

NEWS AND REPORTS

Perspectives on Greek History: an INSET day on the teaching of Ancient Greek History

Penny Goodman and Peter Liddel

On 21st November 2015, the Classical Association Teaching Board – the successor organisation to JACT – held its first INSET day for teachers of ancient history. The morning sessions were held at the magnificent Parkinson Building at the University of Leeds; the afternoon was spent at the splendid Leeds City Museum. Around 50 teachers and students of ancient history from schools and universities across England were in attendance.

The focus was Ancient Greek History: the workshops and lectures aimed to show how a wide range of approaches (such as the close study of ancient texts, reception studies, epigraphy, and the study of material culture) might be applied in the classroom in a way which will encourage students to engage with the sources and important historical issues. Some sessions were informative, while others focused on approaches to the ancient material.

Emma Stafford's plenary lecture, 'The Curse of 300? Popular Culture and the Teaching of the Spartans' surveyed the appearance of the ancient Spartans in modern literature, cinema, and video games. In a brilliantly erudite and richly-illustrated talk, Dr Stafford underlined the wide range of literary and political themes which emerge out of the modern 'Spartan mirage'. She demonstrated the ways in which modern cinematic representations of ancient Sparta might be put to use in the classroom as a way of making points not only about the nature of Spartan institutions and the sources for Spartan history, but also in getting to grips with the uses of the past: as she noted, Zack

Snyder's *300: Rise of an Empire* has even been deployed as a resource for pre-battle combat training!

After coffee, there were four workshop sessions on offer. David Hodgkinson (St Helen and St Katharine, Abingdon) offered a seminar on the teaching of Socrates, underlining the importance of placing him within the context of democratic Athens in the late fifth century BC: he addressed lucidly the motives behind the accusations made against him. Alex Orgee from OCR gave an update on the revisions to the criteria and specifications of Ancient History at A Level and GCSE. These subjects, which recruit steadily and are well-represented in state schools, are currently being re-specified ready for first teaching in September 2017, and Alex sought feedback on the draft specifications. The biggest changes will include separating out the shared Classics Suite to create a sharper distinction between Classical Civilisation and Ancient History, and requiring A Level students to engage with the interpretations of modern historians. Some greeted this news with enthusiasm, but others were concerned about the danger that the requirement might dilute the content of the qualifications and about difficulties with accessing the material and assessing the work.

Roger Brock (University of Leeds), in 'Looking Afresh at Herodotus' Persian Wars', surveyed recent Herodotean scholarship, placing emphasis on both the rehabilitation of Herodotus as a military historian (that is, one who offers insight into the practical, social, cultural and psychological elements of warfare) and also the *Histories* as a source for perspectives on Greek and Persian ideologies; he offered also a vivid and insightful reading of Hdt. 8.83-103, with particular reference to the narrative and historical role of Artemisia of Halicarnassus. Nina Wallace (Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke) showed how it is possible to make Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War accessible to a wide range of students: with great clarity she outlined a range of tasks and tools for tackling this complex work.

After lunch, there were two afternoon sessions. Peter Liddel (University of Manchester) talked about the teaching of Greek epigraphy. He argued that the study of Greek inscriptions offers important insights into

ancient Greek history and the culture of public writing; he tried to persuade his audience that epigraphy is an exciting and fast-moving subject. He noted that the current A Level specifications neglect the potential of Greek inscriptions: whereas the specifications for Roman history encourage engagement with a wide range of epigraphical texts, the Greek history offering is disappointing, consisting only of four Athenian inscribed decrees deriving from a 15-year stretch of fifth-century history. On the other hand, the significance of online resources for making Greek inscriptions accessible to a wider audience was underlined: in particular, Stephen Lambert's Attic Inscriptions Online (<https://www.atticinscriptions.com/>) is making English versions of vast numbers of hitherto untranslated Athenian inscriptions available free of charge.

Natalie Burns gave a tour of the Ancient Worlds gallery in Leeds City Museum, highlighting Greek materials, commenting on the techniques used to encourage visitor engagement, and offering suggestions on how to get the most out of museum visits with school pupils. She focused in particular on Greek inscribed material to link in with Peter Liddel's talk, including an inscribed arbitration relating to a dispute between Paros and Naxos (Figure 1), a marble altar probably dedicated to Aphrodite, and several very beautiful funerary *stelai*.

Natalie showed the group how to get pupils thinking about the legibility of ancient inscriptions and pointed out the value of architectural models for helping them get to grips with space and layout. She also demonstrated that small museum collections are often particularly useful for helping students to compare artefacts from different periods and contexts, as they are often displayed close together or even side by side. At Leeds City Museum, material from ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome is deliberately grouped thematically, rather than being sorted into the three separate cultures, for exactly this reason. The day ended at 4pm, which gave delegates plenty of time to enjoy the Leeds Christmas Markets before returning home.

The financial support of the Classical Association and the University of Leeds meant that attendance at the INSET day was open, free of charge, to all teachers and aspiring teachers of ancient history;



Figure 1. | IG XI 4 1065, inscribed arbitration of Dispute between Paros and Naxos (Fragment B, at the Leeds city Museum). This image © Leeds Museums & Galleries. All rights reserved.

owing to their generosity, we were able also to offer a number of travel bursaries to delegates. Thanks must go also to those speakers who travelled from afar to give up their free time to make valuable contributions.

Penny Goodman (University of Leeds)
Peter Liddel (University of Manchester)

Iris Project News

Lorna Robinson

It's been a very busy year so far for Iris, with events, expansions of existing projects and the continuing development of our newest museum project. Below are updates on our three main news items.

Literacy through Latin expansion

Our Literacy through Latin project which brings Latin to primary schools has been running since 2006; it started life in Oxford and London, and since that time has spread to Swansea, Manchester, Fife and Glasgow. We are delighted to announce that in September 2016 the project started in Edinburgh too.

This September, the Literacy through Latin project in Glasgow has become embedded into the undergraduate degree

course at the University of Glasgow's Department of Classics, where students can choose to take part in the scheme as part of their degree. This is a really exciting development which will help strengthen the scheme and increase the number of students and schools taking part. We are immensely grateful to staff at Glasgow for bringing about this very important development.

For further information please contact the Department of Classics at the University of Glasgow.

Festival of Lost Cities

On Monday 18th January, our community classics centre at Cheney School held the Festival of Lost Cities! Hundreds of Cheney students and visitors were transported back in time to visit six different ancient cities spread across the school site! Everyone taking part was issued with an ancient passport and a guide, and using these, they travelled to the cities of Knossos, Alexandria, Athens, Rome, Troy and Delphi (where they were able to consult the oracle about their future). As well as this, East Oxford Primary School ran their very own lost city of Baghdad in the Library.

Each city included stalls and activities, as well as exhibitions created by Cheney students, and visitors could get their passports stamped in each place. In Rome, there was a theatre where visitors could watch gladiators fighting, as well as dance performances from Avid for Ovid and theatre performances by Unmythable. Activities ranged from being able to watch

and have a go at sundial carving, labyrinth building and making miniature Trojan horses, to ancient Olympics, underwater archaeology and Minoan Fresco painting. There was something for every age and every level of knowledge. Alongside all this we had four well-known expert speakers delivering talks in the Assembly Hall: Michael Scott on Rome, Natalie Haynes on Thebes, Martha Kearney on beekeeping, and Bettany Hughes rounded up the whole event with an exciting Q&A with David Gimson on The Greatest Cities on Earth. As well as many Cheney students and staff, we had hundreds of visitors of all ages, many local, and some school groups travelling from as far as Kent, London and Dorset to take part. It was a really exciting and successful festival, and we are hugely grateful to all Cheney staff and students who helped and welcomed, and the 60 or so volunteer stall-runners and performers, as well as our brilliant speakers.

Iris' Museum at Cheney

The Iris Project's Classics centre at Cheney is home to a large and expanding collection of original artefacts, covering a broad range of periods and regions – from Mesolithic stone tools (approximately 10,000 years old), Ancient Greek and Roman pottery, coins and glass items, to Medieval and post-Medieval pottery fragments (a few hundred years old). The collection has grown gradually out of generous donations from the public. Below I have outlined the key projects we have been working on as part of the museum's development at Cheney.





official ‘museum’ status. We hope that this will be something unique and exciting, which has the opportunity to transform Cheney School for students, staff and many visitors. It will open the door to loans, grants, training and expertise which will bring immense benefits to everyone involved.

If you would like to find out more about any of these projects, to get involved or to offer time, funds or resources, please feel very welcome to be in touch with me directly on lorna@irisproject.org.uk or visit our website at www.irisproject.org.uk

Dr Lorna Robinson
 Director of *The Iris Project and Classics Centre at Cheney*

1. Digital catalogue

In order to extract this information from the collection, we launched a project aimed at cataloguing, photographing and publishing all its archaeological artefacts. The stimulus behind this project has been to create a long-term resource that makes the most of the collection’s educational potential.

We are happy to see how the project is allowing students and visitors to experience heritage through workshops and artefact-handling sessions. The database and photographs are also being incorporated into all Classics lessons, helping bring history to life.

The digital catalogue has been completed and can be downloaded from the Classics centre’s website at www.eoccc.org.uk

2. Embedding artefacts into the curriculum

Our consultant archaeologist has been working to train Classics students to become ‘student curators’ for the collection. They have learned how to identify items, how to catalogue them, how to care for them, and how to make them accessible and interesting to the public. Students are developing projects of their own in groups to showcase the items and are able to deliver handling sessions themselves to primary school groups and other visitors. They have already presented the items to the public at the launch event in March 2015 and the Festival of Lost Cities in January.

From September 2015, the artefacts have been embedded in the Year 7 Enrichment curriculum, so that every single student has the opportunity to handle and understand more about the collection and how we can learn about history using these objects.

We also run archaeology clubs in several local primary schools.

3. Artefact Story Trails

We have designed and created a number of murals which explore possible biographies for some of the many Roman artefacts we have on display at the centre. They are painted by artist Soham De. Most of the items we have are pieces of much larger objects, and the idea behind these mural trails is to show the story of how some of these items would have been made and used, and eventually broken, and discovered centuries later as fragments. Each trail consists of three murals which trace these stories; the artefact itself appears in a cabinet in reception. The trails are appearing all across the school campus, and there is scope for them to appear as well as in feeder schools.

4. Museum Accreditation

The Classics centre has been granted ‘Working towards Accreditation’ status within the Arts Council Accreditation scheme. It will take approximately two years to prepare the paperwork and put all the correct procedures of access and preservation in place in order to achieve

Report of The Primary Latin Project

Barbara Bell Minimus in Brazil!

In January it was exciting to receive the Portuguese translation of *Minimus* from Brazil. It is extraordinary to think of children in Rio learning about the family at Vindolanda!

Meanwhile our **Minimus Pupil’s Workbook**, published in September 2015, is selling well. For only £1 each pupil can have a book to practise grammar, though with Helen Forte’s marvellous illustrations, it hardly looks like a grammar book. There are two pages of exercises for each chapter in *Minimus*, so this book can accompany a pupil for at least a year. Teachers report that the children love working through it and often have to be stopped from forging ahead. One teacher said to me ‘My pupils were in a complete muddle over the difference between adjectives and adverbs. Through *Minimus* and especially through the practice in the new Workbook, they have it sorted’. Please note that the main *Minimus* text books, Teacher’s Resource Books and CDs are available from CUP or the Hellenic Bookservice in London. All other *Minimus* materials (Workbooks, Minibooks, *Minimus in Practice*, *Minimus becoming Maximus*, plus incentive stickers, pencils etc) are available from our business *Minimus et Cetera*. You can download an order form from the *Minimus* website (www.minimus.com) or contact me directly with any enquiries.

Training

Please note that we no longer run official *Minimus* Training Days in London or elsewhere to which people can sign up from all over the country, but we are still very busy training teachers. The system now is that anyone who wants to be trained to teach *Minimus* should contact me and we can organise some training in your school or area. Last September, thanks to generous support from *Classics for All* and Elena Theodorakopoulos at Birmingham University, I trained 12 experienced *Minimus* teachers who live around the country to train others. This is in response to the growing need for training in schools which are using *Minimus*, not just in clubs, but as their designated language on the curriculum. We keep in close contact with each other, and with *Classics for All*, and we can respond to training needs on an ad hoc basis.

Future Events

1. Have you considered entering your pupils' work in our **Mythology competition?** There is still time for your pupils to produce a piece of creative writing or art work. Pupils are justifiably excited to win a prize in what has become an international competition. See the website or write to me for more information.
2. I am pleased to report that Pam Macklin, on the PLP Committee, is again organising a *Minimus* day at the British Museum on **Saturday 18th June 2016**. Any of you who were involved in the two days that she organised in the past will know that both children and teachers can be assured of a wonderful day.

Have you ever seen the original Vindolanda writing tablets? Have your pupils?

Have they explored the Roman Britain Gallery and seen other objects which occur in *Minimus*?

Would they like to work on the *Minimus* website with its creator, Helen Forte, the illustrator of the book?

Do consider bringing your club/class/children to the BM Day, either for the morning or the afternoon session; further information from the *Minimus* website and from Pam Macklin direct (pam@nethaus.co.uk).

Please book promptly

This will be the last occasion on which we can enjoy Pam's superb organisational skills, as she has decided to leave the PLP Committee. Pam has been a great friend and support for over 20 years since I first met her. We will miss her enormously but we will keep in touch; our loss is her grandchildren's gain!

Newsletters Only a quarter of those on our mailing list actually receive the termly *Minimus* Newsletter, as we have such a small percentage of people's e-mail addresses. Please do ensure that we have your e-mail address and you will be kept in touch with future publications, special events etc.

Sales Figures Many of you joined us for our party in Oxford at the end of September 2015 when we celebrated sales of 150,000 copies of *Minimus*. This figure now exceeds 156,000 copies.

If you would like further details of any aspect of the work of the Primary Latin Project, please contact me:

Barbara Bell, Director, Primary Latin Project. email: bmbellmini@aol.com

WJEC News

Alan Clague (Subject Officer for Latin)

- 1 Many thanks to the c130 teachers who gave such incredibly positive feedback to our three CPD sessions introducing the new GCSE in January – the most encouraging feedback ever seen in any subject by the Assistant Director in charge of CPD! There will be further sessions in the summer and/or very early in the next academic year.
- 2 To look at what WJEC Eduqas is offering Latin teachers please access: www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/latin

2 You will notice that our GCSE comes under the heading of WJEC Eduqas. This is to designate the qualifications available to English centres (as opposed to Welsh centres which will have their own qualifications under different grading systems). However in some minority subjects such as Latin where the Welsh government is not offering its own qualification, the Eduqas GCSE will be available to all centres in Wales. The same situation applies in Northern Ireland. I have already met many of the teachers in those two countries and look forward to welcoming them to our qualification.

3 Alongside the GCSE, WJEC has decided to continue to offer the Level 1 and Level 2 Certificates in Latin Language (with or without the Roman Civilisation option). This might well offer a satisfactory solution where teachers:

- have insufficient time to cover the whole GCSE specification
 - would like to see how well their Year 10 students are progressing (instead of an internal exam)
 - can offer those students not opting to carry on to GCSE a target to aim at in Year 9 with some official accreditation at the end
 - would like an alternative to Common Entrance in prep schools (accepted as an alternative by some independent schools)
 - are offering enrichment courses in the 6th Form and would like the students to have a tangible reward to include on UCAS forms and job applications
- However, after 2017 the Certificates will no longer carry the league table performance points and EBacc accreditation which they do currently.
- If you would like to comment on anything here please email: alan.clague@eduqas.co.uk