

# Editorial Note

Welcome to the first issue of JOLCEL, a journal devoted to the study of Latin literature. Given the existence of so many other journals in this field, the reader might be wondering what sets this one apart.

Firstly, our literary-historical scope. Latin Studies has come a long way since its nineteenth-century inception in the bosom of classical philology. While generally speaking, most of its practitioners still occupy themselves primarily with literature from the classical period, scholars of late antique, medieval and early modern Latinity have long stepped out of the heavy shadows of the marble columns, and with good reason. To put things into perspective: according to one conservative estimate by Jürgen Leonhardt (University of Tübingen), classical Latin texts, including all inscriptions, barely make up for 0.001% of all of extant Latinity – with 80% of that 0.001% consisting of *late* antique texts. However, instead of focusing on one particular historical period, JOLCEL will tackle the entire Latin tradition from antiquity to the early 1800s, when Latin's status as a truly living language of literary creation and education was nearing the end of its swan song. Moreover, we want to consider this long tradition in terms of its more constant traits, of its DNA, if you will. The question that interests us here is: what is it exactly that defines Latinity *as a whole*?

Secondly, JOLCEL will examine how the Latin tradition compares to other literatures written in transnational cosmopolitan languages and how it relates to the broader landscape of European literatures. Doing so, we will be looking at Latin literature not as some autonomous, monolithic and inert entity, but as an open tradition, very much characterised by its constant *two-way* interactions with other literatures, both older and contemporaneous. As Wim Verbaal (Ghent University) also argues in his inaugural piece to this first issue, one cannot construe a thorough history of Europe's national literatures without taking into account their roots in Latin schooling and texts – roots that run far deeper than the (already widely studied) 'reception of the classical'. Vice versa, we cannot fully understand the internal workings and development of the Latin tradition without taking into account neighbouring, overlapping and competing literatures. That is another big question we want to pose: how should we envision this Latinity of European literatures and the Europeanness of Latinity?

It is not evident to combine grand scale questions such as these under the hooding of one journal. We do not expect the answers to come quickly or easily, and they demand a community of scholars who are willing to look beyond the kind of lingual, cultural and

temporal borders that tend to go hand in hand with our current academic climate of extreme specialisation. JOLCEL's wide scope will also need a suitable format if it wants to maintain its focus. By introducing the element of dialogue in the form of a critical response piece, we want to ensure a greater coherence that will help us keep in mind the bigger picture. We will try to adhere to this format as frequently as possible.

This first issue will start off with the aforementioned general introduction by Wim Verbaal, in which he hones in on some of the concepts and questions that will be central to JOLCEL, highlighting the fundamental role of schooling in the formation and continuation of literary universes. This will also be the shared topic of our next three contributions: Anders Cullhed's (University of Stockholm) article serves as an illustration of how the literary universe of Latin was shaped by schooling. Focussing on five authors from medieval to postmodern times, Cullhed shows how each of them re-use Latin literature in different ways, depending on their relation to their own Latin educations. Jonathan M. Newman (Missouri State University) explores the impact of *ars dictaminis* and the study of dialectics in twelfth- and thirteenth-century literature from France, Italy and northern Europe, which according to him is clearly felt across different genres, disciplines and national boundaries. Erik Gunderson (University of Toronto) focuses on the topic of Latin imperial prose fiction and its ironic reliance on traditional Greek education, which he believes gives the Latin novel its fairly unique 'morosophistic' character. Based on these three diverse contributions, Roland Greene (Stanford University) will close off this issue with a critical response, in which he also argues that fictional writing is one of the key factors in the durability of Latin education until this very day.

For its first forthcoming issues, the materials offered in JOLCEL will largely stem from activities organised by the international scholarly platform RELICS, or Researchers of European Literatures, Cosmopolitanism and the Schools, including its regular workshops and conferences. After that, we will start launching open Calls for Papers. For more information, we want to refer you to our websites at [jolcel.ugent.be](http://jolcel.ugent.be) and [relicsresearch.com](http://relicsresearch.com).

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