The Transformation of Classics Teaching in Scotland, c.1960-c.2000: The Decline of Latin and Greek and the Rise of Classical Civilisation

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Abstract

In this thesis, the author charts the history of Classics teaching in Scotland between 1960-2000. The second half of the 20th century was a time of extraordinary change, not solely for Latin and Greek, but for the education system at large. It was a period of shifting attitudes towards Classics and its place in the curriculum. Particularly at school level, moreover, the form and purpose of education itself was under debate. A rebalancing was under way, with a move away from language-learning towards an increasing emphasis on the sciences. As this subject has been underexplored to date, the author looks to supplement the existing literature via archival research and through oral testimony gathered from a broad range of educators.

In the years following the 1963 Robbins Report – a landmark publication that would transform the tertiary education sector – Classics occupied a precarious position. Tracing the stories of Classics teaching at Scotland's four Ancient Universities, the author compares the distinct approaches taken and the different outcomes reached. The University of Aberdeen is utilised as a case study to explore the institutional failures that led to the demise of Classics there. In contrast, the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and St Andrews all managed to retain their Classics provision. Greek at the University of Glasgow is taken as an additional case study – one that demonstrates how a department with university support was able to adapt to the significant changes that took place from the 1960s onwards. Although each university adapted to survive in different ways, common threads emerged over the period under investigation in the form of non-linguistic modules and the rise of Classical Civilisation programmes. Whilst the decline of language-focused courses may be lamented, the development and proliferation of popular non-linguistic programmes of study would ultimately open up the classical world to students for whom it would have otherwise remained inaccessible.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Thea M. G. Campbell

Chapter 1

Introduction

At the beginning of the 1960s, students at the University of Glasgow needed at least a Lower Certificate in Latin to enter Higher Ordinary (Year Two) English. But by the end of the 1990s, out of more than forty secondary schools in Glasgow's state sector, only four offered pupils any classical languages. This thesis explores the character, causes, and consequences of the precipitous decline in the teaching of Latin and Greek languages in the Scottish education system, from the early 1960s until the turn of the century.

Classical subjects, Latin in particular, traditionally held an important place within Scottish education, so a contraction of this magnitude is in itself significant. Historically, whilst in other nations, 'the classics were the preserve of the social elite', as Anderson and Wallace argue, 'in Scotland they were open to the people'.[1] Paterson explored four distinctive traditions of Scottish education: social openness, the public character of the system, breadth, and passion for ideas.[2] Others have gone further, arguing the Scottish education system has been remarkably meritocratic and egalitarian, not rooted in elitism or class.[3] Mandler, for example, notes that 'it was widely felt that Scotland – with its smaller, less secure elite, and its long tradition of radical Protestant individualism – had already benefited from the workings of "meritocracy" for a century or more'.[4] However, the extent to which Scottish education has – or continues to – truly live up to such characterisations is debated.[5] Some dispute Scottish education has a distinctive egalitarian approach, calling this the 'Scottish myth'.[6] And while Scottish people may have traditionally had, 'a real concern for education

[1] Robert Anderson and Stuart Wallace, 'The Universities and National Identity in the Long Nineteenth Century, c.1830–1914', in Robert Anderson, Mark Freeman, and Lindsay Paterson (eds.), *The Edinburgh History of Education in Scotland* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2015) p.265.
[2] Lindsay Paterson, 'Traditions of Scottish Education', in Heather Holmes (ed.), *Scottish life and Society: Institutions of Scotland - Education* (East Linton, Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp.21-46.
[3] Carol Campbell, 'An Analysis of a "Scottish dimension" in the Development of School-Based Management', *Scottish Educational Review* 32:1 (2000), pp.4-20.
[4] Peter Mandler, *The Crisis of the Meritocracy: Britain's Transition to Mass Education since the Second World War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020), p.4.
[5] David Raffe, 'How Distinctive is Scottish Education? Five Perspectives on Distinctiveness', *Scottish Affairs* 49 (2004), pp.50-72.
[6] Andrew McPherson and Charles D. Raab, *Governing Education: A Sociology of Policy since 1945* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1988), at pp.403-32; Robert Anderson, 'In Search of the "Lad of Parts": The Mythical History of Scottish Education', *History Workshop* 19:1 (1985), pp.82-104; Lindsay Paterson, 'Does Scottish education need traditions?', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 30:3 (2009), pp.269-81.

and a respect for the educated man',[7] it is also true, for example, that Glasgow had a strong 'tradition of leaving school at the earliest opportunity, to seek employment and careers in industry, commerce and service industries'.[8]

As Latin has struggled to shake off a reputation for being irrelevant, outmoded, and exclusive – an 'elitist subject which is only reserved for the privileged few' – it has perhaps been uniquely vulnerable to ideologically motivated pressures.[9] In Scotland, Williams recognises an 'historic prejudice' against Classics from a Scottish Government 'hostile to the subject because it believes it is out of date with the present'.[10] This is arguably the continuation of an 'anti-classical flood' more than a century old.[11] But to many, the relevance of studying the ancient world and its art, history, and language is clear: 'the classics are strictly relevant to our times. They are the fountain-head of European culture; they clarify many modern problems.'[12] As Davies argued, Classics 'which being dead, or so deemed, yet speak to us across the ever-widening gulf of years in accents as clear and as inspiring as any of their successors.'[13]

Others cynically traduce the value of learning a dead language 'whose only practical application is in understanding some of the dialogue in Asterix books'.[14] The way classical subjects are treated, I argue, exposes underlying attitudes about perceived usefulness or otherwise of specific types of learning, democratisation of access to education, and the relative value of knowledge versus skills.[15] And although modern and classical language teaching differs in character, many stresses – declining student numbers, budgetary

[7] S. Leslie Hunter, *The Scottish Educational System*, 2nd edn (Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1972), at p.72.
[8] Glasgow Corporation Education Department, *100 Years of Education in the City of Glasgow, 1872-1972* (Glasgow, Corporation of Glasgow, 1972).
[9] Gavin Williamson, former Education Secretary, quoted in, Camilla Turner, 'Latin will be taught in state schools to end its "elitist" status', in *The Telegraph* (July 30, 2021). <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/07/30/latin-will-taught-state-schools-end-elitist-status/> [accessed 13 December 2024].
[10] Toby McDonald, 'Executive spells end for Latin and Greek lessons', in *The Sunday Times* (March 14, 2004). <https://www.thetimes.com/article/executive-spells-end-for-latin-and-greek-lessons-2c5h8hr6j9v> [accessed 13 December 2024].
[11] Gilbert Austin Davies, *The Utility of Greek: An Inaugural Address* (Glasgow, James MacLehose and Sons, 1907), p.4.
[12] SED, *Classics in Secondary Schools* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1951), p.6.
[13] Davies, p.21.
[14] As tweeted by former Liberal Democrats leader, Tim Farron. <https://x.com/timfarron/status/1421220545106956296> [accessed 13 December 2024].
[15] Leesa Wheelahan, *Why Knowledge Matters in a Curriculum: A social realist argument* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2010).

constraints, availability of qualified staff – also affect the provision of French, German or Italian.

The author's personal interest in this topic stems from experiences of undergraduate study at either side of the period under investigation. After studying English and French at the University of Glasgow in the early 1960s, I taught languages in Scottish secondary schools before returning to study Classics at the same institution four decades later. Informal discussions within peer learning groups revealed many students faced severe barriers to understanding classical language concepts – not just from a lack of Latin-specific grammar but also rooted in a more fundamental lack of English grammatical concepts. These contrasting experiences emphasised the immense change over this period in the linguistic knowledge and language skills expected of students. In part, this thesis is an attempt to understand how – and why – these changes occurred.

An additional motivation was to address the lack of academic work on Classical education in Scotland. As Holmes-Henderson noted, 'owing to the very limited number of published works on the role of Classical subjects in Scottish education little is known about how, when and why they came to disappear from most mainstream schools.'[16] Poor coverage of this topic is demonstrated by the fact classical subjects were once deemed to merit a chapter in the first edition of Bryce and Humes' *Scottish Education*, the seminal 1999 text on educational provision in Scotland,[17] but that this chapter was removed from the third edition onwards.[18] This is a recurring issue across the academic literature, where classical subjects have typically been given little to no attention in works on Scottish education, and whilst dedicated accounts for other nations exist,[19] this particular Scottish history has not yet been written. And again, whilst there are various international collections on classical education, issues specific to Scotland are not particularly well covered within them.[20]

[16] Arlene Holmes-Henderson, 'A defence of classical rhetoric in Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence' (Ed.D Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2013), p.5. <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/4705/> [accessed 12 December 2024].
[17] T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999).
[18] T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education - Third Edition: Beyond Devolution* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008).
[19] E.g., Christopher Stray, *Classics transformed: schools, universities and society in England 1830-1960* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998).
[20] Christopher Stray, *Classics in Britain: Scholarship, Education, and Publishing 1800-2000* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018).

Information about pupils sitting and passing examinations exists, along with some illuminating resources such as the Statistical Account of Scotland series[21], however there is little critical analysis of what these numbers mean. As noted throughout this thesis, numerous high-level, top-down reports exist which map out the changing priorities in the educational landscape over this period, perhaps most famously the expansionist 1963 'Robbins Report' advocating anyone suitably motivated and qualified should have access to university education.[22] But there is limited understanding to what extent and in what way ordinances were implemented, especially north of the border, and what this meant for teachers and pupils in classrooms, and for lecturers and students in universities. There is very little detailed analysis of specific changes in the curriculum within the study of classical subjects at either school or university level – an omission exacerbated when one considers the limited amounts of surviving contemporaneous course materials. The research methodologies used in this present work are a direct response to the lack of specialist critical analysis of this topic.

Another more general reason this area has not been satisfactorily investigated, perhaps, is because of the mistaken perception of a wider lack of interest. Latin and Greek language and literature has at various times been unfairly dismissed as 'being dead, or so deemed'.[23] This sense of perceived disinterest is memorably encapsulated in the anonymous folk rhyme, known to generations to Latin teachers and pupils - 'Latin is a language / Dead as dead can be / First it killed the Romans / Now it's killing me. / All are dead who spoke it / All are dead who wrote it / All are dead who learned it / Lucky dead, they've earned it' – but it is by no means restricted to reluctant young scholars.

In 2004, when Tony Williams (coincidentally the author of the aforementioned 'Classics Education' chapter that would come to be removed from later editions of Bryce and Humes' *Scottish Education*) retired from Strathclyde University after 30 years, the final remaining pathway for the training of new Classics teachers in Scotland was removed, with the Scottish Executive citing lack of demand. However, Williams instead attributed this to their 'historic prejudice' against Latin and Greek, pointing out that all previous graduates from the course

[21] Especially, the *Third Statistical Account of Scotland*, published across 31 volumes between 1951-1992.
[22] Committee on Higher Education, *Higher Education: A Report by the Committee Appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins, 1961–63 (The Robbins Report)* (London, HMSO, 1963) Cmnd.2154.
[23] Davies, p.21.

successfully found teaching roles, despite a generally low number of jobs, averaging around seven new teachers per year.[24] By 2004, Latin was taught in just 34 out of Scotland's 577 state secondaries, though its popularity was defended by the headmaster of one of these schools, Jim Dalziel, who stated it would be 'extremely regrettable' to lose something that he believed 'parents and children want' due to financial investment. Ronald Knox, lecturer at the University of Glasgow, echoed these sentiments, lamenting the cessation of classical teacher training came at a time when 'interest in novels and films on classical subjects has never been greater'.[25]

Classics in Historical Context: The Pre-Robbins Period

To appreciate the scale of change to Classics teaching provision in Scotland from 1960 onwards one must bear in mind two distinct contexts. The first is the historical setting, in which Classics held an important, if not central, role within education. The second is the seismic transformation to general educational provision during the 1960s which had effects on education in all fields and at all levels of study. The impact of the latter upon the former is a recurring theme throughout this thesis – and the Robbins Report is treated as an inflection point from which to consider Classics, and education more broadly, before and after.[26]

In 1961, the UK Government requested the academic economist Lord Robbins to chair the Committee of Enquiry into the Future of Higher Education. As noted above, its Report (published in 1963) advanced the principle (the 'Robbins Principle') that everyone should have access to university education, providing they were suitably motivated and qualified. In pursuit of this aim, Robbins proposed a raft of changes intended to democratise the university along meritocratic lines – something which had a profound expansionist effect on the tertiary sector. The Report was particularly prescient of the then-future demographic shifts and socio-economic flows that would require universities to adapt and change. The Robbins Report stands out from many of the other social policy reports produced by and for government throughout the second half of the twentieth century because its impact was both

[24] McDonald, 'Executive spells end'.
[25] 'Classics campaigners put Glasgow secondary on a pedestal', in *Tes Magazine* (March 19, 2004). <https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/classics-campaigners-put-glasgow-secondary-pedestal> [accessed 13 December 2024].
[26] Robbins, *Report* (1963).

genuinely transformational and long-lived – in many regards setting the course we are still on today.

In their 1947 Report on secondary education, the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland emphasised 'the different subjects should have equal encouragement: we do not favour any classical or mathematical monopoly'.[27] Nevertheless, the introduction to the Classics section demonstrates Council members not only placed a high value on the transmission and reception of Classics in Scottish secondary schools, but that they have had cause to lament 'their necessarily more modest station in the contemporary world' for in contrast to 'the regal, indeed the imperial, sway they exercised for centuries' the present proposals seemed 'little short of a betrayal' as 'provision for dispossessed royalty'.[28]

This reinforces earlier comments, such as from Ramsay, Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow, in his 1903 address to the Second Annual Meeting of the Scottish Classical Association, where he referred to the position of supremacy that Classics had enjoyed 'until yesterday'.[29] Ramsay's commendation, however, is not elitist as to who might benefit from an education in Classics as 'their supreme place' existed for those 'whose school training may end at 14 or 15 years of age' just as much as for those going on to higher studies on the grounds that they were an introduction to 'human studies as a whole' and also 'an admirable preparation of the work of life'.[30]

Concern was also expressed regarding adequate provision of specialist teachers throughout Scotland lest 'in any corner of our land an able boy were denied his entry into the ancient inheritance because there was no one qualified to guide him'. There was agreement with the Scottish Education Department's insistence on 'classics and not Latin alone' for specialists, and a strong recommendation that 'a classical honours graduate fully qualified to teach both languages' should be on the staff of every school providing four-year courses or more in order 'to safeguard Greek'.[31] They deplored 'the extinction of Greek in so many schools that have in their day produced fine classical scholars'.[32]

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[27] SED, *Secondary Education: a Report of the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1947), p.60.
[28] Ibid., p.79.
[29] George Gilbert Ramsay, *The Classics and Popular Education* (Glasgow, J. MacLehose and Sons, 1904), p.3.
[30] Ibid., p.10.
[31] SED, *Secondary Education*, p.79.
[32] Ibid., p.80.

Further evidence of the high academic achievement of such Higher Grade schools is contained in a booklet produced by Glasgow Corporation in 1972 to mark the centenary of compulsory public education in Scotland.[33] Schools which built up a secondary section to Scottish Leaving Certificate standard taught 'Latin, French, Literature, Mathematics and Science' to Higher Grade level, among which, Whitehill, Hillhead, Bellahouston and Queen's Park are described as 'famous for their Education'. With unintended irony, the pro-comprehensive Education Department of 1972 includes a fitting epitaph in the words: 'Through these splendid schools flowed our future engineers, scientists, teachers, lawyers and doctors'.[34]

How had this reputation for excellence been achieved? Part of the answer can be found in a timetable from an undated prospectus for Whitehill Higher Grade School in Denniston, which outlines subjects and hours of tuition per week offered across three streams – Classical, Commercial, and Girls' Courses.[35] Pupils studying Latin received 5, 6, 6, and 7 periods of teaching in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Year respectively, out of a total of 30 periods per week. Greek (or French or German alternatives) was allocated 5, 5, 6, and 7 periods according to year of study, 1st through to 4th. This represents a rigorous course of study of Classics and was available in a school which also catered for practical and commercial training. All students took English and Mathematics and Vocal Music, but Science was only available to the Classics stream. Gymnastics was allocated just half a period per week, leading the Corporation's writer to caption the timetable *'They cultivated the Brain – not the Brawn.*'[36]

Daily Latin and Greek was emphasised in the 1951 Report on *Classics in Secondary Schools* by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), as well as the importance of continuity of study and the avoidance of '"Latinless" days'.[37] The Report recommended 'able pupils should have the opportunity of commencing the study of two languages simultaneously', suggesting that in 1951, 'the traditional Scottish veneration for the able' was still apparent and perhaps distinct from educational approaches of the time in England.[38] Prior to comprehensivisation, of

[33] Glasgow Corporation (1972).
[34] Ibid., p.18.
[35] Ibid., p.19.
[36] Ibid.
[37] SED, *Classics in Secondary Schools*, p.8.
[38] Mary Mackintosh, *Education in Scotland: Yesterday and Today* (Glasgow, Robert Gibson & Sons, 1962), pp.47-49.

course, the selection process in Scottish schools[39] – done in part via IQ tests[40] – had significant impact upon pupils' educational opportunities. Here 'able pupils' were offered an early start to Latin and Greek, however, 'the course should be fitted to the pupil and not the pupil to the course', a principle clearly upheld in Whitehill Higher Grade School though in practice, Greek was generally postponed 'until capacity for linguistic study has been proved'.[41] The accessibility of Classics is a recurring theme,[42] alongside accusations of elitism and its use as an 'instrument of selection for an intellectual elite'.[43]

Educational writers from this era frequently reference the needs of the able pupil and show concern for their wellbeing when these needs are not being adequately addressed. This is powerfully expressed by the Advisory Council, who eschew the forcing of Greek studies, but abhor the opposite scenario – 'the forcing of an able boy or girl to turn away from Greek to other studies either because no teacher is available or because his time is grudged to the few'.[44] One can only conjecture as to the Council's reaction on being informed that in 21st century Scotland there is no longer any provision for Classics teacher-training. Schools which only paid lip-service to their claim to provide facilities for learning Greek came under attack from the Council because the outcome could be that 'keen youngsters (are left) to struggle along almost unaided at the back of another class in order to study Greek,' and the general introduction to the Classics section of their Report concludes with the strong admonition: 'There is a time to forget numbers and remember quality.'[45]

However, even by the 1950s, some years before the comprehensivisation process began, signs of change were visible. English classicists in the secondary school sector questioned 'the appropriateness of the traditional Latin course' considering pupil retention problems.[46] And alternatives, such as providing courses in English about Classical civilisation to all pupils, began to be promoted by the Association for the Reform of Latin Teaching.[47]

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[39] Ibid., p.153.
[40] David Northcroft, *Scots at School: An Anthology* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2003).
[41] SED, *Classics in Secondary Schools*, p.8.
[42] Kathy Mercer, 'Latin across the ability range - an experiment', *Joint Association of Classical Teachers Review* 14 (1993), pp.11-3.
[43] J. Sharwood Smith, *On teaching Classics* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p.2.
[44] SED, *Secondary Education*, p.80.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Martin Forrest, 'The abolition of compulsory Latin and its consequences', in Christopher Stray (ed.), *The Classical Association: The First Century 1903-2003* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.43-66.
[47] 'The Classics in English Education Today', *Latin Teaching* XXIX:1 (1953), p.12.

The Post-Robbins Years

The education system is a radically interconnected enterprise and change at one level of the system necessarily impacts all others. For example, universities reflect the character of their intake, and so to understand changes at tertiary level, one must consider the changing characteristics of school-leavers who would become students in the post-Robbins landscape. Prior to raising the school leaving age to sixteen in 1972, most pupils in Scotland left school at fifteen (approximately 65%), after three years of vocational education at junior secondary school.[48] In contrast, senior secondary schools offered more academic courses of five years leading to qualifications at Higher level in Fifth and Sixth years, following on from awards obtained at Lower level in Fourth year. Thus, university candidates would offer approximately five subjects at Higher and two or three subjects at Lower levels if applying at the end of Fifth Year (S5) or additional qualifications gained during S6. It was not until 1962 that the new *Scottish Certificate of Education* was introduced to encourage pupils to remain until S4 to sit the new Ordinary Grade examinations, and presentation levels more than doubled in the years from 1965 to 1986, by which year the first new Standard Grade examinations were taken.[49]

Following the abolition of selection in 1965, there followed an uneasy period in Scottish secondary education, with the curriculum in every subject re-evaluated for both content and assessment outcomes to cater for the requirements of a new client group. In 1972 the school leaving age was raised to sixteen and 'the pattern of mixed, six-year comprehensives was almost universal in Scotland'.[50] A more coherent system with appropriate curricula was urgently required, so the Labour government set up the Munn and Dunning Committees,[51] which published respective reports on the curriculum,[52] and on assessment and certification.[53] It was only when the first cohort of pupils educated under the Standard Grade system sat examinations in 1986 that Scotland truly had a fully comprehensive system of

[48] Tom Bryce and Walter Humes, 'Scottish Secondary Education: Philosophy and Practice', in T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp.37-48.
[49] Tony Gavin, 'The Structure of the Secondary Curriculum' in T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp.437-46.
[50] Robert Anderson, 'The History of Scottish Education, pre-1980', in T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp.215-24, at p.222.
[51] Willis Pickard, 'The History of Scottish Education, 1980 to the Present Day', in T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp.225-34.
[52] SED, *The Structure of the Curriculum in the Third and Fourth Years of the Scottish Secondary School* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1977).
[53] SED, *Assessment for All: Report of the Committee to Review Assessment in the Third and Fourth Years of Secondary Education in Scotland* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1977).

education which enabled a larger percentage of young people to achieve appropriate qualifications for entry to tertiary institutions.[54]

From the 1960s to the 1990s, universities had to adapt not only their entry requirements in line with changes in Scottish national qualifications at secondary level, but also the internal components of long-established courses. For example, Arts students entering the University of Glasgow for the 1962-63 academic year (while the Robbins Committee was sitting) and who took Ordinary (First Year) English, were unable to proceed to Higher Ordinary (Second Year) unless they had gained an O Level Latin. Student therefore had a minimum competence in learning inflected languages, since passing Anglo-Saxon (following a crash course in Year 2) was an obligatory component of Higher Ordinary English. The Scottish Universities entrance examinations for 1969-70, held annually at the universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews, included at Ordinary and Higher grades both Latin and Classical Greek,[55] suggesting these ancient languages were still widely available for 5th and 6th Year pupils in Scotland, while for 1969-70 in England, entry qualifications for the University of Oxford, for example, required a minimum O Level pass in Latin.[56]

In the decade following the publication of the Robbins Report, and driven by the Government's University Grants Committee, this relentless expansion in student numbers was being felt across every Scottish university, including the newly designated chartered universities, with the University of Strathclyde (1964), Heriot-Watt University (1966), the University of Dundee (1967), and the University of Stirling (1967) all granted university status by royal charter. In 1972, Hunter, a senior lecturer at Glasgow's Jordanhill College of Education, stated in his overview of the educational system in Scotland that, 'universities are independent institutions and have a large measure of control over their own affairs.'[57] He conceded that 'since university education is of importance to the nation's economy, and since public money constitutes over 80% of university revenue, the government has a substantial interest in university finance and development.' Hunter described the University Grants

[54] Hamish Long, 'The Scottish Examination Board', in T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp.677-87, at p.679.
[55] GUA SEN 10/112, Preliminary Examinations: Syllabus, p.106(a).
[56] Personal communication with Professor Elizabeth Moignard (May 6, 2013).
[57] Hunter, p.232.

Committee (UGC) as the 'machinery for giving effect to this interest without impairing university autonomy.'[58]

Hunter provided figures of full-time university students for 1964-5, immediately after the publication of the Robbins Report, as standing at 25,000 across the then eight Scottish universities, a total which increased to 33,817 students by 1968-69. Of the four ancient universities, Edinburgh had the largest student population at 9,193 students, with Glasgow second at 7,698, Aberdeen third at 5,009, and St Andrews at 2,305. The remaining four shared 9,612 students. Writing from the vantage point of 1971-2, Hunter stated categorically that the Robbins Committee's estimates of university places that would be required by 1973-74 and 1980-81 of 40,000 and 50,000 respectively, as being 'serious underestimates'.[59]

Across all eight universities in Scotland in 1968-69, science subjects accounted for 25% of students, while 22% studied social, administrative and business subjects. Three other broad subject areas, namely a) medicine, dentistry and health, b) engineering and technology, and c) arts other than languages, each accounted for a further 13% of students. Hunter concluded the distribution of students in 1968-69 was 44% to Arts to 56% to Science, however the 7% of students engaged in 'language, literature and area studies' were actually classified under Science'.[60]

Methodology

Certain methodological challenges naturally flow from the quality, character, and size of the literature in this area. Scholarship on Classics teaching predominantly focuses on geographical regions other than Scotland. In England, given the greater provision of Classics teaching, a correspondingly greater body of work explores these issues as they pertain to schools and universities. Similarly, as Classics education in Scotland has diminished throughout the period under investigation, so too has the quantity of scholarly resources on the topic.

[58] Ibid., pp.232-3.
[59] Ibid., p.242.
[60] Ibid. See, also, Mandler (2020) Ch.8.

Given the modest scale of the secondary literature, as it pertains to the teaching of Classics in schools – examined in Chapter 2 – an emphasis has therefore been placed on the work of governmental and quasi-governmental committees and working groups in the education sector, such as the Scottish Education Department (SED), the Scottish Universities Entrance Board (SUEB), the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum (CCC), the Classics Specialist Group, and HM Inspectorate Panel for Classics. These provide contemporary evidence as to the place of Classics at various points throughout the period and give insight into the ubiquitous curricular changes that marked the second half of the 20th century.

Published works from these bodies were supplemented with archival records of working documents and correspondence held by the National Records of Scotland Agency at Register House, Edinburgh, which detailed deliberations and crucial context to their respective operations and illuminated an otherwise hidden process of educational change. These records evidenced key moments in the story of Classics in Scotland, for example evidence that the professors at Scotland's four ancient universities were closely involved in the maintenance of academic standards by the quantity of correspondence throughout the 1950s (some acrimonious) between the SUEB and the SED. In the 1970s, after school comprehensivisation in Scotland, Classics became increasingly marginalised – and similarly, in the archives, Classics was conjoined with modern languages and Gaelic. The paucity of records from the 1980s here perhaps indicates the low point for the discipline. However, the 1990s showed some signs of regeneration, reflected in the archives' documentation of the Classics Specialist Group's work producing drafts for Unit Course Specification in Latin and Classical Greek for the *Higher Still* curriculum.

The changing status and provision of Classics at university level required all relevant university research archives to be accessed. Fine detail of course composition, not otherwise published, was to be found in university calendars. In addition to course content, past examination papers revealed much about the expectations of students' knowledge and skills at every stage of their studies. As will be shown in subsequent chapters, the approaches adopted by Scotland's Ancient Universities over these years varied considerably.

These idiosyncratic trajectories for the availability of Classics teaching demanded detailed study of each institution's archive. For the University of Aberdeen, which is the focus of Chapter 3, the Special Collections Centre in the Sir Duncan Rice Library, Aberdeen was

accessed in August 2017. For the universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and St Andrews, the subject of Chapter 4, various sources were accessed in the respective main holdings, archives, and special collections across 2016-2018. Regarding the University of Glasgow, the University Archives on Thurso Street, Glasgow were particularly helpful when consulted in 2016. For the University of Edinburgh, archival work was undertaken between March-May 2018 and, lastly, the University of St Andrews archives were consulted in October 2018. Other materials concerning educational change not exclusively related to one or other of the ancient universities, was gathered during research visits to the Mitchell Library in Glasgow, the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, and the British Library in London.

Archival resources illuminated many broad changes to Classics teaching in Scotland over the period and helped fill gaps in the literature. Nevertheless, whilst some archival documents spoke to the localised effects of systemic change, more granular detail of changes and how they were manifested in individual schools and university departments was sought through oral testimony. Extended semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve participants between 2015 and 2022, with university academics in Classics, teachers of Classics and modern languages (in both public and private schools), a Classics student, and a civil servant in the education sector. The invaluable testimony of these participants appears throughout this thesis.

Structure

This present work has three primary research areas and is presented in three main chapters; the changes in Scottish secondary schools and the impact of developments on Classics; an analysis of pressures upon classical subjects at university level, using as a case study the closure of the Department of Classics at the University of Aberdeen; and an exploration of the changes and curricular developments in Classics education at the other ancient universities during the same period.

It is necessary to first consider the political, pedagogical and practical factors that uniquely affected teaching of Latin and Greek at secondary school level (Chapter 2). Teaching at university level must adapt to the characteristics of the pupils making the transition from secondary to tertiary education, and therefore some significant changes – such as a reduction

in the availability of classical language provision at school level, or a shift in focus away from translation and the cultivation of linguistic skill – will ripple upwards and impact upon the teaching of Classics at universities. For example, a reduction in language skills will obviously imply a greater reliance on the use of texts in translation. But Classics teaching was also perhaps disproportionately affected by general winds of change that swept the Scottish educational landscape, through comprehensivisation, the abolition of pupil selection, and changes in the school leaving age.

The precariousness of classical language teaching is examined in Chapter 3 through a case study of the devastating closure in 1989 of the Department of Classics at the University of Aberdeen, established nearly 500 years earlier in 1495. The dramatic and unexpected closure of a highly successful and historied academic department meant the overnight loss of one of just four key seats of higher learning for Classics students in Scotland, with a particular impact on students geographically located in the North and East of the country. In certain respects, the expansion and eventual destruction of the department tells the general story of how national political forces impacted on regional educational provision in the context of the post-Robbins expansion of the UK's tertiary sector.

Thereafter, in Chapter 4, an evaluation of the changing dynamics in the teaching of classical languages and broader 'classical civilisation' courses at the three other ancient universities of Scotland will demonstrate the possibility – and necessity – of adapting to survive. While the contraction in linguistic skills and knowledge that used to be more prevalent throughout Classics education in Scotland is a source of regret, there are many examples of popular and academically rigorous short courses to be found throughout the remaining ancient institutions. The fact that so much classical education is taking place at Scottish universities is to be celebrated, and it could be argued that the use of high-quality texts in translation, amongst other media, has permitted students of the 21st century a richer and more nuanced understanding of the ancient world than the narrow linguistic-focused courses of previous decades.

Finally, a brief conclusion chapter summarises key findings, and an epilogue considers the future for Classics in 21st-century Scotland.

Chapter 2

Educational Change in Scottish Secondary Schools and its impact on Classics: from Ordinary to Higher Still

Introduction

This chapter outlines key social, political, and pedagogical developments in Scotland in the early 1960s, and continuing into the 1970s and 1980s, that significantly transformed school teaching in general, and the teaching of Classics in particular. Classics was perhaps more vulnerable to these shifts than other subjects and, despite strong endorsements from some influential figures, Classics came under an almost existential level of threat during this period. Dramatic transformations to the approaches of teaching Classics reflected, in part, the necessity of adapting to survive. And the diminishment in language-learning, accompanied by exponential growth in cultural studies, was a process which prefigured certain changes to come at university level.

The post-war years were marked increasingly by conflict around the place of Classics in the curriculum. On the one hand, a 1951 HMI report stated that 'the classics are strictly relevant to our times. They are the fountain-head of European culture; they clarify many modern problems.'[1] On the other, figures such as Stanley Nisbet argued that for many pupils the net gain of 'reading the Classics in the original languages is too small to compensate for the energy and time expended in learning these languages' and lightly mocked the 'ill-concealed disgust' of the purists at the very idea of using works in translation.[2] Additionally, during the 1950s, there was a 'splintering and divorce between education at school and university' for Classics in Scotland.[3]

Of course, the years following the Second World War were significant not only for Classics – indeed it was a period of remarkable change across the education sector. To retain the Scottish democratic way of life, the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland envisaged,

[1] SED, *Classics in Secondary Schools*, p.6.
[2] Stanley Nisbet, *Purpose in the Curriculum* (London, University of London Press, 1957), p.118.
[3] Ronald Knox, 'The Classical Association of Scotland: the first hundred years', in Christopher Stray (ed.), *The Classical Association: The First Century1903-2003* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.253-274 at p.255.

'not merely a literate, but an educated nation, capable of a high degree of self-discipline, objective judgment and sustained vigilance'.[4] The selective process of Junior and Senior secondary schools was further developed with new initiatives in some junior secondary schools which 'evolved distinctive courses of a practical kind...and developed community spirit, school loyalties and a character of their own' (and this when the leaving age was still only 14 years).[5] By 1955, HMI produced a Memorandum which defined junior secondary education as pertaining to 'all secondary pupils not following a course leading to the Scottish leaving certificate' noting that this accounted for almost three-quarters of the whole secondary school population in Scotland.[6] It is significant that, long before the advent of community schools, educational writers in the post-war period stressed the importance of citizenship.

To appreciate the effects of the changes generated by the introduction of the comprehensive model of education in the 1960s, one must consider the impact on both state and independent schools. No subject better reveals the growing dichotomy between state and independent schooling than Classics, as during this period Latin and Greek virtually disappeared from the public sector, effectively rendering the minority independent sector the key educational stakeholder for Classics.

There is generally an overwhelming amount of written evidence available for the educational historian, but independent schools, in Scotland particularly, are characterised by the paucity of published material – 'apart from a few histories of individual schools' as Hunter notes.[7] Furthermore, existing evidence is mostly of a quantitative nature, concerning statistical information such as numbers of pupils at independent schools as a percentage of the whole school population. However, individual volumes of the *Third Statistical Account of Scotland* provide both statistics and commentary related to the Scottish independent sector. Of particular interest, the accounts of Aberdeen (1953),[8] Glasgow (1958),[9] and Edinburgh

[4] SED, *Secondary Education*, p.4.
[5] Ibid., p.34.
[6] HMI, 'Junior Secondary Education: Memorandum', in H. Hutchison (ed.), *Scottish Public Educational Documents, 1560-1960* (Glasgow, Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1973), Doc. No.217, pp.225-6.
[7] Hunter, p.184.
[8] Hugh MacKenzie (ed.), *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: Aberdeen* (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1953).
[9] J. Cunnison and J.B.S. Gilfillan (eds.), *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: Glasgow* (Glasgow, Collins, 1958).

(1966),[10] help chart educational change in these three main population centres during this period.

In the chapter ahead, the author firstly explores educational change in the 1960s, studying both its broader effect and its specific impact upon educational provision in Classics. Thereafter, this is contextualised by the significant social changes of the period and how these shifts influenced schools. Changes in the character of Classics teaching at secondary level are then compared with those across related subjects, particularly Modern Languages and English. Following this, the challenges that Classics faced by comprehensivisation, and systemic pedagogical changes, are examined in detail. Certain central debates are critically explored, including language vs cultural (Classical) studies, knowledge-based vs skills-based teaching and learning, and the democratisation vs 'dumbing down' of the curriculum. As to the recurring replacement of Scottish curricula over the period under investigation, the author first assesses whether the '5-14 Development Programme' constituted a progression or regression from what came before, and second, whether the post-compulsory regime satisfactorily addressed the changing needs of a changing student body. The tension and conflict of politics, policy, pedagogy, and practice that has beleaguered the teaching of Classics in Scotland will be explored throughout.

Educational Change in the 1960s: its impact on Classics

The 1960s was a time of significant reorganisation for the secondary school system in Scotland, and across the UK, with resultant changes in pupil numbers and access to courses, as well as to the curriculum and examination system. An analysis of the political and pedagogical forces which affected schools in the 1960s and into the 1970s reveals a number of elements that led to profound change within the teaching of Classics, not least a transition from linguistic to non-linguistic courses.

In 1962, the Scottish Certificate of Education replaced the traditional Scottish Leaving Certificate. The Lower grade examination was replaced by a new examination – Ordinary Grade – the purpose of which was to provide 'a certificate of value for entry to a variety of

[10] David Keir (ed.), *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: Edinburgh* (Glasgow, Collins, 1966).

employments and to the intermediate stages of technical and commercial education.'[11] In other words, this was not a replacement: this was a different examination altogether. The Director of the Scottish Leaving Certificate of Education, J.M. Urquhart, stated that the new Ordinary Grade was aimed at pupils in their fourth year 'and is set at a standard at which a pupil who is at the lower end of the top 30% should, with satisfactory teaching and adequate effort, have a reasonable prospect of securing passes in three subjects.'[12] Would this mean for Classics teaching an increase in the possible pupil cohort, or a denial of the need for challenge for those at the top end of the academic spectrum?

Certainly, the introduction of the Ordinary Grade examination resulted in an immediate, Scotland-wide increase in the number of candidates. For comparison, after the group certificate was abolished in 1950 the consequent rise in up-take in Lower grade had amounted to only 10,133 candidates, whereas by 1967 the new O Grades attracted 79,121 candidates.[13] Elsewhere the effects were felt by Education Departments of local authorities for making adequate provision for the post-war increase in population in terms of buildings, staffing and courses on offer. This problem had been aggravated by the intimation of the Secretary of State for Scotland in 1965 that all educational authorities were 'to re-organise their areas on comprehensive lines' and ensure the availability of certificate courses, motivated, according to Mary S. Thomson, herself an HMI, by the wish to prevent 'segregation into separate courses'.[14]

One result of this educational (and perhaps political) policy was the introduction of 'the common course' in the first two years of secondary schooling, to be organised in mixed-ability classes. Osborne, then Vice-Principal of Aberdeen College of Education, writing from the vantage point of 1968, took the view that when the Advisory Council had recommended a comprehensive system in their 1947 Report this had been envisaged as 'the more humanistic and realistic approach' which would be 'appropriate for the overwhelming majority of adolescents' and 'would also have much to offer to the "bookish minority".'[15] The theoretical principles underpinning the concept of comprehensive education are

[11] Ibid., p.806.
[12] John M. Urquhart, 'The Scottish Certificate of Education', in John Nisbet (ed.), *Scottish Education Looks Ahead* (Edinburgh, W&R Chambers, 1969), pp.91-101.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Mary S. Thomson, 'Secondary Schools: Organisation of Courses: The Early Years', in John Nisbet (ed.), *Scottish Education Looks Ahead* (Edinburgh, W&R Chambers, 1969), p.46.
[15] G.S. Osborne, *Change in Scottish Education* (London, Longmans, 1968), p.95.

testimony to both the idealism and practicality of the Advisory Council's members. But it seems self-evident that any assessment of the success or failure of the comprehensive system must rest on its ability to make equal and appropriate provision for secondary pupils at all levels of achievement and attainment. To put this in the blunt terminology of the post-war context, would comprehensive schooling meet the needs of 'the most gifted children' *and* 'backward pupils'?[16] And for Classics specifically, would the comprehensive system enable the Classical tradition to be handed on not only to the 'bookish minority' but also to 'the overwhelming majority of adolescents'?

In addition to the changes occurring in the organisation of secondary education in the 1960s, a fundamental change was taking place in society in general: a change in focus. It was a time of discovery and innovation, the espousal of new ideas and an eschewing of the past and its traditions. Of that 'marriage of freedom and order which democracy presupposes' espoused in the aftermath of the Second World War, with its requirement for 'not merely a literate, but an educated nation, capable of a high degree of self-discipline, objective judgment and sustained vigilance',[17] we hear no more.

In education there was a pedagogical move away from traditional teacher-led methodology towards child-centred learning. The Primary Memorandum of 1965 encapsulates the new spirit of the times thus: 'The acquisition of knowledge and skills, once the main aim of education, is no longer as important as it was...Much more vital today...are the fostering of intellectual curiosity, and the development of the capacity to acquire knowledge independently.'[18] Findlay credits this Memorandum with having 'encouraged the creation of the Scottish primaries of the 1970s where no area of life is untouched by pupil discovery' while noting that curricular change was a slower process in Scotland than in England since 'the academic tradition affecting primary school has died hard.'[19]

As early as 1962, change in English schools was already underway with experimentation taking place in modern language teaching methods, including introducing oral French and German to eight-year olds; the use of language laboratories among teachers in order to learn

[16] SED, *Secondary Education*, p.194.
[17] Ibid., p.4.
[18] SED, *Primary Education in Scotland* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1965), p.18.
[19] Ian R. Findlay, *Education in Scotland* (Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1973), p.55.

French and German 'in anticipation of entry by Britain into the Common Market'; and the introduction of computers as part of the "discovery" approach to mathematics.[20] In Scotland, change did not come without controversy. Findlay observed that 'some teachers feel a loss of accuracy results from the abandonment of the old-style drill in number' and admits that, although the Initial Teaching Alphabet had been experimented with, 'it still arouses much controversy,' while in reading, more remedial attention was being given 'for the backward.'[21]

Those primary school children moving on to secondary school in the late 1960s, having been the recipients of such innovations, found themselves receiving further curricular development and change. Science saw 'a swing towards the understanding of basic concepts rather than the learning of definitions and laws' while in History the emphasis was on study skills, using evidence and understanding of selected snippets of history, 'rather than to factual knowledge and memorisation.'[22] Inevitably, the curricular content of 'classical studies' had undergone a similar sea-change, which took the form of 'a swing towards comprehension and away from translation' achieved by means of 'programmed material of greater interest' in combination with experiments in 'the introduction of non-linguistic "European" themes.'[23]

Since lecturers in colleges of education have figured prominently as the principal contemporaneous sources of information and commentary on educational change, it is possible that a certain 'conflict of interest' has subdued any adverse opinions those writers may privately have held. It is therefore refreshing to read a full-blooded critique of how the Classics scene appeared for a teacher at 'the chalk-face'.[24] Santangeli foresaw that the development of 'yet another regurgitative-type examination... may well deal the death-blow to the teaching of the Latin language.' He also noted the norm of 'one-man Classics departments', whereby, 'the problem of small Latin sets' could be solved by 'the administratively convenient' practice of filling the Classics teacher's timetable with 'O' Grade Classical Studies and non-Certificate full-sized classes, thereby relegating Latin to the status of the 'almost extinct Greek' – available, perhaps, as a crash-course in fifth or sixth year, or 'in some recesses of the timetable.' Besides the administrative aspects of Classics in

[20] 'Education in 1962', in *The Digest of the Year Illustrated, 1963 edition* (London, The New Educational Press, 1963).
[21] Findlay, p.56.
[22] Ibid., pp.83-4.
[23] Ibid., p.84.
[24] Ronald Santangeli, 'A Classic Case of Dementia', in *Education in the North* 15 (1978), pp.31-2.

the secondary timetable, Santangeli refers to 'a new malaise in Classical education,' laying some of the blame on Classics teachers themselves, and attributes the diminution of 'Latin-bashing' to the fact that 'there is little left to bash.' He observed 'the promulgation of a defective methodology', pointing to coursebooks such as *Ecce Romani* (the Latin coursebook produced in 1971 by the Scottish Classics Group) as the means whereby the 'inherent, structural difficulty' of Classics is concealed.[25]

However, Classics was not the only language on the secondary timetable to experience change in the presentation of its structure: modern languages such as French and German were being stripped of their traditional grammatical underpinning as well. As Santangeli noted, referring to a Report of a Working Party into Modern Language teaching in England,[26] this was the reality of language study being replaced by 'non-linguistic courses in European Studies'. So too, perhaps, the problem came down to plain numbers. In a large comprehensive school, it may simply be administratively impossible to cater for minority interests such as Latin, and even more so Ancient Greek.

Hunter argued that the changes experienced in the 1960s had been 'so extensive' and 'so rapid', particularly in the 'scope and complexity of curriculum development', that among other developments, it led to 'an investigation into the part which the school teaching of Classics has to play in a modern, industrial society.'[27] This rate of change was remarkable given that, as noted above, only a decade previously a 1951 HMI report stated that 'the classics are strictly relevant to our times' and can 'clarify many modern problems.'[28] In particular, Hunter posited that 'even a broad-based academic education was rather an inappropriate ideal in an era of secondary education for all' since it had originated in the 19th century in the burgh or grammar schools in Scotland in which Classics was taught and was a somewhat anachronistic ideal in the 20th century during which 'the classics declined in importance.'[29]

Lastly here, there is evidence to suggest that, as of the early 1970s, state secondary schools in Scotland were still using streaming (and modified 'remedial' courses) to offer classes

[25] Ibid., pp.31-2.
[26] Ibid., p.32.
[27] Hunter, p.119.
[28] SED, *Classics in Secondary Schools*, p.6.
[29] Hunter, p.72.

differentiated by pupil ability, rather than immediately adopting a fully comprehensive system at all levels. A small study, published in 1973, goes some way towards giving quantifiable information about the role and status of Classics in Ayrshire, despite its reliance on Questionnaires to head teachers and the omission of pupil numbers and examination results.[30] In this study 'fact and opinion are intimately mixed', its authors 'assessing' the value of the comprehensive system by its organisation.

The study indicates that not all secondary schools had conformed to the local authority's wishes to have classes organised comprehensively, that is, as mixed-ability units. In first year, the practice of setting was employed in certain subjects, generally French, German, Mathematics and Classical subjects, that is classes were arranged by pupil ability. The study found that one school had selected a top class of 'proven high ability' and a lower class for 'remedial backing', a practice that the authors of the study regarded as being 'against the spirit of comprehensive education'.[31]

Miller and White also disapproved of the practice in another school in which the Latin pupils (80 out of 230 pupils) were found to be spread across four of the seven first year classes, where they comprised half of each class, with the authors stating that it prevented 'true mixed-ability groupings'.[32] Also censured were schools which taught their least able pupils in a special class, providing 'remedial' education and a 'modified' course for these pupils. In second year, no school in Ayrshire was found to offer a common course in mixed-ability classes in *all* subjects. The authors expressed disappointment since they believed that 'the aim of comprehensive education is to break down the rigid barriers between children of different aptitudes'.[33]

It is interesting to note that, in Ayrshire in the 1971-72 session, 'all schools offer French and Latin' while 'eight schools offer Greek'. [34] Clearly the full comprehensive system had not yet worked its way through the whole school population by that time. Although the study's authors failed to examine academic achievement in the report, they still concluded that 'the

[30] Hugh Millar and David White, *Comprehensive Education - has it changed anything? A study of secondary schools in Ayrshire* (Saltcoats, Ayrshire Fabian Society, 1973), p.3.
[31] Ibid., p.13.
[32] Ibid., pp.13-15.
[33] Ibid., p.17.
[34] Ibid., p.20.

initiative for comprehensive education reflects credit on the politicians.'[35] Whilst Miller and White deemed this transitional period as being against the 'spirit' of comprehensivisation, it may have effectively prolonged access to Latin and Greek language teaching at secondary level, at least for some pupils.

Pedagogical change and the teaching of languages

To understand the impact of comprehensivisation, child-centred learning, and associated changes upon the teaching of Classics at secondary level, it is helpful to return to comparisons with the teaching of modern languages; for example, the shared requirement to develop teaching resources that suited the contemporaneous pedagogical shift from knowledge-based to skills-based learning. However, it could be argued that Classics was almost uniquely affected by some of these pressures, and the manner in which teachers adapted to mixed-ability classes and skills-based learning in secondary schools can be seen to prefigure subsequent changes in the teaching of Classics at Scottish universities. Classics teachers not only had to adapt to teaching the whole ability range of secondary pupils, they had to transform themselves too.

The manner in which Latin was to be taught required a re-formation of the role of teacher; from omniscient *magister* to accessible facilitator. Despite outward changes such as mixed-ability classes and the Common Course in S1 and S2, the ending of selection presented ongoing problems for staff – 'essentially because the SED had done little to prepare teachers for dealing with the resulting new demands that were placed on them'.[36] In this respect, Classics teachers shared the same difficulty of producing new resources in response to the novel teaching approaches which would also be appropriately differentiated to cater for mixed-ability classes. However, it was easier for modern languages to focus on the world of the pupil, using topics such as the family, school life, hobbies, food and drink, holidays, and so on – which is why school language coursebooks have a marked similarity in appearance, whether they concern French, German, or Spanish. After comprehensivisation, there was urgency for Classicists to find alternatives to existing course books, with their emphasis on

[35] Ibid., p.28.
[36] J. Watt, 'The Introduction and Development of the Comprehensive School in the West of Scotland 1965-80', (PhD thesis, Glasgow University), cited in Lindsay Paterson, *Scottish Education in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p.138.

grammatical constructions, vocabulary learning, and military contexts, such as *Approach to Latin* (1939),[37] which Williams cites as an example of 'the faulty assumption that the prior learning of grammar automatically developed the skills of translating and reading.'[38]

The teaching profession became embroiled in the knowledge versus skills debate: should children be taught knowledge, or skills to equip them for life after school? This pedagogical dilemma has significance in the context of language learning and teaching – whether modern, ancient, or native – and is as relevant in the present as it was in the 1960s and 70s. For example, in a 2014 TESS article, Bennet documents signs of this debate everywhere 'from the great curriculum wars to the battles of group work, independent learning and thinking skills.'[39] Bennet argues that 'skills are knowledge in context' and he emphasises the need for *prior* knowledge from which students might analyse topics, such as the causes of the Reformation.

The transition from a knowledge-based course to a skills-based one perhaps had a more dramatic impact on the teaching of ancient languages than on other subjects in the curriculum. James Morwood, an eminent Classicist and co-author of the Oxford Latin Course, sums up this process of change thus: 'Our profession's inventiveness and adaptability in the face of constantly shifting circumstances have combined with a sense of realism and a dogged determination to ensure that we have both a present and a future.'[40] In Scotland, the Latin coursebook *Ecce Romani*, which had been produced in 1971 by the Scottish Classics Group, with a reissue in 1982, was still proving popular and was never replaced when Standard Grade Latin was introduced. *Ecce Romani* could be said to epitomise the profession's response to child-centred learning: an everyday setting, family life, and children with whom the learner could identify, being of a similar age. Significantly, the characters remembered best by Shearer's pupils were Cornelia and Flamia,[41] for the prominent role of women was characteristic of the new material in Latin, in contrast to traditional courses.

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[37] James Paterson and Edwin George MacNaughton, *The Approach to Latin* (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1939).

[38] Tony Williams, 'Classics Education', in T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p.474.

[39] Tom Bennet, 'I know therefore I can', in *Times Educational Supplement Scotland* (January 10, 2014). <https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/i-know-therefore-i-can-0> [accessed 14 December 2024].

[40] James Morwood, 'Introduction', in James Morwood (ed.), *The Teaching of Classics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. xv-xx, at p. xv.

[41] Jennifer Shearer, interview with author, Edinburgh, 31 January 2015.

Williams acknowledges the attractiveness of the material of *Ecce Romani*, but, although agreeing that it followed the correct strategy of providing learners with reading experience before grammar, he also expresses concern that there was insufficient attention given to the overlearning of grammatical points.[42] Lack of coherence in teaching the grammatical elements in any language, ancient or modern, will not give the learner automaticity of these essentials, and in an inflected language, such as Latin, German, or Russian, such a deficit will let the learner down. Santangeli goes further in his criticism of what he terms '*Ecce Romani* type courses' in Latin, which he accuses of 'concealing its inherent, structural difficulty.'[43] The problem of following a minimal grammar policy in language learning, is that the learner can never achieve mastery over the language, even in uninflected languages such as French. The same holds true for the acquisition of vocabulary. Once dictionaries were allowed into examinations, those educationalists who opposed a knowledge-based approach saw no irony in the fact that the only relevant skill required by the candidate was therefore the skill to look up a dictionary speedily. This is the skills versus knowledge debate in action.

However, this is not to underestimate the successful transformation of Latin to accommodate the requirements of the new pedagogical approaches of child-centred learning. Brenda Gay, with experience of teaching Classics in both state and independent sectors, believes that it was the very threat to the existence of Latin which gave impetus to the development of 'more innovative and imaginative teaching materials and styles... that have continued to engage the learner.'[44]

Although the teaching of ancient and modern languages do have some points of similarity and share methodological approaches to child-centred learning, that is not to assume that they are natural bed-fellows. Nevertheless, a proposal was put forward in 1974 by the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum (CCC) 'that the Scottish Consultative Committee for Modern Languages should be invited to consider the possibility of including classics and Gaelic with their own responsibilities and those of the Scottish Centre for Modern Languages.'[45] The reply from the Scottish Council on the Curriculum for Modern

[42] Williams, pp.475-6.
[43] Santangeli, pp.31-2.
[44] Brenda Gay, 'The theoretical underpinning of the main Latin courses', in James Morwood (ed.), *The Teaching of Classics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.73-84, at pp.83-4.
[45] NRS/ED48/2392, Meeting of CCC on 22 February, 1974.

Languages intimated that the Central Committee did agree that Gaelic lay within their ambit but that it 'was in some doubt as to whether Classics fell logically within their remit'. It was felt that 'given certain developments in the teaching of Classics over the past decade', English or the Social Studies might be equally relevant.' Informal discussions could be considered with Classics, so long as this was understood not to be 'the first step towards establishing official relations with Classics.'[46]

What explanation could account for the gathering together of Gaelic, French, Latin, German, and so on? A clue may be found in a letter from Shipman at the Scottish Education Department to Mr Hays which made clear that 'committee expenditure during this period will have to be curtailed in view of the need for economy in Government spending.' Shipman referred to a request made by The Conference of Lecturers in Classics in the Scottish Colleges of Education 'that in view of the growing interest in Classical Studies and the teaching of Classics generally, a National Curriculum Development Centre for Classics covering both language and civilisation should be established.' The SED believed this 'would not be justified.' No new subject centres would be agreed until after discussion 'on future forms of the national curriculum development structure as a whole.[47] It may be concluded that the suggestion that Classics should amalgamate with modern languages was made on the basis of finance, irrespective of any educational consequences. Secondly, it is apparent that, despite the urgency of producing new teaching resources to accommodate mixed-ability classes and new pedagogical initiatives, Classics teachers could expect little assistance from an apparently indifferent Scottish Education Department.

It would appear that official sanctioning of Classics teaching was not going to be matched by practical support in the years which followed, although, Loney, an examination officer with the Scottish Examination Board, writing in the *Times Educational Supplement Scotland* 'in a personal capacity', found some encouragement for the study of Classics in Circular 1178, in which it was stated:

> '...the Secretary of State believes that [the] study [of classics] offers a valuable educational experience and, in the interests of maximising pupil and parent choice,

[46] NRS/ED48/2392, Letter from Mr H.F. Hays to Mr N.C.L. Shipman (SED), dated 30 April 1974.
[47] NRS/ED48/2392, Letter from Mr N.C.L. Shipman (SED) to Mr H.F. Hays, dated 8 March, 1974.

he urges education authorities to ensure that within each area a number of schools continue to offer courses in these languages.'[48]

Williams confirmed that Classical languages were to be regarded as 'an important part of our heritage' which 'should continue to be available and encouraged', according to a policy demanding 'some schools in each area continue to offer these languages'.[49] However, Williams revealed that government policy was not being, and had not been, carried out in practice. By the time of the publication of *Scottish Education* in 1999, not one maintained school in Grampian region or Dumfries and Galloway still had a Classics department in which to offer pupils and parents the choice of a Classical language. Furthermore, Highland, Lothian and Central barely provided a skeleton teaching staff, while in the sizeable conurbation of Glasgow, with over forty secondary schools in the state sector, only four could provide a Classical education.[50] Since the power to maintain and promote the teaching of Classical languages resided not with government but with local authorities and individual head teachers, the vulnerability of Classics to the personal perceptions of such individuals is all too evident. The corollary also holds true to the present day: where Classics is still available in Scottish state schools, it is at the specific desire of individuals in positions of educational responsibility.[51]

One of the key factors affecting the continuation of Classics in schools was the problems raised by the 'common course' in S1 and S2. Modern languages were 'in': Classical languages were not. However, that is not to say all was well in the delivery of modern foreign languages. Johnstone reports that, as late as 1989, the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum were of the opinion that 'the study of a foreign language should not be a compulsory part of the curriculum post S2 now or in the immediate future'.[52] Yet, also in 1989, the Scottish Education Department Circular 1178 was issued (referred to above in the context of Classics), in which the Secretary of State stated that 'the study of at least one language other than English, and preferably a modern foreign language, should normally be pursued by all pupils throughout the third and fourth years of compulsory secondary

[48] Bridget Loney, 'The long and the short of classics', in *Times Educational Supplement Scotland* (February 1, 1991) p.19.
[49] Williams, p.478.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Jennifer Shearer, interview with author, Edinburgh, 31 January 2015.
[52] Richard Johnstone, 'Modern Foreign Languages', in T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2003), pp.564-8, at p.565.

school'.[53] The political context that motivated Michael Forsyth, then Minister for Education, was 'the need to prepare for the European single market in 1992 by ensuring a pool of young people with good FL skills to help Scotland take advantage of this economic opportunity' and to this end a raft of measures was put in place including the introduction of 'twice-weekly blocks of 30-40 minutes' of French (or German, Italian, and Spanish on a more limited basis) into primary schools and 'making a FL part of the curriculum of all secondary pupils up to the age of sixteen' as set out in Scottish Office Circular 1187.[54]

It appears that no one pointed out that in the 1950s and 60s, pupils in state Senior Secondary schools with ability in languages (in the two-language classes), started learning two languages in S1, generally French and Latin, but could add another in S3, for example, German, and also take a crash course in S6 if available, possibly in Russian or even ancient Greek. At that time, there was nothing particularly remarkable in this – the options were there, and pupils made use of the opportunity – and traditionally Scotland enjoyed a reputation for ability in languages.

However, could this reputation be connected, in part, with the benefits gained from learning Latin? Gwynne states, 'knowledge of Latin makes it easier to learn French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian and other languages derived directly from Latin' and notes that, as well as improving and enriching our command of English, Latin assists with 'the technical terminology of many of the sciences, most obviously biology and medicine'. These are not the main benefits of learning Latin, however, in Gwynne's view. These, he specifies as training us 'to focus our attention, to attend to small details, to memorise extensively, to think logically, to analyse closely and exactly.'[55]

It is not clear what prompted a concession to Classics, but as Loney noted, in Circular 2/1990 there was an amendment to previous announcements to the effect that '[The Secretary of State] accepts... that in certain circumstances pupils and their parents may prefer to pursue their study of... for example, Gaelic, and Asian language or a classical language. The Secretary of State would prefer to see these or other languages studied in S3 or S4 alongside

[53] Ibid.
[54] Lesley Low, 'Modern Languages', in T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), at p.378.
[55] N.M. Gwynne, 'Why learn Latin?', *The Oldie* 320 (April 2015), pp.42-43. <https://www.theoldie.co.uk/blog/why-learn-latin#> [accessed 14 December 2024].

a modern European foreign language but where pupils and parents are persuaded that they do not wish to follow this course *and their preferred alternative is available within the school* he would not wish their preferences to be frustrated.'[56] The catch here, of course, was the above noted issue of availability. As demonstrated by Williams, it was most unlikely that Latin as a 'preferred alternative' would be available on request, and as he points out, 'it is not Classics which is the loser but the educational experience and enrichment of all Scottish pupils.'[57]

The 5-14 Development Programme – Progression or Regression?

The end of the 1980s saw further significant developments, including the creation of the new '5-14 Guidelines' national curriculum, as well as a push towards the introduction of national testing, both of which would go on to have a marked impact on the teaching of Latin in secondary schools. The controversial national testing framework in particular was received with a great degree of resistance, as can be evidenced by the necessity for unprecedented statutory legislation to enforce compliance. To fully appreciate why the revised testing plan engendered such strong opposition, it is necessary to consider a selection of perspectives on the failures of the framework.

In 1987, the Scottish Education Department produced a consultation paper entitled *Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland: A Policy for the 90s* which outlined 'the Government's proposed programme of action' aimed at securing 'substantial improvements in the quality and level of achievement of school education in Scotland'. It sought to do so by means of defining 'the content and objectives of the curriculum' and implementing 'satisfactory assessment policies in all schools, an integral part of which will be a requirement to assess children in certain key skills on a nationally standardised basis'.[58]

The paper noted that many children in P6 and P7 were 'insufficiently challenged' and that there was 'a need for more progression and rigour in the primary curriculum' (para. 7.iii). Another weakness highlighted was 'curricular discontinuity, especially in the four years between P6 and S2 (para. 7.iv). This was to be overcome by 'the development of curricular

[56] Loney, p.19.
[57] Williams, p.479.
[58] SED, *Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland: A Policy for the 90s* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1987), p.1.

guidelines covering all subject areas for ages 5-14' and would be master-minded by the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum at the request of the Secretary of State (para. 17). It would involve 'a programme of clarification and definition rather than of fundamental change in teaching approaches and methods' (para. 18) which was to be 'expressed in terms of nationally approved curricular guidelines which all schools will follow' (para. 26).[59]

Paterson remarks that the curriculum is 'described emolliently as the 5-14 "guidelines"', when in reality a national curriculum was being put in place.[60] Nevertheless, the language used could also be termed as threatening in places, for example, after expressing the Secretary of State's wish for 'co-operation', the paper continued: 'If there was evidence that education authorities were failing to ensure that schools fully observed national guidelines he would not rule out introducing legislation to ensure the proper implementation of national policy'.[61] The position is made clear by Paterson, who attributes the minor resistance that the common curriculum met in Scotland to its not being statutory, 'although in practice it is in effect compulsory'.[62]

Simon refers to the contemporaneous situation in England, noting 'increasing central initiative and control concerning the curriculum during the 1980s' and to then Education Secretary Kenneth Baker's official announcement in January 1987, that he would, if re-elected, introduce 'a national curriculum laid down by statute'. Simon drily remarks on the fact that 'no mention was made at this stage of assessment, or testing, by this expert politician.' By the summer of 1987 a National Curriculum had been imposed by statute in English schools.[63] To understand the impact of the national curriculum in Scotland, it is important to focus firstly on teachers in general, and secondly on the delivery of Latin in particular. This section concludes with a brief analysis of some of the effects of the program of national testing, including the inevitable movement towards a 'league table culture' in schools.

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[59] Ibid., pp.5-7.
[60] Lindsay Paterson, *Scottish Education in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p.120.
[61] SED, *Curriculum and Assessment*, p.7.
[62] Lindsay Paterson, *Education and the Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh, Dunedin Academic Press, 2000), p.24.
[63] Brian Simon, *What Future for Education?* (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1992), p.137.

It is unclear why the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum believed that the degree of intervention implied in a national curriculum could be achieved without fundamental change for the classroom teacher. Humes, in a chapter aptly entitled 'The CCC – Consultation or Control?', puts the case for the individual and quotes the Director of the Edinburgh Centre of the Scottish Curriculum Development Service, Sydney Smyth, remarking that 'The "Curriculum Development" that really matters happens inside the heads of practising teachers, alertly reflecting upon their own aims and procedures.' Humes questions whether 'the process of self-development which lies at the heart of good teaching' can be promoted by 'a strongly centralist organisation like the CCC, closely identified with government policy and locked into a system of bureaucratic constraints' even though 'its ostensible function is to facilitate curriculum development'.[64]

Ellis and Friel, describing the impact of the *Guidelines* for English Language, the first to be issued, suggest that 'whilst the 5-14 framework undoubtedly supports weaker teachers, it can divert average teachers from developing more complex models and simply frustrate the best.'[65] When the English *Guidelines* were at the draft stages (with the distinctive pale border instead of the final dark blue), the Attainment Targets grids, Levels A-E, were envisaged as enabling children to progress at their own pace and to take individual pathways through the various strands (such as reading for enjoyment) and attainment targets (Level C, for example, expected the pupil to 'read regularly for enjoyment and give an opinion on texts of different kinds').[66] While it was acknowledged that 'some pupils may continue to achieve at Level A for all the years of their schooling', nevertheless achievement of targets would ensure 'that a pupil's learning will be comprehensive and progressive'.[67]

It is doubtful if the teaching profession as a whole was aware of the prodigious amount of work that went on behind the scenes to produce the Working Papers for consultation and the final versions of all the subject guidelines. In 1992, the Latin 5-14 *Guidelines* were issued, but unlike English Language, these applied only to S1 and S2 pupils, although in most cases the earliest start to Latin learning was likely to be in S2. Latin therefore had a problem, expressed at the 23rd Meeting of the Curriculum and Assessment Steering Committee on 22

[64] Walter M. Humes, *The Leadership Class in Scottish Education* (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1986), pp.102-3.
[65] Sue Ellis and Gill Friel, 'English Language', in T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p.364.
[66] SOED, Circular 12/91, *English Language 5-14: National Guidelines* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1991), p.16.
[67] Ibid., pp.9-11.

April, 1991 as being 'unique to this group' on account of the 'wide variation in the length of courses in secondary schools', which impacted on decisions about 'how many levels would be appropriate'.[68] The decision to go for three Levels realistically solved the issue of differentiation within a two-year learning period, but there was considerable discussion as to the status of the language awareness element, which previously the Working Party charged with devising the Standard Grade syllabus had regarded 'as an excellent by-product of the learning of Latin' in addition to its three main elements of translation, interpretation and investigation. In the 5-14 Guidelines there were three outcomes: 'translating/interpreting texts, knowledge about language, the Roman World.'[69]

The Draft Report of the Task Group on Latin S1/S2 in April 1991 outlined the findings of an ambitious undertaking to obtain information on 'current practice' by consulting 'all education authorities in Scotland' in order to establish 'what constitutes best practice in schools.' Their Report would hopefully 'provide a basis for schools to review their existing policy for Latin' and it was noted that 'there is growing recognition that Latin has much to contribute to the curriculum of pupils of all abilities.' In practical terms it noted not only 'variations in coverage' ranging from 'none in S1/S2' to 'all in S2' but also variations in time allocation from 4 lessons of 40 minutes per week to 1 lesson of 50 minutes per week. The Task Group noted that 'the current situation is far from ideal' – it certainly made it problematic to devise attainable levels of achievement – and hoped that, since under curriculum proposals outlined in the 1989 document 'Curriculum Design for the Secondary Stages' for S1 and S2 'a substantial portion of time is set aside for enrichment', more schools would avail themselves of this time 'to make an appropriate period allocation to Latin.'[70]

Section 1 of the Task Group Report noted that what 'has heightened the need for the acquisition of foreign languages by our young people' was entry into the European market in 1992 and concluded that 'Latin, as the direct root of French, Italian and Spanish and as a main contributor to the vocabulary of other European languages including English, has an equally important role to play in the effort to expand pupils' acquisition of languages in general.'[71] If the advantages of learning Latin are so evident to linguists and educationists,

[68] NRS/ED48/2535, Curriculum and Assessment, ages 5-14, Curriculum and Assessment Steering Committee (CASC).
[69] Williams, pp.477-8.
[70] NRS/ED48/2535, Curriculum and Assessment, ages 5-14, Curriculum and Assessment Steering Committee (CASC).
[71] Ibid.

why then, in the interests of international communication as well as personal proficiency in English, has the opportunity to learn Latin been denied to the majority of Scotland's young people? Was this progression – or regression?

The charge of elitism has often been the argument of choice against the teaching of Latin and Greek. In 2015, *The Times* published a witty article by Patrick Kidd on proposals in France to cease the teaching of Latin in schools by France's education minister, as part of 'President Hollande's war on supposed elitism', or as Kidd conceives the situation 'Asterix the Gaul ... has finally won.' Surprisingly, Kidd points to the example of England, where Latin is 'thriving' and its availability 'has shot up from about 100 to more than 600 in ten years' in 'non-selective state secondary schools'. According to Kidd, the reason for this increased uptake of Latin is that 'it makes learning other languages easier, and not just the romance languages' – or, to put it another way, 'the journey to Russian or Arabic becomes easier if you take the Via Appia.'[72] Williams noted in 1999 that the position of Classics in England had in fact been 'far weaker than in Scotland' but that there seemed to be a revival – borne out by Kidd's figures some 16 years later – which gave hope for 'the possibility of a pendulum swing' also in Scotland.[73]

In a sense one cannot separate Scotland's changing curriculum from the issues surrounding the introduction of national testing, a programme which met with such hostility from teachers, unions, parents and education authorities, that the Conservative government in August, 1991, brought in statutory Regulations to enforce compliance, 'the only time in the history of Scottish education that such a measure has been taken'.[74] After considerable negotiation, agreement was reached and *The Framework for National Testing* outlined revised arrangements, which included withdrawal of the Regulations; continuity of testing to S1 and S2 of secondary schools; and teacher autonomy on readiness of each pupil to be tested. Mathematics, Reading and Writing were to be tested internally, and unlike the results of national examinations, results would not be collected centrally. Each school would have responsibility for ordering appropriate test items chosen from an annual catalogue of test

[72] Patrick Kidd, 'After 2,000 years Asterix has won his battle with Caesar', in *The Times* (March 19, 2015). <https://www.thetimes.com/article/after-2-000-years-asterix-has-won-his-battle-with-caesar-rcj3jk8gr6t> [accessed 14 December 2024].
[73] Williams, p.479.
[74] Lilian Munro and Peter Kimber, 'National Testing', in T.G.K. Bryce and W.M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp.715-16.

materials, produced for the SQA by teachers. To the initial five levels, A – E, a sixth was added, level F, to accommodate higher-achieving secondary pupils.[75]

However, national testing failed to become established in the secondary sector: approximately 10 per cent of secondary schools implemented national tests in 1996-97 compared to over 90 per cent of primary schools. What might account for this reluctance? Extra workload in marking and administration was certainly a factor. Also, the idea of individual pupil 'readiness' for testing simply did not fit the secondary annual schedule, and so national testing might be fitted in, for example, in a quiet period in May when the upper school was on exam leave. Furthermore, under this system it was not possible to be discreet about which levels of testing different pupils were to take, since at the one time a teacher may have had to hand out papers at four or five different levels of difficulty in the one class. Depending on the sensitivity of the teacher, this process could of course be deemed divisive and demeaning for one's pupils.

There was an additional complication in English testing in the Reading paper. In national examinations, such as Standard Grade and Highers, pupils with a recognised learning difficulty such as dyslexia were entitled to the provision of a Reader, which was particularly relevant for close reading/comprehension assessments. The SQA waived this alternative arrangement for 'Reading' tests, despite legislation requiring 'reasonable adjustments', claiming accurate decoding was being tested as well as comprehension.[76] Pupil 'progression' was not in evidence when a dyslexic pupil in S2 was made to sit yet another national test of Reading at Level B in a class where others were taking Level F. This type of testing epitomised regression from the principles underlying the comprehensive ideal in Scottish education - and it did not find favour with secondary teachers, traditionally less compliant than their primary colleagues.

By yoking together the introduction of the revised curriculum and national testing, the government had ensured that the beneficial aspects of the 5-14 programme – in particular the differentiated rates and levels of progress which the individual child could make – were soon subsumed by the increasingly competitive drive by local authorities and many head

[75] Ibid., pp.717-79.
[76] Personal correspondence with E. Aitken, SQA (February 15, 1999).

teachers, particularly in primary schools, to push up school attainment levels. It contributed toward the league table culture and damaged the learning experience of pupils.

It has been said of Scottish teachers 'that they both want to be told what to do and resent being told when someone actually obliges them', although in the end the result is that 'they usually comply'. In the case of government or CCC directives this may be 'because they feel they have no alternative, or because it is in their interests to do so.' Humes' words, written just before the imposition of a national curriculum and the disputed implementation of national testing in Scotland, were remarkably prescient – particularly in his description of the results of teacher compliance as resulting in 'cynicism among those who are prepared to play by the unwritten rules, and anger or despair among those who are not.'[77]

Cynicism, anger and despair became all too apparent in Scottish primary schools as local authorities began to take a more aggressive line, putting pressure on head teachers who, in turn, would make demands on class teachers to improve results. The National Guidelines had suggested that Level B 'should be attainable by some pupils in P3 or even earlier, but certainly by most in P4'.[78] However, in the words of an experienced primary teacher working in a school in an area of social deprivation, this was being re-interpreted as 'trying to push all pupils through Level B by the end of P3'. In addition, the methods used to achieve this unattainable aim were not at all in keeping with the rationale of the original documents. There was a lack of transparency about the means whereby classroom assistants with no supervision had turned pupils who had failed a level into successful achievers. The integrity and professionalism of the class teacher was being compromised to produce ever-improving school performances. 'I knew we were giving secondary schools problems. It was the wrong interpretation of the 5-14.'[79]

Perspectives of Classical Language Teaching

Due to the lack of literature, the full story of the changes in Classical language teaching in Scottish schools during this period requires oral testimony from those directly involved. A

[77] Humes, *The Leadership Class*, p.103.
[78] SOED, Circular 12/91, *English Language 5-14: National Guidelines* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1991), p.7.
[79] Betty Coffield, telephone interview with author, 17 April 2015.

member of the Scottish Examination Board (who wishes to remain anonymous) listed possible reasons for the reduction in numbers taking Classics during this period as 'changing University entrance requirements', 'comprehensivisation', and an emphasis on 'Science rather than languages'. The Scottish Education Department 'always seemed to encourage Latin and Greek' but 'left the decision to individual authorities and schools', meaning that it may ultimately have come down to 'financial restrictions'.[80]

Louisa McLay, head teacher at the small independent Fernhill School in Glasgow from 1992 to 2005, observed that while uptake of Latin was traditionally very good, with around 25 pupils in Fourth Year and 15 in Fifth Year, by the 1990s Latin was 'beginning to lose its status as an academic subject', and that once universities no longer required qualifications in Latin or Greek, 'if there was no need to study it, children didn't study it'. Parents often did not perceive the 'relevance' of Latin, and pupil numbers 'dropped drastically when we introduced Computing', and later still Russian and Chinese languages. Latin became more and more a subject taught 'off-timetable, at lunchtimes, after school, perhaps in a period when the pupil and the Latin teacher happened to be free at the same time'. This required unpaid extra time on behalf of teachers, but at that point they were 'fighting for their lives', because without students Latin 'wouldn't be offered', so 'they fought very hard' to keep the subject alive. Touching again on the key role of individuals in maintaining the Classical Tradition, Louisa observed that 'if you have a head teacher who doesn't care about Latin or who doesn't see any relevance in teaching it, then I would doubt it will be taught in a school'.[81]

Limited access to Greek, even in independent schools like St. Aloysius' College in Glasgow where Latin was a mandatory subject in First Year, is exemplified by the experience of James Campbell who in the late 1990s studied 'directly with the then Head of the Classics Department, who was a wonderful Latin and Greek scholar – an Oxford graduate, a PhD from there – and that was provided on an external kind of co-curricular basis, so I spent once a week for about 45 minutes after school, and I learned with him'.[82]

[80] B.L., interview with author, 2 March 2015.
[81] Louisa McLay, interview with author, Glasgow, 29 March 2016.
[82] James F. Campbell, interview with author, Glasgow, 11 April 2016.

This image of Greek being handed down to eager pupils in stolen minutes, and of the crucial importance of individual teachers was also the experience three decades earlier of Linda Knox, from the Department of Classics at the University of Glasgow. In her third year at school, she could only access one period a week of Greek, negotiating four periods by fourth year, and for Higher she 'managed to extract five periods'. Linda subsequently taught in secondary schools including Hutchesons' Grammar School in Glasgow and noted the 'high calibre' of people working in Classics teaching, citing Oxbridge graduates Bill Wilkie and Terry Johnston as examples of teachers who 'knew the subject so thoroughly themselves', but were also 'able to use their intelligence as to how best to teach it'. The idiosyncratic role of these individual teachers was further emphasised in curating – and preserving – 'classroom libraries', and for many teachers their 'big concern when they retired, and when the subject was disappearing in their school, was the distribution of their vast collection of books and resources which they had actually gathered together'. So, when Classics stopped being taught in Inverness Royal Academy, their teaching resources were 'taken into the Departmental collection at the University of Glasgow' or 'given to students'.[83]

The impact of individual teachers in providing access to Classics is further underscored by the work of Jennifer Shearer, who taught Latin at Kirkcaldy High School from 1992 to 2021. In 2011, Kirkcaldy High School, a comprehensive school in Fife, provided almost a tenth of the Scottish candidates for Higher Latin, and the fact that all of them passed shows a successful balance between excellence and accessibility.[84]

Following poor experiences of teacher training placements in three schools that 'were being kind of run down' in the late 1970s, and despite people initially questioning 'whether you really have a long-term future teaching classics', Jennifer forged a long and successful career that gave her first-hand experience of many of the changes described elsewhere in this work. On the democratisation of Latin teaching, Jennifer described the prejudiced attitudes of some staff who retired because they didn't want to teach 'the less able', contrasting this with the keen younger generation who believed 'Classics is for everyone'. Jennifer observed that Classics teachers were incentivised to 'try really hard' and 'be more innovative' to survive, possibly more so than other language teachers, because at that time every pupil had to study

[83] Linda Knox, interview with author, Glasgow, 29 August 2018.
[84] Aileen Robertson, 'Latin alive and well and residing in Fife', in *The Courier* (January 31, 2012). <https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-courier-advertiser-angus-and-the-mearns-edition/20120131/282458525849980> [accessed 14 December 2024].

a Modern Language. Jennifer pointed out that while schools may initially have picked Latin as an easy target during a time of financial cuts, subsequently a major factor would have been staff availability. Noting the lack of training options in Scotland for Classics teachers, Jennifer pointed out the circular staffing impasse: politicians 'don't want to train Classics teachers because they don't know if there's going to be any jobs for them', but head teachers 'won't offer jobs for Classics unless they are sure they can get the staff'. Jennifer described the initial perception of Classical Studies as being 'an easy subject' for 'pupils who found Latin too difficult', a perception seemingly shared by universities who initially did not accept the subject at entrance. However, the subject quickly grew into a 'difficult exam' that is 'very rigorous, very academic', with the result that in Jennifer's experience 'candidates who do Latin and Classical Studies tend to do better in Latin'.[85]

From these varying standpoints emerge recurring influences on the decline of Classical language teaching in secondary schools: changing university entrance requirements, new Science and modern language courses, and the development of non-linguistic Classical courses. So too themes recur of financial, staffing and administrative pressures, changing perceptions of the value of Classics, and reliance on a small number of key individuals to maintain access to teaching and resources.

Conclusion

As has been argued throughout this chapter, the substantial educational changes that took place during the period under review fundamentally threatened the place of Classics in Scottish secondary schools. The subject was consequently forced to adapt to survive, with varying degrees of success. For example, whereas previously consisting of a narrower, academically-rigorous curriculum focused heavily on achieving linguistic competence, Classics provision (where available) can be shown to have reacted to these political, social, and pedagogical challenges by pivoting away from the study of ancient languages towards broader and more accessible topics of ancient culture and classical civilisation.

[85] Jennifer Shearer, interview with author, Edinburgh, 31 January 2015.

Some of these changes were forced upon secondary schools for purely demographic reasons, for example to accommodate the post-war increase in population, noted below. Other developments were rooted in an evolving approach to pedagogy, such as the transition from teacher-centred, knowledge-based learning to child-centred, skills-based learning. However, as we have seen, other changes were clearly more political or ideological in nature, including aspects of comprehensivisation or the introduction of national examinations. In this respect the study of Classics - with its perceived aura of elitism - was perhaps uniquely vulnerable and was therefore impelled to transform in pursuit of Santangeli's 'precarious survival'. The general benefits of widened access to meaningful recognised attainment in the 1960s and 1970s were arguably achieved at the expense of the subject-specific learning of traditional Latin and Greek subjects, at least in state secondary schools.

Necessarily these changes at secondary level translated into a materially transformed pupil intake at university level. Augmented in number but diminished in language skills, this changing intake would in turn affect the range, length and character of taught undergraduate courses at Scotland's four ancient universities. The next chapter examines some of these dynamics, using the decline and fall of the Department of Classics at the University of Aberdeen as an in-depth case study to demonstrate just how precarious the position of Classics had become.

Chapter Three

The University of Aberdeen: Classics in the post-Robbins Years

Introduction

This chapter examines the changing place of Classics in the post-Robbins landscape, firstly by considering the broader nationwide changes and evolving educational philosophies and policies affecting tertiary education from the early 1960s – including changes in national needs, educational funding, and student demographics – and secondly, by using the decline and fall of Classics provision at the University of Aberdeen as a case study, setting out the growth in enrolment, the diversification of its student body, and ultimately the sudden and tragic termination of the Department of Classics in its entirety. The author also documents the change from traditional language-based learning in Greek and Latin towards non-linguistic classical studies. This is done, primarily, through analysis of contemporaneous University Calendars and degree examination papers, acquired during archival research at the Special Collections Centre in the Sir Duncan Rice Library, Aberdeen. Few course handbooks, lecture notes, or teaching materials survived, so calendars indicate the breadth and depth offered by the department, including references to classical texts taught during those years. Examination questions show what was being taught in the classroom in the 1980s, and the changing expectations of students' academic skills throughout their university careers, particularly compared with earlier examinations. Finally, the end of Classics at Aberdeen is documented via the student publication, *The Gaudie*, an invaluable contemporaneous resource and window to the turmoil of that time on campus.

Following the 1963 publication of the Robbins Report, the history of the University of Aberdeen is, in many respects, the history of how universities adapted to external changes, often enforced by increasingly powerful external governmental pressures. Nevertheless, it is posited that the unique character of the University of Aberdeen, compared to the other ancient universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews, including its historic role as the University of the North and close ties to regional schools with strong classical tradition, was not sufficiently considered amidst the broader, nationwide expansion of tertiary education. The ultimate demise of Classics at Aberdeen demonstrates the failure of national political forces acting upon regional educational provision.

Furthermore, it is argued insufficient attention was paid to the internal educational upheavals that characterised the Scottish secondary system in the decades following the 1963 Robbins Report. In the rush to reform universities across the United Kingdom, a disconnect emerged between different regional education regimes and their ongoing changes at secondary and tertiary levels. It is possible, since tertiary education is organised as a United Kingdom unit, assumptions were made about an organisation and qualifications system which was historically, and uniquely, Scottish. However, in the 1960s, secondary education was entering a period of unprecedented change which would alter the pedagogical landscape profoundly.

As discussed in Chapter 1, due to the central role of Classics in Scottish education historically, many teachers trained in Scotland would therefore have had experience of Latin during their school years. George Gray, first secretary of The Scottish Council for the Training of Teachers (SCTT), which in 1959 succeeded the National Committee for the Training of Teachers (NCTT), and who was himself 'a classic from Edinburgh Royal High School', noted that at an early meeting involved in producing 'a very important document', eight out of the ten members themselves 'were Honours classics'.[1] This may have contributed to the highly valued status of Classics in the University of Aberdeen and its feeder schools. Those schools themselves had done long service, as 'most of Scotland's six-year (certificate) schools in 1965 dated from before the First World War' and 'Aberdeen was no exception with its Academy, High School and Grammar School, and with Robert Gordon's College, a grant-aided School'.[2] By the early 1960s 'rebuilding and relocation of the Academy was needed to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers created by the new O-grade.'[3] This marked the start of a period of unprecedented expansion in Scotland's secondary schools, which in turn, heralded the creation of a previously unimagined and apparently limitless source of suitably qualified undergraduate candidates for the tertiary sector.

Paterson notes that a 'UK-wide entrance system for the universities was started in 1961, although Aberdeen, Strathclyde and Glasgow universities did not fully join it until the 1980s', and that in this system, 'the new universities no longer required that all entrants have

[1] McPherson and Raab, p.422.
[2] Ibid., p.384.
[3] Ibid.

Higher passes in both mathematics and a language, although all continued to insist on English and some breadth.'[4] This may be viewed as a consequence of the broadening of the traditional secondary school curriculum that was taking place. Additionally 'the universities were also becoming less local', and whereas in 1952 at Aberdeen, 'seventy-three per cent of all students came from the north east and twelve per cent from the Highlands and Islands', by 1962 'across Scotland as a whole, two-thirds of school leaver entrants to university went to their local university'.[5] However, between 1960 and 1970 the proportion of local Aberdeenshire students fell from fifty-one to thirty-nine per cent. This drop was largely compensated for by building residences for students from further afield, which, by 1970, catered for almost a quarter of its intake.[6] As these figures foreshadow, for the University of Aberdeen, and specifically in relation to fundamental organisational changes which affected the delivery of Classics in the secondary curriculum of its feeder schools, the years following the Robbins Report were to be the most contentious in its long history.

Tertiary Education in Britain into the 1980s: Interpretations of Change

The implementation of the Robbins Report and the new relationships formed between universities and Government were hugely significant – tightening central political control over university financing, resource management, academic staffing, and course provision. The sudden growth in student numbers at Scottish universities during the period immediately following the publication of the Robbins Report, from 25,000 students in 1964-65 to 34,000 in 1968-69, represents an increase of over one third in the space of just four years, in a period also characterised by challenges to the equilibrium between universities and the state. To better understand these forces, this author contrasts four accounts of this tumultuous time. The perspectives of Robbins, Scott, Farrant, and Baatz offer distinct interpretations of educational change, and drawing on these, the author aims to map out some of the principal factors at a national level that would subsequently have such profound effects on Classics at the University of Aberdeen.

[4] Paterson, *Scottish Education*, p.157.
[5] Ibid., p.159.
[6] Ibid.

The following contributions offer invaluable insights into the causes and effects of externally-wrought changes on the existing pattern of tertiary education. The first is Lord Robbins, who reflects on the shifting balance between state control and academic liberty in his book, *Higher Education Revisited*,[7] followed by Peter Scott's *The Crisis of the University*,[8] which considers the effects of the original Robbins Report. John Farrant, in his *British Higher Education*,[9] discusses the distinction between academic freedom and institutional autonomy, while Michael Baatz in *English Universities, 1852-2012, From Freedom to Control*,[10] writes from a UK perspective, having held university appointments in Edinburgh, Birmingham, London and Leicester.

Robbins, in his 1979 Preface to *Higher Education Revisited*,[11] sets out his intention 'to state and explain various personal attitudes' rather than 'to provide a comprehensive exposition'. To this end, by writing letters to the imaginary 'My dear X', Robbins can comment more freely on aspects of tertiary education in the United Kingdom. The introduction sets out his credentials to do so, stating that, 'I have continued to be an academic' explaining that he is still lecturing part time at the London School of Economics, after a decade as Chancellor of the University of Stirling in the years 1968-78.[12]

Robbins quotes a recommendation of the Committee on Higher Education of 1963 that 'places should be available for all who have the ability and willingness to benefit from them' but stresses that the accompanying condition which the committee had considered to be 'quite fundamental', and which has not been adhered to in most English universities, was 'that the expansion should involve a much greater provision of broader courses' citing 'demographic and social' pressures, and pointing out that 'no test or tests' exist capable of predicting accurately 'the potentialities of all applicants.'[13] Robbins decries the 'so-called policy of educational planning' describing it as 'the exact reverse of the principles underlying the policies recommended by the Committee on Higher Education' and in practice

[7] Lord Robbins, *Higher Education Revisited* (London, Macmillan Press, 1980).
[8] Peter Scott, *The Crisis of the University* (Beckenham, Croom Helm, 1984).
[9] John H. Farrant, 'Central Control of the University Sector', in Tony Becher (ed.), *British Higher Education* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1987), pp.29-52.
[10] Michael Baatz, *English Universities 1852 – 2012: From Freedom to Control* (Dorset, Downland Publishing, 2013).
[11] Robbins, p. vii.
[12] Ibid., pp.1-2.
[13] Ibid., pp.23-6.

'not…conspicuously successful.' (p.27) He links with this a further problem, namely that 'of forecasting the development of technology and its influence on future markets', and states that, 'any precise planning of the production of various kinds of particular skills must be regarded as hazardous in the extreme.' What is paramount, Robbins stresses is 'the need…for education which is conducive to versatility rather than highly specialised skills liable to be superseded by the unknown.' Although he agrees with the right of individual institutions 'to present limits to their own operations', Robbins is strongly critical of a situation which allows 'the scope they offer to be imposed by a single authority operating from the centre.'[14]

By 1980, Robbins had concerns over university size. While expansion in collegiate systems like Oxford and Cambridge, with quasi-independent colleges, was feasible – he questioned its effectiveness in unitary universities, foreseeing a process of 'diminishing returns' for 'staff, students and administration' and a 'lack of any spontaneous sense of affiliation among staff and students.' For these reasons, in such universities 'with a multiplicity of faculties', Robbins states, 'I would begin to see the red light when numbers were much above 5000.'[15]

Peter Scott attributes the production of his book, *The Crisis of the University*, to a conference in 1979 organised by the Students' Association of Edinburgh University and to his colleagues on *The Times Higher Education Supplement*. Scott describes Professor R.V. Jones 'up in Aberdeen' as being 'as much a prophet crying in the wilderness in 1981 as he was 20 years before, when he was one of the most distinguished critics of the Robbins blueprint for expansion.'[16] Scott concedes that 'the hopes for a better and broader future embodied by Robbins seem natural and right to majority opinion within the universities' seeming 'to fit so exactly the humanist (although elitist) preoccupations of the liberal university.' He confesses to surprise at the way 'in which the commitment to the student and to good undergraduate teaching has held up in a time first of rapid expansion and then of growing strain.'[17] There are references to 'snibborism' (the reversal of Robbins) and 'intellectual thrombosis as the academic arteries harden', followed by the admission that 'Robbins's prescription for a more liberal system of higher education…still holds good and that

[14] Ibid., pp.28-9.
[15] Ibid., p.48.
[16] Scott, p.9.
[17] Ibid., p.10.

Robbins's description of the aims and principles of higher education…has still not lost its power and its freshness.'

Scott's opinion is that 'the 1978 discussion document, *Higher Education into the 1990s*,' contained nothing 'that was not better said by Robbins.'[18] Summarising the effects of the Robbins Report, Scott references the continuing decline of 'the integrative disciplines' balanced by the intensification of 'the specialisation of disciplines', and this 'despite the misgivings of the Robbins Committee.'[19] In his account, 'instead of the popular stereotype of tumbling standards, mass teaching and mediocre scholarship and research' the new reality is that 'British universities in 1983 are much more powerful intellectual institutions than they were in 1945 or even 1963,' and that 'the true picture is of an intensification of the academicism of the universities.'[20]

In 1984 John Farrant, a member of the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA) Statistics Committee, was seconded from the University of Sussex to the secretariat of the University Grants Committee (UGC) 'to assist on preparing the Committee's advice on 'A strategy for higher education into the 1990s'.[21] The Department of Education and Science (DES) provided a government grant to the then 42 universities in Scotland, England and Wales on the advice of the UGC. The sub-committee members represent the groups of academic disciplines to facilitate visits to university faculties, resulting in decisions as to the amount of the block recurrent grant, only about 6% of which at that time was for specific expenditure. Farrant notes that 'the assumed programme of activity' had been subject to an increase in specification and provides examples known to him, such as 'the discontinuance of teaching of Russian' or 'the number of science undergraduates'. The UGC requires 'the restraint of the Government in not seeking to impose its will directly through the purse on individual universities – and also on the compliance of the universities in adapting to national needs as perceived by Government and in not provoking Government to abandon its restraint.' From his experience, Farrant deems the UGC's mediating role to be 'superficially the same, but the degree of direction delivered through it has increased.'[22]

[18] Ibid., p.16.
[19] Ibid., p.150.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Farrant, p.29.
[22] Ibid., p.41.

Farrant argues the 'autonomy of institutions is distinct from the 'academic freedom' of the individual scholar' and reminds the reader of the five desirable constituents of institutional autonomy identified by the Robbins Committee in its 1963 Report (pp.229-34), namely: 'freedom of appointment; freedom to determine curricula and standards; freedom of admission of students; freedom to determine the balance between teaching and research; freedom to determine the shape of development.'[23] Appointment of academic staff 'financed from general funds' remained, apart from what he terms 'new blood' lectureships where 'a nominee of the relevant research council' should be included, though with no power of veto. The university still decided the 'grade and position' on the national salary scales. Universities maintained 'full discretion in selecting between applicants' for places, although Farrant notes they do not have powers to assist with finance, and also that in 1980 the grant from the UGC which applied to the teaching of students from overseas was withdrawn. Curricula and their content were determined by the individual university but continued to require 'external scrutiny' for 'professional recognition'.[24]

Farrant strongly holds that 'the Robbins Committee wished for each institution the freedom to determine the shape of its development' even if that were to result in a mismatch 'with the demands of the national economy' and 'the needs of society'.[25] However, 1979 and 1983 saw a 'Conservative administration…committed to reducing public expenditure' which resulted in 'interventionist policies' with the result that universities were 'required to bear more fully the consequences of their action'. As Farrant succinctly puts it, 'the Government, for its part, does not underwrite institutional ambitions but buys services in the marketplace.'[26] Institutional autonomy can only be maintained if the institution is self-supporting financially. Farrant believes the funding allocated to research in the grant distribution of 1986 was 'guided by assessment of the likely quality of output' and predicts allocation of funding will be determined by both teaching quality and 'the price at which each university offers them.' In a marketplace future for the universities, Farrant foresees 'a UGC on which academics were not in a majority' and accepts the possibility that 'the structure of the university...will be significantly different' at the end of the 20th century.[27]

[23] Ibid., p.48.
[24] Ibid., pp.48-9.
[25] Ibid., p.49.
[26] Ibid., p.51.
[27] Ibid., pp.51-2.

Baatz, lastly, details the effects of austerity measures imposed in the 1980s by the Conservative Thatcher Government, while Sir Keith Joseph was Secretary of State for Education, as a result of which 'in July 1981 the grant provided to the UGC required institutions to make budget cuts of up to 18%'. This was followed by 'further cuts of five per cent in real terms over the following three years' with the result that individual institutions faced, on average, cuts of 17%.[28] Early retirement of staff to some extent reduced costs, but 'some three thousand academic posts were left unfilled', and those figures did not include the Scottish situation.

In April 1984, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) established a committee chaired by Sir Alex Jarratt, Chancellor of Birmingham University.[29] Notable for its managerial language of efficiency, and its Thatcherite reorientation as to the philosophy of education, the Report of the Jarratt Committee was published in 1985. As Baatz explains, 'Efficiency studies were commissioned in six universities: Edinburgh, Essex, Loughborough, Nottingham, Sheffield and University College London (Para 1.3). Each study comprised a General Study on the effectiveness of the institution's general management structure and administrative systems including the decision processes, authority and responsibility for and monitoring of the use of resources, and management information services and a separate Special Study on a specific aspect of the particular institution's structure and systems (Para 1.4).'[30]

Baatz is scathing in his condemnation of the priorities propounded in the Report:

> 'The Report relegates to a mere secondary and subordinate role the academic leadership previously regarded as paramount namely the maintenance of the highest standards in research and teaching; the encouragement and direction or influence of the research of younger staff members and advancement of their careers; presentation of the department and university at national and international professional seminars and conferences; support for publication of work of staff members even if the wait for a major book may appear to take supposedly 'unproductive' years and fostering reputations of staff members and advancing their appointment to higher posts elsewhere.'[31]

[28] Baatz, pp.16-7.
[29] Ibid., p.17-8.
[30] Ibid., p.19.
[31] Ibid., p.20.

Heads of university departments will no doubt be able to add to this list of roles. Baatz adds, the UGC agreed 'that research funds would be distributed more selectively; that tenure needed to be weakened; and that it would consider mergers of small departments.' An increase in academic salaries and 'a reasonable financial settlement' for the universities would result. However, the Jarratt Committee's concerns about the UGC itself in terms of its 'role, structure and staffing' soon resulted in the Croham Committee curbing its powers and reducing the UGC to 'statuary status, reduced in size and have a majority of non-academic instead of primarily academic members.'[32] Thus, the Croham Report, together with the Jarratt Report, 'established a comprehensively different relationship between Universities and Government.'

Several key themes emerge from the varying accounts provided by these four authors, particularly the increasing level of political control of academic institutions exerted by a central state authority. With this came an erosion of institutional autonomy, and concomitant emphasis on efficient resource management and administration over traditional qualities of academic leadership. As the author will go on to show, these themes played a major part in the decline and eventual closure of the Aberdeen University's Department of Classics at the end of the 1980s.

The Aberdeen Experience: from Regional Roles to National Needs

The University of Aberdeen was clearly affected by these national headwinds following the Robbins Report, perhaps seen most readily through the rapidly expanding size of the student population during the 1960s and beyond. But other important changes were also taking place, including a shift towards vocationalism and subject specialism, and a change to the perceived centrality of classical learning in tertiary education, as well as a revised entrance qualification system, all of which rendered the Department of Classics vulnerable to the political and financial pressures that resulted in its closure by the end of the 1980s. Using statistical information about the student population and their subject choices, and evidence from senior academics working at the University of Aberdeen at the time, the author will set

[32] Ibid., pp.22-3.

out how these changes influenced the institution in general, before specifically analysing the teaching of Classics at the University.

When the Committee on Education, under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins, was appointed on the 8th of February 1961, the total undergraduate population of the University of Aberdeen was 1,903 students, of whom just over two-thirds were male. Strikingly, by 1965-66 the undergraduate total was 3,469 (of whom 1,282 were female, double the total of 620 in 1961), a total in which Arts accounted for 1,695 with an additional 94 B.Ed students. Medicine, Law and Divinity accounted for 530, 126 and 18 students respectively and Science for 1,100. This reflects the traditional roles which the University of Aberdeen sought to fulfil.[33]

However, by 1970-71, the Annual Statistical Returns provided by Hargreaves and Forbes show the University of Aberdeen had expanded far beyond its traditional catchment area of the North of Scotland. The total undergraduate body was now 4,943, with an astonishing 2,700 taking Arts and B.Ed courses, whereas just ten years previously, in 1960-61, the numbers peaked at 842. Over that decade, the Faculty of Law expanded from 41 students in 1960-61 to 212 students in 1970-71. Science undergraduates from 591 in 1960-61 to 1,672 in 1970-71.

The number of students requiring accommodation in the University's halls of residence shows the success Aberdeen had in attracting students from beyond its traditional area in the years following the Robbins Report, but hints at the challenges to come. There were only 19 students in accommodation in 1955-56, rising to 195 students in 1965-66, rising again to 1,293 just five years later, with the numbers taking university accommodation in 1975-76 reaching 1,973 students.[34]

Expansion proved expensive, and as John Hargreaves, Professor of History from 1962-85, notes, 'Accepting the principle of expansion does not of course imply that its strategy was well considered or well managed'. Furthermore, he explains, 'Since it seemed important to

[33] John D. Hargreaves with Angel Forbes (eds.), *Aberdeen University 1945-1981: Regional Roles and National Needs* (Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press, 1989), Appendix, Table 1: Student Numbers, p.140.
[34] Ibid.

allow students great freedom of choice – among honours courses as well as within the traditional ordinary degrees – growth was affected by changes in student demand which were not always stable or predictable.'[35] The real problem was the utterly unrealistic rate of expansion demanded by the University Grants Committee. In 1970-71 undergraduate numbers totalled 4,943, with postgraduate students accounting for a further 337, giving a combined student body of 5,280. Yet in March 1973, 'the UGC began to press for a third phase of expansion in the late 1970s' and 'tentatively suggested a figure of 10,000 to 11,000 for 1981-2'. The Senatus, having conditionally accepted the lower 10,000 target, was outmanoeuvred by the UGC and presented with a figure of 10,500 students, 'with a strong warning of displeasure if this was not accepted.' Hargreaves notes that by 'January 1974 the UGC began to require economies'. This resulted in the target for 1981 being reduced to 6,000 students. Furthermore, the quinquennial system of planning, which had given universities a five-year financial budget within which to work, was stopped.[36]

The winds of change, however, were felt even earlier than this. Universities themselves had become aware of political attempts to undermine their traditional autonomy on matters concerning 'the cause of free learning'. For example, in the course of his 1954 P.J. Anderson Memorial Lecture, Sir Hector Hetherington of the University of Glasgow asserted that, 'the University must retain full responsibility for the organization of its courses, and for the character and standards of the instruction given within its walls' and continue to have 'the right and the duty of final decision.' Sir Hector asserted the 'primary condition of University freedom' required that 'the Universities should each retain full responsibility for its own appointments: that it alone, subject to the ordinary law of the land, should choose its teachers, should settle the conditions of their tenure, and should, if need be, dismiss them.'[37]

Osborne, then Vice-Principal of Aberdeen College of Education, emphasises the centrality of Classical learning in the Scottish universities in which 'a pass in Latin or Greek was for long a compulsory element in the ordinary M.A. curriculum' and confirms from his standpoint of 1968 that 'so dominant has the influence of classical learning been that until

[35] John Hargreaves, 'Academic Strategies of Expansion', in Hargreaves and Forbes (eds.), *Aberdeen University 1945-1981* (1989), p.4.
[36] Ibid., pp.10-11.
[37] Hector Hetherington, *The British University System 1914-1954* (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1954), pp.12-3.

comparatively recently in Scotland, it was the study of the classical languages which was the essential ingredient in a liberal education,' and concludes that, 'The equivalent of the trivium is now to be found in the study of language, literature and philosophy or logic.'[38] What he has outlined is the structure of the Scottish Master of Arts ordinary degree curriculum.

However, change was imminent. Paterson points out 'The curricular shifts towards vocationalism and away from the traditional arts curriculum accelerated' as evidenced by a drop between 1950 and 1960 of 8% (from 51% to 43%) balanced by a 7% rise in the proportion of science degrees in the same period, according to UGC figures.[39] An additional factor, as James Scotland was to indicate in his reference to 'the Universities (Scotland) Act of 1966', was that this Act 'removed the stipulation that all four universities had to agree on curricular changes.'[40]

Change was also happening in the key aspect of entrance qualifications, as Findlay, Senior Lecturer in Education at Aberdeen College of Education, explains. Prior to 1968, these requirements were stipulated by the Scottish Universities Entrance Board (SUEB), and its Attestation of Fitness was mandatory for entry into any of the four ancient universities. The situation was to change after the upgrading to university status of both Strathclyde and Heriot Watt, previously termed 'central institutions' and now 'technological universities', as well as Dundee, 'formerly an offshoot of St Andrews', and Stirling University, 'the only completely new creation in Scotland'.[41] The SUEB was abolished, and with it the Attestation of Fitness, to be replaced by the Scottish Universities Council of Entrance (SUCE).[42]

As early as 1970, Paterson notes clear indications the 'most able students' had already 'specialised in their school curriculum in order to achieve entry to either science or arts', meaning most science entrants focused exclusively on science at school, and most university arts entrants 'had taken two foreign languages at school.' He continues, 'the curricular

[38] Osborne, p.23.
[39] Paterson, *Scottish Education*, p.160.
[40] James Scotland, *The History of Scottish Education. Vol. 2* (1969), quoted in Paterson, *Scottish Education*, p.160.
[41] Findlay, p.102.
[42] Ibid., p.103.

change that provoked the most hostility from advocates of the Scottish tradition was the declining popularity and status of the Ordinary Degree. This was still seen as the very embodiment of generalism, and of the unity of the whole education system.'[43] However, that 'unity' was to be reinterpreted and re-embodied in a comprehensive system of Scottish secondary education which would result not only in the transformation of university provision in Scotland, but also in the democratisation of access to Classical education of which the University of Aberdeen was, for a time, an outstanding example.

The Classical Tradition at the University of Aberdeen: Adapted to Survive?

Close textual analysis of examination papers from the University of Aberdeen archives reveals that, by the early 1980s, a varied selection of linguistic (Latin and Greek) and non-linguistic (Classical Civilisation) courses were available to students in the Department of Classics. Examination papers elucidate what was being taught in the classroom, given the absence of a well-preserved body of handbooks, lecture notes or other similar course materials. The Aberdeen University Calendar also provides detailed information about course entry and degree subject requirements.

Notwithstanding national trends affecting university education at the time, the Department offered dedicated courses in Latin and Greek requiring a high standard of linguistic mastery, and provided access to classical learning at tertiary level to pupils with no prior grounding in classical languages through the study of archaeology, architecture, theatre, sculpture and a broad range of texts in translation. Evolving ideas about the teaching of Classics can be seen through comparison with an equivalent exam paper from 1948, highlighting transition from the post-war period focus on linguistic self-sufficiency to a more diverse and inclusive set of courses that broadened access to, and arguably democratised, the subject. The provision of non-linguistic courses could be viewed as adaptation for survival, albeit in the specific case of Aberdeen, one which ultimately proved to be unsuccessful.

[43] Paterson, *Scottish Education,* p.161.

At the start of the 1980s, the strength of the position of the Department of Classics at the University of Aberdeen appeared assured. The Principal was himself an alumnus of this department, having graduated with first-class honours in 1938,[44] and there were few indications of the upheaval to come later in the decade. Sir Fraser Noble, Principal and Vice Chancellor at Aberdeen University from 1976-1981, had a life-long connection with the Department, firstly as a student and thereafter in a professional capacity. His father studied Latin and Greek at Aberdeen and attributed this choice to the Rector of Nairn Academy, whose aim was 'to put all his good students through a Classics course, preferably one in Aberdeen.' Sir Fraser attributed to his Classics training 'a sense of having a trained mind that applies itself to asking questions and assessing the answers to questions' and referred to prose translation, 'being able to translate from English into Latin or into Greek' as continuing to be 'an integral part of university language courses, whether ancient or modern, well into the 1960s'.[45]

However, on 20th March 1979, the University Court of the University of Aberdeen passed Resolution No 93 of 1979, which directly concerned the position of Classics. Firstly, the Regius Chair of Humanity, as referred to in Ordinance No 409, was 'amended to be: Regius Chair of Classics'. Secondly, the Regius Chair of Greek 'is hereby abolished' and 'the rights and privileges which hitherto pertained … shall hitherto pertain to the said Regius Chair of Classics.' Resolution No 93 was to 'come into force on the first day of October 1979.'[46] While this may have merely formalised an existing situation, it can also be seen as foreshadowing future events.

Notwithstanding these changes within Aberdeen University itself, and mounting pressures on the tertiary system across the country, the Classics Department continued to create attractive courses and lively material. In hindsight, problems within the secondary sector would have contributed considerably to any reductions in numbers of first year students opting for Classics. As discussed previously, the change effected by comprehensive

[44]Roddy Begg, 'Sir Fraser Noble' in *The Independent* (September 16, 2003). <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/sir-fraser-noble-37115.html> [accessed 15 December 2024].
[45] MS 3620/1/26, 'Interview with Sir Fraser Noble (1918-2003)' (July 12, 1985). <https://calm.abdn.ac.uk/archives/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=MS+3620%2F1%2F26> [accessed 15 December 2024].
[46] UNIVERSITY 380/1, 'Acts, ordinances and resolutions affecting the University of Aberdeen' (1858-1991), p.153.

education and the common course in Years 1 and 2 had mitigated against a strong start in Latin. The Scottish Classics Group had created *Ecce Romani* to provide a starter course for S1 and S2 pupils, but there was for a time a hiatus until the creation of the Standard Grade syllabus for Latin and for Classical Studies, although in 1981 some pupils were able to sit the first O Grade Classical Studies examination, which, as Williams points out, tended to be cater for 'the top 30 per cent of pupils academic range'.[47]

The Aberdeen University Calendar for 1981-82 evidences the vitality and openness of the Department of Classics to students with or without prior qualifications.[48] Principal George Paul McNicol had replaced Noble in 1981, taking on a dual role as Vice Chancellor. Regulations concerning the Master of Arts Ordinary Degree specified students 'must attend a minimum of seven Ordinary, Advanced and third year level courses and pass the degree examinations relating thereto.' Students were required to take a spread of subjects from three groups, for example 'Logic and Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy, Philosophy of Social Science'. Many languages were available, both ancient and modern, for example, Greek (Ancient) and Greek (Modern), Arabic, Italian, Hebrew, Latin and Russian. There was also a non-linguistic course on Classical Civilisation and Roman Law and Scots Law for prospective lawyers.[49]

In 1981-82 there was an interesting range of language combinations for Classics at the Honours Degree level. Either Greek or Latin could be taken with English. Latin was also available as a partner to Celtic, French, Italian or Spanish. The emphasis was clearly on linguistic mastery, made clear by the stipulation that (unless permission was given) 'A candidate for Honours in Classics may not count Classical Civilisation.'[50] The introduction to the Classical Civilisation course for 1981-82 states the course 'does not require any previous knowledge of the classics and all texts studied are in translation.' Such non-linguistic courses had grown in popularity as more and more classical texts appeared in translation. In the UK, where traditional bi-partite educational systems were being replaced by all-through secondary schools, there was a much larger contingent of interested pupils

[47] Williams, p.476.
[48] Archives x378(4125) C, Rice Library, University of Aberdeen. See also the 'Local Collection', Research Room, University Collections Centre.
[49] Ibid., pp.57-60.
[50] Ibid., pp.62-63.

who were attracted to classical drama, history, archaeology and literature, perhaps encouraged by the increasing affordability of holidays in Greece and Italy, as well as the popularity of classical themes in films and television programmes. For example, one of the top grossing films of 1981 was *Clash of the Titans*, an inventive retelling of the myth of Perseus, albeit one which frequently diverged from the source material.

To better understand teaching provision at the Department of Classics in the early 1980s, it is helpful to analyse end of year examination papers, held in the University's Rice Library. Although the texts are timeless, the skills and competencies required of students reflect changing educational priorities. With reference to a corresponding exam paper published by the same Department during the post-war era, it is possible to chart a significant evolution in course contents, and the expectations placed on students, reflecting the previously discussed changes at secondary level and the overall place of Classics in the curriculum.

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Aberdeen published in two volumes the Degree Examination Papers for the academic year 1982-83. Volume 1 contained examination papers for subjects within Accountancy–Greek, while Volume 2 begins with Latin 1B and Latin 2.[51] Examination Papers for the Degree of MA were taken in May–June 1983. Students who took Greek 1 (intended for beginners) were examined by means of two papers, on Thursday, 2nd June 1983. No questions were optional, and students were clearly expected to have achieved a fair degree of proficiency during their First Year. Paper 1 rigorously tested the students' grammatical knowledge, for example Q1 asked for the genitive singular and the dative plural of eight Greek nouns, while Q2 required the student to provide the principal parts of eleven verbs. The three remaining grammar questions were equally taxing.

The Greek 2 examinations were held on the same day as Greek 1 and comprised two papers of three hours each. Students by this stage were expected, in Paper 1, to translate into English passages from Thucydides and Euripides' *Supplices*. This paper concluded with the option to either continue translating into English (from Plato's *Gorgias*) or to attempt translating

[51] Archives x378(4125) C, Rice Library, University of Aberdeen. See also the 'Local Collection', Research Room, University Collections Centre.

into Greek 13 lines concerning Themistocles and Aristedes voting regarding the civil war. Following this challenging morning paper, students returned that afternoon for Paper 2 – a combination of translation from complex texts and short essays necessitating sophisticated analysis. The translation component here featured sections of Herodotus, Thucydides, Euripides' *Alcestis*, and Plato's *Republic*. Subsequently, students were presented with two short Greek texts with the instruction not to translate, but instead to 'give the context and comment on the subject-matter of one of the following'. The expectation was that students should not only know the Greek but understand the broader significance of what had been read or translated.

With strong foundations established during students' earlier years, the Honours Classics examinations contain an unsurprisingly robust collection of language and literature papers. However, as shall be examined below, the ten papers set at this level of study demonstrate a notable breadth in the educational offerings made by the department by this point in time. Paper 1, Greek Sight, gave four passages for translation – much as at lower levels of study – but with extracts taken from more advanced texts, including Homer's *Iliad*. The synthesis of translation with comprehension and analysis, noted above, continued in Paper 2, Greek Literature I. Here again, increasingly challenging translations were expected (from Herodotus and Plato's *Symposium*), and examinees were tasked with writing a short essay on Herodotus, a textual analysis of Plato. A difficult further section (Section C) asked students to translate passages, identify the authors, and 'add notes on their subject matter'. Indeed, beyond the expectation of a broad knowledgebase of Greek literature, students were expected to understand the metre of passages and 'write linguistic notes explaining' certain Greek words therein. Paper 3, Greek Literature II, continued with translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (and Euripides' *Hippolytus*) followed by challenging essay topics, such as the 'language and dialect' of Homer, Euripides' tone and intention, and analyses of competing translations and versions of *Hippolytus*.

The remaining Honours examination diet maintained these exacting academic standards, across a wide range of subjects. The intellectual scope and ambition of these papers speaks to a programme of education not subsumed by linguistics, or even translation, but one steeped in the humanities and the classical tradition. Paper 4, Greek History, contained questions about the authentic founder of Greek democracy, about Thebes' rise to power in

the early fourth century B.C., and the historical significances conveyed in various passages of text (in the Greek) composed by Aristotle, Plutarch, Thucydides, and others. Further breadth and depth was to be found in Paper 5, a set of alternative papers exploring philosophy, art, and archaeology. The first of these posited questions on 'Plato's arguments for the immortality of the soul', 'the four "causes"', and 'Aristotle's treatment of pleasure'. The alternate, Greek Art and Archaeology, firstly asked students to write 'explanatory notes on the six photographs provided giving identification and approximate dates.' Thereafter, the remaining seven questions included a wide variety of topics: the principal differences 'in technique and style between black-figure and red-figure vase painting', on the '"severe style" in Greek sculpture…its characteristics, and…works in which these are exemplified', and 'compare and contrast the physical situation of Olympia with that of Pergamon, and describe the ancient plan of one of these sites as it has been disclosed by archaeological exploration.'

At the University of Aberdeen, the position of Latin as of 1983 was also strong, as can be demonstrated through its exam papers. For Classics Honours examinations Latin constituted Papers 6-10.[52] Paper 6, Latin Sight, required candidates to translate into English passages from Plautus' *Epidicus*, Cicero's *Philippics*, Lucan's *De Bello Cuili*, and Tacitus' *Annals*. As with Greek Literature, papers on Latin Literature demanded both translation and analysis. Paper 7 included translation of Pseudolus and Rudens and asked students to 'comment fully on subject-matter and language'. Thereafter, examinees were instructed to translate and 'discuss the philosophical content' of passages from Lucretius and write notes on matters such as Lucretian hexameter. Lastly, candidates had to translate, comment, and give linguistic notes upon various Latin language and early texts. The Latin Literature exam, Paper 8, continued in this vein translating Catullus and a Roman satire before writing two short essays upon a selection of topics, including Horace, Juvenal, Ovidian style, or Cicero's presentation of Greek philosophy.

As with its Greek equivalent, Latin language and literature was accompanied by papers exploring the broader Roman world. In Paper 9, Roman History, candidates chose to write essays on topics relating to either Cicero and the Roman Republic or Nero and the Flavians.

[52] Ibid.

Examinees in their final exam, Paper 10, were again offered a range of options. The Classics course was designed to embrace a variety of interests and perhaps even reward students for their specialisations. The first option, Latin Prose Composition, was the most traditional – translating 22 lines of English into Latin. The second, Roman Special Subject, focused on 'Roman Society in the Early Principate' including the imperial promotion of art and learning. The last option, Roman Art and Archaeology, presented students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of areas including architecture. In a demanding, but particularly creative section, examinees had to identify, date, and give explanatory notes about sites shown in photographs.

The Department of Classics also provided non-language courses for students without Latin or Greek. The Degree of MA examinations in the academic year 1982-83 made provision for such students in the Classical Civilisation 1 course. Liberated from the demands of linguistics and translation, students explored key texts, if not in greater depth, then at least with different emphases. The radical accessibility of the Classical canon (albeit in translation) allowed a diverse and imaginative curriculum, as its examinations illustrate.[53]

In Paper 1, Classical Civilisation candidates addressed Epic Poetry, Greek Tragedy, and Greek Histories and Comedies. Texts under examination, some of which were included in papers for the Honours language-focused students, included many of the finest works from both Greek and Latin literatures: Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*, and Euripides' *Alcestis*, *Hippolytus*, and *The Bacchae*. In Paper 2, students composed essays on a wide range of topics, including: 'The Ancient City State', 'Archaeology and Art', for example, 'what are the differences between a typical temple of the 6th century BC and the Parthenon?', and 'Britain in the Roman Empire', for example, 'what were the aims of the Roman administration of Britain?'

Evidence from University calendars and examination papers speaks to the substantive content of courses and the high academic expectations that were placed upon students to successfully complete their studies. Together this strongly suggests that in 1983 Aberdeen's Department of Classics was providing a variety of well-planned and stimulating courses for

[53] Ibid.

linguists and non-linguists alike. Indeed, the study of Classics (both Latin and Greek) had considerably widened its range of texts and topics since the end of World War Two and greatly expanded its appeal as a subject and as part of an MA degree. This change, and the shifting priorities of Classics educators, can be highlighted by comparison of the above examination papers with one from shortly after World War Two, such as the Latin Ordinary examination which Classics students at the University of Aberdeen sat in 1948.

For the Degree of MA (Ordinary), the 1948 Latin (Ordinary) examination was undeniably rigorous.[54] In keeping with practice at that time, neither dictionaries nor word banks were permitted. In Paper 1, students undertook unseen translations from Latin into English of a very long prose paragraph, verses (with one word supplied: *libare* – 'to pour as a libation'), and an extract (possibly from Cicero). Following this, a section on Roman History asked questions concerning topics such as the Second Punic War. In Paper 2, examinees translated extracts from Livy, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Horace's *Odes.* In the section after, more translation was expected before a short essay and 'a brief critical estimate of the poetry of a) Lucretius or b) Propertius or c) Ovid'. For the Latin (Advanced) course, exam papers largely focused on translation, into and out of Latin, with only one question beyond this remit.

Texts are timeless, but education evolves with the perceived priorities of the times. Skills necessary to succeed in the Classics examinations of 1948 were firstly mastery of the foreign language, and that priority remained through to the start of the 1970s. No dictionaries or word banks were permitted nor were they necessary, students having progressed through a secondary system where gaining mastery of the language – self-sufficiency – was the aim. Nevertheless, when comparing the 1948 and 1983 papers, it is clear that perceptions of what skills the subject of Classics should focus on had changed. The very existence of non-linguistic Classical Civilisation courses shows that the worlds of ancient Greece and Rome had opened to welcome all who wished to study them. Consequently, linguists and non-linguists alike could find enjoyment, and a sense of identity, with the ancient Classical authors and their worlds. The burgeoning of Classics in translation transformed perceptions of the study of Classics as a 'closed shop', while allowing students to cultivate skills which parallelled those in other subjects, not least literary criticism and historical practice. It is the

[54] Ibid.

same world those Aberdeen students of 1948 had accessed in the original languages. But it is, perhaps, a wider world, a world to which we can feel connected in a more immediate and personal way than the students of 1948.

Change in the University of Aberdeen

Just six years later, in 1989, the University of Aberdeen controversially announced that all Classics provision was to be terminated, as part of a large-scale departmental restructuring project set against a backdrop of crippling financial pressures. To some extent, one might view the Departmental closure as reflecting circumstances unique to the University of Aberdeen, since Classics provision survived at all three other Ancient Universities. But this decision reflected broader trends affecting tertiary education at large, including severe financial cuts imposed nationwide by the Government from 1981 onwards, and ongoing movements toward commodification of university education to be valued solely as a business enterprise (such as the Jarratt Report) rather than anything of greater significance. As Cameron notes, 'the narrative of the 1970s increasingly became one of how to manage universities in an era of "cuts", which were frequently referred to in the specialist press'.[55] Contemporary editions of the Aberdeen University newspaper, *The Gaudie*, reveal profound distress at these financial constraints. And a human cost, particularly though not exclusively felt by Humanities staff and students, reached a tragic nadir with the deaths of two staff members.

When the University of Aberdeen Calendar for 1989-90 was published, under Degrees of Arts and Sciences, Syllabus of MA Honours Degree Examinations, it warned in bold letters: 'Classics: There will be no intake of students into Honours groups including Classics, Latin or Greek in October 1990 and subsequently.'[56] The University Timetable for 1989-90 explained the effect on teaching provision. Although Classical Studies Honours would proceed, no Year 1 and 2 Ordinary Classical Civilisation courses were available.[57] Greek (Ancient) would continue with five sessions per week (Ordinary) and four sessions for

[55] Ewen A. Cameron, 'A climate of fear? The Scottish universities and the question of devolution, 1974-9', *Historical Research* 97:277 (2024), pp.418-436, at p.422.
[56] Archives x378(4125) C, Rice Library, University of Aberdeen. See also the 'Local Collection', Research Room, University Collections Centre.
[57] Ibid., p.68.

Honours level.[58] Latin 1 would present five sessions per week, as would Latin Honours, but there would be no Latin 2.[59] Below (in capitals) were affected subject combinations in Honours languages: 'Celtic-Latin, English-Greek, English-Latin, French-Latin, German-Latin, Greek-Philosophy, Hispanic Studies-Latin'.[60]

It may be that Scottish universities providing Modern Languages did not feel unduly perturbed at the loss of these ancient languages, Latin and Greek. It is possible there was no realisation of the significant role Latin and Greek played in modern language acquisition, in providing the necessary grammatical framework for understanding how languages, especially inflected languages such as German and Russian, actually work. However, as the new era of Standard Grade educated Scottish students qualified for university language courses, having been taught the common course in Years 1 and 2, there were to be significant changes as to what linguistic 'mastery' was held to entail. From a 21st century perspective, decline in modern language proficiency can arguably be traced to a loss of that common background – inculcated through the study of the ancient languages of Latin and Greek – which previous generations of students in Scotland were able to access.

Troubles at Aberdeen had grown through 1987 and spilled into 1988, vividly documented in several issues of the University's student newspaper, *The Gaudie*.[61] National financial cutbacks had 'hit Aberdeen hard - more savagely than most'.[62] There was hope that the University's new Rector, Willis Pickard, would be an active force in defence of both staff and students against cuts.[63] The scale of the University's economic difficulties, the likelihood of 'compulsory redundancies', and its negotiations with the University Grants Committee soon emerged.[64] The Minutes of the Senatus Academicus similarly reveal savage cuts being considered.[65]

[58] Ibid., p.69.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., p.115.
[61] Past issues of *The Gaudie*, from 1934 onwards, are held at the University Collections Centre (Rice Library), Research Room, L fPer Aa P87 G.
[62] Begg, 'Sir Fraser Noble'.
[63] *The Gaudie* (January 13, 1988). UCC, L fPer Aa P87 G.
[64] *The Gaudie* (January 27, 1988). UCC, L fPer Aa P87 G.
[65] *Minutes of the Senatus Academicus*, Vol XLX, (May 4, 1988). Special Collections, UNIVERSITY 370/1/50.

In May 1988, an Emergency *Gaudie* edition was printed, consisting of only the outside cover pages. The headline 'Save Our Faculties!' appeared, with a call for an emergency General Meeting of the Students Representative Council (SRC).[66] The focus was the proposal by 'A Working Party of the University's Senate Planning Committee' as set out in a discussion document 'to create a system of 7 Schools to replace the 6 Faculties' containing 'features which will centralise decision-making rather than devolve it.' In 'An Academic's View', it was argued 'that the academic direction of the University would be determined primarily by persons of managerial rather than academic values and abilities.'[67]

The *Gaudie* of 5th October 1988, printed with a black border below the title, bore the headline: 'Staff deaths cloud new term. Call for academic staff counselling'. The article announced simply that 'Two members of staff died within a few days of each other during the summer recess, highlighting the human consequences of University financial constraint.' Dr Donal Byrne (Art) and Dr Nicola Mackie (Classics), both from Departments deemed superfluous to requirements, and 'whom were believed to be under a great deal of stress', had died.[68]

This edition of *The Gaudie* contained a tribute to Mackie by G.P. Edwards, Head of Classics. After outlining the remarkable achievements of this outstanding young academic, Edwards attempted to explain how the encroachments of the existing political climate had affected her, writing 'She was deeply pained by the brutal way in which not only her own Department and University, but the whole University system and humane scholarship generally have been treated in the 1980s.' In 1987 Mackie had written, 'It would be "tidier" to close Classics in the sense that a person who amputates his own hand will have fewer limbs to worry about' and 'deeply deplored the mentality…which regards the scholarly and educational work done in a University as needing to be organised and valued as if it were the product of a business enterprise.' Edwards concluded his tribute stating, 'the best way of honouring her is to continue the fight against all current manifestation of barbarism and to support the high ideals which Nicola Mackie never failed to uphold.'[69]

[66] Emergency *Gaudie* (May 25, 1988). UCC, L fPer Aa P87 G.
[67] Emergency *Gaudie*, 'An Academic's View' (May 25, 1988), p.2. UCC, L fPer Aa P87 G.
[68] *The Gaudie* (October 5, 1988), cover page. UCC, L fPer Aa P87 G.
[69] G.P. Edwards, 'Tribute', in *The Gaudie* (October 5, 1988), p.3. UCC, L fPer Aa P87 G.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated how Aberdeen University was particularly affected by national political, educational and financial forces following the Robbins Report of 1963. Significant changes to the school secondary system, including development of new qualifications and increased leaving age, changed fundamentally the student intake. During this period universities faced a shift in the balance of power and autonomy, with the government exercising increasing political control over not just funding but academic decisions, with a drive towards efficient management of universities as businesses supplying vocational training. Changing perceptions and emphasis on new subjects further challenged the traditional focus on languages, contributing to the shift from linguistic mastery to broader engagement with the classical world seen in archived examination papers. The transition from being a University with Latin and Greek to one without was brutal, as evidenced by contemporaneous accounts in the student newspaper. The closure of the department in 1989 directly resulted from the post-Robbins expansion in student numbers followed by sudden contraction in financial resources, but it also speaks to the precarious position of Classics in tertiary education in general. The following chapter explores this theme further by considering how Classics teaching adapted to survive at the three other ancient universities in Scotland.

Chapter Four

Classical Languages at the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and St Andrews

Introduction

Having examined Classics at the University of Aberdeen in Chapter 3, this chapter evaluates the changing provision of Greek and Latin teaching in the remaining three ancient Scottish Universities: the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and St Andrews. Scotland's other universities – Heriot Watt, Stirling, Glasgow Caledonian, Napier, Queen Margaret's, Robert Gordon's, Strathclyde and Abertay – at no point taught Latin, Greek, or Classical Civilisation as discrete subjects, although occasionally may have provided related courses taught by individuals in Departments of History.

In 1963, when the Robbins Report was published, the Classical Tradition in the ancient Scottish universities – including expectations of high standards of linguistic scholarship – seemed assured. However, an unprecedented level of change would soon transform classical subject teaching. In this chapter, these developments are looked at through analysis of university calendars and examination papers sourced from University Archives, from the 1960s and the 1990s. As in Chapter 3, these valuable resources demonstrate the breadth and depth of Classics teaching, and in the absence of surviving course handbooks, lecture notes, or other teaching materials from the period, they provide essential evidence of educational expectations at that time. The importance of linguistic competence and translation is also considered, balanced against the need for Classics teaching at tertiary level to adapt to survive, avoiding the fate suffered by the Department of Classics at the University of Aberdeen. This analysis is further informed by oral testimony from teachers and lecturers who lived and worked through these changes.

In this chapter, it is argued that language departments in Scotland's four ancient universities benefited from standards set by the system of Higher and Lower examinations for the Scottish Certificate of Education, and that consistency could therefore be maintained in the standards expected in university language courses and examinations in the 1960s. For

example, at the start of the 1960s, students at the University of Glasgow required a Lower Certificate in Latin to enter Higher Ordinary (Year Two) English. Presumably this evidenced a student's ability to master inflected languages – an essential skill for an English course which required a pass in the Anglo-Saxon exam. However, as university entrance requirements began to change following the Robbins Report, so did expectations of ancient and modern language proficiency. This chapter outlines how ancient universities successfully adapted provision of Ancient Greek and Latin language courses to a growing cohort of interested students, and the remarkable expansion of non-linguistic Classical civilisation courses which followed.

Classics in Tertiary Education: the 1960s

Geographically central, and with a large catchment of local schools, the Faculty of Arts at the University of Glasgow in the 1960s served a relatively homogeneous student base with broadly similar Scottish Higher entry qualifications, in addition to independent school sector pupils. Students entering the Department of Humanity had generally studied Latin for five years and obtained a Higher Latin qualification.

Although Glasgow's Chair of Greek was instituted as early as 1704, it was not an endowed Chair, hence why Professor Douglas MacDowell (1931-2010), Professor of Greek from 1971-2001,[1] made a bequest to revive and support the endowment of this chair.[2] In contrast, there had been appointed a Chair of Humanity at Glasgow in 1934, a post initially held by C.J. Fordyce until the 1960s.[3] In the 1960s, the Department of Greek consisted of Professor D.J. Allan, supported by J. Carnegie and H. Chalk, Senior Lecturers, as well as Alexander F. Garvie, who served the University of Glasgow with a lifetime of scholarship. In addition, there were two Assistant Lecturers in Classical Greek.[4] New Testament Greek was taught by

[1] Chris Carey, 'Douglas Maurice MacDowell' (2011) *Proceedings of the British Academy* 172, pp.233–248. <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/1690/172p233.pdf> [accessed 14 December 2024].
[2] 'University of Glasgow revives Chair of Greek with £2.4m bequest' (January 17, 2012). <https://www.gla.ac.uk/news/archiveofnews/2012/january/headline_220540_en.html> [accessed 14 December 2024].
[3] University of Glasgow Calendar, 1965-66, pp.2-3. GB 0248 GUA SEN 10, 'University Calendars'.
[4] Ibid., pp.22-23.

three additional staff members, including Reverend William Barclay, Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism – a well-known public figure from his writings and broadcasts.[5]

The impressive size of the department shows that the study of Greek – whether Ancient or New Testament – was much in demand at the time. For these students, many who wished to become teachers of Greek in turn (generally combining with Latin) or to enter the ministry of the Church of Scotland, the Department provided them with a wide, traditional curriculum.

The University of Edinburgh shared certain characteristics with the University of Glasgow; for example, it too received much of its student catchment from local secondary schools, in addition to a thriving independent sector. However, by the mid-1960s, although drawing most of its students from Scotland, it had 'twice as many foreign students as the United Kingdom average' and in fact 'it has seldom less than 1,000 students from abroad and often several hundred more'.[6] In 1960, the Faculty of Arts produced a 'more rational and purposeful arrangement of alternative courses, offering the student a somewhat wider choice than in the past, together with an increased degree of specialisation'. The original requirement 'to include both a language and a science subject' became one or the other.[7] Breadth of choice remained characteristic of the Ordinary Degree at Edinburgh University, embedded in the regulations of the Faculty of Arts. 'Eight types of degree' were then available, each entailing the study of two related double courses, an example cited by Keir being 'Mathematics with a second double course in Language or literature, or appropriately, with Music' claiming this as an 'illustration of the field covered by the Faculty of Arts and its still closely allied Faculty of Social Sciences.'[8]

This "pick-and-mix" approach greatly benefited Classics at the University of Edinburgh. In the more traditional universities, Arts students tended to "double in languages", meaning languages were paired, for example French with German, or Latin with Greek, not mixing ancient and modern. Whilst this can be traced back to provision at secondary level, the

[5] Ibid., p.16.
[6] David Keir (ed.), *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: The City of Edinburgh* (Glasgow, Collins, 1966) Ch. 34.
[7] Ibid., p.756.
[8] Ibid., p.757.

practice was perpetuated at tertiary level. Indeed, the limited flexibility in subject choice meant it was unusual to even pair French with English, as the present author did, in the Ordinary Degree in the Faculty of Arts at Glasgow University in the 1960s.[9]

The east-coast universities of Aberdeen and St Andrews, though smaller than Edinburgh and Glasgow, continued to play a vital part in training future teachers and translators of Classical languages throughout the 1960s. In a sense, they presented smaller versions of the relationship of the University of Glasgow to Edinburgh. For example, Aberdeen had traditionally attracted local students (schools with a strong Classical history), while the University of St Andrews tended to attract a more cosmopolitan mix including English students with A-Levels qualifications in Classics (including those unsuccessful in their Oxbridge entrance exams). Consequently, Aberdeen and St Andrews were well placed to continue a strong tradition of linguistic proficiency in Classical languages.

The Examination in Ancient Greek in the 1960s

What, then, were the expectations of students who had completed the First Year of study of Greek Language in a Classics Department at a Scottish university in the 1960s? As noted in Chapter 1 under 'Methodology', the absence of surviving course materials, including textbooks (if any even once existed), lecture notes, etc., required alternative sources to be found which capture the content of courses. The scant academic secondary literature on this theme further added to this need. In this capacity, examination papers presented an illuminating and relatively unexplored source of evidence. However, their value goes beyond this, as they demonstrate the expectations for students, the academic standards involved, the thematic breadth of courses, the interdisciplinarity of certain modules, as well as more practical features, such as the rigour of a battery of multiple-hour long papers sat without dictionaries and other aids. Similarly, university calendars have hitherto been largely overlooked but held a wealth of information not otherwise retained.

[9] Ibid, p.757.

The four Ordinary Level Greek Language examinations held at the University of Glasgow in May 1963 demonstrate the language proficiency expected of First-Year students.[10] As with Modern Languages, no dictionaries were supplied, and only occasional obscure vocabulary words were provided. Language students were expected to be self-contained in their learning. Two First-Year examinations were held on the 27th of May 1963, each lasting two hours. The first examination, 'Translation into Greek Prose' required students to translate a 14-line passage in what can only be termed 'Olde English' of such obscurity that two of the English words themselves required a definition. First-Year students 'who have not gained exemption' were required to sit an examination on Translation from Prescribed Books. Students studied an impressive range of genres in First Year. Included was the epic poetry of Homer's *Iliad*, the historical writing of Herodotus and the contrasting dramas of Aristophanes' *Acharnians* paired with Sophocles' tragic *Electra*. Finally, students had to translate philosophical writings from Plato's *Ion* and the rousing prose of Demosthenes (*LIV*: Against Conon). Thus, over four hours on a single day, First Year students were anticipated to be able to translate from – *and into* – Greek, a range of advanced texts across several literary forms.

The following morning, Tuesday 28th May 1963, students embarked on the 'Unseen Translation' examination (without dictionaries), containing passages from Euripides' *Helena* and Xenophon's *Anabastis vi*. In the afternoon, Greek Language students sat a fourth 'General' paper lasting two and a half hours, consisting of three sections of which students were instructed to 'Do question A' plus four others 'including at least 2 from B'. The obligatory section involved Grammar, Metric and Scansion. These requirements were the norm in language studies and similar demands were made in English poetry too at the University of Glasgow. In Section B – History – students were instructed to answer at least two questions from a choice of six. Greek history was obviously a key part of the First-Year Greek course, with questions including: 'What developments took place in Greek civilisation between the years 700 and 500, and how far are they due to colonisation?' The specific details revealed through this examination paper demonstrates the extent of interdisciplinary understanding expected of candidates.

[10] University of Glasgow, 'Syllabus of Examinations', (1962-63). GB 0248 GUA SEN 10/12.

Section C of this General examination comprised essays on Literature and Art, with six topics concerning literature, for example: 'Appraise the skill of Demosthenes in presenting a case, giving examples from any of the private speeches which you know.' Students were expected to be sufficiently fluent in Ancient Greek to assess the effectiveness of the persuasive oratory of Demosthenes. The final question of Section C required students to 'Discuss the development and significance of naturalistic representation in Greek art.' This question gave students the opportunity to write extensively on a fascinating topic, notably one which was not dependent on proficiency in Greek language. This question is itself hugely significant, being the vanguard of a new way of presenting the Classical world to university students who, though lacking linguistic skills demanded by traditional Greek courses, were captivated by the classical civilisation of Ancient Greece and its people. Whilst courses of Classics in translation were as yet unavailable, here one can see the shape of things to come in later Classical Civilisation modules.

Second-Year Classics students at the University of Glasgow sat Higher Greek examinations in four papers, at the same time as First-Year students, on the 27th May, 1963. The first Higher examination was a two-hour paper consisting of a passage of a distinctly literary nature by Thomas Ellwood in which he refers to a conversation with Milton concerning *Paradise Lost.* Students were even expected to 'translate into Greek Prose' phrases such as 'realme of England' and 'unknowne event'. Unless granted exemption, Higher students then sat a two-hour examination, 'Translation from Prescribed Books', with five of six extracts from a balanced range of genres to be translated. Texts included Homer's *Iliad* and another drama by Sophocles, his *Antigone,* Aeschylus' *Prometheus Vinctus*, the *Symposium* of Plato, in addition to extracts from Demosthenes, *LVII,* and Thucydides.

The following morning, Tuesday 28th May, Higher Greek students took a two-hour examination of Unseen Translation. Three compulsory extracts for translation were of contrasting genres represented by Aeschines, Aristophanes and Homer. The Higher Ordinary Greek General Paper lasted two and a half hours that afternoon and consisted of a compulsory Section A of Grammar and Metric, plus two questions from Section B on History, and two from Section C on Literature.

The scansion of three verses of Greek poetry called for in Section A was not a skill confined to Classical languages. Scansion of metre had long been an element of English literature and was taught in Scottish senior secondary schools as a natural component of the literary appreciation of poetry. Section B offered a choice of five questions pertaining to Greek History, including: 'How far does the state of affairs in Greece at the time of the Trojan War, as described by Homer, appear to be historical, in the light of modern discovery?' This question tests the student's opinion on historical accuracy in Homer, but also requires knowledge of, and interest in, recent archaeological discoveries.

The final part of the General Paper, Section C, consisted of demanding questions on Greek literature. Question 2, 'Does the Antigone have a moral?', requires personal reflection in addition to linguistic competence. Similarly Question 4 calls for mature consideration in asking, 'What arguments of philosophical value are there in the *Symposium*?' Again, the student is required not only to be well acquainted with the text, but to be able to form considered, mature judgements.

Archival examination papers show the study of Ancient Greek imposed considerable demands on the student, requiring not only mastery of the language itself, but also a maturity in literary appreciation and philosophical thought to access the range of texts studied in Ordinary and Higher Ordinary Greek. These students were studying for an Ordinary degree, which qualified them to teach Greek in secondary schools, however, at this time, only Honours graduates could become Head of Department in Scottish secondary schools.[11] Assessment for Honours degrees was rigorous as, in 1963 for example, Final-Year students taking the Degree of MA with Honours in Classics at Glasgow faced a barrage of examinations. A minimum of six papers in each of Latin and Greek tested the candidate's proficiency in prose composition and unprepared translation – this, in addition to translation from prescribed books, Classical Philology (linguistics), and a special subject such as 'Greek Philosophy from Thales to Plato'.

[11] Harry D. Watson, 'Degrees of Value', in *The Scotsman* (October 11, 2011). <https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/letters/degrees-of-value-1658433> [accessed 15 December 2024].

The high demands of such linguistic scholarship would not suit all students, but few would argue that such a level of expertise in languages was of no value. An adequate pool of expertise in ancient languages is needed in order to reconstruct the worlds of past peoples and to interpret afresh our cultural inheritance from them, transposing this into modern language. Classical languages have acted as a litmus test, from the 1960s to the start of the 21st century, indicating the health, not only of the quality of foreign language courses with respect to the needs of successive generations of learners, but also of the level of linguistic competence endowed. Classical language expertise – and other inflected languages such as Anglo-Saxon or German – depends on and reflects the extent to which students have mastered the essential components forming the bedrock of their own language.

Case Study: Greek at the University of Glasgow

This case study outlines critical shifts in Classics at the University of Glasgow over the final quarter of the twentieth century, using oral testimony provided by Professors Alexander Garvie and Ronald Knox, formerly of the Department of Classics, and contemporaneous archive examination papers. The traditional linguistic focus and qualification metamorphosed to a broader vision of Classics in translation. Ancient Greek remained, but as courses in translation on Greek civilisation and history developed, students' interest grew. How would the Department meet the challenge of creating non-linguistic courses of similar academic standard and rigour to its traditional degrees?

Professor Garvie outlined several challenges facing Greek language courses by 1970 in the University of Glasgow, including a varied pupil intake with 'complete beginners' who 'had no Greek at school'. This was 'tricky', because the Department 'didn't have the staff to do them separately'. By then it was becoming obvious that 'very few schools were now teaching Greek and that this was not going to last for long... so the new Professor, Douglas MacDowell, came up with this idea that we would also have a class called *Greek Civilisation* which would not involve any language.' Garvie recalls that 'Latin came in with Latin Civilisation, so it became Classical Civilisation, and the two classes went together', which 'took quite a while,' since the department also continued to teach linguistic courses to

Honours level.[12] But Professor Garvie stressed the positive impact of these courses on students:

> 'This was a Classical Civilisation class, very much a First-Year class, and this girl came down in front of me and said, "It's amazing!"
>
> And I said, "What's amazing?"
>
> "This subject," she said. "I had no idea that they thought about these things away back two thousand years ago. I think it should be a compulsory subject for every student (to study Classics) because until you do this, you can't understand everything else!"'[13]

Another issue was the compulsory Latin or Greek paper for Civilisation students. Garvie explained at that stage 'we thought anybody who had done Classical Civilisation ought to know some Greek or Latin', but some very bright students unfortunately 'came a cropper in the Greek paper' which brought down the overall class of their degree.

Garvie dismissed initial concerns that Classical Civilisation might prove to be an 'easy option', and unfair on language students: 'We didn't feel that for long, because we discovered we had lots of good students whose work, when it came to writing essays, was well above the standard than the people who were doing Latin and Greek Language... I was amazed by how good these people could be'.[14]

Dr Ronald Knox also supports this, stating 'we were genuinely persuaded, after some years' experience of dealing with students in translation that they could write just as good essays as the linguists, and that, provided that we looked carefully and chose carefully the texts they read, they could do as subtle and as penetrating analysis as the linguists could'.[15]

An interesting counterpoint is made by Dr Knox concerning embedding Greek History into Honours Greek after Douglas McDowell arrived at the Department in the early 1970s.

[12] Professor Alexander Garvie and Mrs Jane Garvie, interview with author, Glasgow, 26 June 2017.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Dr Ronald A. Knox, interview with author, Glasgow, 22 August 2018.

McDowell ‘shared my view of the importance of History in the Syllabus’, and the Honours Greek arrangements were revamped so everyone did a paper on ‘History and Historians’, and ‘I was very happy about that’.

The personal records of Dr Knox from when he arrived in the Department in Autumn 1969 show the stark decline in language student numbers. In 1968-9 the First-Year Ordinary Greek cohort comprised a ‘very decent’ 35 people, who would all have done Higher Greek at school. In their Second Year there were still 19, and when they graduated in 1972 ‘six of them got Firsts’. In 1969-70, only 18 enrolled, and Dr Knox’s colleagues were ‘very despondent and shocked’ by what would prove a ‘steady decline in numbers’. First-Year Greek numbers were 14 in 1978-89, and 13 in 1980-81. There were 9 students across Junior and Senior Honours in 1974-75, and 8 in 1978-79, but in 1984-85 for the first time there were no students entering Junior Honours Greek.[16]

This decline in student numbers coupled with the financial pressures being brought to bear on universities during the 1980s led to amalgamation of the Departments of Greek and Humanity based on arguments from ‘prudence and survival’ and in pursuit of ‘more safety, more clout’. Dr Knox made the interesting observation that the Latinists were perhaps more enthusiastic about the merger than the Hellenists; he speculated that since one ‘cannot study the Romans at any deep level without engaging in the Greek influences on them’ the Latinists saw the Classical world as essentially one discipline, whereas Greeks could ‘very easily think we are dealing with two civilisations, closely related but two civilisations’.[17]

One practical solution to the demand for new Classical Civilisation courses was to re-purpose existing modules. Honours Greek students had always enjoyed Special Subjects, several of which provided material ready for re-use. Choices available at Glasgow University in 1970 included Athenian Constitutional History, Philosophy (Pre Socratic and early Plato, and Aristotle), and the History of Greek Art, Sculpture and Painting via texts including Beazley and Ashmole *Greek Sculpture and Painting*.[18]

[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] ‘Syllabus of Examinations’, (1969-70), pp.167-8. GB 0248 GUA SEN 10/12.

The 1976 Greek Honours examinations demonstrate this point. Students taking Prose Literature (Paper 3) were asked in Question 4 to: 'Ascribe ONE of the following passages to its author, indicating the features of style and thought which are characteristic of him.' The requirement to know and understand an author's style and thought would transpose naturally into non-linguistic courses, since the key elements required are similarly demanding. Similarly, Question 6(b) – 'Discuss the skill of Athenian orators in exploiting for their own ends the prejudices and weaknesses of their audiences' – required knowledge and analysis of rhetorical techniques, together with a consideration of the argument used, within the context of the times.[19] Students reading texts in translation may actually have had an advantage over students whose principal preoccupation was a linguistic qualification.

In 1976, Honours Greek students additionally sat Paper 6: History and Historians, 478-403 B.C. and since ancient history is of considerable general interest, this, too, would provide the basis for a non-linguistic course, as shown by one example from this paper. In Q4(f) students were presented with the following quotation: 'The Athenians lost the Peloponnesian War because Pericles died and his policies were abandoned.' Students were asked: 'What is meant by such a view and can it be sustained?' A course such as this, even in translation, would offer considerable challenge to students, demanding nuanced understanding of the situation and period to weigh the claim against the historical facts.

An additional feature of Honours Classics qualifications in Greek Art and Greek History at the University of Glasgow was highly significant for the educational and personal experience of its students, as stipulated in the *Arts Syllabus of Classes and Examinations 75-76*:

> 'A student offering Greek Art or Greek History as a special subject for Honours must, before taking the examination, have spent not less than three weeks in Greece visiting archaeological sites and museums relevant to his subject, unless specifically excused by the Professor.'[20]

This transformational requirement enabled students to directly experience the timeless majesty of Mycenae, the architectural remains of the Athenian Acropolis, or links with the people of Olympia. Museum visits could bring ancient Greece alive, showing preserved

[19] Ibid.
[20] 'Syllabus of Classes and Examinations', (1975-76), pp.165-166. GB 0248 GUA SEN 10/12.

items of clothing and artefacts used in everyday life. A student's first experience of seeing ancient Greek vases from the 6th century BC and feeling that connection across the ages with an individual potter-painter, such as Exekias, could form the beginning of a lifelong interest.

The Classical tradition in Scotland grew organically out of the European tradition, which united scholars in an academic world "peopled" by the great writers, historians and philosophers of Greece and Rome. By its nature, it was a rather exclusive world, inaccessible to most citizens. In the universities, Latin was the *lingua franca.* Classics graduates, therefore, were endowed with the specialist linguistic skills of Latin and Greek which were appropriate to the times they lived in.

In modern tertiary education, by contrast, access to linguistic qualifications depends on skills obtained by students while in secondary school. In recent times, Ancient Greek was not commonly available, while Latin did continue to exist in parts of Scottish secondary education. For many potential university students, however, only courses in translation would enable them to access the literature, history and civilisation of the ancient world. Whilst we have no direct evidence for what the staff in the Classics Department at the University of Glasgow in the 1970s imagined student demand would be for Classics courses in translation, there may well have been some trepidation about student numbers.

Classics in Translation

Awareness of the transformative power of quality translations of Greek texts is not a recent development. In *The Rainbow Bridge,* the influential classicist R.W. Livingstone describes a 'new note' in the study of Ancient Greece at the beginning of the 20th century which broadened the traditional focus on translation. 'But the great master of it was Gilbert Murray' who, when he came to Oxford from Glasgow, 'stirred the dry bones of what some called pure, and others mere, scholarship.'[21] Livingstone describes Murray as 'a teacher of genius' and remembers that 'his lectures on Greek plays were a revelation. His translations of Euripides had as many editions as a popular novel and were acted throughout England and

[21] R.W. Livingstone, 'The Function of Classical Studies', in *The Rainbow Bridge and Other Essays on Education* (London, Pall Mall Press, 1959), p.80.

America.' He concludes the 'world will always need Hellenism because of Greek literature and art.'[22] It is easy to imagine Murray applauding the greater availability and popularity of qualifications in Classics in translation.

The definition of "Classical Studies" remains elusive down to the present. An umbrella term, it encapsulates the breadth of university courses available, including linguistic courses in Ancient Greek and Latin but also a growing body of texts in translation and courses in philosophy, art and architecture. Morwood, in *The Teaching of Classics,* argued 'the very wealth and range of classics has not proved free of problems and these can reach beyond the walls of the universities' citing a CUCD investigation in 1990 which found that 'the employers who were interviewed had a *concept* of what a degree in classics meant. Even in 1990 this may have been anachronistic.'[23] Nevertheless, Morwood believed the spur prompting an individual to take Classics at university level may lie in the personal domain of reception; 'fired with enthusiasm for the subject by an interest in mythology – or TV programmes, say, on Alexander the Great.'[24]

Evidence of growing interest in the classical world, particularly the artistic legacy of Greece, is demonstrated in the Preface to the fourth edition of Boardman's popular *Greek Art* – 'written in the early 1960s', revised in 1973, 1985 and 1996 – which aims to 'serve the general public and students embarking upon the study of classical antiquity and art.'[25] That Boardman cites first 'the general public' suggests the world of Ancient Greece belongs to all who are interested, not just confined to academia. However, in the 1960s no one would have predicted the enormous expansion of Classics courses in Scottish universities using texts in translation, nor the development of Honours degrees in non-linguistic Classical Civilisation studies.

In *Who Needs Greek?*, Goldhill concludes that 'reading the past and engaging in the present are constantly and actively enmeshed.'[26] In his introduction, Goldhill expressed this view in

[22] Ibid., p.81.
[23] James Morwood, 'Classics in the universities', in James Morwood (ed.), *The Teaching of Classics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.145-8, at p.146.
[24] Ibid., p.148.
[25] John Boardman, *Greek Art,* 4th edn (London, Thames and Hudson, 1996), p.9.
[26] Simon Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek? Contests in the Cultural History of Hellenism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.298.

the negative sense, warning 'students of the classical tradition all too often ignore how an engagement with Greek matters (socially, politically, intellectually).'[27] Goldhill encapsulates the dilemma resulting from the mainly linguistic preoccupation of the "Greats" tradition, though, ironically, it is linguistic scholars who have provided a range of high-quality contemporaneous translations of Greek texts that facilitates wider engagement with Greek matters.

The University of Edinburgh

Examination papers from the Faculty of Arts in the University of Edinburgh, which were held in May-June 1981, illustrate what can only be described as the ubiquitous place of Classics courses in translation. The Classical tradition is present, albeit fragmented, with courses under the banner of its component subjects, for example Ancient History, Archaeology, Art, Classical Literature and History of Science: as well as traditional courses in Greek Language.

First-Year students of Ancient History were examined on a breadth and depth of both Greek and Roman history. The use of texts in translation enabled students with no experience of Classical languages to more deeply understand life in Ancient Greece than likely could have been gained with a linguistic focus. Students of Ancient History 1 were required to answer three from seven questions, in the 2-hour Greek History examination held on 11th June 1981. Question 2 required the student to 'Evaluate the achievements of the Greeks in the aristocratic age (c.800-500 B.C.)', demanding factual knowledge of the period as well as critical evaluation of those achievements. Question 6 also combined individual assessment and historic knowledge: 'To what extent and for how long did the Greeks maintain their local freedom and autonomy after the rise of Macedonia under Philip 11?' Meanwhile, Second-Year students of Ancient History 2 sat a 3-hour examination, also on 11th June 1981, on Greek History covering 386-133 B.C. The compulsory first question provided 8 extracts (in translation) with the remainder devoted to writing 3 essays from a choice of 9.

[27] Ibid., p.10.

With increasing availability of Classical literature in translation, students of ancient history *became* students of Classics and *vice versa*. This interconnectedness is seen in essay choices in Ancient History 2, for example Q4: 'Can Alexander the Great's insight into political and administrative problems be said to have outrun his capacity to solve them?' It can be detected also in Q8: 'To what extent was resentment against Rome in the states of Greece after 196 B.C. really based on the ideology of "Freedom and Autonomy"?' And surely students of Classics in translation would appreciate Q10: 'What arguments can be adduced against the view that the two centuries following the death of Alexander the Great were an age of decadence in the Greek world?'[28] The "walls" between the specialisms were breached and each could benefit from the insights of the other.

Language Skills and the Universities

As educational priorities in the primary school curriculum changed in the latter quarter of the twentieth century, so did the linguistic skills of pupils starting secondary education. Pupils gained confidence in public speaking, but arguably at the expense of written accomplishments. Presentation skills may have taken precedence over academic content in topic work and the reading of short, light-hearted novels (such as Horrid Henry) may have been prioritised over grammatical structure in writing. Consequently, language teaching in Scottish secondary schools was held back by deficits in the grammatical knowledge of incoming pupils. M Campbell, a former German teacher, highlights the difficulties of teaching an inflected language like German, observing the 'need to understand subject and predicate of the sentence as it retains the Latin system of nominative, accusative, genitive and dative - for instance "The dog bit the postman" as opposed to "The postman bit the dog". The use of the dative in English had almost disappeared, as in "to/by whom" for example, and furthermore she found that pupils simply did not understand the concept of "clause".'[29]

A huge stumbling block for language learning was that pupils 'have no concept of tenses', thus 'perfect, pluperfect and conditional' had to be taught, and the challenging subjunctive.

[28] 'Ancient History 2, First Paper: Greek History 386-133 B.C.' June 11th, 1981. University Collections Facility, Per. .37 Uni.
[29] M. Campbell, telephone interview with author, 25 January 2022.

M Campbell demonstrated declining linguistic standards in the early 1990s when her S5 Higher German class sat – and failed, even with the concession of a dictionary - her own German O Grade level translation paper, which had been taken by Fourth-Year pupils in 1968. Inadequate knowledge of grammar would certainly be a barrier to succeeding in inflected languages at university level.

The reality is that universities have endeavoured to maintain acceptable intellectual rigour in language courses provided for students who are arguably inadequately prepared. In this new tertiary environment then, what place was there for the Classical Tradition in Scotland? Some secondary schools still taught Latin to Higher standard, as previously discussed, but few opportunities to study Greek language existed. Whereas the "Greats" tradition was a product of its times, the huge demand for non-linguistic courses in Classics in the final quarter of the twentieth century also reflected its times. There continued to be, however, provision for the linguists, those either qualified in Greek and/or Latin, or deemed capable of acquiring proficiency on the course.

The creation of dual streams of learners in Ancient Greek and Latin demonstrates a willingness to adapt courses for beginners without school qualifications. While adjustments were made, beginners were expected in First Year to begin to close that gap, with the result that much of the examination was at the same level of difficulty for all Classics students. It was, after all, a linguistic qualification. Furthermore, as the secondary school curriculum expanded in the final quarter of the twentieth century, the traditional position of languages in the Faculty of Arts was challenged and superseded, and additional Higher qualifications became accepted for entry. Movement away from language specialisation affected provision and curricula of modern language courses in Scottish tertiary education similarly to earlier courses in Ancient Greek and Latin.

The stark truth is that for present day students inflected languages present an almost insurmountable problem, requiring, as M Campbell outlined, explanation of English cases and tenses in addition to the intricacies of inflection in nouns and adjectives.[30] For new students, Latin at least has the advantage of being easily deciphered, but this does not apply

[30] Ibid.

to Ancient Greek and the Greek script. Hence the comment, 'It's all Greek to me!' rather than 'It's all Latin to me!' While acquiring reading and writing fluency in Greek or Latin is possible, it involves considerable commitment, time and energy. Such students, perhaps, could be considered the true heirs of the Classical Tradition in Scotland.

The organisation of courses significantly affected the availability of Classics in Scotland's four ancient universities during this period, considering breadth and balance not only in the courses made available, but also in the mandatory range of subjects undertaken. An excellent example of how this was achieved is the Ordinary Degree in Arts at the University of St Andrews. Pursuit of balance is explicitly stipulated in the 1975-76 University Calendar: 'Every candidate needs to have a spread of subjects – not only one group.'[31]

The five groups upon which the Ordinary Degree in Arts was based were divided into the following subject types: i) Historical, ii) Ancient World, iii) Scientific, iv) Literary and Linguistic, and v) Theological. The second group – the Ancient World – demonstrates the range of courses available, including Ancient History, Archaeology, Biblical Studies, Classical Culture, Greek, Hebrew, Latin and New Testament. Furthermore, there was the requirement 'to pass the Second and Third Arts Examination in at least two subjects of which at least one must be a subject not listed in group (iii) or in (v) above.'[32] This was an unparalleled choice of subject combinations. Until 1976 a student could combine Ancient History with Classics or Greek or Latin. It was also possible to study Latin with Logic, Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy, Philosophy, Music – or with Spanish, French, Greek or English. Greek could be combined also with Hebrew (possibly for students intending an ecclesiastical career) or with Linguistics, or Logic and Metaphysics – and so on.[33]

Honours Students in Ancient History, Greek and Latin, Classical Studies, or Ancient History and Classics were obliged, under Regulation 9, to spend 'not less than three weeks' abroad 'visiting sites and museums in Greece and/or Italy' by December of their final year.[34] It is impossible to overstate the long-lasting impact of such visits. The worlds of Greece and

[31] 'The St Andrews University calendar for the year 1975-76', X111 Ordinary Degree, p.161. per LF1104.C2
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., pp.163-4.
[34] Ibid., p.171.

Rome which they have studied for years through literature and language are transformed into living archaeology. Yet 1976 was a watershed year, for this was the final year of this qualification in Classical Languages.

The following year saw the introduction of the first Single Honours degree in Classical Studies at St Andrews. Non-linguistic courses were arranged so students first studied 'literature, art, religion, and other aspects of Greek culture', then in the second half studied 'Latin literature and Roman art, religion and culture.'[35] This broad access to the literature and culture of Greece and Rome in translation, was testimony, surely, to the Classical tradition at the University of St Andrews.

The Vital Role of Translators

The literature of ancient Greece and Rome is a unique inheritance. Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* still resonate across the centuries, just as for preceding generations. Classical literature in all its genres has inspired countless playwrights and historians, dramatists and philosophers, poets and politicians, providing us with a secondary heritage.

However, a continuous supply of translators is needed to provide each generation with translations in language which truly resonates. One such translator was J.B. Phillips, whose pocket edition of *The New Testament in Modern English*[36] contains a 'Translator's Foreword' which sets out 'three necessary tests which any work of transference from one language to another must pass before it can be classed as good translation'.[37] His own translation clearly passed these tests because, by July 1965, there had been seven reprints of his Greek translation edition. To Phillips, the first requirement is that good translation 'must not sound like a translation at all … even though the work we are reading is far distant from us in both time and place' and secondly, it must be devoid of any trace of the translator's personality.

[35] Ibid.
[36] J.B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English* (London, Geoffrey Bles,1960).
[37] Ibid., p. vii.

Phillips' third test is 'being able to produce in the hearts and minds of his readers an effect equivalent to that produced by the author upon his original readers.'[38]
Phillips admits the difficulty of achieving all three aims but insists that they should be used 'as principles of guidance'.[39] Phillips also stresses the importance of understanding the context in which a work is written, citing the New Testament world as 'a context of supreme urgency and often acute danger, for without that appreciation, the result is like that of 'an electronic word transmitter!'[40] Phillips' 'Translator's Foreword', by setting out the aims and challenges of meaningful translation for a contemporary audience, reminds us that ongoing access to Greek and Latin literature in translation requires a continuous supply of Classical scholars.

As noted earlier, one of the world's leading Biblical scholars, William Barclay, was Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at the University of Glasgow. Professor Barclay's translation of the Greek New Testament, his Bible Study notes, and his television broadcasts made him a household name and gave his translations worldwide reach. Through his eminently readable yet scholarly 'Plain Man' series, such as *The Plain Man Looks at the Apostle's Creed*,[41] Professor Barclay brought Ancient Greece to life for countless ordinary people who would otherwise have had no means of access.

University Classics Departments often require specific translations for student use, though the student may give little thought about the underlying reasons for that choice. In his lucid book, *The Faber Pocket Guide to Greek and Roman Drama*, Burgess cautions against downloading translations 'free off the web', explaining they are free because they are 'mostly nineteenth century versions now safely out of copyright' and in his view the 'original plays are so submerged in a glue of sub-Shakespearean verbiage that their outlines are barely discernible.' Others are 'long past their sell-by date'. Burgess concedes some more recent prose versions 'might do as literal translations but cannot be read with any pleasure: the experience is a little like eating sand.'[42] Some may disagree with Burgess' assessment, but his depth of knowledge and familiarity with the plays and playwrights of Greece and Rome

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., p. ix.
[41] William Barclay, *The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles Creed* (Glasgow, Collins, 1967).
[42] John Burgess, *The Faber Pocket Guide to Greek and Roman Drama* (London, Faber and Faber, 2005), p. xxviii.

is exceptional. Of a series of translations of Greek tragedy, he comments that it 'varies between the excellent… and the frankly pedestrian.' Even when describing a series of translations favourably as 'the most accessible', Burgess goes on to criticise 'a certain rhythmic monotony, a tendency to make all the playwrights sound the same, and a preference for translating what the dramatist means instead of what he says.'[43]

Translators of Greek and Roman texts are, to some extent, our interpreters of the ancient world and as such they occupy a privileged place in "broadcasting" the essence of these ancient writers as faithfully as possible. It is understandable, therefore, that Classics Departments will have given considerable thought to the value of individual translations of Greek and Roman texts for student use.

It is ironic that despite the virtual disappearance of Greek and Latin from secondary education in Scotland by the beginning of the 21st century, interest and enthusiasm for the literature, history and civilisation of Greece and Rome has grown dramatically in the universities.[44] Thus, we have come full circle; never has there been more urgent need for translators of Greek and Roman texts, because of the worldwide popularity of courses in translation. Scotland, too, has a part to play in the continuing provision of Honours graduates in Greek and Latin language, who may themselves one day join the ranks of the translators. But at large, the Classical Tradition in Scotland has continued to thrive because of the successful development of courses in translation to suit all levels of participation, which the next section will detail.

Classical Civilisation

During the 1970s, the term "Classical Civilisation" was adopted as the subject name for a new stream of courses built on pre-translated Latin and Greek texts. The broad umbrella term 'civilisation' meant there were no restrictions to areas of study and research. University

[43] Ibid., p. xxix.
[44] Council of University Classical Departments, 'Classics at UK Universities, 2019-20: Statistics', *Bulletin* 50 (2021), pp.1-20. <https://cucd.blogs.sas.ac.uk/files/2021/09/CUCD-stats-2020.pdf> [accessed 15 December 2024]; Higher Education Statistics Agency, 'HE student enrolments by subject of study and permanent address 2019/20 to 2022/23'. <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-52> [accessed 15 December 2024].

Classics Departments had the freedom to discontinue existing courses or develop new courses according to staff interests and the changing enthusiasms of students, as evidenced in the earlier example of Ancient History at the University of Edinburgh. Another interesting development was the dual course, whereby aspects of both Greek and Roman life and culture were studied, as seen in the University of St Andrews.

The University of Aberdeen Syllabus of MA Degree Examinations for 1981-82 provides an example of a well-crafted dual course in Classical Civilisation which was open to all since it 'does not require any previous knowledge of the classics, and all texts studied are in translation.'[45] The *Classical Civilisation 1* degree course at the University of Aberdeen for 1981-82 included epic poetry, drama, historical writing, and aspects of the ancient city-state together with Greek and Roman archaeology and art, providing students with a well-planned, balanced curriculum. The course included Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, Greek tragedy was represented by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides accompanied by Aristotle on *Tragedy*, and Plautus provided two plays to balance Greek tragedy with Roman comedy. Historical authors included selections from Thucydides and Herodotus and students explored the history of the ancient city-state, political and economic organisation, and aspects of daily life. Archaeology was also studied, including Bronze Age and Classical sites in both Greece and Italy, as well as their architecture and sculpture. Theatres and theatrical production were also studied in this very comprehensive course, together with life in Britain under the Roman Empire. The information on this *Classical Civilisation 1* course concluded with an impressive list of texts in translation.[46]

Clearly this First-Year course was exceptional in including so many aspects of Greek and Roman literature, history and civilisation. The advantages of Classics courses in translation are considerable, and students continuing their studies into the *Classical Civilisation* Year 2 course were building on the very solid foundation laid in Year 1. For Year 2, in terms of drama, it was students' turn to enjoy the comedies of Aristophanes. Using Barrett's translation, they studied Aristophanes' *Lysistrata, Acharnians*, and *Clouds*, which were balanced by Plato's *Last Days of Socrates* and the *Symposium*. In addition to *The Philosophy*

[45] University of Aberdeen, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, 'Syllabus of MA Degree Examinations, Classical Civilisation, 1981-82', at p.69. Archives x378(4125) C, Rice Library, University of Aberdeen. See also the 'Local Collection', Research Room, University Collections Centre.
[46] Ibid., pp.69-70.

of Aristotle, the Year 2 *Classical Civilisation* students also studied Arrian's *Campaigns of Alexander* as a companion piece to Plutarch's *Age of Alexander*.[47]

Students who had passed both Year 1 and Year 2 Classical Civilisation courses would have amassed a considerable amount of knowledge and understanding of the literature, history and culture of both Greek and Roman civilisations which would have enriched their academic and personal lives. And the intellectual engagement involved in these courses is evidently comparable to that required of students undertaking Greek and Latin.

Dr Ronald Knox revealed an interesting point about nomenclature at the University of Glasgow, stating that 'for those of us brought up before it existed, Classics meant the languages, Greek and Latin; Classical Civilisation meant Civilisation, even though people doing Classical Civilisation might have studied a little of the language. The two things were separate'. However, over time, Civilisation students felt it was 'harming their self-perception' that they were now regarded as 'doing Classics', which led to a new umbrella degree in Honours Classics with a linguistic and non-linguistic stream. Subsequently, the language students decided they didn't like the (traditional) title Honours Classics, preferring the title of Joint Honours in Greek and Latin. This highlights the 'striking sensitivities and sensibilities involved'.[48]

Towards the 21st Century: The Development of Modular Courses

In *Universities and the Twenty-first Century*, in 1994, Anne Wright, then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sunderland, stated that 'Higher education – the universities – exist to advance knowledge, and to advance knowledge through people. Universities are the guardians of the future. Yet universities also cherish the past, preserving and transmitting ancient wisdom, knowledge and culture.'[49] Wright expressed the hope that the universities will 'be peopled by students who regard themselves as learning throughout their lives, and

[47] Ibid.
[48] Dr Ronald A. Knox, interview with author, Glasgow, 22 August 2018.
[49] Anne Wright, 'The University in the Community', in, *Universities in the Twenty-first Century: A Lecture Series* (London, National Commission on Education, 1994), pp.87-109, at p.87.

who expect, confidently, to use the resource of the university many times, updating their knowledge and skills. They will come from a wider base and from more diverse routes.'[50]

In Scotland, the University of Edinburgh rose to this challenge by developing a range of non-linguistic Classics courses across the Faculty of Arts. The open, welcoming approach characteristic of the University of Edinburgh was apparent at the beginning of the 1970s through a non-linguistic course in translation, *Classical Literature 1.* The course studied Greek and Roman writers, but it is the range of literature and its use of matching texts of each tradition which is particularly impressive, as the following brief survey demonstrates.

Examination questions undertaken on 21st and 22nd June 1971 demonstrate the range of texts studied, including the epics of Homer and Virgil, the drama of Aeschylus, Aristophanes and Sophocles, works of Seneca and Plautus, and six further poems featuring Virgil, Horace, Propertius and Ovid. The range of literature is notable, particularly compared to the more restricted number of texts in linguistic courses. Similarly, the depth of literary analysis expected of students by the end of their First Year was only possible in translation, for example in Q5: 'How far do characters in Greek Tragedy determine their own destinies?'[51] And the student's ability to compare and contrast different works was tested in Q14: 'Do the differences in Homer's and Virgil's methods of composition produce appreciable differences in their works?'[52]

The distinctive outreach of Classics at the University of Edinburgh in the 1990s is also apparent through the wide range of other classes from which students could take Classical subjects. Listed are qualifications for degrees such as MA (General), BA (Religious Studies), BD, BComm, BSc (Social Science), BSc (Science), BEng, BMus, BSc (Science), BEng, BMus and LLB, from which pool of undergraduates some would, on Friday 7th June 1996, be taking the 2-hour Paper 1 on Greek History, as part of the Ancient History 1 degree course.[53] Further evidence of symbiosis between Classics and other Arts subjects can be

[50] Ibid., p.98.
[51] University of Edinburgh, Ordinary Degree of MA Examination, 'Classical Literature 1, First Paper, 21st June 1971'. University Collections Facility, Per. .37 Uni.
[52] University of Edinburgh, 'Classical Literature 1, Second Paper, 22nd June 1971'. University Collections Facility, Per. .37 Uni.
[53] University of Edinburgh, Faculty of Arts, 'Examination Papers A-C, Ancient History 1'. University Collections Facility, Per. .37 Uni.

demonstrated through questions in the Ancient History 1 examination held on 7th June 1996: Q2. 'Was land hunger the main cause of Greek colonisation from the eighth to the sixth centuries B.C.?' – which is a difficult question on account of paucity of reliable written sources. A further question clearly fuses Greek history with literary studies: Q8. 'What are the advantages and disadvantages of using Aristophanes as an historical source? [You may answer with reference either to a single play or to any number of his plays].'[54] Students resitting this examination were offered questions such as: Q7. 'How far can one reconstruct Athenian social history from women's point of view?' - another demanding question, which imposes 20th century concerns on a period in which the available evidence was largely written by Athenian men.[55]

The Ancient History Paper 2 examination starts with a compulsory identification of sources from English extracts of authors such as Xenophon, Arrian and Plutarch, with two Greek transcriptions (in English translation). The intellectual challenge of this course and its rootedness in the Classical world can be seen in challenging essay questions such as Q6: 'Cato denounced all Greek doctors, heaped scorn on philosophers, and advised his son that the infection of Greek learning could be the ruin of Rome. What was his problem?'[56]

In Ancient History 2, students studied Greece in their first term, followed next by Rome, so the influence of the earlier civilisation on Roman life, literature and art would be clear, and their differences more apparent. The fluid course structure at Edinburgh overcame boundaries imposed by traditional university departmental structures, and as interest in the Classical world grew, so too did the spread of Classical subjects across the Arts curriculum – for example in the Classical Archaeology course.

The broad focus of the Year 1 course in Classical Archaeology can be seen in examination questions. On the 13th of June 1996, students taking the 2-hour examination paper on Greek Archaeology were asked to 'cite specific plans, buildings and objects and to include plans

[54] University of Edinburgh, 'Ancient History 1, Paper 1, Greek History, 7th June, 1996'. University Collections Facility, Per. .37 Uni.
[55] University of Edinburgh, 'Ancient History, Paper 1 Resit Examination, 10th September, 1996'. University Collections Facility, Per. .37 Uni.
[56] University of Edinburgh, 'Ancient History 1, Paper 2, Greek History, 10th June, 1996'. University Collections Facility, Per. .37 Uni.

and sketches where appropriate.'[57] Students wrote 'brief notes' on three from a broad choice of six, including Mycenaean fortifications, the Sanctuaries of Asklepios, and a potter's workshop. Both knowledge and opinion were required for Q2: 'What do you think are the most significant characteristics of Minoan material culture?' Another demanding but rewarding task was set in Q4: 'What contribution has the study of pottery made to our understanding of the history and archaeology of ancient Greece?'[58] This question type is described by Professor Moignard as belonging to 'explicitly art-historical approaches to the study of vases, and these are often the way in which students of Classical Civilisation become familiar with Greek vases and their cultural context.'[59] Moignard describes a second type of survey of Greek vases, one which 'tries instead to approach the fabric as if it were any other archaeological artefact, often with considerable success.'[60] Moignard concludes that 'recent personal experience suggests that Greek vases and their pictures continue to provoke an intense response in students and viewing public alike. They are objects which can speak with an eloquent voice, if allowed to do so.'[61]

The Faculty of Arts at the University of Edinburgh also provided a Diploma/M.Sc in Classical Archaeology, delivered via modules. The 3-hour examination for 'Images of Women in Classical Archaeology' held on 6th June 1996 included picture questions such as Q1: 'Discuss the role and image of women as presented in three of the four works of art illustrated in the photographs in the accompanying envelope.' An example essay question states: Q9. 'Compare and contrast the role of drapery in any four works of art representing women in the period you have studied.'[62]

The academic rigour of the 'Art and Archaeology of the Greek City State' course, held on 29th May 1996, can be seen in Q1, the picture question, followed by two essay questions of equal weighting in a 3-hour examination. Students were asked in Q4: 'How certainly is it possible to distinguish regional styles of pottery decoration?' This question demanded not only knowledge about ways in which vases could be decorated, but also detailed knowledge

[57] University of Edinburgh, Faculty of Arts, 'Classical Archaeology 1 Examination, 13th June, 1996'. University Collections Facility, Per. .37 Uni.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Elizabeth Moignard, *Greek Vases: An Introduction* (London, Bristol Classical Press, 2012), p.99, fn 5.
[60] Ibid., p.100, fn 6.
[61] Ibid., p.102.
[62] University of Edinburgh, 'Classical Archaeology Examination, 6th June, 1996'. University Collections Facility, Per. .37 Uni.

about variations in styles depending on their point of origin. The apparently innocuous Q6, 'How did mythological scenes acquire contemporary significance in the arts of the Greek city state?', required students to have familiarity with Greek mythology and working knowledge of relevant architecture, sculpture, literature and politics. In contrast, the following question, Q7, makes no secret of its demanding nature: 'Discuss, with detailed reference to the works of at least one artist, how and how effectively it is possible to identify the works and style of EITHER individual sculptors OR individual vase-painters in ancient Greece.' The final option, Q9, invited the student to 'Discuss and criticise the usefulness of ONE of the following books', the authors on offer being Cook, Richter and Coulton – a challenging opportunity in exam conditions.[63]

The University of Edinburgh may not in an organisational sense have an independent Department of Classics, but Classical education permeates much of the Faculty of Arts, in areas such as Archaeology, Ancient History, Art, Civilisation and so forth. Students could study MA with Honours in Classics in combinations including Ancient History and Classical Archaeology, Ancient History and Greek, Classical Studies, Classics and Medieval History, and Philosophy and Greek. The University of Edinburgh obviously met Wright's challenge, supporting learners coming from a 'wider base' and 'more diverse routes'.[64] The range and versatility of Classical courses available, some involving languages, others translations, ensured students from diverse backgrounds and educational systems could continue to discover the ancient worlds of Greece and Rome.

The development of Classics in translation at St Andrews, another east coast university, parallelled the University of Edinburgh, for example in its attraction to students from outwith the local area, and the breadth of courses available in its *School of Greek, Latin and Ancient History*. For the academic year 1995-96, among the undergraduate modules approved as qualifications towards the degree of Master of Arts were: Ancient History, Classical Studies, Greek and Latin.[65] History modules included Ancient Greek History to Alexander the Great (AN1001) and Classical Greek History 1 and 2 (AN 3001/2).[66] A wide range of Honours

[63] University of Edinburgh, 'Art and Archaeology of the Greek City State: Examination, 29th May, 1996'. University Collections Facility, Per. .37 Uni.
[64] Wright, p.87.
[65] 'The St Andrews University calendar for the year 1995-96'. per LF1104.C2.
[66] Ibid., p.4.13.

approved subjects included Ancient History and Greek, Biblical Studies and Greek, Art History and Classical Studies, and Classics. Greek could also be combined with Hebrew, Latin, Philosophy and New Testament.[67] The breadth and variety of modules available under the umbrella of Ancient History is notable, for example, *The Emergence of the Greek World* (AN 3005), *Archaeology-Ancient History 1 and 11* (AN 3011/12) and *The Athens of Demosthenes* (AN 3013/14). Topics were chosen with care and would appeal to a wide range of students.

Under the umbrella of Classics, St Andrews developed an interesting and inviting range of modular courses. The advantage of modules, as with Edinburgh, was that the student had personalised control over what aspects of the ancient world they explored. By the 1990s, the University of St Andrews offered an almost overwhelming menu of modules, including Greek Literature and Philosophy (CL2001), Tragic Drama (CL3002), Ancient Science (CL3206) and Aristotle (CL3402).[68] Students taking Classical Studies were offered a choice of either a Dissertation (Short) in (CL3401) or a Dissertation (Long) in (CL3402). The number and variety of short courses on offer in Classics, together with the modular courses available in Greek and Latin language, are a clear indication of the popularity of Classics among students. More advanced modules were available under 'Techniques of Scholarship' and included topics such as Greek Epigraphy (GK 3007) and Greek Textual Criticism (GK 3008).[69] The popularity of Classics courses at St Andrews may be partly explained by considering examinations taken by students in the 1995-96 academic year.

The *Art and Social Values* (CL1001) exam, 50% of the assessment for the module, explored various aspects of the worlds of Greece and Rome, for example 'Greek and Roman Art and Architecture'. Examination questions from January 1996 demonstrate the broad scope of the course, with students choosing one question from each of sections A and B. The first question of the Ancient History section, Section A, asked: 'How did representation of the human form develop in Greek art from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods?'[70] This fascinating but demanding question encompassed sculpture, painting, pottery and architecture. This shows

[67] Ibid., p.4.10, 'Appendix A, Honours Approved Subjects'.
[68] Ibid., p.4.17, 'Undergraduate Modules: Classics'.
[69] Ibid., p.4.21, 'Techniques of Scholarship'.
[70] 'Examination Past Papers', Ancient History, CL1001, 'Art and Social Values', January 1996. UYUY3279/1.

students studied a comprehensive course, typical of non-linguistic modular courses, which investigated developments in a particular area of Classical Studies in depth. Students would have become involved in the lives of the ancient Greeks in, perhaps, a more personalised way than by studying language alone. An informed opinion was also called for in Q6: 'Was Roman Art just a pale imitation of Greek achievement?', in which the student was required to cite convincing evidence from both cultures to match their claims. In Section B, 'Greek and Roman Society and Religion', the question 'In what main areas did the Roman family differ from the Greek?' shows that students were expected to juxtapose aspects of Greek and Roman civilisation, gaining extra depth of perception about each.[71]

The University of St Andrews mastered what could be termed the 'brilliant compromise' in its determination to make Greek language courses achievable. A practical example of this is a postgraduate course for Diploma and M.Litt. students, *Classical Greek History 1* (AN 4001), catering for both Greek and non-Greek language students. Students were asked to comment on three of six extracts, mainly from Thucydides. These were printed in Greek firstly, but with the text in English translation next to them. It must also be borne in mind that these modular examinations took place in January 1996 – after only one term of study. It can be assumed that both categories of student would play to their own strengths, the first with a focus on language and the second with, perhaps, a wider perspective.

A further example of this compromise at work was found in the May 1996 St Andrews Honours examination on Greek Comedy, representing 50% of the course assessment. Section A, the traditional translation task, taken from Menander, counted for 25% of the course. However, only 10% was for the actual translation from Greek, with the larger 15% reserved for questions on the text.[72] Section B also reached a compromise between linguistic and literary skills. As expected, there was translation from three of the given extracts, however, in the example from Aristophanes' *Wasps* only six of the 20 lines were required. Thereafter students were asked to comment on 'salient points of theatrical, literary and comic interest', which would be equally suited to the aims of a course using literature in translation.

[71] Ibid.
[72] 'Examination Past Papers', Honours Examination: Greek Comedy, May 1996. UYUY3279/1.

Conclusion

This chapter charted the decline of traditional Latin and Greek language teaching at Scotland's ancient universities in the wake of the Robbins Report, and the concomitant rise of Classical Civilisation subjects in translation that were to prove popular and resilient over the decades that followed. Archived examination papers and oral testimony from those involved in tertiary education demonstrate the variety of approaches taken during the period. In contrast to the University of Aberdeen in Chapter 3, the other Ancients demonstrated how the Classical Tradition could adapt and survive challenging periods.

Yet identifying a single reason for Aberdeen's 'failure' – or the 'success' of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and St Andrews – is not straightforward. In both cases, these outcomes were the product of various interconnected forces at different levels of the education system. In the post-Robbins world, certainly, it became clear that academic considerations were not sufficient – nor necessarily paramount – in calculating educational value. To justify the survival of one's department demanded overcoming austerity, managerialism, and efficiency drives. Many of these forces are cyclical and are impacting different departments in 2025 in much the same way. For Aberdeen, although subject to similar stresses as other universities, it may have been particularly vulnerable given its geographical location and smaller share in potential student recruits from England and abroad. The appeal of St Andrews as a university town is distinct to the pull of the City of Aberdeen. And whilst St Andrews has long been a consolatory destination if unsuccessful in Oxbridge applications, particularly for English students, Aberdeen did not draw its candidates in the same way. More reliant on local and regional applicants, Aberdeen's precarity could not be alleviated from outwith Scotland. So too changes to the numbers of those intending on studying Classics prior to becoming religious ministers is notable. It may even be true that Aberdeen's Classics Department could not have done anything different to avoid its fate – that given Classics' increasingly marginalised status at the University, any economic crisis could have led to its closure, whether or not the Department was running at a loss.

The development of academically rigorous courses using classical texts in translation broadened access to more students than ever before, rendering the subject truly mainstream by the 1990s. Some courses provided beginners with a survey-style introduction to Classics,

akin to the First-Year 'Plato to NATO' courses common in History departments in US universities. But, as we have seen, the creation of a new set of modular and interdisciplinary courses also permitted students to delve deeper into specific aspects of antiquity they found appealing, such as art, architecture, politics or philosophy.

Provision remained for some students to study Latin and Greek courses, albeit at reduced levels, allowing for the necessary training of future teachers and translators. Parallels can certainly be drawn between the contraction of classical and modern language study, in that both have been regrettably damaged by a significant – potentially terminal – decline in language ability of pupils leaving Scottish secondary schools. However, when evaluating this diminution of linguistic competence, it is worth remembering the words of Gilbert Murray, the former chair of Greek at the University of Glasgow, in his inaugural lecture:

> 'Greece, not Greek, is the real subject of our study. There is more in Hellenism than a language, although that language may be the liveliest and richest ever spoken by man.'[73]

[73] Gilbert Murray, *The Place of Greek in Education, an Inaugural Lecture* (Glasgow, James Maclehose, 1889), quoted in, <https://heritage.humanists.uk/gilbert-murray/> [accessed 15 December 2024].

Chapter 5

Conclusion

In Chapter 1, the author noted the regrettable lack of academic work on the topic of Classics teaching in Scotland. Over the years under investigation in this thesis, this amounted to a significant educational change that had gone largely undocumented. To contextualise this shift, the historical place of Classics in Scottish education was explored, with note made of how the overall character of the education system was shaped, in part, by the presence of Classics. The author's aims and objectives in this research, to address this gap in the literature and provide a history of Classics teaching in Scotland over the second half of the 20th century, was thereafter addressed. The particular methodology adopted in this work, drawing on archival research and semi-structured interviews, was explained as an effort to gather all available information on Classics teaching despite the relative absence of academic works on this area.

The author's opening remarks also served to introduce themes that would recur throughout the thesis: elitism, selection, and academic relevance. As shown in subsequent chapters, ideological and political attacks on Classics were, and still are, often rooted in such claims. In hindsight, it is perhaps ironic that such allegations transformed a subject that was broadly available to all (with sufficient ability) to become a subject almost exclusively available to those receiving a private education. As such, claims of elitism – which might have been more accurately framed as being selective or exclusive – ultimately produced a reality in which most of the nation would have little or no opportunity to study Classics.

In Chapter 2, the author charted some of the key social, political, and pedagogical developments in Scotland beginning in the early 1960s – and continuing into the 1970s and 1980s – that transformed school teaching in general, and the teaching of Classics in particular. Note was made of changes in the philosophy and practice of teaching in the post-WW2 years. Thereafter, the end of selection in schooling, and the character and consequences of comprehensivisation, was studied in detail. In Scottish education, the second half of the 20th century was one characterised by change. This chapter sought to document the many changes to the broader national curriculum, national testing, assessment,

and to academic expectations. Whilst such changes touched every part of the education system, it was the teaching of languages – modern but particularly ancient – where changes were most severely and negatively felt. The author emphasised that changes in the educational pathways open to pupils necessarily effect their trajectories beyond school, something intimately connected to education at tertiary level.

Chapter 3 turned attention from schools to Classics teaching in universities. The author took the University of Aberdeen, and its former Classics department, as a case study for how changes in the educational landscape can be mismanaged, and can, in turn, lead to the loss of whole departments. The impact of the Robbins Report was a central consideration in this chapter. Beginning by considering the broader nationwide changes and evolving educational philosophies and policies affecting tertiary education from the early 1960s – including changes in national needs, educational funding, and student demographics – discussion was also made of the academic writing on educational policy in the 1980s which revealed the variety of understandings and interpretations that commentators had to the rapid changes taking place within the education system. Considering this, the author thereafter examined the decline and fall of Classics provision at the University of Aberdeen as a case study, setting out the growth in enrolment, the diversification of its student body, and ultimately the sudden and tragic termination of the Department of Classics.

Through analysis of University Calendars and degree examination papers of the period, acquired during the author's archival research at Aberdeen's Special Collections Centre in the Sir Duncan Rice Library, it was made possible for the character of the Classics department at Aberdeen to be examined, from the variety of its educational offerings, the range of literature and disciplines studied, to the academic rigour of its examinations. It was also demonstrated how the change from traditional language-based learning in Greek and Latin, towards a non-linguistic classical studies, took place. This chapter illustrated how the University of Aberdeen at times adapted successfully to change, whether local, regional, national, or United Kingdom-wide in origin. It equally documented where and when, as in the case of Classics in the 1980s, the University made drastic decisions which, although deemed necessary at the time, robbed future generations of an educational opportunity that had been in place for 500 years.

Chapter 4 provided an account of the remaining three Ancient Universities in Scotland. In contrast to the story of Aberdeen, the various approaches adopted by the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and St Andrews – to both weather the storms of educational change and retain their teaching capacity in Classics – led to entirely different outcomes. This chapter noted certain particularities of these Universities, including their distinct student intakes, and the demographics and educational backgrounds of those students. So too, the size and specialisms within these departments – and the extent to which cross-departmental cooperation was effective – was documented across the period under investigation.

The provision of Greek at the University of Glasgow was taken as an additional case study. This served to demonstrate how a department, with some support from the University, was able to adapt to the significant changes that took place from the 1960s onwards. This case study showed the capacity of Classicists for adaptation – to meet new challenges and embrace change, not least by developing non-linguistic modules. Thereafter, the development of 'Classics in Translation' courses was detailed. With reference to the change in students' linguistic competence, an inevitable consequence of changes at school level examined in Chapter 2, the popularity of Classical Civilisation courses would come to more than replace the numbers lost in Latin and Greek language degrees. The curricular flexibility offered at Edinburgh and St Andrews, allowing students to more easily 'pick-and-mix' subjects, was highlighted as a particularly successful adaptation.

The author also reiterated the vital role of translators. There remains a need for linguistic mastery, especially when large cohorts of students passionate about Classical civilisations do not have those language skills. But language ability is no longer a barrier to accessing the ancient world. Whilst the diminution of Classical language degrees is of course a loss, the growth of interest in the Classical world that the shift from Classical language to Classical civilisation has permitted must be viewed as a success in its own right. Indeed, as students come to 'study Latin at university with an increasingly diverse range of qualifications (including no Latin at all)' many now hail this as 'something to celebrate'.[1]

[1] Emma Buckley, Alice Konig, and Ana Kotarcic, 'Transitioning between School- and University-Level Latin Learning: A Scottish Perspective', *The Journal of Classics Teaching* 18:35 (2017), pp.54-64, at p.54.

Epilogue

The story of Classics in Scotland is a long and winding one. It began long before the changes of the 1960s, and it has continued since the turn of the 21st century. Whilst this thesis has charted a portion of this, there remains much to be discovered. Historical comparative analysis between Scotland and other nations which took different approaches to retaining Classics in their curricula might reveal why some were evidently more successful than others. This might in turn show how shifting political and policy agendas can be tackled to preserve the status of Classics in the future.

Beyond the place of Classics in Scottish education, this thesis has also demonstrated how languages at large are increasingly undervalued in Scotland and the consequences of this for Scottish students are considerable in a global job market.[1] In one recent, embarrassing incident for the University of Aberdeen, the French, German, Spanish, and Italian consulates in Scotland wrote to the University expressing serious concerns about potential cuts to modern language courses.[2] Despite an outpouring of support for these departments, it seems possible that these will follow in the footsteps of Aberdeen's Classics department.[3]

More broadly, there may be benefit found in critically reevaluating the success of the comprehensive system in Scotland.[4] So too, it remains imperative to approach each new nationwide curriculum with scepticism.[5] As illustrated throughout the preceding chapters, the Scottish education system has sought to regularly reinvent and rebrand itself.[6] And Paterson has made it painfully clear the extent to which academic attainment in Scotland, in

[1] Josh Pizzuto-Pomaco, 'Scots graduates "non-competitive" amid languages decline', in *The Herald* (October 14, 2024). <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24647678.scots-graduates-non-competitive-amid-languages-decline/> [accessed 17 December 2024].
[2] Robbie Boyle, 'EU consulates call for Aberdeen language courses to be saved', *BBC News* (November 27, 2023). <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-67525163> [accessed 9 December 2024].
[3] 'Save Language, Translation & Interpreting degrees at the University of Aberdeen' (December 4, 2023). <https://www.change.org/p/save-language-translation-interpreting-degrees-at-the-university-of-aberdeen> [accessed 9 December 2024].
[4] Cathy Howieson, Linda Croxford, and Daniel Murphy, 'The experience of 50 years of comprehensive schooling in Scotland', *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 12:1 (2017), pp.8-23.
[5] Mark Priestley, 'Curriculum for Excellence: transformational change or business as usual?', *Scottish Educational Review* 42:1 (2010), pp.23-36.
[6] Walter Humes, 'The Origins and Development of Curriculum for Excellence: Discourse, Politics and Control', in Mark Priestley and Gert Biesta (eds.), *Reinventing the Curriculum: New Trends in Curriculum Policy and Practice* (London, Bloomsbury, 2013), pp.13-34.

comparison to other nations, has fallen in recent years – either despite, or owing to, constant structural change.[7]

However, the most exciting frontier for further research in this area is Classics provision throughout the 21st century to date. Classicists have always shown themselves to be fierce in their defence of Classics and inventive in their proposals to allow it to survive. Since the year 2000, several indefatigable individuals and grassroots organisations have emerged to champion the value and relevance of Classics today. Remarkable successes have been achieved through small-scale enterprises reintroducing Classics into schools and communities across the UK and internationally.[8] In England, there has been considerable activity, including: the 'Advocating Classics Education' (ACE) Project,[9] the Latin Excellence Programme[10] and the Centre for Latin Excellence funded by the Department of Education,[11] the Bristol Classics Hub,[12] and a host of 'Classics in the Community' projects – making Classics available to people who would otherwise never have access.[13] And these new endeavours supplement other long-running projects, such as the Cambridge School Classics Project,[14] whose work has been detailed in historical context.[15]

In Scotland, similarly, new attempts have been made to regenerate Latin in Scottish state schools,[16] such as via the St Andrews Latin Outreach Scheme (STALOS) project.[17] So too the organisation Classics for All,[18] attempts to connect teachers, academics, and local

[7] Lindsay Paterson, 'Scottish Performance in the Programme for International Student Assessment, 2006-2022: Falling Attainment and Rising Inequality', *Scottish Affairs* 33:2 (2024), pp.131-56.
[8] Arlene Holmes-Henderson, Steven Hunt, and Mai Musié (eds.), *Forward with Classics: Classical Languages in Schools and Communities* (London, Bloomsbury, 2018).
[9] Edith Hall and Arlene Holmes-Henderson, 'Advocating Classics Education – a new national report', *The Journal of Classics Teaching* 18:36 (2017), pp.25-8.
[10] Steven Hunt, 'The Latin Excellence Programme (England 2021): The Story So far', *The Classical Outlook* 97:2 (2022), pp.66-73.
[11] <https://latinexcellence.org/> [accessed 17 December 2024].
[12] Hannah Walsh, 'Bristol Classics Hub – reflections on the first year', *The Journal of Classics Teaching* 18:36 (2017), pp.37-9.
[13] Arlene Holmes-Henderson, 'Teaching Latin and Greek in Primary Classrooms: the Classics in Communities Project', *The Journal of Classics Teaching* 17:33 (2016), pp.50-3.
[14] <https://www.cambridgescp.com/about-cscp> [accessed 17 December 2024].
[15] Martin Forrest, *Modernising the Classics: A Study in Curriculum Development* (Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 1996).
[16] George Connor, 'How Latin aims to expand its reach in Scottish state schools', in *tes magazine* (March 28, 2023). <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/secondary/how-latin-expand-reach-scottish-state-schools> [accessed 17 December 2024].
[17] <https://stalos.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/> [accessed 17 December 2024].
[18] <https://classicsforall.org.uk/what-we-do/our-networks/classical-association-scotland-schools-network-casn> [accessed 17 December 2024].

councils to undertake a wide range of educational experiences for children of various ages.[19] We have also seen recurring arguments in popular media for Classics learning as being beneficial not just in and of itself but for the gains it may give students in other areas.[20]

An interesting counterpoint was raised by Linda Knox, who criticised the widespread notion that 'Latin is good for you, like a medicine you have to take', arguing that it 'does the subject no service whatsoever to be obsessed with the idea that language is the be-all and end-all', or that you have to restore the language by presenting it as something utilitarian - 'to teach people better English, or develop their mind'. Calling this a 'mistaken approach', Linda argued that people should study whatever aspect of Classics that interests them, 'be that language or civilisation or history'.[21]

Latin is an increasingly marginal subject within Scottish schools. Whilst Latin's decline has been the most severe, all languages (except Spanish) are in decline nationally.[22] However, in contrast, Classical Civilisation has seen exponential growth. At National 5 level, for example, just over 100 candidates sat the examination in 2019, whilst by 2024 this figure had increased to 333.[23] And Latin has also shown signs of recent growth – with candidates increasing from 338 in 2023 to 384 in 2024 – although this still trails the 2022 figure.[24]

The future of Classics in Scotland is clearly uncertain. But the appetite for learning about the ancient world is abundant and now being met, in part, by high-quality Classical civilisation courses at school and university level. Through the efforts of organisations and individuals who value Classical languages, educational opportunities are available in some schools and communities. Indeed, it is possible that some of the considerable number of

[19] Alex Imrie, '*Caledonia resurgens*: reflections on the campaign to revive Classics in Scotland', *The Journal of Classics Teaching* 20:30 (2019), pp.111-16.
[20] Andrew Denholm, 'Scottish pupils to be taught Latin to boost literacy', in *The Herald* (May 26, 2015). <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13215399.Scottish_pupils_to_be_taught_Latin_to_boost_literacy/> [accessed 18 December 2024].
[21] Linda Knox, interview with author, Glasgow, 29 August 2018.
[22] Henry Hepburn, 'Data shows decades-long retreat of languages from Scottish schools', in *tes magazine* (August 12, 2024). <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/general/data-shows-decades-long-retreat-of-languages-scottish-schools> [accessed 18 December 2024].
[23] SQA, 'Course report 2024: National 5 Classical Studies'. <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/2024-n5-course-report-classical-studies.pdf> [accessed 18 December 2024].
[24] SQA, 'Course report 2024: National 5 Latin'. <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/2024-n5-course-report-latin.pdf> [accessed 18 December 2024].

people who have studied Classical civilisation, or who have read the many popular books on the history and mythology of ancient worlds, may find themselves drawn towards the original sources and, in turn, the languages of Latin and Greek.

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