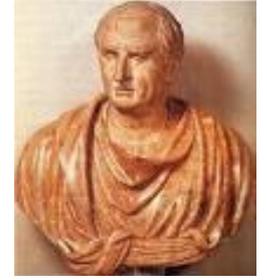


Gazette Tulliana



SOCIETE INTERNATIONALE DES AMIS DE CICERON
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF CICERO'S FRIENDS
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STARTING AGAIN WITH HOPE AND TRUSTING IN THE FUTURE THE SIAC PERFORMS ITS ACTIVITY IN 360 DEGREES

SEEDS OF HOPE

2020-21 was a terrible two-year period for everyone and it is useless to hide how much in particular it affected cultural activities and those organized by associations. However, alongside the proliferation of online initiatives, such as the remarkable conferences of the *Centro Studi sulla Fortuna dell'Antico* in Sestri Levante, for which our association has been providing support for years, already in 2021 we started seeing some "in person" events again. I am thinking above all of the *Certamen Ciceronianum Arpinas*, which saw the end of an event started and held remotely and marked a chance to find numerous young Europeans in the name of Cicero in the square of Arpino. About this event, Stefano Rozzi will offer a detailed contribution with interviews in an upcoming number of this gazette: I will limit myself to saying that that July evening in Arpino represented one of the seeds of hope that, we hope, will be able to germinate and give life to luxuriant plants. If the second half of 2020 was a year of closures, 2021 should mark the definitive reopening. This will also be relevant for SIAC: our association continues to work to make people understand the importance of Cicero and Roman thought in the contemporary world and the loyalty of its members, even in such difficult moments, profoundly rewards us.

Andrea Balbo
Gazette Editor
(tr. T. Frazel)

IN MEMORIAM: GIOVANNA GARBARINO

2020 saw the death of one of the other founding members of the SIAC, Giovanna Garbarino, formerly full Professor of Latin language and literature at the University of Turin. Born in 1939, she served from 1991 to 2010, was a member of numerous academies and cultural associations. She worked on epic, made important contributions to elegy, but above all she focused her attention on Latin philosophy, in particular, authors such as Seneca and Cicero. She contributed to important collective works such as *l'Enciclopedia virgiliana* and *l'Enciclopedia oraziana*. Her 1973 book dedicated to Rome and Greek philosophy from its origins to the end of the second century BC is still essential and was followed, in 2003, as an ideal continuation, by the edition of the *Philosophorum Romanorum Fragmenta*. Of particular note was her great commitment to education. We will miss her strong support and her refinement. A more extensive obituary can be found in the 2020/2 issue of *Ciceroniana* online.

Andrea Balbo

CICERO XX-XX

In order to replace the 2020 *Certamen Ciceronianum Arpinas* (not held for obvious COVID-related reasons) the organizers, with the help of the SIAC, created the *Cicero XX-XX* prize. The contest consisted of a Ciceronian essay on the topic "Cicero again, today". The competition included three categories of participants, *discipuli* (high school students covering Cicero's orations), *students* (university students on his political and philosophical works) and *magistri* (teachers, doctoral students, graduates taking up the letters). Participation was wide and widespread, arousing interest especially among the younger categories, and saw the presentation of various essays that tried to highlight the importance of Cicero in an increasingly "liquid" cultural context and one in transformation like the contemporary one. Even in distant times, therefore, non-fiction writing has made it possible to preserve relationships and keep lively attention on the Arpinate.

Editorial Staff

Scientific section - Ciceronian research in Russia today

CICERONIAN STUDIES AND NEW ORIENTATIONS FROM THE EAST

Our colleague and member of the SIAC A. Bragova from the Nizhny Novgorod Linguistics University sends us this bibliographical work on the presence of Ciceronian studies in Russian culture. The titles of the articles, if any, were written in English by the author and thus retained in the article.

There is a certain interest in Cicero among Russian scientists nowadays: historians, philosophers, linguists, sociologists, lawyers, and others. There are topics that arouse the most interest, such as Cicero's attitude to Catiline's conspiracy, war, religion, Cicero's ethical, philosophical, political, juridical, aesthetic or social ideas, Cicero's image of an ideal orator, his pedagogical ideas, or Cicero's reception in the Russian literature.

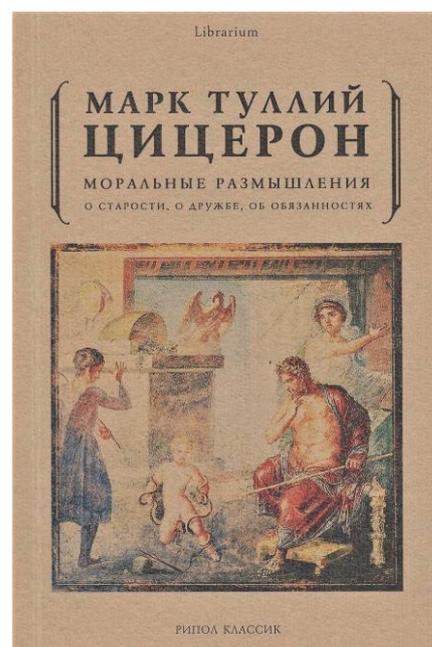
We can name a monograph (at least we have found one: Fedorov D.A. *Socio-communicative Problems in Cicero's Works*. Saint Petersburg, 2015), which



has been published in Russia for the last 5 years.

There are a few translations of Cicero's texts: E. Smykov's translation of Cicero's oration "For King Deiotarius" (Smykov E. Cicero. For King Deiotarus. *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, 2019, 79 (2), pp. 481-501), V. Khrystalyov's translation of the oration "For Cornelius" (Khrustalyov V. Fragments of Cicero's Orations *Pro Cornelio De maiestate. Metamorphoses of history*, 2015, 6, pp. 133-162), the same author's translation of the oration "De rege Alexandrino" (idem. *M.T. Ciceronis orationis de rege Alexandrino fragmenta. Mnemon*, 2015, 15, pp. 501-508), S. Blazheevsky and M. Gasparov's translation of Cicero's "On the Nature of Gods" (Cicero. *On the Nature of Gods*. Saint Petersburg: Azbukatticus, 2015), V. Petukhov and V. Gorenstein's translations of Cicero's writings "On the Old Age", "On Friendship", and "On the Duties" (Cicero. *Moral reflection. On the Old Age. On Friendship. On the Duties*. Moscow: Ripol-classics, 2018). However, the last 2 publications are reconsiderations of the translations made by M. Gasparov and V. Gorenstein in the Soviet times.

There are many scientific articles about Cicero's views, which have been published in recent years. They are about Cicero's



Cicerone. De senectute, De amicitia, de officiis. Mosca: Ripol-classics, 2018

attitude to Catiline's conspiracy (Bugaeva N. The Political Aspect of Cicero's Oration "For Archias". *The Historical journal: scientific research*, 2017, 4, pp. 56-66; Lubimova O. Why Crassus Hated Cicero (Plut. Crass. 13. 3-5)? *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, 2016, 76 (3), pp. 626-641), to war (Demina S. Cicero's Thoughts about War. *Problemy istorii, filologii, kul'tury*, 2015, 4, pp. 33-38) and slavery (Fedorov D. Understanding the Phenomenon of Slavery in Cicero's Socio-philosophical Doctrine. *Scientific Opinion*. 2017, 12, pp. 87-92). There is some linguistic analysis of his speeches (Antonets E. Cicero's Speech for Ligarius: Composition and Style as an Instrument of Defense. *Indo-European Linguistics and Classi-*

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cal Philology, 2015, 19, pp. 3-17; eadem. On the Structure of Complex Periods in Cicero's Speeches. *Indo-European Linguistics and Classical Philology*, 2017, 21, pp. 7-25). A great number of articles are about the textual analysis of Cicero's ethical, aesthetic, social, philosophical, political, and juridical concepts (Demina S. Cicero's Views on Love. *Schole*. 2016, 10 (2), pp. 521-526; Bragova A. The Concept *cum dignitate otium* in Cicero's writings. *Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica*, 2016, 22 (1), pp. 45-49; eadem. The Concept of "State" in Cicero's Writings. *Samara Journal of Science*, 2016, 1 (14), pp. 93-97; eadem. The Concept *amicitia* in Cicero's Writings. *Problemy istorii, filologii, kul'tury*, 2016, 1, pp. 103-110; eadem. The Meaning of Cicero's Concept of *Scientia*. *Magistra vitae*, 2018, 2, pp. 199-204; eadem. Cicero on Vices. *Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica*, 2018, 24 (2), pp. 253-277, etc.). The question of Cicero's reception in the Russian literature is also of some interest to Russian scholars (Solopov A. "Sciences feed the Youth" – or "Drive the youth"? About Cicero as Lomonosov's Model. *Stephanos*, 2017, 5 (25), pp. 125-128; Abramzon T. Cicero and Mark Antony in a Poetic Dialogue between F. Tyutchev and V. Brusov: the Debate about Bliss. *Problemy istorii, filologii, kul'tury*, 2016, 1, pp. 348-354).

There are some publications dedicated to Cicero's oratory teaching (Dymskaya D. Cicero and the Power of Persuasion. *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, 2016, 76 (2), pp. 497-506; Bobrovnikova T. The Image of an Ideal Speaker in Cicero. *Hypothekai. Journal of the History of Ancient Pedagogical Culture*, 2017, 1, pp. 33-43; Bermus A. To the Problem of Thinking and Speech (on the Example of the Text of Cicero "On the Orator"). *Hypothekai. Journal of the History of Ancient Pedagogical Culture*, 2017, 1, pp. 206-229). Close to the above mentioned field of research stand publications about Cicero's pedagogical ideas (Pichugina V. Anthropological discourse "Self-care" by Mark Tullius Cicero. *Historical and Pedagogical*

Journal, 2013, 2, pp. 158-168; Pichugina V., Shirinskaya K. Ancient Ideal of the Educated Person in Cicero's writings. *Scientific Dialogue*, 2015, 4 (40), pp. 124-136; Pichugina V. Greek Household Academies of the Roman Intellectual: the Pedagogical Dimension of Cicero's Letters. *Hypothekai. Journal of the History of Ancient Pedagogical Culture*, 2017, 1, pp. 9-32; Volkova Y. The Subject of Education of a Citizen in the Works of Cicero. *Hypothekai. Journal of the History of Ancient Pedagogical Culture*, 2017, 1, pp. 44-58; Pichugina V., Vorobyeva K. Self-education of poetry and Theatre in the Works of Cicero. *Hypothekai. Journal of the History of Ancient Pedagogical Culture*, 2017, 1, pp. 59-76; Kozlovseva E. Ecophilosophical Concept of Education of M.T. Cicero. *Hypothekai. Journal of the History of Ancient Pedagogical Culture*, 2017, 1, pp. 129-142; Vetoshkina M. Education of the Military and Political Leader in the Ancient Greek and Roman Realities: Versions of Xenophon and Cicero. *Hypothekai. Journal of the History of Ancient Pedagogical Culture*, 2017, 1, pp. 143-161; Bezrogov V. Antique Apprenticeship in the Understanding of Cicero and his Christian Interpreters. *Hypothekai. Journal of the History of Ancient Pedagogical Culture*, 2017, 1, pp. 162-190; M. Polyakova, *Cicero's Treatise "On Obliga-*



Hypothekai
Journal of the History of Ancient
Pedagogical Culture

Scientific section- Ciceronian research in Russia today

CICERONIAN STUDIES AND NEW ORIENTATIONS FROM THE EAST

tions” and the Problem of its Reception in the Pedagogical Heritage of the XVI c, Hypothekai, 2017, 1, pp. 191-205). Some articles are about Cicero’s attitude to religion (Bragova A. Cicero on the Gods and Roman Religious Practices. *Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica*, 2017, 23 (2), pp. 303-313; Appolonov A. The Notion of “religio” in the Works of M.T. Cicero. *Moscow University Bulletin. Series 7. Philosophy*, 2019, 6, pp. 94-100). Finally, there are some publications, which can’t be classified properly, as they offer a specific topic related to Cicero (Lyapustin B. The Peculiarities of Economic Life of Roman Familia in the 1st c. BC (according to Cicero’s Letters). *Problemy istorii, filologii, kul’tury*, 2016, 4, pp. 53-61; Khrustalyov V. The Image of the Egyptian King Ptolemy XII Auletes in Cicero’s Speeches. *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, 2017, 77 (1), pp. 91-105; D. Fedorov, *The Problem of the Interpretation of the Concept of Ordo in Cicero’s Social Philosophy*, Scientific

Opinion, 2017, 11, pp. 17-20; V. Nikishin, *Place and Role of the Hellenistic Culture in the Humanitarian Concept of Cicero*, Hypothekai, 2017, 1, pp. 106-128; D. Samarin, *Speeches of M.T. Cicero and their Significance for the Modern Legal Proceedings*, *Baltic Humanitarian Journal*, 2016, vol. 5, no. 2 (15), pp. 231-233).

To sum up, there is a definite interest in Cicero among Russian scholars these days. However, there are nearly no serious books about him and his heritage, but numerous articles. We can relate this phenomenon to a specific demand at the state level for articles indexed in certain databases, as well as to the high employment of scientists (university teachers) in the teaching process.

A. Bragova
(tr. T. Frazel)



Cicéron, On nature of God. Saint-Pétersbourg : Azbuka-Atticus, 2015. Traduction by S. Blazheevskiy et M. Gasparov.

INSCRIPTIONS 2021

To join SIAC, all you have to do is log into the Tulliana site, complete the membership questionnaire and pay the 25 euros membership fee. It is possible to use PayPal.

RULES FOR SENDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GAZETTE

Contributions should be sent to andrea.balbo@unito.it in Times New Roman 12 without formatting. Please do not exceed 1500 characters and place images in JPEG format only if you own the rights. Any modification of these instructions must be agreed directly with the publisher.

Scientific section-

In memoriam: Marc Fumaroli

IN REMEMBRANCE OF A GREAT EUROPEAN INTELLECTUAL FIGURE

Marc Fumaroli (1932-2020) was one of the most distinguished intellectuals of our time. We can see this not only in the countless awards he received during a decades-long career, but also in the acute cultural vivacity that he was able to reveal in many of his writings. Originally from Marseille, he spent his childhood in Fès, Morocco, before returning to France, where he taught, among the most prestigious locations, at the University of Lille and at the Sorbonne (Paris IV); from 1986 to 2002 he held the chair of *Rhétorique et société en Europe (XVI^e - XVII^e siècles)* at the *Collège de France*. He was one of the founders of the *Société Internationale d'Histoire de la Rhétorique*, a member of the *Académie française* (1996) and foreign member of the *Lincei* (1997) He died at the age of 88 from cancer.

Among the many merits that must be attributed to him, it is important to mention the fundamental role that he played in the rediscovery and relative enhancement of Rhetoric, understood as a discipline not for a select few, who were writers or legal experts, but as an essential remedy for the decadence, both human and literary, of contemporary Europe, prey to a dangerous identity crisis.

In fact, every humanist's library should not be missing - and the term is not chosen by chance - his most famous book, the result of dense research conducted with



extreme rigor and critical method, which still teaches, especially for those who approach still as neophytes. We refer of course to the essay *The Age of Eloquence* (1980), a cornerstone that stands out for the clarity and coherence of its exposition. In this work, Fumaroli categorically rejects the depreciation to which rhetoric was a victim for most of the twentieth century (a period that he almost wanted to get rid of), placing it on the sidelines of intellectual reflection because it was seen as a too cumbersome mortgage of a now anachronistic past.

However, through the very learned, but no less pleasant, reconstruction of the birth of the modern state at the turn of the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in France, Fumaroli identifies precisely the assiduous use of rhetoric by intellectuals as the driving force that allowed them to establish the solid political and cultural foundations of the state institu-

tions that we still know them, net of their necessary transformations. The historical-literary analysis conducted in these dense pages can only start from the Renaissance context, especially the Italian one, in which the revival of the Classics was not only an expression of a renewed interest in the subject matter, but above all represented an instrument of the rigorous application of ancient thought, appropriately mediated, in a world undergoing radical change.

At this juncture, the Ciceronian model, according to Fumaroli, furnished a paradigmatic function for issues related to expressive style and, above all, for the ability to become a vector, both ideologically and philosophically, of reflections that could deeply influence successive generations of followers, who were able to convert Cicero's theoretical teaching into practical and current actions.

Scientific section - In memoriam: Marc Fumaroli

IN REMEMBRANCE OF A GREAT EUROPEAN INTELLECTUAL FIGURE

It is precisely in the continuous effort to absorb the *institutio* of the Roman statesman that Fumaroli finds the quintessence of the message of Antiquity. In the perspective outlined here, it does not offer a simple safe haven in which to take refuge in times of uncertainty, nor a tiny *hortus conclusus* in which to delight in literary amenities in their pure formal capacity, but it administers a very powerful, and too often forgotten, *phàrmakon* to the moral and political degeneration of a Europe that seems to have forever renounced its vocation as a cultural beacon of the world. Therefore, *humanitas* and *urbanitas*, never separated from the competence of *ars bene dicendi*, are the only solutions to recover the centrality of the *logos*, to assist again, as had already happened for the formation of the modern state, in one of the most majestic spectacles that the “theater of the Word” - the expression is Fumaroli's - has ever proposed: a new humanism.

In the hoped-for change thus traced, the critic's final work, *The republic of letters* (2018), the ideal crowning of the aforementioned title, acquires an even more significant value. Taking up re-

flections that he had already extensively developed, the scholar relaunches the Erasmian idea, never completely fulfilled and even less realized today, of founding a true and authentic Europe that is the cradle of civilization, a *Res publica litterarum*, in which the sharing of Ideas, constantly illuminated by rhetorical science, can offer the space for (self) analysis of a society that has lost its values, unable to move within a meaningful horizon, no longer able to elaborate more mature and fundamental thoughts, because it seems to have lost the knowledge of the Classics.

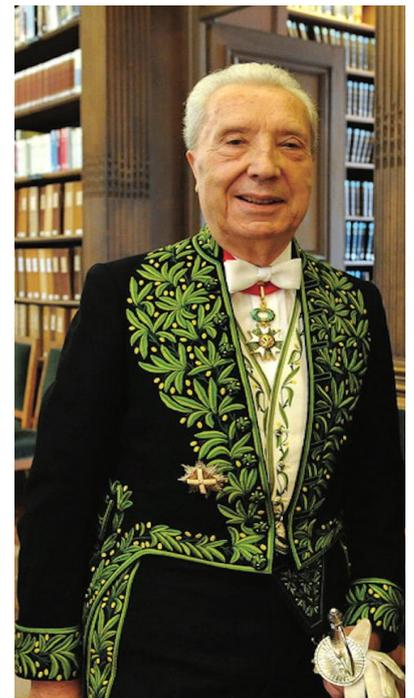
Without ever longing for a utopian *otium cum dignitate*. Fumaroli therefore teaches us the responsibility of being custodians and, at the same time, disseminators of antiquity, assigning us the onerous task of changing ourselves and the society around us through those *litterae humaniores* that continue, despite everything, to make us better.

Thus, the vast contribution that he was able to give to literary history and to sociological and political meditation can be encapsulated in this Ciceronian idea, a passage in which the learning of Rhetoric provides the basis for a life intellectually ful-

filling and morally flawless (*De oratore* III, 57):

Itaque, ut ei studio se excellentissimis ingeniis homines dederunt, ex ea summa facultate vacui ac liberi temporis multo plura, quam erat necesse, doctissimi homines otio nimio et ingeniis uberrimis adfluentes curanda sibi esse ac quaerenda et investiganda duxerunt. Nam vetus quidem illa doctrina eadem videtur et recte faciendi et bene dicendi magistra; neque disiuncti doctores, sed eidem erant vivendi praeceptores atque dicendi.

Alberto Crotto
(tr. T. Frazel)



Scientific section – Justice in Cicero and Western Political Thought

CICERO INVOLVED IN AN ERC PROJECT

Our co-partner Ben Straumann, winner of a Ciceronian ERC, gave us an interview on his work.

Can you briefly describe your ERC project?

The project is about Cicero's conception of justice and the way it influenced Western political thought over the very long term. Cicero thought a deficit of justice had destroyed the Roman Republic – as Augustine was to summarize, “there is nothing so dangerous to a state as injustice; ... a state cannot exist or be maintained without a high degree of justice.” Until recently, scholars viewed *republicanism* as the most important heritage of a coherent Greco-Roman antiquity, leaving it unexplained why some of the most important early modern thinkers focused on Cicero, law and the fall of the Roman Republic, rather than on Greek republicanism and Aristotelian virtue.

Working on the influential Dutch thinker Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) and his doctrine of natural law, I discovered that Grotius was not interested in republican virtue, but instead relied heavily on Roman law and Cicero. Many other prominent theorists, such as Bodin, Gentili, Harrington, Locke, Trenchard and Gordon, Montesquieu, Adam Smith and some of the American founders were not republicans in the conventional sense either, as my subsequent research on Gentili and the history of constitutionalism confirmed. Instead, I discovered, they built



their normative theories on Cicero's very Roman concept of justice, which until the late 18th century was widely appreciated as a cornerstone of normative political thought.

What do you think about the importance of Cicero in the European Culture and Society?

I think that Cicero's thought in general and Cicero's views about justice in particular have been hugely influential on European political thought and, to an extent, Western institutions. Cicero's impact is so far-reaching in European cultural and intellectual history, so widely diffused and over such a long stretch of history, that it is of course very difficult to get a grip on it. The last scholar who tried, in a somewhat comprehensive way, to at least sketch Cicero's extraordinary long-term influence was Tadeusz Zielinski in

the early 20th century. The importance of Cicero has been obscured from the 19th century onward by the tendency of much 19th century philological and historical scholarship to reduce Cicero to either a Roman mouthpiece of Greek ideas (at best) or to see him merely as an opportunist, sleazy politician. Further factors were the rising fortunes of Aristotle, on the one hand, and utilitarianism, on the other. But Cicero's influence, I think, proved enduring and can be gleaned in such important works of 20th century political philosophy as John Rawls *Theory of Justice* or Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. This is in large part an aftereffect of Cicero's outsized stature in early-modern political thought, where the impact of his ideas can be seen reaching deep into the Enlightenment.

You work in Zurich. I work also in Tessin and I know the situation of interest for Latin there. How is the situation in the German speaking part of Switzerland?

I look forward to working in Zurich again, but for more than 15 years I've been working in the United States, in New York, which means that I can claim more insight when it comes to academic life and the situation of Latin in North America than in Switzerland. Here in the US, many if not most undergrads

Scientific section – Justice in Cicero and Western Political Thought

CICERO INVOLVED IN AN ERC PROJECT

who come to focus on and major in Classics have no previous exposure to Latin (or Greek). They start studying the ancient language(s) as part of their undergraduate curriculum. Depending on the department and the major, this can reach a high level of linguistic expertise, or merely average, but the emphasis tends to lie on reading a lot, even in translation, rather than focusing painstakingly on translation exercises. The advantage is that students have a far wider and broader exposure to a whole range of texts and sources – they tend to have to read a lot overall; the disadvantage is that linguistic expertise may not be very deep. Looking at the academic landscape in general, I think it is fair to say that Classics is considered a rigorous and demanding undergraduate major and constitutes a gateway to many of the more selective university programs, especially law schools.

Your experience demonstrates that Cicero can also mean success. What could you suggest to young people interested in Cicero?

I have to admit that as a high school Latin student, I did not like Cicero at all and



would have been inclined to agree with Mommsen and those who thought him to have been a rather vain, opportunist and self-important politician. But once one comes to appreciate the extraordinary window provided by his writings into one of the most interesting periods of history, the late Roman republican period, one cannot help but be interested! Not only do we get historical insights into the workings and dysfunctions of the Roman republic and its eventual collapse, but Cicero also provides, in his more theoretical writings, important ideas that were meant to help stave off

the republic's decline. These ideas, especially the ones about justice, are of great weight to those of us who live in at least notionally self-governing polities. Last but not least, Cicero provides an interestingly skeptical and lastingly influential approach to Greek ideas about ethics and the good life. That he could also be an opportunist should not detract from those many other fascinating aspects of his life and ideas.

(tr. T. Frazel)

Didactic section— How Latin saves our lives

INTERVIEW WITH SILVIA STUCCHI, TEACHER AND WRITER

*Silvia Stucchi, high school teacher and talented specialist in Latin literature, is the author of *Come il latino ci salva la vita, a beautiful book on the meaning of studying Latin today, and she gave us an interview on this subject.**

There are three words that pervade your book: nightmare, opportunity, adventure. Can you better explain their connection to Latin?

About "nightmare", there is little to say: Latin has often turned into a nightmare, an obsession, a loss of sleep for students and families. It is so if the study is imposed, if its usefulness is not perceived, if a certain monotony is established in the routine of the proposed exercises, which risk being always the same, with the risk of penalizing a certain type of student to the detriment of another. Very trivially: there are students - we all know - who find, and will always find, an almost impossible difficulty in translating and for whom translation will always be the *punctum dolens* of their high school career. However, these students often have difficulty in organizing the period and have previous gaps to make up for in Italian morphosyntax (I am thinking of foreign students who are not native speakers of Italian, who are now becoming a growing and, in some cases, an important percentage even in high schools). However, sometimes

these students have a good knowledge of grammar; they study, they succeed well in comprehension exercises - I think of the Latin linguistic certification tests that they can sit for - they are passionate about literature (various students have a keen interest in history, and for ancient history), they learn, if guided, with a certain capacity the vocabulary.

In short, I'm not saying that the practice of translating from Latin should be abandoned, quite the contrary! In many ways, the translation from Latin and Greek, as well as some complex mathematics and physics exercises, remained among the last really difficult, and also for this reason, truly formative tasks left in school; but surely we can think of adding to the translation work - which absolutely must remain - many types of exercises that aim to develop many skills: and in this sense, Latin is an opportunity.

However, it is undeniable that translating from Latin, the famous "version" that so many students have taken and that deprives them - without reason - of sleep, is a great opportunity to perform an exercise in logic, the so-called *problem solving*, the same that applies to the resolution of a mathematical and scientific problem: data collection, formulation of hypotheses, control, validation of the start-

ing hypotheses or their refutation...

But if we leave the strictly scholastic sphere, Latin is an extraordinary opportunity, first of all, to know the history and culture of that which, willy-nilly, we are the fruit.

The great paradox of our time is precisely this: we live in a historical time in which the strong theme is that of identity (if we like, let's call them the "roots"), and in which medicine seems to have found the key to its present and future successes in genetics, which tells us, precisely, who we are and where we come from *ab origine* and even before; however, from the historical and pedagogical point of view, we are massively shunning people from the study of that discipline that can explain very well what history we are children of and where our language, our law, the models of our literature come from, and much more, but which is essential to acquire cultural awareness and critical thinking skills, together with the awareness of the historical dimension of the events and their protagonists, something which today we begin to feel a great lack.

If this is not a great intellectual and spiritual adventure...

But alongside these three words, nightmare, opportunity, adventure, I add a fourth, indeed, I add an oxymoron: necessary luxury. Let me explain: how many times, after a day engaged in so many

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INTERVIEW WITH SILVIA STUCCHI, TEACHER AND WRITER

absolutely urgent, necessary and volatile tasks, so urgent that the next day they will already be forgotten, is there the pleasure of reading something that does not have an immediate, contingent relapse; the pleasure, I would like to say, of discovering who we are and where we come from, because Latin, as someone said, is "the genetic code of the West". In short, being connected to Latin is the pleasure of escaping the "meat grinder of the ephemeral", at least for a few half hours a week. It is no small thing: it is a luxury; but since man does not live on bread alone ... it is a necessary luxury.

But I hope we must keep in mind a little teaching as the key to living better: knowing how to relativize, knowing how to look beyond our narrow personal horizon. Those who live by drowning in everyday problems, in those small contingent problems that, however, have the nefarious power to poison life, can see that unhappy love, betrayal, family disagreements, school disappointments, suffering from inaccessibility of status symbols, are not only evils that afflict only us, but they are problems that the Roman man already had two thousand years ago, often in a much more massive form. And, a little bit, relativizing is the key to living more lightly, or, at least, not to



drown in problems.

What does your teaching experience teach you: Does Latin have a future? Which?

Latin has a future, and a flourishing one, in my opinion, as long as I manage to overcome an obstacle, which is what I found myself in front of, like many teachers, both in high school and university: that "rubber wall", that polite hostility, that not-so-subtle distrust that the teacher feels, warns, that palpable preconception, which makes the students think: "Anyway, I'll never pass this exam"; "Anyway, it's all useless: I don't understand anything"; "It is useless to study Latin", and the like. And this prejudice, this a priori judgment, influences the climate of class and classroom, in high school and university. Let's take into account that the Latin,

- fortunately! I feel like saying - is studied at both the University and in Classics, where, together with Greek and ancient history, it is the "main course" of the course of study, chosen for the love of antiquities; but he is also studied, and fortunately, in Modern Literature, History, Linguistic Sciences, Cultural Heritage; it is a fundamental discipline in the "career" of the student of humanities for the motivation I mentioned above (acquisition of historical awareness), but also for another reason.

Latin, let's not deny it, requires commitment. I don't get involved in the discussion - to which I dedicate a paragraph in the book ("But is this Latin easy or difficult?) - whether Latin or Greek is more difficult, whether Latin is more difficult than German or the like.

However, it is certain that in an age and time of life in which it seems that the competition of educational and cultural agencies is aimed at those who lower the bar the most, it is formative to meet, and sometimes clash, with a discipline that involves a certain commitment, which requires continuous study and a little memory.

Didactic section – How Latin saves our lives

INTERVIEW WITH SILVIA STUCCHI, TEACHER AND WRITER

As a girl who had struggled a lot to pass my Latin language exam at university, and who then passed the interview with an excellent result, wrote to me, it is vital to learn that there are subjects and areas that require commitment "no ifs and buts."

In the Latin of the future, if any, what place does Cicero occupy and why?

In my opinion Cicero occupies a very important place in what we can call the "Latin of the future", and for various reasons. First of all, Cicero crossed through all genres of Latin literature (oratory, philosophical dialogue, epistolography, and even poetry) with always very high results (alas not in poetry): he is a versatile figure, multitasking, we could define it, very contemporary in acting on different levels, diversifying skills and action.

But, especially if we look at the Letters, real correspondence, not revised by the author in view of publication, we see the man, Cicero, with his contradictions, his fears, his moments of despair, the pride that sometimes makes us smile (as in the Letter to Luceius, *Fam.* 5, 12, where he comes to indirectly com-

pare himself to Alexander the Great).

In my book, I would have liked to dedicate an entire section to Cicero, but then, at the suggestion of the editor, I preferred to proceed differently, calling into question Cicero in different chapters that develop various arguments.

Certainly Cicero, politically, was a loser; his projects, from *concordia ordinum* to *consensus omnium bonorum*, have not withstood the test of the times; and his latest attempt, that of re-entering the political game as mentor and supporter of the young Octavian, had a tragic outcome. And let's not talk about family sorrows and private disappointments. This makes Cicero closer for us, more human: one of us, in short (without prejudice to the absolute exceptionality of artistic and literary creation). In fact, we think of the classics as unattainable and unattainable models, bearers of a distant perfection, busts carved in marble in an ideal gallery of the "great dead". But they were also men, and many of them achieved greatness despite, and perhaps even with, their failures.

(tr. T. Frazel)

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