Latīna Lingua Academica Omnium Gentium Usurpētur!

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Exordium: There is an old schoolboy rhyme that goes, "Latin is a language / as dead as it can be; / it killed all the Romans / and now it's killing me" (qtd. in Farley). But is Latin really dead? What does it mean that Latin is dead except that no one uses it, speaks it, writes it?[1] If Latin was once used and useful, and Latin has not changed, then Latin is still useful and usable.[2] For centuries, Latin was the common language for scholarly writing all over the civilized world, and it can be again. That schoolboys' saying can be replaced with a different *sententia*–Latīna lingua academica omnium gentium ūsurpētur: Let Latin be used as the academic language of all nations.

Narratio: Latin, almost from the outset, was an academic language. Authors and statesmen like Cicero, Caesar, and Pliny cultivated the language for order, nuance, and precision (Grimes). After the Classical Period, while Tacitus, Jerome, and Augustine were still writing academic literature in Classical Latin, "spoken Latin continued to change, and it diverged more and more from the classical norms in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, becoming finally a different language, technically known as Proto-Romance or Vulgar Latin" (Batzarov).

Even after the fall of Rome, Classical Latin remained the "accepted language of scholarship" and the Church, though with simplified grammar and varying dialects ("Latin Language and Literature"). Medieval Latin borrowed Germanic vocabulary about government and Arabic words about math and science (Batzarov). Authors included Bede, Boethius, and Aquinas.

The Renaissance proved a rebirth, not just for learning, but for Classical Latin. While they could not delete vocabulary added in the Middle Ages, humanists like Petrarch and Valla did their best to restore Latin grammar to its classical youth. In addition to works of science and philosophy, they wrote letters, plays, and poetry in Latin, after the classical style ("Latin

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[1] Isocolon, Asyndeton

[2] Polyptoton, Anaphora

Language and Literature"). From the womb of classically educated minds, Latin was born

again,[3] as if to cheat chance and change[4] and refute Robert Frost's claim that "Nothing gold can

stay."

But as the modern era's "dawn (went) down to day" (Frost), authors used Latin less and less.

Nationalism motivated scholars to publish in the native language of their country; democracy, to

publish in the language of the common man (Grimes). Meanwhile, the Enlightenment jettisoned

tradition in favor of the abstract and empirical, laying the groundwork for the later rejection of

classical languages and classical education (Kopff 71).[5]

But if "Rome wasn't built in a day," neither was Latin destroyed overnight. Even

Enlightenment philosophers like Jefferson and Mill appreciated and advocated classical

education (which, of course, included reading in Latin) (Kopff 49-51). Scientists and

philosophers, like Spinoza, Hobbes, Linnaeus, Kant (Batzarov), Kepler, Descartes, Newton,

Leibniz, Bernoulli, and Euler (Capelle 38),[6] continued to publish in Latin well into the eighteenth

century.

However, as a language primarily read and not written, Latin was already mortally

wounded.[7] No longer viewed as a "vehicle of expression," but only a "repository of works,"

Latin was taught less "actively" and more "passively." Newer grammars provided more "help"

by translating their examples, so that students were no longer "compelled to grasp the

metalanguage of Latin, to arrive at an understanding of its principals [sic]" (Tunberg). When the

goal of Latin pedagogy was merely reading, or worse, merely translating, or still worse, merely

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[3] Biblical Allusion

[4] Alliteration
[5] Anaphora

[6] Enumeratio
[7] Metaphor

learning grammar, fewer students achieved fluency, and fewer still enjoyment. In the popular

imagination, Latin became the schoolboy's bane, arbitrary vocabulary and grammar existing

only as an excuse for punishing him when he failed to learn it. This impression still persists

today; for example, in the contemporary "mathematical novel" *A Certain Ambiguity,* Latin is

referred to as "a set of postulated rules" which rigidly "control what is permissible and what is

not," rules which, unlike those of geometry, seem to serve no purpose[8] (Suri and Bal 116).

In its old age, Latin grew horribly ill.[9] No longer used for academic writing or studied for

fluency, it became merely an excuse to perpetuate aristocracy in a democratic age, a luxury and

status symbol (Jones, "Ancient and Modern (Britain's Social Policies)"), a "password" to

history's attic of arcane and (supposedly) useless erudition (Jones, "Natale").

With a reputation for elitism and a dwindling constituency of authors, Latin would inevitably

lose its place at the university. It might make someone sophisticated, but that smelled too much

of aristocracy. It might make him truly cultured, familiar with human thought throughout

history, but that was not sufficient incentive.[10] By around 1900, Latin had ceased to be a

prerequisite for most colleges (Atwood).

But removing Latin was only a short-term consequence of modern thinking. In the end, all of

classical education and "the entire Western intellectual tradition, which of course includes works

written in English and other modern languages" (Kopff 19), would be completely replaced by a

less time-consuming and more easily available education (12-13). By the early 1960s, there

were still 700,000 high schoolers in America who studied Latin (192), but that decade

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[8] Amplification

[9] Personification

[10] Anaphora

dismantled all that was left of classical education. Meanwhile, at the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church introduced the vernacular mass, which, though beneficial to non-Latinate laymen, would ultimately diminish the Church's proficiency in Latin (Clark).

Nonetheless, in the last several decades enthusiasm for Latin and the Classics has revived. "Latin might be dead," says the *New York Times*, "but it continues to twitch" (Grimes). In 2000, Latin was the fourth most common foreign language studied by American students (Hu). Of course, most of these students are not fluent. There is a difference between "studying" Latin and actually "learning" it as a language to speak and write (Clark).

That is not to say that no one speaks Latin. On the contrary, Latin faculty are at last starting to teach Latin actively, the same way modern languages are taught. Several *conventicula*–Latin-speaking conferences organized by colleges and universities–take place annually in the U.S. Several years ago, "hundreds of Latin-speakers gathered in Budapest" for a similar conference(Clark). There is even a Finnish radio broadcast in Latin ("Nuntii Latini―Historia"). The total number of Latin-speakers world-wide is hard to measure, but one teacher estimates there are already 15,000 students in some kind of spoken Latin program, 3,000 of whom are fluent at some level, 200 of whom are "moderately fluent," but most importantly, he says, all those numbers are increasing rapidly (Millner). Speaking Latinists Milena Minkova and Terence Tunberg have published a textbook called *Latin for the New Millennium,* but the question remains, what is Latin in the new millennium *for*?

Divisio: Latin, in fact, could unite scholars worldwide as the common language for academic literature, just as it did for Europe during the Renaissance. Having a separate academic language actually makes sense and would make scholars more intelligent. Latin is well-suited for international purposes because of its political neutrality, worldwide familiarity,

and consistent phonetics.   Its complex grammar and well-developed vocabulary make it a good academic language. Latin would encourage scholars to be liberally educated by reading ancient books in the original language to gain historical, cultural, and philosophical perspective. Finally, academic Latin could be kept from changing in the future, so that Latin works from any time period would remain readable forever.

Confirmatio: <u>An international academic language is the primary language used in all nations for academic subjects, such as science, philosophy, theology, and textual criticism</u>–the medium for non-fictional ideas that are meant to be communicated to all places and times. Fiction, though its themes are universal, is often aimed at, or set in, a particular culture, and thus has good reason to use language of that culture.[11] However, where and when its original language is not known, fiction could be translated into the academic language and thus become available to every educated person.

<u>Using different languages for different purposes (such as using one language for scholarship and another for everyday speech) makes sense.</u> Within any one language, people use different sets of vocabulary in different contexts (qtd. in Masci). In English, for example, academic literature consists mainly of Latin-based words, while poetry consists of Old-English-based words. In his unfinished treatise on language and poetry, *De Vulgari Eloquentia,* Dante Aligieri explains how different dialects within Italian suit different poetic subjects–how, for example, the highest subjects of well-being, love, and virtue are best discussed in the most elegant dialect of Italian. Why not go one step further and use completely distinct languages for various purposes?

In *Henry V*, Shakespeare notes,

> That many things, having full reference

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[11] Epistrophe

> To one consent, may work contrariously;
>
> As many arrows loosed several ways
>
> Come to one mark, as many ways meet in one town,
>
> As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea
>
> As many lines close in the dial's center,
>
> So may a thousand actions, once afoot,
>
> End in one purpose, and be all well borne
>
> Without defeat. (Act 1, Scene 2, pp. 15-16)

Even so may many languages may serve different purposes within a single culture, as the Medieval and Renaissance precedents illustrate. Countless authors (Jerome and Dante, to name a few) published some works in Latin and others in the vernacular.

Having a separate academic language would in fact make scholars smarter. Learning a second language, at any point in life, results in "cognitive benefit" which York University has proven to exist because it delays the effects of Alzheimer's for five years. To avoid mixing languages, multilinguals must constantly use and thus strengthen their brains' "executive control center," which is used for "attention and everything we think of as uniquely human thought" (Moskowitz).

A common academic language would help scholars all over the world unite, not in loyalty to one nation, but in love for learning. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare shows how powerfully a common language contributes to mutual understanding: when Ferdinand and Miranda first meet, the strangers "recognize" each other by their common Italian tongue, and, in part as a result, they are immediately able to understand and sympathize with each other (Act 1, Scene 2, p. 93). The mere convenience of a common tongue for scholars means the ability to efficiently share,

discuss, and debate information and ideas with people all over the world, which is a great aid to discovery and invention.

Latin's place in history makes it uniquely suited for international purposes. It is not "owned" by any particular nation or nations, in the way Britain and America own English (Capelle 39), yet because of its influence on the West, it is familiar everywhere. It has, on occasion, been used for international communication even in the modern age: C.S. Lewis and an Italian Cardinal, not knowing each other's national languages, wrote to each other in Latin (Lewis et al., *The Latin Letters of C.S. Lewis*).

But cases of international Latin are few. More significantly, there are millions who speak Latin-like languages and would therefore find Latin vocabulary, and in some cases even grammar, familiar. The Romance languages, descended from Vulgar Latin, are "spoken now by more than 800,000,000 people" (Batzarov). English, claiming over 20% of the world's population "at some level of proficiency" (Masci) was heavily influenced by Latin, so that up to two thirds of its distinct words are Latin in origin (Batzarov). "The structural skeleton of most English sentences—three quarters of them—consists of articles, prepositions, and forms of the verb 'to be' which come from Old English; but the meaning of the sentence, the flesh and muscle of its body, comes from the Latin words" (Kopff 25-26).

Because of "(t)he long and wide use of Latin for scholarly and literary purposes" (Batzarov), Latin influence is especially noticeable in academic literature. Consider the following two sentences from the very beginning of an academic article, in which all the Latin roots have been put in bold:

> In the first **part** of the **article**, an **approach** to Greek diglossia is **propos**ed, **focus**ing on the **differ**ing **social function**s of the two **co**existing Greek **langu**ages. The

> **adoption** of "**pure**" Greek in the early eighth **century represent**ed a **compromise**,
>
> which made **possible** the **rejection** of **Ancient** Greek as the **official langu**age of the
>
> new **state**. (Frangoudaki 1)

Scholars are constantly using Latin words. Thus, before they even start learning the language, many of its roots would be familiar to them.

Not only Latin's influence on modern languages, but also <u>its linguistic qualities in themselves make Latin uniquely suited for an international academic language.</u> It is not that Latin is a divine or perfect language free from idiosyncrasies or what T.S. Eliot, in "East Coker," called the "intolerable wrestle with words and meanings" (Stanza II). Nonetheless, Dante's analysis of poetic Italian in *De Vulgari Eloquentia* shows that it is possible to evaluate the usefulness of language and linguistic forms objectively. Such analysis would reveal several features that commend Latin for international and academic use.

<u>First, Latin's consistent system of pronunciation is perfect for an international language</u>. With macrons written, the Classical rules of pronunciation are completely unambiguous, so that even accent can be determined strictly from spelling. While English has seventy-six phonograms, Latin (even counting long and short vowels, and i and j, and u and v separately, and including the borrowed Greek letters) has only thirty-eight. A given spelling can only be pronounced one way, and with a couple minor exceptions, a given sound can only be written one way. Thus, a student could get a perfect score on a Latin spelling test without ever seeing or having seen the words.

Second, <u>Latin's vowel system is more logical than that of almost every other language.</u> Its vowels are similar to those used in most of Europe, and they are pure: a single vowel indicates a simple vowel sound, while multiple vowels indicate a combination of vowel sounds. Latin's

long "ī", for example, is a simple "ee" sound, while English's (and IPA's) long "i" combines two sounds, "ah" and "ee." (Try saying "I" out loud and observe how the mouth must change positions in the middle of the vowel.) The Romans wrote that sound *ae* because it can also be produced by running *a* and *e* together.

Third, Latin's grammatical complexity makes it useful as an academic language. As a result of this complexity, Latin has an "unfair" economy of expression (Howard), that is, it can say a lot in a few words. Moreover, Latin's system of endings enables writers to change the order of words in a sentence without changing its meaning. Thus, it can add nuance to the meaning by associating grammatically unrelated words through proximity. (For example, if I wrote the previous sentence in Latin, I could put "proximity" next to "associating" and put "words" first to make the meaning clear: Itaque potest, verbīs grammaticē nōn nexīs vicīnitāte jungendīs, subtiliōrem reddere sententiam.) Similarly, Latin word-order can create chiasms and other stylistic devices, and preserve them when translating other languages. Because it is so complex, mastering Latin makes learning other languages, especially Romance languages, easier. Catholic Latinist Reginald Foster says, "you can do that over the weekend" (qtd. in Levy).

Finally, in addition to its pronunciation and grammar, Latin's vocabulary commends it for international academic use. Latin already has the technical vocabulary necessary for an academic language because it was used for science and philosophy so long. Where new words were needed, they were sometimes imported, but more often created using prefixes and suffixes. Even today, Latin is a fertile crescent[12] for generating new scientific terms (Batzarov).

Latin, then, is well-qualified as a language for scholars, but it has other riches to offer: using Latin as the language of scholarship would make classical and Christian books in the original

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[12] Metaphor, Historical Allusion

accessible to scholars, books like Livy's *History of Early Rome,* Aurelius' *Meditations*, Augustine's *Confessions*, Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae,* More's *Utopia,* Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus*, and Newton's *Principia*. By reading books like these, they would become liberally educated, gaining historical, cultural, and philosophical perspective. Academic Latin would not ensure that they do this, but it would make it possible, and to some degree even likely. For Latin and classical education cannot ever be completely separated; the best way to read Latin books is to learn Latin, and the best way to learn Latin (after achieving some spoken proficiency) is to read Latin books. If modernity's removal of Latin went hand in hand with its removal of classical education, it is likely that a return to Latin in the new millennium would both aid and be aided by a return to classical education.

It is true that not all of the classical and Christian library is in Latin (Casey). Much of it is in Greek. Academic Latin, however, would encourage people not to overlook, but to study Greek works. Those who know Latin, a language related and similar to Greek, can understand Greek grammar more easily,[13] or, since Latin can translate Greek more accurately than English can, experience Greek works closer to the original without knowing Greek.

But why should we even try to read ancient books in the original when translations are already available in today's vernaculars? Besides the fact that some works have not been translated, reading the original is the only way to understand a book's meaning, beauty, and flavor fully and accurately. "(T)he sorrow with any translation," says one translator, "is that you're never really quite there" (Howard); "(e)ven the best translations are only crutches" (Kopff 16). As students of Scripture, we instinctively know this, for we often hear good pastors and theologians cite Hebrew and Greek grammar and vocabulary in their exegesis.

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[13] Antimetabole

This is because every word choice of the translator risks changing the meaning. How, for example, should one translate the Latin *sententia*?[14] It can mean "saying," "opinion," "sentence," or "meaning." None English word carries all those senses, and each English word adds possible senses that are not part of the meaning of *sententia*. Any choice alters the original word's connotations, and may even affect its denotation.

Style presents its own pit-or-pendulum dilemma:[15] should the translator of Virgil imitate the epic's "grand and high diction," at the risk of sounding pedantic, or its immediacy, at the risk of imposing his views on the text? (Howard). A perfect translation does not and cannot exist; it is best to let the reader experience the original and interpret it for himself.

Reading ancient books would benefit scholars in several ways. First, it would enable them to learn from history, what Livy called "the best medicine for a sick mind" (34). By reading from the past, we can gain insight into our own *zeitgeist*'s errors. To quote C. S. Lewis,

> Every age…is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes… None of us can fully escape this blindness, but we shall certainly increase it, and weaken our guard against it, if we read only modern books… Not that there is any magic about the past…they made as many mistakes as we. But not the *same* mistakes. They will not flatter us in the errors we are committing; and their errors, being now open and palpable, will not endanger us. (202)

To the claim that modernity knows more than people in the past, T.S. Eliot responded, "precisely, and they are that which we know" (qtd. in Kopff 33-34). If experience is the best

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[14] Rhetorical Question

[15] Literary Allusion

teacher, we should learn from others' experience,[16] by reading about it. On his own, a person has eighty to one hundred years of experience, but by assimilating others' he can add thousands (qtd. in Kopff 103-104).

Second, reading Latin books is especially helpful for those who are Westerners and Christians because it enables them to understand and learn from their own cultural heritage. "Western science, technology, and politics (republican, liberal, or Marxist) are the creations of Western culture, the fruits of what Yeats called a 'great-rooted blossomer'" (Kopff 246). If Westerners want to keep bearing fruit, they must stay attached to their tree.[17] They must understand, and be nourished by, their roots.[18]

Catholic Latin teacher Mark J. Clark urges Catholics to learn Latin "not to return to some Utopian past or to restore some hegemonic culture, but to stay vibrantly connected to our own past and our own culture, past and present," also noting there are numerous Protestant works in Latin. The best way to stay connected to our past is by reading its books, in the original languages. "Studying the ancient tongues allows us to hear our ancestors talking and thinking. We cannot return to their day and age; we can, however, still share their education" (Kopff xv-xvi).

Third, reading ancient books would help scholars fulfill their ultimate goals as humans. While some consider the Classics "enjoyable but irrelevant," for classicist Peter Jones, enjoyment is "the most relevant thing in the world" ("Natale"). No doubt, he has read Aristotle, who said that happiness is the goal of action (Aristotle 10). But this happiness is not mere

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[16] Epanalepsis

[17] Metaphor, Biblical Allusion (see John 15)

[18] Antanaclasis

pleasure; rather, it is a virtuous "activity of the soul" (11), best learned through "study and care" (14) which trains the soul to delight in good and be pained by evil (23).

Happiness, as Augustine said in the beginning of his *Confessions*, is found ultimately in God, for He is the ultimate Good, of whom all other goods are merely shadows, copies, foretastes. Whoever desires anything good, though he may not know it, in truth desires God, for "(t)he chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever" (WSC #1). But whoever trains himself to love the lesser copy will also love the original more. Thus, by learning to love on Earth what is good, we prepare ourselves to love for all eternity the Creator of all good.

Latin books from every age have some instruction for loving good. The Classics cultivate a love for order, proportion, and sanity; for truth, goodness, and beauty (Grayling). Medieval works, for their part, instill love for consistency and harmony, humble respect for authority, passionate devotion to God. Renaissance works, like the Classics, teach appreciation for God's orderly creation and man, His image-bearer. Modern works show how to study nature scientifically and mathematically.

Liberal education, then, is a good thing in itself because it imparts historical perspective, cultural understanding, and instruction on pursuing happiness, but it is especially necessary for scholars because it provides a context for their own studies. The scholar is called to study some discipline–some aspect of the universe–in depth, but not in isolation. Just as a biologist cannot properly understand one system of a frog without understanding its purpose in the whole, so every scholar ignorant of other disciplines cannot properly understand his own. A scientist ignorant of philosophy understands neither the purpose nor the ethical bounds of science (Kopff 108), and a philosopher ignorant of history lacks examples to support and correct his philosophy. Scholars need a broad education in human thought, the kind of education facilitated by Latin.

Latin would facilitate learning from the past, not only today, but also in the future, because as the academic language it need not change over time. With academic Latin, people in the fifth millennium could read books from the third, just as easily as people in the third millennium can read books from the first. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Book III, Chapter XI, Paragraph 1), Locke calls speech "the common conduit, whereby the improvements of knowledge are conveyed from one man and one generation to another." One unchanging academic language would be a straight channel for ideas to travel from the past to the present and from the present[19] to the future. Just as the Roman roads enabled efficient commerce of goods, so the Latin language can pave the way for efficient communication of knowledge.[20]

Historical precedent supports using Latin in this way and proves it is possible.   After 1800 years, Vulgar Latin diverged into countless languages and dialects, but academic Latin remained fundamentally unchanged. The Renaissance scholars chose to write in Latin in part because they knew that since Latin would not change like the vernacular tongues, their works would still be readable centuries later ("Latin Language and Literature"). Medieval usage differed somewhat from classical usage, but never so much as to make the classical unintelligible, or vice versa. Besides, the Renaissance's Classical revival proved that scholars by a conscious effort could reverse some changes in an academic language (for example reintroducing differentiated gender for verbs in the perfect passive system).

Admittedly, preserving academic Latin the way it is would take a conscious effort over multiple generations.[21] Scholars would need to start and follow a tradition of imitating old

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[19] Anadiplosis

[20] Simile, Isocolon, Historical Allusion

[21] Procatalepsis

authors. To some this will appear as language purism. But if it is, then it is a unique sort of language purism, undertaken not for the sake of the language's perceived perfection or nationalistic value, but to ensure one's ideas reach future generations.

Scholars preserving academic Latin would have several factors on their side that are not present to the same degree in vernaculars. First, as an academic language, Latin would have fewer speakers in any given place. Second, its speaking population would include a higher concentration of grammarians who want to resist linguistic change, and of people who are simply grammatically literate. Third, it would have a greater ratio of written use to oral use (and in any language written use is more codified and thus less liable to change than oral use). Fourth, assuming a return to classical education, succeeding generations would learn Latin largely by reading and imitating the same or similar sources from throughout history, not simply from the current spoken and written dialect.

Ferdinand Bruntiere said that, "There are languages that sing, others that draw or paint. Latin engraves, and what it engraves in ineradicable" (qtd. in Jones, "Ancient and Modern (Latin Mottoes)"). It has also been said that, "Latin is not dead; it is immortal." Let the learned only leave their legacy in Latin[22] and their ideas will endure, forever etched as on eternal stone.

Confutatio: But, some will argue, Latin used to be "a property of the elite" (Grimes), so if used as the academic language, might it not create a scholarly elite? First of all, Latin did not create aristocracy; it was used by aristocracy which already existed. Furthermore, the Latin language is not responsible for how it was used (Jones, "Ancient and Modern (Britain's Social Policies)"). If Latin was used in an aristocratic way, it was because it existed in an aristocratic

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[22] Alliteration

culture, and in a more democratic culture, it would be recovered in a more democratic way[23] (Grayling).

If used today, academic Latin would not create an aristocracy–people with hereditary titles or wealth, but a meritocracy–people who have earned their place by intelligence and discipline. With today's resources for education, "anyone can learn Latin" (qtd. in Clark), yet in order to participate in Latin reading and writing, rising scholars would be forced, not by any sort of regulation, but by practical necessity, to achieve a level of fluency which, as already demonstrated, would guarantee higher intelligence and at least encourage liberal education. Even if Latin literacy were made a formal condition to join certain academic institutions, its role in today's world would be more like that of diplomas, degrees, or tenures than that of aristocratic titles; at worst, it would become a useless formality that would cause those institutions to make some bad choices in accepting or hiring scholars; at best, it would be a convenient way to test the scholars' quality accurately.

But granted that an academic language is a good thing, why not English? It is already used all over the world, with 460 million native speakers, 375 million speaking it as a second national language, 750 million more using it internationally, and 1 billion trying to learn it–a total of 2.6 billion (Masci).

As an international language for the present, and not specifically for scholars, English is a good choice. But it may not be as popular in the future if America is, like England was, matched or exceeded by other nations in power or industry (qtd. in Masci). Because it is vernacular, English will change anyway, as it already has. Today, we have a hard time reading 500-year-old

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[23] Antimetabole

authors like Shakespeare, yet people who knew Latin could always read Cicero! Because it is

filled with Latin vocabulary, English's familiarity would, in fact, make learning Latin easier.

Others may propose an artificial language like Esperanto for the academic language. Of the

over 300 artificial languages in existence (Davis 10), Esperanto is the most popular, with an

estimated 2,000,000 speakers, and one of the oldest. Like Latin, it is similar to modern European

languages. In addition, it is specifically designed for ease of learning (Harlow, "Esperanto"); in

fact, L.L. Zamenhof, its creator, originally intended to use Latin or Greek as the international

language before deciding they were too hard and complicated (Harlow, "A Reply").

But learning Latin is not such a Herculean labor,[24] if it is taught properly. If elementary

students learn Latin (Capelle 37), just as Thomas Jefferson advocated (Kopff 49-50), using

active methods that have proven successful with modern languages, high school and college

classes could be taught in Latin, thus reinforcing students' knowledge of the language. Even if,

as Zamenhof suggests, Latin *were* too hard in practice for *everyone* to use, it would not be too

hard for scholars, as its successful past use has shown.

Far from needing to be "shorn of all those complicated declensions, conjugations, and

incomprehensible ablative constructions" (Harlow, "A Reply"), Latin gains in meaning from its

complexity. To be sure, Latin has some unuseful complexity–multiple conjugations of verbs, for

instance (Harlow, "A Reply")–but its other benefits far outweigh this inconvenience. No

artificial language can contribute what Latin can toward liberal education. All Esperanto books

were written after 1877 when the language was invented (Harlow, "Esperanto"), so however

well-crafted, they cannot hope to match Latin books for longevity and historical-cultural

significance.

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[24] Mythological Allusion

Peroratio: But is it even possible that the modern world, which has almost forgotten Latin, could begin using it again? Do not underestimate the future. A century ago, Hebrew, like Latin, was (as Miracle Max from the *The Princess Bride* would put it) "mostly dead" (Goldman 313). Its resurrection seemed impossible, yet somehow the Jews brought it back (Jochnowitz). Even if it is not used as the academic language in this century, Latin, with its long history of usefulness, its suitable linguistic qualities, and its collection of notable and instructive works, will still be available in the next, and the next, and the next. Like a Stoic stone statue, it stands ever ready, undaunted by the long ages, in its hand an offer of international cooperation, intelligence, instruction, and immortality.

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