

# TEACHING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

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OF THE MIDDLE WEST AND SOUTH

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## FEATURES

**Latin for Students with Dyslexia**  
AnnMarie Patterson

## ARTICLES

**The Language of Race in the Classroom: Teaching Classical History at an HBCU**  
Karl Baughman

***Ut te exhorter ad bonam mentem* ‘that I encourage you toward a sound mind’:  
How Nuanced Latin Emotional Vocabulary and SEL Routines Can Help Every Latin Student Flourish**  
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**Vergil’s *Aeneid* and 21st-Century Immigration**  
Chris Nappa

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**EDITOR**

Yasuko Taoka (Temple University, Japan Campus) [tcleditor@camws.org](mailto:tcleditor@camws.org)

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANT**

Sharon Carr (Wayne State College) [tclassistant@camws.org](mailto:tclassistant@camws.org)

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

GUEST EDITORS: CAMWS COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Established by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South in 2010, the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion directs attention to the importance and complexity of bringing the languages, literatures, and peoples of the ancient Mediterranean to increasingly diverse audiences.

Central to the CAMWS mission, of course, the committee's efforts aim to provide a service to teachers and scholars in schools and colleges. In this way, the Committee seeks to assist other CAMWS committees and members in their responsibilities and opportunities. Hence, we quickly said "yes" when Yasuko Taoka invited our Committee to join in preparation of an issue of Teaching Classical Languages that focusses on curricular materials, pedagogical strategies, and the challenges for making classics and its languages available to and accessible by new and increasingly more diverse audiences.

A single issue can only scratch the surface. We attempt here to offer a sample of what "diversity" and inclusion allows: the courage of working with specific populations (e.g., students at all levels with special needs), the importance of looking again and anew at canonical authors (e.g., Vergil) as well as authors themselves examples of the diverse nature of the Roman world (Prudentius). And how the ancients looked at the concept of "race" has significance for all of us who teach the past in an increasingly complex present. Both personal reflective essays and more scholarly approaches have a place in our work. And referees from a wide range of institutions have assisted us in preparation of this issue. We thank the many colleagues whose good will and good judgement we have mined.

We believe that the richness of "diversity" and "inclusion" is itself showcased in this way. Further, with panels and round tables at CAMWS' annual meetings, and with a careful but important social media presence, the Committee hopes to make our profession's commitment to each of the segments in the well-known definition offered by writer/illustrator Liz Fosslien:

**"Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard"**

## **The Language of Race in the Classroom: Teaching Classical History at an HBCU**

**KARL BAUGHMAN  
PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY**

### **Introduction: Race & the Classics**

As I write this, several states have passed, proposed, or are working to create legislation that limits how teachers can discuss race within their classrooms. Black Lives Matter remains a highlight of news programs and social media. At the same time, the 1619 Project, begun in 2019 by *The New York Times*, has prompted reactionary causes like the 1836 Project in Texas and the recently-terminated 1776 Commission. In short, race, skin color, and the cultures and histories connected with those concepts dominate our political, cultural, and personal debates. With all this in mind, it prompts us as teachers and scholars to consider more seriously the connection of our subjects, specifically, the Classical languages and histories, to the larger cultural discussion of race and cultural identity in the United States.

Before I get too much further in this article, I must provide a caveat. This article is not about teaching languages in the traditional sense. Rather, what I hope to accomplish is beginning a conversation about past experiences, best practices, and future endeavors when teaching topics connected to the Classical world (and more broadly, Western Civilization) to students who may wish to eschew some underlying norms of that history and culture – in other words, the “language” of Euro-centric history and culture. I am certainly no expert on this, but I wish to contribute my own experiences and how my university addresses this. For background, I am a

white male history professor from the Midwest who teaches at Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU), a Historically Black University (HBCU) in Texas. My primary areas of expertise are Roman Empire and early Christianity, but as the only ancient historian here, I am responsible for teaching advanced courses on ancient Egypt and the Near East, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome. Since I began teaching as a graduate student more than fifteen years ago, I have always striven to find ways to connect my students to ancient history. Because most of my students are of African descent, my desire to continue this endeavor has prompted me to look more deeply into the relevance, role, and future of Classics as it connects to issues of race. What follows is a brief background of Classics and African Americans, followed by some examples of how I address issues of race in my ancient history courses. I hope that this small contribution will help those new in incorporating the complexities of diversity and inclusion within their classrooms.

The role of Classics or Western histories within HBCUs is not a new topic, although it has recently come back to the fore. Earlier this year, Howard University, a preeminent HBCU in Washington, D.C., decided to eliminate its Classics Department. Howard is home to the last Classics Department among HBCUs. It has been at the center of African American thought, philosophy, and activism since its founding alongside the university in 1867. The news of this cut produced a firestorm of reactions by Classicists and renowned African American scholars and writers, such as Harvard professor Cornel West. An online petition to keep the department soon followed. The university made statements explaining that while the department would be gone, many of the courses taught would remain part of other programs. Editorials debated both sides.

This hubbub with Howard demonstrated the deep-seated relationship between Classics and African American education, particularly within HBCUs. In the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War, many HBCUs created curricula that emulated their white counterparts, emphasizing the Classics. The recognition of Classics as part of the early HBCU curricula is not surprising given that Latin and Greek were considered the foundations of civilization by Europeans and their descendants. It was reasonably assumed that if a black man were to be educated in the Classical languages, he too could claim a part of that civilization and perhaps be a person of equal standing with white Americans. Pro-slavery politician John C. Calhoun supposedly once claimed that “if he could find a Negro who knew the Greek syntax, he would then believe that the Negro was a human being and should be treated as a man.”<sup>1</sup> This challenge was more than met by William Sanders Scarborough, a former slave who later became the President of Wilberforce University and is considered the first African American Classicist. In 1881, Scarborough published a popular Classical Greek textbook, *First Lessons in Greek*, and then texts on Aristophanes and Latin grammar.<sup>2</sup> In the post-Civil War environment, a Classical education was necessary to demonstrate that those of African descent could be on the same level as those of European. In their rebuke of Howard’s decision to eliminate its Classics Department, Cornel West and Jeremy Tate highlight that Frederick Douglass risked his life while enslaved “to study the likes of Socrates, Cicero, and Cato.”<sup>3</sup> More than a century later, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote his “Letter From Birmingham Jail,” in which he mentioned Socrates three times.<sup>4</sup> Needless to say, like their white counterparts, black intellectuals in the United States studied the same Classical



languages, works of literature, and histories. Classics was the foundation of Western education, into which newly freed black slaves were now permitted to enter (albeit under more limiting circumstances).

Given that the primary motivation of Classical languages and histories in African American education was to bring them onto the more superior (white) plane, what is the purpose of Classics today? Or, more to the point, can Classics help students of all races grapple with our polarized racial society? The short answer is, “yes.” As I hope to demonstrate in the rest of this article, incorporating discussions on race, culture, and difference in the ancient Mediterranean gives all students the language to engage in the racial and cultural conversations today in the United States.

### **“Where Am I in the Sources?”: Critical Race Theory & Classics**

When we expose our students to historical sources and literature, most will ask where they are in the sources – although this typically takes the form of “why are we learning this?” As historians and Classicists, we undoubtedly believe subject-content knowledge within our fields is essential. Still, we also know that the critical thinking, cultural awareness, writing, and analysis skills acquired in our classes are necessary for living in a democratic society – and for demonstrating proper assessment typically tied to funding or accreditation. Despite the assurances that the skills are essential, many students wish to have a personal connection with the subject they are studying. It is relatively easy to convince European and European-descended students that the ancient Mediterranean (particularly Greece

and Rome) is important – they have been taught to see themselves in the white marble statues and to recognize the underpinnings of Western government and culture in the literature and histories. The narrative of ancient history has been connected almost exclusively to European culture called “Western Civilization.” It is more difficult for many of our African-descended or non-Western students to connect to this period physically and historically. Therefore, it is more challenging to help them recognize the underlying importance.

Despite being around for a few decades, Critical Race Theory (CRT) has recently attracted much attention (primarily political) in the news. Unfortunately, the understanding of what CRT is and what it means for education is misunderstood by many politicians and their constituents. In short, CRT looks at how our history with race has informed our laws, society, and culture. To do that, those who use CRT are “a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power.”<sup>5</sup> Discussions about the connection between race and the Classics are not new. Frank Snowden, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Classics at Howard until his death in 2007, sparked a conversation about Africans and the ancient Mediterranean with his *Blacks in Antiquity* in 1970 and before *Color Prejudice* in 1983.<sup>6</sup> These texts helped demonstrate how the modern construction of race impacted the Classical world’s interpretation. Continuing this conversation, in 1987, Martin Bernal proposed in his *Black Athena* that Western civilization’s bedrock was a product of colonization by the Egyptians and Phoenicians.<sup>7</sup> This produced a series of responses, most notably by Mary Lefkowitz in her *Black Athena Revisited* and then *Not Out of Africa: How*

*Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth As History*, a rebuttal not only of Bernal's historical method, but of what Lefkowitz saw as an Afrocentric reaction against the traditional "whitewashing" of the Classical world.<sup>8</sup> Although we ancient historians and Classicists would undoubtedly like to think of ourselves as central to the cultural debates of our time, this argument in the 1980s and 1990s was primarily relegated to academic circles.

Recently, race and the Classics have begun to take more center stage. By the late 1990s, the conversation had been reframed by Michele Valerie Ronnick of Wayne State University. Focusing on the contributions to Classics and the impact upon those of African descent, Ronnick coined the term "Classica Africana" and encouraged others to look more deeply at the connections between Classics and those of African descent.<sup>9</sup> Alongside this awakening in the early 2000s, Benjamin Isaac, an ancient history professor at Tel Aviv University, published his *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, and was soon followed by others who made connections between what was thought to be the racially-neutral Classical world and the modern construction of race.<sup>10</sup> Shelley Haley, a professor of Classics and Africana Studies at Hamilton College, noted in 2009 that CRT is important for Classicists because "the interpreters of these ancient societies were or are intellectuals of the nineteenth through twentieth-first centuries, and so have internalized (consciously or not) the values, structures, and behaviors that foster the need for critical race theory."<sup>11</sup> In 2017, University of Iowa professor Sarah Bond wrote an article confirming that Roman statues were painted in a variety of colors. The use of white marble as the bedrock of beauty was more a product of

the 18<sup>th</sup> century than of antiquity.<sup>12</sup> Some media coverage claimed that Professor Bond had said those who preferred the white marble were white supremacists; this led to threats of violence against Bond.<sup>13</sup> Classicists had been reminded that the construction of race impacted even the study of peoples separated from us by half a world and thousands of years.

For Egyptologists, emotions and controversy over race were not news. Arguments over the construction of race and the study of ancient Egypt had been going on for centuries. One example of this debate is the continued wrangling over the proper understanding of *μελάγχροες* in Herodotus' description of Egyptian appearance in *Histories* 2.104. The argument continues to be present in the scholarship and reflects contemporary racial understandings. I discuss below how I bring my students into this debate and flesh out an understanding of ancient peoples and those who have studied them.

### **Best Practices... so far?**

I would like to describe what I do in my classrooms and then what PVAMU is doing to assist me and others in better connecting our students to discussions of race and *other* in various disciplines. Whether these are the "best practices" remains to be seen, but I believe it is a good start. Although race, as we define it in American culture and society, is not a concept fully familiar to those living in the ancient Mediterranean, it informs how our students frame their understandings about not only their own contemporary world but also their grasp of ancient history. Our historical-cultural understandings of whiteness and blackness have been imposed

upon our understanding of Romans, Greeks, and Egyptians. Although those in the ancient Mediterranean are typically portrayed as “white” (meaning northern European) from medieval art through modern film, the people of the Mediterranean were most certainly “brown”. Because my students have been conditioned to think in terms of race, mentioning this in class often produces interesting discussions about race in the ancient world and the modern construction of the past through a racial lens. We see the rulers of the ancient Mediterranean as white because those who claimed whiteness also claimed the heritage of the Greeks and Romans. Modern racial identity required those of a white past to look white. I did not realize it as discussions unfolded, but we were utilizing Critical Race Theory in our discussion of the ancient Mediterranean.

When I arrived at PVAMU, I was tasked with creating courses within my own field to expand our offerings and hopefully increase the number of students majoring or minoring in history. Most of our courses were American history, and the African American experience was often highlighted in these courses. Most PVAMU students are engineering or science majors, so many will take advanced history courses purely out of interest in the topic. Thanks to movies like *300*, *Gladiator*, and the like, many students are eager to take courses in the ancient Mediterranean. I teach three advanced ancient history courses that appeal to students from a variety of majors: Ancient Egypt and the Near East, Ancient Greece, and Ancient Rome. Within these courses, I try to tackle racial issues in the ancient Mediterranean in two specific ways. One is by addressing race directly, and the other is flushing it out through examining and rewriting ancient entertainment literature.

Addressing race directly in my Ancient Egypt and the Near East class is somewhat easy. Because the American construction of race is tied to specific geographic areas (black from Africa, white from Europe, etc.), delving into ancient North Africa provides a wonderful opportunity to tackle race head-on. One of my early PowerPoint slides in my Ancient Egypt and the Near East class asks, “What color were ancient Egyptians?” We look at ancient Egyptian art, we look at Herodotus’ account, but most importantly, we discuss why this is a question for us. In his *Histories*, Herodotus mentions the people of Colchis (on the east side of the Black Sea) and notes their physical and cultural similarities to the Egyptians. After stating that he believes that the Colchians came from Egypt, he writes in 2.104:

νομίζειν δ’ ἔφασαν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι τῆς Σεσώστριος στρατιῆς εἶναι τοὺς Κόλχους. αὐτὸς δὲ εἶκασα τῆδε, καὶ ὅτι μελάγχροες εἰσὶ καὶ οὐλότριχες. καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἐς οὐδὲν ἀνήκει: εἰσὶ γὰρ καὶ ἕτεροι τοιοῦτοι: ἀλλὰ τοῖσιδε καὶ μᾶλλον, ὅτι μόνον πάντων ἀνθρώπων Κόλχοι καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι καὶ Αἰθίοπες περιτάμνονται ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς τὰ αἰδοῖα.

The Egyptians did, however, say that they thought the original Colchians were men from Sesostris’ army. My own idea on the subject was based first on the fact that they have black skins and woolly hair (not that that amounts to much, as other nations have the same), and secondly, and more especially, on the fact that the Colchians, the Egyptians, and the Ethiopians are the only races which from ancient times have practiced circumcision.<sup>14</sup>

My students read the Aubrey de Sélincourt translation, revised by John Marincola, for Penguin Classics. The text, as seen above, is straightforward in translating μελάγχροες as having “black skins.” This passage produces little discussion until we unpack the history of the debate.

Summarized by Tristan Samuels in 2015, the reluctance to translate this passage in a way that makes Egyptians black is a product of modern constructions of race and identity.<sup>15</sup> As seen in the founding of HBCUs briefly mentioned in the beginning of this article, it is difficult to prove to “most Westerners (black or white) who have been inculcated with the conventional wisdom that equates [black] with inferiority and ugliness that Ancient Egyptians were black.”<sup>16</sup> The language of the West is a language centered on racial difference and ability. Ancient peoples also recognized differences: physical, cultural, and linguistic. While they most likely recognized skin color, it was certainly not the most primary form of difference. Because our students are so immersed within a culture of racial identity, it allows us to demonstrate how our construction of race can impact how we discuss and research the ancient past. In other words, we must be aware of not imposing our cultural language upon peoples of the ancient Mediterranean.

As we discuss the connections between skin color and race within the United States, we look at the language of difference within these ancient societies. We create cultural identities based on skin tones in our contemporary American English. Black Americans and white Americans are often thought to speak and act differently, despite even coming from the same region. In most instances, I am considered white before I am thought of as an Ohioan (despite living in Texas for almost a decade, my nasally Great Lakes dialect will usually exclude me from being seen as a Texan). For ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, difference was, of course, recognized, but it was not centered around skin color. Shattering the illusion wherein skin color/race has always been the most significant identifier

for a person is required for helping students grasp the reality of the Classical world while encouraging them to think more about their own world and preconceptions.

Knowledge of Latin or Greek is not required for any of my courses; however, I like to include a little about these languages in order to demonstrate how ancient societies saw and expressed difference. As briefly mentioned above, Mediterranean peoples had words for skin color, but modern lexicographers, linguists, and historians interpreted those words through the racial lenses of their times. For Romans, *albus*, *ater*, *candidus*, *fuscus*, and *niger* were all terms used for skin color. As argued by Nigerian Classicist Lloyd Thompson, and summarized by Shelley Haley, the use of “white” for *albus* by modern translators is an imposition of modern racial constructions upon a people who had no concept of “white.” Even today, the world of the Mediterranean is a range of brown, and the Romans, Greeks, and Egyptians would not have used “white” as a reference point in a world where brown was the standard.<sup>17</sup>

The diversity of peoples conquered and ruled by the Romans allows us to discuss race and difference in a unique way. Thanks to centuries of Western art, education, and entertainment, Romans are typically portrayed as white – more akin to Nordic skin tones than Mediterranean. A more recent way I have attempted to incorporate the discussion of race within my Ancient Rome course is the use of digital reconstructions of ancient faces. Two specific examples I have used in my classroom are the Roman emperors, Septimius Severus (r.193-211) and Macrinus (r.217-218), born in modern-day Libya and Algeria, respectively. Figures 1 and 2, created by Daniel Voshart (voshart.com), use contemporary descriptions and archaeology to



develop near-likenesses of the Roman emperors. These reconstructions are probably not 100% accurate, but their use is not to show superficial connections, instead they allow us to see the much more diverse and complicated reality of the ancient past. The language of Roman history in American culture is a language of whiteness. Something as simple as a reconstructed face can invite discussion on what race is and what it means in different places at different times.

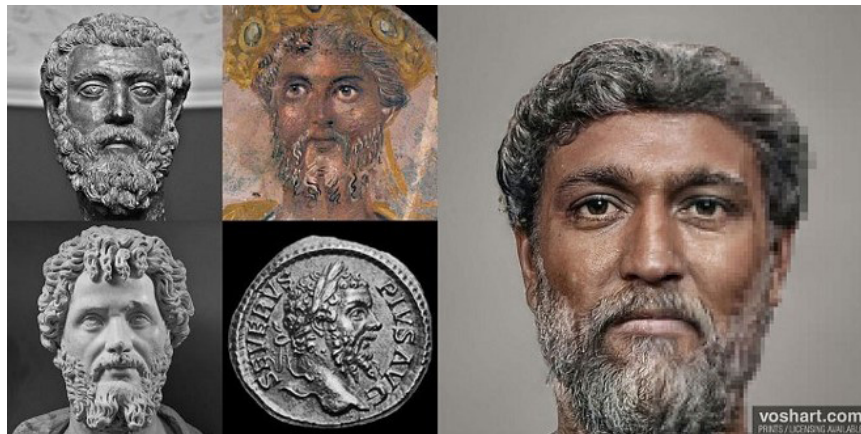


Fig. 1 Severus

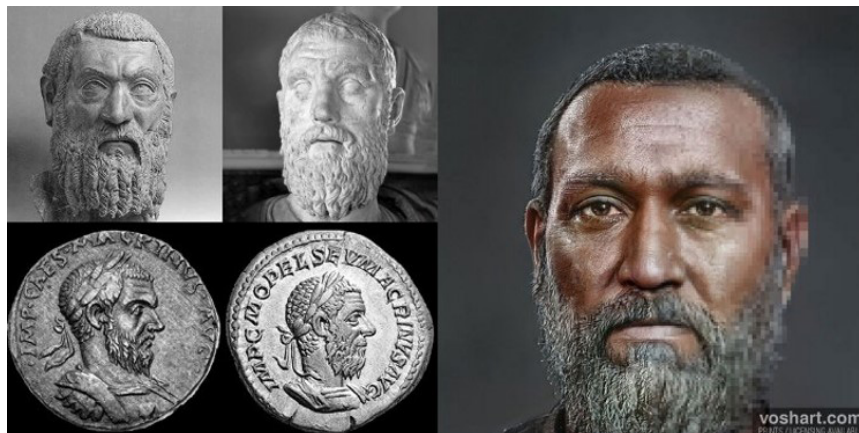


Fig. 2 Macrinus

Although I teach history courses and not Classics, I try to incorporate some literature, albeit only English translations. When I go over the assignments, I try to impress upon my students that forms of entertainment and the use of stereotypes help us as historians to understand better how ancient peoples saw themselves versus others. One specific example I will share is my use of Aristophanes within my Ancient Greece class. I am partial to *The Acharnians* and *Lysistrata*, but I occasionally let students choose their own play on which to write. Besides asking students about the historical connections between the plays and the Peloponnesian War, I like to ask them, “what would this play look like today?” I use this question to help students frame their papers. Not only do students have to recognize the historical context of the play, thereby obtaining the content knowledge, but the assignment leads the students to delve more deeply into the historical constructions of their own society.

To flush out the discussion, we look at Aristophanes’ use of stereotypes. For one example, *Lysistrata* is a humorous play wherein the women from across Greece work together to end the Peloponnesian War by withholding sex from their husbands. There is a plethora of gender, linguistic, and “racial” stereotypes that produce both laughter and questions from modern readers. Using “what would this play look like today?” as a starting point, we explore how the characters would be portrayed in an American version. Who within American society would be most representative of Athenians? Who might the Spartans be? Of course, there are no direct correlations between these ancient peoples and a modern American (or other nationality), but rather, students connect Athenian stereotypes of outsiders to modern American

prejudices. Students typically see parallels between Athenian portrayals of Spartans and white American stereotypes of black Americans: emphasis on athleticism, less sophisticated grammar, and even fetishization of physical appearance.

One example from *Lysistrata* that will suffice for this article is Lampito, the female Spartan representative. Students are usually quick to recognize the features of athleticism, language, and fetishization in her character because she is one of the few non-Athenians in the play who speaks multiple lines. Lampito's name, which means "shining," embodies the stereotype of Spartan women as beautiful and physically fit – it is comparable to naming a character Biff or Sapphire or Foxy – the latter two used distinctively as stereotypical black female characters; the names themselves reinforce what is visible.<sup>18</sup> When Lampito enters the play, she is immediately complimented on her complexion, voluptuous breasts, and tight body capable of "strangl[ing] a bull."<sup>19</sup> These compliments further emphasize the stereotypes that would be visibly obvious and insinuate a possible fetishization of the stereotypical Spartan physique through Lysistrata's fondling of Lampito's breasts and body.<sup>20</sup> For those unable to witness the play in person, the descriptors create a stereotypical Spartan image in the reader's mind that is made complete when Lampito speaks.

Some students connect linguistic stereotypes between Spartans and African Americans. Lampito's first lines in the play are immediately after being complimented on her musculature. She replies, "μάλα γὰρ οἶδ' ναὶ σιῶ' γυμνάδομαι γε καὶ ποτὶ πύγαν ἄλλομαι."<sup>21</sup> Lampito's Greek, although understandable, is purposefully different. It is not only not Attic, it is not really Laconian – it is a distorted Greek.<sup>22</sup>

For translation into English, translators decide whether to present it in broken English, like David Christenson does,<sup>23</sup> or in an English dialect, like Benjamin Bickley Rogers (in Loeb) or Alan Sommerstein (Penguin).<sup>24</sup> These three examples demonstrate Aristophanes' purpose of emphasizing the otherness of Spartans:

Christenson: μάλα γὰρ οἶῶ ναὶ σιώ· γυμνάδδομαί γε καὶ ποτὶ πυγὰν ἄλλομαι.  
Very much yes I think, by Twin Gods. I am an exerciser and I jump at my butt.

Rogers: Weel, by the Twa, I think sae. An' I can loup an' fling an' kick my hurdies.

Sommerstein: So I cuid, I'm thinking, by the Twa Gods. I'm in training – practise heel-to-bum jumps regularly.<sup>26</sup>

Each translator attempts to render Lampito's Greek in a way that embodies what Aristophanes' audience would have expected: Lampito, as a Laconian Greek speaker, would have spoken in shorter syllables than their own Attic dialect – the most superior way of speaking from an Athenian perspective. Discussions in class about how stereotypes in language and grammar can be used to distinguish between people who speak the same language ultimately lead to recognition of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and its portrayal in media and entertainment.

What these discussions accomplish is not so black and white. Certainly, the point is not to say that African Americans are modern-day American Spartans, nor were ancient Spartans the African Americans of Greece. My students recognize that ancient societies distinguished differences between insiders and outsiders, and they also recognize how our own society does the same. Stereotypes are understood in Aristophanes' plays because the majority of Athenians held those concepts in much the same way that American racial stereotypes exist in our own forms of

entertainment. These discussions help students address how their own cultural constructions inform their past and present understanding.

I recently participated in an institute provided by my university that endeavors to foster some of the ideas I have presented in this article. The African American Studies Summer Institute is a workshop for faculty that invites respected scholars in the field of African American Studies to present their research and also to discuss innovative teaching practices. Through funding from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, this Summer Institute, and the larger African American Studies Initiative to which it belongs, has encouraged me to connect modern constructions of race and the African American experience to the ancient Mediterranean. It is not about injecting African American Studies into a past where it did not exist, but rather about helping students better connect to a past that has been taught as the preserve of Euro-descended people. In other words, change the language of how we teach so that students connect to the Classical world similarly to how they connect to American history.

### **Conclusions: Going Forward**

I have begun the paperwork to create a course that explores the connections between the Classics, African Americans, and HBCUs. One of the goals of this new course would be to introduce my students to the Classical world and those who have contributed to our framing of it. In addition to those scholars mentioned throughout this article, students would be exposed to work done by those of African descent who either study/studied Classics, and those who emulate Classical literary

structures or interpret Classical plays in modern ways.<sup>25</sup> Although it is probably a little ways off, my ultimate goal is to bring Latin and Classical Studies back to Prairie View A&M University and incorporate PVAMU into the *Classica Africana*.

Although Critical Race Theory has been mentioned in this article, one does not need to be a theorist to connect our students to the past appropriately or recognize and discuss contemporary issues within a Classical context. A discussion with any of my colleagues will quickly dispel one of any notions that I am a theorist or a purveyor thereof. One does not need to be a theory person to help students connect to the past by encouraging them to recognize the lenses through which they see it. Issues of race and identity do not need to be a topic in every discussion, but we must be willing and eager to engage contemporary issues when appropriate. Those who have been writing the histories of the Classical world have injected their own contemporary biases and preconceptions of race and identity into the past, whether intentionally or not. Recognizing this and attempting to navigate the language of Classical history reveals a field far more important for understanding our contemporary world than most would credit to Classics. As educators, we have an obligation to question what has become a “West vs. the Rest” mentality and engage our students in questions about how and why the ancient past is remembered. Using the tools of Critical Race Theory and *Classica Africana* to prompt discussion and lead students to recognize the larger picture of the Classical world is one way to start.



**Endnotes**

1 Quoted in Susan C. Jarratt, "Classics and Counterpublics in Nineteenth-Century Historically Black Colleges" *College English*, November 2009, Vol. 72, No. 2 (Nov. 2009): 143.

2 Williams Sanders Scarborough, *First Lessons in Greek* (1881) [Williams Sanders Scarborough's *First Lessons in Greek: A Facsimile of the 1881 First Edition* (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2019)]; ---, *Birds of Aristophanes: A Theory of Interpretation* (1886); ---, *Questions on Latin Grammar, with Appendix* (New York: University Publication Company, 1887). See also, Michele Valerie Ronnick (ed), *The Autobiography of William Sanders Scarborough: An American Journey from Slavery to Scholarship* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004).

3 Cornel West & Jeremy Tate, "Opinion: Howard University's Removal of Classics is a Spiritual Catastrophe," *The Washington Post*, April 19, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/04/19/cornel-west-howard-classics/>.

4 Ibid.

5 Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (3rd edition) (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 3.

6 Frank M. Snowden Jr., *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1970) & *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

7 Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

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9 Michele Valerie Ronnick, "Classicism, Black, in the United States," in *The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, eds. Kwame Anthony Appiah & Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 2nd edition (Oxford & New York: Oxford



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10 Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); see also: Frank M. Snowden Jr., "Misconceptions about African Blacks in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Specialists and Afrocentrists," *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, 3rd Series 4, no. 3 (Winter 1997): 28-50.

11 Shelley Haley, "Be Not Afraid of the Dark: Critical Race Theory and Classical Studies," in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies*, eds Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza & Laura Nasrallah (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 28.

12 Sarah Bond, "Whitewashing Ancient Statues: Whiteness, Racism And Color In The Ancient World", *Forbes*, April 27, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/drsarahbond/2017/04/27/whitewashing-ancient-statues-whiteness-racism-and-color-in-the-ancient-world/?sh=31b0d6475ad5>

13 Colleen Flaherty, "Threats for What She Didn't Say," *Inside Higher Ed*, June 19, 2017, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/19/classicist-finds-herself-target-online-threats-after-article-ancient-statues>

14 Hdt. 2.104.2, translated by Aubrey de Sélincourt (revised by John Marincola) for Penguin Classics.

15 Tristan Samuels, "Herodotus and the Black Body: A Critical Race Theory Analysis," *Journal of Black Studies* 46, no. 7 (Oct. 2015): 723-741. Samuels goes further to assert that while modern constructions of race have impacted how we see Egyptians, anti-Blackness is a concept present within Greco-Roman societies as well.

16 Frank Martin, "The Egyptian Ethnicity Controversy and the Sociology of Knowledge," *Journal of Black Studies* 14, no. 3 (Mar. 1984): 298. Martin actually argues that it is impossible, not just difficult, to prove to Westerners that Egyptians were black. My experience has shown it is difficult but not impossible.

17 Shelley Haley, "Be Not Afraid of the Dark," 31; Lloyd A. Thompson, *Romans and Blacks* (Norman, OK: Oklahoma University Press, 1989).

- 18 For example Sapphire Stevens from the Amos n' Andy show and Foxy Brown in the 1974 film of the same name.
- 19 Ar., Lys. 79-83.
- 20 Ar., Lys. 82-85.
- 21 Ar., Lys. 81-82.
- 22 David Christenson, trans. & ed., *Hysterical Laughter: Four Ancient Comedies About Women* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2015), 55 n30.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Benjamin Bickley Rogers, trans. & ed., *Aristophanes III: The Lysistrata, The Thesmophoriazusae, The Ecclesiazusae, The Plutus*. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); Alan H. Sommerstein, trans. & ed., *Aristophanes: Lysistrata and Other Plays* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002).
- 25 For some examples of scholars of African descent who studied Classics, see: although mentioned above, Michele Valerie Ronnick (ed), *The Works of William Sanders Scarborough: Black Classicist and Race Leader* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); ---, *Twelve African American Members of the Society for Classical Studies: The First Five Decades (1875-1925)* (New York: Society for Classical Studies, 2018); Eric Ashley Hairston, *The Ebony Column: Classics, Civilization, and the African American Reclamation of the West* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013). For some examples of artistic expressions in the Classical style by those of African descent, see: Stanley Crouch, *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004); Kevin J. Wetmore Jr., *The Athenian Sun in an African Sky: Modern African Adaptations of Classical Greek Tragedy* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2001); ---, *Greek Tragedy and African American Theater* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2003); ---, *Black Medea: Adaptations for Modern Plays* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2013).
- 26 Ar., Lys. 81-82; Christenson, 55; Sommerstein, 144; Rogers, 13.