

## *Editorial Note*

We are pleased to offer you this fourth issue of JOLCEL, which is the last of our four-part thematic series on the relations between Latin schooling and the production of Latin literature. In the first issue, we looked at the way in which the strong association between the Latin language and formal education shaped the character of European literature. The second issue demonstrated what this Latin basis in education means for texts written in literary peripheries. In the third issue, we took a closer look at the dual life of texts as literary and as classroom authorities. Lastly, in this fourth issue, our theme is the mixture of nostalgia and playfulness that often characterizes the writing of Latin: nostalgia for the lost nativity of the language, for the idea of a bygone golden age of literature, or simply nostalgia for the school; and play as a means to deal with this nostalgia and make it productive.

The article by Jacqueline Arthur-Montagne perfectly illustrates this combination of nostalgia and playfulness by means of the Victorian *Comic Latin Grammar*, which is part functional Latin textbook, part parody on Latin education. Arthur-Montagne shows how the parody of Latin turns into a parody of the people who know Latin, namely those who have used their little knowledge of Latin for social advancement. The *Comic Latin Grammar* lures its readers by evoking the days of companionship and shared jokes in grammar school, only to then mercilessly make the reader the butt of the joke.

In the second article by Scott J. DiGiulio, melancholy for ideals of Latin erudition spurs on the creation of new miscellanies during the Renaissance. DiGiulio applies new insights from the study of Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* to Angelo Poliziano's *Miscellaneorum centuria prima*, written thirteen centuries later. He shows how the aesthetic paradigm of *varietas* underlying the writing of miscellany offers both erudition and enjoyment. As Catherine Conybeare states in her response (found at the end of this issue): "The work is a magnificent Wunder-

kabinett of language, a repository of arresting linguistic curiosities and obscure allusions that wears lightly what is in fact a prodigious achievement of learning.”

In the third article, Piet Gerbrandy takes us to seventh-century Ireland while writing about the *Hisperica famina*, a small but multi-authored corpus of Latin texts of which several different versions are still extant. Focusing on the so-called A-text, which is the most coherent, Gerbrandy attempts to show that “one of the weirdest manifestations of Latinate culture” at once also functions as an *ars poetica*, one that is suited for the times of upheaval and loss of Latin literary culture in which the *Hisperica famina* originated. He suggests that the A-text was written by an English scholar looking back on his school days in Ireland, and describes a text that with its irony, self-mockery, and in-crowd intellectual dynamics is reminiscent of the *Victorian Comic Latin Grammar*.

Finally, in her reflections on these three essays, Catherine Conybeare highlights various patterns in the way in which three very different texts (that is, a seventh-century hermetic text, a fifteenth-century miscellany, and a nineteenth-century comic grammar) not only play with the Latin language but also with its traditions and its melancholic connotations of a youth and a glory that lie always in the past. Conybeare ends her contribution with a plea to continue this tradition of making fun with Latin, but also, perhaps more importantly, to be more inclusive “and let others in on the joke.”

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