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**PERSONAL STATEMENT – COURSE IB #3**

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## Personal Statement ~ Course IB

I am fascinated by the ancient world and its relationship with our own. I find it incredibly interesting that we are able to study literature from thousands of years ago and gain a glimpse into the complex, varied society which, despite striking differences, influences our own in radical ways. The study of Classics is therefore at once familiar and continually surprising. I have always enjoyed studying Latin at school, but I was particularly inspired by the representation of Republican Rome in Robert Harris' Cicero trilogy to further explore the ancient world academically. From there my passion for the subject has only grown.

A natural extension to my interest in this era of Rome was to study Latin texts from the period in greater depth. For example, I was drawn to Cicero's contemporary Catullus and I was struck by the immediacy of his work, as a portrayal of the ancient world which feels in many ways both familiar and modern. I also became interested in the evolving reception of Catullus' work and the tension between my initial perception of the work as a more personal, innovative text and the traditions in which it is rooted, including its debt to Sappho.

My essay for the Sheffield History Essay Prize, "How 'Roman' was the Roman Empire?", allowed me to examine it means to be 'Roman' by drawing on a broad range of Roman history. This raised questions about the nature of the state and identity, and the formation of the two in the ancient world. It also led me to think about how these two concepts link to issues relevant in today's society, such as what it means to have a national identity. I developed my research and analytical skills as well as advancing my overall knowledge of Roman history and its intersections with literature.

I have an interest in classical reception which allows me to combine my passion for history, literature and linguistics in one subject, specifically translations of ancient literature. This partly stems from reading the translator's note to Emily Wilson's *Odyssey* which led me to consider how English translations can emphasise or downplay aspects of the text. I received the joint second prize in the Mary Renault Prize for my essay entitled "How far do translations shape our understanding of ancient literature?". In this essay, I further explored the context of translations in classical scholarship, how they can present different readings of texts and the surprising extent to which translations affect our understanding of ancient literature. I was inspired by my reading around this topic to view the ways in which I interpret texts and communicate in the world from new angles. I feel that the lens of translation can offer insights across the whole field of classical study, including the learning of languages which forms an integral part of any Classics degree.

I take part in a range of extra-curricular activities through which I have developed the self-



motivation, organisation and creativity that I also bring to my academic studies. In particular, I am involved in music, drama, and community participation. I play the clarinet to above Grade 8 standard in a variety of school groups, am a member of the school technical & creative team for theatre production and am a longstanding member of Girlguiding with whom I have volunteered abroad on international expeditions.

As a student with diverse skills and interests, I am greatly attracted to the opportunity to study a variety of different disciplines within Classics. In my independent studies I enjoy applying different methods of analysis, such as bringing together archaeological and textual evidence. I find combining language with literature in Latin A-Level deeply rewarding, and I look forward to the challenge of developing skills across the classical disciplines in order to gain a deeper understanding of the ancient world.

