

# The British School at Athens

## Elizabeth French

The account of the School written in 1904 and published in the *Annual of the British School* reads thus:

'This School (founded in 1886) gives to British Students of Greek Archaeology and Art the opportunity of pursuing their researches in Greece itself, with command of the means which the recent great advances of the science have rendered indispensable.

Athens is now an archaeological centre of the first rank. The architecture of Greece can nowhere else be studied to such advantage; and the concentration in the Athenian museums of numerous and most important discoveries which have taken place on Greek soil in the last few years has made a personal knowledge of those museums in the highest degree desirable for Hellenic scholars.

The student requires two auxiliaries when working in Athens. Firstly, the command of an adequate library; and secondly, the advice of a trained archaeologist, residing on the spot, and following the rapid advances of the science, due partly to new discovery and partly to the rearrangement of old materials'.

How much has changed? The actual area of study broadened within the next few early years of the century as various scholars took up new interests and incorporated them into the work of the School. The current wording is 'the archaeology, architecture, art, history, language, literature, religion and topography of Greece in ancient, mediaeval and modern times'. Add to this the work of our own on site Fitch Laboratory for Archaeological Science and excavations in areas and periods from a Palaeolithic rock shelter in Epirus to a Frankish farmhouse in southern Laconia and there is scarcely anything concerning Greece to which we would turn our backs. The School is a very broadly based centre for post-graduate research in Greece.

The core, however, is still fundamentally archaeology though the word has been dropped from our title – to the great confusion of some of those who see advertisements for posts. The School has always had a strong interest in the 'pre-history' of Greece and perhaps 50% of our excavation work has been on these periods. The School never took on a major classical site or sites as did the Schools of other nations: the French at Delphi, Delos, Argos, Thasos; the Germans at Olympia, the Kerameikos, on Samos; the Americans at Corinth and later in the Athenian Agora. Our chosen area was Laconia, both the province and the town of Sparta. Here before WWI the Temple of Artemis Orthia brought forth immense quantities of odd votives and in the 20's the Acropolis a vast but alas late theatre deep beneath the Roman and Byzantine towns. Thucydides was all too right when he said that the physical remains of Lacedaimon would not be equal to its

renown. The School has returned to Laconia and to Sparta itself in recent years but though very interesting it can scarcely be said to be vastly evocative to students of the classics.

What can the School offer to Teachers of Classics and Classical Civilization? First and foremost we offer a course every two years at Easter for such Teachers. This is one of the two courses that form the only actual teaching that we do. This originated at the request of HMI, and they and my predecessor Dr H. W. Catling organized 6 courses on 'Athens: the Development of a Greek City State'. When I took over as Director, I did not feel competent in this field and offered with specialist colleagues in April 1991 a course on 'Mycenaean Greece: the archaeological background to Homer'. HMI no longer feel that in present circumstances they can validate a course so divorced from the National Curriculum, but we shall be advertising a similar course for Easter 1993 in co-operation with JACT itself. There is some financial support available through the classical organisations to help those who wish to come on these courses. As the result of discussion at the end of the course this Easter, we suggested an up-date of information in this journal – when there was anything worth saying. We have not forgotten, but have been rather busy keeping the course alive, successfully.

All those who come on this course become Associates of the School and any teacher can enrol in this way at any time, if s/he wishes to visit Athens to see the monuments and museums or use the Library. An Associate may stay in the Hostel and on the present pattern there is quite frequently Hostel space available in July and August, when the postgraduates who make up the majority of our Students resident each year are off on field work. The Hostel is closed in September but the Library open. The Hostel charges are compatible with a 3rd class hotel in Athens.

The Library is a major resource. It now encompasses some 60,000 volumes and with the next door Libraries of the American School of Classical Studies (whose contents reflect this title closely) this area of Athens contains half the total holdings of the 12 archaeological libraries in Athens, over 400,000 volumes in all. Currently we are engaged in a programme to computerize the catalogue of this whole group, in conjunction with the DYABOLA scheme in Rome, which will form a major international research tool in classical archaeology.

As well as using the Library someone coming as an Associate would meet a group of widely based 'Students' and have the opportunity to meet at least some of the School's rather scanty staff. At present the classical flag is carried by Dr Jan Sanders whom we are lucky enough to have with us as the wife of the Assistant Director; the

Assistant Director, Guy Sanders, is a specialist in Byzantine and later pottery and on the topography of Greece – a vital subject which he imparts to a group of undergraduates in September each year; I myself am a Mycenaean specialist but have worked in Greece for many years (as did my much more polymath father before me) and thus have acquired a wide range of basic information. It is our job to help.

In the last two years we have rationalized the information and help that we give to those (often those who have come on our Teachers' Course) organizing student trips to Greece. For a basic fee – at present £50 (the cost of 15 single entries to a site) – we can obtain a free entry permit for a school party to all archaeological sites and can give advice on site opening times, possible itineraries, etc. (An entry permit can also be obtained through the travel agent organizing your trip and through the Greek Embassy in London.) Under present legislation no one may guide on site a group of more than three people without special permission and this permission will not be given except to University Lecturers in Greek Archaeology. We are working hard to change this ruling, which is almost certainly contrary to EEC regulations but . . . . Meanwhile we can advise teachers of spots from which sites can be discussed outside the actual site boundaries. We would

also be glad to co-ordinate information of any kind about student trips if this seems useful. A important field is teaching aids: the many guide books and catalogues with beautiful illustrations from which the teacher can make slides and the sections of Greek museums which are very increasingly developing educational programmes of great interest.

One of my tasks as Director is the compilation annually of 'Archaeology in Greece' published each year by the BSA and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies. This summarizes recent archaeological work in Greece by the foreign schools and as it appears in the newspapers and the official journal of the Greek Archaeological Service. The Librarian also contributes a section on recent Greek publications.

Does this all sound rather too pragmatic? Archaeology is a practical subject whatever else it may offer in the way of insight and background. The British School is committed to fostering the study of Greece in all ways, and certainly not least by helping the teachers of today who are training our Students of tomorrow.

ELIZABETH FRENCH  
Director, British School at Athens

## The Oral Method

C. W. E. Peckett

The Oral Method was the name given to the Direct Method of teaching Latin after rules had been formulated for that method so that the uninitiated (mainly those who had not been taught in that way) could use it successfully. The new name was invented by Arthur Munday after he and I had worked together with Dr Loehry at the Priory School, Shrewsbury to formulate those rules. It follows that, if I am to describe the Oral Method, I must first explain the Direct Method, since the two have many practices in common.

As far as I know the Direct Method of teaching French was invented by M. Chouville and M. de Glehn when they were teaching at the Perse School, Cambridge in the early 1900s. The Headmaster, Dr W. H. D. Rouse, found their work so successful that he decided to adapt their method to the teaching of Latin. This adaptation was equally successful, and in 1911 the ARLT was founded to support the work of Dr Rouse, and the word Reform was deliberately included in the title to show that the main aim of the Association was to serve this purpose.

The basic principle of the Direct Method is that a pupil can best learn a foreign language in the same way as he learned his own, i.e. by imitating the words spoken by his parents and others around him, and by using them frequently and speaking them long before he could write them.

So it was that in my first year at the Perse, and in my first lesson with M. Chouville, I found myself imitating his actions and speaking a little French. He sat in a desk among us, got up from it and, while pointing at himself said slowly and clearly: '*Je me lève.*' Then he walked to the platform under the wall blackboard and, still pointing at himself said; '*Je vais à l'estrade.*' He came back to his seat, pointed at himself and said; '*Je retourne.*' Then he sat down, and still pointing at himself said: '*Je m'assieds.*' He went through this drill three times.

Then he sat beside me, got up and said; '*Je me lève.*', and motioned to me to do the same. He put his hand up to his ear to indicate that he wanted to hear me say something. But I got up and said nothing. So he repeated what he had

done before, but this time, as well as putting one hand up to his ear, he pointed at my mouth with the other. I realised what he wanted and said: '*Je me lève.*'; and he patted me on the back. When he walked to the platform and said '*Je vais à l'estrade.*', I managed to say '*Je vais . . .*', and pointed at myself, but couldn't remember the rest. So he pointed at the platform and said: '*. . . l'estrade*', and I got the whole sentence right. '*Je retourne.*' and '*Je m'assieds*' were then easy.

Chouville encouraged about half a dozen other pupils to go through the same drill, making quite sure that when they said the French they pointed at themselves. Then, when the next boy said '*Je me lève.*', he pointed at him and said '*Tu te lèves.*', and persuaded the rest of the class to do the same. After the whole drill had been performed several times in this way, and another boy had pointed at himself and said: '*Je me lève.*' and the class had pointed at him and said: '*Tu te lèves.*', Chouville turned his back on him, and, pointing at him with his thumb over his shoulder, said: '*Il se lève.*'

So the drill went on, and by the end of the first lesson we had learned the three persons, singular and plural, of all four verbs. This drill was the nucleus around which all our basic knowledge of French grew.

Next year, in our first Latin lesson with R. B. Appleton, the beginnings were all too easy. He went through the same drill saying '*Surgo*', '*Ambulo*', '*Revenio*' and '*Sedeo*'. Most of us saw at once what he was aiming at, and we soon learned the three persons, singular and plural, of these four verbs. This drill, with the addition of questions like '*Quid facio?*', '*Quid feci?*' '*Quid faciam?*' etc., was used to teach us all the tenses of these four verbs, and thus of other verbs too, for by good luck, or perhaps through the designs of the goddess Minerva, they were examples of the four conjugations.

After learning the Present Tense we were introduced to First and Second Declension Nouns, in both the Nominative and Accusative at once. This, I suppose, was because it was easy to demonstrate:

*Hic est discipulus.*

*Video discipulum.*

*Haec est ianua.*

*Video ianuam.*

(When, at the Priory School later, we used the same process, we found that *video* did not carry a sufficient idea of action to explain why the ending of the noun changed; so we used *pulso* instead.)

So we proceeded, gradually learning more grammatical forms and their use from the examples given us.

We learned to use the Relative Pronoun surprisingly easily, by the simple process of *aliter latine*:

*Hic est discipulus et discipulus est callidus.*

*aliter latine: Hic est discipulus qui est callidus.*

*Hic est discipulus et discipulum video.*

*aliter latine: Hic est discipulus quem video.*

Finally we were introduced to the Passive by the same process:

*Canis me mordet.*

*aliter latine: A cane mordeor.*

Thus, by the end of the fourth term, we were introduced to, and most of us could use effectively all that was needed to compose or understand simple sentences and some easier complex ones.

The oral work was reinforced by reading Appleton's First Latin Course, *Initium*. This, to me at least, was not very helpful, since it did not practise intensively enough the grammar that we were learning.

During the next two terms we were taught how to understand and use the more difficult complex sentences. This meant, in the main, learning the use of the Subjunctive. At the beginning of each lesson we recited, as we had done in the previous terms, individually or in chorus, some of the Grammar Tables which we had got by heart as soon as we had learnt how to use them. We followed this by drilling the Verb Series. This was important because it provided a means of introducing the Subjunctive.

Appleton prepared the way by adding a little to this series:

Master: *Surge, vel iubeo te surgere. Quid facio?*

Pupil: *Iubes me surgere.*

(We had already been introduced to the Infinitive.)

A day or so later he added to the above in the impressive voice which he always used to introduce new material:

Master: *Iubeo te surgere, vel Impero tibi ut surgas.*

Pupil: *Surgo*

and so on with the second person singular and plural in all four verbs.

Next day this drill became:

Master: *O Marce, impera Sexto ut surgat.*

Marcus: *O Sexte, surge.*

Master: *Bene, imperas Sexto ut surgat.*

and so on with the other verbs.

This showed us that *impero* went like *ambulo*, and so next day we were able to do the drill properly:

Master: *Surge. Impero tibi ut surgas. Quid facio?*

Pupil: *Imperas mihi ut surgam.*

(Past experience showed the 'm' was more likely than 'o' to follow 'a' to mean 'I'. I have never known a pupil to say 'surgao'.)

Master (to the rest of the class): *Quid facio?*

Class: *Imperas ei ut surgat.* etc.

Later this drill was practised in answer to the question '*Quid feci?*'

The use of *cum* with the Subjunctive was introduced by *aliter Latine*:

Master: *Surge et ambula. Postquam surrexisti, ambulavisti. Quando ambulavisti?*

Pupil: *Postquam surrexi, ambulavi.*

Master (in a suitably impressive voice) *Vel, cum surrexisses, ambulavisti. Quando ambulavisti?*

Pupil: *Cum surrexissem, ambulavi.*

and so on.

Indirect Speech was also introduced by using the verb series:

Master: *Surge. Quid facis?*

Pupil: *Surgo.*

Master: *Bene. Dicis te surgere. Quid dicis?*

Pupil: *Dico me surgere.*

Master (to the class): *Quid dicit?*

Class: *Dicit se surgere.*

and so on.

These exercises were backed up by R. B. Appleton's and W. H. S. Jones' book called *Pons Tironum* – the bridge, as it were, between elementary spoken Latin and the literature. This book gave ample practice to the grammar as it was introduced orally, and it began to deal with things Roman. It also included a few simple passages from Roman poets, which we learned by heart.

It was during these two terms that we began Latin Composition. Once a week Mr Appleton told us in Latin a story about a loveable rogue called Noctuinus Noster (who was really Til Eulenspiegel). Each story contained examples of the new construction we were learning and of others that we had already learned. When we had fully understood the story we gave our own versions of it in class, and then wrote them out for homework.

It is noteworthy that *Pons Tironum* kept the basic rule of the Direct Method, that English must never be used in teaching a foreign language. The book had a vocabulary, but the explanations were given in Latin, reinforced sometimes by drawings. E.g. *porcus* was explained simply by a picture, and connected with it was *porculus* = *porcus parvus*.

Great attention was paid to vocabulary. Appleton would explain by *aliter Latine* or *contrarium Latine*, or by a drawing or some action, the words he knew we did not understand when we read a new sentence. He expected us also to ask *Quid significat?* about words whose meaning we had forgotten. We kept our own vocabulary notebooks, and once a week were given a vocabulary test.

Thus, having crossed this 'bridge', we were equipped to approach the main goal of the course, the reading and enjoyment of Latin Literature, and also to begin learning Greek. We were introduced to Latin Literature by means of another book by Appleton and Jones called *Puer Romanus*. This told the life of a Roman boy and included much information about Roman customs. It also ingeniously included passage of prose and verse from Latin Literature, the standard of some of these being equivalent to the present A-Level.

Appleton continued to make sure that we learned the vocabulary and understood the syntax. He did this as he had done in previous years, by asking questions about each sentence after it had been read aloud. For instance, after the following had been read:

*Deinde cum advesperavisset, cum gemitu precibusque e congregata multitudine petiit ut Pompeius ad se veniret.*

the vocabulary was explained and the questions and answers would be:

Master: *Quid fecit?*

Pupil: *Petiit.*

Master: *Quando petiit?*

Pupil: *Cum advesperavisset.*

Master: *Vel aliter Latine?*

Pupil: *Postquam advesperavit.*

Master: *Quo modo petiit?*

Pupil: *Cum gemitu precibusque petiit.*

Master: *Quid igitur fecit?*

Pupil: *Gemit et precatus est.*

Master: *E quibus petiit?*

Pupil: *E multitudine.*

Master: *Qualis erat multitudo?*

Pupil: *Congregata erat.*

Master: *Quid petiit?*

Pupil: *Ut Pompeius veniret petiit.*

Thus, in a way, we construed the sentence without knowing that we did so. What is more, we consolidated our knowledge of Latin by using it.

We also read some passages of Latin prose and poetry from an anthology, and learned them by heart together with the passages of verse quoted in *Puer Romanus*. Part of one lesson each week was given up to reciting these passages.

Each evening we had to write a Latin summary of what we had read in class, and from the beginning of the third year we were given passages of simple English prose to translate into Latin.

So at the beginning of the ninth term the great moment arrived. We really began to read Latin Literature for its own sake. The book we read was *Aeneid II*, and we did so with the same attention to vocabulary and grammar as before. We also learned passages by heart, and the recitation of these, together with those from *Puer Romanus* that we had already learned, now took up the whole of one period a week. This period began with a solemn ceremony. A lectern was put near the platform. On it was a beautiful copy of the *Aeneid* bound in vellum. From this one of us read, using all the expression he could command, the portion of Book II that we had read during the week. The boy who was to do this reading was chosen the day before, so that, if he wanted, he could prepare the passage beforehand. Some of the dullards were bored. I myself was thrilled by every line that Virgil wrote, and at one time knew the whole of the first two books of the *Aeneid* by heart.

During this third year we began to learn Greek, and we did so in a more formal way. It was assumed that since we were now well acquainted with Latin Grammar, we had merely to apply it to the as yet unfamiliar sounds of the kindred language.

Those who specialised in Classics, about six each year, usually spent three years in the Classical Sixth. We tackled Unseens and Prose and Verse Composition in both languages. But our main task was reading the literature. In the afternoons each year had a lesson apart from the rest, so that it could read works that suited its attainment. Thus in the First Year Sixth I read the whole of Caesar's *Gallic War* in one term, while in the Third Year I read Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

The main reading was done during a double period at the beginning of each day by all three Years together. We never translated anything into English, and since we were not allowed to take outside examinations we never wasted our mental energy in learning to defeat examiners. Instead we read the literature to appreciate and enjoy it. The reader read a sentence aloud, and if he understood it began on the next. But he could be stopped either by someone who did not understand the sentence, or by someone who

wished to challenge his understanding and ask him questions about it. We discussed in English the literary and historical value of what we read, and if the grammar was very abstruse Dr Rouse explained it also in English. And each night we wrote in Greek or Latin a summary of what we had read during the day.

In these lessons we had our fun too. I remember that there was in the First Year Sixth with me a boy called Evans, who was not really clever enough to have specialised in Classics. Sometimes he almost dozed off during a lesson, and once, to wake him up, Dr Rouse asked him to point out on the map that always hung on an easel the position of a town we were reading about. Evans seized the pointer and thrust it clean through the map. At once one of the seniors, who was to become a famous film director, burst out with a quotation from Virgil: "*Tantaene animis caelestibus irae?*"

On another occasion one of us who used to ride a bicycle to school sustained a puncture and arrived very late at the morning's reading lesson. Dr Rouse asked him: "*Cur tam sero venisti?*", and he, somewhat at a loss to explain such a modern accident in an ancient language, replied: "*Machina mea aegrotat.*" "*Machina aegrotat*" said Dr Rouse. "*Quo modo machina aegrotare potest?*" And the reply was: "*Pneumonia, ut puto.*"

So by the Direct Method I had, by the time I went up to King's, Cambridge, read, appreciated and enjoyed a vast amount of Latin and Greek literature, including the whole of Virgil and the whole of Horace, the whole of the Iliad and thirteen Greek plays. The Classics tutors at King's were amazed at the amount I had read, and I was equally amazed to find that they could not hold a conversation in Greek or Latin. It was not until then that I realised I had been taught by an unusual method. But I was determined to become a teacher and to use this method in order to enable my pupils to enjoy as I had the literature which is one of the bases of our civilisation.

I began teaching in N. Ireland and so was somewhat cut off from ARLT; but in 1935 I moved to Beckenham and Penge County School, where I was given every encouragement by the headmaster. I joined forces with Frank Lockwood, who was teaching at Wilson's Grammar School. He was two years older than me, so that we were in the Classical Sixth at the Perse together for a year. We did our best to further the work of the ARLT, especially at its Summer Schools. We were greatly helped by Mr Kinchin-Smith, who was in charge of the Classics students at the London University Institute of Education. He sent all his students to observe our lessons, and asked both of us to lecture to them about the way we taught. Most of them joined the ARLT and began themselves to teach by the Direct Method. It looked as if all was going well when early in 1941 I was called up into the army.

When I was invalided out in 1944 I found that the Classics in my school was almost non-existent. My former headmaster had been killed by a bomb. The ARLT was inactive and Lockwood, now Headmaster at Gainsborough was out of touch. Soon, however, he came back to London as Headmaster of William Ellis School, and had the bright idea of starting the Weekend Courses in Lon-

don. He was helped by Mr Kinchin-Smith's old students who were teaching in or near London, and the Courses were a great success. Meanwhile I had been appointed Headmaster of the Priory School, Shrewsbury in 1946, and was soon able to get the ARLT Summer Schools started again. After I had appointed Arthur Munday, an old pupil of Lockwood's, to be head of my Classics Department in 1947 we were able to take our pupils to London to give demonstrations at the Weekend Courses. And yet, somehow, the Direct Method did not become as popular as we hoped.

The reason for this was made clear to Munday and myself by Dr Loehry, who joined my staff in September 1948. He had lectured in Law at Vienna University, and since he had no experience of teaching young people he spent almost the whole of the Summer Term before he took up his post observing Munday's and my lessons, making notes about what we did and how we taught, and asking why we did so.

All too often we found that we could not give him a clear answer. It seemed to us that we were merely imitating the way in which we had been taught, and so were teaching almost by instinct. And then I remembered how Dr Rouse and Mr Appleton also could not explain how they taught. When asked they could only answer: "Come and see some of our lessons, then you will know." Many people came to their lessons and thought them amazingly effective. Then they went away and tried the method in their own classrooms; and failed utterly. So they decided that Appleton and Rouse were either geniuses, who had some special gifts, or else they were charlatans. I began to wonder whether people were thinking the same about myself and Munday.

When we at last worked out satisfactory answers to Dr Loehry's questions, I realised that we were not completely imitating the method by which we had been taught. I had altered it in several ways in order to improve it in places where I myself had had difficulty in understanding fully what the masters thought they were teaching me. For instance, I made sure that my pupils, after they had begun to understand how to use a particular piece of grammar, were given plenty of practice in using it. How intense this was I did not realise until a Tutor from a University Department of Education recorded some of my lessons. He found in one of them that the boys used the particular piece of grammar that they were tackling no less than 127 times in 45 minutes.

Especially I had made a great change about the use of English in learning Latin. At the Perse no word of English was ever used in teaching French, and it was very sparingly used and only in the later stages of teaching Latin and Greek. M. Chouville never used a word of English, and ignored any boy who addressed him in that language, even out of class. Even when grown up, if I met him in the street, I would automatically drop into French to talk to him.

In the early stages of Latin at the Perse there were times when I wished some explanation could be given in English, if only to indicate what we were supposed to be learning. I was sometimes not quite sure what the purpose

of the lesson had been, and so I fell into the habit of asking myself each evening what I had learnt in the Latin lesson that day. The purpose of the Verb Drill was obvious, but when we first tackled the Noun in the Nominative and Accusative together, I was a little puzzled as to why 'm' was put at the end of the noun. After some thought I made a rule for myself that the word has an 'm' added to it when something is done to it. I was frustrated when we first came upon neuter nouns which had an 'm' at their end when they were doing something; but my confidence was restored when we came to the Third Declension. The teacher never insisted that we should go through this kind of mental process, and those pupils who did not do so tended to fail badly at Latin. And so I had introduced into a much changed Direct Method a session when, at the appropriate time, there was discussion in English about what had been learnt, and rules in English were made about it.

It was Arthur Munday's idea that because we had made changes to the Direct Method we should also change its name, and because the approach to each part of grammar was still made by word of mouth he invented the name 'Oral Method'. Here are the rules which, with the help of Dr Loehry, we managed to draw up. Some of them apply to the teaching of any subject.

- 1) Never tell. Instead always lead pupils into finding out for themselves.
- 2) Teach as a pupil, not as a teacher. Abandon your mature ways of thought and adopt those of your pupils, bearing in mind that all but the cleverest become about two years younger in the early stages of learning a foreign language.
- 3) Teach by example, not by rule. When you introduce a new piece of grammar give your pupils enough examples of it for them to be able to imitate you.
- 4) These examples must be in Latin, and must be simple and concrete, and deal with things within their own background and experience. The examples should be accompanied by some kind of demonstrative action or drawing.
- 5) Three examples will usually suffice. If they do not, it is your fault, not the pupils'. You must begin again with better examples.
- 6) When your pupils imitate you well enough to make you believe that it is the result not merely of imitation but of logical thought, the time has come to discuss with them in English this particular piece of grammar, and to encourage them to make up their own rule about its usage in their own words. If they cannot do this you must revert to Rule 3, and begin the whole process again with better examples.
- 7) The final test is for pupils to translate suitable English sentences into Latin. The object of this is not to catch them out, but to give them the joy of proving to themselves that they really know what they thought they did.
- 8) Once pupils have learnt how to use a particular piece of grammar they must practise this usage constantly.

9) Test regularly your pupils' knowledge of vocabulary, and make sure that they learn by heart examples of the grammatical forms that they have learnt to use.

10) Never confront pupils with more than one difficulty at a time. It is perhaps unwise, at any rate in the early stages, to teach Latin by means of stories set in Ancient Rome, since this would mean teaching both Grammar and History at the same time.

Once these rules had been formulated they could be discussed after demonstration classes, and especially at ARLT Summer Schools, which were being attended by more and more people. I could also explain these rules to students at University Departments of Education, where I was invited to lecture. And so the use of the Oral Method grew.

What spread the use of this Method more than anything was the publication of *Principia* and *Pseudolus Noster*. As pupils learned orally the various points of grammar Munday and I had written exercises and stories to fit them. (*Pseudolus* was a reincarnation of my old friend *Noctuius*, alias *Til Eulenspiegel*, in new clothes.) When these exercises and stories had been sufficiently revised, I persuaded a local bookseller, who was also a publisher in a small way, to publish them, warning him that he was unlikely to sell many copies. But in fact he sold thousands of them a year for over twenty years. This meant that hundreds of mainly young teachers were using the Oral Method, and thousands of pupils were perhaps enjoying learning Latin.

The Oral Method spread to its farthest point when Scott, Foresman, one of the largest educational publishers in America, asked permission to publish these books, together with a booklet explaining the Oral Method, in the U.S.A. and Canada, and I was invited to give demonstrations and lectures at Teachers' Courses organised by Universities in those countries.

But old customs die hard. Several years after Scott, Foresman began publishing the books I heard of an American teacher who used them enthusiastically, but introduced the grammar by means of the English-Latin sentences printed on purpose at the end of the books.

C. W. E. PECKETT  
formerly Headmaster  
the Priory School, Shrewsbury

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### Romano-British Chariot-Sticker

Aequa mente cede nunc;  
Iram tuam linque.  
Nihil exstat peius quam  
M viginti quinque.

HERBERT H. HUXLEY

# New Classical Galleries at the Ashmolean Museum

Michael Vickers

During the past few years, the Classical Greek and Bronze Age Aegean galleries in the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum have been refurbished; the Roman gallery and the Greek and Roman sculpture gallery are currently undergoing major reorganization. Different considerations underlie the ways in which these galleries were, and are being, treated. It may be instructive to spell some of these out. If there has been any constant factor in our approach, it has been a desire to remedy the state of affairs described by Kenneth Clark in his autobiography: 'When I wanted to escape from this world of good taste, there was always the other half of the Ashmolean, the department of antiquities. In contrast with [the Department of Fine Art], and perhaps in protest against it, this was arranged with no attempt to please the eye . . .' (*Another Part of the Wood* [London, 1974] 107). Ironically, however, the first gallery to be discussed here is beginning to look somewhat dated in its outmoded modernism.

The Ashmolean's Greek antiquities consist in the main of pottery, and their study used to be a major concern of students of classical Greece. When the Beazley Room, named after the late Sir John Beazley (1885–1971), was redesigned in the mid-seventies, it was decided to illustrate the development of Greek art in the manner that had by then become traditional. Modern display cases were installed, and the old ones used to house the bulk of the collection in a displayed reserve elsewhere in the building. It was Adolf Loos, the Viennese apostle of Modernism, who declared that 'Greek vases are beautiful, as beautiful as a bicycle', and it is perhaps appropriate that the choice of the Ashmolean's Greek ceramics are shown in relatively stark steel-grey cases. Fitting too, in the light of the potter Bernard Leach's animadversions on the 'metallic' nature of classical Greek pottery, 'conceived coldly and without reference to its material and to the organic growth of spinning clay shaped by human hands' (*A Potter's Book* [London, 1976] 235–6). There has in fact been a paradigm shift in the way that Greek ceramics are regarded, and while Beazleyism – for want of a better term – has done wonders for the art market, its practice has led to a misleading view of antiquity. It is now difficult to imagine that pottery played the role accorded it in popular handbooks, and impossible to run the traditional arguments concerning its practitioners' supposed wealth and their artistic rivalries. As a partial corrective to the older view, a new display illustrating the likely dependence of fineware pottery on work in precious metal was added in 1985, at the time of the Oxford Colloquium on Precious Metal and

Ceramics in the Islamic, Chinese and Greco-Roman Worlds (the proceedings published in M. Vickers (ed.) *Pots and Pans* (Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, 3 [1986]), and the contents illustrated in M. Vickers, J. Allan and O. Impey, *From Silver to Ceramic* (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, 1986).

The Arthur Evans Room was redesigned in the early eighties to house all the Cycladic, Minoan and Mycenaean material in the Museum; and not merely to house it, but to make 100% of our holdings accessible to the public. This was done by building a balcony above the primary display and glass-covered drawers containing small-scale excavated material below. There are important holdings of Cycladic marble figurines, of Cretan seals, and of Minoan material from Sir Arthur Evans' excavations at Knossos in the early years of this century. An index of the significance of the Ashmolean's collection is the fact that in 1987 an international conference on Middle Minoan pottery was held at the Ashmolean rather than in Heraklion.

The Beazley and Arthur Evans Rooms were refurbished thanks to the generosity of private benefactors (Mrs Dietrich von Bothmer and Amey Roadstone Corporation respectively). The Leeds Room, which has for long housed both Roman and Anglo-Saxon antiquities is being redisplayed on a shoe-string, making use as much as possible of existing cases. There is no question of putting out all our Roman material, for most of it is only pottery and glass. Instead, a series of thematic displays are being created, with more than half an eye on the new National Syllabus being taught in first schools (the Ashmolean's Education Service has had considerable input). A model of Pliny's Villa serves as the 'spring-board' for sections dealing with life in the Roman countryside and in the city, with religion, the family, food and drink, medicine, and the army, and with the history of later interest in the material culture of ancient Rome. For the next few years the Ashmolean has on loan a remarkable collection of Roman cameos (recently published by M. Henig, *The Content Family Collection of Ancient Cameos* [Oxford and Houlton, Maine, 1990]).

Finally, the redecoration of the Randolph Gallery (the Museum's main ground floor sculpture gallery), and the related Main Staircase is now under way, again thanks to major outside benefactions (from Mrs Dietrich von Bothmer, Messrs Akzo, and the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts). It is hoped that the rich polychrome effect, with Pompeian red walls, and the cast of the Bassae frieze picked out in blue, will do justice to C. R. Cockerell's fine interior built in the 1840s. The marble

statues, most of them from the Arundel collection formed in the seventeenth century, have recently been cleaned with a new steam-cleaning technique (so effective that Greek colleagues working on the Athenian Acropolis have asked for details). A new arrangement of the sculpture is

also under way. Everything should be ready by the time the Classical Association holds its Oxford Meeting in 1992.

MICHAEL VICKERS  
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

## Examining Latin at GCSE Level – A Northern Perspective

David Wilson

### Dark Satanic Mills

In the immediate post-war years the traditional targets of the aspiring Classicist remained largely unchanged – the Diplomatic Corps, the upper echelons of the Civil Service, Politics, Law and, with a view to the regeneration of the species, the Teaching Profession. The belief in the virtues of a Classical Education was so deep-rooted that many other fields of endeavour were also open.

No-one, however, inquired too deeply into the vast number of casualties that littered the road to success, nor what those who fell by the wayside, after as little as two years' struggle, had gained from the experience. Schools were interested only in producing entrants to the Sixth Form who would be able to face the rigours of reading **and** writing both prose and verse.

Teaching (and examining) concentrated on the language and involved the acquisition of a highly selective subject-specific jargon which would enable pupils to decline and conjugate and identify such phenomena as the internal limiting accusative, the partitive genitive and the predicative dative, and constructions which even the Romans fought shy of, through the medium of doctored reading and translation of large numbers of unconnected sentences, often completely divorced from reality. When real Latin was encountered, it was translated without much reference to its purpose or inner meaning; indeed it was possible to arrive at 16+ level without discovering much about Roman life or appreciating that the Romans were real people after all!

Pupils emerged with an extended vocabulary, some knowledge of how an inflected language worked, the ability to translate parts of a Latin author (often without the help of the original text) and a great weariness. Not surprising then that few ventured further!

### Light at the end of the Tunnel

The first signs of movement towards learning through reading were exemplified by the estimable Latin for

Today and by such courses as *Civis Romanus and Pax et Imperium*, but even they were supported by the collection of Grammar and Sentences enshrined in *Mentor and Latin Sentence and Idiom*. Moreover the picture of Roman life they presented lacked system and coherence.

It was not until the '60s that a determined attempt was made to couple Latin of gradually increasing difficulty and complexity with an on-going exploration of Roman Society through the medium of characters who appealed to pupils and with whose problems they could identify.

The drudgery of learning vocabulary in vacuo was alleviated by the frequency with which key words were encountered. It was perhaps unfortunate that many of the words best remembered were those least likely to be met in real Latin. Formal Grammar too had lost much of its terror, though it may well have been a mistake to exchange case names for Form letters and especially to change the traditional order. The greatest advance was without doubt the attempt to offer a coherent picture of Roman Life and to present real Latin in a way which required not only reading but understanding and appreciation.

The most regrettable error of the course, at least at examination level, was to assume that schools, under the comprehensive regime, would be able to allow as much time as before for the study of Latin. Many, seduced by the attractions of the early Units, attempted to complete in three years what could better have taken five and, finding themselves faced by a quite unreasonable examination demand, rapidly reverted to traditional syllabuses for the last two years of their courses. Even those who persisted often paid a price in the reluctance of pupils to continue into the Sixth Form. If this was Latin at O-level, Heaven forbid that they should go on to A!

The Comprehensive system offered an opportunity to popularise Classics for those who were bold enough to seize it. Many schools embarked with enthusiasm on beginners' courses in Classical Civilisation aimed at eventual CSE courses and nurtured the secret hope that a

demand for Latin would emerge — as in many cases it did. They were very conscious that it was necessary to provide a course for all and that the Latin end of it would never be more than three years long. No current examination syllabus would fill this need. Given existing provision, very hard work was likely to produce only modest grades for candidates who were otherwise high-achievers — and evident success was essential for survival!

### First Steps

The first real moves to take account of the straitened circumstances of Classics Departments in comprehensive schools came with the attempt to devise courses leading to awards within a Joint GCE/CSE Examination system. GCE as it stood would not give ample reward for endeavour: CSE had fallen into disrepute and would not be an attractive target. The new syllabuses must save time but, at the same time maintain standards. Classicists were, at long last, compelled to think about aims and objectives. Latin was not about speaking the language; perhaps not even about reading it with any high degree of fluency (except for those candidates who intended to take it on to University). It was not about becoming acquainted with the Literature, since a microscopic amount was read in the original, and that often from unattractive authors. In any case, translations of the best of it were readily available. Nor was it about the civilisation. That could be picked up at second hand in a much more accessible and coherent form. So why not bury the dead language and rely on the new Classical Civilization courses to instruct about the roots of our modern Society?

Slowly the truth dawned. Teaching Latin was not about teaching the language but about teaching LANGUAGE: not about the literature but about LITERATURE. Even the study of Society, at least as presented by the Cambridge Latin Course, was really an opportunity to investigate modern Society. Learning the language required discipline, accuracy, an appreciation of the nature and function of words and an understanding of how they could be linked to convey sense with clarity, economy and precision. Studying the literature involved an exploration of how sense could be reinforced and embellished by the appropriate use of sound and rhythm and by variety of word-order.

With these considerations in mind the Northern Working Party set out to devise a syllabus and examination which would make more reasonable demands on candidates. Since the relationship between words seemed more important than merely knowing the words by themselves, it was decided to restrict the vocabulary to be known for the examination. Had all candidates been following the same general course the task might have been more easy, though later experience with prescribed word lists suggests that it would not. Since, however, there could be no guarantee that all would encounter the same words, it was decided to provide a full glossary of *all* the words to be found in the Language paper. It was further decided that, since the literary phenomena in which the Party was interested most commonly occurred in verse, no prescribed reading in prose would be required and a selection

of verse authors only would be set. Prose works would be encountered only in preparation for the Unprepared Translation and Comprehension passages.

Conscious that a wider range of ability than usual would be entered, the Working Party designed its Language paper on what it thought to be an incline of difficulty. The first question consisted of a passage of real Latin on which twenty multiple choice questions were set, aimed at testing grasp of grammar and syntax. Thus one guessing game (as standard grammar questions often were) was effectively replaced by another! There followed an unprepared passage of made-up or, at best, heavily adapted Latin for translation. The third (and final) question was a piece of unadapted Latin on which questions were set testing application of grammatical and syntactical rules, understanding of sense both general and in detail and, where relevant, social and historical knowledge. An alternative was offered in the form of simple English sentences to be rendered into Latin.

It is not always realised that whereas the Syllabus determines what shall be taught, the examination papers often dictate how that teaching shall be done. The Literature paper was weighted against the learning of translation by rote and included instead questions on background knowledge, literary devices and figures of speech, the selection and placing of words and the attitudes candidates had formed to the authors encountered. Translation was replaced by requests for a summary — which, in many cases, came to the same thing!

The Examination attracted a good entry especially from the State sector but continued (undeservedly) to be regarded as a poor relation until it was superseded by GCSE.

### National Criteria Rule — OK?

The long-awaited reform of the examination system at 16+ and the publication in 1985 of subject-specific National Criteria for Classical Subjects compelled all the Examining Groups to rethink their provision. For some the exercise consisted of little more than tinkering with existing papers to satisfy the letter if not exactly the spirit of the new law. The result was in some cases no more than a thinly disguised version of GCE O-level.

The most pressing requirements were that both prose and verse authors must be read, that at least 10% of marks should be devoted to 'background' knowledge, that in examining prepared texts translation should be limited, that for Combined Courses (eg. Latin and Roman Civilisation) all the aims and objectives for both linguistic and non-linguistic subjects should apply and that the assessment of course work could be used as an optional technique in linguistic courses. These requirements were applied rigidly by the Examining Groups though it later emerged that that had not been the real intention of the Criteria Committee.

For the Northern Group, they had far-reaching consequences. It was already offering Combined Courses linking Latin Language (with no prepared text) to half its Roman Civilisation paper. If it was to retain this course it would have to rearrange its Latin papers to include a

prepared text in each. Moreover, since not all its candidates were using the same basic courses, it would have to choose set texts which would enable it to satisfy the 10% 'background' requirement through questions drawn from *them*. This has never proved a happy solution and has certainly not led to a clear presentation of Roman life, but the alternatives of dictating the full course to be followed or using Coursework to assess background knowledge would have led to an unacceptable increase in work-load.

The other changes made were very few. It was reluctantly decided that a limited vocabulary-to-be-known of about 400 words be required but that all other words used be glossed on a separate vocabulary sheet. The multiple choice question was also abandoned since it was expensive to pretest and not very reliable in its results. It was replaced by a passage of simple Latin on which were set questions ostensibly testing comprehension but actually calling for little more than a guided translation. The other tests of Language remained unchanged in design though the more difficult comprehension passage, now appearing in Paper 2, would involve comment based on understanding of the sense of the passage as a whole. It might be possible to include occasional questions which would contribute to the background quota but, since such passages would be entirely unprepared, any attempt to do this would be unfair and invalid. In any case those candidates who chose the alternative of translation into Latin would upset the relative weighting between examination components. The passage set for translation continued to be of heavily adapted Latin. It was limited in the constructions which might be used and, much more than before, in its vocabulary. There was not much point in setting a restricted learning vocabulary and failing to test it as fully as possible!

The Literature sections also raised problems. The demand for translation could readily be reduced and this would indeed discourage the deplorable practice of learning by rote but how could the examiner be sure that the text had been read in full at all? National Criteria required that questions on the subject matter should be related to the extract set and dependent on understanding of it and this appeared very restrictive. It seemed to forbid any request for a summary of the argument of the prescription as a whole or even of an extended part of it and the Group had discovered by bitter experience that to ask for a summary of a section of a printed extract almost inevitably resulted in a translation. To set only regular comprehension type questions would, in the view of the Group, only lead to the new abuse of learning the Notes by heart and memory would be the only faculty tested!

Both translation and comprehension had their place but both were concerned with surface meaning only. The thrust of GCSE was towards understanding, appreciation and developing personal attitudes and it was towards these that teaching and assessment must be directed. Candidates must be asked to comment not only on the content of the work but on the way the author manipulated words and word-order to support his theme: they must also be encouraged to be critical of the views, emotions and

characters portrayed. Teachers would consequently have to spend more time discussing ideas and attitudes than on simply discovering the surface meaning of the material.

The similarity of this approach to that of its predecessor was obvious but the Group had other ideas which could be properly employed within the restrictions imposed by the National Criteria and its own desire to retain a Combined Studies title. Ideally, a free-standing Latin and Roman Civilization syllabus should have been attempted especially as it was recognised that the combination offered would prove more demanding than either Latin or Roman Civilization alone. However until more encouraging entry prospects emerged the time and expense involved could not be justified.

### A new venture

The Group was aware that many of its existing Centres used Cambridge Latin in the pre-examination years and knew the reasons why they later switched syllabuses. It seemed highly desirable to offer an alternative Cambridge Latin syllabus designed to meet their circumstances.

Its thinking was very much coloured by the problems being encountered by the regular syllabus, particularly with regard to the demands of National Criteria para 2.2.3. By specifying a common course as well as a detailed examination prescription it could include questions on Life and Society in a separate section of the Paper and easily meet the 10% + requirement. To reduce the work-load of examination revision it could offer Centres a choice of any two from a limited range of Topics on which a range of questions both detailed (requiring specific knowledge) and general (inviting personal comments and comparisons) would be set.

One of the least satisfactory features of the regular syllabus had been the separation of the purely linguistic questions between the two papers. This would no longer be necessary and the way was open to devise a much more effective incline of difficulty. It had long been clear that many candidates became confused by the sudden changes of character and historical context usually encountered when passing from one language question to another. It would be more helpful to maintain a continuous story thread running through the whole range of comprehension and translation linking them, where appropriate, with a narrative in English. This was the pattern adopted.

The Paper opened with a short identification of the story in English. There followed a few lines of Latin immediately translated into standard English. Its purpose was three-fold. It would give the candidate a chance to settle down and start thinking in Latin before embarking on the serious business of notching up marks: it would, hopefully, provide some useful words of vocabulary and proper names: it would encourage candidates to use idiomatic English and not translate literally. Such was the theory but in practice the passage was too short to be of real help and the Group discovered that few bothered to read it anyway! Not to gloss the words appearing in it might have helped but some members were adamant that this would be unfair.

From that point the paper followed the well-established pattern of comprehension – translation – comprehension with the Latin increasing in difficulty and the questions in complexity.

The final section of the Paper was concerned with the assessment of work on the Prose Prepared Text. This imposition through National Criteria served only to use up time which could have been better spent covering a longer test of Linguistic ability.

More exciting and innovative by far were the Group's ideas for the examining of the Verse Prepared Text. The vocabulary here involved was unusual, if not eccentric, and the word-order, governed as it often was both by the requirements of the metre and by the poet's desire to achieve some effect, was often very different from that usually encountered in prose. Too much time was spent on the acquisition of this unprofitable vocabulary and the mastery of the strange style (which had frequently led candidates in despair to learn translations by rote): too little on exploring the inner meaning and uncovering the linguistic tricks the author employed to make the message more effective. Lack of time was the chief handicap for both pupil and teacher. How could time be provided?

The existing Cambridge Latin Texts pointed the way ahead. The provision of a glossary alongside the Latin eliminated the need for repeated and time-consuming reference to the back of the book and suggested that vocabulary should be printed beside any passage set for examination but, it was argued, if this were done why not allow candidates to have the full text with them in the Examination Room? National Criteria had restricted questions to the excerpts actually set: this 'open-books' approach would liberate the Examiner and allow much wider cover of the work than before. Knowing how fond school children are of making marginal notes in their books, the Group realised that actual class books could not be taken into the examination and it was reluctant to require Schools to purchase an extra set of books for this use only; it therefore approached the publishers for permission to produce its own examination copies and NEA for the necessary funds. Neither party refused.

An obvious choice of texts presented itself. Unit V of the 1st edition of Cambridge Latin had rarely been used because of pressure of time and was not to feature in the 2nd Edition. It would provide both a prose text to be examined in the normal way and a verse text to be treated as an open book. To satisfy the demand for differentiation, one passage would be clearly identified and a standard set of comprehension questions asked about it. The rest of the prescription would be tested through up to five further questions each dealing with a separate section or with the whole work and inviting extended answers or personal responses. The first Examination produced a host of excellent answers which showed clearly that the course had been enjoyed but there were also many complaints that there had not been time to finish the paper. Next year the number of 'general' questions was reduced.

The sorts of questions now being asked clearly dictated a change in teaching method. Even in the purely 'compre-

hension' section candidates were required not only to deal with the surface meaning but to explain the effects of sound and rhythm and of the organisation of words, to define the feelings of the characters involved and to make critical comments on the development of the story. Indeed, it might have been helpful, in the interests of differentiation to give some guidance (perhaps in the form of a skeleton outline) on how to handle the essay-type question with which the section ended. Such a procedure was discussed but finally rejected on the grounds that more able candidates would feel restricted.

In the second section all the questions demanded extended responses – their expected length indicated by the mark tariff printed beside each. Candidates did not, however, take much notice – hence the difficulty encountered by some in completing the paper! Each of these questions covered a different aspect of the author's technique and students were asked to describe how he used them to achieve the effects he desired. Occasionally they had to make comparisons between two short passages (eg. two similes), decide which was the more successful and give reasons for their choice. A question was also set covering the work as a whole and requiring reference to specific parts of it.

Though the drudgery of learning vocabulary had been removed, what remained was not a soft option. It required in depth discussion not only of the content of the work but of its method and purpose; not only of what the author said but how he said it and the devices he used to drive his points home. It was, in this respect, an extension of the approved procedures of the Cambridge Latin Course and would go some way towards bridging the gap between GCSE and the Sixth Form.

### Coursework

Coursework had been offered as an option by National Criteria and had already been employed by the Group in its Joint Examination on the non-linguistic side. Its experience of the Projects then required had made it wary. They had displayed an admirable variety but, for that very reason, had been difficult to assess or even authenticate. In fact it soon became apparent that a thriving market in Projects was in existence. Under the syllabus too little control could be exerted and it was clear that far more time was being devoted to the Project than its weighting in the scheme of assessment justified. Coursework must not become an addition to the course but an integral part of it. For this and other reasons the Project was abandoned and the Group evolved a scheme peculiar to itself built into the syllabus and carefully monitored. Thanks to the efforts of the Chief Moderator and his strong team of Area Coordinators the system has worked very well and is popular.

For Latin the situation was different. Coursework was not compulsory. The Group was unhappy about offering a choice in its syllabuses, especially to individual candidates. Its provision for Centres to attempt either English-into-Latin sentences or a comprehension exercise had been made with reluctance and was already raising doubts about comparability. If only a few Centres or candidates

chose the option, the scheme would not be cost effective and problems would multiply. When a survey of the views of participating Centres was conducted, it was found that they were almost unanimously opposed to the idea. It was therefore thankfully shelved.

The Group did however explore the possibilities with an eye on later introduction. It was immediately clear that for the Cambridge syllabus (Latin B) the background section could easily be detached from Paper 2 and submitted as Coursework completed in the pre-Examination year. For the traditional Syllabus A, which was based on the philosophy that knowledge of the Civilization should grow from the texts read, no such solution would serve. Since the syllabus prescription did not cover the whole course but only the Examination years, there could be no common learning experience of Roman Life and Society and such knowledge would be compartmentalised and divorced from the prescribed reading. To demand that further secondary source material be read would make Coursework an additional rather than an integrated part of the Syllabus and would considerably increase the burden for Centres in terms of both finance and time.

A more economical alternative was to cover one of the Prescribed Texts through Coursework requiring the submission of an extended essay of specified minimum length. The Group was suspicious of this treatment. It remembered its past experiences: it feared that some of the benefits it hoped would accrue from the study of literature would be lost: it thought that less able candidates might fail to do themselves justice. If a Coursework approach to literature were ever adopted, it intended to exercise close control over the form of the submission.

A third alternative was a reading test on the lines of the Modern Languages oral but, of course, without the conversation. Sound was certainly important for its support of sense and the Group expected that students would hear plenty of Latin read aloud and would read it themselves but it was difficult to see how a reliable standardised test could be set and moderated. The procedure would also add greatly to the cost of the assessment process. It was therefore with some relief that the decision was taken to leave Coursework severely alone.

### Marking for effect

National Criteria had stressed the importance in GCSE of rewarding candidates for what they knew, understood and could do. To achieve this end, traditional attitudes to marking must be revised. It had been the custom to determine the number of marks available for a piece of work and deduct one for each error. In marking translation especially it often happened that the marks had run out long before the item had been completely assessed leaving some correct work which received no credit at all.

Candidates ought to be given credit for what they knew – in the case of a verb, for instance, for person, number,

tense, mood and voice – and the Group devised an elaborate scheme for the marking of unprepared translation on this basis. The raw marks for a passage given an examination weighting of 40% would run to two or three hundred and would be awarded positively.

The system was tried for one year and almost led to the mass resignation of the Assistant Examiners for Syllabus A, whose work load had increased enormously. Moreover it reduced the spread of marks and destroyed the efficiency of translation as a discriminator. Indeed a post-mortem showed that justice was not being done. Strangely the system worked well for Syllabus B perhaps because of the smaller amount of Latin set for translation! In subsequent years the scheme was modified but still retained the principle of a high working total and a positive marking approach.

The scheme of assessment tests performance in three fields – Knowledge, Understanding and Response. Questions set to test Knowledge are probably the easiest to devise and present fewest marking problems since the answer is either right or wrong. To assist positive marking in the other fields it is the custom of the Chief Examiner to prepare a mark scheme which covers a wide range of possibilities – for a question carrying three marks perhaps six or seven points, any three of which will gain the full mark. A fail-safe mechanism allows further points to be added at the Standardising Meeting for Examiners.

### Looking Ahead

The National Curriculum has not been kind to Classics but the Group is reasonably satisfied with its attempts to meet the crisis. It is offering syllabuses which candidates seem to enjoy, judging from the steadily increasing numbers of entrants: it has met the challenge of National Criteria: it has found out how to translate the familiar A–G Grades into the new Levels 10–3. Yet it is far from complacent and eagerly awaits the publication of Revised National Criteria for Classical Subjects so that it can again use them to the advantage of its students.

DAVID WILSON  
Formerly Chairman  
Northern Examining Association  
Classics Subject Committee

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### Mozart's Requiem

Maiestate gravi resonat concentus acerbis  
Perfusus modulis speque superne data.

DR WALTER BERGER