

# *Telling Tales Out of School*

Latin education and European Literary Production

*First Call for Papers*

**GHENT UNIVERSITY (BELGIUM), 14-16 SEPTEMBER 2017**

CONFIRMED KEYNOTE SPEAKERS: ANDERS CULLHED (UNIVERSITY OF STOCKHOLM), RITA COPELAND (UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA) AND ERIK GUNDERSON (UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO)

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At an early stage in its history, Latin went from a vernacular language to the most pervasive and enduring cosmopolitan language in European history. Latin did not only function as the language for international diplomacy, but, more importantly, it also served as the Church's liturgical language all over Europe and gave form to an intellectual climate that stimulated an extensive literary production. Literature written in Latin, from Roman Antiquity over the long Middle Ages to the early modern period, preserved and renewed literary and aesthetic standards. It laid the foundation for a European literature (and culture), which crossed national boundaries. Not surprisingly, 'Great Authors' such as Dante, Rimbaud, etc. that are now mainly known for their works in vernacular languages, also wrote several works in Latin.

In the development of this intellectual climate and literature, Latin education was a driving force. Latin education, as it took shape in Classical Antiquity, combined technical matters (morphology, prosody, metric, syntax,...) with broader ways of thinking such as rhetoric, literature, philosophy and theology. Hence, being educated in Latin always meant an initiation into a social, intellectual *and* literary elite. Most authors, even the ones who only wrote in vernacular languages, followed a Latin educational program and had a reading audience in mind that shared the same background.

The main focus of this conference will be the dynamic interaction between European literary production and Latin education as its undercurrent. At the two extremes, this relation can, on the one hand, be defined as one in which education only functioned as a transmitter of knowledge and literary attitudes; on the other hand, education can also be seen as a full part of the intellectual environment in which literary techniques, values and texts were not only transferred, but also evaluated and (re-)created. From the latter perspective, Latin literature and education were involved in a constant negotiation about (changing) aesthetic, social and historical elements.

This conference seeks to cover the entire Latinitas from the institutionalization of Latin education, as embodied by Quintilian, to the end of Latin as a primary language of schooling in modern times. We invite proposals for 30-minute papers on the interaction between education and literature. Particularly welcome are proposals with a comparative approach to different periods, geographical areas and/or literatures in other languages that had to emancipate from their Latin background.

The following topics can serve as guidelines in exploring the correlation between schooling and literature:

- ↻ Methods of reading and writing literature (genre, style, subject matter, literary attitude, etc.): What is their relation to the methods of the Latin educational system? How do they emancipate from them?
- ↻ Commentary and reflection on literary values and traditions: How does the Latin school curriculum create literary expectations and stimulate theoretical ways of thinking about literature? In what way are canons created and continued by school programs and instruction?
- ↻ Tensions and interactions between literary fields: How did the influence of Latin education affect, decelerate or accelerate the rise of literature in vernacular languages? How do the innovative force of literary production and the conservative nature of schooling disturb, challenge, and at the same time balance each other?
- ↻ Power structures and social identification in and through literature: how are power relations and social identities such as gender, class, race, etc. negotiated through schools and literature? How do schools create an elite community of readers and authors of literature by projecting a model of a *homo literatus*? How does Latin play a role in establishing or changing this intellectual elite?
- ↻ Broad historical-cultural shifts: How does the interaction between Latin schooling and literary production change under the influence of political, demographical, and religious transformations? How do developments within the intellectual climate, such as the rise of universities, the new sciences, the enlightenment etc. affect literary production?
- ↻ The end of Latin schooling: What is the impact of the end of Latin as the language of instruction on literary production? What explains sudden and brief revivals of Latin as a literary language in modern times?
- ↻ ...

We accept papers in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. Please send an abstract of ca. 300 words and a five line biography to [relics@ugent.be](mailto:relics@ugent.be) by **1 February 2017**.

**ORGANIZATION:** TIM NOENS, DINAH WOUTERS, MAXIM RIGAUX and THOMAS VELLE are four FWO-funded doctoral researchers at Ghent University. Their research projects focus on Latin topics ranging from the 1st to the 18th century and in various geographical areas from Spain to Scandinavia. Their common interest in the correlation between Latin and other literatures resulted in the foundation of a new research group RELICS (Research of European Literary Identity, Cosmopolitanism and the Schools), of which this conference is the launching event.