IMP CAESAR DIVI
AVGVSTVS
PONTIFEX MAXIMVS
IMP XII COS XI TRIB POT XIV
AEGVPTO IN POTESTATEM
POPVLI ROMANI REDACT[A]
SOLI DONVM DEDIT

The Emperor Augustus, son of the Divine Caesar, Pontifex Maximus, acclaimed emperor for the twelfth time, and Consul for the eleventh, vested with the power of the Tribune for the fourteenth, upon the subjection of Egypt to the power of the Roman people, gave this as a gift to the sun.[9]

This inscription declares the power and divine connection of Augustus who subjugated the Egyptian people. Furthermore, Augustus himself now gives this to the sun god in Rome.[10] Through the words of Augustus and Pliny the Elder one sees that this monument was not just a block of granite. It stood as a symbol of Egyptian power, a reminder of the pharaohs of old who crushed their enemies. Then, with the coming of Augustus, it stood as a testimony of Roman might over the powers of Egypt.

To fully appreciate this marvelous monument, one must view the Flaminio Obelisk through the eyes of an artist. The Egyptians created this breath-taking structure from a single piece of red granite, weighing over two hundred tons. The finished work stands like a thin, solid tower with a pyramidal top. This monument would dazzle any onlooker as it stretches over twenty-three meters tall, seeming to pierce the sky itself. The Egyptians selected the red granite of Aswan for its rosy hue and vivid color.[11] The Egyptians also painted the deeply carved hieroglyphics with vibrant colors to add dimension to the stone. The red stone offset by the colorful hieroglyphics certainly drew the gaze of all onlookers. Each face of the obelisk bears three columns of hieroglyphics which sometimes repeat the same symbols. These hieroglyphics mention the coronations of both Seti I and Rameses II, their birth names, along with Seti's great boast that he will fill Heliopolis with obelisks.[12] The hieroglyphics also added depth and texture to this monument. In fact, the hieroglyphics of the Obelisk Flaminio are some of the clearest and best carved in existence. They serve to tell a story but also as a way to beautify the stone monument.

In addition to the stone and hieroglyphics, the unique shape of the monument seeks to elevate its beauty and magnificence. Although the top of the obelisk is pyramidal with four sides, its broad base and narrowing body resemble a cone. This conical shape draws the attention of any onlookers first to its broad, simple base. Then, the harsh lines of the obelisks' sides

7. Parker, John Henry, *The Twelve Egyptian Obelisks in Rome: Their History Explained by Translations of the Inscriptions Upon Them*. London: Oxford, 1879.

8. Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis,* translation by Bostock and Riley, 36.14.16

9. Parker, John Henry, *The Twelve Egyptian Obelisks in Rome: Their History Explained by Translations of the Inscriptions Upon Them*. London: Oxford, 1879.

10. Augustus favored Apollo as his patron deity, building a temple to him on the Palatine hill next to his own house. Suetonius writes that some believed Apollo was Augustus' father (Suetonius, *Div Aug* 94).

11. Ibid Cassibry

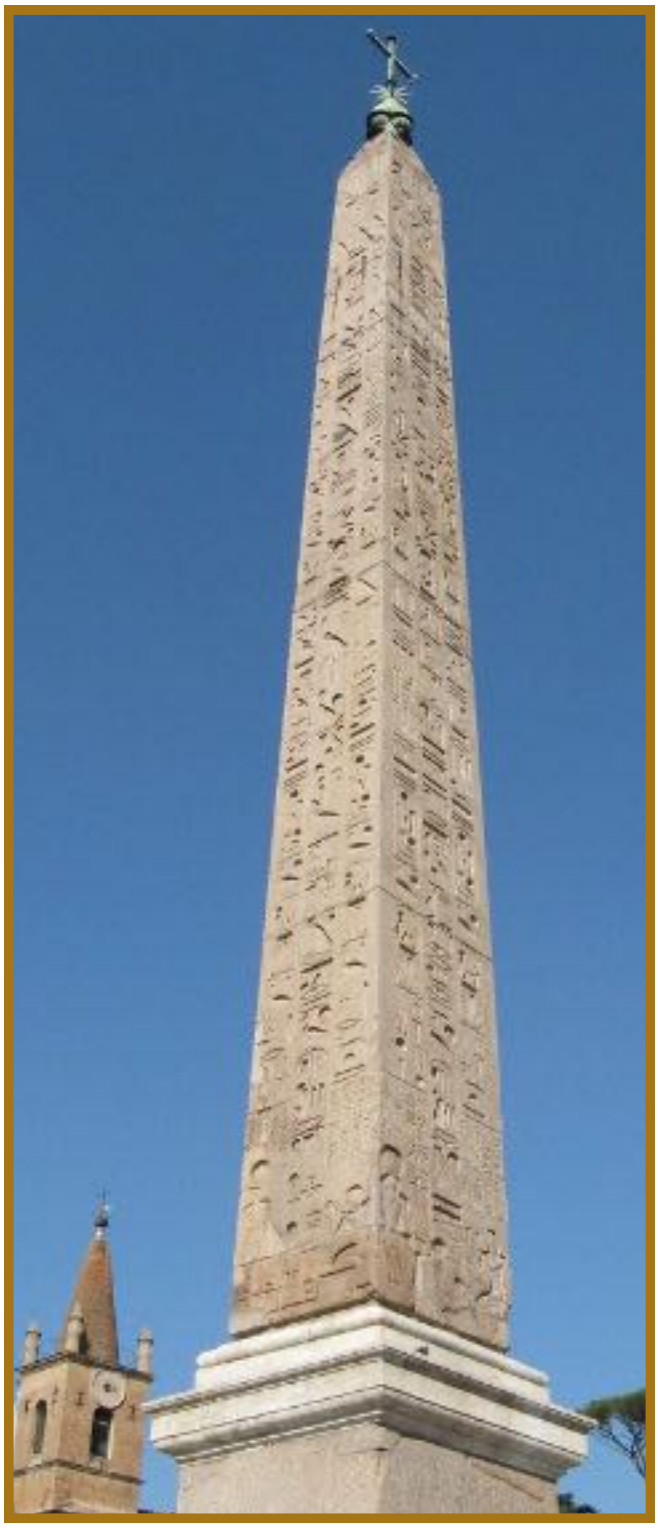
12. Zietsman, J.C. "Crossing the Roman Frontier: Egypt in Rome (and Beyond)." *Acta Classica vol. 52*, (2009): 6-7. Accessed April 15, 2024. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24592482.

The hieroglyphics also discuss Ramses II and how he supposedly filled Egypt with obelisks as innumerable as the stars. However, Egyptologists show that Ramses II's inscriptions were badly executed and rough compared to Seti I's carefully carved hieroglyphics.

draw the observer's gaze up, following these lines to the pyramidal top of the obelisk. This pyramidal top serves as a stunning cap to a beautiful monument, reflecting the astounding shape of the great pyramids.

Because the Egyptians were fascinated with balance and harmony, they often incorporated these themes into their art and architecture. For example, the Flaminio Obelisk is an extremely balanced object due to its four symmetrical sides that tilt slightly upwards and meet in a pyramidal top. Its conical shape and symmetrical faces provide the monument with a sense of unity, a cohesiveness that purposely unites the structure. Yet, the differing hieroglyphics provide the monument with a subtle sense of variety. The obelisk's sense of unity attracts the naked eye, but the subtle sense of variety captures and keeps the observer's attention. Furthermore, despite its height and massive weight, the Flaminio Obelisk is extremely well-proportioned and pleasing to the eye. The immense height of the obelisk gives it a feeling of power and awe as it towers above the onlookers. However, its smooth faces and carefully sculpted hieroglyphics give it an air of elegance.

Undoubtedly, the Flaminio Obelisk manages both to stand as a monument of power and a beautiful piece of art. This magnificent structure was born from a single slab of red granite. With sweat, toil, and lofty vision, a lump of red rock became a towering monument that has stood as a symbol of power over two different empires. However, the Flaminio Obelisk not only stands as a powerful presence, but also as a monument to art. The beautifully carved hieroglyphics give it texture and depth while telling a story. The harsh lines and symmetry draw the observer's eye. The harmony between unity and variety leaves a long-lasting impression on the mind of the viewer. All these attributes make the Flaminio Obelisk not just a monument, not just a symbol, but a great work of art. A work of art that has fascinated people throughout the centuries with its beautiful magnificence.



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Botticelli's *La Primavera*

Lilly Ford, *Grace Academy*

Poetry is often an underlying component that inspires some of the greatest works of art. Detailed allegories and descriptive words can often be transferred from paper to canvas by means of a clever eye and steady brush. An excellent example of this is the correlation of the works of two glorified ancient thinkers: the Roman poet Lucretius and the Florentine artist Sandro Botticelli. It was Lucretius, who threaded imaginative thought and philosophy in his famed poem *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of Things). Inspired by this poem, Botticelli employed Lucretius' flowery language as a means to create a work that would both fit his day and age as well as reach the populace in subsequent generations. Botticelli's *Primavera* is the embodiment of the "golden age" of art, which peaked during the Renaissance. This work combined Greek thought and art with elements of the Renaissance era to create a magnificent collection of culture and meaning.

The *Primavera* was created around AD 1482 by Sandro Botticelli through the use of tempera on a wooden panel.[1] Tempera paint was popular due to its quick drying and translucent elements, which allowed for the buildup of color. The paint commonly changes overtime, which is why the painting appears to be so dark. Critics assert that the work was most likely significantly lighter when it was originally painted. Due to the many hidden details and meanings within the work, it is crucial that the piece is placed in such a way as to be openly interpreted by all viewers. To illustrate, viewers only have one side to look at, so they only have the material that is in front of them to interpret. Because Botticelli did not specify the paintings' inherent meaning, it is often up to the imagination of the viewer to discover their own version. The painting was originally located in Florence at the Medici house on the via Larga called Palazzo Medici Riccardi, but it is now housed at the Uffizi Museum in Florence, Italy.[2] Researchers contend that the composition was originally dedicated to the idea of springtime marriage. Thus, it is likely Boticelli painted *Primavera* for the marriage of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, who was the cousin of Lorenzo Medici.[3] The work encapsulated the primary ideals of the Médicis such as the Neoplatonic philosophy that fused spirit and matter to achieve human perfection and happiness.

While the surface of this painting possesses the details of its history, there are deeper connotations that lie in the intention of the painter. Heavily inspired by the poet Lucretius, Botticelli captured the imagery in Lucretius' works within his paintings. Lucretius writes in his poem *The Nature of Things*, "Dear Venus…Through thee are risen

1. Uffizi Gallery, "La Primavera by Bottichelli." *Uffizi Gallery Museum* (Florence, Italy: April 3, 2024). Accessed 16 April 2024: https://www.visituffizi.org/artworks/la-primavera-allegory-of-spring-by-sandro-botticelli/

2. Florence Inferno. "Botticelli's Primavera." (Sep. 17, 2018). Accessed 10 April 2024: https://www.florenceinferno.com/botticellis-primavera/

3. Zirpolo, Lilian, "Botticelli's Primavera: A Lesson For the Bride." *Woman's Art Inc* (1991-1992). Accessed 13 April 2024: https://www.academia.edu/41759918/Botticellis_Primavera_A_Lesson_for_the_Bride

to visit the great sun. Before thee, Goddess, and thy coming on, Flee stormy wind and massy cloud away, For thee the daedal Earth bears scented flowers, Smile, and the hollows of the serene sky glow with diffused radiance for thee!"[4] To open his poem, Lucretius describes the changing of nature and the coming of the spring season brought by the goddess Venus. Botticelli utilizes Lucretius' imagery to create his *Primavera*, as he paints the scene with flowers and foliage to represent the coming of spring. He pulls from the poem and centralizes Venus as the focal figure that represents the coming of spring and beauty. He uses light colors and subordinating shapes to exemplify her radiance as expressed in Lucretius' writings.

While Botticelli encapsulates many other stories in his artwork, he was greatly influenced by Lucretius' poems to include Greek mythology in his works to help create an idea or meaning. The composition depicts nine subjects. On the right is Zephyr (the spring wind), lurking around a nymph whom he deflowers. The nymph transforms into the goddess Flora who is an extravagant figure covered in decorative flowers and plants, symbolizing springtime and fertility. Venus is placed in the center, flanked by Cupid and the Three Graces (Chastity, Beauty, and Love). It is likely that the addition of the Graces may serve as models which the bride should emulate. Moreover, the position of Cupid pointing his bow and arrow towards one of the Graces indicates she is transitioning from maidenhood to marriage.[5] Further observation leads to the appearance of Mercury on the viewer's left as a messenger holding his staff, representing the passage of time. The collective meaning of the figures is the celebration of the spring season and the birth of nature, while the flowers and foliage represent fertility and beauty, which was an idea pulled from the manuscripts of Lucretius. The garden is likely an allegory that represents the union of nature and culture.[6] To be even more specific, it may represent Botticelli's union of Greek mythology and Renaissance ideals.

A popular ideology of the Renaissance era was Humanism, which was centered on interest in nature and the classical world and focused on what it truly meant to be human. Thus, Botticelli's work holds a very humanistic meaning, as Venus acts as the *Humanatus* (goodwill) separating material and spiritual values.[7] Botticelli hoped to use Greek mythological art to convey the idea of uniting body and spirit, creating the themes of love, youth, beauty, and spring. Botticelli's use of these elements is likely to appeal to the ideology of the Medici influence and the values of the populus.[8] Botticelli hides clues within the work that tie it to the Medici family. For instance, the orange trees in the background allude to the Medici coat of arms, which is recognized by its golden orbs. Additionally, the flowers sprinkled in the background have been identified as native to Florence and appear between the months of March and April, associating specifically with love and marriage.[9] He strategically includes this in his painting in order to celebrate the marriage of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco.

4. Lucretius,"On The Nature of Things." DeWitt C. Lent & Company, New York, 1872, 37.

5. Zirpolo, Lilian, "Botticelli's Primavera: A Lesson For the Bride." *Woman's Art Inc* (1991-1992). Accessed 13 April 2024: https://www.academia.edu/41759918/Botticellis_Primavera_A_Lesson_for_the_Bride

6. Isabella Martinez, "Decoding the Allegories in 'Primavera' by Sandro Botticelli." *1st Art Gallery* (Sep. 4, 2023). Accessed 14 April 2024: https://www.1st-art-gallery.com/article/botticelli-primavera-allegory-analysis/

7. Uffizi Gallery, "La Primavera by Bottichelli." *Uffizi Gallery Museum* (Florence, Italy: April 3, 2024). Accessed 16 April 2024: https://www.visituffizi.org/artworks/la-primavera-allegory-of-spring-by-sandro-botticelli/

8. Isabella Martinez, "Decoding the Allegories in 'Primavera' by Sandro Botticelli." *1st Art Gallery* (Sep. 4, 2023). Accessed 14 April 2024: https://www.1st-art-gallery.com/article/botticelli-primavera-allegory-analysis/

9. M. Stokstad, M. W. Cothren, *Art History,* Pearson, 2018 & F.S. Kleiner, *Art Throughout The Ages,* Harcourt, 2014

Botticelli also employs the elements and principles of design to reinforce his intention for the work. Botticelli's use of colors and shapes give the characters movement and expression, enhancing his central idea for the work. First, Botticelli uses soft, curved lines to provide tone, while using contour lines to contrast the dark and light elements of his painting. Additionally, he paints the trees in a curved circular shape around Venus to bring the viewer's eye to the center of the painting. The Three Graces form a distorted triangle to enhance the idea they are dancing together, supporting the theme of unity in diversity. Furthermore, Botticelli uses light and value to create emphasis and subordination. He uses light, warm colored figures to juxtapose the cool darkness of the background, so that the characters appear as if they were coming off of the canvas.[10] Botticelli paints Zephyr darker than the other figures to emphasize his stereotype of one lurking in the shadows. Additionally, Venus appears as a bright figure and scaled above the others to purpose her as the focal point. The additional figures draw a subordinating aspect because they stand out just as emphatically as Venus, but in unique and individual ways. Furthermore, Botticelli uses texture and color to symbolize spring variety among the figures. The trees and grass are saturated with deep blues, blacks, and greens. Botticelli adds orange trees to add subtle pops of color to the background. Additionally, he also sprinkles yellow, pink, white, and red flowers in the grass below the figures to bring life to the environment and highlight the spring season. The flowers, leaves, and grass create a false sense of texture to classify this work as a subject of realism.

Through the use of historical influence, modern ideals, and fine art principles, Botticelli creates a timeless masterpiece that can be enjoyed and valued across subsequent generations. He molds ancient Greek mythology into an expression of his Renaissance ideals in order to reach multiple cultural values. Furthermore, he employs artistic elements that tie his ideas together and mesh them into a beautiful depiction of the coming of the spring season. Infused with imagery from the writings of the famed Roman poet Lucretius, the *Primavera* is cemented as a representation of the rebirth of the Florentine Republic.

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10. Jonathan Jones,"Spring Begins With Botticelli." (Mar. 19, 2012). Accessed 15 April 2024: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/mar/19/spring-begins-with-botticelli

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OLD VOICES

The Laocoon Group:

A History of the Artwork

Karen T. Moore, *Grace Academy*

This edition of Old Voices speaks to the history and interpretation of the Laocoon Group, presented in the article "A Case Study for the Laocoon: The Integration of the Arts and Humanities" by Karen T. Moore.

I. The Laocoon Group, the History of the Artwork

Thereafter there are not many sculptors of high reputation in the case of excellent works, because the number of artists engaged is an obstacle for the fame of each individual, since neither does one take all the glory nor are the many named able to share that glory equally.[1] Such is the case of the Laocoon, which is in the home of the emperor Titus, a work that must stand out above all other works, both paintings and sculptures. The supreme artisans Agesander and Polydorus and Athenodorus of Rhodes, according to the decision of the council, made him and his sons and the marvelous coils of the sea serpents out of one stone.

(Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 36.37)[2]

II. Laocoon Attacks the Trojan Horse

Then from the citadel, conspicuous,
Laocoon, with all his following choir,
hurried indignant down; and from afar
thus hailed the people: "O unhappy men!
What madness this? Who deems our foemen fled?
Think ye the gifts of Greece lack for guile?[3]
Have ye not known Ulysses?[4] The Achaean
hides, caged in yonder beams; or this is reared
for engin'ry on our proud battlements,
to spy upon our roof-tops, or descend
in ruin on the city. 'Tis a snare.
Trust not this horse, O Troy, whate'er it bode!
I fear the Greeks, though gift on gift they bear."
So saying, he whirled with ponderous javelin
a sturdy stroke straight at the rounded side
of the great, jointed beast. A tremor struck
its towering form, and through the cavernous womb
rolled loud, reverberate rumbling, deep and long.[5]
If heaven's decree, if our own wills, that hour,
had not been fixed on woe, his spear had brought
a bloody slaughter on our ambushed foe,

1. This section opens with a reference to that which precedes it. There Pliny discusses a number of excellent works and the sculptor who crafted each one. Among these is the Venus of Cnidus (Aphrodite of Knidos) by Praxiteles. Pliny now turns to a discourse on works produced by multiple artisans working together such as the Laocoon.

2. Translation by J. Bostock et al., modified by K.T. Moore.

3. The Latin here reads *dolis Danaum* (the deceptions of the descendants of Danaus, i.e. Danaans). There are many terms used for the Greek people groups represented in the Trojan War. Here Vergil puts the name of Danaus in Laocoon's lips. King Danaus ordered his fifty daughters, the Danaids, to murder their husbands on their wedding night. Thus, he is the author of wicked deception and impiety.

4. Ulysses – Vergil plays on the known epithet for crafty Ulysses/Odysseus, a master of deception.

5. Vergil here suggests that the impact of Laocoon's spear brought forth noise from the soldiers inside. Noise that Aeneas now recalls, but laments their blindness to its meaning.

and Troy were standing on the earth this day![6]
O Priam's towers, ye were unfallen still![7]

(*Aeneid* 2.40-56)[8]

III. Laocoon's Death according to Vergil

But now a vaster spectacle of fear
burst over us, to vex our startled souls.
Laocoon, that day by cast of lot
priest unto Neptune, was in act to slay
a huge bull at the god's appointed fane.[9]
Lo! o'er the tranquil deep from Tenedos
appeared a pair (I shudder as I tell)
of vastly coiling serpents, side by side,
stretching along the waves, and to the shore
taking swift course;[10] their necks were lifted high,
their gory dragon-crests o'ertopped the waves;
all else, half seen, trailed low along the sea;
while with loud cleavage of the foaming brine
their monstrous backs wound forward fold on fold.[11]
Soon they made land; the furious bright eyes
glowed with ensanguined fire;[12] their quivering tongues
lapped hungrily the hissing, gruesome jaws.
All terror-pale we fled. Unswerving then
the monsters to Laocoon made way.
First round the tender limbs of his two sons
each dragon coiled, and on the shrinking flesh
fixed fast and fed. Then seized they on the sire,
who flew to aid, a javelin in his hand,[13]
embracing close in bondage serpentine
tw'ice round the waist; and twice in scaly grasp
around his neck, and o'er him grimly peered
with lifted head and crest; he, all the while,
his holy fillet fouled with venomous blood,
tore at his fetters with a desperate hand,
and lifted up such agonizing voice,
as when a bull, death-wounded, seeks to flee
the sacrificial altar, and thrusts back
from his doomed head the ill-aimed, glancing blade.[14]
then swiftly writhed the dragon-pair away
unto the templed height, and in the shrine
of cruel Pallas sure asylum found
beneath the goddess' feet and orbed shield.[15]
Such trembling horror as we ne'er had known
seized now on every heart. "Of his vast guilt
Laocoon," they say, "receives reward;
for he with most abominable spear
did strike and violate that blessed wood.[16]
Yon statue to the temple! Ask the grace

6. Aeneas claims that the Trojans had been deceived, blinded by fate. Servius' commentary echoes this theme of deception in writing that Vergil interprets the reception of Laocoon as though the Trojans were deceived as to his impious character and the true reasons for his death. Servius' text is provided in passage v.

7. O Priam's towers, ye were unfallen still! – An apostrophe of a different color – this rhetorical device turns the author's speech suddenly from his audience to address another, usually absent. Here Aeneas ceases to tell a story to Dido, and calls out to his fallen city.

8. Translations for the *Aeneid* are from T.C. Williams.

9. The Trojans, like the Greeks and the Romans, would cast lots to determine the will of the gods, including whom they chose to act as priest. This also happens in the Jewish culture such as the day on which Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, is chosen by lot to enter the Holy of Holies in order to burn incense (Luke 1:9). Euphorion and Servius suggest it was Apollo who guided this decision in order to exact punishment on Laocoon for his impiety. See passages iv and v.

fane = temple or shrine.

10. At the time of this scene the Greek fleet was hiding behind the isle of Tenedos, out of the Trojans' line of sight. The two snakes foreshadow the two sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus. These Greek leaders would soon make their own swift course across the waves from Tenedos by night to attack the city of Troy.

11. "with loud cleavage of the foaming brine" – Vergil's text offers a beautiful mixture of alliteration and onomatopoeia: *sonitus spumante salo*

12. "the furious bright eyes glowed with ensanguined fire" A nice choice of words by Williams as he interprets Vergil's description, *ardentisque oculos suffecti sanguine et igni* (and burning eyes suffused with blood and fire).

13. Note the order of events. Vergil's lines suggest that the two boys are completely overcome, dead before the snakes attack their father.

14. In the opening lines of this passage Laocoon is in the act of sacrificing a bull upon the altar of Neptune. Now in a tragic twist of irony, Vergil's simile portrays the priest as a sacrificial animal whose death is not a quick clean blow, but slow and painful.

15. As further proof of their divine mission, the snakes seek shelter under the shield of Pallas Athena or Minerva (Tritonia as Vergil calls her in this line) within her temple at Troy. In lines 615-616 of this same book, Venus will reveal to her son Aeneas the hand of the gods in the fall of Troy, specifically pointing out Tritonia standing on the highest citadel. The *Athena Parthenos* on display at the Borghese Gallery provides an excellent representation of this line.

of glorious Pallas!" So the people cried in general acclaim.

(*Aeneid* 2.199-233)

IV. The Literary Tastes of Tiberius

Tiberius composed Greek poetry in imitation of Euphorion, Rhianos and Parthenios, delighted by these poets, he dedicated the writings and portraits of all these in the public libraries among the ancient eminent writers;[17] and for this reason, many academics established competitions with one another in these works for him. However, Tiberius especially took note of a knowledge of mythology, all the way to the laughable and ridiculous; for he used to assess the *grammatici* (a class of men in whom, as we have said previously, he was especially interested),[18] by questions of nearly such a kind as: "Who was Hecuba's mother? What was Achilles' name among the maidens? What were the Sirens accustomed to sing?"

(Suetonius, *Tiberius* 70)[19]

V. Laocoon's Death according to Euphorion

As Euphorion says, after the arrival of the Greeks the priest of Neptune was stoned to death, because he did not prevent their arrival through his sacrifices.[20] After the Greeks departed, when the Trojans wished to sacrifice to Neptune, Laocoon, a priest of Thymbraean Apollo, was chosen by lot [to make the sacrifices to Neptune], as was customary when there was not a fixed priest.[21] Laocoon had previously committed a sinful crime, engaging in sexual intercourse with his wife Antiopa before the statue of the god Apollo, and on account of this the snakes, dispatched by the gods, killed him with his sons. History indeed bears this account: but the poet Vergil interprets this event in the manner of an excuse for the Trojans, who not knowing [Laocoon's prior sin] were deceived [as to his punishment].

(Servius, *Commentarius in Vergilii Aeneida* 2.201)

VI. The Perfidy of Laomedon

. . . Apollo left Timolus borne
Through fluid air until he came to earth
In the land that Laomedon was ruler of,
On this side of the narrow Hellespont.
Sigeum on the right, Rhodes on the left:
Between them on a promontory stands
An ancient altar, consecrated to
The Thunderer, Jove of the Oracles;
And there Apollo watched as Laomedon
Began the walls of his new city, Troy,
An undertaking of great magnitude,
Which was not going well, the god perceived,
And which required very great resources;

16. The Trojans now ascribe impiety as the cause of Laocoon's death; the impious act of attacking the horse. Euphorion will offer a different impious act via Servius' commentary in passage v.

17. Euphorion of Chalcis, a highly regarded Greek poet and grammarian (third century B.C.), whose works survive only in part through the record of others such as Servius; Rhianos of Crete, a Greek poet and scholar whose surviving work consists of a few epigrams in the Greek Anthology (third century B.C.); Parthenios of Nicaea, author of elegies and epics whose only surviving work is *Erotica Pathemata* (Ἐρωτικὰ Παθήματα, *Of the Sorrows of Love*), (late first century B.C.).

18. *Grammatici* – This term is often applied to Roman grammarians, philologists and those who instruct their young students in the art of poetic analysis.

19. Translations for Suetonius and Servius are by K.T. Moore.

20. The priest of Neptune (not Laocoon) was unable to appease the god, still bearing a grudge against Troy because her kings had refused to pay him (and Apollo) for the construction of their impregnable walls (See Ovid 11, passage vi).

21. Laocoon was priest of Apollo. Some art historians claim that traces of the laurel wreath may still be seen about the head of the Laocoon statue. Because the Trojans had executed Neptune's priest, they cast lots to find someone of a priestly order to sacrifice to Neptune. The divine decree called Laocoon to Neptune's altar. The implication is that Apollo orchestrated how the lots fell in order to exact his own punishment.

So he and Neptune, father of the seas,
Assumed the shape of mortals and erected
Walls there for the tyrant of Phrygia,
After arranging to be paid in gold.
The work was soon accomplished, but the king
Denied the debt, and in addition, swore
(the finishing touch put on his treachery!)
That he had never promised to compensation.[22]
"You will not get away with this unpunished,"
Neptune said, releasing all his waters
Against the shores of avaricious Troy,
And drenched the land until it seemed a sea,
And overwhelmed the field and ruined the crops.[23]

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 11.194 – 210)[24]

22. Not only did Laomedon refuse payment and deny the debt, but no other king of Troy made atonement for the injury. For this reason, both Neptune and Apollo sided against Troy in the Trojan War.

23. Ovid's text regarding the impiety of Laomedon continues on to cite another punishment, the surrender of King Laomedon's daughter and her subsequent rescue by Hercules.

24. Translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Charles Martin.

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