

# The State of Classics

Marion Gibbs

Defining the current state of Classics in schools is not unlike attempting to capture Proteus. Whatever measure one chooses, it transpires that no accurate data are currently available, or if data are available, they relate to one year alone and therefore allow no comparisons to be made. By August 1997 OFSTED inspections will have covered every maintained secondary school in England (and a parallel exercise will have taken place in Wales) during a four year period, but the provision of Classics is unlikely to remain stable in every state school during this time and no comparable survey of independent schools is being undertaken. An initial trawl, undertaken while I was still an HMI last year, revealed 268 maintained secondary schools, 256 independent senior schools and 102 further education colleges in England offering some form of Classics at GCSE or Advanced level, but I am well aware that there were many gaps to be filled in this picture. JACT is currently endeavouring to compile an up to date database of schools teaching Classics and all contributions would be welcome.

Examination results are usually published under the single combined heading 'Classical Subjects' and it is often unclear as to whether candidates from Wales and Northern Ireland and both Mode 1 and Mode 3 examinations have been included. Nonetheless, after some research I have acquired the figures for GCSE candidates from 1991-1994 in Latin, Greek and Classical Civilisation.

	1991	1992	1993	1994
Latin	13843	13286	12574	12843
Greek	1367	1285	1268	1153
Classical Civilisation	4895	4775	4008	4161

This reveals a decline in numbers of candidates for Latin by 4% from 1991 to 1992 and by 5.4% from 1992 to 1993 and an **increase** of 2.1% from 1993 to 1994. However, these figures must be placed in the context of the entire GCSE cohort. The numbers in this age group have been reducing over the past few years; for example, the number of candidates for GCSE English (taken by virtually all Year 11 pupils) dropped from 641,937 in 1992 to 630,087 in 1993, a reduction of 1.8%. Viewed in this light, the reduction by 1.3% in the number of candidates for GCSE Greek between 1992 and 1993 can be seen as a small increase in the proportion of the whole age group taking Greek as a GCSE subject! The sharp decline [16%] in candidates for Classical Civilisation GCSE between 1992 and 1993 reflects the arrival of the National Curriculum and the move in many state schools towards compulsory history or geography in Key Stage 4. The Dearing Review has now relieved this pressure and it is to be hoped that the revival of Classical Civilisation GCSE apparent in the 1994 entry figures will gain pace.

At Advanced level there is a similarly mixed picture. I have only been able to obtain accurate figures for the past three years (and for Ancient History for two).

	1992	1993	1994
Latin	1848	1772	1690
Greek	669	367	284
Classical Civilisation	4007	4137	4378
Ancient History	?	1992	1757

This reveals a decline of 6.7% in the numbers taking Latin at Advanced level between 1992 and 1993 and of 4.6% between 1993 and 1994. The numbers of students taking Advanced levels have been increasing substantially during the past few years, but this reflects a rise in the proportion of students remaining in education post-16 and a broadening of the ability band in school sixth forms and further education colleges and it should not be expected to be translated into an increase in candidates for Latin and Greek. The dramatic decline in the number of candidates taking Advanced level Greek between 1992 and 1993 is a cause for concern; although the pace of decline has slowed it seems improbable that there will be a major revival in schools and colleges, particularly now that all universities are prepared to accept candidates *ab initio*. Classical Civilisation continues to be a success story at Advanced level and is more than compensating, in arithmetic terms, for the decline in Ancient History. Once the new syllabuses have been introduced at Advanced level which conform to the compulsory cores (planned for first examination in 1998) there may be a further shift, since Ancient History will have to conform to the History principles, while Classical Civilisation remains a subset of Classics. Syllabuses which are currently entitled Ancient History but which encompass large elements of drama, archaeology and similar broad themes may fit more comfortably into the Classical Civilisation category in future.

Statistics are regarded with a great deal of scepticism by many people and are open to many kinds of interpretation, but I think that those cited above do provide some comfort for classicists and indicate that the subject is not in the state of terminal decline that many would have us believe. One small point is of particular note: if one relates the GCSE Latin figures to those for Advanced level two years later (a not unreasonable connection since the vast majority of students still study for Advanced level for two years, having previously taken GCSE), one finds that 7.81% of the 1991 GCSE cohort entered for Advanced level in 1993 and 7.86% of the 1992 GCSE cohort progressed to Advanced level in 1994. We are clearly continuing to attract similar proportions of students from our GCSE groups into more advanced study: if we can maintain a steady increase in numbers opting for GCSE perhaps we can also reverse the decline in Advanced level numbers.

There is more good news - Latin is the subject most commonly being introduced (or reintroduced) to the curriculum of schools which have gained grant-maintained status. Moreover, the Open University which has run successful courses on Greek and Roman Civilisation topics for many years has now given recognition to courses in the Latin and Greek languages for adults and a great deal of enthusiasm is being engendered.



We have undergone a period of unprecedented change in all areas of education during the past seven years and Classics has certainly not escaped the upheaval. In schools, the pressure has been somewhat relieved by the Dearing Review, which has effectively reduced the Key Stage 4 compulsory core to English, mathematics and science. But beware, the next great bandwagon is already upon us - vocational studies in Key Stage 4. It is intended that pupils may spend either 20% or 40% of curriculum time on GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualifications) courses, although these percentages can include allocations for the core skills of English, mathematics and use of information technology. In some schools such schemes may simultaneously open up the curriculum for pupils who do not wish to pursue vocational options and thus there may be greater scope for classical subjects; as ever classics teachers will have to be well-informed and to have their strategies planned.

There is no room for complacency: my work as an HMI revealed examples of inspirational Classics teaching, but I also saw some lessons which lacked rigour, pace, accuracy and excitement. We must not assume that because we are teaching a subject which is intrinsically valuable it will survive however it is taught. There is a tremendous need for continued in-service training, solidarity and support within our profession. Those who have specialist knowledge must continue to liaise with the ever-increasing numbers of non-specialist teachers of Classical Civilisation and offer assistance to those whose Latin or pedagogical practice may be less well developed or just rusty.

The study of classics has progressed in many ways during the last 30 years. Pupils who study Latin now do realise that

Latin literature is literature and that poets such as Vergil and Horace were real people. Classical Civilisation did not exist as an Advanced level or a university subject 30 years ago, but now it has grown and is thriving and inspiring students to begin a study of the languages themselves if they have not already done so. A new generation of parents is growing up with these more positive experiences of the Classics rather than the decontextualised, half-remembered "*hic, haec, hoc*" or "*amo, amas, amat...*" with which they used to accost Classics teachers at parents' evenings. Classics has a high media profile these days, thanks to the indefatigable efforts of protagonists such as Dr. Peter Jones (whom I was delighted to hear state in riposte to a reference to Latin as a dead language that no one referred to Puccini's *Nessun dorma* as "dead music"). A recent issue of the national campus newspaper *University Life* featured a centre-spread entitled "How the Classics' decline and fall is being reversed".

In conclusion, if any defence of the study of Classics were needed, why look further than Cicero's *Pro Archia*, 6, 14:

*Sed pleni omnes sunt libri, plenae sapientium voces, plena exemplorum vetustas; quae iacerent in tenebris omnia, nisi litterarum lumen accederet. Quam multas nobis imagines non solum ad intuendum verum etiam ad imitandum fortissimorum virorum expressas scriptores et Graeci et Latini reliquerunt!*

MARION GIBBS

(This article is based upon a talk given at the 1994 ARLT Summer School in Nottingham.)

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## A Taste of Greek

### How EMACT\* Graded Tests in Greek came to exist

\*(East Midlands Association of Classical Teachers)

Tony Payne

The EMACT Graded Tests in Greek represent the usual mixture of inspiration, disregard of problems, insanity, encouragement from others and sense of time passing unfulfilled that accompany such ideas. Two strands and people started me off: Hilary Walters and Pat Story.

Hilary had decided (rightly) that our Greek "taster" week for Year 8 would benefit from a more structured approach across the Department than each of us relying on our own initiatives all the time. With characteristic efficiency, two duplicable worksheets titled "A Taste of Greek" quickly appeared, and were duly appreciated by Year 8 - some of the word-derivations were distinctly interesting, and everybody liked resolving *Ζεὺς* and *Ἀθήνη* into "proper writing". Meanwhile, the chance for getting recognized awards in Latin (via the CLC Graded Tests) suggested that something ought to exist for Greek - and Pat agreed. It wasn't reasonable, however, to try to impose new tasks on the CSCP. So do it yourself.

Two thoughts came out straight away when the first plans were made: (1) any system would have to accommodate all courses being used (including my own rough-cast "Paideiopolis"), (2) a simple "taster" level had to be devised - this had to reach schools where Greek wasn't regularly taught (i.e. over 95%) but there was possible interest (which could range from scientific terms to mythology).

Then came the third strand - Peter Barker's "The Greek We Speak" (with the despairing Greek saying *παντα ἔστιν Ἀγγλικά μοι*). Here was a rich source of further ideas, at least for the all-important Level 1 (=taster level) which could also be used in the early stages by those undertaking Greek (as a Level 2). What other things were needed? It seemed that four levels would be appropriate - taster, beginner (8-12 weeks), and two intermediate (26-34 weeks and pre-GCSE).

Next question - how was any literature and Civilisation going to be accommodated? If we (being comparatively fortunate) felt pressure of time, what about everyone else? What questions could be asked about what? Attic Greek was likely to be introduced - how many taster Greek sessions were going to be geared to reading Homer?

The answers seemed to come clear - it had to be Athens initially, the material had to be significant yet able to be absorbed in short time, the taster Level 1 had to be a matter of working with language resources with an easy piece of mythology/Civilisation to be "remembered" (and prompted by practice material). And for Level 1 (which was as far as many pupils were likely to get) the "surrender value" had to be embodied in a booklet which pupils could take away with them - and perhaps use in the future. Cross-curricular considerations seemed to demand consultation with other Departments in school - and the required technical terms for pupils in Years 7/8 in Mathematics/Science came forth and were taken in.

For Levels 2/3/4, a curious mixed-source set of answers turned up. Peter Barker's "The Greek We Speak" contained (amongst others) quotations from the Delphic Oracle, Heraclitus and Aristotle - these were good 1-liners on which elementary questions could be asked for Level 2 (as well as more word-derivations and

more conventional comprehension questions). Corsar (et al.) "Discovering the Greeks" has a short chapter on the workings of Athenian democracy in the 5th century BC - this seemed promising Civilisation material which was likely to be touched on in most Greek courses and could enter Level 3. Some way-out ideas of my own that were tried out in "Paideiopolis" provided the rest of the material - early Greek lyric poems (of all things - believe me, it has worked!) for Level 3, and some lines from Xenophon "Lac.Pol." with some bare Civilisation background on early Sparta and the Peloponnesian League (together with a slightly-predictable language test) seemed a reasonable build-up in both literature and Civilisation directions for Level 4.

Fine so far - now all that had to be done was to try it all out on the suffering pupils - and colleagues -, write it all down in presentable and intelligible form, find a sponsoring body (if it worked in school) to give its name, negotiate copyright permission from publishers, and type it all up.

The acknowledgements on pages 2 and 3 of the Test booklets are heartfelt. Any problems at any stage could have wrecked the idea, but family, colleagues at Loughborough (Grammar and High Schools), EMACT and five publishers were so supportive that it was merely lack of my own time that has held up completeness. We hope it will prove useful.

#### *Some Potted Administrative Ideas*

(1) The Aims and Objectives of the Certificate system can be summarized as an attempt to document engagement with the Greek language from beginner to pre-GCSE level. Each Certificate level describes the candidate's achievement for that level on the reverse (just as in the Cambridge Latin Course).

(2) In summary:-

Level 1 is achievable after 2 hours' teaching, as the emphasis is on working with information supplied, not remembering language material. A little Civilisation material is tested conventionally.

Level 2 is achievable after 8-12 weeks' study and can be worked into conventional timetabled lessons. With longer time, it can of course be worked for under less "protected" conditions(!)

Level 3 is achievable after 26-34 weeks' study. There are 20-25 lines of literature tested as "set", and a Civilisation test on the basics of Athenian democracy.

Level 4 is achievable after approximately 51 weeks' study; it is intended as "pre-GCSE" and has about 40 lines of Xenophon "Lac.Pol." as "set text" as well as an unprepared language (Xenophon) test. This can usually be worked into a GCSE course, as the literature test here allows the vocabulary in the study text to be used in the test.

The language requirements - structures and vocabulary - should not present a real problem as a conscious effort has been made to integrate each Level to stages in a GCSE course (without reference to any particular course).

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(Editor's note: Further information about the EMACT Graded Tests and/or copies of the Syllabus and Test Papers may be obtained from Tony Payne at Loughborough Grammar School.)



# "Language Awareness" — Latin, Greek and English<sup>1</sup>

Gareth Morgan

The business part of this paper is a collection of material which has been used for many years in classes for undergraduates at the University of Texas at Austin. It is presented here in the belief that (allowing for inevitable variations in standards, cultures, teaching styles) it could be useful in attacking the theme of 'Language Awareness' which has now become so prominent in British educational thought.

In the years around 1960, when the Department of Classics of the University of Texas (inspired by the late William Arrowsmith) became a leader in the new field of 'Classics taught in English', a course entitled *Latin & Greek Elements in English* was one of the pillars of the 'Classical Civilisation' programme. With some vicissitudes it has flourished to the present day. Now, in any semester, some eight hundred students, distributed in four or five sections, will be enrolled. It has a reputation, undoubtedly deserved, of improving performances on examinations for professions and for entry to graduate work. A growing clientele comes from immigrant students, notably from South-East Asia, India, and Pakistan.

The various teachers of the course are free to use different styles: but the same textbook is used by all sections.<sup>2</sup> When I teach this course, a word-in-context definition exercise is routinely assigned for each class meeting, and each hour usually begins with students' difficulties from this exercise. Dealing with these may take anything from five to thirty minutes. The rest of the hour is spent on a 'theme'. This may be 'social': a topic from Greek or Roman society is chosen and its effects on English vocabulary examined — huge for such things as Roman Agriculture, or Literacy, comparatively small for Greek Government or Roman Entertainment. Or the theme may be 'linguistic', on such things as you see below. The students have check-lists of words to be dealt with during the semester. What follows is much of the Linguistic check-list, with my own remarks in italics. When the same sort of material is used with students who know some Latin or Greek, many of the illustrations can be more direct and cogent.

## Calques

unforeseeing - improvident: gospel - evangel: transparent - diaphanous: prelude - foreplay: (*and a significant group . . .*) thesis - position, synthesis - composition, hypothesis - supposition, antithesis - opposition, prosthesis - apposition. (*Calque, the French for 'mould', or 'impression from a mould', is used for a word that is shaped in detail, part by part, on a word from another language. There is a huge store of words formed by Romans after the patterns of their Greek mentors. The reformings of Latin vocabulary in Old English are also significant.*)

## CA / CHA Alternation

candle - chandelier: castle - chateau: castrate - chaste - incest: cancel - chancel - chancellor: case - chance: incantation - enchant: Lancaster - Winchester: camisole - chemise: cavalry - chivalry. (*Broadly speaking, Latin CA goes to French CHA.*)

## Clippings

cute, cello, tawdry, tantony, roo, Tannies (Botanical Gardens in Melbourne), Stambul, fridge, flu, fender?, van. (*As you see, this has almost no relevance to the classical contribution, whereas the next topic is thoroughly within Latin, and should be in the knowledge of every Latin student: in practice, I find it isn't.*)

## Dental + T (becomes S)

intend, intense: incendiary, incense: deride, derisive: recede, recess: invert, inverse; pervert, perverse; convert, converse: remit, remiss: patient, passive: connect, connection (connexion, nexus): reflect, reflexion (sic).

**Doublets** (*Words which come from the same original, but by different linguistic paths. This is an all-important theme for discoursing upon the richness of the English language.*)

disk, disc, dais, discuss, desk: regal, royal: legal, loyal: providence, prudence: skin, shin: scatter, shatter: scar, shear, share: skirt, shirt: scat, shit, skitters: dainty, dignity: cruise, cross, crux: camera, chamber: canal, channel: card, chart: ray, radius: ennui, annoy: fragile, frail: compute, count: abbreviate, abridge: ratio, ration, reason: capital, cattle, chattel: gentle, genteel, jaunty: lease, leash. (*Note how many words can have a place under different themes. Here we have put several examples of CA/CHA alternation, and another alternation could be noted, of SK/SH from different pre-Norman dialects. Then, here and elsewhere, many 'linguistic' words fall under 'social' theme — 'compute', for example under the all-important heading of 'thought'.*)

## Glide Consonants

incinerate, cinder: genera, gender: camera, chamber: armory, armoire, aumbry: similar, semblance: humiliate, humble: Tamerlane, Tamburlaine: comb, unkempt: dream -?: (*'Nasal and Liquid are separated by the appropriate unvoiced consonant'. The parallel unnotated pronunciation of 'anger' as opposed to 'singer' (don't forget the more advanced dialect 'singger'). But the opposite process works in some languages. The Greek island of Imbros has become Imroz under Turkish rule.*) Henry, Henderson (*A useful lead-in to the idea that the telephone directory is one of the richest sources of linguistic information: and perhaps to a non-classical 'Names' theme, in which students are led to place their own surnames under the rubrics Patronymic - Occupation - Place - Nickname: and this is contrasted with Indo-European two-element names — Greek Socrates - Polycrates - Isocrates, Germanic Albert Hubert - Robert.*)

1 The substance of this paper formed one of a series of three lectures on 'Linguistics and Latin Teaching', given at the 1993 ARLT Summer School at the University of Exeter. My work at that time was supported by the award of the Centennial Commission Chair of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas.

2 D.M. Ayres *English words from Latin and Greek elements* U. Arizona, 1986



**Grimm's Law** (is not entirely popular in linguistic circles: but its formulation is still useful in raising language consciousness. 'Germanic consonants (and English may be the best example) have moved from Indo-European consonants in a circular way; voiceless to aspirate, aspirate to voiced, voiced to voiceless. But whether or not you want to teach the whole thing, and have on your conscience all sorts of academic reservations, yet the main alternations in English can be useful.)

#### **C/H alternation**

cannabis - hemp: cynic, canine - hound: current - hurry, horse?: coelacanth - hollow: ecclesiastic, clamor, exclaim - hail: centenary - hundred: cardiac, cordial - heart.

#### **P/F alternative**

Pisces - fish: paternal - father: plague - flog: plateau, plaza, piazza, plane, plate, platter - flat: complete, replete, plenipotentiary - fill, full: pelt - fell(monger): pro - for, fore: prime - first: pecuniary - fee: pullet - fowl: pedal, tripod - foot.

#### **T/TH alternation**

paternal - father: tertiary, triad - three, third: maternal mother: hetero, alter, alternate - other, either: fraternal - brother: mortal - (murder) - murder.

(At this point we have diminishing returns)

#### **CH/G alternation**

hostile - guest, ghost?: cholera - gall: horticulture - garden.

#### **F(PH)/B alternation**

fertile - bear: floral - bloom: fraternal - brother: fragile - break.

#### **TH/D alternation**

thyroid - door: methyl, amethyst - mead: threnody - drone.

#### **B/P alternation**

cannabis - hemp: bacteria - peg: labia - lip.

#### **D/T alternation**

decimal, decalogue - ten: duo, dual, dyad - two, twain, twice: adamant, dominate - tame: \**dingua*, lingua - tongue: \**dakru*, lachrymose - tear: druid - tree: deduce, etc. - tug.

#### **G/C(K) alternation**

agriculture - acre: genesis, progenitor - kin: genuflect - knee, kneel: diagnosis, recognise - know: grain - corn.

#### **Learned Error**

lethal: posthumous: Anthony (the American pronunciation often is as written): scissors.

**Lenition** (The process, universal in Western Europe, by which intervocalic consonants are 'softened', with less breath impact. Your Welsh speakers will recognise this as an important structural principle, usually called the 'soft mutation'.)

**Dentals (T>D>Zero)** predator, prey: *pratum*, Prado, prairie: fate, *fada*, fey, fairy: armature, armada, army.

**Labials (P>B>V/F)** episcopal, bishop: capital, chef, achieve: capricious, Capri, cab(riolet), chevron, Chevrolet: rabies, raving: pauper, poverty.

**Velars (C>G>Zero/W)** locus, locate, loge, lodge, lieu, lieutenant, loo?: pacify, pay: focus, Tierra del Fuego, curfew: precarious, pray: caricature, cargo, carry: vocal, vowel: aquiline, eagle: ligature, liaison, ally.

**Metaphor** (The base *PEND* is chosen because it so clearly illustrates the development of physical metaphors, each leading to rich information about Roman and Medieval society. But other such tables could be developed.)

**PEND/** has the basic meaning 'hang'; a physical metaphor is 'weigh'; a further physical metaphor is 'pay'. Each of these three physical meanings has a corresponding non-physical metaphor. So arrange the following words in a three-by-two table:

pending, impend, pendant, pendulous, pendulum, ponder, ponderous, expend, dispense, Spenser, depend, pension, pendent, pound, compendium, appendage, appendix, pensive, peso, peseta.

**Metathesis** (Limited to interchange of consonants. Ayres misleads by giving the name loosely to other sorts of letter-change.)

form - morph: spectacle, species, specious - scope, telescope, microscope, etc.: palaver - parable: scapula - epaulette. (For students with some French, the last word could lead to a sub-theme with such pairs as school - école, spade - épée, study - étude.)

#### **Misdivision**

Marathon Walkathon, Telethon, Danceathon, Readathon (Sicyon, Elaion, arboretum, rosetum — but these, triggered by the meaning of 'Marathon', might well be restricted to classics students): anthropoid factoid, bungaloid: adder (contrast Nag the Cobra, or if in Wales, neidr), apron (contrast 'napkin'): bourgeoisie booboisie, cowboisie.

**Nasal Infix** (This is not a Papuan facial ornament, but an N inserted in a root — often as an imperfective marker. This again is something which should be in the repertoire of Latin learners, and rarely is.)

victor - invincible: contagious, contact - tangent, contingent: relic, derelict - relinquish: strict - stringent: conjugal - junction (yoke): fracture - infringe: succubus, incubus - succumb.

#### **S/R Alternation**

opus - operate: onus; - onerous: corpus - corporal: genus general: adhesive - adhere. cohesion - cohere: just, jury: plus, plural. (One of the most interesting phenomena, since it is attested so early within Latin itself: Cicero tells how a certain member of the Papirius family, in the fourth century, was the first to use this form of the name, as opposed to his ancestors' Papisius (FAM. ix, 21.2). A similar development in Germanic gives us all the German plurals in R, and our own dialect 'childer'.)

**Vowel Gradation** (Every Indo-European root could theoretically appear in three forms: CeC. CoC, CC ~ where C stands for 'consonant'. These are called E-grade, O-grade, and Zero-grade, and are remarkably popular with students, who begin to see them everywhere in the most unlikely situations.)

genus, genesis, general, genital, congenital; cosmogony, gonad, gonorrhea; pregnant, cognate, benign, malignant, Agnes; embolism, symbol, Diskobolos; problem, emblem, ballistics, ballet; sequence, sequel, consecutive, prosecute; social, society, associate; mental; monument, admonish; mnemonic, amnesia, amnesty; protect, architect, toga; pendant, etc., ponder; dental, orthodontic.

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