

# The New Face of Classics

Bob Young

I was surprised (though naturally delighted) to be asked to write this article. Four years after handing over Inspectorate responsibility for classics to far better qualified successors, and six months after retiring from HMI altogether, I can hardly claim with confidence (could I ever?) to know how classics is faring or to prophesy with authority what the future holds. Every practising classics teacher is aware of the problems at first hand, day by day: all I can offer is the perspective of a semi-detached observer who after five decades of close association with classics and with classics teachers – a privilege for which I must always be grateful – has recently enjoyed the luxury of standing back sufficiently far from the battlefield to take a fresh look at the ground we now occupy and the forces ranged against us, and to suggest, if I may, where we should next direct our efforts.

## The present position

In maintained schools the slow decline of classics in the 11–16 phase continues. There are schools which are determined to keep or even extend the classics they now have, and there are instances of classics, especially Latin, being introduced from scratch; but in general the subject in Years 7–11 is still being squeezed, classical civilisation more severely than Latin. At sixth-form level, the small numbers involved in Latin and (especially) Greek make it risky to talk about trends: quite insignificant increases or reductions in absolute numbers from one year to the next can inspire complacency or terror when translated into percentages. Classical civilisation at A-level continues to flourish, especially in sixth-form colleges; we hope soon to know more about what has generally been assumed to be the strong position of classics in adult education; and there is a growing, but unquantifiable, interest in classical themes and materials in primary schools. Classics in independent schools seems relatively secure, although the security is by no means universal and some of it may well be illusory.

On balance then, in what can be counted, we have a **slow** decline: it is worrying and we should be foolish to ignore it, but we must not exaggerate it either. If I may borrow a phrase from an erstwhile colleague, there is such a thing as facile pessimism. If classicists spend half their time deploring the death of classics, the surprise of outsiders who find the subject still alive and kicking may well be coupled not with relief but with an indignant resolve to safeguard their tidy preconceptions by completing the process of elimination. Nor should we react to every new evidence of decline by lashing out bitterly against a hostile and insensitive world: 'we', as much as 'they', are part of the problem and we have *some* power – less than we should like, but life is often like that – to shape the answer.

## The pressures

I shall come to the National Curriculum later: as I shall to explain, I no longer see its influence as crucial, either way. For some years before it came along, there were half a dozen factors which, in various combinations, accounted for most of the difficulties faced by our subject in the schools in which it was under pressure. They are still crucial ones today:

- \* **planned curriculum policies**, of the school or of the LEA, which find no place for the subject – through hostility (but only rarely – and sometimes with good cause); through ignorance of the contribution that classics might make; through a misguided zeal for uniformity, classics being excluded because it would be difficult to provide it universally; or through an over-zealous devotion to a simplistic version of 'curricular balance', based not on the *actual* content and contribution of subjects but on their titles;
- \* **competition from other subjects**, both at school level, where the problem has been to squeeze ever more subjects into a week of finite length, and in the option choices of individual pupils – especially the more able – who can often continue with classics only by abandoning other subjects which they see as essential: the third science and curricular arrangements which set Latin against the second modern language have much to answer for.
- \* **low take-up by pupils** who – given a choice – have often not opted for classical courses in sufficient numbers to justify their continued existence. *Why* they have not opted is a question worth exploring: some are offered a course so abbreviated that they have little confidence in their chance of success; a great many are deprived of both the information and the experience on which to base an informed decision and know little of what they would be choosing; some, of course, know only too well and can see neither the use nor enjoyment in what they are offered. Whatever the explanation, we should not be surprised or angry if schools discontinue courses which few pupils choose to take – though we may rightly be critical of them for requiring pupils to make choices that are unrealistic or ill-informed;
- \* **administrative inconvenience**, if the timetabling of classics for a *small* number of pupils involves – as it sometimes does – quite disproportionate disruption to the work of others: for example, withdrawal from lessons in other subjects, or the wholesale restructuring of teaching groups;

- \* **staffing cost:** if classics groups are small, as many are, their provision can seem an expensive luxury, as well as being an irritant to those teachers who find themselves with larger classes or a heavier teaching load in consequence; sadly there are schools in which the loss of a full-time classicist would adversely affect the curriculum of no more than a couple of dozen pupils;
- \* **lack of teachers,** either because of an absolute shortage of qualified classicists (an increasing danger, given the recent low levels of recruitment) or because the tiny scale of the school's provision produces posts of curious shape ('beginners' Latin with Year 7 technology and sixth-form PE') and doubtful security.

I have listed the pressures not because any reader will be unaware of them – they have been rehearsed often enough – but because locally and nationally, now as previously, our planning for the future of classics must address them. I am not suggesting that classicists can find solutions to them all, unaided, or that we should always be the ones to give way – only that a thorough understanding of the issues coupled with a careful re-examination of our own priorities can make it easier for others to agree with us.

#### What difference will ERA make?

I begin with the National Curriculum (NC). We need to be clear, and to make it clear to others, that the NC does not *rule out* classics – or anything else. It imposes a duty to provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and of society, and which prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Within the whole curriculum, thus defined, certain subjects (and cross-curricular themes, dimensions and issues) must have a place; but:

- \* there are no requirements about the *amount or proportion of time* to be allocated to each subject, nor any requirement that the compulsory subjects occupy all the time available;
- \* there is no requirement that schools *organise their teaching* in terms of the listed subjects – only that somewhere within the school's curriculum the statutory programmes of study and attainment targets must find a place; if a school wishes, for example, to cover some of the English or history requirements within a subject it timetables as classics, it is free to do so.

This does nothing to ease existing burdens; my point is only that the NC – especially as recently modified at Key Stage 4 – does not significantly add to them. There is one important qualification, though. What the advent of the NC will, I think, do is to give schools which are *not* convinced by the case for classics (or at least for the sort of classics they actually have) an excuse for hastening its already inevitable departure. Honest analysis of depart-

mental aims and enthusiastic involvement in the curricular debate are more than ever essential within each school in which classics is taught, independent as well as maintained.

In other respects, we have been lucky – most notably in the inclusion of three classical units (and sundry references to the classical world elsewhere) in the programmes of study for history. There was a serious prospect, ten or fifteen years ago, that classics might eventually find a place in the curriculum of every secondary pupil. Many classics teachers worked with energy and conviction to this end and confronted the difficult choices it entailed. But others did not – or not soon enough – so that when the NC was mooted 'classics for all' was still not rooted firmly enough in the secondary curriculum to command a place among the foundation subjects in its own right. NC history now offers us a second chance, if we are prepared to grasp it.

Aside from the National Curriculum, the Education Reform Act will be largely neutral in its effect. On the one hand, the cost-consciousness encouraged by LMS will put at risk any classics teaching which is perceived to be ineffective: if it is also small-scale, of limited appeal and expensive in staffing, so much the worse for it. On the other hand open enrolment, the extension of the grant-maintained sector and increased competition between schools will in some areas enhance the attractiveness of subjects likely to be seen by parents as distinctive or 'high-status': for many of the wrong reasons, the classical languages may benefit.

#### The way forward

Publicity, information and campaigning are important, at every level from individual pupils and parents to the Secretary of State, The Co-ordinating Committee for Classics, JACT's Manual for the Classics Teacher and the ingenious and enthusiastic efforts of departments and individuals around the country show how the actions and attitudes of decision-makers can be influenced. But I want to focus here on the actions and attitudes of classicists themselves, at local and national level. Here are half a dozen priorities.

First, our thinking and planning must always start with 'classics' as the territory. It is from this that we then construct whatever 'subjects' are most useful and appropriate for the particular pupils we have or can get. If we are serious about 'classics for all' we need to begin with what it should be offering to everyone, *then* consider how this can be enriched and extended for some – not the other way round. This means ending arid arguments which set classical civilisation and the classical language in competition; blurring (not eliminating) the boundaries between 'language' and 'non-linguistic' courses; and disposing once and for all of the dangerous snobbery that sees the function of classics (usually, in practice, Latin) as being to 'sort the sheep from the goats'. This is not just a question of educational philosophy: many of the pressures listed earlier fall more heavily on the small classics departments serving a tiny minority of pupils than on a broadly based one.

Second, we need to take seriously the business of aims and objectives. This is not a matter of writing pious

introductions to schemes of work. It means making whatever aims and objectives we have adopted the *real* focus of the work in the classroom, not desirable extras. It also means abandoning practices, however long-cherished, which contribute little or nothing to their fulfilment. Classics departments will need at the same time to develop systems of marking and assessment which enable them to demonstrate that their stated aims are actually being achieved. Too often, people don't believe that classics achieves in practice what we claim for it; sometimes they are right. The Inspectorate's booklet *Classics from 5 to 16* (Curriculum Matters 12, HMSO, £2.50), offers detailed suggestions which, if generally adopted in practice, could give the subject a clearer identity than it now has and make it easier to show how it contributes to educational objectives that many would accept as important.

Third, where Latin (or Greek) is taught, it must *always* do justice to the three elements of language, literature and cultural context, though the balance between them may vary somewhat. A principal concern should be with the comprehension of meaning, the methods employed to convey it and, where appropriate, its accurate reflection in sensitive and idiomatic English. In both classwork and examinations the reading of Latin aloud deserves greater attention than it often receives.

Fourth, for Latin, Greek and Classical Civilisation the forthcoming revision of national GCSE criteria will require us to define boldly the sort of subject classics is to be. Whatever their detailed requirements, the new criteria must be clearly derived from, not merely influenced by, our agreed aims for classics teaching. On every previous occasion, for all the progress that has been made, excessive caution has led in the end to an uneasy compromise between future need and past tradition. (We no longer, incidentally, need separate 'combined-subject' titles for those Latin courses which include a little more of the cultural context, or of literature studied in translation, than most.)

Fifth, we shall need to make the most of statutory NC attainment targets and programmes of study, especially those for history. Teachers of classics must be prepared to give practical help and support to their local primary colleagues in developing work on the classical elements in Key Stage 2, if pupils are to enter secondary school with an interest in the classical world which they are keen to take further. They will also need to involve themselves in the planning, and wherever possible the teaching, for Key Stage 3, even if it means doing time in the history department. And might there perhaps be a combined history/classics option in Key Stage 4?

Finally, one issue remains paramount. Preoccupation with the *survival* of classics can easily distract attention from the *quality* of what we provide, day by day, in the classroom. My guess is that classics lessons, by and large, are rather *more* efficient than most; for a subject seen to maintain its position without statutory protection, it need not be. It was noticeable that when *Classics from 5 to 16* appeared 90% of the interest among classics teachers themselves appeared to be focused on the 'case for classics' in the first four pages. Unless it is taught well, and unless pupils have an experience of the ancient world which is both interesting and enjoyable, there *is* no case for classics.

In writing of 'the new face of classics', I am implying that features which have slowly and imperceptibly weathered over the years are about to suffer a rapidly unprecedented transformation. That would be to present the massive process of change and development which classics teachers have been constantly and consciously engaged for decades. Sometimes they have had no choice: the spread of comprehensive education, the reorganisation, alterations to the content and balance of the curriculum and the development of new examination systems have all made change inevitable. Much of this, though, has been deliberately initiated by classics teachers themselves, determined to extend the scope of their subject, to offer what they can of it to a far broader section of students, to establish a clear and defensible rationale for what they teach and above all to rid classic schools of the reputation for tedious irrelevance which they so often and so justly enjoyed among generations of pupils – and from whose after-effects it suffers still.

What lies ahead is a continuation of the same process, not a radically different one. But there are two directions we can take and we need a consensus about which it is. Put crudely, the choice lies between struggling to salvage what we can of the languages, for a small minority, and renewing our efforts to make classics an integral component of the curriculum for everyone. It will be clear now that I think we should strive for the second of these. I also think that in doing so we have our best chance, in the long run, of achieving the first as well – and it need not be *such* a small minority. Either way, the new face of classics when it emerges, will have been shaped less by external forces than by the attitudes and actions of classics teachers themselves. From what I know of most of them, it will not be a death-mask.

BOB YOU

#### Archaeology Prizes

The University of Oxford, Gerald Avery Wainwright, Near Eastern Prizes aim to stimulate interest in the Ancient Near East (including Egypt) in young people of secondary school age. They take their name from the Egyptologist and archaeologist Gerald Wainwright (1879–1964).

Substantial money prizes are offered for essays or projects on aspects of the history, archaeology, society, or art of any country or countries from Morocco to Afghanistan in the ancient period (but not classical, i.e. not dealing directly with the Greeks and Romans.) The entries should be between five and ten thousand words in length, and include relevant illustrations and list of works consulted. Candidates should be British subjects attending a recognised school.

**Further details can be obtained from:** The Secretary, The Gerald Avery Wainwright Near Eastern Archaeological Fund, The Oriental Institute, Pusey Lane, Oxford, OX1 2LE.

**Entries should be sent to:** The Head Registry Clerk, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD, at any time during the academic year 1991–2, but by 27th September 1992 at the latest.

# The Genesis of the CSCP: Some Observations on its Origins and Early Development.

Martin Forrest

Readers of this piece will be only too familiar with the main features of the crisis that has latterly afflicted the teaching of Classics in our schools. Since the late 1970s certainly, there have been intensified demands for more prevocational content within the secondary school curriculum often to the detriment of the liberal arts. In this period also we have witnessed pressure for centralised planning and the emergence of a grand design for the statutory years of schooling which pushes classical language teaching to the margins. The gradual squeeze on resources which has accompanied these shifting educational priorities has compounded the difficulties of classical teachers in secondary schools.

In the 1960s, a combination of earlier crises threatened the teaching of Classics in schools. Firstly there were significant changes to the admission requirements of Cambridge and Oxford Universities. Secondly there was the move to abolish selection for secondary education. By the late 1960s, both crises had begun to bite. The first crisis involving the removal of the classical language requirements for entrants to Oxbridge did not have an immediate effect either upon the Latin entry for GCE or upon staffing in schools. However within five years the implications had begun to sink in and Heads were beginning to cut back on both timetabling and upon staffing provision. The commencement of Latin could be postponed and offered to less pupils, perhaps reserved only for a small minority. The second crisis often had profound implications for the teaching of Classics. Comprehensive reorganisation was initiated in the first instance by a small number of Local Education Authorities, but from 1964 this movement was supported centrally by a Labour government pledged to abolish the eleven plus examination and to introduce comprehensive education for all children in the state system.

The combined impact of both crises brought about a major reduction in the amount of Classics taught in secondary schools and yet some of the direst predictions made in the mid-1960s about the likely disappearance of Classics from the school curriculum within ten years had not been fulfilled. Ten years later there is evidence that some kind of plateau had been reached. It is true that Classics had disappeared from some schools but in schools where Classics had previously been strong prior to reorganisation, under comprehensive reorganisation the subject still looked on the face of it to be strong. The nature of classical teaching had, of course, been transformed: the new Latin reading courses had been introduced into many

of the newly reorganised schools and Classics through the medium of English was being taught to a large number of children from a broad ability range. Classical civilisation syllabuses for public examination were by now firmly on the map and were providing an important growth point.

The inauguration of the Cambridge School Classics Project in January 1966 was the key to the transformation of Classics teaching in England and Wales. For the team members set about producing a new Latin course which was to become known as the *Cambridge Latin Course*; they also began to make an important contribution to the development of classical studies courses in secondary schools. Up to this point only small-scale experimentation had been possible. The second crisis coming as it did hard on the heels of the first certainly concentrated the minds of classicists, particularly from 1966 onwards when the idea of curriculum reform was seen as crucial to the survival of Classics in the maintained sector. The history of how the Cambridge Project came into being is remarkable in two respects: firstly for the singleminded determination of certain individuals who skilfully guided events in the wider interests of Classics and secondly for the many difficulties that arose, not least from divergent views among classicists about the nature of their subject. A detailed account of the origins and early history of the Cambridge Project is not intended here, but it is hoped that the foregoing may provide a few glimpses of the fuller story that lies behind the birth of the Cambridge School Classics Project.

First of all, it is worth considering briefly the reactions of classicists not only to the changes they faced as the result of the crises of the mid-1960s, but to the alternative approaches proposed by would-be reformers for confronting these changes. Following the 1944 Act certain leading campaigners had seen to it that a linguistic Latin course with translation both ways was firmly entrenched in the grammar school curriculum. Reformers who proposed to include a 'cultural' element as background to this linguistic study were seen as 'specious' and even 'dangerous'. In the 1950s there were a few attempts to introduce Classics through the medium of English as part of the secondary school humanities curriculum and some efforts were made to inject a classical element into the curriculum of secondary modern schools. Generally however, there was rigid polarisation: as a consequence of the tripartite selective system Classics specialists were generally 'locked into' grammar schools with no experience of and little contact

with the majority of pupils who received their schooling elsewhere.

The community of Classics teachers at that time whether or not they were part of the vast majority who taught in schools or whether they were concerned with some other aspect such as teacher training, can be divided into three groups. Firstly there were the 'progressives', a small minority who had long favoured a more broadly based study of classical civilisation to a wide ability range and who doubted the value of a Latin course in which so great a proportion of the time was devoted to English-Latin composition. If the changed Oxbridge entry requirements gave urgency to their cause, the advent of comprehensive reorganisation rendered their case incontrovertible. In fact some progressives welcomed comprehensive reorganisation as a catalyst that would help them transform their subject. Secondly there were many 'traditionalists' who favoured the *status quo*. For this group composition from English into the classical languages was central and the use of translations of Greek and Latin authors found little place in their thinking. They found it difficult to imagine themselves teaching their subject outside of a selective system. Some traditionalists were prepared to speak out in public against comprehensive education which it was felt would make it difficult in future for pupils to study Greek or Latin. The third group became increasingly dominant in the prevailing climate of the mid-1960s. These were the pragmatically inclined classicists who had long been content to work under a selective system but who were now prepared to adapt their classical teaching in the changing circumstances. The 'pragmatists' saw themselves primarily as linguists but with their subject under threat were prepared to adapt new approaches which would assist the survival of classical language teaching in schools.

The impact of changed Oxbridge entrance requirements may have been slow to sink in for the majority of Classics teachers in schools. As individuals they were powerless to initiate change on a scale that was now necessary without support from outside. There were however, certain individuals who were not only in positions from which they could help to bring about change, but also willing to act. The initiative for a new organisation which would bring together classical teachers under one umbrella to be known as JACT was largely due to the persistence, energy and skill of John Sharwood Smith. His response to the urgent need for action in the light of this first crisis was a pragmatic one. He also foresaw the implications of a spread of comprehensive schooling for the teaching of Classics some while before the second crisis emerged. This achievement came about despite powerful opposition from some quarters. Another pragmatic response came from the late Charles Baty who formerly as Staff Inspector for Classics and latterly as Honorary Secretary General of JACT, worked with great vigour both in public and behind the scenes to safeguard the future of Classics in the light of both crises.

Coming to the actual setting up of the Cambridge School Classics Project, it was indeed fortunate that two sets of events coincided which enabled reforms to be

undertaken on a large scale. At the same time that teachers were responding in different ways to the that beset them, a new initiative was being undertaken then Ministry of Education at Curzon Street person who was crucial in bringing JACT into being with the Nuffield Foundation was R.W. (Robert) He was a senior HMI seconded to work for the Curriculum Study Group established by the Minister Sir Eccles. Nuffield had already sponsored curriculum development projects in science, mathematics and languages. Classics were seen as the next target. Consultative conferences were convened at Nuffield Lodge at the request of the Trustees. They wished to inform themselves about the direction that reform of classical teaching might take; they had in mind both new ways of teaching pupils Latin and non-linguistic courses that might give pupils who studied them some insight into classical civilisation and literature. At the second of the two conferences in particular, the urgency of the situation for Classics in the light of comprehensive reorganisation was underlined. One of the declared intentions in setting up JACT was to enable systematic research and experimentation to be carried out in relation to examination syllabuses. It was now the opportunity to establish that research. Nuffield responded by making its first grant of £34,000 for a curriculum development project that would initiate a programme at an early date. In addition to this, in conjunction of events, it was also fortunate that Charles Baty was by now in post as the first Honorary Secretary General of JACT. Whilst others were demanding a demonstration in protest against comprehensive reorganisation (one such protest was sent to the Press by the Council of the CA at the instigation of tradition following a meeting in July 1964) Baty was playing a pivotal role in negotiating with the Nuffield Foundation together with Robert Morris and his successor as Staff Inspector, Kenneth Todd. Baty used the challenge of comprehensive reorganisation in an attempt to galvanise classicists into concerted and urgent action. The following extract from a letter sent to the distinguished Principal of an Oxford college illustrates Baty's thinking.

But matters of secondary reorganisation (...impending in many parts of the country) making the future of Latin in grammar and secondary schools very problematic; and some of us are not only keenly anxious that Classics should not be penned in to the public school enclosure, there is a need to be fenced in until it can be isolated and finished off. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that there is a danger of this.

The consultative conferences held at Nuffield Lodge in 1964 were a necessary preliminary in the establishment of the Nuffield grant awarding process. The first conference convened was intended to be for the 'pundits', principally lecturers of university standing. The second conference was an opportunity for 'practitioners' of school Classics to have their say but also included some University teachers. Charles Baty was at great pains to ensure that the

conferences ran smoothly and the membership of both conferences had been carefully handpicked to ensure a pragmatic response. At the first conference, however, some divergences of opinion emerged. Professor T.B.L. Webster argued strongly that Greek should replace Latin as the first classical language in schools. Most of those present preferred a realistic course and favoured the retention of Latin as the first language. The conference did not agree that prose composition should necessarily be abandoned altogether. When it came to discussion of non-linguistic courses there was much scepticism about the introduction into schools of 'background courses' *per se* and a feeling that acquaintance with the worlds of Greece and Rome should arise directly out of reading Latin and Greek texts. At this point in time there was little awareness or experience of teaching Classics through the medium of English which the conference could draw upon.

It is not widely known that the actual locating of a school Classics project at Cambridge was by no means a foregone conclusion, although in some people's minds Cambridge was always the favoured location. A strong rival bid was in fact also made to Nuffield to locate a project in the University of London. Negotiations conducted between Nuffield and members of the Cambridge University Classics Faculty early in 1965 might easily have come to grief when the Faculty Board of Classics refused in the first instance to endorse the application for grant funding on the grounds that the Department of Education had not been consulted. It was necessary for some swift action to be taken behind the scenes, not least by Charles Baty, to retrieve the situation.

Reference has already been made to the uneven progress towards reform. This unevenness may be ascribed to a lack of agreement among Classics teachers as to priorities. By the time that an application finally emerged as a joint proposal of the Faculty of Classics and the Department of Education the original intention of developing non-linguistic courses for a broad ability range had been dropped. The Cambridge dons were apparently thinking more in terms of the traditional clientele concerned more for the needs of the non-specialist in sixth forms than for the wider potential clientele in comprehensive schools. Once the grant had been agreed by Nuffield and the Cambridge School Classics Project had been established at Cambridge, the direction of the Project rapidly became clear: the design of non-linguistic courses specifically for comprehensive schools was to be the second main intention of the Project. From January 1966 when the Cambridge Project came into being much of the team's efforts was devoted to work on a new Latin reading programme.

Ring binders containing pre-pilot pupils' materials were issued by the Project in September 1966 entitled: *The Romans: people and language*. Early estimates of the cost of producing all that the Project team was now committed to, both in terms of a new Latin course and in terms of non-linguistic developments, suggested that an early application for further funding would be necessary. In fact the main development of the classical studies materials was not possible until further grant monies had been made available by Nuffield and the Schools Council in 1967.

One final point that should be mentioned is the staffing structure of the Project. After they had appointed David Morton as Project Director, the Project Committee had originally intended to appoint an Assistant Director who would be equipped both as a classicist and with modern linguistic theory. The one eligible person that the Committee had in mind for this position withdrew shortly before the interviews were due to take place. Faced with this impasse, the Committee agreed to dispense with the full-time post of Assistant Director as it had first been conceived and to engage the services of a part-time linguistic consultant, Dr John Wilkins, who had not long previously been appointed to a full-time post at Queen Mary College, London. There is no doubt that the Committee was right to recognise Wilkins' ability as a potential linguistic consultant to the Project. However, at the beginning of 1966 Wilkins was only at a very early stage in his research. The Project had been given a task to do within a limited time-scale. The decision to structure the Project in this way contained built-in contradictions which could never be reconciled.

In the forthcoming book on the subject, it is expected that there will be treatment in much further detail of the origins of an enterprise which is generally agreed to have been one of the more successful Nuffield/Schools Council sponsored curriculum projects to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s. It was from this project that the *Cambridge Latin Course* eventually emerged with its revolutionary approach to the learning of Latin and also the Greek and Roman resource packs which were widely adopted as materials for classical studies. As they say, watch this space!

MARTIN FORREST

The author worked full-time for the Cambridge School Classics Project during 1967-8 and has since continued to be associated with the Project's classical civilisation developments. He is currently working on the text of a book for the University of Exeter on the origins and early history of the Cambridge School Classics Project. The Cambridge Project celebrates its silver jubilee in 1991.

# Who's Afraid of Literary Theory?

Simon Goldhill

Oh, do not ask 'What is it?'  
Let us go and make our visit.

T.S. Eliot.

## An Oblivion of One's Own

The MacCabe affair; structuralism bandied in the *Daily Telegraph*; the heady Seventies; Paris and the hairy Sixties. What *is* literary theory and *why* are they saying such horrid things about it...?

Why not turn to an unlikely source of enlightenment – Oxford? The Thomas Wharton Professor of English offers a clarion call:

Without some kind of theory, however unreflective and implicit, we would not know what a 'literary work' was in the first place, or how to read it. Hostility to theory usually means an opposition to other people's theories and an oblivion of one's own.

There's the rub. 'Theory' isn't something one tacks on to reading. It's what makes reading *possible*. It's there already. Always. The question is how explicit to make it and how to make it explicit. How hard to think about it. What literary theorists do is to try to understand the process of reading. What we do to books and books do to us... An anatomy of the life-blood of teaching.

## Don't Look Now...

It is this desire to make explicit – placing what we do *ex meson* as they say in democratic Athens – that causes most of the fuss and bother. For some classicists, just doing well what they have been taught to do, is enough. And granted our institutional structures, it often has been enough for status, jobs, power. Keeping one's head down... Literary theorists, however, advertize to students the excitement and empowerment of rebellion and revelation: unmasking the hidden agenda, discovering the credo, recognizing the unrecognized. Plus the thrill of the attack on the entrenched position (which, as Stormin' Norman said, needs six attackers for each defender – in theory). Hence the *agon*. Head in the sand versus superiority (up) in the air...

It seems to me – but then it would, wouldn't it? – that only one side of the *agon* is *intellectually* tenable. Because, like Socrates, it seems to me that the unexamined life isn't worth living – especially for a *critic*. Just doing what we do – as a credo – is to fall headlong into the oblivion of one's own.

## Finding One's Place

Particularly for classicists, who have such a developed sense of intellectual tradition, it is ludicrous myth-making

to pretend what we do now is what we've always done. That there is – simply and self-evidently – a *naïve* tradition to read. An unchanging classical tradition. Wilamowitz was once a trendy young Turk, a *Gästarbeiter* in the profession, arguing for a new scientific classicism, *Alte Wissenschaft*, against the dilettantes and aesthetes (Nietzsche). We are the heirs of that faddish tradition. We turn to theory. And like Wilamowitz, we are also heirs to a Romantic commitment to emotion, spontaneity, *lyric*, lime, unity, truth, the artist... When we forget the value of terms like 'realism', 'description', 'literary character', 'nature', – because they seem the most useful words to use – we forget how their assumed meaning is the product of a series of continuing theoretical and ideological battles. (Social 'realism'; psychological 'realism'; critical 'realism'; dirty 'realism'...) Literary theory is an investigation of the history of criticism – especially of what it can tell us of why we are what we are. It is particularly relevant and necessary for classicists. For classicists, the history of such re-evaluations, re-appropriations, renaissances of the past. We read a Greek play like Sophocles *or* like Vergil, *or* Augustine, *or* Dante, *or* Nietzsche, *or*... and to ask ourselves both to engage in literary theory and to try to find our own place within an intellectual tradition. No one's place for granted. To resist the oblivion of one's own.

## Business As Usual

But so many theories! Semiotics, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, feminism, psychoanalysis, narratology... isn't the proliferation in itself a sign of instability, faddishness and fashion? To profess a theory – isn't that to be as entrenched as the profession you said theory set out to attack?

I'd rather see the proliferation of work on literature as a testimony to its remarkable verve and ability to generate excitement and new insight. When the quietest stop, so too does the theory. Different branches of literary and critical investigation look at different aspects of literature. Some compete; some overlap. For example, it was hard to find a feminist who was not interested in psychoanalysis (to gloss a complex engagement as neutral and *possible*); and as the name suggests, post-structuralism is specifically a challenge and response to structuralist rhetoric that sees heated debate, new questions and developing attitudes merely as a sign of 'faddishness'. It is rhetoric sadly committed to the slow, unreflective change of the status quo. Don't look now. As a classicist, my priority is to understand as best as possible the world and my involvement with it, and I am ready to do whatever will help me. (I am describing here the nature of the most other branches of classics. Imagine a classical

sopher or classical archaeologist pretending contemporary methodology in philosophy or archaeology was irrelevant to his or her work!) Studying literature, studying literature of the past, studying literature of another culture – these are shared problems in the humanities, and what arrogance and foolishness would it be to assume that the right questions and answers can come only from within classics! (The best piece of textual criticism I have read recently is on Shakespeare and is written by a vaguely Marxist art historian.)

But it's not one way traffic. Derrida, Barthes, Foucault – those luminaries of the French theoretical (and intellectual) scene – write on Plato, classical rhetoric, and the history of sexuality in the ancient world (and their questions and responses have influenced a generation of scholars inside and outside classics). It is our duty (and pleasure and opportunity and stimulus) to engage critically with their writings. We can inform the work of theory as much as we can be informed by it.

So, in the face of the profusion of critical theory, not so much 'eclecticism' as *engagement*; not so much 'allegiance' as a continuing work of *enquiry*. Above all, not the smugness of Business As Usual. Which will condemn classics to an oblivion of its own.

### The S Word

When the editors asked me to write this piece – yes, they did, and twice – they asked particularly for some explication of the power of the S word. Even before the national press put it on their front pages, 'What is Structuralism?' was a question asked much more often than it was answered. (I first asked it in my first year as an undergraduate, just after being nearly killed by a don who was driving me to a cricket match and who was arguing a theoretical point with a graduate so intently that the car left the road.) So, what is it again?

Let me begin the two minute version with two pieces of background. At the beginning of the century, Ferdinand de Saussure, a French linguist, offered a course in which he outlined the importance of understanding the *structure* of a language, if we wish to understand how meaning is formed. He outlined the structural elements that he thought crucial, focusing on the *sign*, which is made up indissolubly by a *signifier* (e.g. the sound 't-r-e-e') and a *signified* (e.g. the notion 'tree'). He asserted that the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary, that is, with the exception of certain onomatopoeic words like 'plop', there is no necessary or inevitable connection between the sound 't-r-e-e' and the meaning 'tree'. He saw signs put together in a series or sequence – the *syntagm* (e.g. 'The tree is green' or 'Green is the tree', but not 'Tree green the is') – and selected from the possible set, the *paratagm* (e.g. 'a/the etc. tree/bush etc. is/was etc. green/tall etc.). The perception of sound and meaning itself, argued Saussure, were produced by such diacritics: 't-r-e-e' is perceived as not 'b-e-e', 's-e-e', or 'w-e-e' etc.; and it means not 'bush', 'is', 'tall' etc.. As words can only be defined by other words, so meaning is produced in this system of differences. This is the beginning of what is

known as 'structural linguistics', and despite Chomsky's revolution, this has remained a standard part of linguistics.

My second background. In 1949, Claude Lévi-Strauss published a seminal work of anthropology, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* and, later, *Structural Anthropology*. Here, developing Saussure's ideas of a system of differences, he used the idea of *polarities* in particular to explore first kinship and, second, myth. To understand the bizarre rules of kinship and the bizarre narratives of myth, Lévi-Strauss looked at how these rules and narratives could be read as formulated within a grid of polarities, and in one of his most famous analyses (of the story of Asdiwal) he took a particularly intractable tale and showed how it utilized a set of polarized terms – up/down, inside/outside, raw/cooked etc. – crucial to the culture in which the story was told, to produce a message about that culture. Myths, argued Lévi-Strauss, are narratives which mediate – and mediate on – a culture's own structuring oppositions. 'Structural anthropology' has remained a standard part of anthropology.

In the 1960s, this burgeoning work in anthropology and linguistics became an important influence for literary studies. Roland Barthes is a good figure to sum up this part of the story. Barthes' early influential work was within the tradition of 'semiotics', the 'science of signs' that Saussure had predicted as the outcome of his thesis on language. He analyzed both the 'fashion system' – and how self-reflexive that 'fashion' should be the object of his work! – and elements of modern myth: e.g. Brigitte Bardot's face, wrestling, the cover of Paris Match. He was interested in how signs functioned in culture – the *codes* or systems in and by which signs developed meaning – and he drew explicitly on the work of Saussure and Lévi-Strauss. But in *S/Z*, his magnum opus, Barthes turned to analyze a short story of Balzac, *Sarrasine*. He divided the text up minutely to analyze the different codes and different structures of the work, in order to anatomize how the story's meaning was produced. (The story is 30 pages, the analysis 230...) It is a *tour de force*, that combines passages of elegant and deeply serious essay writing on a vast range of topics – from 'character', to 'reality', to 'castration' – with an appearance of careful, even scientific dissection of the language of the story. Indeed, structuralism's grids of oppositions, its demonstrations of how such oppositions structure a culture's narratives, claimed to offer the hope of an objective, even scientific analysis of literature, rather than vague and evaluative 'appreciations' or histories of sources that traditional criticism all too often provided. It is in a work such as *S/Z* that literary structuralism finds its apogee.

So what is meant in general by the S word in literary criticism is the methodological utilization of a model developed from linguistics and anthropology that sees meaning produced in and by a structured system of differences, polarizations and their mediations, within a culture and its texts. Okay?

Now try to define 'Christianity' or 'socialism' and you will see what happens when you try to do a two minute version... Insufficient, superficial, misleading...



### But What About Us?

As one might expect for a society that gave us μέν and δέ (not to mention νόμος and φύσις), this idea of a polarized set of oppositions structuring a culture's view of itself (even as a 'culture' as opposed to, say, 'nature') has proved extremely profitable in the study of ancient Greece in particular. And it would be hard to find a classicist worth his or her salt – yes, even Hugh Lloyd-Jones – who would not confess to being influenced by these ideas, especially mediated by Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet and the scholars around them in Paris. In as it were 'anthropological' questions – religion, the ordering of space in the city, how myths work, and the like – structuralist methodology has led to important and lasting insights, that are already standard. Even in books written for sixth-formers. Take sacrifice, for instance, that central ritual of Greek religion. It has become understood as an institution that sites man within a community and within a set of interrelations with the divine and animal world – indeed, that helps define these different categories of being. It is a way of defining 'human culture' as 'culture' as opposed to 'nature' and the suprahuman immortals. It is also to be understood in contrast to hunting and agriculture in particular as other institutions for the production and consumption of food. Sacrifice is, in other words, a fundamental *expression of social order* (and thus corrupt sacrifice becomes a crucial image for the collapse of social order particularly in tragedy and epic). Both this very general model and the complex details of its working out (which I can't deal with here) are the product of classics' fruitful interaction with structural anthropology, an interaction that has been crucial in uncovering the *categories* in which ancient society thinks (about) itself and by which ancient society is ordered. It would be simply impossible today to discuss 'sacrifice' (and many other topics) without taking account of these analyses.

In classical literature, too, there are by now standard works deeply indebted to structuralist methodology. James Redfield's book on Homer, for example, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*, is the best available exploration of the society depicted in the Homeric poems, and it depends heavily on the structuring of polarity of 'nature' and 'culture' to express many aspects of the poem's depiction of social life and war. With this fine study too, structuralist methodology has proved essential in uncovering the culturally specific categories in and by which meaning is formed.

So it would be wrong to think of structuralist influence as marginal or localised. It is by now across the world integral to classics as a discipline. Our students will all be its heirs...

### Then and Now

The responses to structuralism have been multiform, and if it seems strange to turn back to the 1960s (and beyond) to introduce literary theory, it is a sensible strategy in as much as what has happened since and is happening now can be seen as a reaction to that movement. Post-structuralism and deconstruction, for example, have explicitly challenged the security of the polarized opposition (that

central motif of structuralism) and have explored hierarchies and tensions within such structuring of Narratology has attempted to continue structuralist (claims to a) scientific approach but has reintroduced dynamic of narrative progress into structuralist static descriptions of systems of meaning. Feminist Marxism have challenged the apparently apolitical of structuralism's understanding of meaning. For history, too, has developed the idea of 'code' to a more flexible notion of 'discourse' and reinscribed as a major term in any discussion of culture and meaning. The struggle to refine the process by which we approach the ancient world goes on...

### Those Questions and My Answers

*Are you a structuralist/post-structuralist/deconstructionist?*  
I am a classicist.

*Why all that jargon?*

Each branch of study has a technical vocabulary and you think your critical vocabulary was God-given. The worst jargon of all is the jargon of 'natural', 'sensible', 'common-sense', jargon...

*Why does theory seem so deliberately obscure?*

In part because of your unfamiliarity with the technical vocabulary. Partly because some difficult arguments are hard to read (try Kant, Hegel, Plato). And someone once said 'if anyone fully understood what was written in a newspaper, he would go mad'. Newspapers are clear to the punters, aren't they?

### A Final Story

There's a party/pub game that goes like this: each person chooses five adjectives or nouns that he or she thinks define the most essential definition of him or herself. (You know, 'male, heterosexual, married, depressed, teacher', that sort of thing.) A funny thing is that I've never met a person who *didn't* say 'black' and I've never met a person who *did* say 'white'. Theory's a bit like that. People don't recognize their own until they're made to...

So the next time you hear someone – even yourself – denying an interest in theory or denying its importance, just think of what theory *is* being espoused...

### Finally, Finally

As the epigraph suggested. And a map of the preceding...

#### 1. An O of One's Own

On MacCabe, see D. Simpson 'New Brooms at Farnham Towers' in *Intellectuals: Aesthetics, Politics, Academics*, ed. B. Robbins (Minneapolis, 1990)

The quote: from T. Eagleton *Literary Theory* (Oxford, 1983)

#### 2. Don't L Now

See P. de Man *The Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis, 1986) 3–26

### 3. Finding One's P

On major shifts in 'world-pictures', see M. Foucault *The Order of Things* (London, 1970).

For classicists' attempts to do a job on 'character', see P. Easterling and S. Goldhill in *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature* ed. C. Pelling (Oxford, 1990).

### 4. B as Usual

On many theories: see J. Culler *The Pursuit of Signs* (London, 1981); Eagleton (above); F. Lentricchia *After the New Criticism* (London, 1980).

On Psychoanalysis and feminism, see J. Mitchell *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (New York, 1974); J. Gallop *Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (London, 1982).

On textual criticism, see J. Barrell 'Editing out', in his *Poetry, Language and Politics* (Manchester, 1988).

On French luminaries: J. Derrida 'Plato's Pharmacy' in *Dissemination* tr. B. Johnson (Chicago, 1981); R. Barthes 'L'ancienne rhétorique, aide-mémoire', *Communications* 16 (1970) 172-237; M. Foucault *A History of Sexuality* vol 2 and vol 3 (*The Care of the Self* and *The Uses of Pleasure* [New York, 1985 & 1986]). And for classics engaging, see J. Winkler *The Constraints of Desire* (New York, 1990).

### 5. The S Word

Intros: J. Culler *Structuralist Poetics* (Ithaca, 1975); R. Scholes *Structuralism in Literature* (New Haven, 1974). More advanced: F. Jameson *The Prison House of Language* (Princeton, 1972); R. Macksey and E. Donato edd *The Languages of Criticism and the Science of Man* (Baltimore, 1970).

Backgrounds: F de Saussure *Course in General Linguistics* (New York, 1959); C. Lévi-Strauss *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston, 1969); *Structural Anthropology* (New York, 1963). On Lévi-Strauss, see e.g. E. Leach *Lévi-Strauss* (London, 1970).

R. Barthes *Mythologies* (London, 1972); *Elements of Semiology* (London, 1967); *The Fashion System* (London, 1984); *S/Z* (London, 1975).

### 6. But What About U?

Good general intro: R. Gordon ed. *Myth, Religion and Society* (Cambridge, 1981). J-P. Vernant *Myth and Thought among the Greeks* (London, 1983); J-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (Brighton, 1981)

Sacrifice: e.g. M. Detienne and J-P Vernant *La cuisine du sacrifice* (Paris 1979), and articles in Gordon (above).

Schools intro to Greek religion: J. Gould 'On making sense of Greek religion', in P. Easterling and J. Muir edd *Greek Religion and Society* (Cambridge, 1985).

### 7. Then and N

Post-Structuralism etc: J. Culler *On Deconstruction* (London, 1983); R. Young *Untying the Text* (Boston, 1981); C. Norris *Deconstruction* (London, 1982); J. Harrari ed. *Textual Strategies* (Ithaca, 1979).

Narratology: G. Genette *Narrative Discourse* (Oxford, 1980); *Figures of Literary Discourse* (Oxford, 1982).

Feminism: E. Showalter ed. *The New Feminist Criticism* (New York, 1985); N. Miller ed. *The Poetics of Gender* (New York, 1986); E. Abel ed. *Writing and Sexual Difference* (Brighton, 1982).

### Postword

Pretty well all the above are paperbacks in English...and they all have more reading too... If you want to read one starting article, try P. Vidal-Naquet 'Land and Sacrifice in the Odyssey', in Gordon ed. (see section 6); lots of the above material is used for Greek literature in e.g. J. Redfield *Nature and Culture in the Iliad* (Chicago, 1975) and in S. Goldhill (well, I had to finally) *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1986).

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# Classics Teaching in Poland

## George Korzeniowski and Stephanie West

Poland is notorious for paradoxes, and we may thus not be much surprised at the relatively healthy state of classical teaching there, despite forty years' domination by a regime with little reason to foster the study of Greek and Roman antiquity, and notwithstanding terrifying economic and environmental problems which might be expected to lead to the neglect of subjects of no obvious practical utility. Polish classicists of course complain, as we do, of our subject's reduced share of the curriculum, and regretfully recall the lost golden age of pre-war classical gymnasia organized as in Germany. But Latin stays on the timetable, as an option, providing reasonably well-laid foundations on which university classical departments can build. The contrast with more prosperous Czechoslovakia, where classics teaching has virtually died out in schools (and it remains to be seen whether hopes that it might revive are realistic) is striking.

Independent schools (almost entirely run by religious orders) play a very minor role in the Polish educational system, and, whatever their other merits, do not rate highly from an academic point of view. (Some people evidently expect the end of socialism to bring an expansion of independent education, which *might* mean an improvement in the status of classics; but no-one at all familiar with the financial problems of British independent schools can find this scenario probable). What follows concerns the state sector; we are conscious of the dangers of oversimplification in attempting to sketch a general picture, but the Polish educational system is relatively uniform for the country as a whole and generalisation is thus feasible without the risk of serious inaccuracy.

Compulsory schooling in Poland lasts from seven to fifteen, and the curriculum for these years includes nothing of classical interest apart from some attention to Greece and Rome along with the ancient Near East as part of the history syllabus; the first foreign language studied has up to now been Russian, compulsory for all pupils, and started at eleven. Of those who continue their schooling after fifteen those who are likely to proceed to higher education go either to lycea for a four-year course in arts or science subjects, generally leading to university entrance, or to technical schools for a five-year curriculum focused on the polytechnics (though some go to polytechnics from the lycea and *vice versa*). Both types of school are selective and mixed, and the technical schools are of equal status to the lycea. It is the latter which concerns us.

Latin is not available at all lycea; much depends on the interest of the individual head. But in any big town (and certainly in all university towns) a lyceum offering Latin may be expected. A respectable number of pupils take the Matura (roughly equivalent of A-levels, but four subjects are required, of which Polish must be one) in Latin; exact figures are not available. Greek is also available in

Kraków, Warsaw, Łódź, Kielce, Sosnowiec, Tarnów, Poznań, and, until recently Wrocław, but cannot be taken on its own, without Latin. Timetable provision is not generous: two 45-minute periods (with corresponding homework) out of the week's 32 to 36. The first three years are largely devoted to grammar, but translation into Latin is not required at this stage. (Young Poles might be thought to enjoy a head-start over English beginners, in being native speakers of a highly inflected language, and their teachers are presumably spared any consumer resistance to the idea that endings matter; but how much difference this makes to initial progress we must leave to others to assess). There is no provision for anything like Classical Civilization or Ancient History as a separate subject, though obviously some general information about the ancient world is imparted in Latin and Greek lessons.

Various up-to-date textbooks are available, the more leisurely pace of pre-war textbooks being ill-suited to the modern timetable. In addition there is a highly regarded classical magazine, *Filomata* (i.e. Φιλομαθής, intended primarily for older schoolchildren, though like the less serious-minded *Omnibus* it clearly has plenty of adult readers. Started in 1929 in Lvov (Lwów, then in Poland) by Ryszard Gansiniec, a scholar of apparently boundless intellectual energy, it recently, under its third editor, attained its 400th issue. Publication has not been absolutely continuous; surveying the sixty years of the magazine's existence a contributor from Toruń formulated the rule *Filomata absens signum pessimi temporis est*, having himself witnessed its absence during the period of martial law. Its range is wide, both temporally (from Mycenae to reminiscences of recently deceased classical scholars) and geographically (extending to supplementary issues on the Dead Sea scrolls). Contributions from undergraduates are welcomed, and indeed from school-children, though nowadays, with the passing of the old classical gymnasia, these are rare. Many established scholars seem to have derived more solid satisfaction from a teenage appearance in *Filomata* than from any subsequent publication. Schoolchildren with classical interests are also well served by the series *Nauka dla Wszystkich* (Knowledge for everyone), published by the Kraków section of the Polish Academy. These compendious volumes (an ideal size to keep in the pocket for reading in queues) present scholarship of a high standard in a form accessible to the intelligent non-specialist at a remarkably low price. Most major classical authors are available in Polish translations (some, admittedly, rather out-dated).

For the last ten years enthusiasts have had the chance to compete in a Latin Olympiad, organised by the combined efforts of university – and school – teachers under the presidency of Professor Herbert Myśliwiec of Wrocław. (There are Olympiads in most school subjects.) Prep-

aration calls for a considerable amount of extra work from both pupils and teachers. At each of the competition's three stages there are written papers (translation and grammar tests) and an interview based on a reading-list outside the normal school programme. The finals are held in Warsaw, and the six who come top will gain exemption from the university entrance exam, so that they are assured of places before they sit the Matura. The first prize-winner is invited to Arpino, to the annual international Cicero Olympiad, won a few years ago by the Polish competitor.

Admission to university depends on an entrance exam, distinct from the Matura. Eight universities have classical departments: Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw, Poznań, Toruń, Lublin, Łódź, and Gdańsk. Two universities with an honourable place in Polish scholarship, Lwów and Wilno, were absorbed into the Soviet Union at the end of the war. The same tragic boundary changes brought two great German universities under Slavonic auspices; but while shattered Königsberg has been lost to classical scholarship as Kaliningrad, the transformation of Breslau to Wrocław brought an outstanding reinforcement to the Polish classical scene with a department distinguished for its contribution to classical philology since the foundation of the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Breslau in 1811 (a Jesuit university since 1702), which could also provide a home for some of the émigré classicists from Lwów, as Toruń did for those who had to leave Wilno. 463 students of classics are currently enrolled in these eight universities, with the biggest departments in Warsaw and Kraków<sup>1</sup>; between 70 and 80 graduate annually, and roughly 80% are women. They normally expect to become school-teachers (a profession in which women far outnumber men), and lectures in psychology, methodology, and pedagogy form part of the five-year course. The syllabus is practically the same in all university classics departments; under socialism it was prescribed by the Ministry of

Education, and though much more flexibility is theoretically possible, there seems to be no rush towards syllabus reform. To the English observer the lecture timetable (which includes compulsory P.E. and one day devoted to military training for both sexes) appears unduly heavy.

Students of history and librarianship must do two years' Latin at university, students of modern languages, Polish and Medicine one year. At faculties of theology separate from the universities ordinands do Latin for four years, other students of theology for two.

Any doubts about the general vitality of the classical tradition in contemporary Poland may be conclusively dispelled by the 600 pages of Stanisław Stabryła's *Hellada i Roma w Polsce Ludowej: recepcja antyku w literaturze polskiej w latach 1945 - 1975* (Kraków, 1983); it is necessary to read Polish to get some sense of the extraordinarily widespread influence of classical antiquity even in the cold climate of socialism.

Professor Stabryła's book is a sequel to the even more massive work of Tadeusz Sinko, *Hellada i Roma w Polsce* published in 1935. To anyone familiar with the strength of Poland's classical tradition the apparent paradox of which this survey opened will, on the contrary, be nothing of the sort.\*

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Warsaw 90; Kraków 78; Lublin 65; Wrocław 58; Toruń 47; Poznań 45; Łódź 45; Gdańsk 35.

\*Our warmest thanks to Professor Jerzy Danielewicz for his prompt and generous help.

#### A VISIT TO THE JEWRY WALL MUSEUM AT LEICESTER

The Jewry Wall Museum at Leicester offers the combination of a Roman site, a well-arranged Museum containing material from the Stone Age to the Saxons, and an excellent Education Service which operates, as we discovered, even on a Saturday.

Roman Leicester was the tribal capital of the Corieltavovri (as the tribe's name is now believed to have been spelt) and the Roman site comprises part of the remains of the public baths, less impressive than those at Wroxeter, but sufficiently interesting to encourage my 9-11 year old pupils to identify the various rooms and explore the drainage channels. The site is dominated by the Jewry Wall itself, which well illustrates both Roman building techniques and the extent to which the ground level has risen since Roman times.

Our visit began with a 'hands-on' session in the room set aside for school use. The children were encouraged to describe and identify the uses of a number of authentic items of pottery. They were able to appreciate the size of an amphora, the feel of the mortarium, and to make comparisons with objects familiar to them (the Nene Valley cup with its

indentations for easier handling was likened to a beer mug). Above all there was the thrill of handling the genuine objects.

This session was followed by a visit to the Museum itself. The Museum provides worksheets aimed at pupils of 9-11 years on the following subjects - Roman building materials, mosaics (the second century Peacock mosaic is one of the highlights of the Museum), costume, pottery, funeral customs, and trade. In fact there was plenty to see without using these (though the sheet on Kitchen Pottery fitted well with our theme), whether it was the tessellations of one of the mosaics, or the (Anglo-Saxon) skeleton of a lady buried complete with her jewels.

The climax of our visit was undoubtedly the Roman armour, which exactly fitted one of the taller girls in our party. The flexibility of the lorica segmentata as well as the protection it afforded was well demonstrated, as was the effectiveness of the short stabbing sword and the pilum with its head that bent on impact.

Our thanks must go to the staff at the Museum for such a memorable visit. Further information can be obtained from Jill Bourne at the Museum (Leic. 554100).

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