

MĒAI NUCESQUE

A newsletter for Classics at the University of Dallas

An Interview with Adjunct Professor Sumler

If you have not gotten a chance to get to know Professor Alan Sumler, who instructs both Latin Grammar Review and Latin Intermediate I this year in the Classics Department, this issue of *MĒAI NUCESQUE* now brings you a closer look at this adjunct professor.

M&N: Could you tell us a little about your education?

S: I am currently working on my dissertation in ancient Greek comedy for a PhD in classics at the City University New York Graduate Center. I've received a Master of Arts in classics from the CUNY GC in spring 2010 and a Master of Humanities with a classics concentration from the University of Dallas in 2005. I hold a BA in sociology with a minor in philosophy from the University of North Texas which I completed in 2001.

M&N: What has interested you most about classics, or what do you believe is the best reason to study classics?

S: I enjoy reconstructing the ancient world and gaining access to their everyday life. I find this access by reading ancient poetry and prose while paying special attention to imagery. I also find that a survey of images on ancient pottery can be beneficial. As I study the ancient world, I gain great understanding of today's world and each historical epoch coming before.

[In response to the second part of the question:]

Studying classics gives someone a great advantage in studying all other subjects. From medicine to marketing, the ancient world can shed light on the human experience and its antecedents. Classics also opens up the student to the world of grammar and linguistics which may be applied to the study of any language. There are also great publishing and speaking opportunities in classical studies. As the student puts together an impressive Curriculum Vitae, the academic world in general becomes more accessible.

M&N: Do you have any favorite authors, works, or even quotes that you have read in Latin or Greek?

S: I enjoy poetry more than prose. I have an affinity with Hellenistic poetry, especially the epigram and mime tradition. My interests are at the same time very broad and include the iambic, lyric, and epic traditions. I am especially fond of fragment collections. I would also add comedy and tragedy as making my interests. My favorite quote at the moment comes from Theocritus' *Idyll* 4, lines 35-7: "And there also he having grabbed a bull by the hoof, brought it down the mountain and gave it to Amaryllis. The women shrieked loudly and the herdsman laughed out loud." Also this fragment (45) from Cratinus (Old Comedy) comes to mind: "And the idiot just as the sheep goes around saying, "bah, bah."

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Deity of the Month: Demeter

Identified with the Roman goddess Ceres, Demeter was the Greek goddess of corn who controlled the growth of crops and vegetation. Her role as the sustainer of food earned her worship and festivals at crucial times in the agricultural cycle. The Greeks believed Demeter's anger over the abduction of her daughter Persephone by Hades caused the barren winter months. Shown above is a statue of Demeter from Cnidus.

Source: The Oxford Classical Dictionary, Third Ed. Revised.



Image from <http://www.vroma.org/images/raia_images/demeter.jpg>.

"You've Got a Caesar to Kill": Maurer on the Passive Periphrastic

Recently in Intermediate Latin I, doubt was thrown on whether the "passive periphrastic" is really *passive*. Take, for example, *Caesar tibi necandus est*. This sentence can be translated loosely as, "You must kill Caesar," or more tightly: "Caesar must be killed by you." A more literal translation, however, recognizes that the future participle form *necandus* is not a verb, but a modifier of the noun *Caesar*. Hence: *There is a Caesar for you to kill*, or, *You have a Caesar to kill!* This slightly amusing translation actually allows us to see that there is no need to pretend that *tibi* is a dative of agent. In reality, it is an ethical dative. This brings us to the realization that the passive periphrastic is not really a passive verb so much as it is an adjective.

Source: Dr. Karl Maurer, class lecture on 10 Sep. 2010.

SCISNE
LATINAM?

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M&N: Do you have any advice for students at UD, especially those interested in ancient ideas and languages?

S: I advise students to study ancient languages full-time or, if not able, then at least part-time. He or she must study the languages diligently for many hours per day. The time spent will pay off either in personal understanding or as an interesting career choice. Be sure to continue on to graduate work in ancient languages all the way to the PhD if possible. Come by and see me some time in the Classics Department, and I'll give you suggestions for continuing your studies of the ancient world. ☒

Classics Club Events

October 6 – Meeting cancelled due to Charity Week

October 13 – Meeting – 7 pm, Audio-Visual Center

October 20 – Meeting – 7 pm, Audio-Visual Center

October 22 – Poetry Recitation – 7 pm, Orpheum

October 25, 27, and 29 – Famous Assassinations – 4:15 pm, the Mall

October 27 – Meeting – 7 pm, Audio-Visual Center

Greek Grammar Corner

Expressions of Time

Duration of Time and Extent of Time – expressed by accusative case without a preposition. E.g. He marched five days, ἤλαυνε πέντε ἡμέρας.

Time when – expressed by the dative case, usually without a preposition. E.g. He will come on the next day, ἕξει τῆ ὑστεραία.

Time within which – expressed by the genitive case, usually without a preposition. E.g. He will come within ten days, ἕξει δέκα ἡμερῶν.

Source: Chase and Phillips, Lesson 7

Roman Holidays in October

From Wikipedia.org

- ❖ October 4 – *Ieiunium Cereris*: Fast of Ceres, instituted in 191 BC; at that time that date fell in late spring
- ❖ October 5 – one of 3 days on which the *mundus* is opened
- ❖ October 6 – day of bad omens: anniversary of the battle of Arausio (105 BC)
- ❖ October 11 – Meditrinalia in honour of Meditrina
- ❖ October 13 – Fontinalia, dedicated to Fontus
- ❖ October 15– Equirria, the "equus October" sacrificed to Mars in the Campus Martius
- ❖ October 19 – Armilustrum in honour of Mars

Good Old Poetry

The tenth work in Horace's second book of odes advises one to avoid extremes and is the source of our phrase the "golden mean," which here is *auream mediocritatem*. Enjoy!

Rectius vives, Licini, neque altum
semper urgendo neque, dum procellas
cautus horrescis, nimium premendo
litus iniquum.

auream quisquis mediocritatem
diligit, tutus caret obsoleti
sordibus tecti, caret invidenda
sobrius aula.

saepius ventis agitur ingens
pinus et celsae graviore casu
decidunt turres feriuntque summos
fulgura montis

sperat infestis, metuit secundis
alteram sortem bene praeparatum
pectus. informis hiemes reducit
Iuppiter, idem

submovet. non, si male nunc, et olim
sic erit: quondam cithara tacentem
suscitat Musam neque semper arcum
tendit Apollo.

rebus angustis animosus atque
fortis adpare: sapienter idem
contrahes vento nimium secundo
turgida vela.

Text from Perseus Digital Library:

<<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0024%3Abook%3D2%3Apoem%3D10>>.