ClassConn Grant Report

By Amy S. White

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Thanks in part to the Classical Association of Connecticut’s John Carter Williams Endowment Grant, I spent two glorious weeks this summer in Florence, Italy participating in The Forte Academy’s course “Women Latinists in Florence.” Like many of ClassConn’s members, while I have studied and taught Latin since I was a sophomore in high school (and would rather not mention how many years that has been), I had never been exposed to Latin written by women until this unique course. The course not only focused on reading the words of over two dozen women Latinists writing across history (from the 200s BC through 1982!), but also on examining their work within the literary spaces in which they wrote and engaging with their words through hands-on experiences. Some examples include: reading a Latin poem on the invention of the printing press by Elizabeth Jane Weston (1581-1612), then going to the Florence School of Fine Arts for a letter press workshop using 17th century machinery; and reciting a letter written in Latin from Cassandra Fedele (1465-1558) to Alessandra Scala (1475-1506) in the salon of Scala’s family’s palazzo (which is now the lobby of the Four Seasons Hotel). Cultural outings to Florence’s museums, gardens, churches, and other historic sites left me inspired and recharged by “La Dolce Vita.” I look forward to diversifying Ellington High School’s Latin curriculum to include women Latinists and share them with my own students (half of whom *are* women!), proving that Latin is neither dead nor just limited to the world and perspective of Ancient Roman men. I want to express my utmost gratitude to ClassConn for the grant and highly recommend this inspiring course to my fellow members. *Gratias vobis ago!*