

Razgovor s dr. Patrickom M. Owensom (Sveučilište Colgate, NY, SAD)

Razgovarao: Marko Paradžik¹



Dr. Patrick M. Owens američki je klasičar i latinist specijaliziran za govorni latinski, novolatinsku leksikografiju i humanističku pedagogiju. Diplomirao je na Fordham University, magistrirao na University of Kentucky, a doktorirao na Pontificium Institutum Altioris Latinitatis u Rimu. Predavao je na više obrazovnih razina, uključujući i Colgate University, gdje je bio *visiting assistant professor*. Povezan je s *Accademia Viva-rium Novum* u Rimu i danas je urednik *Neo-Latin Lexicona*, važnog referentnog djela za suvremeni neolatinski rječnik. Njegovi znanstveni interesi obuhvaćaju latinsku pedagogiju, renesansni humanizam, povijesnu lingvistiku, digitalne humanistike, srednjovjekovnu i novolatinsku književnost te suvremenu recepciju klasičnih tekstova. Dobitnik je nagrade CAMWS za izvrsnost u nastavi 2017. godine.

U svojem predavanju “Barbarisms at the Gate: An Analysis of Some Perils in Active Latin Pedagogy” tvrdite da govoreni latinski može produbiti naše razumijevanje klasičnih tekstova. Kako vidite odnos između govorenog latinskog i interpretacije antičkih književnih uzora?

Govoreni latinski ne držim ciljem samim po sebi, nego nezaobilaznim sredstvom za potpunije tumačenje antičkih književnih uzora.

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Usmena uporaba jezika trenira ne samo jezik nego i uho; upravo se ondje unutarnjim slušanjem usvajaju ritam, red riječi, idiom i sintaksa. Ta internalizacija potom omogućuje studentima da izravno obrađuju latinsku književnost, jer smanjuje potrebu za posredovanjem prijevoda i povećava osjetljivost na nijanse, ritam i stil.

To uvjerenje nije moderna inovacija. Erasmus, Posselius, Comenius i mnogi drugi u ranonovovjekovnoj tradiciji inzistirali su na aktivnoj uporabi jezika upravo radi stjecanja tumačke kompetencije. Govor, pisanje i dijalog držali su najboljom pripremom za sudjelovanje u *res publica litterarum*, gdje je bavljenje antičkim uzorima bio najviši cilj. Moderna SLA (*Second Language Acquisition*) istraživanja potvrđuju njihov uvid: učenici najčvršće usvajaju oblike i strukture kad ih moraju proizvoditi i razumijevati u stvarnome vremenu.

Govorenje latinskoga također ima kulturnu i humanističku dimenziju. Razgovarati, pisati i slušati na latinskome znači smjestiti se u isti medij koji je nekoć ujedinjavao učenjake diljem svijeta. Kad naglas čitamo Ciceronove govore ili Augustinove homilije, ne treniramo samo razumijevanje nego i maštom ulazimo u njihov svijet, prepoznajući te tekstove kao izvedbe namijenjene slušatelju. Uporaba latinskoga kao komunikacijskoga sredstva produbljuje auralnu osjetljivost na sve tekstove koji su bili namijenjeni govorenju, a ne samo čitanju.

U radu *De verborum delectu* istražujete nastanak neologizama u novolatinskome. Mogu li se ista načela primijeniti na proširivanje latinskog rječnika radi interpretacije filozofskih i znanstvenih tekstova iz antike?

Iako je novolatinski osobito fleksibilan, latinski je odavno usvajao nove pojmove kako bi opisao nove ideje u filozofiji i znanosti.

Kao i svaki prirodni jezik, mora omogućiti rast i upravljati njime u skladu s unutarnjim pravilima i uz poštivanje postojećih uzora.

Kad su se humanisti renesanse suočili s novim znanostima, tehnologijama i filozofskim strujanjima, nisu se ustručavali kovati nove pojmove; posegnuli su za bogatstvom vlastite tradicije. Tako je nastao leksik koji im je omogućio raspravu o Aristotelu, Galenu ili Koperniku u mediju koji je ostao prepoznatljivo latinski, ali dovoljno prostran da nosi nove pojmove.

Vaš članak *Qui sititis ite ad fontem!* kritički razmatra Ørbergovu metodu. U kojoj mjeri izravna metoda poučavanja jezika, kakva se primjenjuje u *Vivariumu Novumu*, odražava usmenu tradiciju antičkog obrazovanja?

U važnim aspektima postoji kontinuitet: Ørbergova *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata* predstavlja najopsežniji moderni pokušaj oživljavanja izravne metode u latinskoj pedagogiji, a kurikulum u *Vivariumu Novumu* prihvaća je tako da latinski postaje jedini jezik poučavanja. To stvara uranjajuće okruženje nalik na "prirodnu metodu" kojom djeca usvajaju žive jezike.

Možemo reći da je antičko obrazovanje bilo primarno usmeno. Djeca su prvo učila slova, zatim slogove, potom recitirala cijele odlomke; oponašala su učitelje, sudjelovala u dijalozima i internalizirala modele ponavljanjem i izvedbom. Retorička obuka odvijala se naglas, s deklamacijom i raspravama kao središnjim vježbama. Filozofi su također poučavali kroz dijalog i usmenu razmjenu.

U tom smislu, izravna metoda u *Vivariumu Novumu* – s naglaskom na slušanje, govor i stalnu uporabu jezika – vjerna je duhu antičke pedagogije. No program *Vivariuma Novuma* ujedno je izrazito

renesansan: to je humanističko obrazovanje u filozofiji i retorici kakvo nema usporedbe u svijetu.

Vivarium Novum potiče studente da govore latinski cijeli dan. Kako takvo uranjanje potiče intuitivnije razumijevanje sintakse, stila i sadržaja?

Kad studenti žive u latinskome, dogodi se nešto izvanredno: strukture jezika prestaju biti apstrakcije na papiru i postaju misaone navike. Imersija prisiljava učenike da obrađuju sintaksu u stvarnom vremenu. Umjesto da polako raščlanjuju rečenicu s gramatičkim tablicama, moraju pratiti kako se red riječi razvija i predviđati završetke, slaganje i odnos klauza.

S vremenom se stvara instinktivno razumijevanje kako se padeži, participi i zavisne rečenice isprepliću u *symphonia* latinskoga jezika – mnogo veličanstveniju od gramatičkih tablica i pravila. Čestim slušanjem idiomatskih izraza učenici usvajaju ritam, kolokacije i stil te ih reproduciraju. To izravno utječe na čitanje: prepoznaju što zvuči ciceronovski, gdje inverzija naglašava, a gdje izraz djeluje neukusno. Uranjanje spaja oblik, stil i značenje u jednu intuitivnu kompetenciju. Student koji je živio u latinskome čita Cicerona ne kao zagonetku nego kao poznati glas čiji ritam i struktura odzvanjaju u njegovoj vlastitoj svakodnevnoj uporabi jezika.

Sudjelovali ste u *Fabulae Syrae*, modernom prepričavanju antičkih mitova na latinskom. Kako takvo prepričavanje pomaže razumijevanju antičke kulturne imaginacije?

Da! Dao sam mali doprinos tome divnom djelu. Glavninu su napisali Luigi Miraglia i Roberto Carfagni, kojima pripada velika zasluga.

Prepričavanje mitova na latinskome omogućuje studentima da dožive priče u jeziku koji ih je nekoć nosio, potičući tečnost i istodobno uranjanje u antički pripovjedni oblik. To ne zahtijeva reinterpretaciju starih narativa; naprotiv – omogućuje novo vrednovanje.

Danas se, nažalost, mitologija rjeđe predaje jer se teme drže presjetljivima iako sadržavaju trajnu mudrost i temelj su intertekstualnosti u povijesti književnosti. Bez poznavanja mitoloških i biblijskih referenci učenici ostaju hendikepirani čitatelji. Stoga je integriranje mitova u kurikulum latinskog nužno za formiranje kulturno pismenog čitatelja.

Kao urednik *Neo-Latin Lexicon*, kako vidite vezu između suvremene latinske uporabe i njezinih antičkih korijena? Može li se očuvati klasična autentičnost dok se jezik proširuje na nove kontekste?

Teško je govoriti o „jezičnoj autentičnosti“. To ne bismo rekli ni za druge jezike. Ne bismo, primjerice, kritizirali Novi zavjet jer nije pisan „Demostenovu grčkom“, kao što ne bismo prigovarali Shakespeareu što odstupa od Chaucera.

Naravno, svako proširivanje mora se temeljiti na klasičnim uzorima. Neodgovorno stvaranje kvari idiom; ali kovanje uz osjećaj mjere kakav su imali Ciceron ili Lukrecije znači nastavljati isti antički projekt. Poštivanje *auctores probati* – bilo kroz norme, bilo kroz njihovu praksu – ključ je obogaćivanja latinskoga kad god to nalaže potreba.

Kako tretiranje latinskoga kao živoga jezika, kakvo se prakticira u *Vivariumu Novumu*, produbljuje učenikovu vezu s antičkom kulturom u usporedbi s tradicionalnim metodama?

Dubinskim poznavanjem latinskoga i stalnim susretom s antičkim autorima studenti postaju prirodno bliskiji mnogim aspektima rimske književne kulture. Naravno, postoje elementi rimske stvarnosti koje treba odbaciti (gladijatorske igre, ropstvo itd.). No promišljati prijateljstvo (*de Amicitia*), dužnost (*de Officiis*) ili životni put (*Aeneis*, *Confessiones*) s najvećim umovima antičke tradicije – to je nasljeđe *res publica litterarum*.

Govoreći latinski, studenti žive u očaravajućem intelektualnom prostoru između antike i moderniteta, gdje mogu – uz trud i disciplinu – razvijati intelektualne vrline.

U svojem ljetnom tečaju *Spoken Latin* koristite Ørbergovu *Familia Romana*. Kako narativni pristup pomaže studentima osjetiti elemente svakodnevnog života u antici?

Familia Romana omogućuje studentima upoznati latinski kao kontinuiranu priču o običnom rimskom životu, a ne kao niz nepovezanih gramatičkih vježbi. Ørberg uvodi vokabular i strukture kroz rutine rimske obitelji, čime učenici usvajaju jezik u kontekstu i ujedno otkrivaju kako su Rimljani zamišljali svakodnevni i građanski život.

Čitanje naglas i rasprava na latinskome pretvaraju potencijalno zamorne gramatičke vježbe u iskustvo življenja u jeziku – gotovo osjećaj „putovanja kroz vrijeme“.

U kojoj mjeri antički retorički oblici i stilistički obrasci oblikuju Vaš pristup latinskoj kompoziciji? Kako to pomaže studentima bolje razumjeti autore poput Cicerona ili Augustina?

Antički retorički oblici jezgra su mojega pristupa latinskoj kompoziciji. Kad studenti uče pisati na latinskom, vodi ih se kroz elemente stila: period, ritam, ravnotežu rečenica, retoričke figure poput anafore ili hijazma.

Aktivnim vježbanjem tih obrazaca studenti počinju osjećati „arhitekturu“ latinske proze, a ne samo analizirati je. To im mijenja pristup velikim autorima: predviđaju kamo rečenica vodi, osjete snagu rasporeda argumenata i prepoznaju naglaske koji bi im promakli u prijevodu.

Dodatna pitanja

U podcastu Ad Navseam rekli ste da ne treba razlikovati klasični, tradicionalni i srednjovjekovni latinski, jer su to varijante jedinstvenoga jezika. Je li danas moguće nastaviti razvijati latinski neologizmima?

Latinski je uvelike jedinstven jezik koji povezano traje od Ciceroa preko Augustina, Akvinca i Erasma pa sve do današnjih dana. Podjele na „klasični“, „srednjovjekovni“, „novi“ često su umjetne i ne pomažu. Za razliku od engleskog, gdje jezik različitih razdoblja nije međusobno razumljiv (moderni govornik ne može čitati *Beowulfa* bez obuke), latinski je u svojoj povijesti pokazao iznimnu koheziju.

Svako doba kovalo je nove pojmove – kasnoantičko teološke, srednjovjekovno skolastičke, renesansno znanstvene – ali uvijek istim mehanizmima: kompozicija, kalkiranje iz grčkog, semantičko proširenje, odmjereno posuđivanje.

Isto vrijedi i danas: *aeroplanum*, *telephonum*, *computatorium* nisu prekid nego nastavak lanca, pod uvjetom da se tvore s osjećajem za morfologiju, uzore i stil.

Rekli ste i da je gramatika *post factum* stvar. Treba li najprije učiti gramatiku ili nešto drugo?

Gramatika ne smije biti polazište nego odgovor na prirodnu zna-

tiželju koja nastaje nakon stvarnog kontakta s jezikom. Djeca najprije slušaju, oponašaju i govore, a tek potom analiziraju.

Isto vrijedi i za sve učenike: najprije mora doći smislen, razumljiv unos (*comprehensible input*). Gramatika tada daje preciznost i razjašnjava ono što je učenik već intuitivno usvojio.

Jeste li znali da je latinski bio službeni jezik Hrvata sve do 19. stoljeća? Kako to komentirate?

To je prekrasno! To pokazuje izvanrednu prilagodljivost latinskog: nije bio „mrtav“ jezik, nego živi medij u kojem su Hrvati vodili javni život, bilježili zakone i izražavali nacionalni identitet.

Kako ohrabriti Hrvate da se vrate *statusu quo ante*?

Ako bi laik, koji nikada nije učio latinski, od Vas zatražio praktične razloge zašto bi ga trebao učiti, što biste mu rekli?

Latinski je ključ za neka od najvećih djela književnosti, filozofije, povijesti i teologije. Povezuje nas sa živom tradicijom koja je oblikovala pravo, znanost, religiju i umjetnost dvaju tisućljeća. Lijek je protiv postmoderne fragmentacije jer nas ukorjenjuje u jasnoću, kontinuitet i zajedničko značenje. Širi perspektivu, bori se protiv plitkog intelektualizma i povezuje nas s najvećim umovima povijesti.

A uz sve to – iznimno je zabavan!

Interview with Dr. Patrick M. Owens (Colgate University, NY, USA)

Dr. Patrick M. Owens is an American classicist and Latinist specializing in spoken Latin, Neo-Latin lexicography, and humanistic pedagogy. He earned his B.A. at Fordham University, his M.A. at the University of Kentucky, and completed his PhD at the Pontificium Institutum Altioris Latinitatis in Rome. He has served on the faculty of Colgate University and has taught at various institutions at both the pre-college and college levels. Owens is closely associated with the *Accademia Vivarium Novum* in Rome and is editor of the Neo-Latin Lexicon, an important reference work for modern and Neo-Latin vocabulary. His scholarly interests include Latin pedagogy, Renaissance humanism, historical linguistics, digital humanities, medieval and Neo-Latin literature, and the modern reception of classical texts. He received the CAMWS Award for Excellence in College Teaching in 2017.

In your lecture “Barbarisms at the Gate: An Analysis of Some Perils in Active Latin Pedagogy,” you argue that speaking Latin can deepen our understanding of classical texts. How do you see the relationship between spoken Latin and the interpretation of ancient literary models?

I regard spoken Latin not as an end in itself but as an indispensable means toward the fuller interpretation of ancient literary models. Oral use of the language trains not only the tongue but also the ear; it is there that the cadences of word order, idiom, and syntax are internalized. This interiorization, in turn, enables students to process Latin literature directly, by diminishing interference from translation and increasing sensitivity to nuance, rhythm, and style.

This conviction is not merely a modern innovation. Erasmus, Posselius, Comenius, and many others in the early modern tradition insisted upon active use precisely to cultivate interpretive competence. They viewed speech, writing, and dialogue as the best preparation for participation in the *res publica litterarum*, where engagement with ancient models was the highest aim. Modern SLA (Second Language Acquisition) research confirms their insight: learners acquire forms and structures most securely when they must produce and comprehend meaningful messages in real time.

Speaking Latin also carries a cultural and humanistic dimension. To converse, write, and hear in Latin is to situate oneself within the same medium that once united scholars from around the globe. When we read the speeches of Cicero or homilies of Augustine aloud, we not only train our comprehension but also enter imaginatively into their world, recognizing these texts as performances meant to be heard as well as read. So, the practice of using Latin as a means of communication deepens the aural appreciation of those and all texts meant to be recited rather than read.

In “De verborum delectu,” you explore the formation of neologisms in Neo-Latin. Could the same principles be applied to expand Latin vocabulary for interpreting philosophical or scientific texts from antiquity?

Although Neo-Latin is an especially flexible dialect, Latin has always incorporated new terms to describe novel concepts in philosophy and science. Like all natural languages, it must provide for growth and manage it with internally coherent and mostly consisted rules with deference to its established models.

When humanists of the Renaissance confronted newly emerging sciences, technologies, or philosophical currents, they did not

shrink from coining terms: they drew upon the wealth of resources within the patrimony. The resulting lexicon allowed them to discuss Aristotle, Galen, or Copernicus in a medium that remained recognizably Latin, yet capacious enough to carry new concepts.

Your article “Qui sititis ite ad fontem!” offers a critical reflection on Ørberg’s method. To what extent does the direct method of language learning used at *Vivarium Novum* reflect the oral tradition of education in the ancient world?

In important respects, there is continuity: Ørberg’s *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata* represents the most thorough modern attempt to revive the direct method in Latin pedagogy, and the curriculum at *Vivarium Novum* has adopted it in a way that makes Latin the exclusive medium of instruction. This certainly creates an immersive environment reminiscent of the “natural method” according to which children acquire most living languages. I think we can say that ancient education was primarily oral. Children first learned letters, then syllables, then recited whole passages; they imitated masters, engaged in dialogic exercises, and internalized models through repetition and performance. Rhetorical training was conducted aloud, with declamation and disputation as central exercises. Philosophers likewise taught through dialogue and oral exchange. To that extent, the direct method at *Vivarium Novum*, with its emphasis on listening, speaking, and constant use of the target language, is faithful to the spirit of ancient pedagogy.

Certainly, the immersion program at *Vivarium Novum* is unlike anything in the world. It is difficult to compare it to education in the ancient world because it is truly a Renaissance education in humanist philosophy and rhetoric.

What makes Ørberg's approach compelling is precisely this hybrid quality: it borrows from ancient tradition, adapts certain early modern humanistic practices, but aligns well with insights from contemporary SLA studies. The result is not a literal restoration of antiquity, but a method that allows us to approximate the ancient experience daily living in the language, so that when students turn to Caesar, Cicero, or Augustine, they do so with ears and tongues familiar with the genius of the language, having been trained to engage in the language, rather than to decode it at a distance.

***Vivarium Novum* encourages students to speak Latin throughout the day. In your experience, how does this immersion foster a more intuitive understanding of classical syntax, style, and content?**

When students live in Latin, as at *Vivarium Novum*, something remarkable happens: the structures of the language cease to be abstractions on a page and become habits of thought. Immersion compels learners to process syntax in real time. Instead of parsing a sentence slowly with a grammar chart in hand, they must follow word order as it unfolds, anticipating endings, concord, and clausal relations in the same sequence as they appear. Over time this gives rise to an instinctive grasp of how cases, participles, and subordinate clauses work together to create the glorious symphony that is *Latinitas* (i.e., pure Latin elegance), which is so much grander than all the grammar charts, syntactical rules, or pedantic prescriptions.

So, when students hear idiomatic turns of phrase every day, they internalize rhythm, collocation, and register and reproduce them. This sensitivity transfers directly into reading: they begin to perceive when a phrase is Ciceronian, when a word order carries particular emphasis, when a poetic inversion heightens drama, or when a locution falls-flat and sounds inelegant.

Finally, the immersive method of instruction deepens engagement with the material. Discussing philosophy, history, or daily life in Latin invites students to reimagine those subjects through the very medium of antiquity. To debate *virtus* or narrate a myth in Latin is not merely to translate ideas but to inhabit the conceptual world in which they were first expressed. With every word, Latin speakers are literally breathing new life into the texts that they encounter, and their content thus comes alive, no longer as glosses in the margin but as ideas terms one has wielded in conversation.

In my experience at *Vivarium Novum*, this uninterrupted use of Latin does what no single classroom, grammar book, or intensive reading can accomplish: it fuses form, style, and meaning into a single, intuitive competence. The student who has lived in Latin reads Cicero not as a puzzle to be solved, but as a familiar voice whose syntax, cadence, and perspective resonate with the rhythms of their own daily speech patterns.

You contributed to the *Fabulae Syrae*, a modern retelling of ancient myths in Latin. How can the reinterpretation of mythology in Latin help us better understand the cultural imagination of antiquity?

Yes! I made a small contribution to that marvelous book. The lion share of the work was done by Luigi Miraglia and Roberto Carfagni, who deserve great praise for creating an invaluable addition to the Ørberg series. In retelling myths in Latin, as in *Fabulae Syrae*, instructors give students experience the stories in the language that once carried them, fostering fluency while being immersed in an ancient narrative form. This practice does not require a reinterpretation of age-old narratives but provides the opportunity for a renewed appreciation of it. (I would add that where I live, sadly, mythology is less frequently taught in schools today because the themes of mythology are considered too sensitive for young minds.)

Not only do the stories of ancient mythology contain precious and perennial wisdom for modern readers but they are also the material of so much intertextuality throughout literary history. If our students do not learn the references of Greco-Roman myth and sacred scripture, they will always be handicapped readers. The importance of mythology within all subsequent bodies of literature and the conspicuous absence of mythology from other parts of the modern curriculum should be reason enough to use ancient myths in the language learning curriculum so that our students do not leave school without the ability to recognize literary references and allusions.

As an editor of the *Neo-Latin Lexicon*, how do you view the connection between modern Latin usage and its ancient roots? Is it possible to preserve classical linguistic authenticity while expanding the language for new contexts?

It is difficult to speak of *linguistic authenticity*. This is not something we would say of other languages. For instance, we would no more question the *authenticity* of the language of the *New Testament* because it is not composed in Demosthenes' Greek any more than we would reprimand Shakespeare for straying too far from Chaucer or the language of *Beowulf*. Of course, any expansion must remain anchored in classical precedent. To invent carelessly is to corrupt the idiom; but to coin with a Ciceronian or Lucretian sense of proportion is to continue the ancient project itself. In this way, Latin speakers should still respect the principles that the *auctores probati* (i.e., respected Latin authors) have set down for us, either explicitly through prescriptive norms or implicitly in their usage, and in this way to enrich our Latin lexicon whenever necessity demands it.

How does treating Latin as a living language, as practiced at *Vivarium Novum*, enhance students' connection with ancient cultu-

re compared to traditional grammar-translation methods?

Through a more intimate knowledge of Latin and constant study of ancient authors, students naturally become more familiar with the many aspects of Roman literary culture. Admittedly though, there are many aspects of Roman *culture* which we should eschew (e.g., gladiatorial games, slave trading, prostitution, etc). It is, however, a beautiful thing to contemplate the nature of friendship (*de Amicitia*), the demands of responsibility (*de Officiis*), or the nature of life's journey (*Aeneis* or *Confessiones*) with the most brilliant minds of antiquity. That is the culture and inheritance of the *res publica litterarum*. And by remaining in Latin, Latin speakers often inhabit an enchanted intellectual space between antiquity and modernity, where they can – through sacrifice and strenuous effort – *cultivate* intellectual virtues.

In your *Spoken Latin* summer course, you use Ørberg's *Familia Romana*. How does this narrative-based approach help students experience aspects of daily life in antiquity?

Using *Familia Romana* in a spoken Latin course allows my students to encounter the language as a continuous story of ordinary Roman life, not as disconnected grammar drills. Because Ørberg presents vocabulary and structures through the daily routines of a Roman family (e.g., meals, familial interactions – especially, highly emotional relationships, journeys, education, etc.) students acquire forms and syntax in context, while simultaneously glimpsing how Romans imagined domestic and civic existence. And, as I said, reading this narrative aloud and discussing it in Latin turns what would be dreary work of grammar drills into a lived experience, such that students intuitively grasp linguistic patterns along with cultural realities, which, in turn, can give them the impression of time-travelling and, in a way, of experiencing antiquity as a world they momentarily inhabit.

To what extent do ancient rhetorical forms and stylistic patterns shape your approach to Latin composition? How does this help students better understand classical authors such as Cicero or Augustine?

Ancient rhetorical forms and stylistic patterns are at the core of my approach to Latin composition. When students learn to compose in Latin, they are guided through the elements of style, like periodic sentence structure, balance of clauses, variation of rhythm, and the strategic use of figures of speech such as anaphora or chiasmus. By practicing these patterns actively, students begin to feel the architecture of Latin prose rather than analyze it. That familiarity transforms how they read and appreciate the great authors: they can anticipate where sentences are driving, appreciate the persuasive force of an oratorical arrangement, and recognize subtleties of emphasis that would escape a reader approaching the text only through translation.

Added questions

In the excellent podcast related to the Latin language, Ad Navseam, you expressed the view that there should be no distinction between Classical, Traditional, and Medieval Latin, as it is all one unified language. Is it possible today to continue developing the Latin language with neologisms, considering the fact that many phenomena and things exist now that did not exist in antiquity or the Middle Ages? And in what cases could such neologisms still be considered part of this unified Latin language?

Latin can best be appreciated as a mostly unified language, stretching seamlessly from Cicero through Augustine, Aquinas, Erasmus, and even into our own day. It is not particularly helpful to cordon off periods of Latin literature as something inferior or especially foreign to the language itself. When scholars use cate-

gories like *Old, Middle, Modern* in the description of the history of English, they do so because the language at different periods were not mutually intelligible: So, a modern English speaker cannot read *Beowulf* (c. 850) without specialized training. But in terms of literature, with some exceptions, this is not entirely true about Latin. The history of Latin is precisely the history of its capacity to grow: Late antique writers innovated terms to describe the Christian sacraments, medieval authors coined terms for scholastic theology, and Renaissance humanists pruned those and yet added terminology for new sciences. Each age extended the lexicon with neologisms formed by the same principles the ancients themselves employed (viz., compounding, calquing from Greek, semantic extension, and judicious borrowing). And the same can be said today. When we name modern realities like *aeroplanum, telephonum, or computatorium* we are not breaking the chain but following it and adding a link; that is, provided we coin words with sensitivity to Latin morphology, precedent, and style. Such terms belong to Latin insofar as they are created in continuity with the tradition. In these cases, neologisms are not intrusions from without but the natural flowering of a language that has always adapted itself to new contexts. In this sense, the unified Latin of which I spoke includes not only Cicero and Erasmus but also the Latin of some great contemporary Latinists.

Following up on the previous question, in that podcast you mentioned that grammar comes as a post facto thought. In the learning process, is it better to learn grammar first, or should one start differently, for example by learning vocabulary first, or perhaps learn both simultaneously?

Grammatical instruction should never be the starting point but an answer to the curiosity that naturally arises after meaningful contact with the language. The ancients themselves, and later hu-

manists, recognized that children first use language by listening, repeating, and imitating, long before they analyze it. The same principle applies to all language learners: students profit most when they begin with genuine communication that is meaningful and intelligible (which is known as *comprehensible input*) so that structures are acquired intuitively through repeated exposure. Grammar instruction then serves as a way to name and refine what the learner has already understood contextually, offering clarity and precision after exposure has primed the students' curiosity.

Did you know that Latin was the official language of the Croats until the 19th century, and how do you comment on this historical fact?

That is marvelous! That illustrates Latin's extraordinary adaptability: it was not a "dead" language but a living medium in which modern Croats conducted civic life, recorded laws, and expressed their national identity. How can we encourage the Croats to return to the *status quo ante*?

If a layperson who has never encountered Latin before asked you to give them sufficient practical reasons to learn Latin, what would you say?

Latin is the key to some of the greatest works of literature, philosophy, history, and theology ever written and it connects us to a living tradition that has shaped law, science, religion, and art for two millennia. It is a potent antidote to the post-modern malaise because it roots us in continuity, clarity, and shared meaning at a time when language and culture often feel fragmented and unstable. The study of Latin and its literature restores perspective, combats insular, disconnected intellectualism, and humbles us through exposure to some of the greatest minds who have ever lived. And it is great fun!