

MÉΛI NUCESQUE

A Newsletter for Classics at the University of Dallas

Classics Club Update

By Maggie Palmer, Classics Club President

While the Classics Club had a quieter semester this spring due to the absence of Secretary Owen Embree and Events Officer Kathleen Flynn on their Rome travels, we nevertheless hosted a series of talks and discussions throughout the semester. Publicity Officer Ryan Connor presented on St. Thomas Aquinas for the great Dominican's feast day, while Vice President Martin Ellison gave a talk on the creation of the Cyrillic alphabet for the feast of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. Martin also led a discussion on classical Greek oratory, centering around Pericles' funeral oration, and the semester's series of presentations finished with Dr. Kosch's talk on "Epic History: The Hexametric Opening of Tacitus's *Annals*," as well as his advice on presenting at academic conferences.

Other club events included the Asian Student Association's Multilingual Rosary night, at which the Classics officers led the Latin decade of the rosary. At Dr. Kosch's suggestion, the club also hosted a viewing of the Gary Cooper film "Ball of Fire." After the senior thesis presentations on Dead Day, members, professors, and guests celebrated the end of the year with bread, cheese, fruit, poetry, and music at the second annual Xenophanes Banquet.



Music at the second annual Xenophanes Banquet

Although the Classics Club was only a co-sponsor of this event, Ryan Connor also organized the panel "Odysseus: Wanderer Through the Ages" featuring Gabriel Farrell on Odysseus in Homer, Ryan himself on Tennyson's "Ulysses," Dr. Michael West on Ulysses in Dante, and Father Robert Maguire on James Joyce's *Ulysses*. This panel took place on April 20th.

Departmental News

CAMWS Translation Exams

UD students made an excellent showing in the 2022-2023 CAMWS Latin Translation Exams! John Dougherty won a cash award on the intermediate exam, tying for first place with a perfect paper. On the advanced exam, Maggie Palmer, Nicholas Walz, Owen Embree, and Patrick Dodd earned book awards. Congratulations to all!

Lecture on Athenian Ostracism

In February, the Classics Department hosted Dr. Alex Gottesman of Temple University, who spoke about the Athenian practice of ostracism. Noting that the earliest written descriptions of ostracism date from around a century after the last ostracism occurred, Dr. Gottesman examined the material evidence for ostracism, focusing on the more than ten thousand ὄστρακα which archaeologists have discovered in or near the Athenian ἀγορά. He argued that the Athenians viewed ostracism as a mechanism for diverting energy from the inter-factional violence of sixth-century Athens and that the process of ostracism included a social component which made it dissimilar to the modern practice of secret ballot voting.

Karl Maurer Translation Prize Contest

Congratulations to John Dougherty, winner of this year's Karl Maurer Translation Prize Contest! Below is an excerpt of his winning translation of Propertius 2.8.

My girl, long dear, is snatched away from me,
And you, my friend, forbid that I shed tears?

Not war but love brings bitter enmities,

So cut my throat, I'll be a milder foe!

Another's arm about her—can I watch?

All things o'erturn, and loves indeed o'erturn:
O'ercome or be o'ercome, thus love's wheel spins.

Often kings have fallen, mighty tyrants,
And Thebes once stood, and lofty Troy once was.

How many gifts I gave! What songs I wrote!
Yet she, hard-hearted, never mentioned "Love."

Contributing writer and editor: Catherine Wells

Alumnus Spotlight

By Brian Woods, MD, Guest Contributor

I live in New York City and work as an anesthesiologist and intensivist. I never miss an opportunity to tell people what an excellent, special school UD is. I miss reading Greek and Latin, and keep Livy (Dr. Davies) and Vergil's *Eclogues* (Dr Sweet) in a prominent place. Even though my wife's a Classics major, we don't quote Catullus to each other, much to everyone's relief. Our son listed Latin as first choice for high school, so there's hope the classical tradition continues.



From Classics to Critical Care

Classics enriched my life starting in high school and continues to enrich my life today. It started with ninth grade Latin and then continued with college-level medieval Latin as a high school senior with Carmela Franklin (now chair at Columbia) and beginning Greek with Margaret Cook. I continued both at UD and majored under the patient guidance of Grace Starry West, David Davies, and David Sweet. Classics makes sense at UD, where much is ramified by *Athens* and *Rome*. I wasn't the best student, but classes were fun, fellow students (including in one class with my sister!) were lively, and the learning was rich. Rome and Greece were tremendous classrooms. Randomly encountering folks conversing in Latin on the subway was not something I expected, even when in Rome! There were only two Classics majors graduating in 1994, Alvaro Molina and myself. Presenting a senior thesis on Plato's *Lysis* was an early experience at public speaking – valuable, and one which I encourage. But the informal experiences were key as well. A Haggar dining hall argument with a resident of a rival cross-campus dorm, concerning the proper pronunciation of Latin, continues to this day with the gentleman who is now godfather to my daughter.

Classics – many are quick to tell you – is not useful outside academe, and yet I believe it's incredibly useful and good in human and practical ways at the same time. Let me explain. I saw myself as a professor. I went to UT Austin for a PhD in the ancient philosophy track. Professors and students were friendly enough, but their interest in the text extended only as far as they could use it as a foil for the latest in ivory tower fashion. Worse, graduate students toiled for seven or more years with poor job prospects at the end. I needed something more tangible. I volunteered at the hospital near campus, took premedical requirements, went to medical school, and graduated by the time classmates at Austin were starting to finish PhDs. During

medical school I met my wife, who's also a Classics major (there aren't too many in medicine, so it augured well). I doubt she would have talked to me otherwise.

In the practical sense, Classics lets you do anything. You can teach. You can inspire. You can explore. Last month I was delighted to see a classmate from UT Austin on the Discovery Channel explaining the Baths of Caracalla. Sure, many classmates went on to good academic careers—teaching, publishing. But you can go into any field you wish; Classics makes you flexible and imaginative. By the same token, you are attractive to companies and schools that seek prospectives (and perspectives) outside the usual track. At UD I did not envision becoming a doctor in private practice, i.e., running a business while providing medical care, but Classics aided that pivot. Classics let me pursue interests in law (I was VP of legal affairs for our company), ethics (I served on the human research review board at Yale and my current hospital), and leadership.

In the human sense, Classics enriches daily. As an intensive care doctor in New York, I engaged COVID's frontline chaos, heroism, and tragedy. Affairs in the news and at work (political animals staff hospitals and medical practices, after all) echo tensions in ancient history. Journal articles and colleagues make claims that require parsing. Operating room and intensive care unit management requires the persistence, leadership and communication skills of a Xenophon. Hippocrates was right to counsel diet and exercise; these are still the best preventives. Ancient theories of medicine are true at heart. Health comes from balance of many factors – patient factors that I manage through lows and highs of blood pressure, awareness, organ function, breathing, fluid status – nothing in excess. Compassion can be learned from the ancients – their descriptions of physical and psychic suffering abound – and I think of Philoctetes when I take care of someone with a wound.

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