

Latin and ancient Greek

‘The living death’

Is there such phenomenon as a death language? Certainly, the quickest way possible to find out is searching the Internet and reading the first sentence that Wikipedia presents as information on the topic. Deeper analysis, however, discovers the importance of Latin and Ancient Greek languages, which founded our societies nowadays.

Article of Andrew Campbell in Memoria press from the summer of 2007 points out the use of Latin and Ancient Greek not only in learning new European languages but also in developing deeper understanding of the world and increasing the “cultural literacy” of oneself. He examines that Latin also benefits students in doing well in standard tests. As ancient languages are more difficult than the spoken ones that derived from them, they develop logical thinking. Not spoken languages such as Latin and Ancient Greek with complex grammar and many declensions are the ‘Beethoven’ of humanities. They create a logical system of learning the nowadays languages and develop both sides of the brain just like playing the piano. Moreover, they are the parents of the major part of the European languages and can be found in each one many centuries after their ‘death’.

Another prove of the importance of studying Latin and Ancient Greek is an article by Emma Treadway published in The Princetonian in 2018 in which she states that these languages should be mandatory in high-schools or colleges since they give the important foundation of many European languages today but also are crucial for understanding the ancient societies on which ours are based. The unfortunate conclusion of today’s life, however, is nothing more than a public shouting ‘panem et circenses’ (‘bread and circuses’) but with the slight progress that Christians aren’t eaten in the Colosseum in 21st century.

Both articles, written more than 10 years apart by people who developed the love for Antiquity and Classical studies show a similar approach towards those two foundation languages.

However, the number of students throughout those years who study this course is decreasing more than ever. Back in Ancient Rome, knowing ancient Greek as well as Latin was the only way of becoming a figure of power, politician or a philosopher since it was the evidence of great nobility and intelligence. But why does that department won't appeal students anymore?

Latest statistics around the UK, provided by HESA show that the most preferred degrees nowadays are IT, Law and Business since they are considered more lucrative. But since the job market is based on the rule of supplying and demanding the incredible increase in law, business and IT students will eventually lead to difficulties in finding jobs for people who graduated those courses. On the contrary, degrees such as languages suffer severe lack of students which would increase the necessity of experts in those spheres in the near future. The adequate handling of such situation is encouraging students by showing the opportunities that a study such as Classics provide as well as giving more support like scholarships. The experience of witnessing the Roman Forum or the Athenian Parthenon or exchange programs with special academia such as Vivarium Novum will increase the interest in the ancient world and the satisfaction of students doing a course as well as becoming experts in a sphere that would certainly be beneficial for our society.