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Reckonings

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I.

I SPEAK TO YOU TONIGHT with a great sense of humility and gratitude.¹ As a graduate student over forty years ago and then as a young untenured professor, I found in the American Philological Association (APA), as our Society for Classical Studies (SCS) was then called, the larger intellectual community, professional mentoring, and personal support that I needed, but that none of my institutions at the time could provide on their own. Over the years I have tried to give back to the organization by serving it in various capacities, among them as editor of its monograph series, as vice president for professional matters, and as financial trustee. I want to thank you for giving me one more, and very special, opportunity to serve as your president.

The past three years have been challenging ones for all of us. But the SCS has shown remarkable resilience. It is impossible to overstate the important

¹ I want to thank several colleagues and friends who read through drafts of these remarks or otherwise provided very helpful advice: Joy Connolly, Helen Cullyer, Joseph Farrell, David Konstan, and Dan-el Padilla Peralta. I also want to thank my NYU colleague Anna Donch for technical assistance. This essay is essentially unchanged from the version that was delivered orally in New Orleans in January 2023, with only a few minor edits and the addition of a few footnotes.

role played by our executive director, Helen Cullyer. During her tenure, there has not been a year in which she has not had to manage some sort of disruption, be it operational, financial, political, and even, climatological. In all these situations, her foresight, judiciousness, creativity, and energy have been equaled only by her deep commitment to the Society's mission, her responsiveness to our diverse membership, and her support of the Board and especially this grateful president. We are also fortunate to have on our team Cherane Ali, who, together with Helen, had to turn on the proverbial dime to rethink our annual meeting, first when COVID necessitated moving it online, and then this year when we are having our first hybrid meeting. Moving from our administrative team, I want to thank the Board and the many volunteers who take on SCS responsibilities. Finally, we all owe a great debt of gratitude to one such colleague, my predecessor as president, Professor Shelley Haley, who cares so deeply about moving our field in the right direction. When she handed me the gavel a year ago, I committed to continuing that work.

I decided that the best way I could do that was to draw on my experience as a Classicist who has been engaged in academic administration for over three decades, as a department chair, center director, college dean, and academic vice provost.² I have been fortunate to be at institutions that had the will and the wherewithal to be ambitious on behalf of the humanities and especially ancient studies. Of course, this is not the case everywhere, and many programs are underresourced and even at risk. For that reason, I invited the SCS Board during my presidential year to make sustainability a theme for our discussions. By sustainability, I mean how to ensure the viability of this institution, the SCS, and also how to ensure the vitality of our profession, Classical Studies. Yesterday's presidential panel, "Ensuring a Future for Classical Studies in the Academy: Institutional Strategies for Survival and Success," explored different ways in which our field can organize itself at the institutional level. Tonight, I would like to focus on the larger challenges and opportunities our field faces and on the role the SCS can play in moving us forward. To that end, I have entitled my remarks "Reckonings." A word that is enjoying wide currency of late in our political discourse, it has several meanings that are relevant to the current state of our profession. At its most basic, to reckon means to think, and I will be sharing with you some thoughts which I have been developing, on the basis of the extensive reading I have done this year and the many conversations I have had with members of the SCS, especially younger members. But reckoning also means taking stock of where we are, keeping the accounts,

² For an interesting discussion of how Classics and higher education administration intersect, see another SCS presidential address, Nugent 2018.

so to speak. Finally, a reckoning is also a bill or an invoice, an occasion to pay back or, perhaps in our case, to pay it forward.

When one thinks about the vitality of a field, one thinks primarily of the state of research and teaching in it. About a decade ago, I was asked to edit an issue of *Daedalus* entitled “What’s New About The Old,” which focused on recent trends in the study of Greece and Rome. It was inspired by the work of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences and the report the Commission issued in 2013 entitled *The Heart of the Matter*.³ The time seemed right to focus on the oldest of the humanities fields and to assess where it was going. The hope was that this issue, which eventually appeared in 2016, would reach a wider public than a discipline-specific journal would, and that scholars in many different disciplines, as well as educational policy makers and thought leaders, would read it. Quite frankly, I am not sure that it accomplished that grandiose goal or ever could have. But the articles in it remain valuable, offering original case studies that exemplify new approaches and point in new directions. Although the authors did not exchange papers or collaborate, the essays demonstrated a remarkable coherence around several themes, most notably the opening up of the field to new voices, subjects, and approaches, our new understanding of reception (what Emily Greenwood’s article in the volume called “the cultural mobility of classics”),⁴ the expansion of our field outward across boundaries of time and space, and its expansion inward to include especially study and critique of the field itself (including, by the way, its name, Classics).⁵

As I say, these essays remain very much worth reading. But if I were asked to edit this volume now, it would look very different. That is because, in just the decade since it was conceptualized, so much has happened to focus even more of our attention on topics that were addressed in the volume, but not foregrounded with the same sense of intellectual and moral urgency that we experience today. During this time, we have seen anew how the ancient Greek and Roman world, its history, texts, and imagery, have been weaponized in the service of white supremacy, as well as other intersecting forms of violence and exclusion, such as antisemitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, classism, toxic nationalism, militarism, and the list goes on. There is nothing new about this, since the ancient world

³ Santirocco 2016a; the Commission’s report is available at <https://www.amacad.org/publication/heart-matter>.

⁴ Greenwood 2016.

⁵ For an overview of these and other trends, see Santirocco 2016b; for a more recent overview of the field, see Konstan 2020.

has always been co-opted and appropriated for many ends. But this time seems different—different in its intensity (so that, for example, exemplary essays on color in ancient statuary inspired death threats!)⁶ and different in the way that this appropriation of the classical past is visibly connected to contemporary incidents of actual violence, as well as to other underlying and long-standing problems of racial, social, and economic injustice that the recent pandemic has revealed and exacerbated.

These exogenous forces have intensified efforts that were already underway in our field to focus our attention back on ourselves and what we do as Classicists. Thus, if we decry what we see as the misappropriation of the past, our distress is complicated by our awareness that the objects of our study do not necessarily discourage these uses. Aristotle may not have had a concept of biological race, but his discussion of natural slavery was congenial to American apologists for the enslavement of Black people. Similarly, the appropriation of Roman poets like Ovid by the toxic manosphere may miss the irony of those texts, but it is not as if sexual violence and patriarchal values are not enshrined in those texts to begin with.⁷ Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we are coming to understand the ways in which the field itself has historically been implicated and at times complicit in these appropriations, both in the way it was constituted in the nineteenth century to authorize a white, patriarchal, and colonialist European project, and also in the way it has been and is currently practiced in the United States and elsewhere. These considerations challenge us to think hard about the value of the work we do, about why we study this material and how we teach it, and about how we should organize our field.⁸

It was perhaps inevitable that when our conversations and debates made it into the popular media, the headline was that Classics was “in crisis.” (The same narrative is playing out, of course, in other fields, such as medieval studies.) Leaving aside its almost-reflexive use of the tired “crisis” trope,⁹ the popular

⁶ See Bond 2017a and 2017b; among the many subsequent discussions, see Talbot 2018.

⁷ On the misappropriation of Ovid, see Zuckerberg 2018: 89–142.

⁸ For important recent discussion, see Greenwood 2022a and 2022b (two special issues of *American Journal of Philology* on “Diversifying Classical Philology”). See also Billings and Peirano Garrison 2022 and Conybeare 2023 (*Paragraphoi* sections of *TAPA* devoted respectively to “Classics after COVID” and “Rupture and Return”). Finally, see Eccleston and Rankine 2024 (a forthcoming special issue of *TAPA* on “Race and Racism: Beyond the Spectacular”).

⁹ To be fair, we sometimes use “crisis” language ourselves, as in Culham and Edmunds 1989, though the editors of that volume judiciously put a question mark at the end of their title, *Classics: A Discipline and Profession in Crisis?* Among the problems with “crisis” talk is its negativity, as if foreclosing solutions. Also it is used of situations so many and

coverage of the current state of play in our field is flawed in other ways as well. Often unfamiliar with the academic discourse underlying this internal critique, journalists and pundits tend to oversimplify or misrepresent the nature of the debate and of what is at stake. And, sadly, in this highly politicized environment, misinformation often gives way to disinformation, as our serious conversations are sometimes caricatured as “Woke Gone Wild,” “Cancelling the Classics,” and the like. There is a real need for us to reclaim the narrative.

We are, in fact, not so much in a crisis as at an inflection point, a moment of reckoning. The last reckoning that we experienced that was of comparable magnitude was over fifty years ago when, under the impulse of the women’s movement in society and feminist studies in the academy, our field underwent a profound, positive, and lasting change, one which is still ongoing. Indeed, it is impossible to overstate the salutary effect this had on the makeup of our field, on our scholarship and teaching, and also on how we relate personally and professionally to one another.¹⁰ The current moment, in which we are called to confront white supremacy and the ways in which it is reflected in our field, is another such reckoning and has a similar potential to transform the field, if we listen, really listen, to one another, to the lived experience of our colleagues and also of our students, if we make the effort to read widely, study deeply, and inform ourselves, and (most importantly) if we remain open to change.

It was in that spirit that the SCS Board held a series of strategic conversations, which resulted in January 2020 in the publication of a document entitled *Mission Statement and Strategic Priorities*.¹¹ Reaffirming the Society’s purpose, as described succinctly in the bylaws, to “advance knowledge, understanding,

disparate (from enrollment declines in Latin to political threats to academic freedom) as to become meaningless. Finally, as two commentators have wittily observed, “The Groves of Academe Are Always on Fire” (Emre and Gutkin 2021, itself an interesting interview with the authors of a book [Reitter and Wellmon 2021] which argues that the humanities are by their very nature in permanent crisis mode, since whatever case we make for them is, in a capitalist society, overshadowed by the claims of relevance and utility made by or for the STEM disciplines and the quantitative social sciences).

¹⁰ For an account of the opening of the field to women and other marginalized groups, see Hallett 2019. This entire issue of *TAPA*, on the 150th anniversary of the SCS, makes for interesting reading: recounting the transformation of the Society and the field, it notes progress, but also work that remains to be done, especially in areas related to the topic of my remarks.

¹¹ This document is available at <https://classicalstudies.org/about/mission-statement-and-strategic-priorities>; for contemporary discussion of it and the incidents at the 2019 meeting that prompted it, see the SCS presidential address by Boatwright 2020.

and appreciation of the ancient Greek and Roman world and its enduring value,” the Board then set forth three strategic priorities that are crucial to that mission: advocacy for the field and those who teach and study it at any level; growth in the number of those who share an enthusiasm for Classics; and inclusion of different people and perspectives. Several features of this document are notable. The first is that it repudiates the misappropriation of the Classics, arguing that we “should avoid stating or insinuating that the Greek and Roman cultures are superior to other cultures and should firmly oppose those who would exploit the field for politically or socially oppressive purposes.” The second feature is that all three strategic priorities connect with the Society’s larger commitment to promoting a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive field. This means (and I quote) “addressing historical and contemporary inequalities based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class as a way of recognizing that Classics is enriched by new perspectives.” And the document goes on to say: “We must grapple with the historical legacies of racism. The Society must also recognize that, as the field becomes more diverse and inclusive, new voices will challenge established notions. ... These challenges, while they may be uncomfortable, provide an opportunity to reinvigorate the field.” Finally, perhaps the most important feature of this document is the commitment that follows from all of this, viz., that the SCS should test everything we do against these newly articulated goals and the values that underlie them.

To illustrate the point, the document noted examples of progress that the SCS had made up to that point, from efforts to open up the governance of the Society to opening up the program of the annual meeting. And these efforts continue. This meeting, for example, is framed by a panel on the first day that explores “Ancient Greece and Rome after the American Civil War,” and, on the last day, a working seminar on Classics and Race. In between these two events, we have reflected on topics ranging from “Classics and Black Feminist Traditions” to “Ancient Slavery and Its Reception in Global Perspective,” from “Interrogating the Intersections of Trans Studies and Classics,” to “Transformative Pedagogies,” and from “Disability in the Works of Plutarch,” to “Green Vergil.” That a number of these and other sessions have been sponsored by affiliated groups underscores one of the most encouraging signs of progress, namely, the creation in just the past few years of many new groups that combine activism and academics, i.e., that link social and professional advocacy on behalf of diverse communities with efforts to produce new knowledge, promote new pedagogies, and reach new populations.¹²

¹² Just as the earlier reckoning fifty years ago saw the creation of the Women’s Classical Caucus (1972) and, later, what is now known as the Lambda Classical Caucus (1989), so

For all this activity, however, we need to resist the urge to be self-congratulatory, since one goal of the document has not yet been fully implemented, namely that we test *all* of the Society's activities against our strategic priorities. I do not mean to be unduly critical, since in the three years since that document was issued, COVID hit us hard, and the Board, preoccupied with various emergent situations, has had to be more reactive than proactive. But now that we are perhaps entering a different phase of the pandemic, we have the opportunity and the obligation to engage in a systematic review of everything we do as a Society. And, as we do that, we also have the chance not just to tinker around the edges, but to be bolder than we have been in the past. I would like to suggest that there are at least four areas in which we *can* test what we do against our stated priorities and in which we *can* and *must* be more bold. They are, in order: reimagining the annual meeting (section II below), actively promoting reparative scholarship (section III), making our scholarly work more accessible (section IV), and redoubling our commitment to innovation across the entire educational spectrum (section V).

II.

First, the annual meeting. This is arguably the signature initiative of the SCS, not only for financial reasons, but also because of the time and energy devoted to putting on the event and to planning forward for five years out. When the pandemic upended all of that, we could not go to Chicago (2021) or San Francisco (2022). In addition to the loss of revenue that entailed, the Society also faced devastating cancellation penalties, but one hotel did not assess damages and the other allowed us to cancel if we signed up to meet there in a future year. Thus, in both years we moved to virtual meetings, which kept us connected as a community and also mitigated at least some revenue losses. And this year, since COVID is still with us and for other reasons, we have moved to a hybrid meeting, another first for the Society. During this time both our finances and human bandwidth have been severely taxed, and there is no reason to think that the future will be free of disruptions. Given this uncertainty, we have prudently not entered into any new hotel contracts, though we still have three contracts in the pipeline. For these reasons alone, it is time to review the annual meeting.

too in just the past few years we have seen the creation of numerous groups focused on our current concerns: Classics and Social Justice (2016), the Multiculturalism, Race, and Ethnicity in Classics Consortium (2016), Eos: Africana Reception of Ancient Greece and Rome (2017), CripAntiquity (2017), the Mountaintop Coalition (2018), the Asian and Asian American Classical Caucus (2019), Trans in Classics (2020), Hesperides: Classics in the Luso-Hispanic World (2021), the First-Generation Low-Income Federation (2021), and Asterion: Celebrating Neurodiversity in Classics (2021).

But these considerations, while urgent, are not the most important ones. These past three years have also highlighted a number of larger issues with the annual meeting that relate directly to our new strategic priorities, especially inclusion. Graduate students, contingent faculty, and unemployed or retired individuals often find the cost prohibitive, and while we have raised money to provide grants-in-aid, these are not sufficient to meet the need. For other individuals, family commitments, physical disability, or other personal circumstances make it difficult, if not impossible, to attend. In addition, at a time of climate crisis, some members question whether it is responsible to fly across a continent just to attend a convention. And then there is the issue of site selection. This year the Dobbs decision caused some members to stay away, and for them as well as for Classicists of color and LGBTQ+ colleagues, where we meet is not only a political issue but also one of human rights, public health, and personal safety.

For all these reasons, I am announcing this evening the creation of a Presidential Task Force on the Future of the Annual Meeting. The charge, which the Board developed over several of its meetings, asks the group to revisit the purpose of this gathering. For many of us, this was where we interviewed for a job, but the placement function has now changed, given the emergence of Zoom interviews and other factors. What other important functions does the meeting serve, how should we prioritize them, and how can they best be achieved? To answer these questions, the Task Force will consider not only access, affordability, environmental impact, and site selection, but also the time of year and annual frequency of our meetings, their program and format, the role of technology, and possible collaborations with other professional societies, including regional associations. The group will be broadly representative in terms of personal demographics, geographical region, type of institution, and various constituencies, including graduate students, contingent faculty, and the disabled community. Also, it will have the opportunity, if it wishes, to add a few more members in the interest of further representation. And since no small group can ever be fully representative of all constituencies and perspectives, the Task Force will also consult widely with all our SCS committees and affiliated groups, with other organizations like the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and its conference of executive officers, and, of course, with the entire membership, whose input will be actively solicited.¹³ The Task Force will not make any decisions, but will tee up a range of options for the Board to consider. The plan is that the group will report

¹³ The membership and charge of the Task Force can be found at https://myemail.constantcontact.com/April-2023-Monthly-Newsletter.html?oid=1138842952095&aid=eAVP_iuE8dg.

out during President Roller's term and that action will be taken by the Board which President Alison Keith will chair—just as the last of our contractual obligations run out and just in time for us to enter into new contracts and to pilot, if we wish, different arrangements.

III.

This Task Force represents a serious effort to review one important activity of the SCS in light of our new strategic priorities. A second opportunity now presents itself in connection with our mission to support research. Rather than promote specific topics, the SCS has instead invested in tools that are intended to benefit all of our members regardless of their interests. Chief among these is *L'Année philologique*. A very large portion of our annual budget goes to support this legacy bibliography and specifically its American office at Duke University, where works in English are cataloged, indexed, and abstracted. Ten years ago our Society completed a Capital Campaign, a major focus of which was building an endowment to support this project into the future. The Campaign was successful and qualified for a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Challenge Grant. At the time, however, it was not possible to predict that annual cost increases and fluctuating market performance would necessitate our having to supplement the income from that endowment with draws from our unrestricted funds. This was one reason why a Joint SCS-AIA Task Force on Bibliography, chaired by Professor Donald Mastrorarde, was established a few years ago. But just like our new Presidential Task Force on the Future of the Annual Meeting, this one on bibliography was inspired not only by financial considerations, but also by a desire to address the evolving needs of our diverse members.

The report which the Task Force on Bibliography issued in March 2021 identified gaps in the coverage of *L'Année*, one of which was in reception studies.¹⁴ This omission was deemed serious not only because reception is a subject of growing importance to our field—indeed, it is one way in which the field increasingly defines itself—but it is also an area where much work is being done by scholars from underrepresented groups. I am happy to report this evening that progress is being made: the American office has begun to catalog reception studies for inclusion in the online database, and the SCS is now in the process of seeking financial support for this project from other Anglophone Classics organizations that benefit from the work done by the American office.

¹⁴ The report of the Task Force on Bibliography is at [https://classicalstudies.org/sites/default/files/userfiles/files/2021_BibliographyTaskForceReport_withappendices\(1\).pdf](https://classicalstudies.org/sites/default/files/userfiles/files/2021_BibliographyTaskForceReport_withappendices(1).pdf).

As we continue to work through the issues flagged by the Task Force on Bibliography, I wonder, however, if the time has come for the SCS to focus not just on research tools, but also on specific subjects, and one in particular that has a direct bearing on the present moment of reckoning. I refer to reparative scholarship on the history of our field. A number of our colleagues have been working in this area for some time. But this recuperative turn gained even greater visibility when our past two presidents, Sheila (Bridget) Murnaghan and Shelley Haley, organized in collaboration their Presidential Panels on the topic of race, and particularly on what is lost when Black Classicists are excluded from the field (as William Sanders Scarborough was physically excluded from the APA annual meeting in segregated Baltimore in 1909), or when their contributions are illegible in our history (as had been the case with Helen Maria Chesnutt, who experienced in her life and career racialized sexism). These two panels not only recovered for many of us a legacy that was insufficiently known, but they also went beyond the shorthand biographical or obituary-style approach that has characterized how the history of our field is sometimes presented in handbooks, dictionaries, and databases. Instead, the panels situated these two scholars' experiences in a much larger sociological, intellectual, and historical context, namely, what was going on in American society and the academy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In addition, the speakers explored ways in which Scarborough and Chesnutt were (to quote one organizer) "not simply adopting white models but creating a distinctive form of Black classicism." Finally, these panels reminded us that the study of our discipline's history is not a purely academic exercise, but also carries with it the responsibility to fight all forms of exclusion and discrimination wherever they occur, including in our very midst.¹⁵

The question before us now is whether the SCS should do more to promote this particular line of research. Traditionally agnostic about topics of research, we have occasionally put our finger on the scale as when, for example, we took over responsibility for what was known at the time as the *Harvard Servius*.¹⁶ Though worthy, that was a highly technical philological project of use to a limited number of specialists, and it is not surprising that the SCS has not returned to that model of direct scholarly engagement. But the *Servius* example is at least a precedent, and the sort of reparative scholarship that we are talking about would not only have a much wider appeal but would also align with our new strategic priorities, helping us at this moment of reckoning to know

¹⁵ For discussion of these two SCS Presidential Panels, see Haley and Murnaghan 2022, on which I have drawn here.

¹⁶ See Briggs 2019: S-13–S-14.

ourselves better, to understand how we got to where we are, and to figure out where it is we need to go. For all these reasons, the administrator in me thinks that this is the right time for the SCS to seek funding beyond what its own limited resources can at present provide, perhaps from a consortium of schools, foundations, and/or other scholarly societies. One worthwhile project would be to use such funding to train scholars who want to work in this emerging area, or to subvent workshops or special publications that would disseminate this research. I think, for example, of the summer seminars that our Society (then called the APA) and the NEH cosponsored during the nation's Bicentennial and that resulted in the mainstreaming of research on the use of the Classics in the founding generation and subsequent periods of US history.

IV.

Closely related to promoting research is the third topic on my list: how we can make our scholarship more accessible, both to other experts and to the general public. With regard to the latter, Classicists have been practicing what has come to be called “public humanities” for some time, and the SCS supports this activity with grants from the Ancient Worlds, Modern Communities initiative and by recognizing outstanding projects with prizes.¹⁷ Whether producing new translations that speak with a contemporary voice, or headlining events at public libraries, senior citizen centers, and book fairs, or engaging with refugees, veterans, and the incarcerated in educational programs, or reaching large audiences through popular books, TV and radio appearances, videos, podcasts, informal blogs, and social media threads—we have discovered that public humanities is a two-way street, benefiting not only those who are outside of the academy, but also us Classicists, showing us once again the power of the texts we study and their striking contemporary relevance, what Professor Murnaghan, in her moving presidential address two years ago, described as “old news.”¹⁸

¹⁷ As an administrator familiar with the deliberations of promotion and tenure committees, I wonder if the SCS might take on the task of advising institutions on how to assess the quality of this work, which is different from both peer-reviewed scholarship and also traditional *haute vulgarisation*, and advise on how this work, which is so important for our field, should be appropriately recognized and rewarded. In this regard it would be helpful to consult the guidelines for evaluating public humanities that the Modern Language Association (MLA) published earlier this year: <https://www.mla.org/Resources/Guidelines-and-Data/Reports-and-Professional-Guidelines/Guidelines-for-Evaluating-Publicly-Engaged-Humanities-Scholarship-in-Language-and-Literature-Programs>.

¹⁸ Murnaghan 2021.

But what about our scholarly writing? Our journal *TAPA* (formerly *Transactions of the American Philological Association*) is leading the way in promoting one type of accessibility, by announcing its openness to a very wide range of subjects, including reflections on the field itself; by instructing authors that their articles should be intelligible to scholars in other disciplines, as well as to Classicists who are not expert in the topic at hand; and by recognizing that such legibility is not only a matter of style, but also of addressing the *meta* question of why this particular scholarly intervention matters in the first place. Since these moves align with our Society's new strategic priorities of advocacy, growth, and inclusion, they raise the question whether we should be thinking of another, even bolder, kind of accessibility: removing the paywall behind which our publications sit. Paywalls shut out independent scholars, scholars who work in underresourced institutions or in developing countries, students without access to a research library, and (last but not least) interested lay persons. In this way, paywalls not only limit the reach and impact of our scholarship, but also reinforce the perception and reality of elitism that we are currently trying to dispel. They also make it too easy for underinformed or ill-willed people to misrepresent our field or misuse the objects of our study. Finally, paywalls limit the possibility of the two-way exchange I mentioned a moment ago, in which scholars of all sorts and the larger public can learn from one another and even co-create knowledge in a humanities version of "citizen science."

The solution to paywalls is, of course, open access (OA). Made possible by online publishing, OA emerged first in the sciences, to make research, much of it funded by taxpayer dollars, more transparent and available, and also to rein in escalating subscription costs that were straining library budgets. One common strategy of OA has been to shift the cost of publishing from the reader (who pays a subscription fee) to the author (who pays an article processing fee). In the sciences such charges are built into research grants. But this financial model is not well suited to the humanities, in which most research is not funded in this way, and it is not surprising that fields like ours have been slower on the uptake. It is interesting, though, that as early as 2004, our annual meeting featured a talk on OA.¹⁹ Almost two decades later, we may finally be in a position to consider moving in this direction for at least two reasons. First, *TAPA* is provided as a benefit of membership in the SCS, and the sale of separate subscriptions is therefore not a large source of revenue (though we do receive royalties); and second, our publisher, Johns Hopkins University Press, is a member of a new consortium, *Subscribe to Open*, or S2O

¹⁹ Suber 2004.

for short, which is made up of publishers, libraries, and professional societies, and which has developed a new model that may enable organizations like ours to move forward without substantial loss of revenue.

V.

So far, we have considered three important areas of SCS activity—the annual meeting, the way we support research, and our publication program—and we have seen how we can align them more closely with our new strategic priorities and also be more bold in the process. I am sure that each of you can come up with many other areas that can be addressed in this way, and I would encourage you to do so and to get in touch with the vice presidents of our various divisions with your ideas. Right now, though, I would like to close by looking at a fourth and final area, and one which is arguably the most important to us at this time of reckoning, viz., the role the SCS can play in educational reform.

Our Education Division has in recent years expanded its focus to all levels of learning, including K–12. I am delighted to announce this evening a major new initiative in this area. We recently received a generous bequest from the late Dr. Rudy Masciantonio, who had been foreign language director of the Philadelphia public schools, where he pioneered the teaching of Latin to inner-city elementary school students. The bequest will provide an annual revenue stream, and the Board just approved a proposal made by a joint SCS-ACL committee to use some of this funding for K–12 education. While other sources of funding for K–12 already exist, most grants are small, and few, if any, focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in our field. But the SCS grants, when they are up and running, will support each year a student teacher in training, with preference given to members of underrepresented groups, and they will also provide resources to current teachers to support DEI initiatives, with preference given to teachers whose students come from underrepresented or low-income groups and would not otherwise have access to these enriching experiences.

Like our Snowden Scholarships for undergraduates, this new K–12 project has been tested against our strategic priorities and aligns with them. But as the SCS engages in this space, we need to do more to break down the barriers between K–12, undergraduate, and graduate education. To take just one example: there are only a few dozen universities in Canada and the United States that grant a doctorate in Classics, and the professional training they offer is necessarily research oriented. But most of the PhDs they produce, if they go on to teaching jobs, will be employed at the exponentially larger

number of institutions whose primary mission is not research but teaching at the undergraduate or K–12 level. It would be important to know how graduate programs are preparing their students to address this need, so that we can learn from one another. This would be an excellent project for our brand new SCS Committee on Data to tackle, a committee, by the way, whose creation was, appropriately enough, spearheaded by the first graduate student representative on the SCS Board.

And there is one other matter on which we could use more data. In her presidential address last year, Professor Haley argued that small liberal arts colleges have for a long time been what she called “sites of salvation.”²⁰ Recognizing early on that if Classics is to stay relevant, it cannot stay static, these institutions have been innovating, often without fanfare, by making their classrooms more inclusive and by acknowledging biases in the field and redressing them in their teaching. By reading directly from letters she had solicited, President Haley let these colleagues speak in their own voices about their initiatives. It would accelerate change if the SCS could continue to collect this sort of information on an ongoing basis and make it available as a curated inventory of innovation. For this data to be most valuable, we would need to be as inclusive as possible. This would mean surveying not only small liberal arts colleges and university-based four-year colleges, but also community colleges, where the study of the humanities is growing. It would also mean including those schools that have traditional core curricula, great books courses, or Western civilization requirements, since many of those institutions are in the process of grappling with the same issues we are confronting in our profession, opening up their curricula to different texts and focusing on reception, specifically on how ancient literature has been appropriated by diverse communities for purposes of empowerment or what has been called “liberation philology.”²¹

To sum up: by focusing more of our attention on K–12 and undergraduate education, including general education, and by putting into practice innovative curricula and pedagogies that align with our stated SCS values and current strategic priorities, we have the opportunity to reach a great many students. Most will not go on in the field, but the vitality of our field depends not only on feeding the pipeline, but also on enlarging the audience for Classics and building a supportive constituency for it in our communities. Even

²⁰ Haley 2022.

²¹ Used by Sheldon Pollock in a somewhat different context (see, e.g., Pollock 2015), “liberation philology” is also the name of an online language learning platform. I use the phrase here in the same sense in which it is used by Strunk 2010.

more important, by doing this, we will be making it less likely that the next generation will misappropriate Classics in the service of white supremacist, patriarchal, or other destructive ends. Rather, equipped with a more accurate understanding of the ancient world in all its vast and colorful diversity and all its intellectual and moral complexity, our students will be able to see the often orthogonal ways in which the past intersects with and illuminates the present. They will also come to understand how different people and societies have reclaimed these texts as their own; how the ancient plots and arguments have been repurposed—and at times even rewritten in subversive ways—to promote human dignity and freedom; and, finally how the study of the Classics can serve for us too as a vehicle for discovery and a catalyst for change.

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