

## The East London Classics Summer School 2024

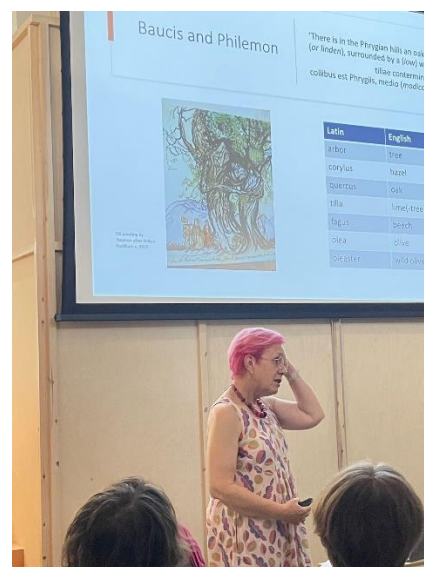
We are absolutely delighted to report that the summer school 2024 (our 4<sup>th</sup> year!) was another great success, and that we were pleased to have received another cohort of dedicated and committed students, of whom we are so proud. This year, we welcomed students from 12 different schools in the London area to an intensive GCSE Latin 5-day revision course in Hackney. We were so pleased to have been able to offer a record number of full and half bursaries this year, courtesy of the Classical Association, the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, and Professor Mary Beard. We offered financial support to over 75% of our students. These students have Pupil Premium or Free School Meals eligibility, and/or are from single parent families, and/or from families experiencing other financial difficulties. What was also very interesting was that 68% of our students are from non-white backgrounds, and over half spoke languages other than English at home with their families.



Over the course of the week, the summer school covered essential grammar from the GCSE specification in four language sessions a day in preparation for the all-important examination in 2025. Sessions were initially teacher-led, which then developed into tasks that encouraged group collaboration, as well as independent study to allow students to really get into the intricacies of the grammar in a GCSE unseen passage.



Of particular note this year was the 'Golden Time' lecture series, which welcomed university academics to our offices in Hackney to speak to the students about an aspect of the Classical world. Our first lecture was delivered by William Lawrence, who spoke about the influence of ancient Greece and Rome in all aspects of our lives, and we were treated to a talk specifically on 'Classical London'. This was the perfect way to start the week. Professor Alison Sharrock (Manchester) delivered a spectacular session on 'eco-criticism' and more specifically, Ovid's beautiful story of Baucis and Philemon, which will be the students' prescribed Verse text next year. Dr Olivia Elder (Oxford) spoke about Messalina, emperor Claudius' third wife, who features in the work of the historian Tacitus, the student's prescribed Prose author. We also invited Laura Thomson-Turnage, who came to us from the London Museum and gave us a sneak preview of the gallery's newest collection on the Romans.



Latin	English
libor	tree
corylus	hazel
quercus	oak
tilia	lime tree
figus	fig
olea	olive
oleaster	wild olive

We were treated on the Thursday afternoon to a lecture by Professor Daniel Orrells at King's College, London! Daniel spoke on the other set verse text, Virgil's *Aeneid* I, which is the story of Rome's legendary founder, Aeneas. This is a story of migration, of families, of people, of hard work and perseverance in the face of adversity. The students were given a taste of university life as we were taken on a tour of the college, which included exclusive terrace views of London in the sunshine, a visit to the college chapel, and a little party at the end to congratulate the students on their hard work throughout the week! The lecture series and the off-site trip are designed to encourage the students to consider Higher Education alongside more advanced classical routes. There are many opportunities out there and ELCSS tries to demonstrate to young people that these options are accessible to all who are keen. We are very grateful to all of our speakers who gave of their precious time, answered a whole array of different questions, inspiring another group of really keen budding Classicists.



A surprise appearance from Professor Mary Beard at the end of the week congratulated our students on their outstanding work ethic and dedication over the five days. She also spoke about the importance of Classics in her life and its relevance to modernity, citing empire, race, gender, and power in her message. The students were on the edge of their seats as they listened to her weighty words, and we all felt incredibly motivated.



At the end of the week, the students, after a pizza lunch and a spot of table tennis, were presented with achievement certificates to recognise the progress they had made as well as a bespoke valedictory report detailing their strengths. Students and parents unanimously agreed that the summer school had been a very positive experience and, most notably, boosted their confidence in the subject. Some of our students also expressed the intention to continue with a Classical subject at A Level and even university, which was fantastic to hear!

*I really just want to thank you so much for all the time and effort put into our lessons and the lectures. I really enjoyed it and it's really helped improve my Latin!* Student

*Thank you to all the sponsors for the bursaries without which I wouldn't be here. It's been difficult but worth it. Definitely rewarding and certainly improved my Latin.* Student

*Thank you so much for the amazing opportunity!* Student

*Thank you for sponsoring my students over the past few years! It's made a big difference. Best wishes and keep up the good work.* Teacher

A heartfelt 'thank you' to all of our sponsors and supporters of our initiative.



We now look forward to welcoming students to our two-day Easter Revision course, which will take place on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025. For further details, please visit our website: [www.eastlondonclassics Summerschool.com](http://www.eastlondonclassics Summerschool.com) and, if you have any questions, or would like to support us in any way, email us at [eastlondoncss@gmail.com](mailto:eastlondoncss@gmail.com).

**Sarah Merali-Smith, Director, The East London Classics Summer School**