“Uprooting the Unquestioned Acceptance of Tradition”: Latin in U.S. Secondary Schools in the 20th Century

by

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To my parents and my teachers

“A favorite pastime of teachers of Latin is the defense of their subject.”

—William M. Read

(“It is Fun to Read Latin,” 1973)
Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: The Turn of the Century (1880s-1910)

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the beginning of the twentieth, something of a contradiction appears in the writings of Classicists when discussing the current state of their subject. On the one hand, they laud great increases in the enrollment of pupils in Latin in secondary schools: from 1890 to 1898, although overall secondary school enrollments were on the increase in general, the study of Latin “increased more than twice as rapidly.”¹ This growing state of high school Latin, being taken by “nearly half of all students” by 1900, was due in large part to the fact that Latin was still a requirement for most colleges and universities.² However as enrollments in secondary school Latin far exceeded those in colleges, this also led to Charles E. Bennett’s belief that Latin was then “recognized as an important element of secondary education for the average pupil, whether he be intending to go to college or not.”³ Yet, on the other hand, despite this period of “enormously increased favour” and the purported “honourable position” of Classical studies still maintained in colleges, Classicists also reveal themselves to be

³ Bennett and Bristol, 4. Charles E. Bennett was Professor of Latin at Cornell University and prolific author of Latin textbooks and teaching materials. His belief for the importance of Latin for all students, not only those who are able to go to college, later becomes more widely held and necessitates key changes in how Latin is taught and promoted. See Chapter 2.
increasingly anxious about the future of Latin education in secondary schools.\textsuperscript{1} Throughout, they show a desire to “maintain” Latin’s status, “extend its vogue,” “secure” a greater popularity, and “retain its position as a permanent part of the school curriculum”—from our perspective a somewhat overly optimistic, if familiar, goal.\textsuperscript{2}

Although Latin was still both an entrance and a graduation requirement for many universities, it began to lose its primary position in both secondary and college education by having to contend with the introduction of more subjects into the curriculum, including English, modern languages, and sciences.\textsuperscript{3} Before teachers came to adjust to the fact that class time must now be shared with a new influx of subjects, there was much lamenting that schools which would be “distinctly enriched and strengthened” by devoting more time to Classical languages were instead spending it “in a manner at once wearisome and wasteful, upon so-called practical subjects,” such as manual training, woodworking, and typing.\textsuperscript{4} Expressing a desire to return to an admittedly “old-fashioned” education, Le Baron Russell Briggs, although himself not a Classicist, stated that we may not be able to “do better for our children than…to drill them in a few subjects, mostly old ones,” rather than attempting a

\textsuperscript{2} Bennett and Bristol, 11, 214. Wright 225.
\textsuperscript{4} Wright, 223. Honey, 37.
“bluff at general culture.” Classicists also complained that Latin was not being provided with the amount of time necessary for full comprehension with the “present crowded programmes,” and argued that, to compensate, it must be started sooner. Arguments against Classical education and for the inclusion of practical subjects were certainly not new to this period; in the eighteenth century, Americans had criticized, without much efficacy, the limited time allotted for English, science, and modern language study. By the late 19th century, however, when such complaints began to have practical effects, proponents of Latin felt themselves to be put “on the defensive” and their subject “on trial.”

In the face of the now more “vigorous” and “informed” attacks against Latin education, Classicists slowly recognized an increasing need to state clearly the benefits gained from Latin study. J.H. Wright, Professor of Greek at Harvard University, even goes so far as to say that classical studies are “doomed to meet reverses and perhaps defeat, unless their efficiency and fruitfulness are maintained and increased.” Yet despite a professed desire to “soberly consider” and properly address the arguments of the other side, many Classical scholars at this time seemed to find it difficult to engage effectively, often lapsing into the traditional claims that the benefits of Classical studies were intrinsic and self-evident.

4 Bennett and Bristol, 4, 214.
5 Wright, 225.
6 Bennett and Bristol, 214.
grudging reluctance to accept the necessity of defending Latin at all. William Collar,¹ for example, grumbled that learning Latin was “certainly easier for the generations that did not question its educational value, than for this, that questions and doubts everything.”² Although no longer attempting to elevate and defend Latin “precisely on the grounds that…[it provides] no direct utilitarian value,” as well as starting to include lists of aims for Latin education in their introductions, many authors of Beginning Latin textbooks did not fully explain the benefits claimed.³ However, the least helpful response in defense of classical education must come from B.I. Wheeler, professor of Greek at Cornell University, who declared in 1893 that “French and German cannot compare with the classics as effective instruments of secondary education, ‘simply because they don’t.’”⁴ Mason D. Gray will later explain, and refute, the belief that there are values inherent in the study of Latin which can be automatically and unconsciously transferred to the student for use in other subject areas, without any direction or encouragement from the course.⁵ Bennett himself appears to hold this position; despite his substantial efforts to convey the benefits of Latin, he concludes that they are only “indirect results…not consciously sought by

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¹ Headmaster of Roxbury Latin School and author of several Beginning Latin textbooks, often with M. Grant Daniell, Principal of Chauncy-Hall School in Boston.
² Collar 1897, iii.
³ Reinhold, 79. The additional benefit of the study of Roman history was in particular simply stated to hold “intrinsic value” (Potter, vi; Byrne, 4). Similarly, the value of Latin is stated as if self-evident, as an advertisement for Bennett’s compilation of Cicero’s orations declares that students “cannot fail to see the speeches as masterpieces of the art of oratory” (Bennet, 25). Byrne, too, asserts that “no one denies that the Latin product is one of the great literatures,” (4).
⁴ Bennett and Bristol, 30.
⁵ Gray, Mason D. “The Function of Latin in the Secondary Curriculum.” The Classical Journal, vol. 17, no. 2, Nov. 1921, 57. Gray was the Director of Ancient Languages in the East High School and in the Junior High Schools of Rochester, New York and was outspoken about the need to reform Latin education in the 1920s. He culminated his efforts with the publication of a teachers’ handbook and a series of textbooks entitled Latin for Today. See Chapters 2 and 3.
either pupil or teacher.”¹ He further adds that, were they to be so, “the joint quest would prove distracting and even futile” and that it is “their absence from…consciousness which is the salvation of the study.”²

Nevertheless, both Bennett and countless others eventually created lists of the benefits they believe can be found in the study of Latin, many of which, to a greater or lesser extent, consciously or otherwise, are still used today. Some of the more prominent arguments include those for a better understanding of English, training in exact thinking, and an historical understanding of the Romans. Perhaps in response to the cited “great outcry in recent years about the importance of English,” some proponents of Latin insist that Latin translation helps students gain “mastery” over their “mother-tongue.”³ Lee Byrne⁴ maintains that learning Latin is essential for obtaining anything more than a “superficial acquaintance” with other modern languages.⁵ Although the relation of English to Latin is increasingly emphasized in later years, as English becomes more accepted as an area of study, there is as early as 1888, in Greenough’s *New Virgil*, an attempt to link the Latin and English literary traditions with the inclusion of quotations from English poets.⁶ Praising the effort to “aid in the general literary culture of the pupil,” teachers state that the new textbook helps them to teach in a “literary manner”, even viewing the work as an “English

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¹ Bennett and Bristol, 39.
² Ibid., 39.
⁴ Byrne, 3.
text.”¹ The process of translation is also frequently said to provide training in “exact thinking,” “logical thought,” observation, and “insight.”² Collar explains these acquired “habits of clear and sound thinking” as being habits of “intellectual conscientiousness, patience, discrimination, and thoroughness,” hinting as well that such abilities are in some way connected to the building of a student’s character.³ However, not only is exact, logical thought included as a benefit, but there is even a reference to the currently more popular turn of phrase, “flexible thinking,” or the ability to understand that there is more than one way to solve a problem.⁴ While still insisting that such an effect is “unconscious,” Collar and Burgess argue that the translation of Latin “differentiates the mind subjected to it by a flexibility…of intellectual perception.”⁵ Additionally, when referring to the concrete knowledge of Roman history to be found in the study of Latin, Classical scholars offered the opinions, some of which are still referred to today, that Latin helps the student to “assume an attitude of sympathy towards the author, and…look at things to some extent from the Roman point of view,” using the original text to get “a more intimate contact with the ancient world,” while also making use of the traditional argument that it allows for “comparison” and “understanding” of the “genesis of our present civilization.”⁶ By 1910, feeling added pressure to contend with the rising interest in

³ Collar, iv.
⁵ Bennett and Bristol, 21.
⁶ Bennett and Bristol, 34. Rolfe, John C. *Selections from Viri Romae with Notes, Exercises, and Vocabulary.* Revised ed. Allyn and Bacon, 1897, xiv. Byrne, 5, 3.
sciences, the arguments are already shown to shift with the times, as Paul Shorey, a Professor of Classics at Chicago University, attempts to adapt and align them with the current demands. Citing a new position that Latin’s ability to “exercise the memory” is no longer a viable argument, Shorey instead aligns the study with mathematics, describing it as a “deductive” “discipline of the intelligence” whose ability to help develop a “critical sense,” as well as “exact and lucid expression,” would be a “utility for the engineer.”¹

While the benefits of moral values were more often stressed in previous centuries and later during the World Wars, they were still occasionally held up at this time as worthy aims to be obtained through Latin education, as they are still surprisingly so proclaimed today. Lhomond’s *Viri Romae*, first compiled in 1779, was one such early text which aimed to “influence the character of…pupils by giving the preference to acts of valor, or mercy, of unselfishness, of nobility of character, and of kindness.”² Although first written in the eighteenth century, *Viri Romae* was still praised by Collar and Daniell in 1894 for “present[ing] to the young many noble ideals of spirit and conduct,” as they wished to encourage its increased use.³ There was also at this time, a general recognition that school systems had been transformed by the State to promote “civil order and social stability,” taking up a responsibility previously held by the Church.⁴ For this reason, it was felt to be of the upmost importance for students, now viewed as individuals, to be properly socialized to

² Rolfe, v.
become “efficient, intelligent, loyal member[s] of society” in order to transmit the cultural inheritance of each generation.¹ Therefore, Shorey similarly views in Classical education the ability for the individual to train “the sense of conduct” and “attune…the moral feelings to a certain key” so that a “cultural, social, and moral tradition” is transmitted through society.²

Part of the anxiety of Classical scholars is also revealed to stem from the self-professed difficulty of learning Latin, easily discouraging if taught badly, which drove their efforts to make their grammars and textbooks simpler and more direct. Collar stated his belief that the underestimation of Latin’s difficulty caused approximately a third of Harvard applicants to fail their Latin examination, leading him to advocate for an easier and more gradual progression for the study, so too do most authors of the period take up similar aims in organizing their material.³ For example, Allen and Greenough expressed their hope that, through their revisions, they made “more plain some of the devious ways of Latin grammar” and similarly, Rolfe and Dennison’s Junior Latin Book promises to present Latin styles so that there is “an economy of vocabulary and of effort to master strange fashions of writing.”⁴ There appears to be general consensus that it is a failure to discriminate between necessary and unnecessary detail that both made “older grammars so confusing” and causes a great part of the “wasteful[ness],” “barrenness, and futility” of the contemporary

¹ Russell, ix.
² Bennett and Bristol, 34; Shorey, 598.
³ Collar, iii-iv.
study of Latin. Although desirous to combat this tendency, the authors nevertheless insist on mastery of forms as a condition of “further pleasant, successful, and profitable study,” arguing that without it, Latin study will “always drag, and will be distasteful and profitless to the student.” Rolfe, as well, claims that knowledge of history, geography, mythology, and Roman life are also necessary to make the pupil’s work “easier.” However, in recognition of the amount of material to be learned, there begin to be calls for more time to be spent on reading “easy Latin” with “practice in reading connected prose,” instead of advancing immediately to Nepos and Caesar. Additionally, and with apparent connections to the growing desire for methods and evidence based in science, something which will be shown to be even more significant in the following chapters, Byrne conducts his study on The Syntax of High-School Latin with the goal of showing, through “scientific examination and evaluation,” how Latin teaching can be done with “greater economy of time and greater efficiency in results.” However, the continuous stress placed on the difficulty of Latin as “slow,” “serious,” “severe” work, as seen, too, in the common metaphors of “attacking” the Latin and the “struggle” of translating, would seem to be intimately tied to the classist view that Latin can only be of benefit to certain students.

2 Collar and Daniell 1889, iii-iv. Bennett, iv.
3 Rolfe, xiv. John C. Rolfe was a Professor of Classics at Michigan University. He authored the new edition of Lhomond’s Viri Romae and was a translator of several Latin historians for the Loeb Classical Library.
4 Collar and Daniell 1889, vi. Potter, iii.
5 Byrne, 2, vii.
Although Americans as early as the eighteenth century were dissatisfied with the “exclusive nature” and “traditional veneration” of Classical study, and in spite of Classicists’ concerns for its future status, classist rhetoric and arguments remained firmly rooted in scholars’ writings into the twentieth century.¹ Alluding to the professed difficulty of Latin and its “peculiar educative power”, Bennett presents the belief that only minds of a “certain natural endowment” are capable of benefitting from the study, viewing a danger in too many students being “ambitious” of taking the subject.² Latin itself is described as “elevated,” having the ability to “raise” a pupil into the “higher atmosphere” above ordinary thinking, and as such, “marks the educated man.”³ Additionally, while public high schools are sometimes optimistically described as places “in which social distinctions have no place” and which strive to “serve all classes,” as opposed to preparatory schools “patronized by the favored classes of society,” there is an obvious hierarchy in the language used to describe different types of schools.⁴ Whereas preparatory schools are described as “flourishing” and “very successful,” and certain public schools, “only in the eastern states and in some of the larger cities,” are praised for including Latin in their curricula, the majority of high schools are looked down upon for not going beyond “common English” and “so-called practical studies.”⁵ Interestingly, something of a moral superiority is also assigned to students of preparatory schools, as corporal punishment, detentions, and ‘lines’ are said to be “unknown…in schools of this

¹ Reinhold, 304.
² Bennett and Bristol, 48.
³ Ibid., 21-22, 29.
⁴ Russell, x.
⁵ Wright, 78, 223.
class.”¹ The presence of different social classes in the public high schools, having different expectations for their education depending on whether or not they intend to go to college, is also alleged to “confound” the educational system.² Such a dichotomy in the descriptions of the two classes does not abate any by 1910, as Shorey, for example, states that the “excellence of Classics” is accepted only “among the thoughtful” by those of “educated opinion,” but not by the “majority” or the “man in the street” who thinks that all education and culture can be found in the “five-cent theater…or the one-cent newspaper.”³ He adds that this shift in American education towards “spectacle” cannot be checked “by argument,” as if referencing a conception of the masses which cannot be reasoned with.⁴ Bennett, as well, asks whether we can “safely intrust the interests of our higher education” to the “common man who has given no serious thought to the problems of education.”⁵ In a final tirade against “soft” subjects and methods, such as those of English literature and social sciences, Shorey proclaims that the Classics cannot be relegated to the position of a specialty without an “emasculating of our discipline and an impoverishment of our culture.”⁶ In light of such statements, it is baffling that Bennett could be so dismissive of the criticism that Latin was used as a marker of social superiority and exclusion, as he arrogantly makes the unsubstantiated claim that such things are not a factor in America.⁷ However, there are a few notable exceptions to the elitism which seems to pervade the early arguments for the study of Latin. In addition to the criticisms cited

¹ Ibid., 224.
² Russell, x.
³ Shorey, 587.
⁴ Ibid., 587.
⁵ Bennett and Bristol, 47.
⁶ Shorey, 604, 602.
⁷ Bennett and Bristol, 44.
by Bennett which refer to the desire of those with Classical educations to “perpetuate the caste in all its glory” and “[pander] to authority,” certain textbooks and class materials are praised for their “cheapness.”¹ A professor quoted in an advertisement for a new Classical atlas expresses his approval of the fact that a resource which “used to be an expensive luxury [has been] brought within the means of all students of classics.”² Similarly, photographs are said to be “now fortunately so cheap as to be within the reach of all schools.”³ Finally, unlike most of the other Classical scholars, Byrne does not argue for the possibility of a mastery to be gained over either English or Latin, as a complete knowledge of words and grammar is “not necessary” to begin to read, which he says should be the chief aim of the study, just as “we do not have this in the mother-tongue.”⁴

Along with attempts to alleviate the difficulty of Latin to limit discouragement among students, efforts to include more elements of interest into the study increase into the twentieth century as a further consequence of growing concerns about the future state of Latin education. It was, at first, rare for Classics teachers to include such crucial and engaging components in their practices and textbooks. Collar and Daniell, strong proponents of the necessity of imparting something of “attractiveness, interest, freshness, and variety” into the teaching of Latin, criticize the fact that this “immense advantage” seemed to be “purposefully ignored” by their contemporaries.⁵ However, efforts to engage students’ interest by no means originated at this time. P.

¹ Ibid., 44. Allen and Greenough, 497.
² Ibid., 497.
³ Bennett and Bristol, 201.
⁴ Byrne, 12.
⁵ Collar and Daniell 1889, vi. Collar and Daniell 1894, iv.
A. Barnett,¹ in his new rendition of Goffeaux’s translation of Robinson Crusoe into Latin from the mid-nineteenth century, explained how Goffeaux discovered that the “degenerate practice” of striving to engage the interest of students through Caesar, Cicero, and Vergil completely failed to do so.² He therefore used Robinson Crusoe in an effort to make young readers recognize that the language could be used to express interesting things. Barnett himself argues that the only way students will accept Latin is if the “forbidding but necessary Grammar” is “temper[ed]…with something not quite so austere.”³ However the importance of making the study of Latin more enjoyable comes to be more generally accepted both as it is “rediscovered” and proclaimed with “energy,” and as the danger is cited that otherwise students will “abandon the study.”⁴ In order to avoid such an outcome resulting from the “tediousness and drudgery” of “excessively and needlessly arid and wooden” introductory Latin books, textbooks begin to advertise and add to their attractiveness.⁵ Numerous texts of this time extol their own “beautiful” illustrations or wood engravings and their “vivid and attractive” narratives being “full of variety.”⁶ Similarly, the use of additional classroom teaching materials, including photographs, maps, and busts is encouraged to “brighten the school-room” and add “reality” and “vividness” to the study of the past.⁷ However, as it is unknown how effective these new methods were, apart from the enthusiasm of teachers as quoted in advertisements, even Briggs, who above expressed his ambivalence towards some

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¹ P.A. Barnett was a Scholar of Trinity College at Oxford with an interest in pedagogy. He was the author of Common Sense in Education and Teaching: An Introduction to Practice.
³ Ibid., viii.
⁴ Ibid., vii. Collar and Daniell 1894, v.
⁵ Allen and Greenough, 496. Collar and Daniell 1889, vi.
⁷ Bennett and Bristol, 201.
aspects of new-fashioned education, questions whether such attempts at enjoyment go
far enough. Agreeing that the new education “deserves our gratitude for its relief from
wooden teaching and wooden learning” he presents a dull and banal example of
“modern twaddle” from a textbook comparing the fact that there are different types of
birds to the fact that there are different types of words and expresses doubt that “such
intellectual sawdust should be mistaken for oatmeal and cream.”\(^1\) We may ask
whether the inclusion of a rare illustration or even the reading of *Robinson Crusoe*,
now considered somewhat less than “enchanting,” is not likewise, at this point, still
far from the desired goal.\(^2\)

The solution to the problem of Latin education that draws overwhelming
consensus, however, is that teachers have better training in terms of their pedagogical
skill rather than simply in scholarship. This is shown to be especially necessary in
light of James E. Russell’s observation that many teachers are “naturally
conservative,” only being able to teach what and how they themselves were taught
without adapting to current standards or reforms of education.\(^3\) Relatedly, although
with specific regard to the teaching of syntax, Byrne’s study seeks to completely
“uproot” the “conservatism,” “indifference,” and “uncritical…unquestioned
acceptance of tradition” in the way teachers select texts and grammar instruction.\(^4\)
Setting the future of classical learning upon the “skill, learning, and devotion” of
secondary school teachers more than on college professors, Wright declares the

\(^1\) Briggs, 393.
\(^2\) Barnett, vii.
\(^3\) Russell, ix. James E. Russell was a professor of pedagogy, philosophy, and psychology who helped
to improve and develop the Teachers College in New York.
\(^4\) Byrne, viii, 1.
importance of teachers being well prepared and well chosen for the task.¹ His hopes that they will soon be selected based on pedagogic skill along with their scholarship are echoed by Briggs, who argues that an increase in scholarship often does more harm than good by leaving a new teacher “more remote” from the students, for “no amount of scholarship can make up for the want of…self-sacrifice.”² It may be for similar reasons that Lhomond was so highly praised as an “enthusiastic teacher” who gave up prestigious positions in order to devote himself to his teaching, having created his Viri Romae as a “labor of love” to address the difficulties of Latin and to “stimulate the curiosity” of students.³ However, after teachers instill enthusiasm for Latin into their students, and beyond the persuasiveness of any argument for the utility of the subject, Barnett touchingly concludes that “whereas Latin literature will not live as an interest of youth—or of old age, for that matter—by reason of its philological or rhetorical or scientific interest, it will live because people love it.”⁴

¹ Wright, 225.
² Briggs, 393.
³ Rolfe, v.
⁴ Barnett, viii.
Chapter 2: Arguments and Improvement (1910-1924)

The contrast between the growth of Latin enrollment figures and anxious defenses of the Classics becomes increasingly prevalent in the years during and following World War I. Worries about the state of Latin were augmented by the fact that increases in Latin enrollment paled in comparison to those of overall secondary school education. The concern of Latin teachers and scholars was also due, in no small part, to the growing attacks against classical education at this time, leading to heated debates and animosity between proponents of the Classics and self-proclaimed radicals in favor of educational reform. Battle, likewise, according to A.G. Sanders,¹ “waxed hot between the Ancients and the Moderns,” because advocates for modern languages viewed Classicists as “true aristocrats” who “refused to grant recognition to the unpedigreed newcomers.”² In response to criticisms by reformers such as Dr. Abraham Flexner,³ President-Emeritus Eliot of Harvard University, and H.G. Wells,¹

¹ Professor of Modern Languages at Millsaps College and supporter of the work done by Classics teachers. Writing in the 1920s, he explains the animosity between teachers of modern and classical languages in previous years, but says that there is now friendship between them. He adds the gratitude felt by modern languages teachers for the “patient, thorough” groundwork in grammar provided by teachers of Latin, as well as that both groups are now bound together as humanities with a common cause against those who would see them both removed.
³ Dr. Flexner was an influential educational reformer whose efforts contributed to the introduction of modern medical and science education in American colleges. Despite earning a B.A. in Classics and having taught high school Latin and Greek in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, Flexner was opposed to the model of education based on mental training or formal discipline in favor of education based on content. He wrote several publications that criticized American higher education, including The American College: A Criticism (1908), “A Modern School,” (1916) and Universities: American, English, German (1930). He also founded both an experimental school with no formal curriculum or grades and the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J.
countless books, papers, addresses, pamphlets, and weekly articles in the *Classical Journal* and the *Classical Weekly* proclaimed the benefits of Latin study.

To combat the “bitterness,” “slurs,” and “self-interest” brewing in these arguments and instead provide an opportunity for parents and children to be informed about both sides of the question and come to their own conclusion, a volume of articles was compiled by Lamar T. Beman that included an equal number of positive and negative statements about the value of the Classics. Many of the affirmative arguments are similar to those we have already seen, including the claims that Latin provides “superior mental training,” “the power to appreciate the beautiful” and develop the imagination, and “polish, grace, and refinement” in English. Strongly emphasized, as well, is the defense of Latin on the basis of its past and current eminence: that the study of the ancient classical languages has “stood the test of time” and is recognized by educational and world leaders. However, it also adds arguments which could be seen to refer to or respond to the present day, both in terms of trends in educational reform and the recent world war; thus we find claims that classical languages make a well-rounded curriculum together with other subjects, that they offer a strong foundation for work in other subjects, including law, medicine, modern languages, and sciences (because Latin and Greek underlie most of their terminologies), and that they provide “poise and mental equilibrium,” since “men and

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1 In addition to being the well-known author of science-fiction novels, H.G. Wells contributed to the debate over Latin with his paper, “The Case Against the Classical Languages” published in 1917: K., C. “Dr. Flexner’s Critics,” The Classical Weekly, Vol. 12, No. 2, October, 1918.
3 “Affirmative Brief,” in Beman, 1921, ix, xi.
4 Ibid., x, xi, xii.
nations whose leaders have a classical education do not yield to hysteria in times of crisis or excitement.”¹

The opposing arguments are also worthy of close examination, unrelenting as they are in their attacks on the study of classical languages as “absolutely useless to the average person,” and causing an “enormous social waste.”² Calling for a release from “one of the few surviving relics of old-world tradition,” advocates of education in sciences, social sciences, and modern languages, demand “a declaration of independence from the grip of the Dead Hand of Latin.”³ These opponents are unanimously stern in their condemnation of the elitist past and present of classical studies. They show themselves to be especially socially conscious in their critique of the ability of the Classics to develop “narrowness and snobbishness.”⁴ Describing how the study of classical languages has historically been “warmly supported and encouraged by despotism and intolerance” while “better” forms of education, such as the natural sciences, were degraded and ridiculed by those simply interested in preserving their own positions, they explain that it was intended in England to create gentlemen, “who considered themselves above ordinary people and who showed their loftiness of mind by the occasional use of a Latin quotation.”⁵ The present state of classical study is said to be no better, with Latin holding its position because of college requirements “imposed by powerful institutions” and practical studies

¹ Ibid., x, xi, xii. Throughout these comments, there is often an underlying bias which perpetuates the idea of classical studies as a preserve for men. This was previously seen in fears that Classics would be “emasculated” by the introduction of other subjects into the curriculum and may also appear below in the belief that the study holds no attraction to “weaklings.” (Shorey, 602. Game, 61).
² “Negative Brief,” in Beman, 1921, xvi.
⁴ “Negative Brief,” xvi.
⁵ Ibid., xxv.
continuing to be denounced as “low utilitarianism.”\(^1\) Additionally, the critics explain that ‘classical’ teachers and ‘classical’ students continue to “assume an attitude of lofty superiority and look with contempt upon all who waste none of their time on the dead languages.”\(^2\) Blunt and regrettable is their further observation that, since it is generally “abler” students who take the Classics, “other students are not wanted. Many weaker students change their course or leave school discouraged.”\(^3\) Such sharp yet appropriate criticisms are not yet addressed by classicists at this time, as they insist on retaining the stance that Latin pupils are “the more substantial and serious minded students” and that the study “offers no attraction to weaklings and triflers.”\(^4\)

Perhaps the opponents’ main complaint, however, held to be especially pertinent in light of the changing times and recent war, is the “inexcusable neglect of contemporaneous social knowledge and science which the classics foster” by diverting students, whose eyes are turned “so constantly backward,” away from “the realities of the world” and the “progress of civilization.”\(^5\) Just as Flexner himself rejects the argument for classical languages on the basis of mental training in favor of education based on useful content, opponents of Latin argue for providing practical knowledge of and for the present day.\(^6\) In his 1918 article “Liberal Education without

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1 Snedden, 153. “Negative Brief,” xxv.
2 “Negative Brief,” xxv.
3 Ibid., xvii.
5 “Only flabby-minded pupils wish for easy subjects, and these are not worthy of our attention”: M.N.W. “Editorial.” The Classical Journal, Dec. 1917, 147.
7 Flexner, Abraham, “Education as a Mental Discipline,” in Beman, 176. Incidentally, algebra, too, is lumped in with Latin as one of the “mummified studies, quite divorced from all the realities of mind, spirit and body as they belong to our day and generation” (Snedden, 162). Flexner even suggests dropping the study of formal grammar, objecting to its claim of mental discipline and the lack of evidence for its usefulness.
Latin,” David Snedden, education commissioner of Massachusetts and Professor of the Teachers’ College at Columbia University, comments on the necessity of reforming education so that it can meet the inevitable new responsibilities and problems in the twentieth century that will be the result of the war.\(^1\) Explaining this pressing need by drawing on a comparison to the world war, he states that in the same way that Americans “watched from a distance the present storm mount and finally sweep us into its depths, while we trembled in apprehension and irresolution,” they will be equally unprepared for their “coming part in diplomacy, interchange of knowledge, and the promotion of constructive programs making for international co-operation and friendliness.”\(^2\) Likewise, Walter Hall, Professor of History at Princeton University, in his explanation for “Why I Have a Bad Education,” asks, “are not the mind-widening influences of the opening of South America and the unlocking of Asia more significant to us than the adventures of Dido and Aeneas? Can any problems be so important as those of our own generation?”\(^3\) “Painfully” translating Caesar, on the other hand, being about as useful for the present as “bows and arrows would be in modern warfare,” is said to be incapable of creating the best citizens for twentieth century democracy because students either become “bookworms” or lose their best student hours on the “pedagogical treadmill” of Latin study.\(^4\)

In addition to arguing for practical, contemporary knowledge, educational reformers included a moral component in their claims that the “needless horrors” of

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\(^2\) Snedden, 149.

\(^3\) Hall, 210.

\(^4\) Snedden, 151-152. “Negative Brief,” xxiv.
war, immorality, and “social wastage” were also connected to the current poor state of education.\(^1\) In order to develop “the best humanistic ideals and means,” including America’s supposed “high example” of an “increasingly wholesome family life, a better position for women, [and] a fair start in life for all children,” originality and an “inventive spirit” were deemed necessary.\(^2\) Although they seem overly optimistic about the standard they suggest America now is setting, the reformers are also stark in their condemnation of the contemporary plights of American society, stating, without further explanation, that “for a boy or girl to graduate from college in total ignorance of the intolerable conditions under which some men and women earn their living in this country of ours, and of the disguised child slavery before our eyes, is a disgrace.”\(^3\) For this reason, Snedden asserts that the Greeks and Romans should not be invoked because their ways of life, including slavery, which has “become…abhorrent,” are so different from, and less developed than, the ideals of the present time.\(^4\) Not only do the opponents of Classical Studies claim that “not one student in a hundred” ever uses any of the “useless nonsense” they learn about the ancient world, but they condemn the study of “primitive pagan civilization” for its “highly immoral mythology…its human slavery of white men…its very corrupt government…its brutal dungeons…its frequent murders, its wholesale robbery of its colonies, [and] its utter intolerance and contempt of the rights of other nations.”\(^5\)

Despite the fact that the critics’ position clearly views itself as taking the moral high ground, it reveals its own racism in its complaint over slavery specifically of “white

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\(^1\) Snedden, 160.
\(^2\) Ibid., 160.
\(^3\) Hall, 211.
\(^4\) Ibid., 160.
\(^5\) “Negative Brief,” xviii.
men.” Today we might think there is an obvious rebuttal to the opponents’ abhorrence of the cultural values being learned by studying ancient civilizations: we do not seek to gain, or support the acquisition of, Romans’ values while examining their culture and society.¹ Still, the fact that both supporters and critics of Latin look to the moral lessons they find in the course content shows how important the development of students’ character was held to be at that time.

For example, defenders of the Classics, including Josiah Bethea Game, Professor of Classics at the Florida State College for Women and author of *Teaching High-School Latin: A Handbook* (which will be examined in greater detail in a later section), also deeply considered what the impact of the war would be on education. However, the defenders saw the results of the war as evidence for classical education and the type of student it creates through its disciplinary and cultural values. After the First World War, Game explains there was a “great searching of hearts” for the cause of such destruction and questioning of whether “everything created and discovered in the world of science [was] to be turned to the ruin of the human race.”² Although the initial response by educational reformers was, predictably, to push for a greater

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¹ “We are observers and preservers of things past, but will never be reborn Romans. It also seems less than laudable to try to recapture and renew the Roman attitude toward the people whom they considered merely in the light of occasionally inconvenient property...The Classics are objects for study, not revivification.”: Robinson, Erik. “‘The Slaves Were Happy’: High School Latin and the Horrors of Classical Studies.” *Eidolon*, 2017, https://eidolon.pub/the-slaves-were-happy-high-school-latin-and-the-horrors-of-classical-studies-4e1123649916, accessed March 9, 2019.

² “Another way to avoid a marginalizing climate in Latin and Greek courses is to interrogate, rather than adopt, the ideologies that the texts we teach communicate implicitly and explicitly. Instead of plodding through a Greek textbook starring a lazy enslaved Xanthias and a pair of women valued only for physical attributes and not for intellect, one might call upon students to explore the hidden point of view of these characters and ask how the characters might feel about the way they are portrayed.”: Gellar-Goad, T. H. M. “How learning works in the Greek and Latin classroom, part 7.” Society for Classical Studies, Jul. 30, 2015, https://classicalstudies.org/blogs/ted-gellar-goad/how-learning-works-greek-and-latin-classroom-part-7, accessed March 10, 2019.

development of the sciences because they were the “controlling factors in the actual struggle,” Game states that the conviction then grew that, instead, “the world’s hope lies in a type of education which would develop a finer idealism and a finer feeling for justice in human affairs.”\(^1\) The “remarkable balance, devotion to duty, and the high honor manifested in times of bitterest warfare by the young men from Oxford and Cambridge universities,” were apparently often cited as examples to admire by those, such as Game, who viewed the true work of education to be in “character-making.”\(^2\) In this goal, both proponents and opponents of Latin are united, but Game goes a step further by criticizing the “type of men” obtained through the studies of highly specialized sciences, engineering, or mechanics, who would be “lacking in a spirit of true humility and of appreciation of the rights of others” and for whom life would not “really mean much.”\(^3\) The study of the humanities, meanwhile, are said to refine and ennable one’s nature and “bring him into sympathy with what is noblest and best in life,” with no subject able to do this better than Latin.\(^4\)

Finally,\(^5\) defenders of classical languages are largely criticized because of the fact that there exists “not one iota of proof” for the claim that the values and mental training provided by the study of Latin are superior to all others.\(^6\) Detractors, such as

\(^1\) Ibid., 13.
\(^2\) Ibid., 13.
\(^3\) Ibid., 21.
\(^4\) Ibid., 21.
\(^5\) Other common arguments against the study of classical languages include the claims that students do not take the courses long enough to gain their supposed benefits, that everything useful has been well translated, common Latin phrases are easy enough to understand, teaching methods have been continuously criticized without showing improvement, everything learned is quickly forgotten, that it is boring and distasteful to students, and Lincoln and Shakespeare did not study any dead language. For a full list, see the “Negative Brief” in Beman, xv-xxvii.
\(^6\) Hall, 208. This seems to still be the case. Latin teacher Bob Patrick explains that, while the claim that Latin ‘trains the brain’ was often used to promote the subject, there was never any proof to back it up, and certainly none that showed it to be superior to any other foreign language for this purpose.
Hall, seem justified in this observation, as they point out that the only arguments and
evidence offered in defense of classical studies consist of the opinions and
propaganda of teachers who have a financial stake in the discipline. They cite, as
well, evidence that was currently available which showed Latin to provide “neither
better nor worse” training than anything else, adding that it is “ridiculously absurd” to
say that it is impossible for someone to gain mastery of English without Latin.¹ Hall
also dismisses the theory of the automatic transfer of the educational values of Latin
to students without any direction from teachers. He then criticizes how, despite the
lack of evidence of automatic transfer, “it is stoutly affirmed that the plastic
intelligence of youth has but to be touched by the magic wand of Latin and presto! he
thinketh.”² However, as H.C. Nutting³ contends, many Latin teachers were indeed
working to keep up with recent advances in educational methods, and the critique of a
lack of evidence is eventually shown to be taken to heart. He explains that critics of
Latin, who assume the study is still taught just as it was in previous decades, are a
“generation or two behind the times” and “would sustain a violent shock if they took
the trouble to visit some classes in which Latin is being taught by the latest
methods.”⁴ Grace Harriet Macurdy,⁵ Professor of Greek at Vassar College from 1893

¹ Hall, 208. “Negative Brief,” xx, xxvi.
² Hall, 208.
³ H.C. Nutting was a professor of Latin at Berkley and prolific author of textbooks and teaching
materials. His Latin reader Ad Alpes: A Tale of Roman Life was recently released in a new edition in
2017 to highly favorable reviews. Nutting also takes aim at the impression that Latin is declining
rapidly. Citing statistics from the United States Commissioner of Education which showed that Latin
enrollment in secondary schools rose from 100,144 in 1890, 314,856 in 1900, to 405,502 in 1910, he
quips, “for a decaying subject, surely an increase of 300 per cent in twenty years is very encouraging.”
⁴ Nutting, H.C. “Classics and the Reformer,” 1917, 293.
⁵ Grace Harriet Macurdy earned her PhD from Columbia in 1903. She was the third woman, and first
American woman, to do so. When she returned to teach undergraduate and graduate courses there in
the summers, Macurdy became the first woman to teach in the university’s academic program:
through 1937, also, dismisses charges brought against “our classics” by those who “know as little of their value and scope as Mr. Wells and Dr. Eliot,” however she takes seriously the prophecy that it will soon be rare for a university student to have knowledge of Latin.\(^1\) Interestingly, she also turns the classist argument against Classics on its head, criticizing the “aristocratic” claim that Classics are not of practical use for the American “artisan, farmer, or the like.”\(^2\) Instead she states her belief that “there is no gulf fixt between the farm or the market-place and classics, as Mr. Wells and Dr. Eliot say or imply,” and she decries the “aristocratic brutality” of those who ask such questions as “do you want [the uneducated man] to recite Homer to you? Do you want him to speak purer grammar to his cows?”\(^3\) M. Theresa Dallam, an English teacher in the Western High School of Baltimore and supporter of Latin, is even one of the few who begins to question the belief that Latin students do better English work than non-Latin students purely because of their “superior mentality.”\(^4\) On the contrary, she writes, “it seems incredible to me that the hundreds who study Latin in our schools should have better minds than the thousands who do not study it.”\(^5\) She then takes the original approach, soon to be emulated by many, of attempting to prove her belief in the correlation of Latin’s usefulness for English with concrete evidence gathered through a scientific investigation and a mathematical formula. Her results profess to show that Latin is more useful than other modern languages for

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\(^2\) Ibid., 445.

\(^3\) Ibid., 445.


\(^5\) Ibid., 500.
work in English, adding the caveat that, in future, a larger sample size should be used.

In fact, within a few years, the authors of *The Classical Investigation* (1924), which will be examined in the next section, made use of a significantly larger sample size and scientific methods.

A few years later, and after “a new day of peace” eventually dawned, at least in the contest between classical and modern languages, Mason D. Gray, a prominent advocate for pedagogical reform in Latin, reveals how the preceding controversies led to a period of “self-analysis” and “self-examination” by Classists.¹ However, he explains, such reflections did not “spring mainly from motives of self-defense, but from an honest determination [for the teaching of secondary school Latin] to be absolutely sincere with itself and with [its] 500,000 pupils.”² Teachers and scholars were now not only taking steps to explain clearly the aims of Latin study, but were also asking both whether these values were worthwhile for students and, significantly, whether they themselves were actively working “to make sure these aims are actually being realized.”³ Moreover, there was a growing acceptance of the idea that the values of Latin should continue to be useful even after the course was completed and “any capacity to read Latin has been lost,” rather than that the study of Latin should be an end in itself.⁴ Such goals, along with gathering factual evidence to support their claims, seem to be the primary motivation behind the extensive project conducted by the Advisory Committee of The American Classical League, which resulted in *The Classical Investigation*, published in 1924.

² Gray, 1921, 52.
³ Ibid., 52.
⁴ Ibid., 55.
Prior to the Investigation, the 1894 Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies published by the National Education Association was the accepted basis for the content of secondary school Latin curriculums. It espoused the “theory of ‘postponed returns’” and the “preparatory” function of secondary Latin mainly for future work in Latin.  

Soon afterward, the 1899 Report of the Committee of Twelve of the American Philological Association, seemingly inspired by feelings of “elation and overconfidence” at the increases in Latin enrollments, attempted to demand even more reading requirements beyond the already excessive amounts, including 4 to 5 books of Caesar, 6 to 9 orations of Cicero, 6 to 9 books of Vergil, and 1,000 lines of Ovid. Gray explains that such recommendations “naturally…had little effect on an already overloaded curriculum” and aptly criticizes the fact that the committee’s concern seemed to have been “what these pupils could do for Latin, not what Latin could do for the pupils.” The 1909 Report of the Committee of Fifteen likewise provided no attempt “to set up or evaluate educational objectives” other than to prepare students for work in college Latin and continued to insist on the amount that should be read. It was not until the Report of the Committee on Classical Languages of the National Education Association on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, whose final recommendations were finished in 1921 but never published, that any consideration was given in such a document to “the attainment of the educational values of Latin.” It not only provided a “vigorous arraignment of some of the evils of the traditional course,” but also rejected the idea that the values of

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2 Ibid., 4.
3 Ibid., 4.
4 Ibid., 5.
5 Ibid., 5.
Latin study would be automatically transferred to students for use in other subjects.¹ Instead, it promoted the idea that teachers of Latin were to continually explain its value so that the study would be “worth while, whether it is continued in college or not.”²

The Classical Investigation: 1924

Building on the 1921 Report and addressing the need to provide evidence for the claims of Latin study, “The Classical Investigation” was conducted by the Advisory Committee of The American Classical League and published in 1924.³ Intended to improve the organization of the Latin course, the methods of teaching, and the results of students, the investigation makes use of numerous tests, studies, and surveys to guide its recommendations. From the start, the authors profess their efforts to be both impartial and scientifically precise in their “analysis…and criticism of the facts,” having enlisted the help of education and psychology professors to “divest [the investigation] of any bias” as well as the use of “the most recent improved methods of

¹ Ibid., 5.
² Ibid., 6.
measurement” (2, 14). Although the study inevitably does reveal its bias, as well as the authors’ optimism about the benefits they believe can be gained through studying Latin, what is more striking is the expressed willingness and desire on the part of the committee and Latin teachers from across the country to change and adapt Latin courses to be more manageable, enjoyable, beneficial, and even more inclusive for the students.

The first evidence of surprisingly modern and carefully considered attitudes toward Latin education comes from the responses of public school superintendents to a questionnaire on that very subject. While some continue to reiterate such traditional arguments as the importance of Latin as a “basis for sound scholarship,” its “values of content and intellectual drill,” and its “paramount” influence in literature, equally evident is the desire of others to create “revolutionary modifications” to Latin courses and move away from outdated methods (27-28, 26). These superintendents explain their belief that Latin study can be meaningful and of value for students, but add that it will only be so if taught by teachers who “have the intelligence to break away from some of the deadly, dull and orthodox methods” (26). If, on the other hand, it is “done to death” by “people of a narrow view, or those who teach it for traditional reasons or for formal discipline,” they state that they would “rather see something substituted that means helpfulness in living during the next fifty years” (27). Incidentally, it is interesting to note the persistent use, here and previously, of the metaphor of “death” to describe both Latin education and its effect, as if not only is the subject “deadly” for students, but itself could be killed by persistently bad pedagogy. Still other superintendents go a step further and are especially blunt in their grim opinion of the
value of Latin for their students. One unidentified superintendent from an agricultural state, despite being a Latin specialist, criticizes the “traditional and aristocratic type of education,” which, he says, “has been a serious obstacle to our development,” adding, “I cannot be reasonable and at the same time try to promote in this state a type of education which does not fit 95% of our communities and seems to have little value for 90% of our young people” (26). There is a common thread, however, in the emergence of a concern to make Latin education of better use for the future and for all students, not merely those who continue in the subject for four years and are likely to pursue a college education. There is greater recognition of the fact that Latin had become an “elective” in most schools and “may usually be dropped at the end of any year at the pleasure of the pupil,” and so there is a need to make the subject “worth while in itself” for those who take it only for one or two years to “secure their returns” (251, 31). Partly for this reason, the ultimate objective of the ability to read new Latin after the study has ceased was one of the only original arguments to be rejected as not valid by the committee (38).

In its efforts to prepare a “progressive constructive programme” for teaching classics in secondary schools, the investigation not only gathers data on teaching methods and course organization, but, crucially for this paper, attempts to analyze and evaluate the objectives of Latin study to determine whether they can be considered valid and applicable to other avenues of life after the course has ended (14). Unfortunately, it is here that the authors reveal their partiality toward classical education and admit their difficulty in providing scientifically conclusive results. Like their classical colleagues of the previous thirty years, they often simply resort to
saying that such values as the ability to understand English words derived from Latin, or the ability to speak and write correct English, are “obviously” of “unquestionable value to every pupil,” rather than providing specific examples as to how they may be of future use (42, 45). Additionally, the results of various tests used to compare the achievements of Latin versus non-Latin pupils of the same initial ability often reveal only “somewhat” or “slightly” greater growth on the part of the Latin students (45, 46). Similarly, while the majority of teachers surveyed typically find the objectives listed to be valid, rarely do they rank the results secured by their students as satisfactory. For example, only 25% of teachers believed that the improvement in the literary quality of their student’s written English was satisfactory (70). When the results are inconclusive, or impossible to gather, as in the case of disciplinary objectives, the study often resorts to analysis of the opinions of Latin teachers or falls back on one of their main proposals: that the values of Latin education “must be brought specifically to the pupil’s attention,” “consciously developed,” “and the application of the principle to other fields made clear” (57, 59). This idea, that students must be aware of the benefits they can gain through studying Latin so that they can be encouraged and supported in making connections to other subjects, is in line with the current opinion of psychologists of the time which almost unanimously refuted the previous belief that the values of Latin study will be automatically transferred to students. It is clear, however, that the updated ideas about transfer were not yet widespread, as many teachers assumed it was either automatic or had “very vague ideas” about how transfer was to be accomplished (177). The

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investigation, therefore, recommends that teachers as well be “awake” to the importance of the values to be transferred and “alert in using all opportunities to emphasize them,” claiming that doing so “will be sure to produce the best results” (169).

This “increased responsibility,” admitted by the committee, at first seems to place an undue burden on the Latin teachers, requiring of them both effective Latin instruction as well as conscious instruction in all its benefits, including correlations to other foreign languages, reflective thinking, historical implications, knowledge of the general principles of language structure, “accuracy, sustained attention, orderly procedure, thoroughness, and reasoning” (177). One wonders when the teachers would have time to teach Latin itself when they are continually being asked to make connections to so many other uses and subjects. The task seems especially difficult considering the investigation’s own vagueness when it comes to providing examples of how teachers should go about accomplishing it. While they argue that “specific illustrations of the identity of the method used in Latin with that employed in other intellectual activities should be given from time to time” and that these values “are not only capable of transfer to other academic activities, but will manifest themselves in the professions, in business life, and in other callings generally,” the report offers no specific examples for the teachers to use (220, 243). The committee even goes so far as to suggest that, since they have been unable to come up with the conditions under which transfer takes place through scientific studies, as the factors involved are “so numerous and so complicated,” the teachers themselves should “cooperate with every effort to ascertain these conditions by experimentation and otherwise to attempt
to discover those devices and methods which will be effectual” on their own (177, 55).

However, the investigation does concede that, if taught in the wrong way, a “conflict of interest” could develop between the immediate aims of learning Latin and the ultimate objectives that extend beyond the study itself (83). Nevertheless, the authors remain firm in their belief that “concurrent development of both aims will result in a fuller attainment of each,” citing a controlled experiment which showed that devoting greater time and attention to the development of the wider benefits of Latin also led to higher Latin test scores (84). In addition, they generally recommend substantial reductions in the amount of reading required by both Latin courses and college entrance examinations, as well as “considerable freedom” for the teacher to find new and largely unused material not limited to classical Latin to better meet the needs of different classes and add variety to the course (114). Likewise the authors wholeheartedly adopt the idea of reading easy Latin before classical texts, an approach previously advocated by Collar and Daniell.1 While they regret the lack in the U.S. of good, easy Latin textbooks with ‘made’ or adapted readings, they comment on the growing trend of first and second-year book authors’ including such stories in their works (129). Their suggestions are shown to be in keeping with the wishes of teachers, over 90% of whom stated that they would make changes to their present course, “if they were free to do so,” and would make use of easy Latin before reading the first classical author (102). The vast majority of teachers also felt that the common four-year Latin course was too extensive, too difficult, or both, with one

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1 See Chapter 1, p. 8 above.
teacher adding that it is “just impossible” to cover all the required material of four books each of Caesar, Cicero, and Vergil (107). The committee also echoes earlier Classicists calling for better training for both prospective and current educators. While they note that the availability of such resources are on the rise, facilities are said to still be “utterly insufficient” to meet the need (249). Here we see an early example of the argument for Latin on the basis that there is a “demand for Latin teachers” and the present supply “is so inadequate as to warrant deep anxiety” (249). The authors include some other seemingly novel suggestions as well, such as the importance of practice in speaking Latin in order to dispel the “auditional dread” of reading Latin aloud, because “living directness is better than inanimate precision” (128, 192). Moreover, they advise against analytical methods of translation in favor of training pupils to read Latin in the Latin word order, so that they will “comprehend Latin as Latin” and think “as Romans themselves perceived the thought of the Latin sentence” (198). In this way, the authors believe that every Latin sentence becomes an exercise in “consecutive and self-correcting thinking” with “constant practice in suspending judgement,” rather than a “vexing puzzle,” as it is often taught and considered today (198).

Of course this is not to say that the study is devoid of the classism and traditional views so apparent in earlier works. There remain present beliefs such as that students possess a certain “ability” to take on the “mental challenge” of Latin, that a knowledge of Roman history be “an aid to the solution of present-day problems of a similar character,” that syntactical ideas are universal and demonstrate the “ultimate unity of the human race,” and that “characteristic Roman virtues, such as
patriotism, honor, and self-sacrifice...reveal standards which should be kept before American boys and girls today” (243, 180, 72, 67). The authors also ascribe the decreased percentage in Latin enrollment as compared to the public high school enrollment to a recent increase in total enrollments by “hosts of students” who “even ten years ago would not have thought of a secondary education...[and] do not care for the study of foreign languages, classical or modern,” while the decrease in Latin enrollment for the third and fourth years of private schools is “much smaller” (19, 20). However there are glimpses of improvement to the traditionally classist rhetoric. Although the authors retain their belief that Latin students are “of a somewhat higher initial ability than other pupils,” the committee is able to realize through their findings that “this initial superiority is less than has been generally supposed,” concluding instead that higher results are due to “something derived from the study of Latin” (250). Perhaps most poignant is the slogan of one superintendent regarding Latin: “Offer it to everyone; require it of no one” (26). Such sentiments are echoed by the investigation itself, although speaking specifically of Greek, as the authors explain that they are not asking that students be “compelled” to take the subject, but for “every capable American boy and girl, no matter how well or how poorly circumstanced in life” to have the “unhindered and really encouraging chance to take it” (254-255). Although the authors continue to insist on the difficulty of the subject, bemoaning the easier “line of least resistance” through school chosen by “crowds of students,” the openness with regard to classical education seems quite progressive for its time, especially considering that this point of view is still advocated today (255).¹

¹ *The Pegasus Project, Aequora,* and *Classics for All,* a UK-based charity, are examples of present-day organizations that aim to combat the tradition of classical education being a “privilege for the few” by
Finally of note is the historical context provided by the study regarding the overall state of Latin education following World War I. Although there was a “sagging” in Latin during the World War, with a drop in New York enrollments of over 16,000, Latin retained its position as the leading foreign language throughout the war and saw a “rapid increase” soon afterward (250). The committee states their optimistic view of the “highly encouraging” figures that “will almost certainly show further increase soon” because of an “unforced growing demand for the study” (250, 251). Despite such increases, and while the authors claim their satisfaction stems from the unprecedented opportunity for “wide diffusion of the educational benefits of Latin,” lurking throughout the study is a larger hope for the future of Latin (250). The authors express their anticipation that, if there is a fuller appreciation of the values of Latin in courses better adapted to the abilities and interests of the students, many more pupils will wish to continue the subject in high school and college (250-251, 31, 127). Only briefly touched on, however, is the principal reason given by freshmen for continuing to study Latin in college, which may go far in explaining the committee’s apparent bafflement at the uncompeled demand for the subject: they liked it. The investigation agrees with previous educational scholars in the “necessity of interesting,” adding that greater interest on the part of the students is shown to react “favorably upon the mastering of Latin itself” (188, 84). While the study generally falters in providing examples of how to accomplish its recommendations, it also promotes, more collectively than ever before, significant, practical improvements to Latin education based on teachers’ desire to benefit a greater number of students.

Chapter 3: Socializing Latin (1924-1930s)

Although there was apparently criticism from some over the “revolutionary proposals” of the Investigation, the College Entrance Examination Board unanimously approved the recommendations of the study to go into effect in 1929.¹ Agreeing to place emphasis on quality rather than quantity, the Board abolished requirements regarding the amount to be read. Instead it sought to encourage freedom of choice in a wider range of material by placing requirements of certain Latin authors for only one semester of each of the last three years of the study.² In Mason D. Gray’s view, this beneficial move made it possible for the development of a policy of Latin teaching “from the point of view of the secondary pupil,” with the future of Latin resting “in the hands of the secondary teachers of Latin.”³

Experienced Latin teachers wholeheartedly supported the Investigation’s findings, and so it quickly assumed the function of a teachers’ manual and became highly influential in the development of later Latin textbooks and handbooks for teachers.⁴ Gray for one, writing his own Latin teaching handbook in 1929, echoes

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¹ Gray 1929, 10. The Investigation suggested “80 pages of easy Latin, followed by 35 pages of Classical Latin in the second year (instead of four books of Caesar’s Gallic War) 60 pages in third year (instead of six orations of Cicero), 100 pages in fourth year (instead of the first six books of the Aeneid).” 
² Ibid., 10-11.
³ Ibid., 11.
⁴ Ibid., 8.
many of the sentiments of the Classical Investigation, and understandably so, as he was one of its special investigators. Just as the Investigation, Gray argues that educational reform and Latin instruction need not be mutually exclusive, calling for the adoption of more up-to-date and egalitarian methods. Gray, however, goes a step further than the Investigation in his indictment of both the methods of the traditional course and those who continue to argue for its use. Admonishing Classicists who desire to retain the previous inordinate amount of reading material, he is especially critical of those who insist on the ability of the traditional course to provide the values claimed, despite available evidence which revealed its failure to do so. Indignantly, he questions how it could ever have been asserted that the traditional Latin course develops ideals of accuracy and thoroughness, or historical-cultural values, since Latin pupils on average show poor results in their limited knowledge of vocabulary and verb forms and very little time is spent on an already “small and isolated fragment of Roman history.” In his view, the educational needs of the students should always be the main consideration in a Latin course, and so Gray questions the “intellectual honesty” of teachers who continue to defend the traditional course,

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1 He likewise believed that there should be great improvements to the teaching of Latin based on scientific analysis and an appraisement of the extent to which the benefits of Latin were actually being gained by students (8, v, 11). He also agreed with the necessity that teachers and students be aware of the values of Latin study and placed the majority of the responsibility of coming up with practical, in-class examples of them onto the teachers. (26, 114).
2 Gray explains that it is “of the utmost importance for progressive Latin teachers [to be]…accurately, promptly, and continuously informed regarding new texts, new material, new equipment, [and] new ideas” (26, 173). He adds that “it is unjustifiable to deprive ninety-five pupils of material because five may read it in college.” (49).
3 Gray rejects the argument made by those who were opposed to the proposed reductions on the basis that “pupils would not master the reduced amount any more thoroughly than they had mastered the traditional amount” by calling this position “assuredly a counsel of despair” (90). He also amusingly goes after Bennet’s earlier assertion that, “no one will undertake to deny” that the benefits of Latin are actually obtained by students by stating that “it is precisely this claim that, in light of the overwhelming evidence of data now available, must be denied” (125).
4 Ibid., 138, 156
By attacking his predecessors and contemporaries, Gray shows that not all Latin teachers were of the same mind when it came to their vision for the future state of Latin and its purpose in the educational system. Some teachers held more traditional views and were resistant to change, caring more for Latin’s prestigious and prominent position than its ability to be useful for students. Still, most others, as demonstrated by Gray and the Investigation, supported efforts to change and improve the teaching of Latin for the benefit of a greater number of students, even if it meant discarding long-held beliefs. For example, Gray argues that classical texts should not be seen as “sacred and inviolable,” if modifying them will make them better suited to the reading comprehension level of the students. Further, he questions whether any author currently read, apart from Vergil, is appropriate or interesting enough for the secondary level, calling for a “complete reappraisal” of Latin literature in order to find suitable replacements for Caesar and Cicero. However, Gray does believe in the ability of Latin to produce the educational values that have often been claimed for it, and he does not offer solutions for every problem in Latin education at the time.

While he admits that the traditional course provides little evidence for the

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1 Ibid., 49, 138-139. “It is not without significance that the strongest advocates of the disciplinary values of Latin have been at the same time the most obdurate supporters of the traditional course” (138-9).
2 Ibid., 49.
3 Ibid., 47. Gray suggests Livy as a possibility. Later on, Dorrance S. White explains that selections from Ovid’s Metamorphoses became widely approved of for use in the 3rd year, and that other authors sometimes included were Pliny the Younger, Aulus Gellius, Petronius, Seneca, Macrobius, Quintilianus, Sallust, Catullus, Horace, and Eutropius: White, Dorrance S. 1941. The Teaching of Latin. Scott, Foresman and Company, 60-67.
development of “desirable habits,” he speculates that, were the instruction of Latin to be improved, the subject would show itself to produce results superior to those of other subjects. Therefore, even he shows his bias towards the study of Latin by stating, just as previous scholars have done, that “it may be affirmed without much risk of dispute” that progression in a cumulative subject like Latin, which continually demands the use of an increasing amount of knowledge, can be more beneficial for students than noncumulative subjects. In addition, although Gray advocates for the material of Latin courses to be limited only to what “can be mastered, semester by semester,” nevertheless he insists that such material “be mastered to a 100 per cent degree,” which seems to be an unreasonable and nerve-racking expectation of exactly the sort which could leave students discouraged, as the opponents of the study of Latin pointed out.

Finally, Gray himself supports the new tendency, “manifested in a number of recently published elementary Latin books, to explain to pupils in the introductory lessons the reasons why they are studying Latin, and to analyze the values which they will derive from it,” the main justification now being its benefits for English. However, I think that Gray’s most significant addition beyond the recommendations of the Investigation is his observation that “pupils will not normally undertake or

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1 Ibid., 141.
2 Ibid., 141-142.
3 Ibid., 141.
4 Ibid., 38. This can be clearly seen in Perley Oakland Place’s 1917 textbook, even in its very title, *Beginning Latin: An Introduction by Way of English, To the Latin Language*. It first begins with an explanation of “Why American Boys and Girls Should Study Latin” followed by how it plans to lay “special emphasis upon the relation of Latin to English. Throughout, it stays true to this promise by including sections on “How Latin Lives To-Day,” “The Importance of Latin Words in English,” and by suggesting the “Game of Related Latin Words.” Place, Perley Oakland. *Beginning Latin: An Introduction by Way of English, To the Latin Language*. 1917, iii, 5, 139, xvi. Perley Oakland Place was the author of several textbooks and teaching materials for all levels of a Latin course.
pursue a subject with zest merely because it is good for them,” no matter how thoroughly the benefits are explained to them.¹ He explains his belief that, in order for motives to be “genuine and powerful,” they must come from the emotions as well as the intelligence, and so early analyses of values in the course, promises of indirect returns, and even vocational appeal, are likely to have little effect on students.² The “only sound, permanently active motivation for the study of any language,” he says, must come therefore from “the desire to learn the language, and from a consciousness of steady progress in it.”³ Although I admit to having limited empirical evidence to support Gray’s conclusion, I think that his advice is likely reasonable. While many of the students surveyed, both by the Investigation and by myself today, describe their motivations to begin Latin and the benefits they expected to gain from the study in terms similar to those of the arguments made by Classicists, the majority state that they decided to continue taking Latin not for these reasons, but because they enjoyed it.⁴ The need to ensure that students feel a sense of both accomplishment and joy in learning Latin would soon be taken to heart by many teachers and authors, as will be seen below.

¹ Gray, 1929, 38.
² Ibid., 38.
³ Ibid., 39. In order to bring this about, Gray explains that letting the content and tasks of the course “regularly illustrate the potential values of Latin is much more effective than to preach about its values.” (41).
⁴ “I decide to keep taking Latin after the first year because I truly enjoyed it and I was always having a great time with my friends. At beginning I just expected to learn some Latin in order to help me on English, but it’s much better than what I expected. I really enjoyed all the parts of Latin class like learning vocabulary, grammar, or translate those stories which our teacher often make it fun and talk to us, so we can understand while enjoying it.”: 8th Grade Latin student from Chase Collegiate School (2018). However, Ruth Hetzman, teacher at Royal Oak High School in Michigan found in the results of her questionnaire that more of her students believed in the value of Latin than found it interesting. Hetzman, Ruth. “Latin Meets the Challenge of the Present World Crisis.” The Classical Journal, vol. 39, no. 2, 1943, 76-77.
Josiah Bethea Game,¹ whose handbook, *Teaching High School Latin*, was released in its fourth printing in 1925, explains that he too used the Classical Investigation for the new edition and cites it as one of the best sources of arguments in defense of Latin education.² Although he reveals himself to be generally more conservative in his opinions, being a firm defender of the disciplinary values of Latin, Game also suggests several new and seemingly radical recommendations for teachers.³ He also provides them with more concrete examples (to be discussed below) to improve the course for students and, significantly, for themselves as well. Despite his insistence of the disciplinary values of Latin, Game calls for a more humane, understanding approach to teaching by commenting on the negative attributes commonly ascribed to Latin teachers. He advises teachers not to try to do or expect too much, nor to be “too severe,” but rather to “be merciful.”⁴ Explaining that “there are too many teachers of Latin who take pride in being ‘hard-boiled’ who think that they are something superior if they get a reputation among the students for driving the very life out of those who are in their class,” Game urges teachers to “use every means at your command to lighten the burden to the timed and distressed” and “remember, above all else, that you are a teacher, not a mere driver of prisoners.”⁵

Although he himself is harsh towards newer subjects and toward opponents of

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¹ Game was a Professor of Classics and General Literature at Florida State College for Women. The revised edition of his handbook was published posthumously.


³ Game was also an opponent of the recent introduction of a multitude of “easy, namby-pamby subjects” in favor of the “record of achievement” and “hard, persistent effort” required of Latin. Gray’s editor, Paul Klapper, however, explains that recent studies were shown to “refute such smug conceit” as a belief in the disciplinary values of Latin. Klapper was Head of the Department of Education and Dean of City College before serving as the first president of Queens College from 1937-1948.: Game, 36, 1. Gray, 1929, vii-viii. Dolan-Mescal, Alexandra. Ed. “The Paul Klapper Collection,” Queens College Archive, accessed March 2, 2019.

⁴ Game, 75, 83.

⁵ Ibid., 83.
classical language study, Game still cautions against the possibility of teachers becoming intolerant and narrow-minded, stating, “Latin cannot do the whole work of education; it must stand shoulder to shoulder with every other subject which can be used in the task of educating young men and young women.”¹ To a much greater degree than ever before, Game also shows an understanding for the arduous task faced by the Latin. He not only recognizes the practical difficulty in “teaching a dozen things in one class,” questioning whether all the educational values of Latin claimed can be accomplished, but also takes into account the emotional strain placed upon the teacher.² He assures Latin teachers that, “to [their] great relief,” they should not expect all results to be successfully achieved and that even they can find amusement in updating the course so as to be able to “smile now and then.”³

Some of the most striking ideas advanced by Game include ways for teachers to modernize and enliven the Latin course. In every aspect of teaching, he urges classwork to be much more closely related to the lives and interests of the students. Disapproving of how pupils are “‘Caesared’ day in and day out,” in which text “not a bright or amusing thing appears from cover to cover,” Game believes that students will “work joyfully and gladly” over something which “touches [their] own life.”⁴ To keep the students engaged, he radically encourages teachers to “throw their prose texts to the winds now and then,” explaining that “anything to get pupils to learn forms and sentences is in place.”⁵ For both reading and Latin composition, Game urges the use of riddles, proverbs, hymns, news articles, jokes, plays, and stories of

¹ Ibid., 45.
² Ibid., 72.
³ Ibid., 10, 110.
⁴ Ibid., 70, 110.
⁵ Ibid., 110-111.
student pranks as examples, which, he says, “enable pupils to find themselves and to
get the knack of using words other than those of Caesar” in addition to holding their
interest.¹ This seems to be a significant departure from arguing that students’ English
composition can be improved through strictly classical Latin reading and
composition, recognizing instead that students should have practice in writing in their
own voice and in a manner suited to the present time. Cartoons with Latin captions,
Game says, also “will do no harm,” and he even recommends the use of songs,
especially in times of stress, because “young people are always glad to sing, if it
means relief from class work for the time being.”² Game adds his hope that this
suggestion could be used as part of a greater effort to have the class perform in front
of the whole student body and even, somewhat unrealistically, to “get your whole
neighborhood to sing Latin songs.”³ Now included among useful classroom materials
and resources, in addition to maps, photographs, and sculptures which were
encouraged in previous years, are projection lanterns, slides, and “moving picture

¹ Ibid., 70, 110.
² Ibid., 115.
³ Ibid., 137. I admit that I was, at first, skeptical of the claim that students would enjoy singing Latin
songs or hymns, seeing it as another example of over-optimism for the ability of certain methods to
interest students. However, I may have judged the idea too hastily, as it is not uncommon for teachers
today to make use of Latin songs to the delight of their students. Even my own high school class
happily sang Jingle Bells in Latin every year.

“I’ve taught students at all levels, elementary through undergraduate, and there is something both
joyful and pedagogically rich about singing with students”: Butterworth, Elizabeth. “Nunc
Est Canendum: Getting in Touch with Your Inner Classics Nerd.” Eidolon, Jun. 25, 2018,

“Looking back at the videos [of pop songs translated into Latin by the students] now after a while, I am
struck by the brilliance of the students, and I sense how much the opportunity to create content and
broadcast themselves to the world was unique and special for them…They want an audience for their
expression and to stand out in the world, and we can connect that to their love of Latin with powerful
results.”: Umiker, Charles. “How YouTube Made Me Almost Famous in the Latin Teacher World.”
teacher-world-105b2061b86d, accessed March 10, 2019. The benefit of allowing students to express
themselves artistically through performance is even seen in the 1930s, as Jeanne MacNaughton explains
in describing her high school Latin class’s choral performance: “The accomplishment was in my
estimation quite worth while. The activity provided a form of artistic expression for the boys and
films” such as *Julius Caesar*, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, *Spartacus*, and *Quo Vadis*.\(^1\)

Game also innovatively encourages teachers to have their students make “home-made illustrative materials;” he mentions that those who are of “a mechanical turn of mind” would enjoy making model weapons, war machines, and bridges, which he says “can be built by any boy who makes the effort.”\(^2\) Girls, on the other hand, are encouraged to make “articles of dress” for model miniature figures of different types of soldiers and politicians.\(^3\) Although problems of representation for women went unaddressed until more recent years, the efforts to add to the enjoyment of Latin seem to have had an overall positive effect on both students and teachers, as it still does today. Not only does Game wish to keep students more attentive, but the activities he recommends are also intended to serve the wider Latin cause by drawing the interest of the community at large. Through such efforts, Game explains, a teacher will do more for the future of their subject than by making any number of carefully crafted arguments. He writes that “the best argument a teacher can give in favor of his subject is found in his teaching,” and therefore instructs teachers to “not bother about perfecting yourself in the fine art of arguing for the classics, but give yourself diligently to the making of yourself into the best teacher in your school.”\(^4\)

From this time on, attempts to make Latin more enjoyable only increase in order to benefit a greater number of students.

In an attempt to fix the widespread and widely acknowledged problem of Latin textbooks, many authors wrote new works directly structured around the recommendations of the Classical Investigation and updated requirements of the

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\(^1\) Ibid., 126.  
\(^2\) Ibid., 127-128.  
\(^3\) Ibid., 128.  
\(^4\) Ibid., 133.
College Entrance Examination Board.¹ Increasingly, they seek to make clear to the students that studying Latin provides “immediate, definite, and abundant returns in useful, everyday values” and emphasize them frequently throughout the course, with practical applications to English vocabulary, English literature, and even cultural values.² In doing so, they make an even greater effort to come up with new ways to engage the interest of the students, including many more, and colored, pictures, common Latin phrases and mythological references, Latin songs, a greater variety of stories presented in varied styles, and some truly ridiculous word game suggestions.³ I admit to being unsure about how effective such suggestions were, as many of the games are repetitive and one textbook even attempts to claim that “there may be added romance and high adventure even in the study of Latin grammar, a thrill in meeting the unexpected even in so prosaic a thing as a case ending.”⁴ However, it is clear that the authors are making a determined and sincere effort to make Latin more enjoyable, as well as more useful for students.

¹ Examples include Karl P. Harrington and Walter V. McDuffee’s *Third-Year Latin: Cicero and Other Prose Writers*, Walter Eugene Foster and Samuel Dwight Arms’ *First Year Latin*, and, of course, Mason D. Gray and Thornton Jenkins’ *Latin for Today*. Karl P. Harrington was the Robert Rich Professor of the Latin Language and Literature at Wesleyan University, as well as a composer of Methodist hymns, including the “Christmas Song,” set to Josiah Holland’s poem, “There’s a Song in the Air.” Walter V. McDuffee was the Supervisor of Latin in the Springfield (Mass.) Public School. Walter Eugene Foster was the Head of the Department of Latin at Stuyvesant High School in New York City. Samuel Dwight Arms was the Supervisor of Ancient Languages at the New York State Education Department.

² Foster and Arms, *First Year Latin*, 1925, 43. Harrington and McDuffee encourage students to allow the cultural values they gain by studying Latin to aid them in “making ourselves better-informed, more cultured, and more useful”. Foster and Arms even hope that stories of Roman characters will serve as “an inspiration to physical courage and to high-minded, patriotic attitudes” for students. Harrington, Karl P., and Walter V. McDuffee. *Third-Year Latin: Cicero and Other Prose Writers*, 1929, lviii. Foster and Arms, vi.

³ One such game involved asking students to copy a picture of a girl blowing bubbles, or a blacksmith at an anvil, on the blackboard and write as many English derivatives as possible on the respective bubbles or sparks. Foster and Arms, *First Year Latin*, 1925, 64-65, 104-105.

⁴ Foster and Arms, vii.
Since the College Board no longer included a set requirement of the amount of any specific author to be read, emphasis in teaching also shifted to “the development of power in translating at sight,” because students needed to learn how to tackle any passage set before them in an examination.¹ For this, Harrington and McDuffee’s *Third Year Latin* provided some pages of Medieval Latin for easy practice. In line with the Investigation’s recommendation, there was also a rapid increase in publications of new, “made,” easy to read Latin prose.² Interest likewise grew in the possible usefulness of the pedagogical methods of oral and aural work in Latin, with many textbooks then beginning to include compositional exercises for spoken and heard Latin. Foster and Arms recommend that students be asked to translate sentences spoken by the teacher, to answer in Latin questions asked in Latin, and to practice proper pronunciation, phrasing, emphasis, and inflection, all in the hope that such practice will provide both “pleasure and progress in Latin study.”³ Similarly, Bertrand Kraus, in his translation of George Capellanus’ *Modern Latin Conversation*, hopes that the use of the direct method for Latin, with contemporary subjects, will create an interest and a “love” for the language, and that his text will become a “pleasant companion” to the standard list of Latin authors.⁴

Unfortunately, however, such positive gestures in the study of Latin were accompanied by a particularly egregious example of racist ideologies in Claire C. Thursby and Gretchen Denke Kyne’s textbook, *Living Latin for the Junior High*

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¹ Harrington and McDuffee, iii
³ Foster and Arms, vi-vii.
⁴ Kraus, Bertrand F. *Modern Latin Conversation*. The Bruce Publishing Co., 1930. George Capellanus, whose real name was Eduard Johnson, had his work retranslated as recently as 1996 under the title *Latin Can Be Fun: A Modern Conversational Guide* by Peter Needham, also the translator of the Harry Potter books into Latin.
School Book Two. Although it uses many of the new methods I have discussed,\(^1\) it also perpetuates some of the older rhetoric to an alarming extent. In a section entitled, “Our Classical Heritage,” the authors tell their students that, while Rome may have, at times, seemed “harsh and relentless…in her battle for supremacy, we should rejoice that neither Carthage, Macedonia, Syria, nor Egypt was victorious.”\(^2\) If any of these other societies had triumphed, they assert, “all progress and civilization as manifested by science, philosophy, art, and literature, would probably have perished beneath the rule of an eastern empire and been lost to us forever.”\(^3\) Praising Rome for fighting to “preserve for us the best of Graeco-Roman art and thought,” they conclude with the disturbing message that “the very life we live to-day was made possible for us by Rome’s victorious contest for world supremacy.”\(^4\) While these regrettable imperialist and racist sentiments, expressed here by Thursby and Kyne, were the most direct that I have seen, they were likely to have been shared by many other Classicists of the time who continually made claims for the value of “appreciating” ancient and modern civilizations.

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During the 1930s, several important developments, growing both from the Investigation and larger educational trends of the time, had a definite impact on the arguments and efforts of Latin teachers. The foremost of these changes was the reinvigorated appeal of the social studies, in part because of the ongoing economic

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\(^1\) Surprisingly, the number of suggestions provided by Thursby and Kyne to enliven the class and alleviate the burden of the teacher was criticized by a contemporary review for “leaving nothing to the imagination or invention of the teacher” and therefore being “too kind”. *The Classical Review*, vol. 43, no. 6, December 1929, p. 233.


\(^3\) Ibid., 478.

\(^4\) Ibid., 478.
depression and the looming threat of war.\textsuperscript{1} As opposed to mathematics, hard sciences, and languages, courses which sought to “societize” the individual, as well as to preserve and promote democracy, such as civics, sociology, economics, political and industrial history, and geography, became much more popular and prominent in school curricula.\textsuperscript{2} The increasingly dominant position of the social studies had the effect of uniting the humanities, including the Classics, in defense of their subjects out of fears that they would soon be eliminated.\textsuperscript{3} This very goal was the purpose behind the investigations of the Committee on the Present Status of Classical Education, appointed in 1935 by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. In addition to studying the status of Latin in school curricula and working to protect it, the committee was to “promote co-operation between the humanistic fields in combating the extreme tendency toward the domination of education by the social approach.”\textsuperscript{4}

As a result of the emphasis placed on social values in the high school curriculum, Classicists actively sought to adapt their arguments for the study of Latin to align them more closely to the current demands, shifting their emphasis “from form

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\textsuperscript{3} “…there has been an awakening as to the serious situation into which education is being brought, or even has already been brought, by the dominant forces in educational thinking and administration, and by the exaltation of the social studies and of social objectives as the determining factors in the entire educational system. Consequently there has come about the steadily strengthened determination among scholars and teachers in the humanistic fields and among adherents of a sound, reasonable philosophy of education to make a united stand in defense of their principles…Along the same line is a resolution of the Humanist Society of the University of Iowa, endorsing "the movement to combat the present trend toward making the Social Sciences the core of the school curriculum and the resultant elimination of language study and other humanistic subjects." : (Wagener, 2)

\textsuperscript{4} Wagener, 1.
and construction to content and the art of the language.”\textsuperscript{1} Attempts to relate Latin to the present-day in order to make the subject more relevant for students were greatly amplified, as teachers were encouraged to make connections to American history and promote ideal qualities of democracy and citizenship portrayed by Roman authors.\textsuperscript{2} Dorrance S. White\textsuperscript{3} offers many examples for this purpose, including “the attitude of the Romans toward conquered peoples in contrast to the brutal subjugation seen in Europe in the twentieth century…ancient and modern slavery; communism as practiced by early German tribes; reasons why the Gauls would not tolerate the importation of alcoholic liquors into their country; and conspicuous advances made by the American and European peoples over the ancient Gauls and Germans.”\textsuperscript{4} He then suggests a Latin Club performance in which a character summons Cicero,

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Crabb, Irene J. “Latin in Step with the Times.” \textit{The Classical Journal}, vol. 32, no. 9, 1937, 523-524. The need to adapt arguments to fit the current social need seems to be a key theme throughout the history of promoting Latin education which becomes consciously invoked at this time. White even goes so far as to say that arguments and methods of the study of Latin must adapt to any current trend: “Whatever the definition, interpretation, or specifications of ‘children’s interests and needs’ may be, language study must play a distinctive part in the curriculum…[Latin teachers] must meet the criticism of educators by constantly examining their field, by observing what adolescent boys and girls need that the study of Latin can supply, by drawing up a definite and attainable body of objectives, by using working material that will aid in attaining such objectives, by adapting methods to those objectives and those social needs. Suppose for example that we set as our ultimate goal of education the development of Americanism; immediately we must lay the foundations on the sources of the American form of government, social customs, inherited cultures, and the present and future place of America among the nations. Language could easily be the core of such a curriculum”: White 1941, 270. He likewise claims that “we Latin teachers have always been integrationists,” able to connect Latin to all other subjects so as to “function vitally in the life of young students” (White 1937, 272).
\item “Cicero as a Textbook on Civics: The perfect citizen Cicero endows with the courage of a Washington, the affability of a Taft, the integrity of a Lincoln, the refinement of a Wilson, and the military dash of an Andrew Jackson. Every good teacher, without pausing too long in the main business of translation, should encourage his pupils to reflect on these superb qualities of good citizenship. : (White 1941, 23). White, Dorrance S. “Latin and the Reconstructionists.” \textit{The Classical Journal}, vol. 32, no. 5, 1937, 267. Seeger, Dorothy M. and Bertha M. Winch. Teaching First Year Latin. Ohio Latin Service Committee, 1938, 2.
\item Professor of Classics at The University of Iowa from 1929-1952 and later president of CAMWS from 1947-1948. Known as the “teacher of teachers,” he also taught in three high schools in the mid-west and was the author of \textit{The Teaching of Latin}, as well as many articles on Latin pedagogy: Briggs, Ward W. Editor. \textit{Biographical Dictionary of North American Classicists}. American Philological Association, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1994, 696.
\item White 1941, 22.
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Caesar, and Vergil to deliver “patriotic messages from the past,” before George Washington appears to “bring the patriotic sentiments previously expressed into relation with modern American life.”\(^1\) In response to the purported necessity of having students gain an understanding of the cultures of other people, proponents of Latin also argued that “appreciation and tolerance are the key words of culture and are the most natural byproducts of the study of the languages of other peoples.”\(^2\) Irene J. Crabb\(^3\) even asserted in 1937 the potential for understanding present-day economics by studying the ancient economic policies of the Romans.\(^4\) She is also one of the first to ask college professors for their cooperation: “College professors, we high school teachers are anxious to fill your classes with interested and eager students, for it is only too true that if our classes drop off, yours also will dwindle and die. Therefore, let us work together toward genuine social objectives and so save the situation.”\(^5\)

Although Latin was, at this time, still by far the most commonly taught foreign language, and its enrollments continued to increase, having between 700,000 and 900,000 high school students in 1934,\(^6\) the longstanding worries about

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\(^1\) White 1941, 201.
\(^2\) White 1937, 278. “Latin study establishes a bond of sympathy with the Romans. This attitude is subject to spread and will tend to correct preconceived ideas that other peoples are inferior to us” (White 1941, 274).
\(^3\) A high school teacher in Ann Arbor and later the author of the textbooks Living with the Romans and Rome, A World Power (1951).
\(^5\) Crabb, 528. A. Pelzer Wagener, Professor of Greek and Latin at the College of William and Mary, president of CAMWS from 1948-49, and chairman of the Committee on the Present Status of Classical Education, echoes this sentiment from the other side: “Above all, the college and university instructor needs to reach down to the high-school and help the teacher there, with whom ultimately rests the well-being of our subject. He must give inspiration, advice, and practical assistance freely and gladly” (8).
\(^6\) Figures are conflicting. Mary Trowbridge Honey, writing in 1939, says that 725,142 high school pupils were enrolled in Latin in 1934. The U.S Department of Education, however, cites 907,040 high school Latin pupils in the same year. Meanwhile, The Pegasus Project holds that over three million students took Latin in schools around this time, a figure which perhaps included college enrollments.
educational reforms and competition with other subjects finally begin to make an impact on Latin. Crabb, for example, cites “two large New York high schools which have already so little Latin left…that they have decided to introduce classical civilization in courses as a means of reaching students whom now they cannot secure by any type of language offering.”¹ Latin teachers complained that, despite their advances in pedagogy, school administrators remained unaware of the improvements or believed that they belonged to only a small number of educators.² To counteract both anxieties about possible declining enrollments and preconceived notions about the study of Latin, teachers were encouraged to significantly add to the enjoyment of the subject and, crucially, to now publicize their activities whenever possible. The creation of Latin clubs was warmly supported. They were to sponsor a variety of events, including dinners, picnics, performances, publishing Latin newspapers, making Latin puns,³ various athletic contests,⁴ Halloween parties with dancing, toga costumes, and ghost stories read from Ovid, Petronius, Plautus, and Apuleius, and Christmas parties with Latin hymns, charades, and “the presentation of amusing gifts, each with an appropriate Latin verse.”⁵ Dorothy M. Seeger and Bertha M. Winch¹ in which might account for the large discrepancy. : Honey, 38. Snyder, Thomas D. Editor. “Table 16.—Public school enrollment in grades 9 to 12, by subject: 1889–90 to fall 1981,” 120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait. National Center for Education Statistics, 1993, 50. “Why Classics.” The Pegasus Project, https://www.pegasus afterschool.org/whyclassics, accessed March 12, 2019. ¹ In light of this, she argues that “the time to fight for the preservation of Latin is now while we still have it. If we teachers in Latin do not see how easily our own subject can be adapted to this new educational trend and, while we still have some people left to teach, begin to adjust our subject matter and methods, we shall soon find ourselves without pupils.” (Crabb, 518)² Seeger and Winch, 9. ³ e.g. “What is safe to do to tin horns? Tutum. When your mother orders you to do something, do you always obey her? Iubet.” (Seeger and Winch, 157).⁴ “e.g. foot race, one-legged race, three-legged race, discus throwing, javelin throwing, chariot race” also “Latin baseball”: White 1941, 199, 202.⁵ Seeger and Winch, 206-210. White 1941, 190-203. Wood, Frederic M. “Hints for Teachers.” The Classical Journal, vol. 34, no. 2, 1938, 115-116.
their handbook, *Teaching First-Year Latin*, also suggest field trips to museums or other sites which could allow for comparisons between ancient and modern times, since “fourteen-year-old boys and girls are full of life and energy and want to ‘do something.’”2 While White cautions that it will be up to the teacher to determine the line between “constructive fun and nonsensical entertainment,” both he and Seeger and Winch argue for the overall benefits of such activities, calling Latin clubs “a great humanizing factor in the lives of the teachers and pupils. To plan sing, play, and laugh together are good for both.”3 In the classroom itself, teachers exhibit new textbooks, made since the Investigation in 1924, as evidence that the subject has been keeping up with the changing curricula and philosophies, calling them “wonderfully made” and “marvel[s] of scientific construction… [which are] so flexible in the hands of the capable teacher that her methods may be suited to student aptitudes and community needs.”4 On this point, I have to agree. Not only are these textbooks worlds apart from those published even a few years earlier in terms of the amount of

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1 Dorothy M. Seeger was a teacher at the Rayen School in Youngstown, Ohio and chairman of the Second-year Latin publications for the Ohio Latin Service Committee. Bertha M. Winch was a teacher at Roosevelt High School in Dayton, Ohio and the chairman of the First-year Latin publications. (Seeger and Winch, vii).
2 Seeger and Winch, 209.
3 Seeger and Winch, 210. “It seems to the author that the returns of [the Latin club] are always a hundred-fold. And the work and play of the club are pleasantly remembered by pupils in after years.”: White, 203.
4 White 1941, 266. White 1937, 271. Incidentally, this was also the first time I noted the assumption that high school Latin teachers were women. Although Bennet stated in 1903 that some young women turned to teaching “as a respectable occupation during the period they spend between the completion of their education and marriage,” he also criticized their lack of expertise. (Bennett and Bristol, 207). By the 1920s and 1930s, however, women Latin teachers were having their teaching materials published with greater frequency. Dorrance S. White’s wife, Mabel Beatrice White, was also “a Greek and Latin scholar and careful critic of every phase of Latin teaching,” being a teacher at the Chicago Latin School, whose help and advice White credited as invaluable in the making of his handbook: (White 1941, 5).
illustrative material, containing a wealth of varied images, but they also provide plenty of interesting tidbits to accompany each picture.¹

In order to promote such new aspects of Latin classes and encourage interest in the subject, teachers called for publicity rather than propaganda, in line with the current “age of advertising.”² Teachers are prompted to showcase their students’ handmade and creative work on bulletin boards in the hallways, at exhibits, and at “Open House Night” for parents.³ In this way, it was hoped, they would be able to “arouse a community interest in Latin and to create a lasting bond of sympathy between the Latin department and the parents to whom the study of Latin itself was of no interest.”⁴ It also seems significant that, since public school enrollments had increased tremendously since the late nineteenth century, parents were not now

¹ “Paintings of classical subjects also have renewed interest. To these have been added drawings, good and bad, and the beginner’s text of today is most generously illustrated. Most recently of all, textbook makers have begun to act upon the theory that these illustrations are now to be considered as an integral part of the lessons in which they appear”: (Seeger and Winch, 180). “The best of the modern textbooks have been made attractive enough to engage the pupil’s attention, simple enough to meet eighth and ninth grade intelligence, and modern enough to conform to the prevailing ideas of educational psychology and pedagogy… The development of the Latin textbook also reflects the marked change from the ethical to the social aim…. They make an effort to develop social values and the human side of Latin.” (White 1941, 266). For one such example, see Chesnutt, Helen M. Whittier Olivenbaum and Nellie Price Rosebaugh. 1938. The Road to Latin: A First-Year Book. The John C. Winston Company. It even begins with drawings and exercises in Latin on the comparisons between ancient and modern schools. Helen M. Chesnutt was an African-American Latin teacher at Central High School in Cleveland, Ohio. Langton Hughes was one of her students, who found her inspiring. For Vergil’s 2000 birthday, she organized a play involving the whole school. She also wrote an influential biography about her father, novelist Charles W. Chesnutt.

² Wagener, 8. Seeger and Winch, 217. “Classical people as a group object to both the idea and the term ‘propaganda.’ This is not propaganda and let us from now on discard the term. It is presenting to children and to parents of children who should study Latin and Greek the values in those studies they should know of. It is presenting to the public at large the services of our subject in research and discover, in adding to the intellectual equipment of our people, and in enriching their lives with enduring cultural values. Surely that is dignified, legitimate, and necessary publicity”: (Wagener, 8).

³ On Latin bulletin boards: “Every pupil passing north on the second floor was obliged to face this spot…thus publicity was secured. Interested groups gathered there curious about the exhibits.” (Seeger and Winch, 168).

⁴ “For parents to see the work in which their children have had a part has made them feel that Latin must be a good thing and that only high grades should be brought home on the monthly report in Latin. All of these things are factors, especially in an industrial center, in increasing the number of pupils studying the language and in extending the influence of the department as an educational force in the community.” (Seeger and Winch, 179).
expected to have any prior knowledge of Latin and therefore they became a crucial new group to be persuaded of its merits. Latin clubs were also thought to be able to “advertise by their activities the value of Latin study in their school,” after teachers first ‘sell’ the idea to their own students.¹ Suggested opportunities to explain such values “to patrons and to pupils” included the performances at school assemblies of the plays “A Day Without Latin” or “Latin Grammar Speaks,” or essays written by students on “What Values Have I Derived from the Study of Latin?”² White adds that it would be helpful to have a club president who is prominent in other school activities: “this helps publicize the Latin department!”³

However, while teachers’ efforts to ensure their subject is of interest and relevant for students are surely laudable, and they certainly seem to have created viable solutions to the problem of monotony,⁴ from our point of view they go too far in desiring to emulate the Romans both as examples of patriotic citizenship and in their entertainment. For example, both White and Seeger and Winch suggest having some students dress up as slaves for presentations or banquets, at which a “‘slave’ boy” or “‘slave’ girl” would greet guests.⁵ Other issues which remain partially addressed are the stress placed on the presupposed mental abilities and language aptitude of students and the intensity of Latin class and its grading system. Some

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¹ White 1941, 191.
³ White 1941, 191.
⁴ “monotony is fatal” (Seeger and Winch, 91). “following a plan too closely may lead to dull routine, and routine can be a deadening thing, destroying the pupil’s interest…the resourceful teacher should be equipped to pull any one of a number of trick out of the bag whenever the spirit of the pupils lags” (White 1941, 155).
⁵ Seeger and Winch, 108. White 1941, 198-199, 202. This is shown to be an ongoing problem, as Ruth Hetzman, Latin teacher from 1931-1967 at Royal Oak High School who will be discussed further in Chapter 4, sponsored Latin club activities which included “slave auctions and annual dinners at which the menu was written in Latin and everyone wore togas.”: “Ruth Hetzman.” Royal Oak High School Hall of Fame, http://www.rohshalloffame.com/staff/ruth-hetzman.html, accessed March 25, 2019.
teachers begin to see the necessity of adapting their methods to the benefit of all students, not only those “who will in time lead the social and economic life of their communities,” suggesting that “a pupil need not feel that he must have established a reputation as a superior student” in order to take Latin. They even advise against overvaluing a student’s I.Q., since it does not “indicate the pupil’s actual capacity or his willingness to work or his personality, qualities that vitally affect his chances of attaining success after leaving school.” However, while such recommendations appear to show an ideology more common today which believes in a student’s potential based on their effort rather than innate ability, Latin teachers continue to desire an “ideal” class of students, discriminating against others and dissuading them from the subject. With the advent of standardized, objective tests, as opposed to the previous subjective, essay-type tests, White hopes that schools will be able to “sift out the chaff from the wheat” and put into Latin classes “only those who show definite language aptitude.” Nonetheless, while Latin teachers continue to recommend severity in grading, they also begin to recognize the harm that can be caused by constant correction and criticism, as well as the benefit of more individualized help.

1 White 1941, 233. MacNaughton, Jeanne. “Hints for Teachers.” The Classical Journal, vol. 34, no. 1, 1938, 55. “The chief concern of the friends of the Classics, in these days of educational readjustments, must be to continue to improve the instruction and to see to it that no child in America is denied the privilege of finding in the Classics an inspiration and a way of life” (Honey, 42).
2 White 1941, 227.
3 Hendrick, Carl. “The Growth-Mindset Problem.” Aeon, March 11, 2019, accessed March 14, 2019, https://aeon.co/essays/schools-love-the-idea-of-a-growth-mindset-but-does-it-work. “The ideal class would be composed of about twenty-five pupils in excellent health, mentally alert, possessing language aptitude, ambitious to succeed, and intent upon pursuing the study of Latin so far as their plan of life makes it feasible”: (White 1941, 233). “A boy or girl, however, whose scholarship record shows more failures than successes, will not be likely to find in Latin the one thing he can do well. For a consistently poor student, Latin is not recommended.” (MacNaughton, 55)
4 White 1941, 233. “It may not be too optimistic to predict that sometime there will be no need to ask what to do with the failing pupil. There will be none!” (Ibid., 233).
and attention. Building on the more humane approach proposed by Josiah Bethea Game, teachers now call for an “atmosphere of good cheer. No one does his best surrounded by unfriendly criticism.”

Another prominent development during the 1930’s, stemming from the Investigation, was the controversy between two different teaching methods, the grammar-translation method and the Latin word-order method, also known as the Latin-as-Latin or reading method. The disagreement seems not dissimilar to the ongoing ones today between proponents of the grammar-translation method and proponents of reading and, more recently, active, methods. The grammar-translation method, recognizably, required a “mastery” of inflections and grammar for comprehension, followed by translation to test the student on their understanding. Meanwhile, the Latin word-order method had as its first aim the development of the ability to read Latin in the original and “comprehend its meaning as read.”

1 For vocabulary quizzes: “Score on the basis of a word being wholly right or wholly wrong, as the partial credit system is too involved. Severity in scoring will lead to greater accuracy. Let one word make the score a ‘B’; two wrong, a ‘C’; three or more wrong, a “Fail” (White 1941, 182).

2 Seeger and Winch, 135. “Avoid disciplining or rebuking a pupil just as the bell rings. Let the pupils go with the feeling that they have worked hard, but have had a good time” (White 1941, 252). “If criticism must be made, let it be constructive. Select the group or individual needing it and give the criticism outside of class time. Even then more will be accomplished by helping them with their difficulties than by harsh criticism.” (Seeger and Winch, 139). “It is a good thing to choose privately the day before some one of the poorer or more timid pupils and drill him until he reads well. Such a pupil is pleased to show the class that he can read, is encouraged by this practice, and is benefited by your personal interest” (Ibid., 149).

3 “I am here advocating a kind of oral-objective-psychological-direct method rolled into one. Some have called it the conversational method, since conversation about activities or concrete objects in the room or represented by picture or in the story being read is an almost inevitable feature of the method….I prefer calling it the reading method; but whatever it is called, the method I am urging must be one which will provide effective devices for teaching pronunciation, vocabulary, forms, and syntax functionally, and one that will lead the pupil to realize that language is something used for conveying thought; that it is not merely black marks on a white page or white marks on a black board.” Carr, W. L. “Shall We Teach Our Pupils to Read Latin?” The Classical Journal, vol. 23, no. 7, 1928, 509-10.

4 White 1941, 130-1.

5 Seeger and Winch, 145. Although some teachers found the reading method too “revolutionary,” it was not only recommended by the Investigation and Mason D. Gray, but was previously proposed by the Committee on the Present of Classical Education, as well as the earlier 1894 Report of the
most extreme form, vocabulary and new constructions were learned by recognition in sentences only, without the help of vocabulary lists and grammar rules, and there was no emphasis on formal grammar and syntax.¹ Few, however, held strictly to this rule, often providing some instruction in grammar and charts as visual aids, in addition to abundant reading. Only the University High School in Chicago was known to follow the reading method absolutely.² Therefore, while the grammar-translation method remained most widely used, it also became the most flexible, allowing teachers to include what they found to be the best parts of a variety of different methods.³

Beginning to align themselves with the aims of the reading method, proponents of the grammar-translation method soon began to argue that it too did not simply involve looking for a subject and verb, but that students should be encouraged to take in the meaning of a sentence in the Latin word-order.⁴ In search of a “happy medium”

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¹ Ibid., 145. Aims of the Reading Method: “1. To develop the power of pupils to comprehend Latin by silent reading without use of vocabulary or the memorizing of conjugations, declensions, or rules; 2. To develop the power to translate at sight certain kinds of Latin into clear, idiomatic English which conveys accurately the thought of the Latin author; 3. To develop power of written expression in simple Latin”; Hutchinson, Mark E. “Some Needed Research in the Teaching of Latin.” The Classical Journal, vol. 29, no. 5, 1934, 339. “The Latin word-order method relies largely on conversational Latin, and trains the pupil to recognize thought-units in the order in which they occur in the Latin sentence and to take in the significance of a Latin word without giving its English equivalent. Response to questions on content takes the place of translation in determining the accuracy of comprehension” (White 1941, 130).

² Hutchinson 1934, 338.

³ Seeger and Winch, 146. “As a matter of fact this method, in the hands of the better teachers of the present day, has been so much transformed as to make it scarcely more than recognizable in comparison with what it was in its earlier years” (Ibid., 8).

⁴ White 1941, 141.
between the two methods, some teachers sought to adapt to the newer methods while reintroducing traditional elements of grammar study which the Investigation deemed too excessive for first-year students. For example, Chesnutt, Olivenbaum, and Rosebaugh built their first-year textbook, *The Road to Latin* around exactly the purpose of finding such a “golden mean,” developing a new Cleveland Method which made use of both the oral presentation of Latin and formal grammar. Still others sought to determine by experimentation, aided by the development of new standardized tests, which method would be most beneficial for students. Mark E. Hutchinson of Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa repeatedly calls for an end to the “pointless debates on the value, or lack of value, of certain methods of teaching Latin” and instead for the comparison of their classes by “the best standard tests available.” Such an experiment was, in fact, carried out in 1938 by J. Wayne Wrightstone of Ohio State University, who concluded, predictably, that the new reading method provided better scores in reading, and the grammar-translation method provided better scores in grammar. However, knowledge of vocabulary was shown to be not significantly different between the two groups, and a student’s I.Q.

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1 White 1941, 113. “Were the teacher today to carry out the methods employed a half century ago, or even those advocated by Bennett, most of the pupils would find Latin so distasteful that they would not study it for more than a single year. If, on the other hand, we should faithfully carry out the recommendations of the *Report*, it would mean that an unwarranted amount of first-year work would have to be carried over into the second year, and the traditional first-year work would require nearly two years. Neither Bennett nor the *Report* has given us a solution to the complex problem that confronts us. (White, 114)

2 Chesnutt, Olivenbaum, Rosebaugh, iii. Hutchinson 1934, 349.

3 Hutchinson, Mark E. “Objective Measurements in Latin. Their Value and Purpose.” *The Classical Journal*, vol. 26, no. 5, 1931, 355-356. “Perhaps some of these problems cannot be solved, but until they are solved or at least a greater effort has been made to grapple with them scientifically, none of us Latinists dare to be too dogmatic in our strictures upon the faulty method of other Latin teachers, whom, depending on our point of view, we consider too heretical or too orthodox” (Hutchinson 1934, 356).

was revealed to be “not as important as many persons would have us believe” in
determining their ability in Latin.\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1} Wrightston, 165.
Chapter 4: For Discipline and Democracy (1940s)

With the onset of World War II, Latin teachers once more had to adjust to the needs and demands of the time, and new emphases for the justification of Latin in high school curricula were required. The teachers saw themselves directly threatened by the increase of war-preparation classes, which were being pushed in both high schools and colleges. Professional education associations promoted training in areas related to the war effort, such as in mechanical, scientific, technical, and industrial skills, while the humanities and most foreign languages were demoted in importance.\(^1\) Dr. W.G. Carr of the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association went so far as to advise school administrators to discontinue Latin as a high school subject for the duration of the war and enlist Latin teachers for more vital functions. His statement led to the curtailment of Latin programs in some high schools or simply discouragement of the subject in others.\(^2\) Some Classicists claimed that such educational professionals were simply using the war as an excuse to permanently eliminate the study of foreign languages from high schools.\(^3\)

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\(^3\) “But apparently the National Education Association would take advantage of this opportunity virtually to banish the ancient languages from the high schools on the ground that they are worthless for the average American and that high-school freshmen and sophomores should devote themselves to
However, for the first time it seems, Latin teachers hesitated to jump immediately into impassioned defenses of their subject. In the midst of such an international calamity and calls for substantial preparation, even they began to question Latin’s relevancy and their own efforts in teaching it.¹ After describing a student whose ambition to join the Navy resulted in his first dropping out of Latin to work in a machine-shop and finally dropping out of school to enlist, Latin teacher Ruth Hetzman of Royal Oak High School in Michigan asks herself, “What could I have done for Henry, and what should I be doing for the other Henrys and Johns and Marys who are left in my classes? Are they wasting their time declining nouns, comparing the irregular adjective, and translating the passive periphrastic?”²

Nevertheless, she and others conclude that the best course of action for a teacher is to “stop, reconsider, and re-evaluate” their courses in order to ensure that they are still able to meet the needs of students in difficult times.³ Settling on the most relevant technical subjects or to modern languages like Spanish or Chinese. It would be a dreary world for the future if the humanities are to be excluded and boys and girls are to be educated merely as scientists and technicians.⁴ Tavenner, 522. “The fact of the matter is that some persons, under guise of the war effort, see a fine opportunity to rid the high school curriculum permanently of Latin, modern languages (except Chinese and other languages for a select few), much of English literature, and other cultural subjects, in favor of nutrition, vocational subjects, health education, and community projects”: Ullman, B. L. “To Arms, Latin Teachers!” The Classical Outlook, vol. 20, no. 6, 1943, 53. Berthold Ullman, Professor of Latin at the University of Chicago and UNC Chapel Hill, was also the author of the textbook Latin for Americans, first published in 1941 and still in use today.

¹ Carr, W. L. “Word Power in War and Peace.” The Classical Outlook, vol. 20, no. 6, 1943, 53. “I, too, I confess, had been wondering how vital my work was in a war-torn world. First-aid, knitting, and defense classes were crowding in upon my horizon. I felt that my pupils were asking why study Latin…when they would end up in the army, anyway. And I was asking myself if I should not be teaching them something more essential than Latin grammar.” Hetzman, 78.

² Hetzman, 76. For Hetzman, this process involved distributing a questionnaire to her students, through which she discovered to her satisfaction that most students still “realized the value of the course” and “were not consciously thinking of the changing values in our changing world. To them Latin was no
arguments in defense of Latin to suit the times, Classicists emerged from their existential concerns both more confident and more determined than ever to promote Latin as a vital part of wartime education.\(^1\) They urged their colleagues to do the same, arguing that “these are no days for the doubter and the questioner in our ranks; we must be “all-out” Latinists.”\(^2\)

After nearly twenty years of having to promote the cultural aspects of Latin study in order to keep up with demands for the social studies, Classicists saw the opportunity to almost completely reverse their position back to emphasizing values of discipline, precision, and difficulty once more.\(^3\) Complaining about the recent “democratized…softening” and “cheapening tendencies” of schools to encourage paths of least mental effort and to lower standards “in order not to give offense to the less gifted,” they cite similar criticisms from the military to support their views.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) “In a spirit of earnest co-operation, then, and of a reasoned confidence and self-assurance, we classicists may assert the claim of our subject in these our days”: Korfmacher, 140-1. “Let us put our hands to the plow and not look back with regret, but go forward in the knowledge that our task is worthy of our best; that it, too, is vital for defense; and that it is essential to the lasting peace for which we are all striving”: Hetzman, 87.

\(^2\) “Secondary Latin and even Greek are as much in place as ever; and beyond that intellectual self-assurance, we need an even stronger emotional urge and zeal invigorating us in our classroom method and technique and in our justification of the subject on all sides.”: Korfmacher, 134. “We must be ourselves fully convinced and able to give evidence of our conviction if we expect the educational world to heed us in the multiplicity of subjects now being put forward for consideration.” Reinsch, 312. It is interesting to note the proliferation of violent, military language that seems to have pervaded Classicists’ arguments during the war. Repeatedly, they call for supporters to “join the fight” in “defensive,” “offensive,” and “militant” programs to prevent “hostile action” toward, or the “extermination” of, their subject. : Ullman, 53. Tavenner, Eugene, and Bayard Quincy Morgan. 1943. “An Invitation to Fight.” *The Classical Journal*, vol. 38, no. 5, 257–259.

\(^3\) “Latin and Greek may still merit recognition as a mental discipline despite the relegation of the disciplinary theory to the limbo of allegedly invalid assumptions.” Tavenner and Morgan, 149. “The pleasant dream of twenty years fades, and cold reason gets a hearing. We must go into complete reverse educationally. We must elevate mental discipline to its proper pinnacle. We must recognize that mathematics, languages, history, and science are the essential fields of study at the secondary level. In no other way can we fight the war and win the peace.”: Korfmacher, 134.

\(^4\) Tavenner, 514-15, 520. Needless to say, these Classicists continue to exclude students based on supposed mental ability and desire only “superior” or “capable” students to take Latin.
Military leaders declared that new recruits were “woefully deficient” in mathematics and physical sciences, to the serious detriment of the war effort.¹ In response, they asked educators to stress “principles of democracy, of self-discipline, and of obedience,” expressing their support of Latin and Greek in addition to math and science.² Teachers seized the chance to promote Latin on the basis of its supposed ability to develop habits of perseverance, effort, judgement, accuracy, and concentrated attention.³ Asserting the necessity of such habits in the professional training of doctors, nurses, engineers, and pilots, Ruth Hetzman explains “there is no better time than now to begin to train these young people in precision…There is no better place than a Latin class to learn to think through a situation, approach it with all the evidence available, make a careful analysis, apply formulae, and test the results.”⁴

Similarly, in light of the danger that ideologies like Nazism might take hold in America, teachers advocated the importance of language study as a way for students to learn how to evaluate what is told to them, express themselves accurately, and formulate their own thoughts.⁵ Otherwise, it was feared, students would be “easy prey for the proponents of the totalitarian view.”⁶ William Charles Korfmacher¹ even

¹ Bagley, William C. “Do the Classics Have a Place in Wartime Education?” The Classical Weekly, vol. 36, no. 13, 1943, 147. “From the comment and criticism that comes not only from military headquarters but in general today, it is very evident that young men (and women) are lacking in power of concentration, in accuracy, in a sense of responsibility, and in willingness to do anything hard.”: Hill, Essie. “Latin in America Today.” The Classical Outlook, vol. 20, no. 1, 1942, 2.
² Korfmacher, 135. Bagley, 149. “Colonel Venable of Virginia, who addressed a meeting of college presidents last January in Baltimore to formulate plans for the war, actually declared that he considered the study of Latin the ideal discipline for the soldier. He expressed the view that it teaches the student to think coherently, interrelatedly, and with precision.”: Tavenner, 515.
³ Hetzman, 80, 86. Hill, 2.
⁴ Hetzman, 80.
⁵ Carr, 54.
⁶ Tavenner, 521.
suggested the importance of being able to appraise language coming from statesmen or charlatans, out of an anxiety about what sounds very much like ‘fake news.’ Latin teachers emphasized the importance of having liberally educated citizens, who admired democracy as a way of life and recognized the ancient civilizations that had contributed to it, in order to win the war and build a better future. It was believed that, if citizens were more knowledgeable about the origins of their culture, they would be more willing to fight to defend it. Proponents of the humanities also argued that, if their subject was to be discarded and a narrower educational viewpoint adopted, “you will lose freedom, as surely as if you were to invite Hitler and his henchmen to rule over you.” However, Classicists did not only espouse ideals of ‘western civilization.’ They also began to emphasize the importance of studying and appreciating other cultures and ways of life. Adopting the arguments made by defenders of foreign language study in general, they contend that an understanding of

1 Professor of Classical Languages at St. Louis University He is described as a “citizen-classicist” and committed teacher who “believed in and fostered the meticulous cultivation of the classics for students' self-development but also pursued relentlessly the importance of including the classics in the American curriculum at all levels.”: Rexine, John E. “Korfmacher, William Charles.” Database of Classical Scholars, Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers.edu, accessed March 21, 2019.

2 “We shall probably hear in increasing numbers pronouncements of statesmen and pronouncements of charlatans, and listen to utterances intended to inform and utterances intended to deceive. There is likely to be an increasing need for a sagacious and intelligent American public mentally equipped to come to grips with issues of national and international moment and able to weigh and appraise language because language has been an integral part of its scholastic training—or perhaps the integrating part”: Korfmacher, 137.

3 “Democracy is in very truth a ‘way of life,’ a thing of internal conviction, a possession which, if it is to thrive, calls for a full measure of understanding and unstinted devotion.”: Korfmacher, 139.

4 Hetzman, 85.

5 Tavenner, 517, 521. “WHAT! SHALL WE DISCARD “the humanities” because Hitler is inhuman? ...Why, that's the essence of the Hitler doctrine! Let us keep clear of the poisonous contagion. Surely the humanities, the classics, the liberal arts, the amenities of civilized life are among and not the least of the great causes for which we are fighting.” Tavenner, 523, citing John Kieran.

6 “An appreciation of an alien culture forms an essential of a liberal education. A clear realization of the contribution of foreign lands to the world's cultural heritage is indispensable in the solution of the tremendous problems which confront us now and will confront us in the years to come. Today, as never before, the importance of a working knowledge foreign languages is self-evident. An understanding of alien mores and ways of thinking is absolutely vital we are to co-operate effectively with our allies.”: Reinsch, 304, citing Edwin A. Lee.
others through language helps to remove “misunderstanding and suspicion” and may lead to “an enduring collaboration of democratic peoples who shall be free to cherish their own traditions, their own languages, and their own ways of life.”¹ Thereby, they acknowledge, for the first time, a need for tolerance of racial differences, however at the same time they begin promoting ‘color blind’ arguments of merit which are unfortunately still used today.² The new argument in favor of examining and appreciating the differences between cultures, rather than having a desire only for the emulation of Roman values, is even carried through to the study of Latin grammar. In Gilbert Moore’s English-Latin class, “not only did the students learn similarities of the two languages, but, more important, the differences were stressed in pointing out the niceties of feeling and the shading of thought gained by different wordings.”³

Beyond the typical arguments in defense of Latin study and the idea that teachers must always educate students “for life as well as death… [in] preparation for permanent peace,” Ruth Hetzman suggests a new claim for Latin in times of war.⁴ She posits that there is a benefit to be had from a school’s ability to provide a safe, stable environment for “painfully war-conscious” students who may become

¹Reinsch, 313-14.
²“[These future citizens, whom Fortune has destined for the huge task of rebuilding a better world once peace is gained, must have vision. They will need the breadth of understanding, the tolerance for racial and national differences, the far-sighted wisdom obtained from a classical education.”: Hetzman 86. “We must establish beyond any doubt the equality of men. And we shall find this equality, not in the different talents which we severally possess, nor in the different incomes which we severally earn, but in the great franchise of the mind, the universal franchise, which is bounded neither by color, nor by creed, nor by social status. Open the books if you wish to be freed”: Tavenner, 517, citing Wendell Willkie. Peralta, Dan-el Padilla. “Some thoughts on AIA-SCS 2019.” Medium, Jan. 7, 2019, https://medium.com/@danelpadillaperalta/some-thoughts-on-aia-scs-2019-d6a480a1812a, accessed April 16, 2019.
³ Reinsch, 309.
⁴ White, 184, citing Fred S. Dunham.
increasingly overwhelmed by the war and face difficulties at home. Teachers, therefore, must become “keepers of morale,” providing both security and perspective on current events. She argues that the study of Latin enables students to learn that history tends to repeat itself, and that national emergencies, greed, and corruption are not unique to their times; such a realization can be a comfort to concerned students. Here, too, there is a change from purely idealizing the past, as Hetzman suggests providing students with ancient examples of breaking with tradition, totalitarianism, and the “draft evasions” of Achilles and Odysseus to compare with the present. However, in keeping with the return of the emphasis on discipline in the study of Latin, she cautions against sugar-coating the class in order to generate interest. Yet such activities and Latin club events continue to be eagerly promoted, both to encourage the study and to build morale. Beginning in the early 1940s, schools across the country began participating in Latin Week celebrations, including banquets, skits, chariot races, the singing of patriotic songs in Latin, and presentations

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1 Hetzman, 79. In periods of emotional crises children need above all a sense of security [At home there are] “distraught parents, overcritical of our war effort, upset over rationing, priorities, and increased costs of living, and bitter over labor striking in defense plants while sons die in foreign lands…With fathers in the service and mothers in defense work, [children] find their only security at school…“Especially are adolescents depressed by adult talk of pessimism and discouragement. They begin to wonder if this government is worth sacrificing for, worth fighting and dying for.” Hetzman, 81.
2 Hetzman, 81.
3 “They will soon see that history does repeat itself and they will be reassured to learn that it is not only in our day that national emergencies call for radical changes…a major worry of idealistic youth is the prevalence of greed and corruption. History records noble deeds and sacrifices; current newspapers reveal subversive activities and crimes. There is a tendency to feel that heroes lived only in the past and that self-centered politicians belong only to our day.” Hetzman, 81.
4 Hetzman, 81-2.
5 “The interests helps out the toughness, and I am inclined to think that they together build morale”: Tavenner, 135.
of student costumes and projects, to publicize their programs. In order to better align Latin classes with the times, teachers came up with many other ways to make the subject relevant for their students. The Committee of New York City Teachers of Latin created modifications to their state curriculum for Roman civilization with an eye to war developments, including explicit comparisons between Caesar and Hitler. Many schools are also said to have participated in multi-disciplinary exhibits on the development of the airplane with titles such as “From Daedalus to Doolittle.” George W. King of Battin High School in Elizabeth, New Jersey even recommended the creation of a ‘Latin for Nurses’ Club for girls who intend to work in medical fields to learn Latin words found in medical terminology.

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Chapter 5: Decline and Resurgence (1960s-1980s)

Scholars of Latin pedagogy have extensively analyzed the post-war period because of the sharp decline in enrollments that occurred in the mid-1960s through the 1970s, and so I will briefly summarize some of their findings in this final chapter.¹ When enrollments began to rise once more in the late 1970s and 1980s, Classicists and Latin teachers looked back on the period of decline in order to continue the efforts that had been made to stem the flow and ensure that the problems were addressed. They determined that, while the causes for the decreases in Latin enrollments were many and complex, several important factors contributed to the drop-off. On the whole, there were challenges to traditional institutions at every level, including the methods, courses, and curricula of both high schools and colleges.

First, the Space Race and the launch of Sputnik in 1957 spurred a renewed interest in math, science, and modern languages.² The National Defense Education Act, passed in 1958, began providing grants and funding to support these changes.³ In response to the perceived threat posed by the increases in modern languages, Belle Gould, chairman of the National Junior Classical League Committee, attempted desperately in 1964 to encourage supporters of Latin to arouse interest in their subject.

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¹ After similarly substantial decreases during World War II, enrollments in Latin were once more on the rise until 1962. They then dropped severely from 702,000 in 1962 to 265,293 in 1970. Enrollments continued to decrease until 1982, after reaching a low of 151,782 in 1978. See Table 1.
³ Ibid., 120.
“now. Right now, this minute.”\textsuperscript{1} In 1963, the Roman Catholic Church de-emphasized Latin, allowing Masses to be celebrated in the vernacular language, typically English or Spanish, which caused an abrupt decline in Latin enrollments in parochial schools.\textsuperscript{2} Most significantly, a combination of political events, including the Vietnam War, the Cambodian Invasion, and the Watergate scandal, led to public disillusionment and demonstrations.\textsuperscript{3} Anti-establishment sentiments were just as prominent in high schools and colleges, as traditional education, especially in English and foreign languages, was rejected in favor of practical subjects.\textsuperscript{4} More than twice as many students were now planning to go to college than had in 1950, and they sought courses directly related to improving their work skills and future employment opportunities. Their efforts were encouraged by educational, social, and political leaders who began promoting college education on the basis of the potential for higher salaries, rather than the earlier ideals of the “intrinsic benefits of a liberal education.”\textsuperscript{5} One of the main outcomes of the demand for relevant courses was that the many colleges and universities began to lessen, or drop altogether, their

\textsuperscript{1} Gould, Belle. “The Time is Now.” The Classical Outlook, vol. 42, no. 2, 1964, 17. Although she holds a traditional opinion of the value of Latin, believing it to be a “necessity” of a basic course, Gould also slightly condemns the “calm indifference” and “smugness” of Latin teachers who believed themselves secure in the knowledge that Latin was “essential.” (16). Even throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when Latin teachers began to slowly adopt the position that Latin should no longer be promoted and held to be superior to other subjects, this smugness remains evident in some defenses of Latin, as will be seen below.


\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., 120.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., 120.

\textsuperscript{5} Sebesta, Judith Lynn. “Aliquid Semper Novi: New Challenges, New Approaches.” in Richard A. LaFleur, Latin for the 21st Century: From Concept to Classroom. Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc., 1998, pp. 15. “While in the 1950s only about 25% of high-school graduates went on to college, the percentage had more than doubled by 1980. Much of this new clientele consisted of non-traditional students, who attended college to improve their work skills and gain promotion at their place of employment or qualify for better-paying jobs” (15).
requirements of foreign languages for admission and graduation.\textsuperscript{1} This in turn led to the elimination of foreign language programs at many secondary schools.\textsuperscript{2} Latin in particular was “condemned as irrelevant,” criticized for requiring more time for grammar drill than modern languages, as well as for “enshrining the militaristic values of the Roman dictators and emperors,” particularly Caesar’s imperialist expansion.\textsuperscript{3} Kenneth Kitchell, then of Louisiana State University, adds that Latin was “twice doomed” in this period of anti-establishment sentiment, “since, as a requirement in many curricula, it both stood for and was enforced by the establishment.”\textsuperscript{4}

Once again, Latin teachers saw the necessity of rising in defense of their subject and increasing their promotional and collaborative efforts. In doing so, there were of course those who argued, explicitly or implicitly, from the standpoint that Latin is inherently better than other subjects, and that its loss would be detrimental to student ability. With not a few hints of smug disparagement, some Classicists criticized the “Decade of the Relevant” and the “Cafeteria-line Curricula.”\textsuperscript{5} Writing in the late 1980s, Richard LaFleur cites decreases in student achievement as evidence

\textsuperscript{1} LaFleur, 1987, xiii.
\textsuperscript{3} Kitchell, Kenneth F. “The Great Latin Debate: The Futility of Utility.” in Richard A. LaFleur, \textit{Latin for the 21st Century: From Concept to Classroom}. Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc., 1998, 1. Phinney, 120. Just as Latin teachers during WWII claimed that educational reformers were using the demands of war-time as an excuse for eliminating foreign language programs, Phinney claims that “Undoubtedly, some of this criticism was exaggerated, hypocritical, or both, and was sometimes used for self-serving purposes by school principals who wanted an excuse to prune the wildly proliferating language curriculum (which in many high schools had expanded to include modern foreign languages like Japanese, Chinese, and Russian because they were deemed crucial to the national economic and military survival) or by teachers of other elective subjects who wanted to reduce the competition for their students” (120).
\textsuperscript{4} Kitchell, 1.
that the educational changes of previous years did not provide the adequate training that courses such as Latin could provide: “Johnny did ‘his own thing’…and in the process forgot how to read and write.”\(^1\) Even efforts which encouraged experimentation and improvement seemed to inadvertently hold the Classics in higher esteem than other subjects. For example, Floyd Moreland’s study, “Strategies in Teaching Greek and Latin: Two Decades of Experimentation,” explains that, while educators finally turned away from an “ivory tower approach” and were exploring new methods, which will be discussed below, they did so to “correct” declines in enrollment and “preserve quality and substance in humanistic education.”\(^2\) However, even among teachers who believed that Latin held “intrinsic merit” and “cannot fail to impose itself again,” they often expressed their willingness to “reevaluat[e], experiment, and change” and allow Classical Studies to grow “more in accordance with the needs of our time and society.”\(^3\)

As early as 1961, Goodwin B. Beach and Ford Lewis Battles explained the widely held belief that the methods of teaching Latin must be changed and the subject matter more closely adapted to the students’ interests of the time.\(^4\) As a solution, they offered a collection of conversational Latin words and phrases to enliven the course,

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\(^1\) Ibid., 2. Richard LaFleur was a Professor of Classics from 1972-2012 at the University of Georgia. In addition to revising Wheelock’s Latin, LaFleur has published extensive collections on Latin pedagogy, as well as other teaching materials: “Biography: Richard A. LaFleur.” University of Georgia: Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, accessed, April 7, 2019.


\(^4\) Beach, Goodwin B. and Ford Lewis Battles. 1961. Locvtionvm Cotidianarvm Glossarivm: A Guide to Latin Conversation, Hartford Seminary Press. “It is quite widely agreed that the humanities must continue to be taught but that the methods must be changed. One change needed is to charge the subjects with more interest and to persuade the pupils that real, live, flesh-and-blood people used the ancient languages; i.e. the reading matter must be adapted to their age and interests. To bring out the terms that were encountered in daily life, but which occur but rarely in authors that pupils are likely to read, so as to enliven and vary the courses, is a necessity” (v)
just as Bertrand Kraus did in 1930. Likewise, Richard P. Eichner of Cranford High School in New Jersey criticizes teachers who “are quite happy teaching what they have always taught and find innumerable ways to rationalize their ultra-conservative attitude.” Commenting on the feelings of dread experienced by Classicists in the 1970s, Vincent J. Cleary of the University of Massachusetts, explicitly stated that he and his colleagues had to “present a new image of ourselves to the world, primarily so that others may begin to change the way they view us and in a very real sense in order to change the way we view ourselves.” Both he and Meyer Reinhold, who was writing over ten years later, provide similar, helpful commandments for teachers to keep in mind in order to keep progressing in their efforts to promote Latin. Both require that Latin teachers “shalt not bewail the passing of the ‘good old days’” and, in opposition to the proclamations of the superiority of Latin study as implied above, Reinhold even demands that teachers “not promote classical subjects with an apostolic claim of ‘absolute goodness.’” Cleary adds that Latin teachers must stop blaming declining enrollments on everyone and everything else, from the textbook, the modern language teacher, and the school principal, to the PTA, the freedom in American education, and the committee to reelect the president. Instead, teachers ought to reflect on their own pedagogical methods and how they are being perceived,

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4 Reinhold, 134. Cleary, 2.
5 Cleary, 1-2.
while doing all they can to promote their subject. However, Cleary echoes calls made by Latin teachers in previous decades, and makes a fresh attempt to encourage both spoken Latin and the reading of Latin in the Latin order, urging teachers to “stop condemning out of hand” new methods before they have experimented with them in their own classrooms. Reinhold, on the other hand, writing in a comparatively stable period when Latin enrollments were on the rise, does not feel the need to insist upon additional new efforts. Nevertheless, he too insists that grammar not be made an end in itself, and that teachers not attempt to restore Latin as an educational requirement. Such sentiments aimed to persuade Latin teachers to believe in and actively promote their field and yet at the same time to recognize that some of their traditional beliefs and methods were no longer appropriate. They seem to mark a shift toward recognizing and removing some of the elitism and presumed superiority of Classical studies.

1 I must stop being defensive about my subject. Those of us who view the question as "Why Latin?" or "Why Greek?" rather than "Why not Latin?" or "Why not Greek?" are defeated before the first shot is fired. If the best defense is a good offense, let us take to the offensive rather than always being on the defensive… I must beard the lion in his den and shout my message - "The classics live, live, live"- from every rooftop, every podium, every PTA and schoolboard meeting in the land. We live in a competitive, free-enterprise society. Our American educational system is a democratic one and offers, for better or worse, a smorgasbord of choices to students. This fact of life puts us in competition for students. Therefore we have an obligation to make our offerings appear in the best possible light, to promote and – if you will – sell our wares."; Cleary, 1-2.

2 “I must teach my students, and myself, to read Latin and Greek out loud in the classroom. These languages were meant to be heard, and not only seen. There is far too little Latin and Greek pronounced in the classrooms that I visit…I must teach my students to read Latin and Greek as well as to translate them. If these languages were read and understood by the Romans and Greeks, it must be at least possible for them to be read and understood today…I must teach my students to understand an inflected language and some of the subtleties of a Latin or Greek sentence, i.e., to understand the words in the order in which they appear in the sentence. To the extent that I achieve this goal I am a bona fide language teacher. Let those who say "Find the subject, find the verb" be shot at dawn. In my opinion, this is the worst bit of advice ever given to students, and those students who do not at some point go beyond it are doomed to a life in which it will be impossible to read a Latin or Greek sentence.” Cleary, 2.

3 “Thou shalt not grasp at everything new and discard traditional methods lock stock and barrel; thou shalt not make grammar an end in itself; thou shalt not labor to restore Latin as an educational requirement”: Reinhold, 134.
In many ways the “Great Counter Defensive” was markedly similar to the defense movements that had been mounted by Latin teachers in the past, and many of the arguments used remained the same. As ever, educators argued that Latin improved students’ vocabularies, study skills, critical thinking, ability in college, and that it provided contact with “the finest literary and civic minds of all time.” However, in addition to the usual lines of argument, Classicists now included that Latin students exhibited higher results on the SAT than their peers in other subjects, demonstrated by a study published by Richard LaFleur in 1981. LaFleur begins to slightly resist the idea that Latin “naturally attracts superior students” by showing that students who took German, which he says is “also generally regarded as a difficult language with appeal only to the exceptional high schooler,” scored lower than students in Latin. The idea that Latin is “not just for the elite” finally becomes the newest addition to the list of go-to arguments fiercely advocated by Latin teachers. Sally Davis explains how Classicists and Latin teachers collectively worked together to defend Latin to school administrators, curriculum supervisors, and local, state, and federal organizations. The values of Latin were vigorously publicized by national organizations, among them the American Classical League and the American Philological Association (today called the Society for Classical Studies), and by

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1 Kitchell, 1.
2 Ibid., 1-2.
4 Ibid., 117.
5 Kitchell, 1.
regional Classical Associations (like the Classical Association of the Middle West and South); publications like *Classical Outlook*, edited by Richard LaFleur, did the same.\(^1\) The National Junior Classical League and the National Latin Exam, both managed by secondary school teachers, were especially praised for publishing advertisements and broadening the appeal of Latin.\(^2\)

However, it was likely not only the campaigning efforts of Latin teachers that contributed to the rebound in enrollments, but the fact that the teachers themselves were willing to discard old methods and develop new ones.\(^3\) Sally Davis and Floyd Moreland, in his study on Latin teaching methods, explain that educators first began by de-emphasizing the traditional grammar-translation method with its focus on morphology and syntax.\(^4\) It was believed that, whereas an emphasis on grammar and syntax suited the previous aims of writing Latin, new methods were needed to support the current aim of reading Latin. There was also a growing awareness of, and interest in, the incorporation of linguistic theory into the teaching of Latin.\(^5\) Such efforts, including pattern practice exercises and inductive methods, were developed by Waldo

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2. Ibid., 80-1.
3. Amusingly, after congratulating Latin teachers for their seemingly successful efforts to increase enrollments of their programs (“the cleverness of our arguments won the day”), Kitchell expresses his surprise and dismay at discovering that the same arguments were used by the chairman of the Classical Investigation, Andrew West, eighty years previously. From this he concludes both that “there is nothing new under the sun” and that the arguments which have been used most often are likely also the most effective: “It behooves us then, to look backward before progressing forward, and to choose wisely from those arguments which seem soundest (or recur most frequently).” Therefore Kitchell does not see the recurring use of old arguments as a problem, and even defends the Classical Investigation: “A current teacher could do worse than read this study for its pragmatic recommendations, many of which are in place today.”: Kitchell, 2, 13.
5. Moreland, 1.
Sweet and Gerda Seligson from the University of Michigan. The structural approach, which in many ways sounds remarkably similar to the Latin word-order method of previous decades and is even described as such by Seligson, promised to “teach the reading of Latin as Latin…as a living language rather than as a crossword puzzle…[entailing] an automatic, non-analytical reaction to syntactical signals.”

Although it at first eliminated the learning of all paradigms and was followed by only a few schools, the structural approach grew in use with the publication of more textbooks and the development of more systematic methods for its use, including the reintroduction of some analytical instruction. Likewise, some instructors turned to the natural, or direct, method of Hans Oerberg’s Lingua Latina which is entirely in Latin, and the inductive, reading methods of the Cambridge Latin Course. In addition, Latin programs were introduced in elementary and middle schools first by Judith LeBovit in Washington D.C., and then in Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Indianapolis, Detroit, and Brooklyn. Such programs were specifically designed to

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1 Ibid., 1. Waldo E. Sweet was Professor of Latin at the University of Michigan from 1946-1981. He published the self-taught active Latin course, Artes Latinae, which included recordings for pronunciation guides, as well as textbook, Latin: A Structural Approach. “This book was written for teachers without previous training in structural linguistics who are dissatisfied with the traditional approach to Latin teaching and want to try something new…In general keep any talk about the language to a minimum. Students will learn Latin by hearing it, speaking it, reading it, writing it, not by talking about it. Wherever possible, avoid the kind of talking about the language which we call translating. If the student can answer the questions in Latin, he knows the meaning of the passage. The slower student, who cannot at first answer the Latin questions, will gradually comprehend the meaning of the original through the questions and answers.”: Sweet, Waldo. Latin: A Structural Approach. The University of Michigan, 1957, v. Gerda Seligson was Professor of Latin at the University of Michigan from 1956 – 1979 and was the co-author of the beginning textbooks, Greek for Reading and Latin for Reading.


3 Ibid., 97-99.

4 Davis, 2. Moreland, 2.
improve language skills among disadvantaged and minority students.\(^1\) In keeping with the general movement away from a focus on grammar, LeBovit sought “to teach Latin through story, song, visuals, and games, and - most important for this program - to draw students' attention to the links between Latin and English.”\(^2\) The successful results of the programs, revealing accelerated improvement by Latin students compared to those with no foreign language class, also showed the first steps made by teachers to make Latin accessible to students who were traditionally excluded from their classes.

As a result of the many efforts of Latin teachers, the reestablishment of foreign language requirements by colleges and universities, and the conservative doctrines of the “Back to Basics” movement, incited in part by fears of a decrease in student language ability, Latin enrollments began to increase again during the 1980s.\(^3\) The teaching of Latin appears to have reverted back somewhat at this time to more traditional arguments and methods, as Moreland concludes that more teachers were determining that “the so-called old-fashioned “traditional” method of teaching an

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\(^1\) Phinney, 122. Reinhold, 136.: “The aim is to develop a feel for language: the goals are specifically to improve English vocabulary, spelling, reading comprehension, and critical skills, and to provide a bridge also to the modern foreign languages (e.g. in Los Angeles as a bridge to the formal study of Spanish for native Spanish speakers).

\(^2\) Phinney, 122. LeBovit’s course was published as the Elementary School Latin textbook, Via Romana (1973).

\(^3\) “One of the most striking phenomena to emerge in North American education in recent years is a strong demand on the part of many parents, school boards, and educators for schools to get back to the basics -in reading, writing, arithmetic, and standards of behavior; that is, for schools to give increased emphasis to the three R's and to raise their disciplinary standards. To date, the main response of school districts to the "back to the basics" call has been the establishment of "fundamental" or "value" schools as an alternative choice within the public school system. These "fundamental" schools are offering tradition-oriented education programs which emphasize computational arithmetic, phonic drill in reading, rigorous homework assignments, and above all, codes of pupil behavior based on order, quiet, and control”; Morgan, Margaret T., and Norman Robinson. “The ‘Back to the Basics’ Movement in Education.” Canadian Journal of Education /Revue Canadienne De L'éducation, vol. 1, no. 2, 1976, 1. The rise in Latin enrollments was so dramatic that the ‘Crisis’ referenced by Richard LaFleur was not one of the overall state of Latin, but of the lack of capable Latin teachers available to meet the demand.
ancient language is not so bad after all.”¹ The old claims for Latin also reappear, including that it “trains the mind” and appeals to students in science, mathematics, and, now, computer technology, in addition to proving knowledge of formal grammar, scientific terminology, and literary references.² Reinhold even argues that all aspects of Latin study should be subordinated to “first, the study of literature through inspiring comprehension of literary masterpieces; and second, the broadening of the students’ cultural horizons through the study of the Roman legacy as one of the great roots of Western civilization.”³ Everything else, he says, including “transfer” to other languages and “enhancement of critical skills through critical comprehension of texts,” should be of lower priority or emerge as “by-products”; he seems to be rejuvenating the theory of indirect transfer which was rejected by the 1920s and is today still discredited by current psychological analysis.⁴ Classicists, however, were determined to not become complacent and allow the mistakes from the past to cause another decline in enrollments.⁵ Gerda Seligson herself warned, “We have been given a new lease on life, and we dare not fail.”⁶ Moreland adds that the innovation of the previous twenty years had an overall positive effect, allowing Latin teachers to

¹ Moreland, 2-3.: “Our national survey in 1979 shows that more and more classicists are returning to traditional terminology and explanations, if only to supplement other, more recently developed methodologies. All students need some structure on which to hold, and certainly serious students who wish to pursue their study of the language and literature need ultimately to have a knowledge of standard terms in order to understand sources and to refine their appreciation of style and rhetoric.”
³ Reinhold, 135.
⁴ “Student transfer or generalization of their knowledge and skills is not spontaneous or automatic; it becomes progressively more difficult the more dissimilar the new context is from the original learning context.”: “Top 20 Principles from Psychology for PreK-12 Teaching and Learning” Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education, American Psychological Association, 2015, 10.
⁵ “Currently American classicists are enjoying a halcyon period in their educational endeavors. With the advantage of hindsight, they can see that this calm was in the making for two decades. Wishing, naturally, for the calm to continue as long as possible, they are not satisfied simply to rest on their nests, but are studying the reasons for the calm and are working to prolong it”.: Phinney, 119.
⁶ Reinhold, 134.
“broaden our perspective and hence to provide better, more effective instruction
blending a variety of methods and strategies.”

1 Reinhold, too, believes that “for all our students, we need also a better understanding of how young people learn today, especially the new ways in which they seek and absorb knowledge.”

2 Computer-assisted instruction and multi-sensory media were also encouraged as new resources as soon as they became available.

3 Although there were still those who lamented that the study of the Classics was still “too small in comparison with the intellectual and cultural wealth it has inherited and can share with educators” and desired it to take its “rightful place in a modern and democratic education,” many Latin teachers continued to make advances in their teaching methodologies and finally take steps towards making Latin available and welcoming to students who were historically discriminated against.

4 Despite some cutbacks, the Language Arts through Latin programs continued throughout the 1980s.

5 Classicists also began to denounce the sexism and representation, or lack thereof, of women in Beginning Latin textbooks.

6 They criticized how boys are assumed to be the intended audience, that characters are overwhelmingly male, and that girls often only appear as *parvae*, weak, frightened, helpless, vain, beautiful, and stared at by men. As a part of wider efforts towards better representation and inclusion in education throughout the 1990s, Latin teachers

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1 Moreland, 2-3.
2 Reinhold, 134.
3 Ibid., 135.
6 Harwood, Natalie. “Latin for All Americans.” *The Classical Journal*, vol. 84, no. 4, 1989, pp. 358–361. Allan, Charlayne D. “Images of Women in Introductory Latin Texts: Problems and Alternatives.” *The Classical Outlook*, vol. 64, no. 1, 1986, pp. 1–4. “First, females generally do not appear, even in English sentences where an innocuous ‘she’ subject would not be culturally incorrect. ‘She’ can praise the poets, hurry out of the house, or certainly tell a story to the children, quite as well as ‘he’ can” (1).
begin to adopt feminist and critical approaches to the material, and some of the recommendations put forth by Harwood and Allan were used to update popular intro textbooks.\(^1\) There are also heartening signs that teachers started to take into consideration the needs of students with learning disabilities and, at long last, some Classicists argued for the inclusion of all students into Latin programs.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) “A male professor tries to select modern textbooks ‘that will reflect a wider range of attitudes towards gender,’ and another laments that ‘we desperately need elementary Latin and Greek texts that pay attention to women and integrate them fully into the content of the elementary language sequence.’ However, a female graduate student finds that the standard language textbooks provide ‘a very useful springboard for discussions of both gender in antiquity and the representations of these cultures by later societies,’” and a male high school teacher positively prefers the old misogynist textbooks: I find it useful to keep the books…and to encourage the student to look critically at the depictions of women. Are they true to antiquity, and if so, how then do the expectations of antiquity differ from those of today? Are they merely the shortcomings of the editors, and if so how can that be compared to similar examples in popular literature and media?”: McManus, Barbara F. *Classics and Feminism.* Twayne Publishers, 1997, 124.

\(^2\) “Classical Women’s Studies is a new but burgeoning field. Information is rapidly becoming available, and every teacher of Latin can be well informed if he wishes. I believe that communicating the world of women to the youth of America will evolve as one of the more interesting aspects of teaching Latin, and ironically, the sexist textbooks can be used to bring women back to life”: Harwood, 361. Ashe, Althea C. “Latin for Special Needs Students: Meeting the Challenge of Students with Learning Disabilities,” in Richard LaFleur, *Latin for the 21st Century: From Concept to Classroom.* 1998, Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc.
Conclusions:

To bring the discussion of the arguments for Latin study and the pedagogical methods of Latin teachers up to the present, I will begin with the qualification that the following will be a far from complete analysis of the current state of Latin education in secondary schools. Just as there were several new educational and cultural shifts in each period I have analyzed, there were likely just as many from the 1990s to the 2010s, of which I fear I have only a cursory knowledge. However, it would be remiss of me not to comment on some of the problems that persist in the presentation of claims for Latin study that are made today, many of which remain identical to those put forth by Classicists throughout the past century, and, explicitly or implicitly, condone the use of Latin and Classical Studies as a means of exclusion and oppression.¹ Likewise, and lest we become too discouraged, there are also positive efforts being pursued by Latin teachers that indicate that they are becoming increasingly aware of troubling issues and are continually working to make the study of Latin a better experience for all their students.

One of the most blatant exclusionary ideologies regarding Latin education of the 20th century, which continues to be consciously and unconsciously invoked today, is the perception that Latin is very difficult, and therefore is the domain of, and only of use to, ‘top’ students. I think it is also highly likely that the belief that Latin could

only be worth-while for students of a certain “mental endowment” was historically coded language for the express purpose of excluding women and people of color; such an opinion was in line with other racist ideologies of the time that were based in pseudoscientific theories. Despite several studies in the 20th century which claimed to show both that Latin could be beneficial to all students and that their success was not contingent on some innate ability, it was not until the 1990s that Latin was actively promoted for all students. In place of a rigid insistence that a student’s academic performance reflects their supposedly predetermined intelligence, the growth-mindset theory, which holds that effort, rather than ability, can aid a student’s performance, has become much more widely adopted by educators and psychologists. Although there are problems in this theory, namely that there can be many other factors at play beyond just a student’s effort that disproportionately affect low-income and minority

1 Although many Latin teachers embraced the concept of teaching a more diverse range of students and expressed their willingness to “take students from where they are,” this new state of education was also often presented as a “problem,” and a “challenge,” in a similar, if more inclusive, way to how Bennett described the introduction of students from different social classes into the high schools in the early 1900s as presenting a problem to teachers: “Today’s Latin student population is indeed a ‘mixed bag’—national merit finalists and learning disabled students; aspiring artists and athletes; those who have, or have not, succeeded at learning a modern foreign language; those whose first language is not English; the busy, the bored, and the conscientious…What Latin teachers must do in this age of ‘classics for everyone’ is to attempt to raise the level of achievement of the greatest number to the highest possible point, and provide something of value for each student.” “We must take them all with whatever deficiencies they may have, and try to structure programs that offer the best opportunity for some degree of success to every student. This includes many groups that have not traditionally studied Latin: “Limited English Proficiency’ students, Learning Disabled students, the economically and culturally disadvantaged, the handicapped, and students ‘at-risk.’” Davis, Sally. Latin in American Schools: Teaching the Ancient World. American Philological Association, 1991, 13-15, 49.

2 “Teachers can convey to students that their failure at any given task is not due to lack of ability but rather that their performance can be enhanced, particularly with added effort or through the use of different strategies. Attributing failure to low ability often leads students to give up when they encounter failure. Hence, when students believe their performance can be improved, they are fostering a growth mind-set that can bring motivation and persistence to bear on challenging problems or material”: “Top 20 Principles from Psychology for PreK-12 Teaching and Learning” Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education, American Psychological Association, 2015, 6.
students, some Latin teachers at least are beginning to reject the idea that only “smart” students take the subject, and are recognizing the need to adapt their teaching methods to suit the needs of different kinds of learners in their classrooms.\(^2\)

Unfortunately, however, Latin continues to be promoted by some on the very basis of its perceived difficulty, in order to promote racist, sexist, and homophobic ideologies and attack the progress recently made in education to include the perspectives of marginalized groups.\(^3\) Related to the reactionary position, I think, is the claim that Latin and the study of the Classics should be “in a sense culturally

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\(^1\) “Growth mindset – like its educational-psychology cousin ‘grit’ – can have the unintended consequence of making students feel responsible for things that are not under their control: that their lack of success is a failure of moral character. This goes well beyond questions of innate ability to the effects of marginalisation, poverty and other socioeconomic disadvantage.” Hendrick, Carl. 2019. “The Growth-Mindset Problem.” *Aeon*, accessed March 14, 2019.

\(^2\) “I had secretly enjoyed the fact that only "smart" students took Latin, but now I was beginning to see that this view was wrong.” Toda, Keith. “About Me.” Todally Comprehensible Latin: A recovering grammar-translation Latin teacher's journey into Comprehensible Input and Instructional Technology, http://todallycomprehensiblelatin.blogspot.com/p/about-me_1047.html. accessed April 14, 2019.

Even Peter Dodington, a long-time high school Latin teacher and now adjunct professor at Montclair State University, who argues for the importance of difficulty in a subject for gaining self-knowledge and self-worth, states: “One often hears that only elite students (rich or poor) can learn Latin, but there is nothing about Latin that makes this inherently true.” Dodington, Peter. “Knowing Ourselves: How the Classics Strengthen Schools and Society.” *American Educator*, Summer 2012, 29.

In 1998, Martha G. Abbott, Foreign Language Coordinator and high school Latin teacher in Fairfax, Virginia, stated the importance of using “other skills, such as listening, speaking, and writing, in order to meet the learning needs of students.” Abbott, Martha G. “Trends in Language Education: Latin in the Mainstream.” In Richard A. LaFleur, *Latin for the 21st Century: From Concept to Classroom*, 1998, pp. 36-43. John Gruber-Miller of Cornell College echoes these ideas in 2004: “Teachers, I now more fully understand, need to address diverse learning styles, provide different instructional settings, and design activities in which Latin students can link form, meaning, and function, and can encounter extended discourse so that they can recognize how a text progresses from one idea to another. My paradigm of language teaching has shifted from a transmission model to a constructivist model... Such a paradigm shift does not mean giving up every classroom activity that has worked in the past, but rather expanding the number of approaches we utilize in helping our students learn Latin. Most importantly, I hope that we can learn to become more reflective about our pedagogical practices, considering not only what we do in the classroom, but why we do it.” Gruber-Miller, John. “Seven Myths about Latin Teaching.” *Syllecta Classica*, vol. 14, 2004, 212.

\(^3\) “More and more, it seems, the study of classics—like the study of the humanities generally—has fallen under the spell of grievance warriors who have injected an obsession with race and sexual exoticism into a discipline that, until recently, was mostly innocent of such politicized deformations—largely, we suspect, because of the inherent difficulty of mastering the subject. (In this sense, classics is different from pseudo-disciplines like women’s studies, black studies, lgbtq studies, and the like, because classics can never be entirely reduced to political posturing. You actually have to know something.)” “Decline & fall: classics edition: On identity politics in classical studies.” *The New Criterion*. vol. 37, no 7, March 2019, pp. 1.
neutral,” “innocent” of political issues, colorblind, and “universal.” The signers of the “Open-Letter to the Paideia Institute,” including the instructors of the Institute’s Living Latin programs, reject such ideologies as “lacking in critical perspective” and representing “a regressive position that will not foster inclusion and equity.” Instead, they explain, it is necessary to “actively foster inclusion and condemn white supremacy and its narrative of western civilization” in order to create a more welcoming space to those who have been disenfranchised and marginalized in the Classics. Such work and commitment to an “ethically rigorous standard of inclusion” will need to be consistent, continual, and active, even at the level of habits of speech which have become engrained in the explanations of, and arguments for, the study of Latin.

Dan-el Padilla Peralta, Professor of Classics at Princeton, describes this necessity as he also criticizes the continued distinction made between the “rigorous” classical languages and the anthropological studies of cultural historians and, especially, how language classrooms too often become “sites for the performance of certain kinds of mastery.” The rhetoric still widely used by Latin teachers to demand

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3 Ibid.
5 Ibid. “For me one of the challenges in the future of the field…is that language instruction and language pedagogy, if not done with a view to an ethically rigorous standard of inclusion becomes a site for the performance of certain kinds of mastery… And it was not just a matter of having internalized the status with ‘having’ the languages, it was that for those of us who had been beneficiaries of this structural privilege, received continuous and endless affirmation in what we did as being rigorous: we weren’t doing that anthropologically minded stuff that some of the cultural historians were doing, we were doing the languages, the languages were hard. ….These are habits of speech that are very hard to break, and they are also tied to habits of practice and the teaching that we do that are very hard to break. And so at the point that any person debating whether to enter the field,
that their students gain a “mastery” of the language, together with the pressure to perform that mastery over, and in front of, their peers, is likely a considerable factor in causing anxiety and discomfort among students.

Peralta, however, suggests that there may be a more equitable way to reconcile the teaching of Classics with an “ethically demanding standard of equality and equity.” Some Latin teachers have indeed begun taking steps to rework their language about, and their conception of, the role of being an educator.¹ Countering arguments for mastery, Sally Davis insists that “no one ever ‘finishes the grammar.’”² John Gruber-Miller also encourages a reconsideration of the position of the teacher as providing all the energy to the classroom. He criticizes the assumption “that the teacher has all the knowledge to impart to students…and that student interaction is not significant for learning Latin.”³ The view of teachers as “guides” rather than “dictators” and “all-knowing experts” seems to have become more accepted by Latin teachers in recent years.⁴ In addition, theories of educational psychology advocate that teachers continually re-evaluate their assumptions about students’ abilities, and that they work to develop interpersonal relationships in the classroom to ensure the

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¹ Ibid.
² Davis, 50.
emotional well-being and development of students, so that they all feel supported, respected, and valued. Latin teachers have begun to introduce these practices into their teaching. They are experimenting with traditional grading practices to alleviate some of the pressure from their students and working to make their classrooms “a safe space to make mistakes.” One of my favorite examples of this, perhaps especially important in light of the increased use of Spoken Latin in many programs and the added element of performance that may come with it, is Keith Toda’s account of his first experience at Rusticatio, a weeklong, summer, spoken-Latin immersion "camp," sponsored by SALVI: “There was such a collegial and supportive atmosphere among the attendees and instructors at Rusticatio that it was okay if I was struggling; no one expected me to be at anyone else's ability but my own. I vividly remember Nancy Llewellyn on the opening night, saying in English to all of us, "Do you see this spot I am holding? (she then threw the spot on the floor) I will never put you on it. I will never put you on the spot. Instead, let me put myself on it."

2 “…many of my students showed high levels of anxiety. I could see younger versions of some of the high-achieving students I had taught at the college level, and I had been teaching in the Ivy League at a time when student mental health was getting national press. I bought into their notion that “grades don’t matter in middle school,” and changed many of quiz and test procedures to encourage academic risk, minimize anxiety, and normalize failure as part of the learning process… It is my job to teach Latin, but it is my duty, I think, to give these students a safe space to make mistakes (I have learned from that first day and now make it a point to own and discuss my own mistakes in the classroom with them), and for the ones who feel these growing pains more critically than their peers, to remind them that it does, in fact, get better.” Galante, Heather. “My Kind of Circus: Transitioning from College to Middle School Teaching.” Eidolon, December 17, 2018, https://eidolon.pub/my-kind-of-circus-4729e9f8d5d7, accessed April 14, 2019.
3 Toda, Keith. “About Me.” Todally Comprehensible Latin. Keith Toda is a Latin teacher at Parkview High School in Lilburn, GA. The school’s Latin program is one of the largest in the country, at about 700 students, and makes active use of Comprehensible Input, which both he and his colleague, Bob Patrick, promote through online blogs and groups with wide followings. Related to an increased awareness of the pressure felt by Latin students, is that felt by Latin teachers, as more openly confess their fears that they would fail and drive students away from the language. This has also led to the creation of online groups and organizations for the support of Latin teachers.: “I catastrophized until I was sure all of the students would drop the class, create scathing, viral posts about Latin on social
Most importantly, some teachers now advocate the rejection of previous arguments for studying Latin on account of moral, social, and civic values, although such arguments still appear too frequently along with the still ubiquitous argument for gaining an appreciation of ‘Western Civilization.’ Latin teacher Erik Robinson states explicitly that “the Classics are objects for study, not revivification…we ought to do our best to foster engagement and discussion which do not minimize the horrors of antiquity.” In order to create an explicitly centralizing, as opposed to marginalizing, climate in a classroom, which does not leave the burden of voicing minority views on students from marginalized groups but instead “includes readings and discussion of texts by persons of all races, religions, genders, and sexual orientations,” T.H.M. Gellar-Goad cites recent educational theories in order to provide suggestions for ensuring that minority students do not feel excluded or silenced in Latin classrooms. He writes that useful possibilities include the insertion of “art, artifacts, and translated media, and convince teenagers worldwide to steer clear of dead languages.”

1 An example of a present charter school’s endorsement of classical education: “Apart from this impressive history [of the West], Hillsdale has embraced classical education as the surest road to school reform for at least four reasons. These reasons constitute a clear break from modern, progressive education and a return to traditional aims and methods. Classical education: values knowledge for its own sake, upholds the standards of correctness, logic, beauty, weightiness, and truth intrinsic to the liberal arts, demands moral virtue of its adherents, and prepares human beings to assume their places as responsible citizens in the political order.”: Moore, Terrence O. “A Classical Education for Modern Times.” Hillsdale.edu, 2016, https://www.hillsdale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Charter-School-2016-A-Classical-Education-for-Modern-Times.pdf, accessed April 14, 2019.


texts that offer alternative and diverse views [which can] ameliorate the canonizing
effects of the manuscript tradition.”

Additionally, like Robinson, he argues that it is
necessary to “interrogate, rather than adopt, the ideologies that the texts we teach
communicate implicitly and explicitly,” whether they be classical sources or
textbooks that sanitize the experience of slaves and sexual violence against women.

Robinson adds that it is still possible for students to develop a love for the Classics,
but that it is necessary that they do so “not because they are unaware of or indifferent
to its darker side.”

Finally, as Latin teachers have shown through the years, I agree
with Latin teacher Bob Patrick that “work that is truly compelling to our students and
which is done in a way that is caring and supportive will at times include silliness”
and that such silliness is necessary and “does not preclude seriousness and depth.”

I think that if these techniques are adopted by Latin teachers in their efforts to create
welcoming, supportive and inclusive classrooms, and if “the idea that there’s
something inherently better and more worth studying about Classics than other

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1 Ibid.
3 Ibid. Teller, of the comedy magic duo Penn and Teller, who was a Latin teacher for six years at
4 Lawrence High School in NJ before pursuing a career in magic, also argues in favor of “discomfort” in
learning while also developing an interest and love for a subject: “And if Shakespeare (or Catullus or
Vergil) makes students uncomfortable? That’s a good thing, Teller said. Learning, like magic, should
make people uncomfortable, because neither are passive acts.” Lahey, Jessica. “Teaching: Just Like
4 Patrick, Bob. “Comprehensible Input in Latin Classrooms: Is it Silly or Serious?” Comprehensible
8accc39de16c, accessed April 15, 2019.
disciplines” is finally abandoned, the learning of Latin can be a beneficial and confidence-building learning and growing experience.¹

While there is certainly plenty of work to be done on this front, especially if the white supremacist and traditionalist reactions against the Society for Classical Studies’ recent panel on “The Future of Classics” are any indication, the responses of both Latin teachers and students to a survey I distributed may also serve to reinforce some of the positive trends in Latin education. Although arguments for an appreciation of Roman culture are still reiterated by some, many teachers expressed their eager adoption of new methods to foster creativity and imagination, including interactive activities, online resources, interdisciplinary and STEAM approaches, new games and reading strategies, as well as Comprehensible Input and conversational Latin.² The students, meanwhile, nearly all described their motivation for beginning Latin as encouraged by an expectation that it would improve their English, Spanish, or other future foreign language abilities. They also almost unanimously dislike analyzing grammar and memorizing charts. Some perception of a necessity to completely ‘master’ the language seems to still affect some students, as one explains that what they like least about Latin is “the occasional test where I feel as there is too much expected on it” and another answers what they like least is “because of myself, I always got one wrong from my vocabulary quiz or test, no matter what I do I will


² “STEAM is an educational approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. The end results are students who take thoughtful risks, engage in experiential learning, persist in problem-solving, embrace collaboration, and work through the creative process.” “What is STEAM?” Education Closet, https://educationcloset.com/steam/what-is-steam/, accessed April 15, 2019.
always forgot one translation, part of speech, or derivative of a word.” Yet these same students also describe the overall comfortable atmosphere of the class and explain that they have gained confidence through the help of the teacher. The students’ general perception of the language is somewhat less clear and seems to include a mixture of traditional and their own viewpoints. Two described it as “scholarly,” another as “underrated,” and a third, who decided to take Latin because they did not want to be like the “majority,” as “intriguing yet odd.” What is apparent, however, is that they enjoy taking Latin, not only because of the stories and history, but also because of the relaxed and collaborative learning environment, and especially because of their teacher: “For me, Latin class is not just about what we translate and what we are taught, but how it is approached by our teacher. It has allowed me to actually enjoy learning a language, something I have previously been unable to do.”
Appendix:

Portraits of Latin Teachers and Classicists:

Karl P. Harrington  
First Methodist Church, Middletown, Connecticut.  
(1861-1953)

Grace Harriet Macurdy  
(1866-1946)

Dorrance S. White

Helen M. Chesnutt  
(1880-1969)

Dorothy M. Seeger

Ruth Hetzman  
(1902-2000)
Latin Week: 1950

Sample Responses from Latin Teachers and Students:

Teachers:

“I always included STEAM activities, even before it was so labelled, creative writing in Latin and oral Latin work.” (Norwich, CT)

“I am always on the lookout for new activities and more collaborative ways to teach the language. For my own mental health, I cannot keep the curriculum static. I firmly believe that the key to maintaining enthusiasm and interest in the language is to be a dynamic and enthusiastic teacher. On the other hand, Latin is a disciplined subject, and requires a certain degree of rigor and focus… What is exciting for me is the discovery of more interactive activities online that tap into the imagination of the students while still holding on to the rigor of traditional Latin teaching. I always said that if I were to create a Latin reader or textbook, I would use all sorts of crazy stories about aliens, werewolves, superheroes, etc. to share concepts with the students. You can teach Latin and still have plenty of room for humor, creativity, imagination and fun.” (Madison, CT)

“[I keep the material new and exciting for students] by relating it to their own lives/times. Relevancy is key. We read popular archaeology a lot. I also show them the latest films on history, archaeology, cultural topics, etc. They just tune out the old videos. We also take field trips whenever possible.” (Norwalk, CT)

“I use a variety of techniques associated with comprehensible input, technology, and connecting with their lives. I'm trying to move towards more task based assignments. Latin teaching has moved from memorizing forms (Jenney) to learning through reading (Cambridge & Ecce) to comprehensible input.” (Durham, CT)

“We do have the website now, I try to use conversational Latin and multimedia presentations (Youtube, music, etc., skits) to enliven the class. [Latin] has become more interactive and colorful (all our drawings used to be in black & white), it needs to become more conversational and active, making a link with modern day curricula (across curricula, so that we do not stand in isolation, and especially apart from modern World Languages.” (Stamford, CT)

“I try to speak Latin as much as I can, also use websites (Classical Academic Press, Minimus, etc.) Also point out how much Latin is found today (car names, Roman numerals, calendar, etc.).” (East Lyme, CT)

“My primary goal is the gift of a bilingual experience. My approach is to make Latin acquirable in a natural way. The text is designed for this purpose. There is no English in the textbook/pdf file. It provides 100% comprehensible reading input and I provide 100% comprehensible listening input. Students must hear the language to tap into the audio learners…There is value in experiencing thinking in another language, any language. This creates compassion and empathy for other language learners. This is what really matters in our contemporary world. It's lovely to see the past, but it's even better to see our neighbor. The strategies they learn in my class can be transferred to any other language, expanding their potential in our contemporary world.” (Hamden, CT)
Students:

“I decided to take Latin, because I felt like it was such an underrated language, and I though it would be fun to learn something new. I believed that I would gain a better understanding and comprehension for both the English language and any other languages I decided to learn in the future.” (7th Grade)

“I think I have gained a better understanding of English, and have been able to empathize with the latin people.” (7th Grade)

“I chose Latin because it seemed like more of a challenge for me. I gained lots of information about the language and about the culture from taking Latin. I enjoy translating vocabulary and stories in Latin. I least enjoy analyzing grammar in Latin.” (7th Grade)

“It was mandatory for my first year, but I really enjoyed it, so I wanted to take it again. Many languages come from Latin, so learning it could make any language, even English, easier. (7th Grade)

“I decided to take latin because y doctor said I’d be a lot better at latin than spanish, I thawt I wold gain nothing just another sulks language I’d never yous but quickly I learned to love latin and its helped me a lot with my English skills.” (8th Grade)

“I decide to keep taking Latin after the first year because I truly enjoyed it and I was always having a great time with my friends. At beginning I just expected to learn some Latin in order to help me on English, but it’s much better than what I expected. I really enjoyed all the parts of Latin class like learning vocabulary, grammar, or translate those stories which our teacher often make it fun and talk to us, so we can understand while enjoying it. My least part is probably because of myself, I always got one wrong from my vocabulary quiz or test, no matter what I do I will always forgot one translation, part of speech, or derivative of a word. For these years I gained a lot from Latin whether gaining confidence or learning English, my teacher helped me a lot and I’m pretty sure I’ll keep learning Latin for my high school as well.” (8th Grade)

“I decided to take latin because I felt it could help me perfect my native spanish. It would also enable me to learn more languages easier.” (Latin II)

“I have an interest in medicine and science, and it did help me a bit with scientific terminology. I actually have gained better understanding of English, since my native language is not English, I have actually understood English better with the help of Latin.” (Latin III)

“I decided to take Latin after a 6th grade required class because I was interested in learning a more uncommon language and because I liked the teacher. I enjoy my teacher’s style and the story translating in class. I do not dislike any part of the class but if I had to pick my least favorite part I would choose verb synopsies. I have gained a better understanding of Roman history for my other history classes, I have gained knowledge of derrivatives that allow me to use more scholarly language and I have learned many words that are used in the medical field and other languages that allow me understand some of what people are saying without knowing the full language.” (Latin III)
“I enjoy having my class be a small group who all enjoy learning latin together. My least favorite aspect of latin is trying to remember the verb synopsis.” (Latin III)

“I definitely have gained an area of new English words that have been derived from Latin so I can sound more professional in formal interviews or just in general. I also have obtained knowledge of the ancient world and how the Romans were ahead of their time, as well as the fact that if the Dark Ages never occurred, mankind would be a thousand years advanced.” (Latin III)

“I always feel the most at ease and comfortable in my Latin class. The work load isn’t bad and we have a stress free learning place. The thing I enjoy least is the occasional test where I feel as there is too much expected on it.” (Latin IV)

“I decided to take Latin because after being required to take it in 6th grade, I really liked learning about a unique language and the amazing culture behind it. I thought that I would gain a better understanding on English words, and it would help me on my SSAT! I enjoy the most connecting the Latin texts to the Roman history behind it. I also like reading many different authors and styles of Latin. I enjoy the least some of the grammatical concepts of Latin, which can take many years to finally cement down and learn in order to translate well.” (Latin IV)
Table 1: Latin Enrollments in Public High Schools, 1890-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Latin Enrollments in Public High Schools</th>
<th>Latin as a Percent of Total Public High School Enrollments</th>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>70,425</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>153,693</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
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<td>1905</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
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<td>-</td>
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\(^1\) Source: Unless otherwise stated, figures are drawn from Draper, Jamie B. and June H. Hicks. “Foreign Language Enrollments in Public Secondary Schools, Fall 1994.” ACTFL, 1996.


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