

Study abroad has a long relationship with classics. In the *Odyssey*, which holds a special place in our discipline, Odysseus spends twenty full years abroad. He is known as πολύμητις, a man of many resources, and πολύτροπος, a man of many turns. His circuitous travels and his resourcefulness are closely related. In the opening invocation, the poet summons the Muse to describe this remarkable ἄνδρα... πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ πλάγχθη (1-2). In his wanderings, he saw the cities of many people and got to know their minds, and endured many woes on the sea in his spirit. Hospitality occupies a special place in his travel narrative. Finding himself far from his family, and even his network of family friends, Odysseus has to look to total strangers to provide for his needs and to help him on his way. Necessity teaches him that not all cave-dwellers are created equal. One eats his travel companions for dinner, the next supplies the tools to build a raft and the provisions for his journey. Necessity teaches him to look for help in unlikely places, to approach unmarried girls, shuttle-wielding witches, shifty young men in the jungle offering him psychotropic plants. After years of unsuccessfully trying to find his own way back to Ithaca, he even learns to ask for directions! And when he returns home, the lessons he has learned while abroad continue to serve him well. Perhaps I digress. But in study abroad digression is usually the point.

Classics is a discipline built not around a methodology but around a time and a place. It is the study of the ancient Mediterranean, especially the Greco-Roman world. A classics major who has not had the opportunity to visit Greece or Italy is like a Muslim who has not yet made the hajj to Mecca. There are often good reasons why the pilgrimage has not been made, chiefly financial. But oh the rewards of heeding the call, of drawing near to the Kaaba, the omphalos, the città eterna. If every college student got to explore the ancient world in person, the world would be full of lifelong classicists. Yes, for classics study abroad is the ultimate recruiting tool. The evidence is all around you in this room. Every year that I attend the Centro alumni party at the APA meeting, I am reminded of the centrality of study abroad to the formative experiences of classicists. Certainly for me as an undergraduate in England, it was travel in Greece and Italy that made me fall head over heels for the subject.

What is it that sparks that flame? One important element is simply the act of getting away. We leave behind the familiar and become more open to discovery. Our five senses go into overdrive as they take in new sights, sounds, textures, smells, and especially tastes. This sensory receptivity is supported by an attitudinal openness. As we board the plane, we leave behind our cares. We begin a journey that has usually been long anticipated, that we see as an expansion of our horizons as well as an interior journey of self-discovery. Forster's *A Room with a View* and the dozens of other novels and films about romance abroad understand this well. On arrival, we find everything bathed in a golden glow. Our hearts are wide open.

Nowhere more so than in Italy and Greece. These countries are what the Italians call *suggestivo*: they inspire artistic responses. Especially Italy comes preloaded with romantic associations: Vespas, piazzas, Romeos, the Renaissance—you get the drift. Which is why I feel our students lose out if we lead them on a forced march around classical sites rather than allow them to linger and savor. Of course, this is my first instinct too. So many famous buildings to see, so little time. But less can be more, especially if we think carefully about what we want our students to take away.

Let's start with these classical sites, the bread and butter of most travel courses. Seeing ancient monuments with their own eyes rather than on PowerPoint slides is in itself a significant experience for our students. We are all visual learners, but the younger generation has grown up in a multimedia environment saturated by visual stimuli. This does not mean that virtual reality has honed their skills in visual literacy. These have to be acquired, and a

whistle-stop tour of the meager remains in the Roman Forum can leave teenagers profoundly underwhelmed. What is more, attention spans for onsite lectures, especially when accompanied by the claxons of traffic, are short at best. My colleague Matt Panciera, two-time teacher at the Centro and always one step ahead with innovation, is thinking of developing a set of interactive podcasts that students could listen to onsite, providing background context and posing analytical questions that would allow them to interact with the site on an individual or small-group basis.

Taking the time to get to know a site well helps develop powers of observation and analysis. Of course, the best training in this is through archaeological fieldwork. But even small-scale site analysis projects can be highly effective. I learned this when I co-led a study course with my brother Kyle, a classics major turned architect. He built into our course a series of on-site exercises ranging from sketches to site analyses that trained students in visual literacy. On our way to Hadrian's Villa and the Villa d'Este, we stopped for an hour at the sanctuary of Hercules Victor, a site that was opened to us by special permesso. Converted at various points into a gunpowder factory, a paper-mill and Italy's first hydroelectric plant, the site is both suggestivo, as industrial ruins can be, and enigmatic. Students were split into groups and charged with drawing a site plan to scale and determining the original function of the complex. The look of triumph on their faces when they figured out that the arcades were part of a temple sanctuary such as the one they had seen at Praeneste was priceless.

Another component that I have incorporated into study abroad assignments is the *ekphrasis*, the vivid description of a work of art. This is, of course, a quintessentially classical genre. Most students are not familiar with it. But they embrace it with gusto, as it allows them to respond to what they encounter on an affective level. A combination of preparation and practice hones their skills of observation and description. They learn what the Greeks called *enargeia* by seeing examples in artistic responses from the past. It is thrilling to discover that these same sculptures, monuments and landscapes have been the inspiration of great artists such as Piranesi, Goethe, Keats and Shelley. There really is an embarrassment of riches, and I make sure to include a broad selection in the coursepack. Thus exploring the afterlife of the ancient world is just as important to me as studying the ancient context itself.

What strikes me about the experiences of travelers on the Grand Tour as I read their accounts is that they took the time to let the locus amoenus work itself into their souls. Having usually endured considerable discomfort to get there, they were in no hurry to move on. They sought out those special encounters with the genius loci, whether it was viewing the great carcass of the Colosseum by moonlight or exploring Etruscan tombs. That is one reason why I encourage my advisees to spend at least a semester abroad, if possible—preferably the spring semester, so that they can do some exploring on their own when classes are over, armed with an Interrail pass.

Time abroad can build interpersonal skills, self-confidence and resourcefulness. These are especially valuable for those students with helicopter parents, who never allowed them to go beyond the end of the driveway growing up and who now text them ten times a day. In the United Kingdom, the practice of taking a gap year between high school and college is fairly widespread. I spent my gap year working and hitchhiking my way around Australia. I found myself substitute teaching Latin, harvesting watermelons, and mending fences knocked down by kangaroos. These experiences broadened my horizons and built my self-confidence. Odysseus would not have had the same experiences if he had traipsed behind an umbrella-toting tour guide and traveled by private coach. In study abroad, opportunities to get lost, to ask for directions, to explore one's surroundings should, I believe, be part of the curriculum. I remember the look on my students' faces when, at the end of our first day out in Rome, my brother and I took our leave from the group by the column of Trajan and told them we would see them back at the hotel. Yes, they would have to use those maps we had given them to find their way back up to Piazza Vittorio Emanuele. Within a few days, many of them knew the city like the back of their hand.

Two years ago, I spent four months in India, leading a semester-long program on Social Justice, Peace and Development. Those four months had a profound effect on me and on most of the students. For many, the experience could honestly be called life-changing, radically challenging their preconceptions and reprioritizing their values. When I stop and think what contributed to this growth, I think it was exposure to people and situations radically different from those they had previously encountered. The program offered meaningful interactions with people from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds. For example, a two-day theatre workshop in which our students and teenage girls from a residential home developed and performed mimed pieces that showcased resistance to oppression using Augusto Boal's Forum theater techniques. Needless to say, most of the examples of oppression came from the experiences of the resident Bandhavi girls. But through this collaboration, our students stepped into their shoes, expanded their capacity for empathy, and gained cultural understanding. Students also spent part of their stay with host families, most of whom were Muslim. Like Odysseus on his journey, they received *xenia* from total strangers and began to understand the perspectives and values of people from a very different culture. We traveled by train, in second class. This is, I believe, what is meant by the line *πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω* ("he saw the cities of many people and got to know their minds"). In the India program, interactions with people were at the core of the curriculum. As one student put it, "my greatest teachers have been illiterate women in India."

Cultural competence, interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence and empathy are desiderata that are increasingly valued in the workplace. Indeed, they are now admission criteria for many medical schools. Study abroad offers ample opportunity to develop these skills. However, *classical* study abroad faces a very real challenge: true cultural immersion is an impossibility given that the society that we are studying is long gone and we are left studying footprints in the sand. I believe hybrid programs offer real opportunities. Students *can* enjoy living with a real Roman host family—just not an ancient one! And there is real value in learning about the economic struggles of modern day Greeks or understanding why the Greek government has blocked the Republic of Macedonia's entry into NATO. Rather than focus exclusively on the ancient world, I think the most dynamic study abroad experiences are those that explore the Greco-Roman world, ancient and modern, in all its richness.

In the pre-departure orientation, I introduced students to Milton Bennett's article "Towards ethnorelativism"<sup>1</sup> in preparation for the disorienting process of engaging with a radically different culture. Bennett defines intercultural sensitivity in terms of stages of personal growth along a continuum from ethnocentrism towards greater recognition and acceptance of difference. To give an example, one typical stage is romanticism towards the host culture and denigration of one's own culture. Romantic notions of India's spiritual mystique and of an ennobling poverty abound among travelers just as Italian culture is often seen through rose-tinted glasses.

This panel hopes to offer a holistic assessment of the role that study abroad plays in classics programs in the U.S. It seeks to articulate the value of study abroad in classics. What specific learning outcomes can classics faculty cite as they advise students or talk to administrators about why their institution should participate in classics-related study abroad programs? In comparing classics with other disciplines, what are the main strengths of our study abroad programs, and what are weaknesses or untapped possibilities? In what ways does study abroad in classics expand the ways of learning that we offer our students (e.g. through the experiential learning that can occur through fieldwork)? What modes of

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<sup>1</sup> Bennett, Milton J. "Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity." *Education for the Intercultural Experience*. Ed. R.M. Paige. 2nd edition. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1993. 21-71.

instruction and learning are used on site that cannot be reproduced in the regular classroom? What can we learn from classics departments in which study abroad is an integral component of their curriculum, in some cases even a graduation requirement for their majors? What are the benefits to the students and to the programs of such an approach, and what are its challenges?

At the same time, the panel seeks to provide practical information on a range of topics related to study abroad. It will feature a presenter who recently took students abroad for the first time, who will provide an overview of the process from planning to execution, as well as offer recommendations for others who may be considering leading a study abroad course. It will also feature a presentation by an experienced veteran of study abroad, who will discuss the importance of setting expectations for study abroad. Presenters will discuss a range of study abroad opportunities, from semester-long programs to shorter travel courses, programs for high school students, undergraduates and for graduate students, and large inter-institutional programs and programs run by an individual institution. A similar discussion of archaeological opportunities will be provided by a presenter who has directed an archaeological field school, recognizing that many APA members are philologists without direct archaeological experience who may, nevertheless, want to be able to give informed advice to their students.