

# THE MCA NEWSLETTER



Malta  
Classics  
Association

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## MESSAGE From the MCA President

If one were to travel far enough, at some point he may get near. The world is a globe, and the further one goes from home, the nearer he arrives from the other end. Far and wide are words we hear a lot today. At no time have I felt so far from our members of the Malta Classics Association, and yet so near thanks to this newsletter and thanks to its editor, Ms Elizabeth Kemp.

The Greeks and the Romans lived in an epoch far away in time from ours; yet they are so near to us, precisely thanks to Classical Associations around the world. We also get closer to their past as we either repeat their mistakes, or benefit from their achievements.

The Romans conquered the Greeks but were conquered by them culturally, but the Vandals were not conquered by the conquered Romans. They were conquered later by civilizations which ultimately looked to Rome and Greece for the inspiration which helped them develop.

We today are living in a situation where we can be either the losers of this great heritage, or its beneficiaries. We can die prematurely through this disease, or get stronger through the suffering caused by it. Aeschylus preached *pathos mathos*, that is, one learns from suffering. We take every opportunity that is offered to us to show our resilience against all odds, to put into practice our sense of Classical heroism, and to always, together with others, look forward to a brighter future in which a new Rome and a new Greece may be founded.

Long live the times when we can appreciate what we are and what we are destined to be tomorrow.

Prof. Horatio Caesar Roger Vella

President

Ladies and Gentlemen, Honoured Guests.

I thank you all for attending the Annual General Meeting of the Malta Classics Association.

That the Classics hold a fascination for us all is evident, and so I can start by appropriating Catullus, who in turn had looked to Sappho. To me, those well versed in the Classics seem to be equal to gods. Often, I find that despite my own passion for the Classics, when it is my turn to extol their virtues and to flirt with them, my tongue grows thick. I truly am more of a doer and this, I hope, is what I have done in my second and final year of Presidency.

In 2019 I was especially proud of three ventures:

- Prof. Horatio Vella's lecture "Those Sacred Numbers", described by Evenings on Campus as their biggest and best attended event ever. On that day, over 250 people attended Prof. Vella's lecture, listened to his wise words and were delighted by his dulcet tones.
- The publication of a second book of Latin quotations – masterminded by Maria Zammit, with illustrations by Warren Bartolo. This publication would not have been possible without the financial aid of the National Book Council.
- The *Iliad* Reading Group. These meetings over wine helped the Malta Classics Association reach out to an entirely new audience who have now become friends. These meetings, held every two or three weeks, were both enjoyable and educational. They eventually evolved into a more causal reading group, kindly hosted by Konrad Buhagiar.

In 2019, we also lost four cherished members of the executive committee: Jason Baldacchino, Samuel Azzopardi, Steve De Marco and Jessica Farrugia. I thank them once again.

2020 shall be the MCA's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I know that whoever shall take the helm of the Association has quite a lot of work coming up, but I am sure that they will face it with the same enthusiasm that I did.

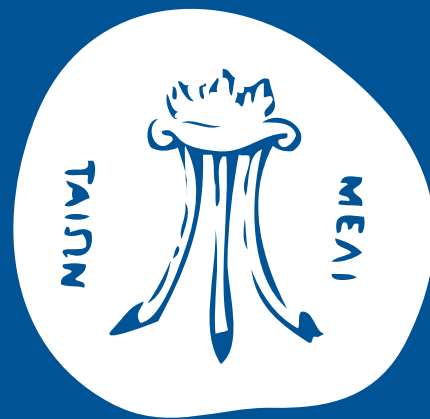
My final words shall be firstly of gratitude to the previous Presidents of the MCA, three of whom – Prof. Vella, Dr Carmel Serracino and Maria Zammit – are here today. I was truly standing on the shoulders of giants. And secondly another appropriation, this time of Cicero's words: While other occupations are not suited to every time, nor age, nor place, I find the Classics to be the food of youth, and now that I am approaching old age, a delight. They are a refuge, a comfort in adversity, a pleasure both at home and abroad and my companions where I may roam. Thank you.

# 2020 AGM

## Outgoing President's Speech

MARIA GIULIANA FENECH

# the power of the CLASSICAL WORD



## astronomy

*noun //*

The science concerned with celestial objects, such as stars and planets.

From the Classical Greek *ἄστρον* (astron) meaning 'star' and *νόμος* (nomos) meaning 'law'.

## dialogue

*noun //*

A conversation between two or more characters, usually in the settings of a literary work.

From the Classical Greek *διά* (dia) meaning 'between' and *λέγω* (lego) meaning 'to speak'.

## hypothesis

*noun //*

A proposition, usually scientific, in need of further testing to be confirmed as truth.

From the Classical Greek *ὑπό* (hypo) meaning 'under' and *θέσις* (thesis) meaning 'condition'.

## quadrangle

*noun //*

A four-sided shape, typically used to refer to a space surrounded by buildings.

From the Latin *quattuor* meaning 'four' and *angulus* meaning 'angle' or 'corner'.

## obscure

*adjective //*

Used to describe something not clearly expressed or not certainly understood.

From the Latin *obscurus* meaning 'dark' or 'shady'.

## optimum

*noun & adjective //*

The most ideal or best situation for flourishing in a particular instance.

From the Latin *optimus* meaning 'the best'.

# MCA Summer Courses

## June 2020

Send a private message to [MCA's Facebook page](#), phone 7909 4702, or send an e-mail to [info@classicsmalta.org](mailto:info@classicsmalta.org) to apply.

This year, the MCA's summer courses will be fully online. We are offering five courses, and each course lasts 8 weeks, with 2 hours of tuition per week. The fee is €25 for each course.

### ***Lingua Latina ab Initio***

Ancient Rome lives on in our literature, imagination and culture. *Lingua Latina ab Initio* introduces the structure and general workings of the Latin language. By engaging with interesting texts that deal with a variety of topics - history and poetry, laws and myth - the student will come into direct contact with the minds and thoughts of a variety of ancient authors and personas.

This course is ideal for those who are unwilling to commit themselves fully to a longer and more cumbersome course but who want to gain a clear idea of what studying Latin is like.

*Thursdays 5pm-7pm, starting Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June.*

### **The Mythology of the Classical World**

Who has not heard one Classical myth or another and fallen absolutely in love with its gods, heroes and monsters?

This course will offer a journey through the mythology of Classical Greece and Rome that will not only introduce you to the main figures and powers of both well-known and obscure myths, but will also explore the very essence and meaning of mythology and its role within Classical Culture.

*Mondays 3pm-5pm, starting Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June.*



## Classical Greek

Would you like to read Plato in his own Greek words? Or Homer? Or Aristotle?

Did you ever dream of understanding how the Greeks thought and spoke?

Are you curious to discover the roots of our civilisation from 2,500 years ago?

Seize the opportunity and start your journey into the world of the Ancient Greeks!

*Thursdays 5pm-7pm, starting Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June.*



## Sanskrit, Language & Culture

An introduction to Sanskrit's unfamiliar but pleasant script and the more elementary concepts of the language and its systems. No prior knowledge of the language is required.

*Thursdays 3pm-5pm, starting Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June.*

## An Overview of Greek and Roman History

Name dropping the living is so yesterday.

It's time to riddle your conversations with references to Alex\* and Gaius\*. Get to know the great figures of Classical History.

\*Alexander the Great & Julius Caesar of course.

*Tuesdays 5pm-7pm, starting Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June.*

**If you are still unsure about which course to take, we even created a fun quiz to help you out**

[www.classicsmalta.org/quiz-time](http://www.classicsmalta.org/quiz-time)

# FOR THE LOVE OF CLASSICS

MARIA GIULIANA FENECH

*In June 2019, the MCA received an email. A woman from China, named Aiyuan, had just moved to Malta and she was inquiring about Latin lessons for her 12-year-old daughter. Her daughter Keren was obsessed with the Classical world and she really wanted to learn Latin.*

I met up with Aiyuan and Keren a couple of times for coffee, however a tutor in their locality was not available. Aiyuan and Keren remained very keen and finally, admittedly because I felt a bit sorry for this woman who moved to Malta all the way from China in order that her daughter may learn Latin, I agreed to give Keren private lessons myself.

Keren and I started meeting once a week. I was very impressed with her progress. She was in a brand-new country and in a brand-new school, and she had also just started learning French and Italian at school. Nonetheless, she managed to grasp the basics of Latin surprisingly well. Anyone who has started to learn Latin knows that the first lessons are make-or-break. We suddenly have to understand that the same noun can exist in various forms. This was even more so for Keren, whose mother tongue Mandarin almost entirely lacks inflectional morphology.

The lessons which I had initially agreed upon out of duty became a source of joy for me too. I was also amazed at Keren's artistic talent and her unique insight into mythological characters.

In November, my new friends decided to return to their homeland. Aiyuan and Keren asked that we continue with the lessons online. Truthfully, I had never taught online and I was on the fence about this. Now, I do all my teaching online – as we are all aware the world has changed dramatically in just a couple of months. Nonetheless in December we embarked on a new adventure. Despite a six-hour time difference and busy schedules on both ends, we managed to make the lessons work. Keren's enthusiasm is infectious, and I look forward to our weekly meetings over WeChat.

## Q&A with Keren

**How did you first fall in love with the Classical world?**

I fell in love with the Classic world because of the Greek Mythology in 2015 when I was eight. I bought this book in the airport on the way back to my city Chengdu.

**What do you love most about Latin?**

The part I love the most in Latin is the structure of sentences. It is different from Chinese and English since Latin put the verb at the end of the sentence. Latin is also very accurate. Chinese does not have tenses, conjugations nor declension, which leave people space for imagination. But Latin is beautiful in an accurate way. The declensions, conjugations and tenses make the sentence very specific.

**What is the hardest aspect of Latin?**

To memorize the declensions, conjugations and tenses.

**What are your dreams when it comes to studying Classics?**

I like to study Classics. The only thing I hope is to keep loving it. I did not really think of what I am going to be when it comes to study Classics. I study it only because I love the mythological and historical figures of ancient Greek and Rome. Studying makes me feel happy and I think this is the main reason I study it. I want to do the things I like.