

# MÉΛI NUCESQUE

A Newsletter for Classics at the University of Dallas

## First Poetry Translation Contest

As announced in our last edition of Meli Nucesque, the Classics alumni and faculty have proposed the Karl Maurer Translation Prize to honor Dr. Maurer's love of poetry and his appreciation for a good translation. Our first contest will commence in Fall 2017 and the poem to be translated for the school year 2017-2018 will be Propertius' *Carmen* 3.21. Submissions from current undergraduate and graduate students will be accepted for consideration beginning October 1, 2017 and until March 1, 2018. The winner for the best translation will be announced in April and he or she will receive a book of poems as well as \$250.

*Karl Maurer in front of the Laudatio Turiae in the Museo Nazionale Romano in Rome*



## Support the Classics Department!

A critical element of the Karl Maurer Translation prize is its funding; this prize is completely funded by donations. Several alumni and faculty have committed to contributing to the fund but it will need sustained giving over the years to keep it alive. Your donations to the **Karl Maurer Translation Fund** would be greatly appreciated. In addition, a **Karl Maurer Scholarship** has been set up by an anonymous donor for graduate students pursuing the Masters in Classics or MA in Classics to which you can contribute. We have several graduate students now who would greatly benefit from the partial aid this scholarship provides. And finally, you can always designate your gift directly to the Classics Department to be used for the department's greatest needs. Gifts to Classics would currently be used to support departmental socials and visiting speakers. Should you wish to donate to any of these entities, please visit [udallas.edu/classics](http://udallas.edu/classics) and select the "GIVE NOW" button.

## Other Departmental News

This semester UD Classics students have participated in several national Latin and Greek sight-translation competitions. Senior Rebecca Deitsch won first place (and the accompanying \$100 prizes) in Eta Sigma Phi's Advanced Latin and Advanced Greek categories, while senior Zachary Foust received an Honorable Mention in Koine Greek. UD students also excelled in the CAMWS Latin Translation Exams. Out of a total of 189 contestants, Deitsch scored in the top 4%, while sophomores Irene Carricker and Thomas Hogan scored in the top 15%. Deitsch will receive a Book Award and Carricker and Hogan will receive Certificates of Commendation.

Congratulations to junior Isabella Villanueva, who was accepted into the Paideia Institute's Living Latin in Rome program – AND awarded a full scholarship covering classes and lodging (totaling \$3850)! Isabella will spend 5 weeks in Rome this summer in this unique program which focuses on spoken Latin. Isabella, who studied abroad in Rome in Spring 2016, is very excited about returning. "Without the encouragement of my family, friends, and professors, and without the propitiousness of the gods, I would not be able to participate in this program," she says. "Thanks to the support and generosity of many kind souls, I'll be able to study more Latin in Rome! I'm so thankful I get to revisit the 'fairest city on earth' (Verg. G. 2.534) to learn again, now with new eyes and a more mature mind."

Last but not least, congratulations to our five graduating seniors! Rebecca Deitsch is pursuing a PhD in Classics at Harvard, Maggie Dostalik is teaching Latin for a year before continuing on to graduate school in Classics, Zachary Foust is teaching Latin at Brilla College Preparatory School in the South Bronx, Elizabeth LaFrance is working as a lab technician at UT Southwestern for a year before continuing on to medical school, and Rachel Marlett is teaching at a Great Hearts school in San Antonio. Our seniors will give their thesis presentations this Friday, May 5, at 2:30 pm in Anselm Hall 222. Please join us in listening to their presentations and admiring the final product of all their hard work! A reception will follow.

**Like us on Facebook for more updates – our page is University of Dallas Classics!**

*Contributing writers: Dr. Teresa Danze & Rebecca Deitsch*

# Alumna Spotlight

Emily Austin received her BA (*summa cum laude*) in Classics (Greek focus) from the University of Dallas in 2006. After leaving UD, she pursued graduate studies at Boston University and received her PhD in Classical Studies in 2016 (Dissertation: “Grief, Longing, and Anger: A Study of Emotions in the *Iliad*”). As of Fall 2016, she is an Assistant Professor of Classics and the College at the University of Chicago. Her research focuses on Homer, Greek literature more broadly, and emotions in the ancient world.



## The Classical *Habitus*

By Emily Austin, PhD, Guest Contributor

On a recent flight from Dallas to Chicago I found myself engaged in a heated conversation about social media with the amiable Texan at my side. A Vergil text lying neglected in my lap, our conversation pursued well-trodden worries – “no one listens to people who disagree with them anymore”; “but we aren’t having face to face conversations”; “I see so much increased anxiety”; and then the final bit of poison came out as I worried, “What concerns me is how hard it has become to *pay attention* or think deeply about *anything*.”

The conversation was quite sweet, perhaps because its interlocutor had such a warm East Texan drawl. But our concerns also nestled deep in my chest – what Homer would call my *phrenes* – and I pondered the relationship between these contemporary cares and my persisting life questions. Why Classics? Why the University of Dallas? and now, why the University of Chicago – and why me? I remain largely unable to answer these questions. But some clarity did emerge from this pondering, helped in great part by the conference I had just attended (the Association of Core Texts and Courses) and the prodding of UD’s own Dr. Susan Hanssen. I think we need Classics for the *habitus* it engenders, those ways of thinking and being that are essential to our human flourishing; and we need it too for the *content* which intertwines with its *habitus* in almost inseparable ways.

My own classical journey began with the University of Dallas. I often joked as an undergraduate that as a classicist I was majoring in “Core.” I said this with a kind of gleeful relief – I was in no way eager to specialize, to lose the richness of conversations across disciplines or the depth that pervades a classroom where the students come armed with so many common texts and shared intellectual battles.

But Classics is more than Core. To the joys of shared knowledge and pursuit of truth is added the painful experience of acquiring Greek and Latin. I remember being corralled into the old Carpenter Classics Department together with other first year Classics majors, and being told that for the next two years we would work harder than any other major in this school. Whether or not this statement was fair to our fellow English and Philosophy majors is debatable, but it certainly stirred up in me a

stubborn determination to survive my total immersion in Ancient Greek and Latin.

Studying Classics engenders conversion of heart. The intellectual rigor of acquiring Greek and Latin shapes you. No one who translated Sophocles under the razor-sharp attentiveness of Dr. Maurer could emerge from UD with a careless attitude towards life. No one who studied the lyrics of Horace in the company of Dr. Sweet could be immune to the experience of gentle beauty. This is classical *habitus*: patience, attentiveness, total interest in whatever kernel of goodness or understanding can be found.

And here my thoughts were converging as I pondered that conversation about social media and our entertainment-saturated culture. As I think through my years of doctoral studies at Boston University, the windfall of a tenure-track job at the University of Chicago, and my first few months of teaching, I see myself sustained by this rigorous classical training in patient attentiveness and tenacity. The world is messy – we interact with people who are flawed, we strain against our own limitations, we stumble repeatedly and are tempted to weariness – and to distractedness. But as anyone who has struggled to master Greek verb paradigms will tell you, we learn endurance through suffering. And as those who have marshaled those verb paradigms in the service of translating Plato, or Homer, or Sophocles will agree, such suffering pays off in spades. Here perhaps we can see how classical *habitus* and content converge. The Greeks knew they were limited, and within this awareness they created works of surpassing beauty. To be a student of classics is to be a realist, but one shaped by unrelenting hard work and the progressive opening of one’s eyes. Truth, beauty, goodness are hard to see, easy to give up on—but they are the only source of joy. Thrilled as I am to have a job at the University of Chicago, the real joys of my life are won through daily becoming anew the *kind* of person whom Classics has made me. Each time I open a dictionary or hunt for an entry in Smyth, I hear the call. It is a moment for conversion, for renewed effort, for the attentiveness so proper to our field.

How grateful I am to have discovered Classics at the University of Dallas, where hard work and love are so gracefully wed, where conversion is the bread and butter – or perhaps *meli nucesque*? – of our daily life.