

What JACT does

John Murrell

'The Joint Association of Classical teachers exists to preserve and support the teaching of Classics in schools and colleges. Its members are drawn from teachers in schools and universities in the United Kingdom and abroad. The Executive Officers are all part-time: they are either serving or retired teachers. The main work of the Association is done by a number of subject committees; there are at present six such committees: Ancient History, Classical Civilisation, Latin, Greek Textbook and Audio-Visual Aids. Committees are established by the Council for an initial period of five years and their existence is renewed for further five-year periods as long as they are varied. The income of the Association is, for the most part, derived from an annual subscription paid by members; however, some income is received from the sale of the Association's publications which are zero-rated for VAT'. These facts which form part of a submission to the officers of Customs and Excise for a possible VAT registration by the Association may equally serve as an introduction to a short description of the workings and organization of JACT which the new Joint Features Editor invited me to contribute. What follows, I hasten to add, is a personal view: others wiser and more experienced in the ways of the Association will certainly be able to add detail and may well disagree with individual points of view. They will not, I hope, disagree with the main outlines of the description.

The governing body of JACT is the Council. Reference to the inside back cover of this journal will show that the council comprises six elected members (each member serving for a period of three years), two co-opted members (serving for a period of one year with a maximum of three) and five members nominated by other classical bodies in this country. They, together with the President and the Chairman of Council, make up the voting members of council. In addition, the Executive Officers attend ex-officio and other officers of the Association are invited. It has become customary in the recent past to invite other individuals who can make a significant contribution to matters on the agenda; thus, for example, the Chairmen of the Hellenic and the Roman Societies Schools Committee have attended meetings, while Dr P. V. Jones attended the November 1987 meeting of Council to contribute to the discussion upon the National Curriculum. The Council meets twice a year, normally in November and March at Gordon Square in London. There are certain regular items of business, a financial report, reports from the committees and the summer schools, AGM arrangements, reports from the editors of the various publications and from the publications officer upon sales. The agenda for each meeting is drawn up by a small preparatory committee which consists of the Executive Officers and two

ordinary members of council. Recent major items of business have included finance and publications, the organization and administration of the Association and, of course, the Governments proposals for the National Curriculum. The Council has been a forum for debate upon the preservation of classics in this country, giving guidance and advice to the officers who have the considerable task of putting the policies agreed by Council into practice. The decisions of Council are normally communicated to all members through the Editorial of the Bulletin which has customarily been written by the Executive Secretary.

The routine business of the Association is conducted by telephone, post and person through the JACT office in Gordon Square. This business of infinite variety, from routine requests about membership to the occasional request on abstruse points of scholarship, is dealt with by the London Secretary with part-time help from a secretarial assistant. The installation in 1987 of an answering machine has to some extent alleviated the loss of full-time secretarial assistance in the office. However, it remains the case that the office needs more regular manning than is currently available, though given the present London rates, such provision is not easily within the financial capacity of the Association. The future of the London office still needs to be settled.

Until some two or three years ago, the statement that the main work of the Association had devolved upon a number of committees would, with the exception of publications, have been accepted without question. Given that the Executive Officers are all part-time and that the Council meets only twice a year, it could hardly be otherwise. Traditionally, a JACT Committee was the outcome of one or more Didaskalos conferences. A small number of experienced and enthusiastic teachers (usually culled by John Sharwood Smith) met over one or two week-ends to consider some particular topic. A working-party was formed to propose and eventually to take action, such a working-party was, in time, given official approval and became a JACT Committee. Thus the Ancient History Committee was formed to devise the JACT Ancient History syllabus, operated by the Oxford and Cambridge Board – and that Committee still meets regularly twice a year to consider the operation of the A-Level Examination changes in topics, help for teachers etc. Similarly with the Classical Civilisation Committee which has oversight of the JACT A-Level in that subject. Both Committees set up a Bureau for their subjects, each with a secretary who regularly produces a Broadsheet giving details of the syllabus, results, changes, together with articles and reviews to help those teaching the syllabus. This summer, for the first time, the Classical Civilisation Committee organised under the direction of Peter Evans, Solihull

Vith Form College, a Summer School to help pupils who were either starting the subject with no classical background or who wished to reinforce what they had already learned with a rounded and in-depth study of the ancient world. This Summer School was the subject of an article in the Times Educational Supplement (3766) for 2nd September 1988.

At an early stage in the history of JACT attention was given to Greek. There were two main topics – how to preserve any teaching of that subject in schools and the provision of suitable course books. After long discussion the Greek Committee, with agreement from Council, decided upon a public appeal for funds to support a project to write a new course designed to teach Greek to older beginners, i.e. primarily Sixth-form pupils (aged 16–17 years). It was to be a two-year course leading to an A/O (Advanced/Ordinary) qualification and would concentrate upon providing pupils with a sound grasp of the language enabling them to read a worthwhile selection of literature. There was some doubt at the time about the feasibility of the appeal: the success of Dr Peter Jones and his team must rank as one of the outstanding achievements of the Association during its first twenty-five years. The Greek Committee also devoted its attention to the problems facing pupils who wished to learn Greek but whose schools could and would not provide tuition. Thus was born the first JACT Summer School where for some two-weeks keen and interested pupils were given the opportunity in small and intensive classes with experienced teachers to learn Greek and read some Greek literature. That Summer School has grown steadily and, despite the considerable cost, and the numbers annually applying, show little sign of slackening. Indeed, given the introduction of the National Curriculum, they may well increase. Other non-residential Summer Schools have been established: it is clear that JACT will need to give careful thought to how increasing numbers of pupils who are denied the opportunity to study the classical languages may be given regular teaching and support outside their normal schooling. The Greek Committee also developed the Greek Diploma – a qualification available particularly to teachers who had no formal qualification in the subject. Such students, with the help of experienced teachers, are enabled over a period of years to gain sufficient proficiency in the language and literature to be able to teach the subject to school pupils. The number of students is inevitably small but the Diploma serves a perceived need.

The Latin Committee came later upon the scene. Among its first acts was to support the establishment of a JACT Latin Summer School to provide for pupils in the same way as the Greek Summer School. Though the Director of the Summer School, at present Mrs Lorna Kellett, has long been of a member of the Latin Committee and reports upon the progress of the school year by year, the connection between the school and the committee is somewhat looser than that of the Greek Summer School with the Greek Committee. The Latin Committee has recently concerned itself with the problem of providing Latin within the secondary school curriculum, with gathering information to create a database upon Latin

teaching in secondary schools and, under the chairmanship and direction of Mr Richard Woff, in producing the highly successful and useful Manual for the Classics Teacher. This publication will surely help teachers, perhaps the majority, who, in maintained schools may be threatened by the gradual introduction of the all-embracing National Curriculum.

A depressing feature of the past decade or more has been the decline in educational publishing. Not only are very few school textbooks or texts published, but many are allowed to go out of print and remain so. The textbook Committee has in conjunction with publishers and with examination boards, had the task of reviewing and monitoring the position. At one time the Committee itself proposed to publish, but that venture had to be halted in view of costs and uncertain sales: unless the Association were to receive some grand legacy of several hundred thousand pounds it is hard to see how such a venture could be revived. For some time now the Textbook Committee has been working upon a Good Texts Guide and it is hoped that before long an edition for Latin Texts will be available to members.

The Audio-Visual Aids Committee is unique, with almost no formal meetings and with few members, but with the remarkable enthusiasm and energy of its Secretary, Mr W. Ball, it manages to keep an oversight of new and revised teaching aids and to provide regular reviews of such materials for the Bulletin. There have been other committees but the policy of Council has been that, when a committee has completed its task or reports that it has little work to do, in such circumstances its existence should not be further extended. Thus in the early days of JACT there was a Preparatory Schools Committee which worked upon a revision of the Common Entrance examinations. Recently there has been a move to consider the provision of classics in the 8–13 range in both independent and maintained schools and, following a conference of teachers and lecturers at St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, last May there is some likelihood of Council being asked to establish a JACT Committee for that age range. It is likely too that the LAG Foundation Course Bureau will be subsumed under arrangements proposed by that Working Party.

Not the least of the achievements of the Association has been the regular provision of information, reports, reviews, articles and more in the various publications. Throughout its history, members of JACT have received a termly Bulletin. In the unhurried past this was edited by the Executive Secretary with the devoted assistance of the Assistant Secretary in the London office. The Bulletin is now the responsibility of a Bulletin Editor, at present Mrs Marion Baldock. The Bulletin continues to be one lifeline between the Association and its members: it deals essentially with information and news. Originally it published the reviews but these are now incorporated with features in the JACT Review – a publication which was the outcome of protracted, difficult, but amicable negotiations between JACT and ARLT in 1985 and 1986. Published twice a year it shares Features Editors nominated by the two associations and a Reviews Editor agreed jointly. This

division of labour spreads the work evenly among the editors who all hold other full-time teaching appointments. In addition to these publications, and other occasional productions such as the Manual and the more recent Philology pamphlet, members receive a free copy of the Magazine Omnibus. Unlike the Bulletin and the JACT Review this is aimed at a wide-market of upper-school pupils and goes on general sale to the public. In my last report to the JACT AGM in Cambridge I described Omnibus as 'the jewel in the crown' of JACT's publication – a view to which I firmly hold since I believe that it is only by creating interest and enthusiasm among pupils – which

Omnibus clearly does – that the subject can have any real prospect of survival.

In the submission to Customs and Excise I wrote that the main business of the Association was carried on by a number of subject committees. When describing the work of those committees I suggested that what was written in the submission would, until two or three years ago, have been unquestioned. Why the change? In my short time as Executive Secretary JACT was regularly asked for comment or views by examination boards, by parliamentary committees and by government. In the case of examination boards the topics could normally be properly and



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swiftly dealt with by JACT subject committees. When JACT was asked to submit its views to the Kingman Committee on the Teaching of English, the time allowed was such that it was possible to establish a Working Party, chaired by Mrs Carol Handley, which was able to meet and produce an eloquent submission. On the other hand, for Dr Higginson's Committee on A-Level it was only possible to circulate the Chairmen of JACT Committees and a few other members considered suitably qualified.

Their views, collated by Mr Richard Smail, were then submitted on behalf of the Association. Then, formally, came the proposals for the National Curriculum: published in late July 1987, received by JACT in early August, comments required by the end of September. Fortunately, with the agreement of the Treasurer and the co-operation of the other classical associations and societies, it was possible to alert members and to encourage lobbying – which certainly gave the subject a high profile to the possible embarrassment of the Secretary of State. Certainly no other school subject featured as an Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons. It was, however, doubly fortunate for the Association that the Executive

Officers, upon whom responsibility for the JACT campaign rested because of the absurd time scale allowed by government, happened, quite fortuitously, to have the time available. There is no question but that the organization and administration of JACT has changed to meet altered circumstances but I still have the feeling that further change will be needed if it is to respond to the challenge of the National Curriculum. I was much impressed by the United States experience: there a National Committee for Latin and Greek campaigns and lobbies for the subjects. One of my last acts as Executive Secretary was to write to the other classical associations and societies to suggest that serious thought be given to establishing such a co-ordinating body in this country, for of this I am sure: JACT cannot in isolation preserve and support the existence of classics in maintained and independent schools in Mr Baker's Brave New World.

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On the position of Classical Languages in the Federal Republic of Germany

Kjeld Matthiessen

For a better understanding of the following observations I should like first to say a few words about the system of schooling in the Federal Republic before the educational reforms of 1970.

The German school system, as it developed in the nineteenth century, was hierarchically divided. The great majority of pupils attended a General School for eight years. What was at first a small minority of less than 10 per cent, but which increased year by year, left this General School after four years and went on to a school, either for six years to a Modern School, which prepared pupils for middle-ranking careers, or to one of three types of Grammar School, which alone qualified pupils to study at University or Technical High School. These three types

were the Classical Gymnasium, which taught Latin, English and Greek, the Gymnasium for Modern Languages, which taught English, Latin, and French and lastly the Gymnasium for Mathematics and Science, which taught English and offered French and Latin as optional subjects. It may be of interest to English readers that English played a very small part in German education during the nineteenth century. It only began to spread after 1900, thanks to the influence of Kaiser Wilhelm II, whose mother was a daughter of Queen Victoria, and it was not until 1938 that it supplemented French as the most important modern language.

The Classical Gymnasium, previously known simply as 'Gymnasium' or 'Gymnasium for the Humanities' was the

oldest type of Grammar School, which took shape in the period between 1810 and 1820, and for a long time was the only avenue for entry to University. The other two types were added in the course of the nineteenth century, and lengthy battles were needed before they succeeded in 1900 in securing similar recognition. Until the end of the imperial era in 1918, the number of Classical Gymnasiums considerably exceeded the other types, but it declined during the Weimar Republic (1919–37), and even more so under the Nazis (1933–45). During the early post-war years (1945–60), in the course of general restoration this kind of School experienced a last, brief flowering. But in the sixties there came at first an imperceptible, but soon an even more noticeable decline, not only in the Classical Gymnasium itself, but also in the teaching of Classical Languages in the other kinds of school. A good deal of the blame for this may have rested with old-fashioned methods of teaching; probably more decisive was the shift of general interest at that time towards the Natural and Social Sciences.

The decline was not at first noticed because the total number of pupils was rising, and because more and more pupils were transferring to the secondary schools, and in particular to the Gymnasium. The tendency to send children to school 'for longer periods and to better institutions' was widespread, and encouraged by every means by politicians concerned with education. There was also an overall improvement in the school system. The General School was divided into four years of Basic School, compulsory for all pupils, followed by at first four, then five, and eventually six years at a Main School, the timetable of which bore a strong resemblance to that of the Modern School and Gymnasium. All these developments had been carried out, or at last introduced by 1970.

As a result of the educational reforms of 1970–5 the school system in the Federal Republic was radically altered.

1. The Gymnasium, hitherto a school for the minority, became the most popular form of secondary school. Whereas in 1967 20 per cent of pupils moved on to the Gymnasium, this had risen to 38 per cent by 1985, and a further rise is expected. It was made easier to transfer from the other kinds of school (Main School and Modern School) to the higher forms of the Gymnasium. Pupils from Modern Schools in particular make considerable use of this facility.

2. Sociological subjects made their way into the timetable, and simultaneously the time given to Mathematics and Science was increased. Both these developments took place at the expense of linguistics and literary subjects. In particular Latin and Greek lost periods, and where they were hitherto compulsory subjects, became alternative, or optional subjects.

3. The traditional three types of Gymnasium (for Classics, Modern Languages and Mathematics and Science) were abandoned in favour of a single non-specialised Gymnasium. At appropriate points in the curriculum opportunities for choice were given corresponding to those available in schools of the old type. Alongside the three kinds of secondary school, there appeared a new

kind, the Comprehensive School, combining within itself all the previously existing types (i.e. Main School, Modern School, and Gymnasium). In what follows I do not consider the Comprehensive School in any detail, though there are not many of them as yet, their number is increasing, and instruction in Latin is given in them, if not very widely. In the new non-specialised Gymnasium, Latin can be chosen from the fifth, seventh, ninth, or eleventh year, Greek from the ninth or eleventh. The latter, however only applies if there is sufficient interest, and if there are teachers at the school capable of teaching Greek. Latin from the fifth year is offered only at particular schools, mostly those that were originally classical Gymnasiums. It is at such schools too that Greek is most likely to be available.

4. The top three classes of the Gymnasium were organised in a different way (with an Upper Stage or College Stage), which provided pupils with an even wider choice of subjects (the course system). Whereas Latin and Greek were previously compulsory in certain kinds of school up to or until shortly before the Leaving Examinations, they now became optional subjects, which would be chosen, according to particular regulations, either as basic courses for three periods a week, or as full courses for six periods a week. However, a fixed minimum number of applicants has to be reached before such courses can take place.

The four changes taken together seemed likely at first to prove disastrous for the Classical Languages. Now, after an interval of time, it can be seen that developments were less dramatic than was originally expected.

The situation of Classical Languages is different in every one of the eleven states of the Federal Republic because, within the framework of certain general rules, the states are autonomous in the way they arrange their school system. The two extremes are Bavaria and Bremen: in Bavaria the situation of Classical Languages is particularly favourable, while it is particularly unfavourable in Bremen. Nevertheless, even in Bavaria the languages have lost much ground in comparison with the past, while even in Bremen teaching in Latin and Greek is still available. In what follows, I start with conditions in my own state of North Rhine-Westphalia, with which I am most familiar. This state adopts an intermediate position between the two extremes.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, although Latin has lost its privileged position, it has nevertheless remained an important school subject. Though it lags far behind English, a language that every pupil has to study from the fifth to the tenth year in the Main School and the Modern School as well as in the Gymnasium, it is still far ahead of French, the third most important foreign language. At the present time, 52 per cent of pupils in Gymnasiums are studying Latin in one form or another, and the trend is slightly upwards. Greek too is surviving, if in a reduced form. At present, 5 per cent of pupils in Gymnasiums are studying Greek. On the other hand, it is apparent that as a result of the reduction in the time available, teaching in the two languages is achieving less than before. To put it succinctly, never in the history of German education have so many pupils learned so little Latin as in recent years.

As an example, I give the timetables for the different courses in North Rhine-Westphalia:

LATIN

twenty five per cent as their third, while about twenty-five per cent take up the subject for the first time at the Upper Stage.

The universities of North Rhine-Westphalia require a

| | School Year | Age | Full Course | | Basic Course | Full Course | Basic Course |
|--------------------|---------------|-------|-------------|----|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Secondary Stage II | 13 | 18-19 | 6 | | 3* | 6* | 3 |
| | 12 | 17-18 | 6 | | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| | 11 } 2nd half | 16-17 | 6 | | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| | | | 3 | 3* | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 11 } 1st half | | 3 | 3* | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Secondary Stage I | 10 | 15-16 | 3* | 3 | 4 | | |
| | 9 | 14-15 | 3 | 3 | 4 | | |
| | 8 | 13-14 | 4 | 4 | | | |
| | 7 | 12-13 | 4 | 4 | | | |
| | 6 | 11-12 | 5 | | | | |
| | 5 | 10-11 | 5 | | | | |

Thus a pupil at a Gymnasium can nowadays receive teaching in Latin for a maximum of nine years, and the number of hours devoted to Latin in any one year will never exceed 34.5. By way of comparison, in 1891 a pupil at a Classical Gymnasium could also have studied Latin for a maximum of nine years. But the number of hours given to the subject every year was 62.

knowledge of Latin of the standard of the LATINUM (i.e. the ability to read reasonably demanding literary texts) for a large number of the courses of the philosophical faculties and for the theological faculties. Teachers need to be aware of this when advising pupils and parents about their choice of subjects. Pupils are not properly qualified to study at university until they have achieved a knowledge of Latin to the standard of the LATINUM. The earliest school year in which this standard can be

GREEK

| | School Year | Age | Full Course | | Basic Course | Full Course | Basic Course |
|--------------------|---------------|-------|-------------|---|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Secondary Stage II | 13 | 18-19 | 6 | | 3 | 6* | 3 |
| | 12 | 17-18 | 6* | | 3* | 6 | 3 |
| | 11 } 2nd half | 16-17 | 6 | | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | |
| Secondary Stage I | 10 | 15-16 | | 4 | | | |
| | 9 | 14-15 | | 4 | | | |

Thus a pupil at a Gymnasium can receive teaching in Greek for a maximum of five years, and the number of hours devoted to Greek in any one year will never exceed 24.5. By contrast, in 1891 a pupil at a Classical gymnasium could have studied Greek for six years, and the number of hours given to the subject every year was 36.

achieved (in Greek as well as Latin) is marked in the tables given above by an asterisk.

Of course, this knowledge of Latin can also be achieved by courses in Latin taken at university. But these courses are always oversubscribed. They do not provide anything like as good conditions for learning as school, and they are a heavy burden for students in their first term.

About ten per cent study Latin as their first foreign language, about forty per cent as their second.

phical or theological subject at University to make use of the better opportunities for study available at school.

I am not pessimistic about the future of Latin teaching in our schools; but there are big problems. One is that far too few periods are available in Classes 9 and 10. (In some states there is an allocation of four hours a week at this stage too). My optimistic outlook applies mainly to the courses in Secondary Stage I, at the end of which the conditions for the LATINUM are fulfilled, as well as to those in Secondary Stage II leading up to LATINUM.

There are greater difficulties with the Latin courses of Secondary Stage II which go beyond the LATINUM. A knowledge of Latin extending beyond the LATINUM is only required of those intending to study Latin and Greek at university. A further difficulty is that such courses are only held if there is a minimum number of applicants. Again and again one hears that even in traditional schools the requisite number cannot be found. Furthermore, pupils are not completely free in their choice, but have to choose their courses, according to certain rules, from the linguistic and literary, the mathematical and scientific, and the sociological fields. They have to choose one foreign language, but it is difficult for them to choose a second one since they have to pay due regard to the other two fields of study. So Latin finds itself in fatal competition with the attractive languages of English and French. Decisive in their choice of course, besides factors beyond the control of the Latin teacher, is the motivation that pupils receive during their Latin lessons at Secondary Stage I. This motivation can be greatly influenced by the Latin teacher. It depends on the quality of the textbooks, the choice of reading matter, the way in which the texts are interpreted and made to come alive, and by the abilities and whole personality of the teacher.

Knowledge of Greek is required by the universities for the course of the theological faculties and for the few subjects of the philosophical faculty that are connected with the ancient world. Nevertheless the Greek courses at the universities are also oversubscribed. That is a sign that too little Greek teaching is offered in our schools. In fact, since the educational reform, the teaching of Greek has declined steeply. As a result of the disappearance of the specialised Gymnasium, the subject has lost the protection granted it by the Classical Gymnasium, where every pupil was obliged to spend five or six years learning Greek. Now the subject has to maintain itself on the "free market". That applies not only to Secondary Stage I where Greek is

in competition with French in particular, but also to Secondary Stage II where courses in Greek are in competition with all other courses including those in Latin. On top of that the subject has to contend with the special disadvantages that apply to the second and all further foreign languages. From the standpoint of the university subject of Classical Philosophy, the most desirable combination would be that of a full course in Latin with a course in Greek, but that is precisely the combination that can only be put on with the greatest difficulty in the system of courses in the Upper Stage. In addition, Greek is faced with the special problems that arise from the small number of possible takers.

One must, however, also see the opportunities that a non-specialised Gymnasium offers the subject of Greek. Hitherto it was limited to the small number attending the Classical Gymnasium; now it can be offered to all those attending a Gymnasium. So that this possibility, afforded by law, can actually be made use of, a positive advocacy of the subject, not, alas, so far in evidence, is required.

Although it is possible in principle to learn Greek without any preliminary study of Latin, yet in the widespread teaching of Latin and the requirements of the LATINUM for many university courses, practical Greek speaking, this case does not exist. Our Greek textbooks, whether explicitly or implicitly, continue to assume a knowledge of Latin accidence and syntax.

In conclusion, I should not conceal the fact that the teaching of Classical Languages, and in particular Greek, will be threatened again by the general decline in the number of pupils. In the next few years many of our schools will have to close or amalgamate because of a shortage of pupils. It is easy to imagine the difficulties for the subject of Greek. To meet them much imaginative organisation will be needed. In small towns with only one Gymnasium it will be even harder than before to maintain the teaching of Greek. In larger towns one will have to strengthen the collaboration between a number of schools in order to produce viable courses. That applies particularly to the course on offer in the Upper Stage, and not only in Greek but increasingly in Latin as well.

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(The article is translated by Peter Needham of Eton College).

Latin and Greek in Europe: The present situation

Peter Wülfing

In April 1986 delegates from eleven European countries assembled at Tübingen in West Germany to exchange brief reports on the present state of the teaching of the classical languages in their respective countries. The occasion was that of the 11th Colloquium Didacticum Classicum. I do not propose here to reproduce fully the results of that discussion but to present instead a synthesis of the views expressed.

The Present Situation

A Panoramic View of Europe

At first sight common elements of the eleven countries seem hidden beneath the great diversity of their education systems: centralism more or less rigorous in Greece, Italy, Austria, Holland, Denmark, Great Britain and France; decentralisation – particularly in education – in Switzerland, West Germany, Yugoslavia and Belgium.

In fact the contrast between the two systems is more marked if one takes note of the private sector which, paradoxically, sometimes occupies an important place in the centralised countries and, on the other hand, of the legal framework destined to limit autonomous whims in the federalised countries. However it may be, the diversity both in the teaching of the ancient languages and in the administrative methods of organization is certainly a reality. To give just one example, in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany, there are no less than four different approaches to Latin at the secondary school level.

But I shall begin by talking about the agreed common elements. **There is no country which has not undergone decisive reforms in the course of the last ten years, affecting secondary education in general and much more particularly the ancient languages** more than other subjects.

The main tendencies seem to be as follows:

- Abandonment of a school structure run on social class lines: labourers, clerks, higher levels... There has been a preference for creation of general establishments open to all but which offer – apparently inevitably – a notable diversity of options beneath their apparent unity.

- Differentiation shows itself above all in the last stage of secondary schooling. Specialization with a view to a future career has replaced what was once called ‘general culture’. Curricular time allocated to science, technology as well as the social sciences has increased at the expense of the ancient languages in particular.

- The introduction and diffusion of choice within the

curriculum shows that we are no longer agreed about what is worth studying and knowing, that is to say about the priorities to be imposed on the general teaching programme. Thus, since we do not know how to justify giving direction, we prefer to turn to personal choice or the inclinations of our pupils without always considering the fragility of the criteria involved therein. The consequence for the classical languages is that **we no longer dare to include them in an obligatory curriculum of the first stage of secondary schooling and we have delayed the start of their teaching almost everywhere.**

These changes did not occur at the same time in all countries. Gradual and varying reforms have taken place from the beginning of the century up to the present day with different levels of achievement: sometimes the decisive stage was reached at the beginning of the century, as in Denmark with the introduction there of courses in Greek and Roman Civilization, while in other countries it happened in the twenties, as in Italy with the *Gentile* reform. 1945 brought a great upheaval in the socialist countries of eastern Europe. Most countries in the west were affected by reforms in the sixties, often, however, a little earlier than what is known in France as ‘the Events of May’. This cycle of reforms is not yet complete. Sometimes there has only been a change of pace, sometimes a change of direction, sometimes there has been a reversal on points of detail. As a general rule there is an increasing attempt to fit in with the needs of the economy ... and with constraints imposed by economic budgets! The ancient languages very often become the victims.

Permit me now to present some more detailed information from the eleven reports that I mentioned before. It is immediately noticeable that those problems judged as most urgent in individual countries are common to several if not all of the countries involved. It is these matters of common concern that I wish to emphasise.

For Greece, Daniel JAKOB of Salonica spoke mainly about the question of translations. In 1976 study of texts in the original Greek was in effect suppressed at the *gymnase* level [up to GCSE – Ed.]. The curriculum allocation in terms of time was not altered but teaching of ancient Greek was done from translation. Ancient Greek itself is begun only at the *lycee* level (post GCSE). This development is not unparalleled elsewhere, since study from translated texts was officially introduced into teaching in France twenty years ago. It is, however, a development of great significance for us. For the moment I shall only state my regret that the use of translations tends to be

a last resource, to which we make furtive recourse when pressed by lack of time. We ought instead to raise the matter openly and work out a teaching method for the use of translations, in particular the comparison of translations, and – most important – the use of the parallel text!

With regard to Italy Carlo SANTINI of Perugia drew attention to the difficulty of adapting teaching – he was thinking principally of older student beginners – to the particular needs of the various professions. The future librarian requires ‘a different Latin’ from the teacher of literature. In effect the question he raises goes much further: within the study of literature itself, should we teach the same texts to both philologists of the romance languages and classicists whose interests lie either in literary genres or in the history of ideas?

Anton D. LEEMAN from Amsterdam denounced a recent administrative tendency which is developing in Holland but which has spread quickly already in all the other countries, namely the limiting of student entry in the most sought after courses, especially those that lead directly to a career (eg. in teaching or research). This has led to, on the one hand, courses with a fixed total where full teaching of classics is maintained and on the other, to new diploma courses open to all but with a less demanding programme. We can now distinguish among those courses which train pupils for teaching, those which lead to research and those which are designed to achieve a general culture (the Dutch term for those who take this last course is ‘generalists’). Our subject surely risks losing much in this ‘parcelling’, for it is a subject which is already almost completely divided up into language teaching, literature, and civilisation, all of which in turn distinguish among the archaic, classical and later periods.

The opening of courses to ‘generalists’ seems to me in itself a courageous measure. But some questions must be raised: should these courses have a syllabus so very different from that of the specialists? Will pupils complete courses which by definition do not lead to any practical end? Will such courses not become a reserve just for people later in life? And finally, will they not be the obvious target for economic cuts?

We should bear in mind too another new and unfavourable factor, namely the demographic decline, noticeable in varying degrees in all European countries. Sooner or later this will make itself felt so that starting up or even simply maintaining a Latin – and even more so Greek – course will pose great problems. This is also because in our subject we cannot rely on a compensating influx of immigrants, who to an extent counteract the general demographic imbalance in Europe!

Since I am addressing a French audience, it seems pointless to speak about what is well known here. I should, however, like to draw attention to one phenomenon which appeared very clearly from the French statistics, namely the preponderance of women in classics. At the upper secondary school level there are 18 girls to every 10 boys, and among those taking up the subject at university the ratio increases to 22 to 10 (figures from 1985–86)! What will the consequences of this development be – a development also noted in some other countries? Will it one day

bring changes to both the method and content of cl

Robert SCHILING, who presented the paper in France, called attention to another phenomenon which can also be observed in some other European countries. We can note a rise in the number of latinists at the secondary school level, the brutal drop in numbers at upper school detracts from the optimistic conclusion which might otherwise have been able to draw: in sum we are witnessing a stagnation in numbers. It is difficult to conclude anything about Greek numbers given the unreliability of the figures, but its situation is more than precarious.

For Great Britain, John MUIR spoke about the opening of courses of Greek and Roman civilisation in Classical Studies. The courses are very popular ... and can be compared with similar courses already in existence in Denmark... Unfortunately they have not enjoyed the expected success in stimulating pupils to follow in Greek or Classical Civilisation courses on entrance to university.

It must be emphasised that only the Scandinavian countries and England have experimented with the teaching of ancient civilisation and history through imitations, drawings, models and translated texts to a great number of pupils including young pupils. In Holland such a course of study has been rejected; in Germany it has not even been discussed. Only the special case of Greece might be compared.

I think, however, that the question must be put back on the agenda. Of course teachers are concerned that Classics without the languages sells the values of the ancient world at too low a price. But is this a real danger? Would we rather gain access to a market drawn from different backgrounds, which would otherwise never have had a close, serious or creative contact with antiquity? On the Continent we are engaged in a purely defensive campaign to safeguard the classical teaching that still exists. Resistance has its uses and indeed occasionally achieves results; but it should not hinder us, as is often the case, from turning to the offensive.

In England intensive language courses, organised as Summer Schools enjoy considerable and growing success... Several other countries have instituted courses for students taking up Classics at university level, as shown in papers from Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Holland and Germany made clear. But while such courses exist it seems that they have neither the attraction nor the standard of the English Summer Schools. [The paper continues by making some suggestions for improving courses for the maturer beginner in Classics along the lines of the English Summer Schools – Ed.]

To return to the discussion papers, Annette SCHNEIDER of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, examined the difficulties caused by decentralisation. Each of the twenty-six cantons and demi-cantons follows its own educational system. Nevertheless all seem to share the same general orientation in that the start of the teaching of classical languages is delayed. This is what happened in France in 1968, and has occurred in Italy, Austria and in Greece with ancient Greek. In some cases intermediary stag

termed 'orientation' or 'sensitisation' have been introduced.

The situation in Yugoslavia as described by Marijan BRUČIĆ made us realise what can happen when teaching is reduced solely to the level of defending the ancient languages. In the absence of any positive movement only in a few centres which inherit a particularly well established tradition does the teaching of Latin and Greek have a chance of survival – at the price of growing isolation. One of these bastions is at Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, another is at Zagreb and the last at Belgrade. The tradition of ancient Greek also survives in Macedonia. This sort of 'devolution' cannot be excluded for western Europe, as the contributions from Holland, Germany and England pointed out.

Josef VEREMANS from Belgium devoted the whole of his paper to the situation of Greek. I shall mention here one of his interesting ideas, a course in the scientific terminology which derives from Greek. This approach can be very stimulating and is also much used in the United States.

[A version of Kjeld MATTHIessen's paper for West Germany, especially updated for JACT, is printed in this issue as a separate article – Ed.]

Textbooks

In Yugoslavia new textbooks have given good results. This leads me to raise the question, which until now has received little consideration, namely international (or at least European) co-operation in the matter of school texts. Innovative ideas, new methods and new texts ought to be rapidly exchanged so as to avoid the repetition of errors and loss of time. Personally I have learned much from the Cambridge Latin Course. It gave a working party from Cologne the idea of excerpting judiciously simplified passages from Cicero and Pliny which, accompanied by commentaries and slides, were used to prepare pupils at the secondary level to read complete texts.

Concerning international exchange, a Dutch textbook called *Redde Rationem* has been translated into German with very satisfactory results. In Austria a book of Scottish origin, *Via Nova* enjoys a certain success as well as attracting some severe criticism. In Germany now we are witnessing a veritable flourishing of new textbooks, some of which are well established. As regards Greek I should like to mention *Lexis*, while in Latin *Cursus Latinus*, *Contextus*, *Ostia* and *Litterae* all offer fresh approaches. I know that the same applies in France, Italy and even in Greece where for three or four years now they have begun to wean themselves away from the famous *Lhomond!*

Personally I see four main tendencies at work in the renewal of textbooks:

1. The integration of grammatical approaches suggested by modern linguistics, or more precisely by its different schools.
2. The opening up of the language course in the direction of civilization and history, that is to say in my view towards a greater semantic coherence which can partially remedy the inevitable grammatical lacunae given the reduction in curriculum time.

3. An increase in the scope of Latin literature to include texts from late antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Humanist period etc.

4. A look at the modern world to compare ancient texts with corresponding or non-corresponding modern ones from the linguistic point of view as well as that of content.

Balance and Perspectives

The Future of Greek

Greek finds itself in a bad position, poorly protected and poorly defended in all the countries under consideration. It seems that no one has tried to justify in any way the existence of a separate teaching method for Greek. [In fact Peter Wülfing himself has put forward some extremely interesting views on the comparison of Greek and Latin in a stimulating paper printed in *Latin Teaching* (1985), pp. 10–18 – Ed.] Greek is learned everywhere after Latin as a methodical complement to it. Greek **instead** of Latin does not exist in Italy, Switzerland or Denmark. It has not been possible to do this recently in Austria and the occurrence of Greek only in England, Germany, Belgium and Yugoslavia is insignificant. Everywhere the practical obstacles are considerable and, indeed, in France the study of Greek without Latin excludes entry into Classics at university level.

[The article proceeds to show how the weak position of Greek and its dependance on Latin arise from the history of Classics in European education. Only introduced towards the end of the 18th century it met with a hostile reaction from traditionalists – who preferred Latin – and then almost immediately shared with Latin the same slow but inevitable retreat from the system of education. By the beginning of this century Latin was no longer a prerequisite for all university entrants, although it had to be studied at university. Latin is still at present obligatory in Germany in theology and philosophy but this too is on the way out. – Ed.]

Defining Our Objectives

The fall-off observed in universities has been matched by a comparable development at the secondary school level: continual diminution of curriculum time. What makes this change difficult to cope with for teachers is that there has been no proportional diminution in the rigour and content of courses – at least not officially. The courses are still substantial, so that teaching has to adapt as best it can to the brutal reality. The only revision and reduction has been in the active knowledge tested (essentially pronunciation and composition) and the range of the authors studied. For the rest we avoid admitting too clearly that the passages read are of extreme poverty and that a translation must often be used to fill in the gaps which have left the few paragraphs that were studied in the original deprived of sense. This situation causes much delusion, much reticence and even dishonesty. It discourages experienced teachers and frightens off young ones...

Responsibility for this state of affairs is widely shared. First of all there is our own indecision in the face of the reality which we refuse to accept. We prefer to grumble

rather than to think hard, make choices and defend them in the face of public opinion. Those responsible for educational strategy have also been indecisive. They overload curricula with new subjects, thus bleeding dry our rich and exacting disciplines, even though they themselves are convinced of their value and of the need to preserve them.

I believe that the only way to remedy this vicious circle is **to negotiate at the same time about quantity and quality**. What I mean is that if we classicists refuse to run the risk of defining precisely the content of our courses, which implies necessarily the retaining of what we consider as priorities and the discarding of the less important, **then we will remain incapable of working out the amount of time absolutely necessary for the teaching of our subjects**. We shall vegetate forever in sullen opposition, perpetually protesting against the shortage of time, when the only question we have to pose is: **how many school periods are necessary to achieve our**

objective? Have you ever made that calculation in your country? In Germany at least I can say that we have not.

We can no longer afford to cherish illusions: a discipline such as ours, which cannot make claim to any immediate utility, needs institutional protection. This can never be gained in advance and will always depend on fluctuation in public opinion. Such necessarily favourable treatment imposes upon us a double duty: not only that of rigour and seriousness in our teaching but also that of remaining open to the needs of the contemporary world as revealed in the interests of our pupils. We must not recoil from innovation. We all know very well that we are dealing with a precarious equilibrium and a never-ending struggle. We must deploy all our courage and all our intelligence.

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(The article is translated, and abbreviated where appropriate, by the JACT Features Editor.)

Quod Vides Perisse Perditum Ducas: Classics and the Statutory Curriculum of 1988

Peter Cornall

When I agreed to write this contribution, I was uncertain what its tone would prove to be: it would have been agreeable to have found myself able to offer an optimistic view. In the short term, the words of a senior HMI, reported in the latest JACT Bulletin, make good sense – ‘Don’t take your bats away: play on the wicket that is there.’ Something rather less facile may be required from a more detached observer; and if I err on the side of despondency, to provoke a vigorous reaction may be more productive than to offer bland reassurance.

For the readers of this journal, the most significant feature of the national curriculum is that it is not truly ‘national’, but a statutory norm from which there is, for a minority, freedom to depart. Rejecting the two entirely logical options of either no imposed curriculum or a curriculum required of all schools without exception, the Government has chosen to loosen the structure of school provision, in the hope of bringing market forces to bear on all maintained schools, while establishing its so-called ‘national’ curriculum as a obligation from which, most

oddly, the minority schools (some created by themselves, others purely private but educating state-funded pupils) are exempt.

Such a state of affairs can only be deemed logical by defining ‘national’ in a most curious way: the meaning which certainly cannot be applied is the very one which might have seemed most natural – ‘self-evidently essential to the education of all young citizens of England and Wales’. What might, had it been the product of a genuinely consultative process, and had it been applied to all schools, have commanded widespread loyalty, as the expression of a corporate, ‘one nation’, sense of purpose, has instead been deprived of any moral claim on the allegiance of those regulated by it. It might have represented, even if paradoxically, an all-embracing unity of perception about objectives, at a moment when competition and division were for political reasons being exalted. There would have been appeal in such a formulation, applicable to all, and presenting its challenge without distinction from the bravest and most beleaguered inner-

city comprehensive to Westminster and St Paul's, Eton and Winchester. This is, as we know, exactly what has not happened. A government, whose authority among its supporters is quite exceptionally strong, has chosen *not* to adopt a national curriculum; and the significance of this for teachers of Classics is that their subject is likely to become more than ever a mark of distinction between private and public education, surviving in the one, passing away in the other, and often for reasons which have little to do with perceived educational benefit.

If this happens, as I fear is very likely, it will be less the result of the curricular requirements of the Education Act, than a response to the general encouragement being given to competition between schools, and to the reinforcement of divisions, which are already powerful and socially dangerous. The curricular provisions in themselves do little to weaken the position of Classics in the maintained school. The imposition of 'core' and 'foundation' subjects may marginally reduce the maintained day school's room for curricular manoeuvre (compared with that enjoyed by schools somewhat more free to lengthen the teaching week); but that room is already very narrow. In many schools the time for an examination course in Latin has long been hard to find, except by withdrawing students from other subjects. Almost always any second modern language competes with Latin for the same 'slot' of time.

The practical arithmetic of the statutory curriculum (although the officials of the Department of Education and Science recoil from it) can be explained readily enough, if one accepts, for the purpose of illustration, a few simple assumptions. (1) In Years 4 and 5 (upon which attention is appropriately centred) the true unit of curricular currency is that amount of time (10%) which offers a decent chance of completing a single GCSE course. (2) The smallest subdivision of the week worth allocating to any course is 5%, or approximately 70 minutes a week. (3) The student keen to study Latin for GCSE is also ambitious to obtain the same qualification in a wide range of the more demanding subjects.

Such a student will devote time in at least these proportions to:-

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| English | 10% |
| Mathematics | 10% |
| Science | 20% (double certification) |
| Modern language | 10% |

The other foundation subjects required in all students' timetables are Art, Geography, History, Music, Physical Education, and Technology. Religious Education is also statutory. If one supposes that this list can offer our ambitious student two further GCSE courses (together taking 20% of the week), and that these (hypothetical) courses could in the future meet statutory obligations towards *four* of the listed subjects, thus:-

combined Geography & History GCSE course (10%)
 combined Technology & Music Technology GCSE*
 course (10%),

one can then allocate a minimal 5% each to the three remaining subjects (Art, P.E. and R.E. in our example)

and thus arrive at a total of 85% of the week used a disposable 15%.

As yet no time has been allowed for the personal social aspects of education to which almost all maintained schools attach importance. Health and careers education are highly specific components in most courses of this kind, and few teachers accept the mistaken assumption of the politicians and the civil servants that what are admittedly 'cross-curricular themes' can be left exclusively to cross-curricular teaching! What is in theory the responsibility of everyone so easily becomes in practice the responsibility of nobody at all.

A modest 5% for the personal and social aspects brings our total to 90%, and leaves precisely one slot to be contended for by such unhoused courses as the school cannot afford to offer. In smaller schools this list of courses will be a short one; it is only among these courses that additional languages can find a secure place within the normal timetable, and this puts Latin in direct competition with, say, German and Spanish. Only in larger schools, or where the classical tradition is unusually strong, will a Latin course of 'economic' size – a dozen, say, or perhaps fifteen – be likely to form itself in the face of competition which cannot be confined to alternative languages.

My calculations relate to the curricular requirements of the 1988 Education Act which applies to England and Wales: it is interesting to note that the different, and at first sight more flexible, patterns being recommended in Scotland, by the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum in their Guidelines for Headteachers of 1987, appear likely to produce in practice almost exactly the same constraints for Classics. A maximum of 32.5% of the week is suggested for 'Language and Communication', a 'module' which includes all provision for English and other language studies. This limit is only marginally more generous than the equivalent 30% allowed in the example offered above.

Meanwhile our own D.E.S. is recommending that a second modern language should not be introduced before Year 4. Although this is only a recommendation, and it relates to modern languages, very few schools, I think, will decide to provide an option for Latin alone in Years 2 or 3, at least within the normal hours. The length of most Latin courses will thus be reduced to two years below the Sixth Form, which will restrict GCSE success at 16 to students of exceptional talent and commitment. 11-18 schools may be able to guarantee an opportunity to complete GCSE study in their Sixth Forms; but this will be much more difficult in areas served by tertiary or Sixth Form Colleges. Certainly, delaying the introduction of Latin until Year 4 will do nothing to improve recruitment, and to halt the tendency for Latin courses to become so under-subscribed as to be considered uneconomic.

If I have been concentrating, up to this point, on Latin courses, when my title refers to Classics, this is not because I am failing to value the non-linguistic contributions which a Classics specialist can make to the curriculum. Nevertheless, I see the presence of a language course which will in most schools be Latin rather than Greek, as the key to the all-important retention of a Classics post

the staffing establishment. 'Retention' is the vital word here. Even their acquisition of unaccustomed new powers under Local School Management is unlikely to lead school governors into the wholesale dismissal of Classics teachers already in post; but the replacement of those who leave voluntarily is quite another matter. There is a world of difference between perceiving and valuing what an under-employed Classics teacher can contribute beyond the teaching of language – classical civilization, Roman Britain, ancient history, classical literature in translation, perhaps archaeology or philosophy – and deciding in cold blood to replace such a colleague who retires, in preference to the appointment of a different specialist who can be wholly deployed in the direct service of some core or foundation subject. At the moment of decision, when the sharp financial issues must be faced, and there is institutional freedom to adopt the solution seen as most cost-effective, it is the *indispensable* which will be replaced, not the marginal extra; and that means the teaching of the classical language, which is the most highly specialized activity. If that demand, for the language, is not compelling, the post will go; courses in progress will be seen through, in some more or less satisfactory way, and that will be that – the end of an old song.

Fewer pupils, fewer teachers; still fewer pupils, even less teachers: the vicious circle is complete. Can anything be done? If so, by whom? As they increasingly become the playthings of market forces, according to the prevailing doctrine, the schools will feel ever more strongly the pressure to demonstrate success in the areas of the curriculum most available to assessment and public scrutiny. Only sparingly, if at all, will they indulge in the 'uneconomic' sponsorship of minority pursuits. In a few districts, traditional attitudes (whether or not they have any profound cultural basis) may actually work in favour of the Classics, especially where private education is strong, and known to maintain these studies as a hallmark of 'quality'; but in most places, alas, the trend will be otherwise, and the decline inexorable.

Our Cornish experience of employing an Area Teacher of Classics, to maintain and promote Classical Studies in the populous district around St Austell, has demonstrated the limitations of external influence upon the practice of schools. Schools have welcomed outside support which has come to them as an uncharged supplement to their staff, allowing them to postpone hard decisions, and to maintain a toehold for Classics at little cost. (External supplementation of this sort is exactly the kind of intervention which will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for LEAs in the future.) Altogether, the results of this 'positive discrimination' suggest that the permanent establishment in the County of even one Advisory Teacher post for Classics would do much to encourage an interest in the classical civilizations, in both primary and secondary schools: but L.E.A. posts of this sort may be impossible under the new system of delegated finance, however desirable they may be in terms of cultural breadth.

What room is there for hope? Of a well-established and dependable place for Latin in the curriculum of the 11–16 age-group, very little. Outside a few exceptional enclaves,

in relatively prosperous urban areas, the maintenance of a tradition of Latin will become more and more unusual, the product of some local rivalry or an example of a particularly determined refusal to abandon hope for the Common Good in the face of disaster. In the primary schools, and perhaps in the earlier secondary years, Greeks and Romans will continue to fascinate, and to resist being set aside in favour of the less accessible but globally significant 'classical' civilizations of China and India, Central and South America. In larger Sixth Forms, and in post-16 Colleges, there will be important opportunities, if a Classics specialist is at hand to exploit them. Some students will be interested in starting Latin, to support their major studies in English, History or Romance Languages. There may in some places be enough GCSE classes to permit a small but valued Advanced Level course in Latin. Classical Civilization Courses at A Level are often popular, and so is Archaeology. Where provision can be made for adults in the same programme of courses (which could in an urban area involve evenings), classes can be simultaneously enlarged and enriched. It has been remarked so wisely that many major issues of today can be illuminated, in one way or another, by the recorded experience of the European classical civilizations.

These are the possible areas of growth, which we must allow to compensate us for the continuing decline in main school Latin, which only the better-endowed parts of the private sector will be sufficiently well-resourced to withstand. It is as well, after all, to remember that high culture and minority tastes, which often, but not always, coincide, positively depend on subsidy of one sort or another, and always have. The British state, under its present rulers, declines the privilege of acknowledging obligations of this sort, in any fashion worthy of a régime which boasts of restoring prosperity.

Even if they wished to give special support to Classics in their schools, Local Education Authorities are less and less able to do so. Rhetoric from Whitehall about their supposed curricular responsibilities is accompanied by new financial arrangements which are deliberately designed to squeeze to a minimum their capacity for independent action. Two lines from Roy Campbell are irresistible here, out of context but so pungent;

'They use the snaffle and the bit all right,
But where's the bloody horse?'

Let me report: the horse is staggering. Managerial responsibility is increasingly devolved to headteachers and governors who will have very little scope to exercise financial discretion in favour of minority interests. That which lies outside the core and the foundation lists has, by definition, little interest for a central government which has distinguished itself, even among British governments, for what Matthew Arnold would unquestionably have condemned as a 'Philistine' attitude, utilitarian and mean-spirited, towards cultural activities from which no clear economic profit is to accrue. And that which it eschews for itself, it bitterly resents in others, to the point of destruction: the Greater London Council perhaps wrote its death

warrant as much through its cultural enterprise as by its more overtly political activities. The lesson for the LEAs of the 1990s is plain enough: they will survive, if at all, by keeping their profile low, and by being good at monitoring and inspecting their schools. I gravely doubt whether

there will be much Classics for most of their reports to celebrate.

PETER CORNALL

Senior County Inspector of Schools for Cornwall.

The National Curriculum

A revised and abbreviated version of an address given to JACT AGM at Cambridge on May 14, 1988

Martin Thorpe

The Education Reform Bill – the ‘great’ Education Reform Bill – is now law, and the next few years will see the introduction of the national curriculum. The threat this poses to the continued existence of Classics, particularly in maintained schools, is only too apparent to members of JACT and has already received considerable attention in the Bulletin. The following paragraphs therefore concentrate on some of the more general implications of the reforms.

1 Not the National Curriculum

Not the Nine O’Clock News, Not the National Theatre – Not the National Curriculum.

a) The national curriculum will apply only in England and Wales, not in Scotland and Northern Ireland. This would not matter if we were dealing only with a matter of organization and mechanics, but the government defends its introduction of a national curriculum on grounds of general educational policy: it believes ‘pupils should be entitled to the same opportunities wherever they go to school’ and that ‘a national curriculum – will help to raise standards of attainment’ and draws attention to a number of advantages which ‘can be guaranteed only within a national framework for the secular curriculum’. Why are these advantages to be denied the children of Scotland and Northern Ireland?

(In fact, of course, the curriculum in Scotland has been carefully considered and extensively reformed in recent years but it is by no means as prescriptive as the curriculum proposed for England and Wales.)

b) Even within England and Wales the national curriculum will have legal force only in relation to maintained schools. For independent schools the government will issue a circular recommending ‘that they should take account of the principles of the national curriculum’; it seems likely that the independent schools – or at least the

major ones – will accept this recommendation. However, nearly all independent schools are selective and many of them are highly selective, and the impact of the national curriculum will be less restrictive upon them than upon the average maintained comprehensive school: the former may indeed be able to deliver the national curriculum – or at least to ‘take account of <its> principles’ – in 70% of timetabled hours, while the latter may find that it takes up more than 90% of those hours; the former will be able to enrich and mitigate the rigidity of the national curriculum more easily than the latter. Is it desirable to widen the division between independent and maintained education?

There is a real risk that a hierarchy of status will develop among schools and that the national curriculum will become what Professor Tomlinson has described as ‘a curriculum for other people’s children’¹.

2. Home Thoughts from Abroad

a) *They order this matter better in France:*

The government has defended its introduction of a national curriculum by reference to the situation abroad, so it may be worth examining something of the educational system in the two most obvious of our European partners – or trading rivals – and the position of Classics within each.

Particularly frequent reference is made to the West German system but these references are always partial. True, the vocational element in German education enjoys a high reputation for the contribution it is believed to make to economic prosperity; but it is virtually confined to the Hauptschule and Realschule and hardly affects the ablest pupils, those in the Gymnasium. True, there is an element of centralism in the coordinating work of the KMK; but West Germany is a federal republic and the eleven Länder have absolute autonomy in matters of school education. What is the position of Classics? We shall not be surprised that Latin – there is no Classical

Studies and Greek is a rarity – varies considerably in popularity from one Land to another; we may regret that its study is available only to the roughly one quarter of German pupils attending a Gymnasium; but we must be envious when we learn that it is studied for at least some time by more than half of Gymnasium pupils².

France is often regarded as the classic case of a national curriculum determined and administered from the centre, but this centralism now serves rather to protect than to threaten the position of Latin. More than a quarter of pupils in the comprehensive Collèges d'enseignement secondaire and about one eighth in the Lycées³ study Latin and the subject can be started either in the Quatrième (our Third Year) in the Collège or in the first year of the Lycée course, the Seconde. Moreover, M. Jean-Pierre Chevènement, Minister for Education in the previous socialist government, wanted not only to see an increase in the number of pupils studying the scientific and technological subjects but also a revival of interest in the purely literary sections of the Baccalauréat, including the Classical languages⁴.

A national curriculum need not work against the interests of Classics.

However, there are two further respects in which the situation in France and Germany – and in many other countries – differs significantly from that in this country.

b) *ὁ ἀνεξέταστος βίος...?*

Pupils taking the national curriculum will be assessed at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16. This will be partly a matter of internal assessment by teachers, but 'at the heart of the assessment process there will be nationally prescribed tests' and these will be subject to external moderation.

There is nothing comparable to this in France. There, pupils' progress in the nationally prescribed programmes of study is internally assessed by their teachers at all stages below the Baccalauréat; even the Brevet des Collèges, taken at the end of the Troisième and the nearest equivalent to our GCSE, is awarded on the basis of continuous assessment by the teachers.

In Germany too assessment is basically internal, continuous, and teacher-dominated. A recent HMI report stated 'the question of totally reliable comparability of assessments lower down the school – i.e. below the Abitur-, particularly at age 15 or 16, becomes much less important.'⁵

Do we need both a centrally prescribed curriculum, with centrally prescribed programmes of study, and a centrally controlled system of external assessment?

c) *ὑστερον πρότερον*

There are two main reasons why France and Germany can adopt such a comparatively relaxed attitude to assessment below the age of eighteen or nineteen.

In the first place, these countries – like most European countries, the USA and Canada, Japan and the countries of the developed world in general – retain a much larger proportion of their 16–18 age group in full-time education

Participation rate, as % of age group, 1981⁶

| | <i>Full-time</i> | | <i>Part-time</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | <i>School</i> | <i>Other</i> | | |
| France | 33 | 25 | 8 | 66 |
| W. Germany | 31 | 14 | 40 | 84 |
| Italy | 16* | 31 | 18 | 65 |
| Netherlands | 50 | 21 | 8 | 79 |
| UK | 18 | 14 | 32 | 63 |

(* The period of compulsory education in Italy ends at age 14.)

It may be worth adding that in France it is agreed policy between governments of the left and of the right to double the full-time participation rate in schools and that this process has already begun with the introduction of the first Baccalauréat Professionnel courses. All we have is the YTS.

Secondly, the curriculum for the post-16 age group in these countries is much broader than in England or Wales. This is true not just of the general academic courses leading to Baccalauréat or Abitur but also of their vocational education, which includes a more substantial element of general and theoretical education than is customary in this country⁷. Even in Scotland the Highers system ensures a more general education until at least the age of seventeen.

If the government were really concerned to 'develop the potential of all pupils and equip them for the responsibilities of citizenship and for the challenges of employment in tomorrow's world' – or if it were at all clear-sighted in its concern – it would have fixed upon reform of the 16–18 stage of education as its most important objective. As it is, one can only echo the Irishman's considered reply to the frustrated traveller – 'if that's where you want to go, you shouldn't be starting from here'. But the proposals of the Higginson Committee have been rejected out of hand.

3. *Education, Classics and the Curriculum*

Since James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in 1976 the public debate on the future of education in this country has been conducted mainly in economic terms: 'schools are turning out dangerously high quotas of illiterate, innumerate, delinquent, unemployables'⁸ or, to reduce discussion to a slogan, education is failing society. It seems to be the case that periods of industrial decline or economic uncertainty are also periods of public anxiety about the place of education in society, but the causal link between what goes on in school and the health of the economic system has been accepted as a matter of faith rather than proved or even convincingly argued. The claim that educational reform will increase economic prosperity may attribute greater power to education than it really possesses, may inhibit the search for other possibly more effective though less immediately palatable solutions to our economic problems, and may mistake the area in which the true power of education lies.

Classics, and the Arts subjects in general, are important in that they can enable pupils to see beyond this narrowly economic focus. The defence of Latin and Greek and of Classics generally as school subjects rests first upon the

alone might not be thought sufficient to justify their retention in the curriculum. However, we can also point to the fact that even limited study of Latin or of Greek can improve pupils' command of English, both at the basic level demonstrated by experience in the USA⁹ and at the more sophisticated level of specialized and academic vocabularies described by David Corson¹⁰. Why does this matter? Command of their own language sets our pupils free by helping to give them control of their own lives; it is therefore an entitlement in and a prerequisite for a democratic society. Similarly, some understanding of our past – including but not only our Classical past – is essential if we are to be able to understand and evaluate our present; without that understanding we remain rootless orphans, unable to realize our full human potential, and any plans we make for the future will be partial and flawed.

The distinguishing mark of education – what sets it apart from its old rival, training – is its concern for moral values: for their examination, for principles of choice among them, for their transmission. The fundamental weakness of the national curriculum is its inadequate appreciation of this fact.

NOTES:

- 1 Julian Haviland (ed), *Take Care, Mr. Baker*, London (Estate) 1988, p. 10.
 - 2 Dr Peter Wülfing, March 1988.
 - 3 Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, *Note d'information 86–1986*
 - 4 *Les Lycées demain*, Paris (CNDP) 1986, p. 24.
 - 5 DES, *Education in the Federal Republic of Germany: Report*, London (HMSO) 1986, p. 36.
 - 6 DES, *Statistical Bulletin 10/85*, Table 2.
 - 7 See, for example, S. J. Prais & Hilary Steedman, 'Vocational Training in France and Britain: The Building Trades', *National Curriculum*, 116, 1986, pp. 45–55.
 - 8 Geoffrey Pattie, Minister for Information Technology, quoted in *TES*, 27.6.86. (For a more thoughtful attempt to trace the link between education and economic performance in Britain, see Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, 1981).
 - 9 See, for example, Nancy A. Mavrogenes, 'The Effect of Extended Latin Instruction on Language Arts Performance', *Elementary School Journal*, vol 77, no. 4, 1977.
 - 10 *The Lexical Bar*, Oxford (Pergamon) 1985.
- All other quotations, except the Irishman's, are taken from: DES, *National Curriculum*, 5–16: a consultation document, July 1987.

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Augustus' Metamorphoses

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill

Metamorphosis

My theme is Augustus, not Ovid. But I want to start from an insight I think Ovid offers us into Augustan Rome. Whether Ovid really understood Augustus, we may doubt. But, with his extraordinary perceptiveness, he surely understood Augustan Rome. And I like to think that it was this that helped him to his vision of the process of metamorphosis. Transformation, after all, is the theme of his epic, though it often disappears from our sight. By transformation Ovid's world comes into being, and in transformation he saw a leitmotif by which to string together a corpus of mythology. Ovid loves transformation as a *process*. There are no abrupt transitions from old to new. Instead, the new emerges from the old gradually and by a sort of inevitable logic.

Pallas, jealous of the craftsmanship of Arachne, sprinkles her with a magic medicine: (6.140ff)

sparsit: et extemplo tristi medicamina tactae
defluxere comae, cum quis et naris et aures
fitque caput minimum; toto quoque corpore parua est:
in latere exiles digiti pro cruribus haerent,
cetera venter habet, de quo tamen illa remittit
stamen et antiquas exercet aranea telas.

As the poison touched it, her hair fell off, following her nostrils and ears; her head shrinks to a minimum and all over her body she becomes small. Her slender fingers stick to her side as legs, the rest is taken off her belly, and yet from it she lets down a thread, and from her old loom, a spider.

The attention to detail, moving with the poison from the old downwards, gives the scene a macabre credibility. Arachne shrinks inevitably into Aranea, the new creature formed by a distillation of the essential features of the old, so that it is the slender fingers, slender for spinning, that become the slender legs, together with the thread-producing belly, the most prominent part of the mutation. The new is both made out of parts of the old and preserves visible memories of the old in transmuted form:

antiquas exercet aranea telas.

Perhaps Ovid found inspiration for this in some traditional Hellenistic poetic model; but he only had to look around him to observe metamorphosis in live action. In his lifetime the Roman world went through its most radical transformation. It wasn't a revolution, for revolutions seek to overthrow the old. It wasn't sudden, for it lasted throughout Augustus' reign, for the best part of half a century.