

UNDERGRADUATE BOWDOIN PRIZES 2023–2024

TRANSLATIONS IN GREEK AND LATIN

TWO UNDERGRADUATE PRIZES

(A) A \$3,500 prize is offered for translation into Classical Greek.

(B) A \$3,500 prize is offered for translation into Classical Latin.

(A) A prize is offered for the best translation into **Classical Greek** of a passage from Jill Lepore, *These Truths: A History of the United States*.

(B) A prize is offered for the best translation into **Classical Latin** of a passage from a speech by Sojourner Truth, delivered at an 1853 meeting of the Women's Rights Convention (published in *Proceedings of the Woman's Rights Convention held at the Broadway Tabernacle, in the city of New York, on Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 6th and 7th*).

Further details on this and other prizes may be obtained from the website of the Prize Office (<http://prizes.fas.harvard.edu>) or by email (prizes@harvard.edu).

RULES

All submissions must be made under a **pseudonym** and must conform to the directions on the submission website (<https://tinyurl.com/classicsprizes2024>). Only the pseudonym should appear on the translation; the submitter's real name should not. See submission form for details.

DEADLINE

Last day of spring classes: **Wednesday, April 24, 2024, 5 p.m.**
This deadline applies to all students graduating May 2024 or later.

QUESTIONS?

<https://classics.fas.harvard.edu/prizes-undergraduate>
classics@fas.harvard.edu

BOWDOIN PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION INTO
CLASSICAL GREEK

Jill Lepore, *These Truths: A History of the United States* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2018), pp. xiv-xv:

The American Experiment rests on three political ideas—“these truths,” Thomas Jefferson called them—political equality, natural rights, and the sovereignty of the people. “We hold these truths to be sacred & undeniable,” Jefferson wrote in 1776, in a draft of the Declaration of Independence:

that all men are created equal & independent, that from that equal creation they derive rights inherent & inalienable, among which are the preservation of life, & liberty, & the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these ends, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

The roots of these ideas are as ancient as Aristotle and as old as Genesis and their branches spread as wide as the limbs of an oak. But they are this nation’s founding principles: it was by declaring them that the nation came to be. In the centuries since, these principles have been cherished, decried, and contested, fought for, fought over, and fought against. After Benjamin Franklin read Jefferson’s draft, he picked up his quill, scratched out the words “sacred & undeniable,” and suggested that “these truths” were, instead, “self-evident.” This was more than a quibble. Truths that are sacred and undeniable are God-given and divine, the stuff of religion. Truths that are self-evident are laws of nature, empirical and observable, the stuff of science. This divide has nearly rent the Republic apart.

Still, this divide is nearly always overstated and it’s easy to exaggerate the difference between Jefferson and Franklin, which, in those lines, came down, too, to style: Franklin’s revision is more forceful. The real dispute isn’t between Jefferson and Franklin, each attempting, in his way, to reconcile faith and reason, as many have tried both before and since. The real dispute is between “these truths” and the course of events: Does American history prove these truths, or does it belie them?

[...]

It has often been said, in the twenty-first century and in earlier centuries, too, that Americans lack a shared past and that, built on a cracked foundation, the Republic is crumbling. Part of this argument has to do with ancestry: Americans are descended from conquerors and from the conquered, from people held as slaves and from the people who held them, from the Union and from the Confederacy, from Protestants and from Jews, from Muslims and from Catholics, and from immigrants and from people who have fought to end immigration. Sometimes, in American history—in nearly all national histories—one person’s villain is another’s hero. But part of this argument has to do with ideology: the United States is founded on a set of ideas, but Americans have become so divided that they no longer agree, if they ever did, about what those ideas are, or were.

BOWDOIN PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION INTO
CLASSICAL LATIN

Sojourner Truth, from a speech given at an 1853 meeting of the Woman's Rights Convention (published in *Proceedings of the Woman's Rights Convention held at the Broadway Tabernacle, in the city of New York, on Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 6th and 7th*. New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1853, pp. 76–77):

I was a-thinkin', when I saw women contending for their rights, I was a-thinkin' what a difference there is now, and what there was in old times. I have only a few minutes to speak; but in the old times, the kings of the earth would hear a woman. There was a king in old times, in the Scriptures; and then it was like the kings of the earth would kill a woman if she came into their presence: but Queen Esther came forth, for she was oppressed, and felt there was a great wrong, and she said I will die or I will bring my complaint before the king. Should the king of the United States be greater, or more crueller, or more harder? But the king, he raised up his sceptre and said, 'Thy request shall be granted unto thee—to the half of my kingdom will I grant it to thee!' Then he said he would hang Haman on the gallows he had made up high. But that is not what women came forward to contend. The women want their rights, as Esther. She only wanted to explain her rights. And he was so liberal that he said, 'the half of my kingdom shall be granted to thee,' and he did not wait for her to ask, he was so liberal with her.

Now women do not ask half of a kingdom, but their rights, and they don't get them. When she comes to demand them, don't you hear how sons hiss their mothers, like snakes, because they ask for their rights; and can they ask for any thing less? The king ordered Haman to be hung on the gallows which he prepared to hang others; but I do not want any man to be killed, but I am sorry to see them so short minded. But we'll have our rights; see if we don't: and you can't stop us from them; see if you can. You may hiss as much as you like, but it is comin'. Women don't get half a much rights as they ought to; we want more, and we will have it. Jesus says, 'What I say to one, I say to all—watch!' I'm a-watchin'. God says, 'honor your father and your mother.' Sons and daughters ought to behave themselves before their mothers, but they do not. I can see them a-laughin', and pointin' at their mothers up here on the stage. They hiss when an aged woman comes forth. If they'd been brought up proper they'd have known better than hissing like snakes and geese. I'm 'round watchin' these things, and I wanted to come up and say these few things to you, and I'm glad of the hearin' you gave me. I wanted to tell you a mite about Woman's Rights, and so I came out and said so. I am sittin' among you to watch; and every once and awhile I will come out and tell you what time of night it is.

Note: For further context, you may read the [entirety of the speech](#) on the Library of Congress website.