

## Commentary on the Uses of Classics in *Dr. Wortle's School*

Authors for individual entries are identified by their initials in square brackets, along with the year in which the entry was written or revised. Contributor names and source abbreviations are provided at the end of the document.

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### Chapter 1 – Dr. Wortle

#### **Jupiter and his nod**

- “As his wife worshipped him, and regarded him as a Jupiter on earth from whose nod there could be and should be no appeal, but little harm came from this.” With this reference to the king of the Roman gods in the second paragraph of the novel, Trollope can immediately attach to Dr. Wortle associations of power and authority that revolve around Jupiter and thus more quickly establish Dr. Wortle’s character. Both Jupiter and Dr. Wortle are the masters of their domains, and they both can dole out judgment with supreme authority. Yet, just as Jupiter’s supreme authority does not necessarily equal supreme good for humans, neither do Dr. Wortle’s decisions automatically lead to the best outcomes for those around him.

The comparison between Jupiter and Dr. Wortle becomes uncomfortable when Trollope describes how Dr. Wortle’s wife worships him, elevating him to a divine status. Not even Jupiter could effect this level of spousal obedience. Furthermore, by holding his own opinion in such high esteem and allowing others to elevate him to a position of absolute authority, Dr. Wortle is arguably acting hubristically.

However, Trollope softens Dr. Wortle’s potential hubris, claiming with a pardoning conditional statement that “if a tyrant, he was an affectionate tyrant.” Trollope also describes how “little harm came” from Dr. Wortle’s playing god in his household. Yet the idea remains that Dr. Wortle has overstepped his human boundaries and is in some way too high-handed. Through the simile likening Dr. Wortle to Jupiter we are introduced to a flawed man who is accustomed to his power and is accustomed to considering himself right, yet who still manages to be likeable with this foible. [JE 2014] - Within the simile depicting Dr. Wortle as an earthly Jupiter, Trollope mentions the force of Dr. Wortle’s nod. Given that Trollope is making a reference to Roman mythology, his

use of the English *nod* may call to some readers' minds the various meanings of the Latin noun *numen*: “a nod of the head,” “divine power,” and “divinity.” [RR 2014]

### **Latin and Greek**

- During Trollope's introduction of Dr. Wortle we learn that Dr. Wortle had previously had a minor confrontation with a bishop who had been concerned that Dr. Wortle was favoring his work as an educator over his duty as a clergyman. While Latin and Greek are sometimes closely tied to the church, in this instance Classics is presented in some opposition to the church. [BL 2013]

### **translation**

- When the bishop who questioned Dr. Wortle's divided attention is moved to a different diocese, Trollope calls the move a translation and relies on the literal meaning of the word's Latin components: *trans-*, “across,” and *lat-*, “having been carried.” Trollope's recourse to Latinate etymology is perhaps especially fitting here since Trollope has been discussing Dr. Wortle's school in which Latin is a core subject. [RR 2014]

### **senior or Classical assistant-master**

- Dr. Wortle sets aside a special residence specifically for a senior or Classical assistant-master. The fact that the position of Classical assistant-master is equated with a senior assistant-master shows how highly Classics is regarded. [BL 2013]

## Chapter 2 – The New Usher

### **Mr. Peacocke's Classical career**

- While Dr. Wortle is searching for a new teacher with a wife who could undertake domestic duties for the school, Mr. Peacocke—an Oxford-educated Classicist who became the vice-president of a Classical college in Missouri—is looking for employment. In the 19th century, for a Classical scholar to move from Oxford, with its legacy of Classical scholarship, to a college in America with no comparable history at all, would have been considered a downgrade in terms of both quality and reputation. For Mr. Peacocke to have made the move willingly could be viewed as a rather foolhardy choice. Trollope describes Dr. Wortle himself as “a thorough-going Tory of the old school” who “considered himself bound to hate the name of a republic” and who “loved Oxford with all his heart.” Yet, while he “had been heard to say some hard things” about Mr. Peacocke's move to America, Dr. Wortle is prepared to forgive the man when he returns to the English fold and meets Dr. Wortle's requirements. [JE 2014]

### **hate the name of a republic**

- Trollope explains Dr. Wortle's dislike for America by mentioning that as "a thorough-going Tory of the old school" Dr. Wortle "considered himself bound to hate the name of a republic." Trollope's turn of phrase here recalls expressions of the Romans' dislike of monarchy once they had founded a republic. In Cicero's *De Re Publica* we read that "once Tarquin was expelled, the Roman populace had such great hatred for the name of king." Trollope's twist here on the Classical formulation is clever, as it employs a Classical prototype but inverts its political orientation: the conservative Dr. Wortle supports monarchy and is skeptical of a republic. [RR 2014]

- source: Cicero, *De Re Publica* 2.52

### **Mr. Peacocke's Classical library**

- Mr. Peacocke's small but comprehensive library shows that his Classical interests are focused on scholarship. The collection's lack of grandiosity indicates that Mr. Peacocke is not attempting to use his work with Classics to appear more cultured. Trollope may be suggesting that Mr. Peacocke's attitude toward scholarship is purer than that of Dr. Wortle, who is very concerned with his own public image. [BL 2013]

### **Lady Altamont**

- Lady Altamont makes a brief appearance at Dr. Wortle's school when her son, a pupil at the school, falls ill. Her name underscores her lofty position in society, since *alt-* in Latin means "high" and *mont-* means "mountain." Her appearance in the novel provides an opportunity for readers to see the self-possession of Mrs. Peacocke in action: when the high-placed Lady Altamont tries to give Mrs. Peacocke money for nursing Lady Altamont's son, Mrs. Peacocke refuses it in such a way that Lady Altamont "blushed, and stammered, and begged a hundred pardons." Mrs. Peacocke may not have the social status of the marchioness, but her personal bearing is considerable. [RR 2014]

### **decent people**

- Dr. Wortle is exasperated that the Peacockes will not dine at the Wortles' house "like any other decent people." Mr. Peacocke explains that they are "not like any other decent people." Perhaps *decent* here is carrying some of the force of its Latin forebear *decens*, *decentis*, "fitting, proper." The Peacockes do not socialize with other people because their marital situation does not conform to social expectations of what is fitting or proper. [RR 2014]

## Neptune

- Although the Wortles' choice to name their dog Neptune after the Roman god of the sea may seem a somewhat arbitrary use of Classics, Trollope has Neptune live up to the aquatic associations of his name when the dog pushes a young student into a stream. [RR 2014]

- When Mr. Peacocke rescues the boy, he shows a human capability above a god, even if it is just a dog named after a god. This incident, along with the influence Mr. Peacocke has over the Jupiter-like Dr. Wortle and the esteem Dr. Wortle has for him, casts the quiet Classical scholar in the unlikely role of semi-Classical hero, though he is still only a hero in a humorous world where Dr. Wortle and Neptune the dog are gods. [JE 2014]

## Chapter 3 – The Mystery

### emergence

- When discussing Mr. Peacocke's rescue of the student from the stream, Dr. Wortle tells Mr. Peacocke that he feels lucky to have had a man such as Mr. Peacocke "ready at such an emergence." *Emergence* here works like *emergency*, but perhaps we should also sense some of its literal etymological meaning at play: its Latin components *e-*, "out from," and *merg-*, "plunge," bespeak a coming out of water, and Mr. Peacocke's response to the emergency was to bring the student out of the stream. [RR 2014]

### solve

- Ferdinand Lefroy's actions "solve all bonds of affection" between himself and his wife. Trollope uses *solve* here to signify something equivalent to the Latin verb *solvere* from which it is derived: "to loosen, break up." [RR 2014]

## Chapter 4 – The Doctor Asks His Question

### facile princeps

- The phrase *facile princeps* is used to set Mr. Peacocke apart from the other teachers and is Latin for "easily foremost." This specific phrase can be found five times in Cicero's work and hardly at all in the texts of other Latin authors; the praise it conveys carries weight by virtue of both its meaning and Cicero's own status within the Classical canon. Cicero had a significant place in the Classical curriculum of the 19th century, and so it is particularly apt to use a Ciceronian phrase to describe Mr. Peacocke, the Classics master and the best of the teachers at the school. [JE & RR 2014]

- sources: Cicero, *Post Reditum in Senatu* 5, *De Oratore* 3.60, *De Divinatione* 2.87, *Timaeus* 2, *Epistulae ad Familiares* 6.10a

## Chapter 5 – “Then We Must Go”

### **Jupiter**

- Whereas the reference in Chapter 1 to Dr. Wortle as Jupiter was made by Trollope as narrator, in this instance Mrs. Peacocke introduces the Classical reference. Whether or not a character is able to deploy Classics appropriately is a testament to their ability to judge the situation or characters around them and draw an apt comparison. In repeating and reinforcing a use of Classics employed earlier by the author Mrs. Peacocke is shown to have an insight into Dr. Wortle’s character similar to the author’s own. This conversation between husband and wife also shows that they are equals, able to banter as peers using the Classical reference. Mrs. Peacocke is even able to transfer the joke from Jupiter-the-god to Jupiter-the-planet, demonstrating her quick wit. [JE & RR 2014]

### **fate**

- Mr. Peacocke describes the Peacocke’s relationship and living arrangement “as fixed by fate.” Mr. Peacocke appeals to a Classical and abstract idea of a higher power affecting human life; he does not invoke a Christian God in this context, since his living situation with Mrs. Peacocke violates Christian convention. [RR 2014]

## Chapter 6 – Lord Carstairs

### **Lord Carstairs’ education**

- Lord Carstairs’ private tutorials in Latin and Greek resemble a Roman or Athenian education in which a young man might be privately educated by a tutor. This form of education could build a lasting sense of fellowship between the tutor and pupil, and we see the development of a friendship between Mr. Peacocke and Lord Carstairs. Mr. Peacocke’s influence over Lord Carstairs may also be evident in Lord Carstairs’ adoption of Mr. Peacocke’s unusual level of individualism in romantic pursuits. [BL 2013]

### **Classics in America**

- When Mr. Peacocke discusses with Lord Carstairs his time in America, he mentions the differences between Classics in America and Classics in England. This distinction becomes one way of describing or assessing cultural differences between the two countries. [BL & RR 2014]

### **Dabit Deus his quoque finem**

- In a conversation with the young Lord Carstairs Mr. Peacocke quotes this Latin phrase that means “God will give even to these things an end.” The quotation comes from book 1 of Vergil’s *Aeneid*, as Aeneas comforts his sailors during a storm. When Mr. Peacocke uses the phrase, he aligns himself with Aeneas, the hero who flees the burning of his city, Troy, and who suffers hardships with his people during their travels. Much like Aeneas, Mr. Peacocke has already endured much in his past and must continue to endure. Yet this phrase also foreshadows an end of suffering, for both Aeneas and Mr. Peacocke.

Trollope makes the choice to capitalize *Deus*. This seemingly minor change opens a new set of connotations. The capitalized *Deus* becomes a monolithic entity separate from the plurality of the Roman pantheon and can be associated instead with the single God of Christianity. For Trollope’s audience, the capitalization could add a degree of solemn spirituality to the quotation that the more intellectual Classical reference alone might not supply. Trollope and Mr. Peacocke are finding a way to synthesize Classics and Christianity.

In discussing a personal situation with his pupil Mr. Peacocke enlists Classics as a touchstone which they have in common. This demonstrates both the use of Classics as a hermeneutic lens for understanding one’s present situation and the recognition of Classics as a “common language” shared by gentlemen. [JE & RR 2014]

- source: Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.199

### **Classical matutinal performances**

- Trollope tells us: “Mr. Peacocke, of course, attended the morning school. Indeed, as the matutinal performances were altogether classical, it was impossible that much should be done without him.” When Trollope switches to the adjective *matutinal* in the second sentence rather than reuse *morning*, the variation linguistically underscores the Classical focus of the morning lessons, since *matutinal* is derived from the Latin adjective *matutinus*, “morning.” [RR 2014]

## Chapter 7 – Robert Lefroy

(No uses of Classics identified.)

## Chapter 8 – The Story Is Told

### **Mr. Peacocke’s Greek verbs and a passage from Caesar**

- Mr. Peacocke has concerns weighing on his distracted mind, but he is still able to teach his students their Classical material effectively. Yet, as he ironically says to Clifford junior in a kind of vicarious reprimand, “Caesar wants all your mind.” [JE 2014]
- Julius Caesar’s commentaries on his military activities were standard Latin texts in 19th century education. [RR 2020]

### **nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa**

- As he did in Chapter 6, Mr. Peacocke again quotes a Classical text when discussing his personal situation with Lord Carstairs. This time Mr. Peacocke’s source is Horace, and the quotation can be translated “to be conscious of no guilt, to turn pale at no blame.” Mr. Peacocke uses Horace to express his ethical standard of being right with himself. Trollope quotes the same bit of Horace in Chapter 43 of *The Claverings* and Chapter 62 of *The Last Chronicle of Barset*. [RR 2014]
- source: Horace, *Epistle* 1.1.61

## Chapter 9 – Mrs. Wortle and Mr. Puddicombe

### **Horace echoed**

- When the Peacocks discuss their situation, Mrs. Peacocke asserts that she is not ashamed of herself. Mr. Peacocke assures her that he is ashamed of neither her nor himself. Their conversation echoes the sentiment which Mr. Peacocke used Horace to express in Chapter 8. Mr. Peacocke’s use of Horace in conversation with Lord Carstairs consolidates the gentlemanly bond between them; when talking with his wife, Mr. Peacocke does not have recourse to Latin. Mr. Peacocke complicates Horace’s sentiment somewhat here. Although the Peacocks can take some comfort from their clear consciences, Mr. Peacocke reminds Mrs. Peacocke that the mores of their social context also matter, and their living situation runs counter to those norms. [RR 2014]

### **phoenix**

- There are many variant accounts of the phoenix in Greek mythology, but they hold in common that the phoenix is a long-lived bird, bursts into flames on its death, is reborn from its ashes, and is associated with the sun. By calling Mr. Peacocke “the very phoenix of school assistants,” Trollope is connecting Mr. Peacocke to a rare mythical beast and to the sun itself; Mr. Peacocke is a shining paragon in his field whose equal it would be

difficult to find. Trollope could also be foreshadowing Mr. Peacocke's own rebirth after his annihilation, that annihilation being the revelation of his uncertain marital status and the destruction of his reputation. [JE 2014]

- Phoenix is also the name of Achilles' tutor, so perhaps Trollope is making a double Classical allusion here: As "the very phoenix of school assistants," Mr. Peacocke is both a rare bird and the equal of a famous mythological teacher. [RR 2014]

### **phalanx**

- Dr. Wortle thinks of himself as if he were in a battle against the bishop's phalanx. The phalanx was a primary military formation used in Classical Greece. It was an interlocking block of hoplites, citizen-soldiers armed with spears and shields. Each hoplite was protected by half of his own shield and half of his neighbor's shield. As a result, the phalanx relied heavily on group coordination. Dr. Wortle's solitary stand against the phalanx may reflect the clash between individualism and collectivism that is present throughout the book. Another important aspect of the phalanx is its rigidity. The phalanx excelled at charging straight forward. However, its interlocking structure made it difficult to change directions fluidly. In this way, the likeness between the church and the phalanx may also show the church's difficulty in adapting to the complexity of Mr. and Mrs. Peacocke's situation. [BL 2013]

### **Fortune and sin**

- When the Wortles are discussing Mrs. Peacocke, Dr. Wortle asks his wife, "Ought we not to be kind to one whom Fortune has been so unkind?" Mrs. Wortle responds, "If we can do so without sin." While Dr. Wortle's description of Mrs. Peacocke employs the Classical personification of Fortune, Mrs. Wortle's response takes its key from Christianity. The tension between these perspectives epitomizes the conflict of views about the Peacockes' situation. [RR 2014]

## Chapter 10 – Mr. Peacocke Goes

(No uses of Classics identified.)

## Chapter 11 – The Bishop

### **quasi and arch**

- Lady Margaret is the aunt of Augustus Momson, a student at Dr. Wortle's school; she is also the first cousin of Mrs. Stantiloup, Dr. Wortle's antagonist. Trollope reports that "There had been a question indeed about whether young Momson should be received at

the school—because of the *quasi* connection with the arch-enemy.” With *quasi* (Latin “as if,” “as it were”) and *arch-* (Greek “first,” “foremost”), Trollope gives a Classical inflection to the causal clause explaining the hesitation about admitting Augustus to the Classical school. [RR 2014]

### **Augustus Momson**

- Augustus Momson, the worst behaved and dullest boy in Bowick, is named after the first emperor of Rome. After the emperor’s death, Augustus (meaning “venerable,” “magnificent”) was passed on to later emperors as a title. There is humor in the fact that the Latin honorific of one of the most celebrated emperors is given to such an unworthy recipient. The use of the name here shows some arrogance in the family that has spoiled the boy. [BL 2013; rev. RR 2014]

- There may be further humor in that Augustus Momson’s last name recalls Theodor Mommsen, a noted Roman historian who lived and wrote in the 19th century. It is ironic that the name of such an unpromising student is given a name with a doubly Classical resonance. [RR 2014]

## Chapter 12 – The Stantiloup Correspondence

### **Latin and Greek vs. the soul**

- When Mrs. Stantiloup supposes that Mrs. Momson’s son will be withdrawn from Dr. Wortle’s School, Mrs. Momson responds negatively, excusing herself by citing her husband’s esteem of Dr. Wortle and their concern that Augustus do well at Eton. In reply, Lady Margaret insists, “What is Latin and Greek as compared to his soul?” Latin and Greek were the basis for a gentleman’s education in Trollope’s time, but—as Lady Margaret points out—intellectual pursuits do not necessarily align with spiritual ones. Though Classical material had been somewhat harmonized with Christian doctrine in Trollope’s time, there were still fundamental differences. While Lady Margaret is emphasizing the moral importance of the soul above education, Trollope might be noting a general tension between a Classical education and Christian religion. [JE 2014]

### **morals of a Latin grammar teacher**

- Mr. Momson does not care about the morals of his son’s Latin teacher. His view seems to be that since Mr. Peacocke is not in charge of his son’s moral education, Mr. Peacocke’s morals do not matter. In Victorian England studying Classics was an important part of a privileged education. Mr. Momson’s sentiment suggests that, in wanting to keep Augustus at Dr. Wortle’s school, Mr. Momson is concerned about his

son's cultural education and advancement. Mr. Peacocke's instruction is seen as a serviceable means to an end, akin to a hired woman's maintenance of Augustus' clothes. [BL 2013 & RR 2014]

### **potential**

- Mrs. Stantiloup, doubting her own influence, hopes to carry out her schemes against Dr. Wortle through Lady Grogam, "who was supposed to be potential over those connected with her." The current understanding of English *potential* is related to possibility. *Potential* is related to Latin *potens*, which can mean "capable" or "powerful." Trollope here uses *potential* with these other meanings in mind. The OED shows this usage of the word as early as c. 1500 and as late as 1935, but it has since become rare. [JE 2014]

### **as many sons as Priam**

- John Talbot sends Dr. Wortle a reaffirming, positive letter, assuring him of his support while other parents withdraw their children from the school or question Dr. Wortle's choices. In the letter, Talbot gives a ringing endorsement—that if he had "as many sons as Priam" he would "send them all" to Dr. Wortle. Priam is the king of Troy during its fall and father of numerous sons, including the famous Hector and infamous Paris. While Priam's story is ultimately tragic, Talbot's position is not, and Talbot seems to be employing the reference for comic juxtaposition instead, particularly when he mentions immediately following that "the cheques would be very long in coming." The reference to Priam also alludes to the Classical education and the gentlemanly friendship that Talbot and Dr. Wortle share. The exchange of the Classical reference becomes equivalent to a handshake between peers. The two refer to Mrs. Stantiloup as Mother Shipton (a British prognosticator), and the comparison of Mrs. Stantiloup to a homegrown British figure further excludes Mrs. Stantiloup from the gentlemen's Classical circle. [JE & RR 2014]

### **Classics in America**

- In a letter to John Talbot, Dr. Wortle states that Mr. Peacocke's decision to teach Classics in America was rash. The point here may be that Americans would not properly appreciate Mr. Peacocke's scholarship. Since Classics was considered an important part of a cultural education, Dr. Wortle may also be assuming that America is culturally deficient. [BL 2013]

**Fortune**

- In his letter to John Talbot, Dr. Wortle mentions that “Fortune had been most unkind” to Mr. Peacocke. Dr. Wortle had earlier invoked personified Fortune when discussing Mr. Peacocke’s situation (see the commentary for Chapter 9). While that earlier reference to Fortune was contrasted with Mrs. Wortle’s Christian concern about sin, here Dr. Wortle’s Classical reference may not meet similar resistance, given the Classical background which Dr. Wortle and Talbot share. [RR 2014]

Chapter 13 – Mr. Puddicombe’s Boot

(No uses of Classics identified.)

Chapter 14 – “Everybody’s Business”***tuptō* in the morning and *amo* in the evening**

- When a writer for the newspaper *Everybody’s Business* learns of the Peacocks’ story and Dr. Wortle’s defense of the couple, he submits a humorous article that sets off a chain of reactions among the characters in *Dr. Wortle’s School*. In mocking Dr. Wortle, the author of the article uses the Greek *tuptō* (“I strike”) and the Latin *amo* (“I love”) to suggest the conjugation of verbs, a typical schoolboy exercise. The article associates Greek (the more difficult of the two languages) with daily work in the school, and the choice of Greek verb reminds readers of the possibility of physical discipline meted out to students by teachers. By contrast, the Latin verb is used to suggest romantic improprieties undertaken by Dr. Wortle with Mrs. Peacocke during Mr. Peacocke’s absence. By using Classics in his article, the contributor to *Everybody’s Business* is perhaps elevating himself while also mocking the values of the higher classes. In discussing the use of these verbs, Mick Imlah further notes a possible play between verb conjugation and sexual conjugation or union. [JE & RR 2014]

- source: Trollope, *Dr. Wortle’s School*. Ed. Mick Imlah. London: Penguin, 1999, 220.

**vulgar and instant**

- In his letter to the bishop, Dr. Wortle calls the newspaper article a “scurrilous and vulgar attack.” *Vulgar* seems to have a double resonance here, signifying both “crass” and “common.” English *vulgar* is related to Latin *vulgus*, “the crowd,” “the common people,” and its deployment here resonates with the name of the newspaper which printed the offending article, *Everybody’s Business*. Later in the letter, Dr. Wortle refers to the bishop’s letter “of the 12th instant.” Such a use of *instant* to refer to the current month is

derived from the Latin adjectival stem *instant-*, “present.” Trollope has Dr. Wortle choose words which attest his Classical credentials. [RR 2014]

### Chapter 15 – “*Amo* in the Cool of the Evening”

#### ***amo* in the cool of the evening**

- Dr. Wortle is not concerned with the reference to *tuptō* in the article but rather with the mention of *amo*. While Latin *amo* can have the lighter meaning of “I am fond of,” or “I like,” Dr. Wortle’s lawyers concur that in this case *amo* seems meant to refer to making love. This is also how readers of the article would interpret the implications of the Latin in context. The Latin *amo* would be far more recognizable than the Greek *tuptō*, and there may have been additional associations of *amo* with the French noun *amour*. The OED demonstrates that the use of *amour* in English to mean “affection” or “friendship” was obsolete by the 19th century; instead, the preferred meaning at this time was “love affair,” particularly an illicit one. [JE 2014]

#### **shirt of Nessus**

- When Dr. Wortle reads the article from *Everybody’s Business* sent to him from the bishop’s palace, the article’s mockery is compared to the shirt of Nessus. In Classical myth, Nessus is a centaur who tries to steal Heracles’ wife Deianira. When Heracles shoots Nessus with a poisoned arrow, Nessus gives his bloodstained clothing to Deianira and tells her that it will keep her husband faithful to her. Many years later, upon learning that her husband has taken Iole as a concubine, Deianira sends Heracles the garment; however, instead of securing Heracles’ fidelity, it causes him to experience such unbearable pain that he begs for death. Just as Deianira does not expect to harm Heracles, the bishop does not anticipate that his attempt to save Dr. Wortle from disgrace would cause him such offense. [BL 2013; rev. RR 2014]

- source: Sophocles, *Trachiniae*

#### **remitting Classical lessons**

- While Mr. Peacocke is in America, Dr. Wortle has to step in to continue the Classical lessons at the school. However, when Dr. Wortle needs to speak with his lawyer, the lessons have to be cancelled. The Peacockes’ scandal thus disrupts the Classical education of the students. [BL 2013]

**ultimo**

- When Dr. Wortle's lawyer shows him the apology which the newspaper *Everybody's Business* has offered to print, the apology includes the date demarcation "of the — ultimo." Latin *ultimo* here modifies an implied *mense* to mean "of the last month." The word lends formality to the apology while also elevating the writer (and the newspaper being written for) through the use of Latin. [JE & RR 2014]

Chapter 16 – "It Is Impossible"

(No uses of Classics identified.)

Chapter 17 – Correspondence with the Palace**vulgar**

- See the commentary for Chapter 14.

**in terrorem**

- When Dr. Wortle writes a response to the bishop's letter, he questions the bishop's purpose in holding "the metropolitan press *in terrorem* over [his] head." A literal translation of the Latin phrase could be "with a view to terror or alarm," and it can describe a warning meant to pressure someone to act in a certain way. Dr. Wortle seems to use it here for its formal and cold connotations. Its distancing effect contrasts with the social bonding through Classics seen in the correspondence between John Talbot and Dr. Wortle (see the commentary for Chapter 12). [JE & RR 2014]

**amo (again)**

- The phrase "*amo* in the cool of the evening" comes to epitomize the newspaper article and its attack on Dr. Wortle. Perhaps, in addition to its innuendo, Dr. Wortle may be vexed by the way in which the article has employed Classics to undermine Dr. Wortle's position of authority: a marker of Dr. Wortle's status is now used against him. [JE & RR 2014]

Chapter 18 – The Journey**dead as Julius Caesar**

- Robert Lefroy tells Mr. Peacocke that Ferdinand Lefroy is as "dead as Julius Caesar." Here, Robert Lefroy unsuccessfully attempts to bond with Mr. Peacocke through a

Classical reference. The humor of Robert Lefroy's joke is in its exaggeration: one does not become much more dead than after multiple stab wounds and 1900 years. [BL 2013]

### **DT**

- Mr. Peacocke learns that Ferdinand Lefroy died of DT, *delirium tremens*. This Latin medical term translates to “shaking madness” and refers to the severe symptoms that can occur as a result of excessive alcohol consumption and/or withdrawal from such consumption. [BL 2013 & RR 2014]

### **prosecute his journey**

- *Prosecute* is used here to signify “go forward with,” and this usage accords with the meaning of the Latin verb from which the English verb is derived: *prosequi*, “proceed,” “continue with.” The relationship between English *prosecute* and Latin *prosequi* is especially apparent in the Latin verb's perfect participle *prosecutus*. [RR 2014]

## Chapter 19 – “Nobody Has Condemned You Here”

### **Mr. Peacocke as a hero**

- Mrs. Peacocke admits that different circumstances could have made her first husband a better man, but she also asserts that Ferdinand Lefroy could never have been a hero like Mr. Peacocke. Through his faithfulness and determination, the quiet Classical scholar has become a quasi-Classical mythological figure in Mrs. Peacocke's estimation. [RR 2014]

### **Mrs. Peacocke's conscience**

- Mrs. Peacocke explains to Mrs. Wortle that “to the best of [her] conscience” Mr. Peacocke is her husband and that she is not ashamed of herself. Mrs. Peacocke's words recall both her conversation with her husband in Chapter 9 and Mr. Peacocke's quotation of Horace in Chapter 8. Though Horace is not quoted directly here, Mrs. Peacocke again echoes the Horatian sentiment. [RR 2014]

## Chapter 20 – Lord Bracy's Letter

(No uses of Classics identified.)

## Chapter 21 – At Chicago

### **perfected**

- After Mr. Peacocke has obtained proof of Ferdinand Lefroy's death, he has "perfected his object" and leaves San Francisco. In current usage as a verb, *perfect* means to make something without faults; the older usage exemplified here hearkens to the Latin verb *perficere* ("to complete," with perfect participle *perfectus*) and has generally fallen out of popularity. [JE 2014]

## Chapter 22 – The Doctor's Answer

(No uses of Classics identified.)

## Chapter 23 – Mr. Peacocke's Return

### **Aristotle and Socrates**

- While earlier Lady Margaret had valued the soul above a Classical education (see the commentary for Chapter 12), Mrs. Wortle is now concerned about the competing claims of a Classical education and affairs of the heart. When Mrs. Wortle expresses a worry that seeking a degree will distract young Carstairs from romantic purposes, Trollope has her specifically reference Aristotle and Socrates, who might "put love out of his heart." Aristotle and Socrates seem to represent Classical education in general, but the choice of Classical figures may not be arbitrary. In Plato's *Symposium* Socrates advocates for wisdom above romantic love. And while Aristotle praises *philia*, love among friends, Mrs. Wortle worries about the possible detrimental influence of Carstairs' peers. For Mrs. Wortle, whose primary concern is her daughter, Socrates and Aristotle are enemies, since she fears philosophy and male camaraderie might lure Carstairs away from his engagement. [JE & RR 2014]

### **Greek and Latin**

- It is suggested that Lord Carstairs will be too preoccupied with his Latin and Greek to think about Mary while he is at Oxford. In this way, he would be valuing his cultural education over his romantic pursuits. This is society's expectation of what he should do. However, by confessing his love to Mary, he has already shown defiance of these expectations. [BL 2013]

### **triumphed in his own mind**

- Dr. Wortle has composed a letter defending himself, and he plans to send copies of it to the bishop and some other concerned parties. Although he is proud of the letter, Mr.

Puddicombe is less enthusiastic. While Dr. Wortle “triumphed in his own mind” at his anticipated victory through words, he is deflated as he rides home from his meeting with Mr. Puddicombe, and he finally decides to burn the letters. Dr. Wortle’s imagined Roman victory celebration is juxtaposed with a quiet return home and a less adversarial attitude: actuality subverts the imagery of a Roman triumphal procession. [RR 2014]

#### Chapter 24 – Mary’s Success

##### **the degree should be given up**

- Trollope suggests that Lord Carstairs may eventually give up the pursuit of his degree at Oxford in order to marry Mary. If Lord Carstairs does do so, he would be valuing his romantic commitment over scholarship. In a way, this would reflect the choice of Mr. Peacocke, who decided to leave St. Louis with Mrs. Peacocke instead of ending their relationship and keeping his job there. [BL 2013]

##### **Source abbreviations**

OED : *Oxford English Dictionary*

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