



$\int f(x) dx = \lim_{\Delta x \rightarrow 0} (f(a)\Delta x + f(x_1)\Delta x + \dots + f(x_n)\Delta x)$

μιθολογία *mitologia*

$\sum a_i = a_1 + a_2 + \dots + a_n$
 itan aye atijo

OUR MYTHICAL EDUCATION

Edited by Lisa Maurice

神話 *mythologie*

$(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) \begin{pmatrix} y_1 \\ y_2 \\ \vdots \\ y_n \end{pmatrix} = x_1 y_1 + x_2 y_2 + \dots + x_n y_n$ $\left(\frac{u}{v}\right) = \dots$

$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2^n} = 2$ ∞ *mitologie* *מיתולוגיה*

$f(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp\left(-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right)$

$F(x) + C$ *μιθολογία*

$y = \ln x$ *mythologie*

$\int \frac{dx}{x} = \ln|x| + C$

mythologie *mitologia* $N(\mu, \sigma^2)$

$C = \frac{n!}{\dots}$

OUR MYTHICAL EDUCATION

“OUR MYTHICAL CHILDHOOD” Series

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OUR MYTHICAL
EDUCATION
The Reception
of Classical Myth
Worldwide in Formal
Education, 1900–2020

Edited by Lisa Maurice



Our Mythical Education: The Reception of Classical Myth Worldwide in Formal Education, 1900–2020, edited by Lisa Maurice (Bar-Ilan University, Israel) in the series "Our Mythical Childhood", edited by Katarzyna Marciniak (University of Warsaw, Poland)

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mitology

міфалогія

ітан аче атіжо

μυθολογία

(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)

$\begin{pmatrix} y_1 \\ y_2 \\ \vdots \\ y_n \end{pmatrix}$

$= x_1 y_1 + x_2 y_2 + \dots + x_n y_n$

$\left(\frac{\mu}{\sigma}\right)$

mitologie

mythologie

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מיתולוגיה

$f(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp\left(-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right)$

$F(x) + C$

мифология

神話

$\int \frac{dx}{x} = \ln|x| + C$

Mythologie

$y = \ln x$

mythology

mitología

$N(\mu, \sigma^2)$



*IN THE CIRCLE OF CHIRON'S PUPILS, OR:
A FOREWORD BY THE SERIES EDITOR*

If you had been at the seaside that day, you would have seen a strange group in the morning light cast by the rosy-fingered Eos. A huge, majestic half-man, half-horse, waving with his broad hand. Next to him a beautiful, ethereal woman – a nymph, no doubt. In her upraised arms a baby boy. High above her head, as if she were trying to show the child to somebody far out at sea. And indeed, growing smaller by the minute, soon destined to disappear beyond the horizon, was a ship with the tiny figure of a man waving back from the barely visible deck. Had you arrived earlier, you would have been able to see the impressive stature of the man (not tiny at all) and to note the ship's name – Argo. You would also have heard voices, muffled by the wind and the sea. And then the identity of the group and the reason for their presence there, so early in the morning, would have become clear: the centaur Chiron had come to the seaside with his wife, the nymph Chariclo, who carried little Achilles, to bid farewell to the boy's father, Peleus, one of the Argonauts, at the dawn of the famous expedition.

This touching scene, a gem of surprising tenderness in the midst of the austerity of the mythical battles and monster-slaying, has passed to us owing to Apollonius of Rhodes and his Hellenistic epic *Argonautica* (1.553–558). But what I wish to bring into the focus is not the artistic mastery of the Greek poet, obvious as it is (if we are allowed to use the adjective “obvious” to speak about poetry). Let us concentrate on the strange trio we have now identified: the human boy, the nymph, and the human-animal hybrid, the latter being then the most famous of the group. Achilles has to grow up to gain his timeless fame. And he grows up with Chiron and thanks to Chiron – his teacher. The boy was placed in the care of the Centaur by Peleus, Chiron's former pupil himself, who did not know whether he would return alive from the Expedition of the Argonauts, but he was sure that Chiron was the best tutor in the whole universe and that he could trust the Centaur with

his beloved son. Indeed, Chiron was the mythological first teacher of a whole host of heroes, to mention only Theseus, Jason, Asclepius, Actaeon, and the mighty Heracles. Each of them went on to choose slightly different paths in life, but all received a thorough education. They had been brought into the human world by the wise human-animal being who practised holistic teaching: not only fighting and (of course!) horse-riding, but also medicine (quite useful if you needed to tend to battle wounds), astronomy, music, and even the art of courtship.

The lives of Chiron's pupils took various turns *per aspera ad astra*, often also quite literal ones, like in the case of Asclepius, and even the Centaur himself, who in the end were both placed in the heavens as constellations. Be that as it may, the holistic lessons with Chiron did not give his students easy answers as to how to conduct themselves – no school is able to do that. Instead, the future heroes were equipped by their teacher with the ability to think independently and to choose consciously. And this is precisely what good education should provide students with.

The heritage of ancient culture, with its focus on basic values, dilemmas, and fundamental questions, has much to offer in this respect. Thus, as the Centaur in the wilderness of Thessaly was preparing the heroes for a life in the midst of the human world, so Classical Antiquity – the cultural repository of the past transmitted at school – can prepare young people for the challenges of the contemporary world. This is not a paradox, if you take a good look. And of course we have been doing just that, within our great team, fantastic friends and colleagues, ever since the establishment of the *Our Mythical Childhood* programme in 2011 at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies "Artes Liberales" – now the Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw. In all the applications I presented for its development, practical educational ventures played a vital part, mainly within the Loeb Classical Library Foundation Grant for the project *Our Mythical Childhood... The Classics and Children's Literature between East and West* (2012–2013), the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Alumni Award for Innovative Networking Initiatives for the project *Chasing Mythical Beasts... The Reception of Creatures from Graeco-Roman Mythology in Children's and Young Adults' Culture as a Transformation Marker* (2014–2017), and, finally, the support that permitted us to develop our mythical activities in a truly holistic scope – a European Research Council (ERC) Consolidator Grant for the project *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global*

Challenges (2016–2021). Along with our research work, in recognition of the potential of a broader presence of the Classics, we have been fostering close collaboration with schools by means of Classical Antiquity-related efforts and activities involving students, teachers, and scholars. Here and now, however, it is time for a different approach.

The present volume, prepared by Prof. Lisa Maurice, gathers the results of a vital component of the ERC project. Namely, this component is focused on an analysis of the presence of classical mythology in formal school education worldwide, both in experimental ventures and in typical, systematic teaching. This is a task of paramount importance, as educational processes have a lasting influence on us – all the more so as we are exposed to them already in childhood, when the capacity for critical thinking is being formed by none other than school curricula shaped and developed in specific circumstances. This volume makes us aware of these complex processes, their implications, and the opportunities they create for the future of Classical Antiquity.

I wish to thank the ERC Executive Agency team and in particular Ms Sandrine Barreaux, who took care of the Grant Agreement and a good start of the endeavour, and Ms Katia Menegon – our Project Officer – for their admirable support. I am most grateful to the reviewers of the volume – Prof. Bernd Seidensticker from the Free University of Berlin and Prof. Ermanno Malaspina from the University of Turin – for the time they dedicated to our studies and for all their most precious remarks. And to Prof. Yasunari Takada from the University of Tokyo for his valuable comments. My deepest feeling of gratitude goes, as always, to Prof. Jerzy Axer and Prof. Jan Kieniewicz from the Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw, for their rock-solid support at all the stages of the *Our Mythical Childhood* programme, ever since its very beginning. I also wish to thank Ms Beata Jankowiak-Konik – the Director of Warsaw University Press, and her team of excellent collaborators – the commissioning editor, Mr Szymon Morawski, and the copy editor, Ms Ewa Balcerzyk, Mr Zbigniew Karaszewski – a graphic artist and the designer of the present series and its covers, and Mr Janusz Olech, who prepared the layout of the volume. I am also grateful to Ms Małgorzata Sudół – an attorney-at-law and specialist in international projects and copyright – for all her most helpful expertise. At various stages of the work we also received help from some colleagues from the University of Warsaw part of the *Our Mythical Childhood* team: Dr Elżbieta Olechowska – my closest collaborator and the first scholar ready to embark on this adventure as early

as in 2011, when it was only a seemingly impossible dream, Dr Hanna Paulouskaya, Ms Magdalena Andersen, Ms Maria Makarewicz, and Ms Olga Strycharczyk – *gratias ago!*

I am also immensely grateful to all the amazing team members and collaborators from all over the world. Developing a Community together, and watching it grow with each further stage of the programme – this has been my honour and pleasure. In particular, in the context of the project's educational components, I wish to thank Prof. Susan Deacy from the University of Roehampton in the UK, who makes use of the Classics to build bridges – *pontes facere* – for inclusive education with her groundbreaking study *What Would Hercules Do? Classical Myth as a Learning Opportunity for Autistic Children* (in preparation for print); Dr Sonya Nevin and Steve K. Simons from this same University of Roehampton and the Panoply Vase Animation Project, who create marvellous animations for both scholarly and educational use; Prof. Daniel A. Nkemleke, Prof. Divine Che Neba, and Dr Eleanor Anneh Dasi from the University of Yaoundé 1 in Cameroon, who are involved in research, but at the same time they educate future teachers for the big centres and small villages in Africa – a mission of critical societal significance; and last but not least, Prof. Elizabeth Hale from the University of New England in Australia, who is working, with Miriam Riverlea, on the exceptional guide through the Classics for scholars, teachers, and the general public, *Classical Mythology and Children's Literature: An Alphabetical Odyssey*, soon to be published in the "Our Mythical Childhood" series.

My special expression of appreciation is reserved for Prof. Lisa Maurice from Bar-Ilan University in Israel. As the author of the concept of this volume and its tireless editor, she managed the impossible. For the first time ever, she gathered contributors from Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Germany, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, the Republic of South Africa, Russia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and she invited them to reflect together on the place and role of classical mythology in education. What I find particularly important is the fact that she gave voice not only to scholars, but to teachers and graduates as well, thereby building a platform for a truly vibrant intergenerational and international dialogue. Thus, the reader of this volume is embarking on a very particular adventure. The chapters are not meant to instruct anybody. Instruction was far from Chiron's way of teaching. Lisa

knows this well. After all, among her numerous publications there is a study on the centaurs in youth culture.¹

Instead, the chapters are to inspire a deeper reflection, also on the “invisible agenda” – that is, on specific factors that condition attitudes towards classical education in various regions of the world, including the historical backgrounds of the given countries, from regimes to democracies, from colonization to independence, with many current cultural and ideological issues not to be dismissed, too. These factors can be traced and brought into focus via the chapters presented in this volume – a collection whose editor and authors are not afraid of diversity. On the contrary, diversity is the strength of our endeavour, as we try to show many aspects of the phenomenon of classical mythology as part of formal education, showing at the same time that despite our different approaches, backgrounds, and experiences, we speak *una voce* on behalf of ancient heritage. In our troubled times, this can be a key to holistic learning in the spirit of *artes liberales*, with respect towards other people, animals, and nature, as if we had the chance to be(come) Chiron’s pupils ever again. To pass this chance onto the next generations is the most beautiful gift we can make to them, to our mythical ancestors, and to ourselves.

Warsaw, May 2020

¹ See Lisa Maurice, “From Chiron to Foaly: The Centaur in Classical Mythology and Fantasy Literature”, in Lisa Maurice, ed., *The Reception of Ancient Greece and Rome in Children’s Literature: Heroes and Eagles*, *Metaforms: Studies in the Reception of Classical Antiquity* 6, Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2015, 139–168. For more on the centaurs’ role in youth culture, see Edith Hall, “Cheiron as Youth Author: Ancient Example, Modern Responses” and Elena Ermolaeva, “Centaur in Russian Fairy Tales: From the Half-Dog Pulicane to the Centaur Polkan”, in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Chasing Mythical Beasts: The Reception of Ancient Monsters in Children’s and Young Adults’ Culture*, *Studien zur europäischen Kinder- und Jugendliteratur / Studies in European Children’s and Young Adult Literature* 8, Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2020, respectively 301–326 and 327–337.

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To Aryeh, my constant fan and supporter
and
to my children and grandchildren who are more wondrous
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Yonatan and Elital
Eli, Ayelet and Ori
Talial and Yair

Lisa Maurice

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Lisa Maurice

INTRODUCTION

This introduction has been given its final touches as Covid-19 rages throughout the globe, forcing lockdown on much of the planet in a manner that is unprecedented, at least in living memory. Many universities and schools have resorted to remote teaching, and as physical national borders have closed, virtual international ones have expanded. The classical community has responded to this admirably, sharing resources, information, and aid through social media and other forms of online collaboration. Such cooperation is very much in the spirit of the *Our Mythical Childhood* project, of which the present volume is a component, and whose brief is specifically *The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*. It is possible that the present challenge is the greatest ever faced; yet it is also connecting educators and scholars the world over, who have united in the dual intentions of disseminating the works of classical Greece and Rome and continuing in their educational missions. In this way, they have been providing, what seems to many, a beacon of hope in the current darkness.

I. Our Mythical Education: Rationale and Overview of the Project

Through such ideas and practices, the teaching of classical myth continues on paths that are very well established, in the sense that myth has constantly been consciously utilized for specific aims, in order to put across ideological messages. It is accepted that children's literature, often the first meeting point with the worlds of Ancient Greece and Rome, is an important element in the formation of perceptions of that culture, but, since any book that is written for or given to children involves by definition an element of ideology, these perceptions are far from free of ideological implications. As Peter Hunt puts it:

It is arguably impossible for a children's book [...] not to be educational or influential in some way; it cannot help but reflect an ideology and, by extension, didacticism [...]. Children's writers are in a position of singular responsibility in transmitting cultural values.¹

If this can be stated regarding children's literature, how much more must it be stressed with regard to actual educational curricula and materials, which are explicitly selected and developed for particular ideological and/or didactic aims? It is true that methods of educating and pedagogical practices may vary.² Nevertheless, all elements of a planned educational curriculum must by their very nature have a didactic component, in the sense that they are included for their supposed value in teaching something. What is taught is not necessarily information or skills, and may include less concrete elements, such as values or codes of behaviour; but that educational constituent is still thought to be present. No text, subject, syllabus, or other educational material is ever selected randomly (although the amount of thought and intention devoted to the choice does, of course, vary).³ Naturally it is the case that curricula do not always achieve their aims, and may on occasion in fact promote, consciously or subconsciously, values their proponents ostensibly oppose.⁴ In general, however, educational systems reflect and are shaped by ideological and organizational processes at a number of levels (individual, local, national, societal, global, etc.), all of which are influenced by wider concerns and challenges.⁵ Recent research has attempted to assess the character and change in these ideological processes by examining the formally stated aims of education in countries throughout the world in the second half of the twentieth century.⁶

¹ Peter Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, 3.

² See, e.g., Geraint Johnes, "Didacticism and Educational Outcomes", *Educational Research and Reviews* 1.2 (2006), 23–28.

³ For an overview of the two major transnational curriculum theories and practices, the Anglo-American curriculum and the European-Scandinavian *Bildung-Didaktik*, and the changes in recent years, see Tero Autio, "The Internationalization of Curriculum Research", in William F. Pinar, ed., *International Handbook of Curriculum Research*, 2nd ed., New York, NY and London: Routledge, 2014 (ed. pr. 2003), 17–31.

⁴ See, e.g., Kenneth T. Henson, *Curriculum Planning: Integrating Multiculturalism, Constructivism, and Education Reform*, 5th ed., Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2015 (ed. pr. 2000), 1–40.

⁵ See *ibidem*, 41–141.

⁶ Robert Fiala, "Educational Ideology and the School Curriculum", in Aaron Benavot, Cecilia Braslavsky, and Nhung Truong, eds., *School Knowledge in Comparative and Historical Perspective*, CERC Studies in Comparative Education 18, Dordrecht: Springer, 2007, 15–34.

When talking about classical studies, the question of curriculum becomes even more loaded than it does with many other subjects. Debates about the role of Classics – whether arguing the necessity or the irrelevance of such subjects – are so charged with history and ideology, particularly in the post-modern environment of debates around issues such as colonialism, class, and gender, that they take on a fervour that is rarely seen in many other areas.⁷ The historically central place of Classics within the education systems of many countries (not least as a result of colonialism and imperialism), and its gradual marginalization, has been the subject of academic scholarship and wider public debate over recent decades, and many countries provide their own individual perspectives on the issue.⁸ To provide only a single example from Europe, one of the most influential works on the subject in Britain was Christopher Stray's *Classics Transformed*, a work published twenty years ago, that was groundbreaking for its study of "school and university curricula, teaching, and textbooks; with the content, institutional forms, and

⁷ Some of the most important works focusing on the United States and Britain are: Phyllis Culham and Lowell Edmunds, eds., *Classics: A Discipline and Profession in Crisis?*, Lanham, MD and London: University Press of America, 1989; Christopher Stray, *Classics Transformed*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; Barbara Goff, ed., *Classics and Colonialism*, London: Duckworth, 2005; Lorna Hardwick and Carol Gillespie, eds., *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199296101.001.0001>; Mark Bradley, ed., *Classics and Imperialism in the British Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; Lorna Hardwick and Stephen Harrison, eds., *Classics in the Modern World: A Democratic Turn?*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; Henry Stead and Edith Hall, *Greek and Roman Classics in the British Struggle for Social Reform*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015; Eric Adler, *Classics, the Culture Wars, and Beyond*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016; Christopher Stray, *Classics in Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018; Edith Hall and Henry Stead, *A People's History of Classics: Class and Greco-Roman Antiquity in Britain and Ireland 1689 to 1939*, London: Routledge, 2020.

⁸ For the cases of Britain and the United States, see, e.g., Martin Lowther Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain 1500–1900*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959; Stray, *Classics Transformed*; John Roach, *Secondary Education in England 1870–1902: Public Activity and Private Enterprise*, London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1991. For France, see, e.g., Eric Verdier, "La France a-t-elle changé de régime d'éducation et de formation?", *Formation emploi* 76.1 (2001), 11–34, and Pierre Duroisin, "Rosa, rosa, rosam... Les Enjeux de la querelle du latin", *Cahiers du Centre Jean Gol* 3 (2007), 527–553. For Germany, see, e.g., Hans-Joachim Glücklich, *Lateinunterricht. Didaktik und Methodik*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993. For a broader European perspective, see Freddy Decreus, *New Classics for a New Century?*, *Didactica Classica Gandensia* 42, Gent: RUG Seminarie voor bijzondere methodiek van de oude talen, 2002; Bob Lister, ed., *Meeting the Challenge: International Perspectives on the Teaching of Latin*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; Evelien Bracke, "Bringing Ancient Languages into a Modern Classroom: Some Reflections", *Journal of Classics Teaching* 16.32 (2015), 35–39, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2058631015000185>. Space does not permit further examples, but similar arguments and works can be found globally, and especially throughout Europe, in a number of languages.

definition of scholarship; and with the social bases, location, and organization of classical knowledge".⁹ This work opened up the debate on the role and evolution of Classics within British formal education from the Victorian era to the early 1960s. Since Stray's authoritative work, the research in recent years by other scholars has continued to shine the spotlight on the role of Classics within British education and society.

Similarly, in the United States, books such as Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* and Victor Davis Hanson and John Heath's *Who Killed Homer? The Demise of Classical Education and the Recovery of Greek Wisdom* stimulated debate and concern about the changing role and use of the traditional great works of Western heritage, including those in the classical languages.¹⁰ Such works led to talk about a "crisis" within Classics in America, resulting in a number of articles and books on the role of the Greek and Roman Classics in American education overall.¹¹ More recently, Caroline Winterer, concentrating on examining university rather than school curricula, demonstrated how Classics was transformed from a narrow, language-based subject to a broader study of civilization that influenced both the rise of the American university and modern notions of selfhood and knowledge.¹²

2. Aims and Scope

Almost all of the emphasis in these studies of Classics in education is on the study of the ancient languages. Yet, as we are all aware, not only is Classics far broader than just the languages of the ancient world, but it is found much more commonly within other areas of the school curriculum. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Greeks and Romans are commonly encountered within history lessons, while in the United States they appear as part of social studies curricula. Nevertheless, it is the case that not only are children

⁹ Stray, *Classics Transformed*, 3.

¹⁰ Victor Davis Hanson and John Heath, *Who Killed Homer? The Demise of Classical Education and the Recovery of Greek Wisdom*, New York, NY: Encounter Books, 2001 (ed. pr. 1998).

¹¹ Edward Phinney, "The Classics in American Education", in Phyllis Culham and Lowell Edmunds, eds., *Classics: A Discipline and Profession in Crisis?*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989, 77–87; Lee T. Percy, *The Grammar of Our Civility: Classical Education in America*, Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005; Daniel Walker Howe, "Classical Education in America", *The Wilson Quarterly* 35.2 (2011), 31–36.

¹² Caroline Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780–1910*, Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

more likely to be introduced to myth than history via other media, such as books and films, but that one of the most common ways in which Classics is encountered within school curricula is through classical myth.

Clearly, wherever myth forms part of an educational syllabus, value judgements have been made by those who chose the texts, with regard to content, approach, usage, emphases, purpose, and many other elements. The present volume looks at these myriad factors, in an attempt to untangle which elements of classical myth have been selected and adapted, and how and why these choices have been made. Through this analysis, light is shed on some underlying ideas and beliefs, regarding both conceptions and manipulations (whether conscious or subconscious) of the ancient world, and of the adapting society.

This volume is a product of the five-year European Research Council-funded project, *Our Mythical Childhood*, headed by Katarzyna Marciniak, which is examining the reception of classical mythology in children's culture worldwide (<http://www.omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/>). As part of this investigation, the present volume examines the reception of such myth within formal education in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, over a wide geographical area. It focuses for the most part on school education, but with forays into post-high school where relevant, and includes a wide geographical and chronological range. With regard to the latter limitations, the general emphasis is on modern day and the current situation, but as a result of individual historical circumstances in each example. The complexity of such traditions has led to summaries that reach rather further back in history in some cases;¹³ this was unavoidable since comprehensiveness in both chronological and geographical terms for the volume would have resulted in hundreds of contributions, an obviously impossible undertaking.

In place of a narrow delineation of a time period, the decision was made to focus on geographical breadth, even at the expense of temporal cohesion as a result of individual circumstances in each case. Unlike many works on reception, which focus on Europe or North America, the volume covers Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas (including Canada, the USA, and South America), and both Australia and New Zealand. While the book cannot hope to be exhaustive, it is truly global in its approach, and

¹³ See, e.g., Markus Janka and Michael Stierstorfer's chapter which traces developments as far back as the twelfth century.

breaks new ground in its scope and attention to geographic regions without a strong classical tradition, such as Brazil, Israel, and Japan.

Because of this broad geographical scope, the book is arranged by region rather than by theme, with commonalities and differences being highlighted in the concluding chapter. This was not an easy decision; the volume could have been designed around topics such as pedagogy and ideological approaches, for example. Yet so doing would have blurred the comprehensive international nature of the work, which is such a distinctive feature of the *Our Mythical Childhood* project. Making this a fundamental element of our approach, therefore, the regional grouping was preferable. With respect to globalism, it should be noted that while the papers themselves are all in English, the book does cover a range of languages and addresses issues not generally discussed, at least in English-language publications, such as the focus on French Canada, rather than the English-speaking areas.

The differing circumstances in the various countries have also led to a variety with regard to the disciplinary backgrounds of the contributors. While most are classical philologists, this is not the case for all; some are experts in pedagogy or literature, and one case even includes the perspective of a school student. Although the natural result of this is a somewhat uneven attitude towards ideological and theoretical issues, the benefit of the resultant breadth of experience was felt to outweigh the inevitable disadvantages of such an approach.

Similarly, a decision was taken early on not to impose restrictions on contributors as to how to present evidence for their particular regions. As a consequence of this decision the nature of the articles differs considerably. While some (for example, the papers by Konstantinou, McAuley, Gancz and Santos) give a complete survey of the historical development of classical education in the country they cover, others (for example, Unceta Gómez, Paulouskaya, Peer and Roesgaard) limit their research to the last hundred years or to smaller, interesting periods (for instance, Garulli, Ryba, Gunter and Curley, Maurice). Still others present case studies of a particularly innovative programme or usage of myth (Hale and Foka, Puetz, Holmes-Henderson, Fratini), a single school (Ermolaeva and Pushel, Marciniak and Strycharczyk) or myth (for example, Neba and Nkemleke), or even a single text (Janka and Stierstorfer). Two of the cases (Neba and Nkemleke, Peer and Roesgaard) even devote considerable space to non-classical mythology, in places where local legends take precedence and Graeco-Roman myth acts in a comparative manner. Although this range of approaches may not make

for the academic uniformity typically found in collections with a narrower focus, it is hoped that the benefits of the wider outlook, with its concomitant vagaries, outweigh the disadvantages that are an inevitable consequence of the scope and nature of the subject in this case.

3. Outline of the Book

The book is divided into five parts, arranged by area. Opening with Western Europe, an area in which the classical tradition has long been deep-rooted, Part I considers five different countries: Greece and Italy, the birthplace of the classical cultures, as well as three in which the Roman civilization was well established: Spain, Germany, and Britain. In the first chapter, Ariadne Konstantinou shines the spotlight on Greece, examining how Ancient Greek myth and Mycenaean civilization fit into the mosaic of national identity and self-definition. Focusing on the history curriculum for Grade 3, Konstantinou demonstrates the ideological issues underlying the inclusion of mythology in a history textbook and syllabus. She shows that there is a blurring not only between myth and history, but also between history and prehistory, which reflects both uncertainty regarding the ancient roots of the Modern Greek people, and an unease with how to understand, and to present to children, a tradition that so strongly impacts on the question of national self-identity.

Valentina Garulli's paper focuses on the other centre of classical civilization, namely Italy. She concentrates on a specific era, the Fascist period, examining schoolbooks on classical myths for secondary school published in Italy during the 1920s and 1930s. Providing an overview of Italian schoolbooks on mythology, she demonstrates that although some show explicit signs of Fascist ideology, with emphasis given to the Roman side of classical myth, this is not always the case. Many of the books are actually of a high quality and fluctuate ambiguously between a continuation of the positivist and liberal culture of the first two decades of the twentieth century, and the political use of classical myth, with the exploitation of the tales for ideological purposes less blatant than might have been expected.

Ideology is also the central theme of Luis Unceta Gómez's paper, as he gives an overview of the role of classical mythology in successive educational systems in Spain's recent history and suggests that the difficulty in incorporating mythology in Spanish education is fundamentally due to ideological and religious issues. The author shows how many of the textbooks used

in schools in the late 1800s and early 1900s were dominated by explicit moral and religious precautions about the content of classical mythology. Educational reforms in the first decades of the twentieth century adopted the French model, which, since it imposed secularization on the educational system, led to tension between conservatives in Spain, who were identified with the Church, and modernists. The weight of Catholicism had the effect of limiting mythology content in the curricula; it was considered unimportant and even morally corrupting. With time, mythological content has been gradually normalized, and a significant nucleus of humanities subjects has been formed within compulsory secondary education, with classical civilization becoming a popular subject, particularly under the impetus of popular culture. The religious influence remains, however, in a negative manner; in tandem with the recent popularity and in-depth knowledge of classical myth, there has been a growing ignorance of the Bible, with biblical references no longer understood by youth.

The final two papers in this section present case studies in countries where the classical tradition has deep roots. In Germany, education was steeped in Classics in the early modern period, as modern educational systems evolved, and this is reflected in Markus Janka and Michael Stierstorfer's paper. Rather than raising questions about the place of mythology within education it takes its position for granted, honing in on the use of one particular author, Ovid, within the German gymnasium curriculum. Janka and Stierstorfer demonstrate that whereas in the first half of the twentieth century Ovid was overshadowed by Virgil and Horace, with the mythical narratives of the *Metamorphoses* relegated to the middle level of higher education, in recent decades, and especially in the new millennium, Ovid has had something of a rebirth. Despite the difference between Germany and Spain with regard to the classical tradition, there is also similarity regarding the impact of popular culture on education. In Germany, for this reason, and also because of the multimedia appeal and Ovid's playful yet sophisticated poetry that is almost postmodern in style, the *Metamorphoses* have been adopted as refreshing stimuli of a complex and intellectually demanding mythological education.

Similarly in Britain, where classical studies has long been well established within education, a case study of some current uses of classical myth is presented. Arlene Holmes-Henderson considers the use of mythology as a different type of stimulus, namely to literacy, or, more accurately, multiliteracies, for primary school children in the United Kingdom. Although

classical myth exists only on the fringes of the school curriculum, British children frequently discover the stories outside of the school framework, through reading, popular media, and informal education, and their attraction to the tales allows for exploitation for educational reasons, within a classroom setting. Presenting two case studies in which classical mythology was deliberately and creatively introduced to British classrooms, Holmes-Henderson demonstrates how the projects enhanced the development of multiliteracies in children aged seven to twelve.

Part II of the book takes us to Central and Eastern Europe. Here, two overview studies and two case studies are presented, one for Russia and one for Poland. For the former, Hanna Paulouskaya examines the use of mythology in Soviet schools, where it was presented only to children through a number of textbooks that were widely used across the Soviet Union. These books taught that Soviet children belonged to a common Greek heritage, ridiculed religion, and depicted figures such as Heracles or Prometheus as Soviet heroes and revolutionaries fighting for the people. The strong ideological tone – and indeed the books themselves – changed little throughout the period of Soviet rule despite the freedoms and more progressive attitudes in later years. Nevertheless, the very stability of the teaching material, which quickly became deeply familiar to the teacher, actually allowed for creativity within teaching, since there was rarely new material to be internalized, and efforts could then be expended on teaching methods.

Focusing in on specifics, a case study follows, this time of a particular Russian school, the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg, School No. 610. Here the description and analysis is provided from the point of view of both a teacher, Elena Ermolaeva, and a recently graduated student, Lev Pushel. Each provide a personal perspective on how Classics in general, and classical myth in particular, form a central part of both the ideology and daily practice within the curriculum of the school.

Janusz Ryba's examination of the teaching of classical languages and culture in Poland from 1945 to present day highlights a central trend of marginalization of classical languages, particularly of Greek, which has been almost entirely removed from the curriculum; similarly in the teaching of Latin, the skills of reception have increased at the expense of traditional parsing. Latin is now regarded as a bearer of cultural content and a means of enabling pupils to decode this content, which means that language education is subordinated to intercultural skills. Along with this reduction in importance of language analysis has emerged a parallel trend of emphasis upon

classical civilization and culture, which, according to the current programme guidelines, is oriented towards intercultural communication skills, although it should be stressed that the programme is still highly text-based.

Katarzyna Marciniak picks up on the idea of the cultural legacy of the ancient world that is experienced in Poland in her study of the Classics programme at the Mikołaj Rej High School No. XI. Emphasizing the importance of the Classics as means of establishing a common spiritual heritage upon which the Polish intelligentsia could draw in order to maintain ties with the West, she demonstrates how ancient culture was perceived in Poland as a vital connection with the Mediterranean community transcending geographical and political borders. In contrast to Spain, Latin's association with the language of the Catholic Church placed it in the centre of opposition, while the academic elite also cherished the ancient tradition in the belief that it "helped defend their identity from the attempts to create captive minds". Using the Mikołaj Rej school, with its enlightened attitude and fitting motto of *Macte animo!*, as a case study, Marciniak outlines the "Classics profile" class opened in 1982, a seeming impossibility in that time of communist censorship. Inspired, however, by the aim of educating youth who would bring about social change, Marciniak, herself a graduate of the programme, provides a testimony to the joint mission of teachers and researchers of antiquity to secure for young people an education that was intended to help them become adults with critical minds, aware of their choices. The paper is preceded by a piece by Barbara Strycharczyk, who was the teacher of the Classics class at the school for thirty years, ever since the implementation of the programme in 1982, and who provides an overview of the programme as it evolved and some highlights from her experiences. The two perspectives of teacher and student are complemented by a few remarks from the author of the concept of the Classics profile at Rej, the director of this school in the difficult 1970s and 1980s – Prof. Witold Kaliński.

With Part III, we move to the continent of Australasia. Elizabeth Hale and Anna Foka's focus is on Australia, where they demonstrated how Australian Classics teachers in New South Wales, the state with the largest concentration of classical classrooms, use creative approaches to classical education. They stress in particular the innovative use of fabrication, visualization, and reception to engage students, integrating an appreciation of classical mythology into a curriculum that covers many aspects of ancient cultures. To illustrate their point, Hale and Foka turn the spotlight on a number of case studies, including projects that utilize LEGO and digital

fabrication technologies, innovative storytelling practices and thoughtful activities, and incorporation of indigenous myth into classical textbooks.

Moving across to New Zealand, Babette Puetz gives an overview of classical studies in the region, demonstrating its popularity at New Zealand secondary schools, particularly as a result of exposure to recent popular culture, such as the *Percy Jackson* and *Harry Potter* novels and movies. With regard to the school curriculum, Puetz stresses the freedom of choice of content that is available for teachers in this region, although they are encouraged to choose material that connects with the students' local contexts, and in particular Māori culture. Despite this great flexibility and variety, general trends can be determined, and Puetz shows that myth, rather than taught as a specific unit, usually tends to be embedded into other topics of enquiry, and is taught in order to exemplify ancient attitudes and to help students analyse and interpret ancient literature and art.

Part IV takes us from one New World to another, in the shape of America. Since the United States, with all of its independent states and educational systems is too vast for comprehensive analysis, a decision was taken to look not at schools in this case, but rather at college and university programmes, where some cohesiveness can be delineated. Emily Gunter and Dan Curley therefore carried out a survey of the 3,000 or so myth courses run by colleges in the United States, contacting them and subsequently receiving 589 syllabi in response. From this information, they created a database, examining which departments offer myth courses; the structures of the courses themselves; which Graeco-Roman gods, heroes, and myths are taught; and what themes and motifs are addressed. Analysing this information, they were then able to discuss some current and emerging trends, such as the use of screen media and gaming, as well as the increasing utilization of trigger warnings with regard to gender, sexuality, and violence. Such elements appear to define, or have the potential to define, the twenty-first-century mythology classroom in the United States.

Remaining on the same continent but moving north, Alex McAuley's chapter considers an element of classical-myth teaching rarely examined in the Anglophone world, that found in French Canada, where the link between Latin and the Catholic Church once again features as the central issue. McAuley highlights how, until the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, the Catholic Church had an almost unchallenged monopoly on public education in French Canada. This meant that the curriculum, which infused almost every element of education with the fundamentals of the Catholic faith, both required

the teaching of the Latin language, but as a consequence, also, paradoxically, gave prominence to “pagan” mythology and religious traditions. This chapter therefore addresses the question of why a Catholic system spent so much time teaching non-Catholic literature and religious material. It does this through a detailed examination of the place of mythology in a variety of primary pedagogical materials used in French Canadian schools from the foundation of the colony until the publication of *commission Parent's* report in 1964. The evolving place of classical mythology in French Canadian education is tracked from the establishment of the colony in the seventeenth century through to the vociferous debates among the clergy over the place of pre-Christian authors in Catholic education, which erupted in France in the mid-nineteenth century and then spilled into French Canada in the 1860s. The perceived benefits and threats posed by such a mythological education are analysed through the assertions of a variety of contemporary commentators. By means of conclusion, the prominence of classical mythology and ancient authors in the curriculum is viewed in relation to the evolving national mythology of French Canada itself, according to which the French Canadian Catholic establishment becomes the direct successor to the classical past.

Ideology again features as the central theme of the final paper in this section, which moves southwards to Latin America, with Pablo Silva Machado Bispo dos Santos and Ricardo Gancz's chapter on Brazil, where they examine the different periods in the Brazilian education system, demonstrating how the myths are used to justify and reinforce the political paradigm/views of each period. Tracing the history of Brazil, from the period in which the country was a vassal to Portugal until independence, the beginning of the republic, two different dictatorships, the rise of the left and the current rise of the right, the authors show that with each political change came a shift in the paradigm of education, expressed in the form of laws and the alteration of the obligatory curricula. In every period, as this chapter establishes, mythology was part of the official curricula that schools were required to follow, and these myths were used to further the political messages of the different governments.

While America is the New World, the links to the old in the form of European culture remained strong, through the people who settled the area. With Part V, we move to realms rather less traditionally associated with classical culture: Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Despite the weaker connection between the classical past and Africa, myth is far from non-existent, and Daniel A. Nkemleke and Divine Che Neba make a plea for the use

of classical mythology as a tool within the African classroom. Arguing that the tussle between world mythologies has pushed writers, particularly within the African continent, to come to terms with what pertains to them, what they have borrowed, what they offer to the world, and what they share with others, they explain that African scholars may use classical mythology as templates for their own writings, or as a means of celebrating their individual cultures. Demonstrating this, they provide an analysis of a modern African adaptation of the Oedipus myth, Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, emphasizing how his writing is rooted in rituals and other accompanying elements, like dance, songs, and chants. The introduction of these cultural elements in writing (and eventually in performance) by Rotimi and Sophocles, therefore, they argue, has the potential to contribute to identity formation of young adults, linking their cultural past and projecting to the future. In particular, they claim that the adaptation of such cross-cultural literary models in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom in Africa can serve as a catalyst for improving cross-cultural competence and igniting the imagination of learners.

In the case of South Africa, where the classical culture itself was inextricably linked with its colonial past, there is now a requirement to decolonize and Africanize the curriculum. Claudia C.J. Fratini, after giving an overview of the evolution of the South African education reforms, argues, like Nkemeleke and Neba, that mythology could be used as an invaluable tool within the classroom to create a multicultural and interdisciplinary conversation within the South African school environment. Illustrating this, she provides a detailed example and lesson plans of how mythology can be employed in the classroom to journey through what she calls "the wormhole that links contextualized learning to the parallel universes inhabited by the debates on decolonization and Africanization of the curriculum".


Like Africa and Australia, which both possess their own native mythologies, Japan also has a cultural history far-removed from that of Greece and Rome. Western education and methods greatly influenced the development of Japanese education after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, but the mythology that was taught was not classical, but Japanese, mythology. This was, in fact, a point of great dissension in the past, with the mythological origin of the Imperial Family taught within the framework of history classes, from the establishment of the educational system in the 1870s onwards. This emphasis on nationalism, reinforced by the teaching of Japanese mythology, was an important element of education right up to World War Two. In this

chapter, Ayelet Peer and Marie Højlund Roesgaard examine the role of Japanese mythology and Japanese Classics within the national curriculum, before going on to explore the exposure of Japanese children and youth to classical Graeco-Roman myth, looking at the role of mythology in modern Japanese society. They demonstrate that, whereas previously it had been a strong source of legitimacy and national identity, it has become trivialised into merely a rich store of stories and fantasies about ancient times, which form a common basic repository of narratives and images.

Lisa Maurice rounds off the contributions with a discussion of the modern State of Israel. Here, distrust of Greek culture, when coupled with the fact that the Jewish people had their own legends and stories in the form of the Bible and of other traditional tales, meant that the classical world was regarded with suspicion and always marginal within education. After outlining the development and role of Classics in general within the Israeli education system as it evolved, the somewhat tantalizing glimpses of Greek myth, within the various history, literature, and drama syllabi are analysed, as well as the various programmes for gifted children, and, finally, a new initiative currently being pioneered, for children on the autism spectrum. The chapter concludes with some ideas as to how to capitalize on the great enthusiasm for classical mythology demonstrated by Israeli children, in ways that will enhance various aspects of their education.

In order to provide some kind of cohesion to this diverse smorgasbord of offerings, the volume concludes with some thoughts and observations as to trends, similarities, and differences observed from place to place. It is to be hoped that these may go some way towards identifying some of the points of contact and of divergence in the treatment of classical mythology in educational contexts. While a book of this kind can never be exhaustive – and indeed this one makes no claims to be so – what it does hope to do is to provide a wide-ranging and multifaceted picture, which opens up different perspectives on the topic and offers its readers stimulating suggestions for their own teaching and research. It is, in many ways, a starting point rather than a final destination, intended to provide a basis for the further enquiry that is necessary, as the teaching of classical culture and mythology continues to have relevance and be promoted, as it has throughout history, even in the technological age of the third millennium.

$$\int_a^b f(x) dx = \lim_{\Delta x \rightarrow 0} (f(a)\Delta x + f(x_1)\Delta x + \dots + f(x_{n-1})\Delta x + f(b)\Delta x)$$

$$\sum_{i=1}^n a_i = a_1 + a_2 + \dots + a_n$$


mitologia

μυθολογία

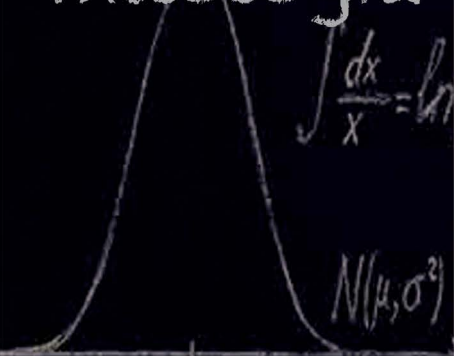
Mythologie

$$\begin{pmatrix} y_1 \\ y_2 \\ \vdots \\ y_n \end{pmatrix} = x_1 y_1 + x_2 y_2 + \dots + x_n y_n$$

mythology

$$f(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp\left(-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}\right)$$

mitología



Part I

OUR MYTHICAL EDUCATION
IN WESTERN EUROPE

MODERN GREEK “PREHISTORY”: ANCIENT GREEK MYTH AND MYCENÆAN CIVILIZATION IN MODERN GREEK EDUCATION

The reception of Classical Antiquity in Modern Greek culture is a complex phenomenon, full of nuances, emotions, and ideology.¹ One important aspect of this reception has to do with perceptions of national identity and self-definition. A no less challenging topic, a part of which will be addressed in this chapter, is how Ancient Greek myth and Mycenaean civilization fit into this complex mosaic. Ancient Greek myth permeates many elements of Modern Greek culture; it is most famously employed in poetry, but is in fact deeply felt in almost all spheres of life.² Because myths are detached from the “here and now”, they are often thought to convey general truths. However, because myths remain culturally relevant, they are also a product of their time. Myths are hence both stable and changeable, both traditional and innovative. And so is their reception. In what ways may the retelling of an Ancient Greek myth convey notions of Modern Greek national self-definition? What is the role of the Homeric epics? And how might the Mycenaean world, caught in between the heroic and early historical times, fit into the grand narrative of Hellenism, especially since Linear B was deciphered as a syllabic script of an early Greek language less than seventy years ago?

¹ See, among others, Dimitris Tziouvas, ed., *Re-Imagining the Past: Antiquity and Modern Greek Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, and in particular on archaeology, Yannis Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, as well as Dimitris Damaskos and Dimitris Plantzos, eds., *A Singular Antiquity: Archaeology and Hellenic Identity in Twentieth-Century Greece*, Athens: Mouseio Benaki, 2008.

² On poetry, see Peter Mackridge, ed., *Ancient Greek Myth in Modern Greek Poetry: Essays in Memory of C.A. Trypanis*, London: Frank Cass, 1996.

In order to examine this vast topic, I will look into Greece's educational system, in accordance with the volume's theme.³ Education in Greece is instrumental in creating and perpetuating mainstream perceptions of national self-definition. The subject of history, taught early on, from Grade 3 of primary school, is an infamous platform for the use and abuse of (sometimes competing) historical narratives, perhaps also due to the educational policy of the single textbook.⁴ Suffice it to mention here the notorious public debate, which broke out in the spring of 2006 and received extensive media coverage in the following year, about the history textbook of Grade 6, developed by Maria Repousi (Associate Professor of History and History Education at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and former Member of Parliament) and a team of historians and teachers.⁵ One of the most controversial and hotly debated points of the textbook concerns its description of the destruction of Smyrna in the summer of 1922.⁶

³ On Modern Greek retellings of Ancient Greek myths for children during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Ekaterini Papageorgiou, *Η ελληνική μυθολογία στην ελληνική παιδική λογοτεχνία. Συγκριτική προσέγγιση της ελληνικής μυθολογίας* [I elliniki mythologia stin elliniki paidiki logotechnia. Syngritiki prosengisi tis ellinikis mythologias; Greek Mythology in Greek Children's Literature: A Comparative Approach to Greek Mythology], PhD dissertation, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2010. Throughout this chapter transliterations are provided in a format based on the guidelines of the Hellenic Organization for Standardization (Ελληνικός Οργανισμός Τυποποίησης; Ellinikos Organismos Typopoiisis) and adapted for *Grove Music Online*. See "Greek Transliteration", Oxford Music Online, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/page/greek-transliteration> (accessed 10 July 2020).

⁴ See Ephe Avdela, "The Teaching of History in Greece", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 18 (2000), 239–253; Anna Frangoudaki, "Απόγονοί Ελλήνων από τη μυκηναϊκή εποχή: η ανάλυση των εγχειριδίων ιστορίας" ["Apogonoi" Ellinon "apo ti mykinaïki epochi": i analysi ton enchiridion istorias; "Descendants" of Greeks "from Mycenaean Times": An Analysis of History Textbooks], in Anna Frangoudaki and Thalia Dragonas, eds., *Τι είν' η πατρίδα μας. Εθνοκεντρισμός στην εκπαίδευση* [Ti ein' i patriða mas. Ethnokentrismos stin ekpaidevsi; What Is Our Homeland? Ethnocentrism in Education], Athina: Alexandria, 1997, 344–400; and Jurgen Broeders, "*The Greeks Fought Heroically*": *A History of Greek History Textbooks*, MA thesis, Radboud University, 2008.

⁵ Maria Repousi, Hara Andreadou, Aristidis Poutahidis, and Armodios Tsivas, *Στα νεώτερα και σύγχρονα χρόνια. Ιστορία ΣΤ' Δημοτικού* [Stá neótera kai synchróna chrónia. Istória Ektis Dimotikou; In Modern and Contemporary Times: Grade 6 History], Athina: Organismos Ekdoseos Didaktikon Vivlion, 2006.

⁶ Emre Metin Bilginer, "Recent Debates on Greek History Textbooks: The Case of the *Contemporary History Textbook for 6th Grades* by Maria Repousi", *Eckert. Beiträge* 2013.2, http://repository.gei.de/bitstream/handle/11428/103/745117228_2016_A.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y (accessed 25 June 2018). On the term "interference" in history textbooks, used as a more neutral term than "censorship", see Jan Braauw, "Forms of History Textbook Interference", *Educational Practice and Theory* 39 (2017), 53–68. On another famous example of controversy having to do with the Macedonian crisis and school textbooks, see Erik Sjöberg, "The Past in Peril: Greek History Textbook Controversy and the Macedonian Crisis", *Education Inquiry* 2 (2011), 93–107.

The reason I mention the history course in a volume dedicated to mythology is that the latter is hardly taught in Greece as a subject *per se*. Yet it is far from absent in the twelve years of primary and secondary education. Mythology is often integrated into courses on Ancient Greece, and especially in the many courses offered on Ancient Greek literature, whether in translation or, in later years, in the original. It is almost impossible to read Homeric poetry without becoming familiar with the myths that form the basis of the *epos*. Nor may a Greek tragedy be fully appreciated without some serious discussion about the dramatized myth.

There is one notable exception in this picture of the absence of mythology that I have just painted, and on which this chapter shall focus: the history programme of Grade 3 primary school (Γ' Δημοτικού; Triti Dimotikou). As far as I was able to trace the earlier Grade 3 history textbooks online, thanks to the digital collection of the Institute of Educational Policy (Ινστιτούτο Εκπαιδευτικής Πολιτικής; Institutouto Ekpaideftikis Politikis – formerly Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο; Paidagogiko Institutouto), which includes downloadable PDFs of more than 6,000 school textbooks going back to the nineteenth century,⁷ Grade 3 has traditionally been the year that students in the educational system of the Modern Greek state are first introduced to Ancient Greek mythology.⁸ Most twentieth-century textbooks are written in a style that draws on the tradition of ancient mythographical handbooks, such as the *Bibliotheca* attributed to Apollodorus, rather than being based on primary sources in translation – probably an apt choice for this age group.⁹ With minor variations, these textbooks on mythology usually open with an introductory chapter on Greek gods, move on to the heroic myths

⁷ Institute of Educational Policy, IEP Book Collection, <http://e-library.iep.edu.gr/iep/index.html> (accessed 1 July 2018).

⁸ For some earlier textbooks, see, among others, Geor. Myrias and And. Papadakis, *Μυθικά Χρόνια. Για την Τρίτη Τάξη του Δημοτικού Σχολείου* [Mythika Chronia. Gia tin Triti Taxi tou Dimotikou Scholeiou; Mythical Years: For Grade 3 of Primary School], Athina: Kentavros, 1966; Eythymios N. Anagnostopoulos, *Ιστορία: Μυθικά Χρόνια. Για την Γ' Τάξη του Δημοτικού Σχολείου* [Istoria: Mythika Chronia. Gia tin Triti Taxi tou Dimotikou Scholeiou; History: Mythical Years. For Grade 3 of Primary School], Athina: Pechlivanidis, 1974; Vasiliki Lymberopoulou-Tzortzakaki, *Ιστορία Γ' Τάξεως Δημοτικού* [Istoria Tritis Taxeos Dimotikou; Grade 3 Primary School History], Athina: Organismos Ekdoseos Didaktikon Vivlion, 1977.

⁹ On such a handbook based on primary sources (for adults, especially university students), see, e.g., Stephen M. Trzaskoma, R. Scott Smith, and Stephen Brunet, eds., *Anthology of Classical Myth: Primary Sources in Translation*, 2nd ed., Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2016 (ed. pr. 2004).

of Hercules, Theseus, and the Argonautic Expedition, before turning to the Trojan War and the wanderings of Odysseus.¹⁰

There is of course much that can be said about the choice to teach mythology under the heading of a history course, most notably the assumption about the heroic and the historical past being part of one continuum. This is evocative of the Ancient Greek perspective according to which much of what modern scholars would put under the heading of mythology, including the Trojan War, was understood to fall under the much broader field of history.¹¹ In Modern Greece's educational system, the passage from myth to history used to occur for many years at the transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4, with the students being introduced to the early civilizations of Greece in Grade 4, after having spent a year learning mythology.¹² For example, when I attended primary school in Greece in the mid-1980s, the whole textbook of Grade 3 was dedicated to Ancient Greek mythology, despite its somewhat incongruous title – *Ιστορία* [Istoria; History].¹³

¹⁰ I have chosen to use the more familiar Latinized forms of names from Ancient Greek mythology.

¹¹ For famous examples, see the opening of Herodotus' *Histories*, 1.1–5, or Thucydides 1.1–19 ("Archaeology"). What is perhaps more problematic, but goes beyond this chapter's scope, is that the first chapter of Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos's influential history is also dedicated to mythology ("Μύθοι. Ερμηνείαι. Ιστορική του Έθνους καταγωγή" [Mythoi. Erminiai. Istoriki tou Ethnous katagogi; Myths, Interpretations, Historical Origin of the Nation]), in his *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους* [Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous; History of the Hellenic Nation], 6th ed., corrected and augmented by Paulos Karolidis, vol. 1, part 1, Athina: Eleutheroudakis, 1932 (ed. pr. 1860–1876), 1–61.

¹² These earlier textbooks, however, were eager to pass quickly from prehistory and early history to the end of the Dark Ages and the archaic period in Greece. For instance, in Georgia Kamaterou-Glitsi, *Αρχαία Ελλάδα. Ιστορία Δ' Δημοτικού* [Archaia Ellada. Istoria Tetartis Dimotikou; Ancient Greece: Fourth-Grade History], Athina: Organismos Ekdoseos Didaktikon Vivlion, 1974, the textbook opens with a chapter on "Για τα προϊστορικά χρόνια" [11–16; Gia ta proistorika chronia; Prehistoric Times], only to move on in the next chapter to the "Κρήτες: οι πρώτοι ναυτικοί" [17–22; Krites: oi protoi naftikoi; Cretans: The First Sailors]. In the body of the text, this civilization is eventually named Minoan (18), and is considered a "Mediterranean tribe", which immigrated from Asia Minor (17). In the following chapter, "Η αρχή της ιστορίας μας" [23–32; I archi tis istorias mas; The Beginning of Our History], the terms Achaean, Mycenaean, and Homeric appear to be quite vague, with no clear demarcation of where myth ends and history begins. The Achaeans are called the "first Greeks", they are mentioned as an Indo-European tribe which spoke Greek (24), but only after mentioning the archaeological discoveries of Heinrich Schliemann (26) is this civilization also called "Mycenaean". And while on p. 14 there is something of a clue about the beginning of "history" during this period – understood as coinciding with the discovery of writing – there is no reference to the excavation of the Linear B tablets and their sensational decipherment as a script representing an early form of Greek about twenty years before the textbook's first publication.

¹³ Kostas Kalapanidas, *Ιστορία* [Istoria; History], Athina: Organismos Ekdoseos Didaktikon Vivlion, 1979.

However, this is not the situation in the most recent book currently in use in Grade 3 in Greece, *Ιστορία Γ' Δημοτικού. Από τη Μυθολογία στην Ιστορία* [Istoria Tritis Dimotikou. Apo ti Mythologia stin Istoria; Grade 3 History: From Mythology to History].¹⁴ This specific history course includes a student's textbook, an exercise book, and a teacher's book. I wish to discuss the choice to pass within the *same* school year and the *same* textbook from mythology to prehistory and the so-called protohistory of the Cycladic, Minoan, and Mycenaean civilizations of early Greece. "From Mythology to History" is after all the textbook's subtitle. This choice follows the guidelines of the national curriculum (Αναλυτικό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών; Analytiko Programma Spoudon) developed by the Pedagogical Institute (Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο; Paidagogiko Institutouto).¹⁵ It should also be mentioned that the current Grade 4 textbook opens with geometric Greece before moving on to the archaic, classical, and Hellenistic periods.¹⁶

In what follows, I present in brief this Grade 3 textbook and its treatment of myth. I argue that the presentation of the material may give rise to a blurring between myth and history, as well as between history and prehistory. What is more, Homeric poetry does not receive the special attention it deserves. I conclude with some thoughts about the problematic status of Mycenaean civilization in the grand narrative of Hellenism and Modern Greek national self-definition. Are the Mycenaeans also part of the cultural

¹⁴ Stratis Maistrellis, Eleni Kalyvi, and Marina Michail, *Ιστορία Γ' Δημοτικού. Από τη Μυθολογία στην Ιστορία* [Istoria Tritis Dimotikou. Apo ti Mythologia stin Istoria; Grade 3 History: From Mythology to History], Athina: Organismos Ekdoseos Didaktikon Vivlion, 2015, available online as "Ιστορία Γ' Δημοτικού" [Istoria Tritis Dimotikou; Grade 3 History], Διαδραστικά Σχολικά Βιβλία [Diadrastika Scholika Vivlia; Interactive School Books], <http://ebooks.edu.gr/new/course-main.php?course=DSDIM-C103> (accessed 1 July 2018). Today, all Greek school textbooks are available online at Διαδραστικά Σχολικά Βιβλία [Diadrastika Scholika Vivlia; Interactive School Books], www.ebooks.edu.gr (accessed 1 July 2018).

¹⁵ For the 2003 curriculum (Αναλυτικό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών; Analytiko Progamma Spoudon), see "Διαθεματικό Ενιαίο Πλαίσιο Προγραμμάτων Σπουδών (ΔΕΠΠΣ)" [Diathematiko Eniaio Plaisio Programmaton Spoudon (DEPPS); Unified Interdisciplinary Curriculum Framework], Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο [Paidagogiko Institutouto; Pedagogical Institute], <http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/depps/> (accessed 29 July 2018). A new curriculum was announced at the end of 2018 (for Grade 3 history, see "Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών Ιστορίας Γ' Δημοτικού" [Programma Spoudon Istorias Tritis Dimotikou; Grade 3 History Curriculum], Ινστιτούτο Εκπαιδευτικής Πολιτικής [Institutouto Ekpaideftikis Politikis; Institute of Educational Policy], http://iep.edu.gr/images/IEP/EPISTIMONIKI_YPIRESIA/Epist_Monades/B_Kykos/Humanities/2018/2018-11-02_c_dim.pdf [accessed 29 July 2018]), but so far no new textbooks have been produced.

¹⁶ "Ιστορία Δ' Δημοτικού" [Istoria Tetartis Dimotikou; Grade 4 History], Διαδραστικά Σχολικά Βιβλία [Diadrastika Scholika Vivlia; Interactive School Books], <http://ebooks.edu.gr/new/books-pdf.php?course=DSDIM-D103> (accessed 23 July 2018).

construct of *οι αρχαίοι ημών πρόγονοι* (*oi archaioi imon progonoι*; our ancestors), at least as it is reflected in this textbook?

Before I proceed, however, I need to disclose that I approach this topic from the standpoint of a classicist whose main research interest is Ancient Greek myth. I will, therefore, refrain from examining the pedagogical aspects of the textbook or delving deeply into the vast issue of Modern Greek national identity and its reflection in the educational system.¹⁷ Moreover, because I was born, raised, and educated in Greece, but have not lived there permanently since my early twenties, I sense that I am in a good position to analyse the textbook's authoritative version of myth and the past: close enough to be familiar with the culture and the power politics involved in education but, hopefully, sufficiently detached to identify certain idiosyncratic Modern Greek perspectives about mythology, Homer, and early Greece. Yiannis Hamilakis also discusses the possible positive effects of such "distancing" in conducting work on the reception of the classical world (in his case, archaeology) in Modern Greece.¹⁸

The textbook is divided into two large parts entitled "Μυθολογία" [Mythologia; Mythology] and "Προ-ιστορία" [Pro-istoria; Pre-History]. The first part takes up approximately two-thirds of the book; it contains six large units, each divided into several shorter chapters: the first is on "Η δημιουργία του κόσμου" [I dimiourgia tou kosmou; The Creation of the World] – with the title echoing the Judeo-Christian tradition – and deals with the Titanomachy, the Olympian gods and goddesses, Prometheus, Pandora, Deucalion and Pyrrha. Units 2 to 4 are about Hercules, Theseus, and the Argonautic Expedition. The last two units are dedicated to the Trojan War and the adventures of Odysseus. All in all, the choice of stories and their order follow the tradition of earlier Grade 3 textbooks. The second part on prehistory is divided into four units and fills about one-third of the book. The Stone Age is presented in the first unit, while the following units share the title "Η εποχή του χαλκού στην Ελλάδα" [I epochi tou chalkou stin Ellada; The Bronze Age in Greece], with units on the Cycladic, Minoan, and, finally, Mycenaean civilization.

¹⁷ On this aspect, see Savvas K. Gousteris, *Η διδασκαλία της Ιστορίας στο δημοτικό σχολείο. Μια εμπειρική προσέγγιση από την πλευρά των εκπαιδευτικών της πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης* [I didaskalia tis Istorias sto dimotiko scholeio. Mia empeiriki prosengissi apo tin plevra ton ekpaideftikon tis protovathmias ekpaidefsis; The Teaching of History in Elementary School: An Empirical Approach from the Perspective of Elementary School Teachers], Athina: Kyriakidis, 1998.

¹⁸ Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins*, ix.

The textbook is printed in colour and includes numerous illustrations of ancient and modern artefacts related to the topics discussed. In addition, it includes a rich collection of boxed material, with sources and quotations containing further information. While this material is welcome and is meant to expand the main text and enrich the learning process, it seems that adding sources from different periods and media is bound to result in some historical blurring instead. This blurring may sometimes be a direct outcome of a lack of precise information. In other cases, a more general blurring of the different periods of Hellenism's long history is apparent. Often enough, the students cannot get a full grasp of the chronological and cultural range of the illustrations, since the captions are not informative enough and as such do not help develop their sense of (historical) time: they do not provide, when available, information on the name of the artist, year, or period of production, or the museum in which the item is currently located. This is a pity, since such information could perhaps allow for an initial awareness of the varying and rich receptions of Ancient Greek myth in subsequent periods and cultures.

A single but telling example is the case of Atlas. In the unit on the Titanomachy at the beginning of the book, Atlas is shown on an archaic black-figure vase. This is placed side by side with a second-century CE Roman sculpture of the Titan. The captions that accompany the photos are "Ο Άτλαντας σε αρχαίο ελληνικό αγγείο" (Atlas on an Ancient Greek vase) and "Ο Άτλαντας σε γλυπτό νεότερης εποχής" (Atlas as a sculpture of a newer era). These captions fail to mention that the two works of art are about 800 years apart and that the sculpture, commonly referred to as the Farnese Atlas, is a Roman copy of a Hellenistic sculpture now located at the Archaeological Museum in Naples.¹⁹ One may think that this might be considered redundant information for Grade 3 students, and indeed perhaps it is. However, I still think that some of this information could have made its way to the captions, or at least to a list of figures at the end of the book. This point is made stronger once we compare the textbook to a popular sticker book about Greek myths, originally published in English and translated also

¹⁹ Additional information that goes unmentioned includes reference to the fact that Atlas features next to his brother Prometheus, and that both are shown as suffering Zeus' punishment. Also unmentioned is the Laconian provenance of the vase, or the fact that it is now at the Vatican (Gregorian Etruscan Museum). Oddly enough, the vase reappears a few pages down (19), in the story of Prometheus, with both Titans represented this time, and the caption reading "Το μαρτύριο του Προμηθέα. Από αρχαίο ελληνικό αγγείο" (The suffering of Prometheus. From an Ancient Greek vase).

into Greek.²⁰ In the sticker book, intended for an age range that roughly includes Grade 3,²¹ the two pages about the Titans include, among others, stickers with the vase and the sculpture reproduced in the textbook. Strangely enough, however, the captions of the recreational sticker book are more informative than those of the school textbook.

Lack of information is also evident in the boxed material. While some material is no doubt effective, one cannot fail to notice that, in general, it seems to lack the extra information that could help students contextualize or even assess the nature of these additional sources. One example that showcases this lack of information appears in the introductory chapter on Cycladic civilization. The boxed material (107)²² quotes the opening lines of the song “Κυκλαδίτικο” [Kykkladitiko; Cycladic] by Nikos Gatzos, with music by Manos Hadjidakis.²³ The quotation is set against the background of a map naming many of the Cycladic islands and the song could, theoretically at least, help the students familiarize themselves with the names of some of these islands. However, the title of the song is not mentioned, so students cannot look it up if they want to;²⁴ nor does the map name all the islands mentioned in the song. What is apparently more debatable in this combination of song and map is the assumption about continuity between the ancient past and the present, which might ultimately damage the student’s understanding of historical continuities and discontinuities. The Cycladic islands of the song are not quite the same thing as the Cycladic civilization that flourished there about 3,000 years ago – and by this I do not mean geography. This combination seems to overlook cultural differences, in favour of a historical and

²⁰ Rosie Dickins and Galia Bernstein, *Ελληνικοί Μύθοι: Βιβλίο με Αυτοκόλλητα* [Ellinikoi Mythoi: Vivlio me Aftokollita; Greek Myths: Sticker Book], trans. Katerina Servi, Athina: Patakis, 2013 (ed. pr. in English: *The Usborne Greek Myths Sticker Book*).

²¹ The English edition of the sticker book is marketed to children aged between seven and nine, while the Greek edition notes that it is suitable for ages six and over.

²² Page numbers from the textbook are given in parentheses throughout this chapter.

²³ Maira Eua, “Κυκλαδίτικο – Μανώλης Μητσιάς” [Kykkladitiko – Manolis Mitsias; Of the Cyclades: Manolis Mitsias], YouTube, 8 August 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MOpU-VU8LX0&feature=emb_logo (accessed 3 June 2020).

²⁴ The teacher’s book provides some information about the song, but is less precise on how to handle the juxtaposition (85): “Οι μαθητές ακούν από το μαγνητόφωνο το τραγούδι του Μ. Χατζιδάκι ‘Κυκλαδίτικο’ σε στίχους Ν. Γκάτσου από το δίσκο ‘Της γης το χρυσάφι’, όπου αναφέρονται πολλά νησιά των Κυκλάδων και καλούνται να τα εντοπίσουν στον αναρτημένο χάρτη” (The pupils hear from the tape recorder the song by M. Hadjidakis “Cycladic” with lyrics by N. Gatsos from the album *The Land’s Gold*, where many islands of the Cyclades are mentioned, and are invited to locate them on the displayed map).

geographical continuum that embraces all activity that took place on these islands. This perspective both assumes and perpetuates an ethnocentric view of Hellenism, which, as many other contributions have noted, is quite prevalent in the great majority of history textbooks in Greece.²⁵ Yet, oddly enough, it embraces here a culture that, as far as we know, is not "Greek", at least in comparison to the Greek-speaking Mycenaeans of later periods.²⁶

Moving from illustrations and boxed material to content, I would like to examine here two blatant, as I see them, instances of blurring: first, a blurring between myth and history, and then between history and prehistory. I deliberately choose the term blurring, instead of more neutral terms, such as fusion or conglomeration. The latter are used by Anna Simandiraki to describe a similar phenomenon in the presentation of fact and myth in the teaching of Minoan civilization, based on the previous school textbook.²⁷ By using the term blurring, I wish to highlight the obscure outcome, especially for the students, rather than comment on the intended blending together of dissimilar things.

The boxed material that introduces the unit on the Trojan War sets the stage early on, with its tendency to turn mythology into early history:

*Πριν από πολλά χρόνια, οι Αχαιοί που κατοικούσαν τότε στην Ελλάδα ενώθηκαν και με τα πλοία και τον στρατό τους πήγαν να κυριεύσουν την Τροία. Έτσι, άρχισε ο Τρωικός πόλεμος, που κράτησε **δέκα χρόνια**. Ήταν ο μεγαλύτερος πόλεμος της αρχαιότητας κι οδήγησε στον θάνατο αμέτρητους Τρώες κι Αχαιούς. (57)*

*Many years ago, **the Achaeans**, who then lived in Greece, united and went to occupy Troy with their ships and army. Thus began the Trojan War, which lasted **ten years**. It was the *biggest war of antiquity* and led to the death of countless Trojans and Achaeans.²⁸*

²⁵ See Avdela, "The Teaching of History in Greece"; Frangoudaki, "'Apogonoi' Ellinon"; and Yannis Hamilakis, "'Learn History!' Antiquity, National Narrative, and History in Greek Educational Textbooks", in Keith S. Brown and Yannis Hamilakis, eds., *The Usable Past: Greek Metahistories*, New York, NY and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003, 39–67.

²⁶ On a comparable "Hellenization" of the Minoans, see Anna Simandiraki, "The 'Minoan' Experience of Schoolchildren in Crete", in Yannis Hamilakis and Nicoletta Momigliano, eds., *Archaeology and European Modernity: Producing and Consuming the "Minoans"*, Padua: Bottega d'Erasmus, 2006, 257–274.

²⁷ Anna Simandiraki, "Μινωπαιδιές: The Minoan Civilization in Greek Primary Education", *World Archaeology* 36 (2004), 177–188 (esp. 178, 184–185).

²⁸ Translations from Modern Greek are my own. I have retained the spelling of the original and have used the monotonic system throughout. In all quoted passages, emphasis in bold comes from the original, while emphasis in italics is my own.

The Trojan War is introduced as a historical fact, which took place many years ago and constituted the greatest war of antiquity. The “Achaean warriors” depicted at the bottom of the same page (a detail from the so-called Warrior Vase from Mycenae, now in Athens)²⁹ are supposed to serve as visual proof of this fact.³⁰ Likewise, the following chapter on the beauty contest between the three Olympian goddesses opens thus: “Πριν από πολλά χρόνια, στην αρχαία εποχή, τότε που στον Όλυμπο κατοικούσαν οι δώδεκα θεοί, ο Δίας αποφάσισε [...]” (58; Many years ago, in ancient times, when the twelve Olympians lived at Olympus, Zeus decided [...]). While these are clearly attempts to present the mythological narrative in a vivid manner, they also hinder the historical thinking that this course purports to convey to its young students. In attempting to help them perceive that “to a certain degree, there lies historical truth behind the myths”, as proclaimed in the introduction to the teacher’s book, the textbook often ends up presenting myth as an event of very early history. The transition “from myth to history” is not, as declared, “smooth” in any way.³¹

²⁹ National Archaeological Museum 1426; see “Collection of Mycenaean Antiquities”, National Archaeological Museum, <https://www.namuseum.gr/en/collection/sylogi-mykinaikon-archaiotiton> (accessed 3 June 2020).

³⁰ A photograph of the same vase appears again a few pages down, in the chapter narrating the sacrifice of Iphigenia before the Greeks sailed to Troy (61).

³¹ See the introduction to the teacher’s book, in Stratis Maistrellis, Eleni Kalyvi, and Marina Michail, *Ιστορία Γ’ Δημοτικού. Από τη Μυθολογία στην Ιστορία. Βιβλίο Δασκάλου* [Istoria Tritis Dimotikou. Apo ti Mythologia stin Istoria. Vivlio Daskalou; Grade 3 History: From Mythology to History. Teacher’s Book], Athina: Organismos Ekdoseos Didaktikon Vivlion, n.d., 5: “Με βάση το νέο Αναλυτικό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών αλλά και τις επικρατέστερες ψυχοπαιδαγωγικές και διδακτικές απόψεις, με τη διδασκαλία του μαθήματος της Ιστορίας στην Γ’ τάξη επιδιώκεται, μεταξύ των άλλων, τα παιδιά στην αρχή να έρθουν σε επαφή με τους σημαντικότερους ελληνικούς μύθους και ειδικότερα με αυτούς που έχουν παγκόσμια απήχηση, για να χαρούν, όπως τονίζει σε σχετική μελέτη του ο Ι. Θ. Κακριδής, ‘την ομορφιά των αρχαίων μύθων απλά και απροβλημάτιστα, όπως χαίρονται ένα παραμύθι’, και να αντιληφθούν σε ένα βαθμό ότι πίσω από τους μύθους κρύβεται ιστορική αλήθεια, ώστε να γίνει ομαλά η μετάβαση από το μύθο στην ιστορία, όπως άλλωστε υποδηλώνεται και από τον τίτλο του βιβλίου” (Based on the new curriculum and the prevailing psycho-educational and didactic views, the teaching of Grade 3 History aims, among other things, for the children to first come into contact with the most important Greek myths and especially those that have a global impact, so that they may enjoy, as I.Th. Kakridis highlights in a relevant study, “the beauty of ancient myths simply and smoothly, in the same way that they enjoy a fairy tale” and to realize to a certain degree that there lies historical truth behind the myths, so that the transition from *myth* to *history*, as indicated in the title of the book, will be smooth). The book is available at Διαδραστικά Σχολικά Βιβλία [Diadrastika Scholika Vivlia; Interactive School Books], http://ebooks.edu.gr/modules/document/file.php/DSDIM-C103/%CE%94%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%B1%CE%BA%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%B9%CE%B2%CE%BB%CE%AF%CE%BF%20%CE%94%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%BA%CE%AC%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%85/10-0058_Istoria_C-Dim_BK.pdf (accessed 22 June 2020).

One way to come to grips with this blurring could involve discussing the special status of the Homeric poems and their complex relation with Mycenaean civilization. While the unit on the Trojan War contains several quoted passages from the *Iliad*, Homer comes up for the first time only mid-way through the unit (69), and, even there, the opportunity is missed. The photo shows, as far as I could tell, a modern copy of a Roman bust now in Paris, the so-called Homer Caetani,³² which is itself a copy of a lost Hellenistic bust. The poet's bust is supplemented by an additional box on "The *Iliad* of Homer", stating that:

Την ιστορία του Τρωικού πολέμου την περιγράφει ο ποιητής Όμηρος στο έργο του *Ιλιάδα* (από τη λέξη Ίλιον = Τροία). Το ποίημα αυτό αρχίζει με τη σύγκρουση του Αχιλλέα με τον Αγαμέμνονα, που συγκλονίζει το στρατόπεδο των Αχαιών, γι' αυτό και η πρώτη λέξη της *Ιλιάδας* είναι η "μήνις", δηλαδή ο θυμός του Αχιλλέα. (69)

The poet Homer describes the story [ιστορία] of the Trojan War in his work the *Iliad* (from the word *Ilion* = Troy). This poem begins with the rivalry of Achilles with Agamemnon, which devastates the Achaean camp, so the first word of the *Iliad* is *menis*, that is, the anger of Achilles.

Here and elsewhere in the textbook, there is hardly any reference to the special status of the epic as a source of our knowledge about the myth of the Trojan War or the epic's substantial role in the long history of Greek culture more generally.³³ Most importantly, there is no reference to the problematic relationship between Homeric poetry and the archaeological remains of Mycenaean civilization.

This absence is even more conspicuous in the opening information on Mycenaean civilization, in the chapter on "Αχαιοί, οι πρώτοι Έλληνες" [Achaioi, oi protoi Ellines; Achaeans, the First Greeks]:

³² Louvre MR 530 (Ma 440); see "Imaginary Portrait of the Blind Homer", Musée du Louvre, <https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/imaginary-portrait-blind-homer> (accessed 3 June 2020).

³³ See Robert Browning, "Homer in Byzantium", *Viator* 6 (1975), 15–33; Margalit Finkelberg, "Canonising and Decanonising Homer: Reception of the Homeric Poems in Antiquity and Modernity", in Maren R. Niehoff, ed., *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters*, Leiden: Brill, 2012, 15–28; and the forthcoming volume of Christina-Panagiota Manolea, ed., *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Homer from the Hellenistic Age to Late Antiquity*, Leiden: Brill.

Όταν ο Κυκλαδικός και ο Μινωικός πολιτισμός βρίσκονταν στην ακμή τους, ένας νέος λαός, **οι Αχαιοί**, ήρθαν από τον Βορρά κι εγκαταστάθηκαν στην κεντρική και τη νότια Ελλάδα. Αυτοί είναι οι πρώτοι Έλληνες.

Οι Αχαιοί γνώρισαν τον Κυκλαδικό και τον Μινωικό πολιτισμό και εντυπωσιάστηκαν. Έμαθαν πολλά πράγματα από τους Κυκλαδίτες και τους Μινωίτες και δημιούργησαν τον δικό τους πολιτισμό που ονομάζεται **Μυκηναϊκός**. Πήρε το όνομά του από τις **Μυκήνες**, που βρίσκονται στην Πελοπόννησο και ήταν το μεγαλύτερο κέντρο του πολιτισμού αυτού. Άλλα μυκηναϊκά κέντρα ήταν **η Θήβα, ο Ορχομενός, η Αθήνα, η Ιωλκός, η Πύλος, η Σπάρτη, η Τίρυνθα**.

Οι Μυκηναίοι ή Αχαιοί, έχοντας σαν παράδειγμα τους Μινωίτες, έγιναν κι αυτοί έμποροι. Με τα πλοία τους ταξίδευαν σε όλη τη Μεσόγειο κι έφταναν μέχρι την Αίγυπτο, την Παλαιστίνη και την Κύπρο. Κατέλαβαν και την Κρήτη που, μετά από την έκρηξη του ηφαιστείου της Θήρας και την καταστροφή των πόλεων της, είχε χάσει τη μεγάλη της δύναμη.

Αργότερα, οι Αχαιοί έκαναν εκστρατεία εναντίον της Τροίας. Η θέση που βρισκόταν η **Τροία** ήταν πολύ σημαντική για το εμπόριο. Γι' αυτό οι Αχαιοί ήθελαν να την κατακτήσουν και να δημιουργήσουν εκεί δικό τους εμπορικό σταθμό. Ο Τρωικός πόλεμος, όπως έχουμε μάθει, κράτησε δέκα χρόνια. Οι Αχαιοί κατέκτησαν την Τροία, μετά όμως άρχισαν να χάνουν σιγά σιγά τη δύναμή τους.

Ο Γερμανός ερευνητής Ερρίκος **Σλήμαν** ήταν ο πρώτος που έκανε ανασκαφές και ανακάλυψε τις Μυκήνες. (131)

When the Cycladic and Minoan civilizations were in their prime, a new people, **the Achaeans**, came from the North and settled in central and southern Greece. These are the first Greeks.

The Achaeans became familiar with the Cycladic and Minoan civilizations and were impressed. They learned many things from the Cycladians and the Minoans, and they created their own civilization, which is called **Mycenaean**. It was named after **Mycenae**, which is located in the Peloponnese, and was the largest centre of this culture. Other Mycenaean centres were **Thebes, Orchomenos, Athens, Iolkos, Pylos, Sparta, Tiryns**.

The Mycenaeans or Achaeans, having the Minoans as an example, became also traders. They travelled with their ships across the Mediterranean and reached Egypt, Palestine, and Cyprus. They also captured Crete, which had lost its great power, after the eruption of the volcano of Thira and the destruction of its cities.

Later, the Achaeans campaigned against Troy. The location of **Troy** was very important for trade. For this reason the Achaeans wanted to conquer it and create their own commercial station there. The Trojan War, as we have learned, lasted ten years. The Achaeans conquered Troy, but then gradually lost their power.

The German researcher Heinrich **Schliemann** was the first to excavate and discover Mycenae.

"Achaeans" is of course the commonest designation for the Greeks in Homeric poetry; other interchangeable names are Danaans and Argives. The term "Mycenaean" is a convention, which originates from the importance of the city of Mycenae and the archaeological finds discovered there, and which regained popularity after the decipherment of Linear B as a Greek script in 1952.³⁴ Yet, as Robert Fowler notes, "Neither on the basis of Homeric tradition nor on that of modern dialectology [...] can the relation of Homer's Achaeans to the population of Mycenaean Greece be established".³⁵ Contrary to how the school textbook would have it, the two terms are by no means considered interchangeable in scholarship, nor are they simply mere synonyms.

No doubt the epic poems served as the initial inspiration of Heinrich Schliemann to dig up Troy and Mycenae. Yet the Homeric epics do not reflect precisely Mycenaean times; as Moses Finley, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, and others have shown, the features of Homeric society seem to belong by and large to a later period.³⁶ Indeed, there is now a scholarly consensus that "it would [...] be anachronistic to approach epic tradition with modern criteria of historicity".³⁷ This issue becomes even more complicated because the terminology used for early Greece and its periodization is far from being a settled issue among archaeologists and historians.³⁸ And still, the blurring that the textbook presents between the "Achaeans" of Homer and myth and

³⁴ Oliver T.P.K. Dickinson, "Mycenaean Age", in Margalit Finkelberg, ed., *The Homer Encyclopedia*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 539–543.

³⁵ Robert L. Fowler, "Achaeans", in Margalit Finkelberg, ed., *The Homer Encyclopedia*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 2–4.

³⁶ Moses Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, London: Chatto, 1956; Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Le monde d'Homère*, Paris: Perrin, 2002; and the discussion in Margalit Finkelberg, *Greeks and Pre-Greeks: Aegean Prehistory and Greek Heroic Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 1–3.

³⁷ Finkelberg, *Greeks and Pre-Greeks*, 2–4, 9–15, quotation from p. 3.

³⁸ See Antonis Kotsonas, "Politics of Periodization and the Archaeology of Early Greece", *American Journal of Archaeology* 120 (2016), 239–270.

the “Mycenaeans” of the archaeological record is striking. This blurring occurs both in the chapters that deal with the Trojan War and those that deal with Mycenaean civilization. It is hence bound to create a series of misunderstandings and hinder the historical understanding of early Greece and the unique role of Homer’s poetry in it. It is also possible that this is an expression of some uneasiness as to where and how to place the Mycenaean world within the grand narrative of Hellenism, a point to which I will return below.

The second blurring upheld in the textbook and which I wish to discuss concerns the dichotomy between history and prehistory. Let me repeat that the second part of the textbook is named “Προ-ιστορία” [Pro-istoria; Pre-History].³⁹ The first unit opens with the Stone Age, where one of the first concerns is to define prehistory and history: the dividing line is, as expected, the invention of writing.

Τα πολύ παλιά χρόνια οι άνθρωποι δεν ήξεραν να γράφουν. Γι’ αυτό δεν άφησαν κανένα γραπτό που να μας δίνει πληροφορίες για τη ζωή τους. Μας άφησαν όμως τα **εργαλεία** τους και τα όπλα τους. Από αυτά μαθαίνουμε για τον τρόπο που ζούσαν. Επειδή τα πρώτα εργαλεία τους ήταν από πέτρα (λίθο), την πρώτη αυτή εποχή την ονομάζουμε **εποχή του λίθου**. Αργότερα, όταν έφτιαξαν εργαλεία από μέταλλα (χαλκό), άρχισε μια νέα εποχή, η εποχή του χαλκού. Οι εποχές του λίθου και του χαλκού μαζί αποτελούν την προϊστορική εποχή ή **Προϊστορία**. Η **Ιστορία** αρχίζει από τότε που οι άνθρωποι ανακάλυψαν τη **γραφή**. (97)

In very old times people did not know how to write. That is why they left no writings that give us information about their lives. But they did leave us their **tools** and weapons. From these we learn about the way they lived. Because their first tools were made of stone, we call this early period the **Stone Age**. Later, when they made tools from metals (copper), a new era began, the Bronze Age. The Stone and Bronze Age constitute together the prehistoric era or **Prehistory**. **History** begins when people discovered **writing**.

This boxed text is supplemented by a timeline illustrating the different periods, which highlights how the invention of writing marks the end of prehistory and introduces a new era. This period of prehistory in Greece,

³⁹ The hyphen in the term prehistory, only used on the title page (96) and in the table of contents (151, in red), is perhaps meant to highlight the difference between history and prehistory. Prehistory (*ηροϊστορία*; *proistoria*) is usually spelled in Greek without a hyphen and this is the spelling used in the remainder of the textbook.

according to the introductory chapter (107), is said to include three civilizations: the Cycladic, the Minoan, and the Mycenaean. While as far as we know the Cycladians "δεν ήξεραν να γράφουν" (108; did not know how to write), the situation changes with the latter two civilizations:

Οι Μινωίτες ήταν οι πρώτοι από τους κατοίκους της Ελλάδας που χρησιμοποίησαν τη γραφή. Για να γράψουν μια λέξη σχεδίαζαν εικόνες ζώων, φυτών, πλοίων, αγγείων κτλ. Η πρώτη αυτή γραφή λέγεται ιερογλυφική. Στη Φαιστό οι αρχαιολόγοι ανακάλυψαν έναν δίσκο γραμμένο με **ιερογλυφική γραφή**. Κανείς μέχρι τώρα δεν κατάφερε να τον διαβάσει. Λένε ότι πάνω του είναι γραμμένος ένας θρησκευτικός ύμνος. Στον **δίσκο της Φαιστού** τα σχήματα έχουν γραφτεί με σφραγιδες. Είναι το πιο παλιό δείγμα τυπογραφίας. Αργότερα οι Μινωίτες ανακάλυψαν μια πιο απλή γραφή, που ονομάστηκε Γραμμική Α'. (123)

The Minoans were the first among the inhabitants of Greece who employed writing. To write a word they drew images of animals, plants, ships, pots, etc. This first writing is called hieroglyphic. Archaeologists have discovered at Phaistos a disc written in **hieroglyphic writing**. No one has managed to read it until now. It is said that a religious hymn is written on it. On the **Phaistos Disc** the shapes are written with seals. It is the oldest sample of typography. Later on, the Minoans discovered a simpler script, which was called Linear A.

This short paragraph on the writing systems of the Minoans condenses information about the Phaistos Disc, Cretan hieroglyphic writing, and the Linear A script. A few pages down (126), a photo of the disc is placed opposite a photo of a clay tablet in Linear A. There is no additional information as to the possible language(s) that these scripts are supposed to represent. Even in the teacher's book, it is not stated clearly that these scripts have still not been deciphered (95). Nor is there any discussion in the textbook about why, following the distinction made earlier between prehistory and history, these early scripts are traditionally *not* thought to represent the transition to a historical period.

The picture does not seem to change much in the unit on Mycenaean civilization and its writing system. Like with the Minoans, the writing system of the Mycenaeans is somewhat incongruously presented within one chapter together with their religion (123–126, 142–144). Yet if the discovery of writing were indeed as important as presented earlier on, one would expect the book to dedicate a separate chapter to this subject. Again, some uneasiness

accompanies the presentation of this early script, possibly because language is often conceived, in the Greek context at least, as an issue very close to the question of national identity.⁴⁰

The first chapter about Mycenaean civilization is labelled “Achaeans, the First Greeks” (131), where we are to understand the term “Achaeans” as synonymous with “Mycenaeans” (see above). The textbook dedicates one paragraph (142) to Linear B and its decipherment as an early Greek script, and one piece of boxed text including a photo of a clay tablet (144):

Οι Μυκηναίοι μιλούσαν ελληνικά και επηρεασμένοι από τη γραφή των Μινωιτών ανακάλυψαν ένα άλλο είδος γραφής που ονομάζεται **Γραμμική Β'**. Έγραφαν με ένα μυτερό ξυλαράκι πάνω σε πλάκες φτιαγμένες από μαλακό πηλό. Οι αρχαιολόγοι βρήκαν πολλές τέτοιες πλάκες σε ανασκαφές που έκαναν στην Πύλο, στην Κνωσό κι αλλού. Οι επιστήμονες κατάφεραν να διαβάσουν τα γράμματα της Γραμμικής Β' κι έμαθαν πολλά πράγματα για τη ζωή των Μυκηναίων. Η Γραμμική Β' είναι **η πρώτη ελληνική γραφή**. (142)

These Mycenaean spoke Greek, and, under the influence of the scripture of the Minoans, invented another kind of script called **Linear B**. They wrote with pointed wood on tablets made from soft clay. Archaeologists have found many such tablets in excavations made at Pylos, Knossos, and elsewhere. Scholars managed to read the letters of Linear B and learned a lot of things about the life of the Mycenaean. Linear B is **the first Greek script**.

Όταν οι αρχαιολόγοι ανακάλυψαν τις πήλινες πινακίδες της Γραμμικής γραφής Β', έμειναν σιωπηλοί μπροστά στην άγνωστη γραφή που έβλεπαν. Όταν όμως μπόρεσαν και τη διάβασαν, ανακάλυψαν ότι στις πινακίδες αυτές υπήρχαν λέξεις μιας πολύ αρχαίας ελληνικής γλώσσας. Πολλές από τις λέξεις αυτές τις χρησιμοποιούμε ακόμη και σήμερα: οίνος και έλαιον, χρυσός και χαλκός, θάλασσα, άνεμος, αγρός και πλήθος άλλες. Από τις πινακίδες αυτές οι επιστήμονες μπόρεσαν να μάθουν πολλά πράγματα για την εποχή των Μυκηναίων. Έμαθαν λοιπόν για τη ζωή τους, για τους θεούς και για τους άρχοντές τους, για τα προϊόντα που εμπορεύονταν, για τα κτήματα και τα ζώα τους, για τα επαγγέλματά τους. (144)

When archaeologists discovered the clay tablets of Linear B, they remained silent in front of this unknown writing that they saw. But when they managed to read it, they found out that in these tablets were the words of a very old Greek language. We use many of these words still today: wine [*οίνος*]

⁴⁰ See Peter Mackridge, *Language and National Identity in Greece, 1766–1976*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

and oil [έλαιον], gold [χρυσός] and copper [χαλκός], sea [θάλασσα], wind [άνεμος], field [αγρός], and many others. Scholars could learn from these tablets many things about the period of the Mycenaeans. So they learned about their life, gods and lords, about the produce they traded, their estates and livestock, and their professions.

Sensational as the discovery and the later decipherment of the Linear B tablets were, I find it strange that the textbook, which mentions the archaeological accomplishments of Schliemann (131–132) and those of Sir Arthur Evans at the turn of the twentieth century (115), including photographs of the two men, fails to mention that the decipherment was the accomplishment of a single individual, Michael Ventris, who, together with John Chadwick, published in the early 1950s his attempts at reading what turned out to be against all expectations a very early Greek script.⁴¹

Furthermore, there is no reference to the fact that this is a syllabic script – possibly a missed pedagogical opportunity for the students to consider the differences between this and the Greek alphabetic script they are familiar with. Nor is there any indication of the administrative content of the tablets, or the small number of “hands”, indicating a small group of professional scribes. All these details could ultimately serve as an explanation as to why this civilization is conventionally categorized as belonging to prehistory.

The only, to my mind, attempt to accommodate this seemingly contradictory information is the use of the word “protohistory” in the teacher’s book in order to describe these early civilizations. Now, “protohistory” is quite a rare term, at least in Anglophone scholarship on the Mycenaean world.⁴² Some uses of the word emerge in the historiographies of places with a very long history, such as India.⁴³ The word “protohistory” is not used in the textbook,

⁴¹ Michael Ventris and John Chadwick, “Evidence for Greek Dialect in the Mycenaean Archives”, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 73 (1953), 84–103; Michael Ventris and John Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 2nd ed., New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1974 (ed. pr. 1956).

⁴² On the adjective “protohistoric”, see Kotsonas, “Politics of Periodization”, 257, quoting Anthony Snodgrass, “The Coming of the Iron Age in Greece: Europe’s Earliest Bronze/Iron Transition”, in Marie Louise Stig Sørensen and Roger Thomas, eds., *The Bronze Age–Iron Age Transition in Europe: Aspects of Continuity and Change in European Societies ca. 1200 to 500 BC*, Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1989, 23. See also the more recent discussion in John K. Papadopoulos, “Greek Protohistories”, *World Archaeology* 50 (2018), 690–705.

⁴³ As in, e.g., Hasmukh Dhirajlal Sankalia, *The Prehistory and Protohistory of India and Pakistan*, Poona: Deccan College, 1974 (ed. pr. 1963); Madhukar Keshav Dhavalikar, *Indian Protohistory*, New Delhi: Books & Books, 1997; Vardhman K. Jain, *Prehistory and Protohistory of India: An Appraisal. Palaeolithic, Non-Harappan, Chalcolithic Cultures*, New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2006. Less frequently, “protohistory” may be used to refer to the peoples of the Andes or Ancient Israel, as, e.g.,

but appears in the teacher's book. While, as we saw above, the second part of the book is entitled "Προ-ιστορία" [Pro-istoria; Pre-History] in the textbook, it is entitled "Προϊστορία-Πρωτοϊστορία" [Proistoria-Protoistoria; Pre-history-Protohistory] in the teacher's book (73). It is mentioned there that:

Η ιστορική επιστήμη εντάσσει το Μυκηναϊκό πολιτισμό εν μέρει στην Προϊστορία ή για την ακρίβεια, θεωρεί ότι αποτελεί την ελληνική Πρωτο-ιστορία. Κι αυτό γιατί, ενώ έχουμε γραπτά κείμενα της Γραμμικής Β', που αποκρυπτογραφήθηκε το 1952, εν τούτοις οι πληροφορίες που μας δίνουν έχουν λογιστικό περιεχόμενο και δεν είναι αρκετές, για να σχηματίσουμε μια ολοκληρωμένη εικόνα για την εποχή αυτή. (73)

The science of history incorporates Mycenaean civilization in part in Prehistory or, to be precise, considers that it constitutes Greek Proto-History. This is because, while we have written texts of Linear B, which was deciphered in 1952, the information they provide is about accounting, and it is not sufficient to form a complete picture of this period.

In the context of Mycenaean civilization, it is not an exaggeration to assert that the use of the term "protohistory" seems to be an idiosyncrasy of Modern Greek. A decisive shift in its introduction and gradual common use was brought about by the multi-volume *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους* [Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous; History of the Greek Nation] released in 1971 by the publisher Ekdotiki Athinon. This history's very first volume, running up to 1100 BCE, is entitled *Προϊστορία και Πρωτοϊστορία* [Proistoria kai Protoistoria; Prehistory and Protohistory].⁴⁴ From a Modern Greek perspective, this is quite a convenient term.

While "protohistory" implies an affiliation of the later Greek world with this early culture, which, as we now know, writes and speaks a form of early Greek, the term also marks these early inhabitants of the Greek peninsula as different from the Greeks of the archaic and classical age. The latter ones, according to the mainstream national narrative, are still "our" ancient ancestors *par*

in Daniel H. Sandweiss and D. Peter Kviotok, eds., *Perspectives on Andean Prehistory and Protohistory: Papers from the Third Annual Northeast Conference on Andean Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Latin American Studies Program, 1986; or Abraham Malamet, "The Proto-History of Israel: A Study in Method", in Carol L. Meyers and Michael P. O'Connor, eds., *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983, 303-313.

⁴⁴ George A. Christoloulos and John C. Bastias, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους* [Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous; History of the Hellenic Nation], vol. 1, Athina: Ekdotiki Athinon, 1971.

excellence (οι αρχαίοι ημών πρόγονοι; *oi archaioi imon progonoι*), in a long continuum of Hellenism that stretches into today.⁴⁵ Suffice it to mention the popular conviction of a great many Modern Greeks that historical figures such as Pericles and Plato are the most important Greeks of all times.⁴⁶ Apparently the collapse after the fall of the Mycenaean palaces and the beginning of the so-called Dark Ages is too grand to ignore. This results in some uneasiness in adopting a seamless identity from the Mycenaean world of the middle of the second millennium BCE up to the present day. Introducing the term "protohistory" is an idiosyncratic Modern Greek way of coming to terms with this newly discovered Greek-speaking Mycenaean world – and by "newly" I mean about seventy years ago, when Linear B was deciphered. How and where Homer could (or should) fit in this complex picture belongs to a different discussion.

Needless to say, Modern Greek historiography is not unique in communicating such uneasiness. Indeed, it may be equally traced, to a certain extent, in classical scholarship.⁴⁷ While Mycenaeans must have been the "first Greeks", for indeed scholars have found that they wrote in Greek, they are a bit too foreign, too mysterious, or perhaps too ancient (or even too Near Eastern⁴⁸) to be properly integrated into what classicists view as Hellenism. Discontinuity for the sake of periodization is often the preferred scholarly route. At the university level, the disciplinary divide between classical studies and archaeology or anthropology also helps keep the Mycenaean world quite apart from the later Hellenic world.

⁴⁵ On archaeology's role in creating and maintaining a narrative about national identity, see Damaskos and Plantzos, *A Singular Antiquity*.

⁴⁶ Five out of ten of the "greatest Greeks" of all times, according to a survey that was conducted as part of the 2009 television programme *Μεγάλοι Έλληνες* [Megaloi Ellines; Great Greeks], produced and broadcast by the Greek TV network SKAI, belong to antiquity (Alexander the Great, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, and Pericles). Available online at ΣΚΑΪ [SKAI], <https://www.skaitv.gr/show/enimerosi/megaloi-ellines/archeio> (accessed 1 December 2020).

⁴⁷ For the discontinuity after the fall of the Mycenaean palaces and the convenience of using this collapse for periodization, see Robin Osborne, *Greece in the Making, 1200–479 BC*, 2nd ed., London: Routledge, 2009 (ed. pr. 1996), xvii, and Jonathan M. Hall, *A History of the Archaic Greek World: Ca. 1200–479 BCE*, 2nd ed., Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014 (ed. pr. 2007). There are, nevertheless, also historians who attempt to compose a history that stretches from prehistoric times up to the end of the Hellenistic period, such as Thomas R. Martin, *Ancient Greece: From Prehistoric to Hellenistic Times*, 2nd ed., New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012 (ed. pr. 1996).

⁴⁸ Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 3: "In 1200 BC Greece looked much like any near-eastern society. The Mycenaeans were highly organised and, in their way, highly civilised. The language they spoke was Greek but, like several near-eastern neighbours, they wrote in a syllabary (so-called Linear B) and used writing to record the accounts of a complex and very hierarchical state organisation. Although their monuments and their figurative art certainly differ in detail from that of their near-eastern neighbours, it is difficult to feel that they differ in kind".

From a Modern Greek perspective, then, Hellenism still begins in a traditional manner after the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces and the Dark Ages, with the archaic period and the invention of the Greek alphabet. It is hard to tell whether this periodization could be gradually modified in the future. The so-called Hellenization of the Minoans in Modern Greek education is a good instance of a similar process of appropriation.⁴⁹

Independently of what happens within the educational system, recent research on the genetic origins of the Minoans and Mycenaeans might at some point add a “scientific” touch to such an appropriation.⁵⁰ This research was published in 2017 in *Nature* and drew a lot of media attention because it also argued for the genetic similarity of these early peoples to contemporary Greeks. It has already been pointed out that this study contains some elements of racial discourse reminiscent of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century national narratives about Hellenism.⁵¹ Whether or not this was the intention of the authors, it is indicative that its results were even reported on the website of the Golden Dawn (Χρυσή Αυγή; Chrysi Avgi), the neo-fascist party in Greece. Where myth ends and history begins, as it were, is still a politically charged issue. Like many others, I too think that self-definition is a safer marker of identity than genetic testing in this case.

This chapter examined the current Grade 3 history schoolbook in use in Modern Greece. The textbook’s blurring between myth and history, and between history and prehistory, reveals some Modern Greek uneasiness, or perhaps I should say anxiety, in coming to grips with the Mycenaean world and what this early Greek-speaking culture may mean for Greeks today. And because education in Greece is instrumental in creating and preserving perceptions of national self-definition, examining this textbook can greatly inform our understanding of this complicated and politically charged reception of Ancient Greek myth and early Greek history.

⁴⁹ Simandiraki, “Μινωπαιδιές: The Minoan Civilization” and “The ‘Minoan’ Experience”, as well as Sofia Voutsaki, “The Hellenization of the Prehistoric Past: The Search for Greek Identity in the Work of Christos Tsountas”, in Sofia Voutsaki and Paul Cartledge, eds., *Ancient Monuments and Modern Identities: A Critical History of Archaeology in 19th and 20th Century Greece*, London: Routledge, 2017, 130–147.

⁵⁰ Iosif Lazaridis et al., “Genetic Origins of the Minoans and Mycenaeans”, *Nature* 548 (2017), 214–218.

⁵¹ Yannis Hamilakis, “Who Are You Calling Mycenaean?”, *London Review of Books Blog*, 10 August 2017, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2017/08/10/yannis-hamilakis/who-are-you-calling-mycenaean/> (accessed 27 July 2018).

OUR MYTHICAL FASCISM? CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY AT SCHOOL DURING THE ITALIAN FASCIST TWENTY-YEAR PERIOD*

Classical Antiquity and Fascism

Much has been written about the ideology of classicism and the political manipulation of classical heritage by the Fascist regime in Italy.¹ We will focus on a specific aspect of classical education during the Fascist period: schoolbooks on classical myths for secondary school published during the 1920s and 1930s.²

I. Classical Mythology in Giovanni Gentile's Reform

The first period of the Fascist era for Italian schools begins with Gentile's reform in 1923, one of the most durable reformations of the Italian secondary school, due to the Fascist politician and philosopher Giovanni Gentile.³

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¹ On classical studies and Fascism in Italy see, e.g., Luciano Canfora, "Classicismo e fascismo", *Quaderni di Storia* 2.3 (1976), 15–48, and his *Ideologie del classicismo*, Torino: Einaudi, 1980.

² Only a selection of books are examined in what follows. Such a selection has been made on the basis of a few criteria: they are schoolbooks, that is books clearly intended as tools for school; their main subject is classical mythology; they were popular enough for their copies to be still preserved in public libraries. Such criteria exclude not only narratives and novels drawing their subject from classical myths, and whose features and objectives are different from those of schoolbooks, but also anthologies of short stories on various subjects, including only a few classical myths. On the former, see William Grandi, *La Musa bambina. La letteratura mitologica italiana per ragazzi tra storia, narrazione e pedagogia*, Milano: Unicopli, 2011, 202–205, on the latter, *ibidem*, 164–169.

³ On Gentile's reform, see, e.g., Jürgen Charnitzky, *Fascismo e scuola. La politica scolastica del regime (1922–1943)*, trans. Laura Sergio Bürge and Ina Pizzuto, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1996

Although the remarkable continuity between Italian schooling before Gentile's reform (which had been shaped mainly by Casati's reform of 1859)⁴ and after it has been recently pointed out,⁵ Gentile's reform marked a significant change as regards the role assigned to classical myth at school, although this was in part prepared by some trends already developed in Italian classical scholarship.⁶ The new syllabuses required knowledge of classical mythology at several school levels and in more than one curriculum, and, whereas the previous syllabuses prescribed the knowledge of classical deities and heroes as a very small part of a wider and detailed study of Greek and Roman civilization,⁷ the new syllabuses focused on mythology itself. Schoolbooks published after 1923 were obligated to follow the guidelines drawn up by this reform.

The schooling system established by Gentile consisted of five years of primary school, followed by, in its longest form, five years of *ginnasio* (divided into three years of *ginnasio inferiore* and two years of *ginnasio superiore*) and three years of *liceo classico*. This was the highest-level curriculum and the only one that included the compulsory study of both Greek and Latin.⁸

(ed. pr. in German 1994), 93–191; Adolfo Scotto di Luzio, *La scuola degli Italiani*, Bologna: il Mulino, 2007, 121–170; Gianluca Gabrielli and Davide Montino, eds., *La scuola fascista. Istituzioni, parole d'ordine e luoghi dell'immaginario*, Verona: Ombre Corte, 2009, 150–155; Camillo Neri, "Il greco ai giorni nostri", ovvero: sacrificarsi per Atene o sacrificare Atene?", in Luciano Canfora and Ugo Cardinale, eds., *Disegnare il futuro con intelligenza antica. L'insegnamento del latino e del greco antico in Italia e nel mondo*, Bologna: il Mulino, 2012, 134–135; Federico Condello, *La scuola giusta. In difesa del liceo classico*, Milano: Mondadori, 2018, 101–120.

⁴ For a rich collection of documents concerning the classical school before Gentile's reform, see Gaetano Bonetta and Gigliola Fioravanti, eds., *Archivio centrale dello Stato. Fonti per la storia della scuola: III. L'istruzione classica (1860–1910)*, Roma: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1995. On Casati's reform, see Gianluigi Baldo, "Gli studi di latino nell'Italia postunitaria. Dalla legge Casati alla scuola media unificata", in Luciano Canfora and Ugo Cardinale, eds., *Disegnare il futuro con intelligenza antica. L'insegnamento del latino e del greco antico in Italia e nel mondo*, Bologna: il Mulino, 2012, 171–177.

⁵ Condello, *La scuola giusta*, 108–120; also Scotto di Luzio, *La scuola degli Italiani*, 57–68. Tables summarizing the Italian schooling system before and after 1923 can be found in Charnitzky, *Fascismo e scuola*, 525, 531.

⁶ See, e.g., Neri, "Il greco ai giorni nostri", 113–117, and his "Un Filologo-Rettore: Vittorio Puntoni (Pisa 24.6.1859–Roma 21.3.1926)", *Eikasmós* 27 (2016), 386, 388.

⁷ See *Codice dell'istruzione secondaria classica e tecnica e della primaria e normale. Raccolta delle leggi, regolamenti, istruzioni ed altri provvedimenti governativi emanati in base alla legge 13 novembre 1859 con note spiegate e raffronti colle leggi preesistenti approvata dal Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, Torino: Tipografia scolastica di Seb. Franco, 1861, 198–199 (syllabuses for the final exam of *ginnasio*).

⁸ For a table summarizing the Italian schooling system according to Gentile's reform, see Charnitzky, *Fascismo e scuola*, 531.

Gentile's *ginnasio* required the students to read episodes from the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and *Aeneid* in Italian translation, to know "il mondo dei miti e della religione romana" (the world of the myths and Roman religion), "la vita religiosa e i suoi miti" (religious life and its rites)⁹ already for the admission exam from the first to the second cycle (*ginnasio superiore*), not to neglect "le tradizioni e leggende che parlano vivamente all'animo del giovinetto" (the traditions and legends that can speak to the young boy)¹⁰ for the admission exam to the first class of *liceo classico*, and to translate select passages and summarize the contents of one book of the *Iliad* and one of the *Odyssey* for the final exam.

Even students of the *scuola complementare di avviamento professionale*, whose *cursus studiorum* lasted only three years and did not give access to further steps, as well as those who wanted to be admitted to the second cycle of *istituto tecnico* and to *liceo femminile*, were expected to read an Italian translation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*¹¹ and to be familiar with Roman mythology and religion.¹² The latter holds true for the candidates for the second cycle of *istituto magistrale*.¹³

In other words, a basic knowledge of classical mythology was required at a relatively early stage of secondary school, even within the non-classicist and professional curricula. Such an institutional framework stimulated a new set of schoolbooks suitable for these needs.

2. Our Mythical Books: Before 1923

Although 1923 is a turning point in the history of Italian publishing for schools, books published before that date remained in use and were reprinted. The pocket-sized schoolbook on classical mythology written by Felice Ramorino (1897) long enjoyed wide circulation,¹⁴ and among the most pop-

⁹ Giovanni Gentile, "Orari e programmi per le regie scuole medie", *Bollettino Ufficiale del Ministero dell'Istruzione Pubblica* 50.2 (17 November 1923), 4433, 4435. All translations are mine (V.G.), unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 4441.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 4426, 4454, 4499.

¹² *Ibidem*, 4455, 4500.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 4482. After the five-year primary school, the first cycle of *istituto magistrale* lasted four years, the second cycle only three years.

¹⁴ Felice Ramorino was a Latinist who taught at the universities of Turin, Palermo, Pavia, Florence, and Milan (the Catholic University). His scholarly work concerned several Latin authors, but

ular pre-1923 handbooks and dictionaries of mythology are those by Nicola Terzaghi [1912],¹⁵ Domenico Bassi (1912), Guido Falorsi (1913), Enrico Bianchi [1917], and Concetto Marchesi (1922).¹⁶

Most titles specifically mention the school for which the book is intended. So Terzaghi refers to the *scuole medie classiche*, and especially addresses the *ginnasio* students; he declares that his book was inspired by “un desiderio sincero di bene per la nostra scuola, e da un profondo amore per l’antichità classica” (7;¹⁷ a genuine desire for the benefit of our school, and a deep love for Classical Antiquity), as an alternative to “soliti manuali di mitologia che infestano le nostre aule scolastiche” (5; the usual handbooks that infest our classrooms); he also prints an appendix with “pochissimi cenni sugli oracoli e sui Riti religiosi, voluti dai programmi ministeriali pei Licei Moderni” (a few remarks on oracles and religious Rituals, prescribed by the official syllabuses for Modern Colleges). Bassi presents his book “ad uso delle scuole e delle persone colte” (for the use of schools and learned people). Similarly, Bianchi considers doing something helpful “non solo alla scuola, ma anche a tutte quelle persone colte che amano leggere e intendere i grandi capolavori delle letterature antiche e moderne” (iv; not only for the school, but also for all learned people who like to read and to understand the masterpieces of ancient and modern literatures). Falorsi’s book belongs to the series titled “Biblioteca degli studenti. Riassunti per tutte le materie d’esame nei Licei, Ginnasi, Istituti Tecnici, ecc.”, and the title of Marchesi’s book includes the subheading *Lecture latine ad uso dei ginnasi superiori*.

Nicola Terzaghi (1880–1964) was Professor of Latin Language and Literature in Turin (1923–1942) and then in Florence (1942–1950).¹⁸ A pupil

an important part of his publications was devoted to school. See AA.VV., *Raccolta di scritti in onore di Felice Ramorino*, Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1927, xviii–xx.

¹⁵ The dates are put in square brackets when they are not printed on the book.

¹⁶ Nicola Terzaghi, *Miti e leggende del mondo greco-romano. Manuale di lecture mitologiche ad uso delle scuole medie classiche*, Palermo and Roma: Sandron, [1912]; Domenico Bassi, *Mitologia greca e romana. Ad uso delle scuole e delle persone colte*, Firenze: Sansoni, 1912; Guido Falorsi, *Mitologia*, 4th ed., Livorno: Raffaello Giusti, 1913 (ed. pr. 1901); Enrico Bianchi, *Dizionario di mitologia e di cultura classica, con un’appendice storica e con molte illustrazioni*, 2 vols., Firenze: Sansoni, 1921 [ed. pr. 1917]; Concetto Marchesi, *Miti e riti. Lecture latine ad uso dei ginnasi superiori*, Messina: Principato, 1922.

¹⁷ Throughout this paper, the figures in brackets indicate page numbers of the quoted passages.

¹⁸ See Enzo Degani, “La filologia greca nel secolo XX (Italia)”, in AA.VV., *La filologia greca e latina nel secolo XX. Atti del Congresso Internazionale. Roma, 17–21 settembre 1984*, vol. 2, Pisa: Giardini, 1989, 1120–1122.

of Girolamo Vitelli, his earlier works betray a clear inclination to regard Greek and Roman civilizations as a whole and to prefer research topics suitable for such a unitary approach.¹⁹ One of them were ancient myths, observed from both a literary and iconographical point of view, always within a firm philological setting. He wrote:²⁰

[N]on si può dire, che gli studi di carattere insieme archeologico e filologico fossero inutili o vani: al contrario abituavano a cogliere i rapporti fra l'arte figurata, la letteratura, la mitologia, la storia del culto e della religione, la vita, il costume, per capir meglio l'antichità nel suo insieme, e per render chiaro, che il mondo antico non è composto di due compartimenti stagni, la Grecia e Roma [...], ma è un'unità grandiosa dall'età preellenica fino al principio del Medio Evo. (ix-x)

One cannot say that archaeological and philological studies were useless or idle: on the contrary, they got people accustomed to noticing the connections between figurative art, literature, mythology, history of cult and religion, life, tradition, in order to better understand antiquity as a whole, and to make clear that the ancient world is not made of two separate parts, Greece and Rome [...], but is a great unity from the pre-Hellenic time to the beginning of the Middle Ages.

Such an approach to the ancient world produced his schoolbook on myths (not his only schoolbook).²¹ Terzaghi offers a book collecting "le principali figure divine dell'antichità e le principali tradizioni mitologiche e legendarie" (5; the major deities of antiquity and the main mythological and legendary traditions). He does not intend to translate, but rather to "reduce" various passages from ancient authors describing mythical characters and mythical traditions (5–6). He prefers the Latin names of deities to the Greek equivalents because *ginnasio* students read only Roman authors, and it is the teacher that can decide whether to explain the differences between the gods of the Greeks and of the Romans (6).

¹⁹ This idea of a global approach to Classical Antiquity was shared by scholars such as Domenico Comparetti, Enea Piccolomini, and Vittorio Puntori: see Neri, "Il greco ai giorni nostri", 113–117, and his "Un Filologo-Rettore", 386, 388.

²⁰ Nicola Terzaghi, *La filologia classica a Firenze al principio del secolo XX*, Firenze: Le Monnier, 1957.

²¹ See Degani, "La filologia greca", 1122.

In other words, Terzaghi writes a schoolbook as a classical scholar, always keeping well separated the needs of the school and students, and those of classical scholars, with a preference for the former:

La scuola ha dei diritti imprescindibili, ed anche superiori a quelli accampati dalla scienza, sì che questi debbono per forza venir sacrificati a quelli. (6)

School has its own essential rights, even greater than those claimed by science, so that the latter must be necessarily sacrificed to the former.

This allows him to offer an excellent schoolbook with a reliable scholarly background.

Domenico Bassi (1859–1943) had focused on mythology already as a philologist,²² and in 1912 wanted to make a work of “learned popularization”:

Con la speranza di far cosa non inutile alla cultura italiana accettai molto volentieri la proposta del cortese editore [...] di comporre un trattato di Mitologia greca e romana “ad uso delle scuole e delle persone colte”, cioè un’opera essenzialmente di divulgazione. Ma, pur componendo un’opera di divulgazione si può, anzi si deve soddisfare, entro certi limiti, alle esigenze della scienza [...]. L’opera, giova ripetere, non ha pretese scientifiche; bensì vuol essere, e speriamo che sia realmente, di divulgazione scientifica. (v, xi)

In the hope of doing something of value for Italian culture, I accepted with great pleasure the proposal of the kind publisher [...], that of writing a treatise on Greek and Roman mythology “for the use of schools and learned people”, that is, a work of popularization. Nonetheless, even in writing a work of popularization, one can, or, better, one must, meet – to some extent – the needs of science [...]. The work, as needs to be said, does not have any scholarly ambitions; on the contrary, it intends to be, and let us hope it is really, learned popularization.

Actually, the scholarly background of this work is noticeable even in the preface (v–xi): he acknowledges his debts to the most recent, prestigious,

²² See, e.g., Domenico Bassi, *Mitologia babilonese-assira*, Milano: Hoepli, 1898; *Mitologia germanica: gli dei e gli eroi*, Milano: Hoepli, 1933; “Apollo Liceo”, *Rivista di storia antica e scienze affini* 1.3 (1895), 61–74. He published a few essays concerning mythology in the *Rivista di filologia e d’istruzione classica* (1890, 1895), and to its editor-in-chief, Ettore Stampini, is dedicated his 1912 book (“Ad Ettore Stampini Direttore della ‘Rivista di Filologia e d’Istruzione Classica’”).

and up-to-date scholarly works, published in Italy and abroad (an excellent bibliography is given on pp. viii-x); at the same time he claims independence from foreign books:²³

Compendio veramente è anche il mio, non però una riduzione o un rimaneggiamento di nessuna specie di qualche libro straniero. (v)

Mine is honestly a summary, but it is not an adaptation or a remake of any sort of foreign book.

He also makes the best of the most recent research in the domains of anthropology and archaeology: in smaller font he gives more details about these aspects of ancient myths. He pays attention "al culto e ai monumenti artistici" (to religion and artistic monuments), in addition to the neglected and less known versions of the myths. Two detailed and rich indexes ("Indice de' nomi propri mitologici" and "Indice delle cose più notevoli") make this volume a good tool for students and for all readers.

The attitude of Guido Falorsi (1847–1920) was strongly positivist. His definition of mythology in general is telling:

Mitologia è, secondo la derivazione della voce, esposizione o narrazione dei Miti, cioè delle favolose credenze, le quali [...] ciascuna delle genti medesime si foggì secondo la sua naturale disposizione, e le contingenze esterne del viver suo. (v)

Mythology is, according to the etymology of the word, description or narration of the Myths, that is of the imaginary beliefs that each nation fashioned following their natural inclination, as well as the external conditions of their life.

On Greek and Roman mythology he writes in particular:

La Mitologia, o Religione, dei Greci, e per gran parte anco quella dei Romani, è un naturalismo antropomorfo; una credenza, cioè, che attribuisce natura e caratteri divini alla cagione immediata, da cui procede ciascun fenomeno od ordine di fenomeni nel mondo fisico, ed anco nel morale. (vi)

²³ This clarification can be understood in the context of a long-lasting debate between those who looked to German classical scholarship for guidance, and those who refused to follow the model of the foreign scholarship for reasons of alleged patriotism. See Neri, "Il greco ai giorni nostri", 128–130.

The Mythology, or Religion, of the Greeks, and to a great extent also that of the Romans, is an anthropomorphic naturalism; in other words, a belief which imparts a divine nature and divine features to the immediate cause of each phenomenon of the physical world, as well as of the moral world.

He goes into more detail while confronting the difference between Greek and Roman mythology:

L'uomo greco, trovandosi in presenza ad una natura, che ne provocava ed esercitava le energie senza sopraffarle, poté di leggieri immaginare le naturali potenze, da lui deificate, nelle forme e nelle proporzioni di individui umani trascendenti di forza e di beltà, ma non in infinito eccesso, i mortali; e così il naturalismo antropomorfo dei Greci assoggettavasi alle norme della estetica, immaginando, e studiandosi di rappresentare le sue Deità secondo i più severi canoni della perfezione fisica umana [...]. Questo originario antropomorfismo, e quella maggior libertà, di cui relativamente ad altri popoli godettero i Greci, presso i quali i sacerdoti non si costituiscono mai in casta, non dominarono mai lo Stato [...], conferirono al Mito greco quella agevolezza di umanizzarsi e di evolversi [...]. Una più austera concezione della vita, che naturali disposizioni e condizioni di ambiente contribuirono a creare nella coscienza latina, ed in generale nella italica; una minore libertà politica; una più rigorosa e dogmatica influenza dello Stato così sulle cerimonie del culto esterno, come sulle dottrine filosofico-religiose e sulle credenze; quella minore fecondità d'immaginazione, e minor facoltà creativa di Miti, che caratterizzano il genio italico raffrontato col greco; influirono notabilmente sulla Mitologia romana. (vi-x)

The Greek man, facing a nature that stimulated and trained his strengths without defeating them, could easily figure out the natural forces, deified by him, as creatures with the appearance and size of human beings, by far superior in strength and beauty – although not excessively – compared to mortals; so the anthropomorphic naturalism of the Greeks followed the aesthetic rules, shaping its Deities in accordance with the strictest standards of physical perfection [...]. This original anthropomorphism, and the bigger freedom of the Greeks, whose priests never constituted a caste, never dominated the State [...], gave Greek Myth its own humanity and variety [...]. A more austere concept of life, in whose creation in the Latin and more generally Italic conscience a natural attitude together with environmental conditions contributed; a lesser political freedom; a more strict and dogmatic influence of the State on the ceremonies of cult as well as on the philosophical and religious doctrines and beliefs; a less prolific

imagination and ability to create Myths, which are typical of the Italic mind compared to the Greek one; all this affected Roman Mythology considerably.

Myth and religion are regarded as phenomena to be observed and analysed *sine ira et studio* and placed within their cultural context. The discussion of the reasons for learning classical myths is rather modern: they help us to know and understand not only classical history and civilization as such, but also modern literature and arts, which are indebted to the classical world and which draw so much from ancient mythology (v). The book closes with an analytic and etymological index of myths and mythological characters, suggesting that it is not only a schoolbook but also a reference tool.

Enrico Bianchi (1878–1953), another pupil of Vitelli in Florence, engaged “in una seria e fruttuosa opera di divulgazione” (in serious and fruitful popularization), a definition which could suit all the books examined so far:²⁴ he was mostly the author of schoolbooks, but also of a critical edition of the scholia to Nicander’s *Alexipharmaca*.²⁵ His paperback *Dizionarietto* [1917] offers some information about ancient culture and civilization, and therefore includes names not only of mythological characters but also of historical people, as a result of the same view of the ancient culture and world as a unitary whole that we have described above.

Concetto Marchesi’s (1878–1957) book (1922) is different from the ones examined above: it is an anthology of passages (or whole texts, whenever possible) taken from various ancient authors and given in their original language, with a line-by-line commentary but no translation. These texts are collected in two main sections, the first entitled “Miti”, the second one “Riti”. As the author writes in his preface (v), the intrinsic unity of such parts is due to the unity of the subject matter, connecting myth and religion. The texts were chosen to stimulate the students’ memory and arouse their curiosity: in the first section poets prevail, especially Ovid and Tibullus, and generally speaking most passages collected in the book come from the works of Augustan authors. But Christian texts are included too:

[P]erché la struttura ideale del libro sia compiuta, e perché lo studio del latino vada oltre quell’indebito limite che ha fatto considerare a molti sinora come unica lingua di Roma quella che è soltanto la lingua di alcuni scrittori

²⁴ Degani, “La filologia greca”, 1119, n. 52.

²⁵ *Scholia in Nicandri Alexipharmaca*, ed. Henricus Bianchi, Firenze: Seeber, 1904.

romani [...]; è giusto che gli scolari sappiano e intendano come la lingua di Roma abbia potuto comprendere e significare due grandi epoche della nostra civiltà. (v)

So that the structure of the book may be complete, and the study of Latin may go beyond the usual line, as if Latin were only the language of a few Roman writers [...], students must learn and understand that the language of Rome included and gave voice to two major ages of our civilization.

The emphasis put on a complete (and non-partisan) view of Ancient Rome, different from that advertised by the Fascist administration, is consistent with Marchesi's political profile: he joined the Socialist Party in 1895 and the Communist Party in 1921.²⁶ In 1922 his name appeared in the journal *Rassegna comunista*, sometimes under the pseudonym "Marsico", then in the party journal *l'Unità* until January 1925. Since he was concerned about the immediate political future, although he was Professor of Latin at Messina University since 1915, he became a student of law in 1922 and graduated in 1923, to make sure to have a fallback position, fearing that the coming Fascist regime could prevent him from teaching because of his political ideas.²⁷ In fact, the regime never deprived him of his chair: in January 1927, as a full professor, he swore loyalty to the king and his successors, and in 1931, on 28 November, he also swore loyalty to the Fascist regime, as all professors were bound to do in order to keep their chair.²⁸ The Communist Party, which was clandestine, approved this oath because it was important that such a personality kept his educative role and his relationship with young people.²⁹ Nonetheless, he never enrolled in the

²⁶ Ezio Franceschini writes in *Concetto Marchesi. Linee per l'interpretazione di un uomo inquieto*, Padova: Antenore, 1978, 96: "Proveniva dal socialismo, in cui fermamente credeva, e se ne staccò, come tanti, quando lo vide [...] impotente a risolvere i problemi della classe operaia e contadina o, per dire una frase che amava, della povera gente" (He came from socialism, believed firmly in it, and left it, like many people, when he saw that it was [...] unable to solve the problems of the working class and the farmers, or, better, as he liked to say, of the poor people).

²⁷ On Marchesi's complicated and uneven career and life, see, e.g., Franceschini, *Concetto Marchesi*; Luciano Canfora, *La sentenza*, Palermo: Sellerio, 1985; and Emilio Pianezzola, *Concetto Marchesi. Gli anni della lotta*, Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2015.

²⁸ It was Gentile who suggested that Mussolini required all professors to swear: see Franceschini, *Concetto Marchesi*, 97. Only twelve professors refused to swear: among them, the historian of antiquity Gaetano De Sanctis. See Helmut Goetz, *Il giuramento rifiutato. I docenti universitari e il regime fascista*, trans. Loredana Melissari, Milano: La Nuova Italia, 2000 (ed. pr. in German 1993).

²⁹ See Franceschini, *Concetto Marchesi*, 97, and Pianezzola, *Concetto Marchesi*, 30–31. Nevertheless, Marchesi's choice had to be independent: "[L]a sua coscienza stessa deve avergli detto

National Fascist Party, and this kept him out of any other public assignment usually connected to the role of professor.³⁰ In 1923 he moved from Messina University to Padua University, where he taught for thirty years, until 1953, when he retired.³¹

His recognized masterpiece, the handbook of the history of Latin literature, was published between 1925 and 1927 by his main publisher, Principato, which also printed his schoolbook on myths. The handbook was rather successful, going through eight editions,³² and is still reprinted. It covers a wide timespan, from the origins of Latin to the sixth century CE: this choice betrays the idea expressed already in the preface to the book on myths, that Christian literature cannot be separated from classical literature. He writes:

Roma ha innestato le sue facoltà creative sul tronco dei generi letterari greci e ha prodotto una letteratura che doveva sopravvivere nei secoli alla caduca potenza del suo impero.³³

Rome added its own creative talents to the core of Greek literary genres and produced a literature that was to survive over the centuries the passing power of its empire.

essere più utile all'idea rimanere fra i giovani che andarsene con un gesto clamoroso" (Franceschini, *Concetto Marchesi*, 98; His own conscience must have told him that it was more helpful to the idea to remain among the young people than to leave by a clamorous action).

³⁰ See Franceschini, *Concetto Marchesi*, 86–87: "Sta cominciando l'era fascista' che durerà venti lunghi anni, costringendolo alla inattività aperta e alla vita privata. Non in quanto gli abbia tolto la cattedra, ché a tanto non giunse mai, almeno per chi si sottomise al giuramento. Ma perché lo escluse da ogni funzione pubblica, anche da altri incarichi d'insegnamento, dalla partecipazione a concorsi d'ogni genere, da promozioni, trasferimenti, da tutto ciò insomma che si accompagnava alla carica di docente universitario. E questo perché egli non si piegò mai a chiedere l'iscrizione al partito nazionale fascista" (The "Fascist era" is beginning, which will last twenty years, and force him into inactivity and private life. This is not because the regime deprived him of the chair, for it never did so much, at least for those who swore. Nonetheless, the regime kept him out of any public position, even of any teaching position, of any kind of competitive exam, promotion, transfer, of anything connected to the role of academic professor. And this happened because he never agreed to enroll in the National Fascist Party).

³¹ Marchesi was Chancellor of Padua University from 1 September (designated by the Badoglio government) to 28 November 1943 (when he resigned after the creation of the Italian Social Republic), and from February to December 1944 he sought refuge in Switzerland. He was able to go back to Padua in November 1945. See Franceschini, *Concetto Marchesi*, 31–39, and Pianezzola, *Concetto Marchesi*, passim.

³² 2nd ed. 1929, 3rd ed. 1932–1933, 4th ed. 1936–1937, 5th ed. 1939–1940, 6th ed. 1944, 7th ed. 1949, 8th ed. 1950.

³³ Concetto Marchesi, *Storia della letteratura latina*, 2 vols., Messina: Principato, 1925–1927, vol. 2, 400.

The revolutionary thought implied by this handbook was apparently not recognized by the regime, which therefore did not forbid its publication.³⁴ His schoolbook on myths met a different fate, not being republished after 1922. Marchesi's publications for school have been underestimated by scholars,³⁵ although they are perfectly consistent with his scholarly works and his political ideas. He recognized the importance of schools and their role in society, and devoted a significant part of his work to school texts and, after World War Two, to political essays on school.³⁶

Among the books on mythology examined above, Marchesi's alone was not published again after 1923. Terzaghi's reliable book enjoyed understandably long-lasting success and was reprinted at least until the 1980s. Bianchi's *Dizionario* [1917] was a convenient tool, and was reprinted up to the 1940s. Finally, Bassi's (1912) and Falorsi's (1913) books circulated

³⁴ See Franceschini, *Concetto Marchesi*, 92: "[S]olo l'ignoranza e l'ottusità del fascismo, all'apparire della prima edizione della Storia in tutt'altre faccende affaccendato [...], poterono non impedire la sua diffusione: ché altrimenti sarebbe bastata la lettura delle pagine dedicate a Sallustio a porla al bando. Ma Catilina e Sallustio erano morti da tempo... quindi non c'era pericolo. Invece proprio la lettura di quelle e di altre pagine del Marchesi aiutarono a non morire chi si sentiva soffocare nei tempi delle camicie nere e del saluto al duce: e tennero desti il desiderio di libertà e la speranza di rinascita" (Only the ignorance and stupidity of the Fascist regime, which was busy with other affairs when the first edition of the Storia appeared [...], made it possible that its circulation was not forbidden: otherwise, the reading of the pages devoted to Sallust would have been enough to ban it. But Catilina and Sallust had been dead for a long time... therefore there was no danger. On the contrary, reading those and other pages of Marchesi allowed those who felt they were suffocating at the time of the Blackshirts and of the Roman salute not to die: and this kept the freedom desire and the hope for a renaissance alive). According to Pianezzola, *Concetto Marchesi*, 28, the Fascist regime found it more convenient to regard Marchesi's handbook as merely a literary work. On Marchesi's history of Latin literature, see also Baldo, "Gli studi di latino", 177–180.

³⁵ For example, schoolbooks are kept out of Franceschini's bibliography (*Concetto Marchesi*, 361–372).

³⁶ On Marchesi's proposals about school to the Italian Constituent Assembly in 1946, see, e.g., Francesco Olgiati, "Concetto Marchesi e la libertà della cultura e della scuola", *Vita e pensiero* 30 (1947), 15–18; Tina Tomasi, *La scuola italiana dalla dittatura alla repubblica. 1943–1948*, Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1976, 273–285. See also Concetto Marchesi, "Motivi di politica scolastica", *Rinascita* 2 (1945), 244–246; "Nella scuola, la nostra salvezza", *Il Politecnico* (3 November 1945); "La cultura e la scuola", *Rinascita* 3 (1946), 217–224; "In difesa della scuola", *L'Acropoli* 2 (1946), liii–lvi; "Crisi di scuola e di cultura", *Rinascita* 5 (1948), 262–264; "L'istruzione superiore", *Rinascita* 6 (1949), 379–382; "Corrispondenza", *Atene e Roma*, n.s. 1 (July–August 1951), [23]; "Il latino nella scuola", *Riforma della scuola* (1 November 1955); "Latino sì o no?", *l'Unità* (7 April 1956); "In difesa del latino", *Belfagor* 11 (1956), 345–348. For an analysis of Marchesi's ideas about school, see Lucio Lombardo Radice and Alessandro Natta, "Concetto Marchesi uomo di scuola", *Riforma della scuola* 3.3 (1957), 14–17, and Tomasi, *La scuola italiana*, 186–193.

only during the 1920s, most likely because of their strong bond with their time, which made them old-fashioned quite quickly.

As this survey reveals, the schoolbooks on classical mythology published before 1923 share a scholarly approach to classical mythology inspired by a positivist tradition, looking at the ancient culture and civilization as a unitary subject of study, including all aspects of this world (from religion and literature to archaeology and anthropology), and looking at Greece and Rome as two halves of one and the same civilization.³⁷ This approach produced some examples of serious and committed popularization, based on scholarly reliable grounds.

3. Our Mythical Books: After 1923

During the rest of the 1920s and during the 1930s,³⁸ many kinds of schoolbooks on mythology were published. They can be divided into two main types:

1. collections of passages taken from ancient authors;
2. handbooks and dictionaries (reference books).³⁹

3.1. Anthologies

In fact, in the field of anthologies, little new was published after 1923: on the one hand, the previous “mythical anthologies” were still in use and relevant for the first cycle of high school despite the new curriculum (Terzaghi, for example); on the other, the new syllabuses emphasized the importance

³⁷ Whereas at primary school classical myth had a pedagogic function, as Grandi, *La Musa bambina*, 165–168, shows.

³⁸ The range of time under examination extends up to 1938, when the racial laws forbade the adoption of schoolbooks written by Jewish authors, and therefore the panorama of schoolbooks is “adulterated”. Moreover, in 1939 Giuseppe Bottai, the Fascist education minister, published the *Carta della scuola*, which marked a new period in the history of the Italian school system: see Baldo, “Gli studi di latino”, 181–184. On the effects of the racial laws on Italian school, see Charnitzky, *Fascismo e scuola*, 469–483.

³⁹ I do not agree with Grandi (*La Musa bambina*, 69–70), who regards dictionaries as closer to narrative texts than to schoolbooks for their language and illustrations: since their purpose is giving information, not narrating, I rather take them to be reference books/handbooks.

of reading ancient authors,⁴⁰ which encouraged the publication of anthologies of passages in their original language with commentary from a mainly linguistic point of view, rather than collections of texts translated and illustrating ancient myths.

Two examples are Ferruccio Bernini's (1926) and Manfredo Vanni's (1923) anthologies.⁴¹ Bernini opens his preface with the following words:

Questo piccolo volume è stato composto per i giovinetti delle scuole medie inferiori d'Italia, i quali secondo le prescrizioni dei nuovi programmi governativi debbono *mostrare di conoscere il mondo dei miti e della religione romana e dar prova di saper tradurre passi scelti dalle Metamorfosi di Ovidio.* (v)

This little volume has been written for boys of the first cycle of secondary school in Italy, who according to the prescriptions of the new syllabuses are expected to *know the world of myths and of Roman religion and to translate select passages from Ovid's Metamorphoses.*

This book is an anthology of Ovidian passages, given in Italian metrical translation (Italian hexameters)⁴² and regarded as early tools for learning about ancient mythology and religion and the contents of the Ovidian poem.⁴³ The selection of passages ends with lines 843–870 of Book 15 of the poem, Caesar's deification, the prophecy of Rome as "queen of the world" and Augustus' celebration, a favourite subject of the ideological propaganda, which suggested that continuity be shown from Caesar to Mussolini.

⁴⁰ See Gentile, "Orari e programmi", 4451: "Lo studio d'una letteratura si riduce ad un semplice 'ammobigliamento della memoria' se non è accompagnato dalla lettura degli autori. Perciò, nessuna letteratura, né l'italiana, né la latina, né la greca sarà studiata senza leggere le opere più significative di esse" (Studying literature is reduced to the mere "furnishing of memory" if it does not go hand in hand with reading the authors. For this reason, no literature, neither Italian, nor Latin, nor Greek, should be studied without reading its main works).

⁴¹ Ferruccio Bernini, *Nel mondo dei miti. Per i giovinetti delle scuole medie inferiori. Favole scelte dalle "Metamorfosi" di Ovidio tradotte in esametri italiani e collegate col racconto dell'intero poema*, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1926; Manfredo Vanni, *"L'Iliade" di Omero nella traduzione italiana di Vincenzo Monti. Letture - scelte e commentate e ricongiunte col nesso del poema, aggiuntivi i riepiloghi delle note di lingua, grammatica e stile e un repertorio di mitologia - ad uso delle scuole medie con illustrazioni d'arte*, Milano: Signorelli, 1923.

⁴² See Bernini, *Nel mondo dei miti*, vi–vii. In particular, he opts for the hexameter used by Giovanni Pascoli.

⁴³ Later, in 1933, Bernini published a complete translation in Italian hexameters of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Bologna: Zanichelli).

Vanni's anthology (1923) is a shorter version of a previous book (also from 1923),⁴⁴ as the author declares on page 5 of his preface (dated "Milano, il maggio del 1923"): while the previous anthology includes both Homeric poems and Virgil's *Aeneid*, this selection includes only the *Iliad*. This book is intended to meet the needs of the new school:

Non credo di apparire presuntuoso affermando di aver preveduti gli ordinamenti nuovi della Scuola, nella quale l'alunno [...] sparisce per dar posto al giovane, che mira, nelle nuove responsabilità che lo attendono, ad esser l'artefice di se stesso nella vita. (5)

I do not believe that I come across as presumptuous by asserting that I had foreseen the new School system, where the student [...] disappears and is replaced by the young man, who aims – with his new responsibilities – at being the creator of himself in his life.

After a short introduction to Homer and the Homeric question (7–8), Vincenzo Monti's Italian translation of select passages is given, together with explanatory footnotes and marginal notes. At the end of the volume appears a short illustrated dictionary of mythology ("Mito, favola e leggenda nel ciclo omerico-virgiliano", 73–98), which is a shortened version of the *Breviario* of the same author (1923, see below).

3.2. Handbooks and Dictionaries (Reference Books)

Manfredo Vanni (1860–1937) was a teacher and writer: he taught literature for his whole life, in Arezzo and Milano, and his fondness for teaching together with his experience made him a productive author of schoolbooks.⁴⁵ His *Breviario* (1923),⁴⁶ from the same year as the anthology described above, is presented by its author as "un primo avviamento ad apprendere e intendere il

⁴⁴ Manfredo Vanni, *Calliope (Epos di Grecia e di Roma). Letture omeriche e virgiliane nelle traduzioni del Monti, del Pindemonte e del Caro, scelte e commentate e ricongiunte col nesso del poema – aggiuntivi i riepiloghi delle note di lingua, grammatica e stile ad uso delle scuole medie superiori*, Milano: Signorelli, 1923.

⁴⁵ For his complete bibliography, see Giuseppe Fatini, "Manfredo Vanni. Maestro e scrittore", *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 19.3 (1941), 223–230. Besides anthologies and handbooks for school, Vanni published a few collections of short novels, as well as of epigrams.

⁴⁶ Manfredo Vanni, *Breviario di mitologia con speciale riguardo alla greco-romana e illustrazioni dedotte da reliquie d'arte antica*, Milano: Signorelli, 1923.

vasto mondo dei miti. Particolarmente quelli greco-romani, senza i quali non si può fare il primo passo verso l'antico" (5; the first introduction to learn and understand the wide world of myths, especially the Graeco-Roman myths, without which one cannot take the first step towards antiquity).

The book has the alphabetical structure of a dictionary, and is therefore a reference work; to make it less dry, Vanni supplements entries with some quotations of either an ancient (Ovid, Virgil) or a modern poet (Giuseppe Parini, Ugo Foscolo, Giosue Carducci), giving his little book a distinctive profile. The mythological entries of the dictionary include also characters of the Egyptian, Indian, Persian, Germanic, and Scandinavian traditions. However, the focus is obviously on Greek and especially Roman myths: in this regard, Vanni places special emphasis on the "Romanness" of several gods and heroes. For example, Mars is introduced as "divinità schiettamente romana" (67; very Roman deity), and Diana is described as "divinità Latina" (37; Latin deity); Ceres is "una delle grandi divinità latine" (30; one of the major Latin deities). Moreover, the entry corresponding to the Latin name of a god or a hero is longer and more complete than the entry corresponding to the Greek name, which gives just a few hints: whereas Zeus is briefly described as "nome greco di Giove o Jupiter latino" (101; Greek name of Latin Jove or Jupiter), "Giove" is "prima divinità dei Romani" (56; the first deity of the Romans);⁴⁷ Heracles appears both as "Eracle" and as "Erocle", and the latter is introduced as "divinità latina, nel nome e nel culto non dissimile dall'Eracle greco, ma con caratteri proprii di dio agreste, protettore del suolo, dio dell'abbondanza, dei ritrovati agricoli, e anche della parola mantenuta" (43; Latin deity, not different from Greek Heracles in terms of his name and cult, but having his own features of a rustic god, protecting the country, god of wealth, of agricultural inventions, and also of keeping one's word). More generally, the point of view is certainly anchored in the Roman world, since Greek names of the deities appear systematically as "Greek name of X" and the complete description of the god can be read under the corresponding Latin name. Even more, the minor characters of Aeneas' story find an important place in Vanni's dictionary.⁴⁸ This *Breviario* was successful even after the war, and was reprinted at least until the 1950s.

⁴⁷ In the same entry one can read: "Il Giove latino (Jupiter) ha linee meno maestose e leggiadre di fantasia, ma varie, e nella loro semplicità profonde a interpretare la stirpe latina e la civiltà romana" (56-57; Latin Jupiter has a less majestic and graceful profile, but a plain and varied one, helpful for understanding the Latin race and the Roman civilization).

⁴⁸ On the Fascist ideology of Romanness, see, e.g., Gabrielli and Montino, *La scuola fascista*, 155-158.

Luigi Mario Capelli and Renato Rasponi (1924) in their preface refer directly to Gentile,⁴⁹ presenting their book as a tool for providing *ginnasio* students with the knowledge of Greek and Roman mythology and religion.⁵⁰ The structure of the book itself mirrors what is prescribed by the current syllabuses: the description of the myths is followed by that of religion, and every treatise is furnished with passages from ancient poems. Such a book, so tightly bound to the present, was never reprinted afterwards.

No less conditioned by the recent past is Aristide Calderini's (1883–1968) mythology (1924).⁵¹ Calderini, whose whole career was in Milan, mainly as Professor at the Catholic University of Greek and Roman Antiquities, Roman History, and Papyrology, was particularly active in the fields of archaeology, papyrology, and ancient history.⁵² The preface to his mythology, referring once again to the new syllabuses, identifies as its main aim that of generating interest in the students:

[S]e esso contribuirà a suscitare nei nostri giovani qualche interesse maggiore per questo grande archivio di pensiero antico, sicché siano spinti alcuni a cercare di approfondire la conoscenza altrove, potrò credere che il tentativo, per incompleto e manchevole che sia, ha raggiunto il suo scopo più alto. (v)

If it contributes to generate in our youth some more interest in this great archive of ancient thought, so that someone may be encouraged to learn more about this elsewhere, I will admit that this attempt, although lacking, achieved its top goal.

At the same time, the book belongs to a series of volumes entitled "Il libro d'oro del sapere. Il sapere in brevi trattati per le famiglie" (vol. 4.1) – such a title reveals that families, as well as students, are the intended addressees of the book.

A final section concerns the survival of mythology in the present time (192–196), which betrays an approach to ancient myth consistent with that of Fascist propaganda: the author draws the reader's attention to

⁴⁹ Gentile, "Orari e programmi", 4433.

⁵⁰ Luigi Mario Capelli and Renato Rasponi, *La mitologia greco-romana esposta ai giovinetti delle scuole medie e corredata di 123 illustrazioni e di 40 letture, in conformità dei programmi ministeriali 14 ottobre 1923*, Milano: Trevisini, 1924.

⁵¹ Aristide Calderini, *La mitologia classica*, Milano: Vallardi, 1924.

⁵² On Calderini's profile, see Claudio Barocas, "Calderini, Aristide", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 16 (1973), 595–597, with further bibliography.

quanta sia la parte della mitologia, che sotto i più diversi aspetti rifiorisce fresca e vigorosa intorno a noi [...], innalzandosi ancora verde di giovinezza sul nostro suolo e nel cielo nostro. (192)

how widespread mythology is, which under the most varied appearances flourishes fresh and vigorous around us [...], and stands out green for youth in our land and in our sky.

Even more explicit is the final phrase, suggesting that the present time deserves a new mythology, deeply rooted in the classical culture:

[E] rinacque e rivive anche intorno a noi ed in noi; e infatti che altro sono le figure più belle e più significative della storia nostra, e gli atti più fulgidi e quasi soprannaturali degli eroismi e dei sacrifici nuovissimi, se non la materia sempre viva e sempre rinnovata di una moderna mitologia? (192)

And [ancient mythology] was reborn and lives again around us and in us; indeed, what else are the most noble and important figures of our history, and the most brilliant and almost supernatural deeds of most recent heroism and sacrifice, if not the more and more lively and new subject of a modern mythology?

All this ensured that Calderini's book would not see further editions. After all, as Claudio Barocas observes, a unifying feature of Calderini's personality was his looking for the everyday man behind the great historical events, his

mancanza di un reale impegno culturale, di una problematicità vera e propria [...], impedimento a comprendere i fatti storici come punto di incontro delle volontà individuali [...]. Tale assenza di dialettica può in parte spiegare anche il successo delle sue iniziative nei tempi culturalmente difficili del fascismo, che in alcune delle sue espressioni amava esaltare il valore dell'individuo e che per di più ricercava una rievocazione meno storicistica possibile del passato.⁵³

lack of a deep cultural engagement, of a proper problematical attitude, of the ability to regard the historical events as meeting points of individual wills [...]. Such a lack of dialectical approach can also partly explain his success during the difficult time of Fascism, which in some manifestations liked to emphasize the value of the individual and sought a commemoration as little historicist as possible of the past time.

⁵³ Barocas, "Calderini, Aristide", 596.

Fernando Palazzi (1884–1962) was neither a classicist nor a teacher: he studied law and worked in that field until 1922, when he decided to devote his time and energies to his genuine passion, literature.⁵⁴ He published many schoolbooks, and together with Vincenzo Errante he gave life to one of the most successful collections of children’s literature during the Fascist regime, *La scala d’oro*.⁵⁵

Palazzi’s *Piccolo dizionario* (1924), frequently reprinted after World War Two until the 1970s, is an encyclopaedic index not only of gods and heroes, but of whatever belongs to Classical Antiquity (authors, institutions, festivals, places, architectural structures).⁵⁶ One appendix is devoted to the Roman calendar, a second appendix to the Greek calendar, and a third appendix to weights and units of measurement. Besides “Artemide”, “Ercole”, and “Zeus”, one finds also “aes uxorium”, “agon”, “agora”, “affinitas”, “age-ma”, “sortes”: in other words, this is not a specific tool for learning classical mythology. What is more, Palazzi’s approach to antiquity is rather impartial: the names of the gods and heroes are sometimes Greek and sometimes Latin, and equal attention is paid to all aspects of the ancient world.

Anna Evangelisti’s (1882–1945) *mitologia* (1925) is presented by its own author as a remake of a previous book of hers (1910), in accordance with the current syllabuses.⁵⁷ The preface is a letter addressed to Oliviero Franchi, editor-in-chief of the publishing house Zanichelli. In the whole preface (v–vii) the attention paid to the new syllabuses is nearly obsessive:

Lei mi porse i cinque volumettini contenenti i programmi di tutte le Scuole secondarie. Io studiandoli ho visto che l’epopea classica di Omero e di Virgilio, la quale importa diretta conoscenza di mitologia, si trova, oltre che nelle Scuole classiche (Ginnasi inferiori), anche negli Istituti tecnici, anche nei Licei scientifici e femminili e anche nelle Scuole complementari: il nostro libro in qualche modo risponde dunque a tutte le diverse Scuole secondarie. (v)

⁵⁴ On Palazzi, see Elisa Rebellato, *La scala d’oro. Libri per ragazzi durante il fascismo*, Milano: Unicopli, 2016, 20–22 and passim.

⁵⁵ See *ibidem*.

⁵⁶ Fernando Palazzi, *Piccolo dizionario di mitologia e antichità classiche*, Milano: Mondadori, 1924.

⁵⁷ Anna Evangelisti, *Mitologia, epopea e storia secondo i programmi del R. Ginnasio, con un preambolo di geografia, con trattati illustrativi di grandi autori, con note di richiamo a opere d’arte*, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1925.

You gave me the five little volumes containing the syllabuses of all Secondary schools. By examining them, I realized that Homer's and Virgil's classical epic poetry, which requires a direct knowledge of mythology, is found, apart from the Classical schools, also in the *Istituti tecnici*, *Licei scientifici* and *femminili* and even in the *Scuole complementari*: our book to some extent meets the needs of all different Secondary schools.

[Q]uel programma richiede la storia tutta quanta, dalle origini ai nostri giorni. E io ho voluto seguirlo a tutto rigore: infatti i dieci capitoli della parte terza hanno per titolo le dieci tesi di quel programma. Il programma, piuttosto che alla serie dei fatti, mostra di dare importanza alla vita dei popoli [...]. Del resto, non credo di aver poi mancato al programma, se ho tenuto anche il filo storico dei fatti e della cronologia. (vi)

That syllabus requires the study of the whole of history, from the origins to the present time. And I wanted to follow it exactly: indeed, the titles of the ten chapters of the third part mirror the ten points of that syllabus. The syllabus proves to pay attention to the life of peoples rather than to the sequence of deeds [...]. However, I do not believe to have failed the syllabus by following the historical thread of deeds and chronology.

In a footnote of the book (xi) one finds a reference even to the geography syllabus, and an especially detailed description of contemporary Italy with its boundaries, including a list of the Italian colonies. The descriptions of the gods and heroes are centred around the Roman tradition, the names of the mythical characters are Latin, and Aeneas' epic together with Ulysses' is given more space than the Trojan War. A short digression is devoted to the history of the Jews, described with a cool and disdainful tone: we are still far from the racial laws, but the direction is already drawn. Evangelisti was a high school teacher, a scholar, and a writer: her rich writing covers a wide range of subjects, such as classical and Christian Rome,⁵⁸ Giosue Carducci,⁵⁹ whose courses she attended at Bologna University, but also Giovanni Federzoni, father of the politician Luigi Federzoni,⁶⁰ Valfredo

⁵⁸ Anna Evangelisti, *Romanità classica e cristiana*, Roma: Desclée & C., 1932; Anna Evangelisti, *Nuovi studi di romanità*, Roma: Desclée & C., 1942.

⁵⁹ Anna Evangelisti, *Giosue Carducci col suo maestro e col suo precursore: saggi due*, Bologna: Cappelli, 1924; Anna Evangelisti, *Giosue Carducci, 1835-1907. Saggi storico-letterari*, Bologna: Cappelli, 1934.

⁶⁰ Anna Evangelisti, "Giovanni Federzoni", *Rassegna italiana* 73 (1924), 359-369. In 1924, after Giacomo Matteotti's murder, Luigi Federzoni (1878-1967), a nationalist close to Mussolini, was appointed Interior Minister; see Albertina Vittoria, "Federzoni, Luigi", *Dizionario Biografico degli*

Carducci, Giosue's younger brother and Benito Mussolini's teacher.⁶¹ Neither did she miss the opportunity to celebrate the Fascist Bimillenario Augusteo (1938).⁶² In other words, her work shows the signs of the time, and we must not be surprised that the schoolbook described above was not reprinted nor re-edited: it could not satisfy the request of the editor, that of a good schoolbook "che sia (scusi la brutta parola) digerito, che abbia in sé la ragione del proprio essere e si sostenga anche all'infuori dei programmi scolastici" (which may be [excuse the ugly word] digested, which may have in itself its own reason to exist and may survive even outside the syllabuses for school).⁶³

Whereas G. Edoardo Mottini's mythology (1926),⁶⁴ thanks to its historical slant and its numerous plates of classical sculptures, kept being reprinted until the 1990s, Bassi's (1931)⁶⁵ – like Evangelisti's (1925) – is an adaptation ("una riduzione") of a previous book of the same author (1912), "fatta in modo da rispondere il meglio possibile alle prescrizioni dei vigenti programmi per le scuole a cui il libro è destinato" (v; made for meeting as well as possible the prescriptions of the current syllabuses for schools, to which this book is addressed). Bassi appears worried about the current syllabuses and highlights the differences between this book and the previous one:

Il tono è meno scientifico che nella *Mitologia* [...], le discussioni critiche furono omesse, e così le notizie su redazioni speciali di questo o quel mito, di questa o quella leggenda [...]. Il libro dovrebbe servire, e spero che servirà realmente, di commento anzitutto alla lettura delle *Metamorfosi*

Italiani 45 (1995), 792–801. His father, Giovanni Federzoni (1849–1923), was a teacher and scholar, as well as Carducci's pupil; see Chiara Boninsegni, "Federzoni, Giovanni", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 45 (1995), 789–792.

⁶¹ Anna Evangelisti, "Il maestro di Benito Mussolini (Valfredo Carducci)", *La rassegna italiana*, 2nd series, 133 (June 1929), 517–524. In this article, Evangelisti boasts "una specie di cuginanza col Duce restauratore, sempre più potente e felice, delle affrante cose d'Italia" (some sort of cousinness with the Duce, who is restoring – more and more powerful and happy – Italian ruins), and Valfredo Carducci is described as "uomo austero e retto di carattere veramente romano per la sua seria solidità" (austere and honest man, with genuine Roman character).

⁶² Anna Evangelisti, *Il "De Republica" di Cicerone nel bimillenario di Augusto*, Roma: Desclée & C., 1938.

⁶³ Evangelisti, *Mitologia, epopea e storia*, v.

⁶⁴ G. Edoardo Mottini, *Mitologia greca e romana, con 31 tavole da sculture classiche*, Milano: Mondadori, 1926.

⁶⁵ Domenico Bassi, *Miti e leggende del mondo classico per le classi superiori del ginnasio e le inferiori dell'Istituto tecnico con 104 illustrazioni*, Firenze: Sansoni, 1931.

e dei *Fasti* di Ovidio; e mi sembra che possa dare un'idea adeguata di ciò che è la Mitologia classica. Chi voglia saperne di più, veda la *Mitologia*. (v)

The tone is less scientific than in the *Mythology* [...], critical arguments have been omitted, as well as details about special versions of each myth, each legend [...]. This book is expected to work, and I hope it really will work, first of all as a commentary to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*; it seems to me to be able to give an appropriate idea of what classical Mythology is. Whoever wants to learn more should see my *Mythology*.

A scholarly and up-to-date bibliography (in German, English, French, and Italian) follows, together with an index of the mythical names. In the light of what has been observed, Bassi's 1931 handbook appears to be another work too strongly conceived for fitting in its time: its success lasted only a few years.

4. Our Mythical Authors

As we have observed, the authors of the books under examination belong to either of the following categories: specialists (academic scholars) and school teachers.⁶⁶ Among the authors we have found a few major scholars, such as Terzaghi, Marchesi, or Calderini. However, two authors out of three wrote and published their books before 1923: the only classical scholar whose book belongs to the two Fascist decades, Calderini, was the one who never came into conflict with the regime. Such a difference in the number of academic scholars engaged in popularizing classical mythology between the period before and the period after 1923 may be regarded as a remarkable sign of the different value that writing a book on classical mythology could have during the decades when Fascist propaganda made use of Classical Antiquity and myths as instruments of its ideological propaganda. After 1923 most authors are teachers, and this comes to light also in their concern about the official syllabuses (see above).

⁶⁶ The only exception is Palazzi.

5. Some Concluding Remarks

The resulting picture is partly unexpected: not all Italian schoolbooks on mythology during the age of Gentile show explicit signs of Fascist ideology, and in general classical mythology as a subject of schoolbooks seems to be less showily affected by ideological elements than one can expect. On the one hand, the introduction of classical mythology as a major subject of study at school had a political value of its own. As a result, in the selected schoolbooks the explicit mention of the official syllabuses established by Gentile's reform in 1923, together with the concern about following them accurately, is a strong tie with the political present: depending on how trustworthy that reference is, we can evaluate how effective the Fascist ideology is in each case. On the other hand, the emphasis given to the Roman side of classical myth betrays the Fascist ideology of the renewed Roman empire.⁶⁷

However, the majority of these books are of a high quality and provide a good base for study. Like the books for primary school,⁶⁸ the books of mythology for secondary school also fluctuate ambiguously between continuity with the previous schoolbooks on mythology, belonging to the positivist and liberal culture of the first two decades of the twentieth century, and the ideological use of classical (especially Roman) myth.

⁶⁷ The same holds true for the books for primary school examined by Grandi, *La Musa bambina*, 173–174.

⁶⁸ See *ibidem*, 168–179.

*A HUNDRED YEARS OF CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY IN SPANISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS**

I. Introduction

During the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Spain underwent a varied political history that encompassed several stages: the restoration of the monarchy with Alfonso XII (beginning in 1874), the period of the Second Republic (*Segunda República*, 1931–1939), the Francoist dictatorship (1939–1975), the years of the so-called Transition (*La Transición*, that is, the transition to democracy, 1975–1982), and the emergence of modern democracy. Over this time, Spain has also experienced substantial social changes that have radically altered education and have given rise to a number of national education plans.

The aim of this paper is to sketch a brief history of the uses of classical mythology in the Spanish educational system from the monarchical period at the beginning of the twentieth century to the present day. Different political systems and circumstances, with different aims, have shaped different education programmes and uses of mythology. Through analysing these changes and usages, the importance of classical content in Spanish primary and secondary school systems emerges, leading to a need for a rethinking of the value and role of classical studies in contemporary educational practice.

* This study has been conducted within the framework of the research project *Marginalia classica: Recepcion clásica y cultura de masas contemporánea. La construcción de identidades y alteridades* (PID2019-107253GB-I00) and the *Our Mythical Childhood* project.

2. Setting the Stage: The Nineteenth Century

In the modern era, and until very recently, the relationship between the Spanish educational system and Graeco-Roman classical mythology has been complex and problematic, largely as a result of religious issues, but also due to questions of ideology and politics. Before the 1990s, mythology was not included in the curricula in the form of standardized, systematic content; nevertheless, its importance was often acknowledged in a utilitarian sense, in that it enabled recognition and understanding of cultural models of European art and literature from different eras. For this reason, it is possible to trace its relatively constant presence over time, mainly in the subjects of language, arts, and Latin and Greek literature.¹ For example, already during the reign of Ferdinand VII (1814–1833), the *Reglamento General de Escuelas de Latinidad y Colegios de Humanidad*, dated 1825, aimed to foster the teaching of Latin language and classical literature, and regulated the creation of humanities schools. Here we find that the schools of Latin studies taught, over a two- or three-year period, content such as Latin grammar, Spanish grammar, antiquity, and mythology.²

During the nineteenth century, classical mythology studies became emancipated and took on a certain autonomy as an independent area of scholastic knowledge, beyond its practical function of facilitating proper comprehension of literature and art. As Angélica García-Manso suggests, the nineteenth century is “el siglo de la divulgación de la Mitología Clásica o, en otras palabras, de la ‘mitología divulgativa’” (the century of the divulgation

¹ However, the presence of mythology was not exclusive to these subjects. Very significant in this respect was the Pidal Plan (named after Pedro José Pidal, Minister of Governance) of 1845 (Royal Decree of 17 September 1845), where great impetus was given to the humanities in general, and to Latin specifically. Although this plan was only in effect for a short time, it included a subject called *Mitología y Principios de Historia General* in the first year of secondary education. Moreover, in the modern era, it must be noted that teaching Latin language and literature has been a constant in the Spanish educational system at least since the *Ley de Instrucción Pública* of 1857, known as the *Ley Moyano*. Nonetheless, its presence has been reduced gradually over the years. Greek was generally a compulsory subject for students of the *Bachillerato en Humanidades* (the Spanish Baccalaureate in the Humanities) since the 1938 plan, until it became an elective subject even for humanities students under the *Ley Orgánica para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa* (LOMCE), dated 9 December 2013, *Boletín Oficial del Estado* (BOE), 10 December 2013.

² See Antonio Medina Medina, “La formación del Sistema Educativo español y las ideas pedagógicas de la Educación Liberal”, in Olegario Negrín Fajardo, ed., *Historia de la educación española*, Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 2006, 219–267 (on Latin schools, see p. 245).

of Classical Mythology, or, in other words, of “informational mythology”).³ This phenomenon was a direct result of the Enlightenment, which weakened the position of the Christian worldview, and it accounts for the appearance of a textbook by writer and pedagogue José de Urcullu Baterruri (1790–1852), *Catecismo de mitología*, where the word “catechism” loses its religious content and takes on an exegetical value.⁴

Even though Romanticism in Spain rejected the classical model to some extent, leaning more towards other historical periods, especially the Middle Ages, mythology as a key to knowledge of the past sparked renewed interest across Europe during this era, and Spain was not immune to this influence. Thus, the mid-nineteenth century saw a surge in publications about mythology, whose didactic intent was clearly reflected in their titles by words like “compendium”, “elements”, or “course”.⁵

Despite this sudden emergence, in Spain’s case it cannot be said that these texts were entirely free from the influence of the Catholic Church, although it is true that more progressive, moderate voices can be seen, which downplayed the inherent danger that the Catholic mindset had attributed to the Classics for centuries in Spain.⁶ Very illustrative in this regard are the ideas of Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1856–1912), Spanish polygraph

³ Angélica García-Manso, “Mitología para niños: el relato fabuloso grecolatino según Fernán Caballero”, *Epos* 32 (2016), 102. All translations of cited fragments in this article are mine.

⁴ The text was published in London, at the Ackerman publishing house. See García-Manso, “Mitología para niños”, 102–103.

⁵ The more notable publications included: Rafael Reinés, *Compendio de mitología y de las Metamorfosis de Ovidio: con un extracto de la historia romana. Arreglado por D. Rafael Reinés para uso de los estudiantes de retórica, poesía y conocimiento de los autores clásicos de la antigüedad*, Barcelona: Imprenta de J. Oliva, 1840; Patricio de la Escosura, *Manual de mitología. Compendio de la historia de los dioses, héroes y más notables acontecimientos de los tiempos fabulosos de Grecia y Roma*, Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico de D.F. de P. Mellado, 1845; Juan Miró, *Curso de mitología para uso de las universidades e institutos*, Cádiz: Imprenta de la Enciclopedia Política, 1846 (classical mythology occupies the greater part: pp. 21–124); José María Antequera, *Compendio de mitología ó historia profana: comprendiendo en esta la de los pueblos más célebres de la Antigüedad hasta la destrucción del imperio romano, escrita en forma de diálogo para el uso de los niños*, Madrid: Imprenta del Diccionario Geográfico, 1847 (classical mythology also occupies the greater part: pp. 9–62); Francisco Lorente, *Compendio elemental de la mitología: para la mejor inteligencia de toda especie de libros que maneja la juventud estudiosa*, Madrid: Imprenta de Repullés, 1847. These data are taken from Antonio Ramón Navarrete Orcera, “Manuales de mitología en España (1507–2002)”, *Tempus. Revista de Actualización Científica sobre el Mundo Clásico en España* 31 (2002), 5–107, which provides the most complete available catalogue on this material.

⁶ Christianity has faced (and solved in many different ways) the problem of how to relate to classical culture since at least the second century CE, but a detailed analysis of this history falls beyond the scope of this paper. Among the many existing references, it is worth mentioning

at the pinnacle of nineteenth-century Spanish scholarship. In his monumental *Bibliografía hispano-latina clásica*, he presents certain interesting ideas about the formative value of the Classics, and also plays down any dangers:

Cierto que la lectura de los paganos ofrece inconvenientes y peligros, como todas las cosas en el mundo, pero ni tantos ni tales como imaginan los que nunca los han leído. Creer que el arte de la antigüedad está reducido a las Venus de la decadencia, a los poetas eróticos y a las novelas de Petronio y Apuleyo, arguye ignorancia tan crasa que más provoca a indignación que a risa. ¡Pluguiera a Dios que la literatura de las épocas y pueblos tenidos por más cristianos estuviera tan libre y exenta de manchas e impurezas morales, como el arte religioso, severo y profundo de los cuatro más grandes poetas helénicos: Homero, Píndaro, Esquilo y Sófocles! ¡Pluguiera a Dios que abundasen en las sociedades modernas filósofos como Aristóteles, moralistas como Epicteto y Marco Aurelio! Realmente no hay para qué lamentarse de la perversión intelectual que tales libros lleven al ánimo de nuestra juventud, solicitada hoy por lecturas perniciosas de muy diverso y nada clásico linaje. No ignoro que en alguno de los líricos, y en estos mismos bucólicos (leídos en su original), y en Tibulo y Propertio, y aun en Horacio, hay pasajes y aun composiciones enteras, merecedoras de expurgarse e indignas de correr en manos de la juventud, aunque a los doctos siempre ha consentido su lectura la Iglesia *propter elegantiam sermonis*. (230–231)⁷

It is true that reading the works of the pagans has its disadvantages and dangers, like everything else in the world, but they are fewer and less than what people who have never read them imagine. To think that the art of antiquity comes down to nothing but the Venuses of decadence, the erotic poets, and the novels of Petronius and Apuleius speaks of such gross ignorance that it provokes more indignation than laughter. Would to God that the literature of the eras and peoples held to be most Christian were as free and exempt from moral stain and impurity as the religious art, severe and profound, of the four greatest Hellenic poets: Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, and Sophocles! Would to God that in modern society there were

Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, "Pagan Mythology in the Christian Empire", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 2 (1995), 193–208.

⁷ Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, *Bibliografía hispano-latina clásica: códigos, ediciones, comentarios, traducciones, estudios críticos, influencia de cada uno de los clásicos latinos en la literatura española*, Madrid: Tipografía de Vda. e Hijos de M. Tello, 1902. The quotation is taken from the 1952 edition (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas), vol. 10: *Miscelánea y notas para una bibliografía greco-hispana. Apéndice: notas para una bibliografía greco-hispana: Bucólicos griegos*. Hereinafter numbers in parentheses after the quotations are used to refer to page numbers of the cited publications.

an abundance of philosophers like Aristotle, moralists like Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius! There is really no reason to lament the intellectual perversion that such books might bring to the heart of our youth, tempted as they are today by pernicious reading of very diverse texts of non-classical origin. I am not unaware that in some lyrical texts, and in these same bucolic ones (read in the original), and in Tibullus and Propertius, and even in Horace, there are passages and even entire compositions worthy of censorship and unfit to be found in the hands of youth, even though the Catholic Church has always allowed scholars to read them *propter elegantiam sermonis*.

Notwithstanding, most of these textbooks are full of explicit moral and religious precautions about the content of classical mythology. An example may be found in one of the most well-known texts of this group, a book which continued to be used in Spanish schools in the 1960s, *Elementos de mitología, ritos y costumbres de los antiguos romanos, y nociones elementales de retórica y poética*, by Raimundo de Miguel y Navas (1816–1878), arranged in a question-and-answer format.⁸ The first question in its introduction (see Fig. 1) clearly sets the tone:

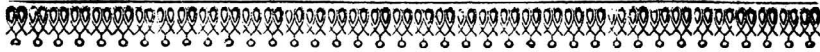
P. Qué es la Mitología? – R. La historia de las fabulosas divinidades del gentilismo adoradas por los pueblos hasta que la luz del evangelio vino a disipar las tinieblas de la ignorancia. [...]

P. Y era falso cuanto creían? – R. Muchas de sus fábulas eran alegorías ajustadas por los filósofos a algunos hechos notables, así históricos como religiosos, las cuales envolvían algunas verdades morales; otras carecían hasta de la más remota verosimilitud. (3)

Q. What is Mythology? – A. The story of the imaginary deities of the heathens, worshipped by people until the light of the gospel came to dissipate the darkness of ignorance. [...]

Q. Was everything they believed false? – A. Many of their fables were allegories that the philosophers fitted to certain notable facts, both historical and religious, and they contained some moral truths; other fables lacked even the slightest authenticity.

⁸ Raimundo de Miguel, *Elementos de mitología, ritos y costumbres de los antiguos romanos, y nociones elementales de retórica y poética: dispuestos para uso de los jóvenes que estudian el tercer año de latín*, 2nd ed., Burgos: Imprenta de Timoteo Arnaiz, 1861 (ed. pr. ca. 1842, with several later editions). The question-and-answer model was inspired by the work of François-Antoine Pomey, *Pantheum mythicum. Seu fabulosa deorum historia*, Lyon: Molin, 1659, who had a great impact later on. In this regard, see Josep Closa Farrés, "Humanisme classicista i humanisme cristià en l'ensenyament de la mitologia al llarg dels segles XVIII i XIX hispànics", *Faventia* 5 (1983), 131–139 (esp. 138).



NOCIONES ELEMENTALES

DE

MITOLOGÍA.

INTRODUCCION.

P. Qué es la Mitología?—R. La historia de las fabulosas divinidades del gentilismo adoradas por los pueblos hasta que la luz del evangelio vino á disipar las tinieblas de la ignorancia.

P. Quién fué el primero que tributó culto á los dioses falsos?—R. Nino, rey de los Asirios, quien para hacer inmortal á su padre Belo ó Nemrod, le honró con los honores que se tributan á la divinidad.

P. Bajo qué nombre se le dió culto?—R. Bajo el nombre de *Jove*, segun unos, ó el de *Saturno Babilonio*, segun otros.

P. Adoraban tambien á los irracionales?—R. No solo á los irracionales, sino á las criaturas insensibles. El sol, la luna y las estrellas, el agua, el fuego, los vientos, la oveja, el perro, el cocodrillo tenian templos y altares; y llevaron su increíble insensatez hasta el extremo de adorar á los puerros y cebollas. Esto hizo exclamar con gracia á Juvenal:

¡O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis Numina!

P. Y era falso cuanto creian?—R. Muchas de sus fábulas eran alegorías ajustadas por los filósofos á algunos hechos notables, así históricos como religiosos, las cuales envolvian algunas verdades morales; otras carecian hasta de la mas remota verosimilitud.

Figure 1: First page of the textbook by Raimundo de Miguel, *Elementos de mitología, ritos y costumbres de los antiguos romanos, y nociones elementales de retórica y poética*, Burgos: Imprenta de Timoteo Arnaiz, 1861, 3. Reproduced with permission from the owner – Biblioteca Digital de Castilla y León.

This brief citation demonstrates two elements that were very present in this period of interpreting the stories of classical mythology: moralization, from the point of view of Catholic doctrine, and Euhemerism, or the intent to rationally justify certain accounts. Both approaches are also clearly recognizable in another text that was produced shortly afterward (1867), specifically targeting children and youth, *La mitología contada a los niños e historia de los grandes hombres de la Grecia*, by Fernán Caballero, a pseudonym of Cecilia Böhl de Faber (1796–1877).⁹ The presence of a woman is unusual in this group of authors of educational texts on mythology, but is explained by her German origin and the training she received in her country as the daughter of German Hispanist Juan Nicolás Böhl de Faber.

In the following passage from this work, the exercise of “Christian humanism” can be seen, a label that has been used to characterize the approach to mythology, justified by the target audience of the work, that makes direct allusion to the fallaciousness of these stories:

Esto es, pues, la Mitología o Fábula, esa religión de los paganos, disparatada, descompuesta y hasta criminal, que habría caído entre nosotros los cristianos en el olvido y desprecio que merece, a no ser porque la embellecieron los afamados poetas griegos y latinos, cantándola, y los excelentes artistas atenienses con sus obras maestras, que siempre se dirigieron al culto de sus falsos dioses. Así, embellecida y poetizada, ha seguido dando imágenes y alegorías a los poetas, y modelos a los artistas, por lo cual se presentan de continuo a nuestra vista producidos esos lindos emblemas que creó la florida imaginación de aquellos poetas, y vemos copiadas sus perfectas obras artísticas; y sucede que aquel que no sabe a lo que se

⁹ On this work, cf. Closa Farrés, “Humanisme classicista”, 138–139; Pilar Hualde Pascual, “... Soñaba con los héroes de la *Ilíada*: La obra de Homero en la literatura infantil española de tema clásico (1878–1936)”, *Estudios Clásicos* 118 (2000), 73–76; María Carmen Encinas Reguero, “Los mitos griegos en la literatura infantil y juvenil del s. XIX”, *Thamyris* 6 (2015), 104–106. On the way that Euhemerism is adopted here, see García-Manso, “Mitología para niños”, 106–111. This author underscores the work’s amphibological use of the word “fable”, as an “implausible narrative” and as a “didactic genre” (112). The word “myth” (s.v. *mito*) would not be included in the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* until its 11th ed. (1869), and its definition relies precisely on the former: “fábula, ficción alegórica especialmente en materia religiosa” (fable, allegorical fiction, especially in religious matter). In this regard, see Marta González González, “Aproximaciones al estudio de la mitología en la España del XVIII y comienzos del XIX”, in Francisco García Jurado, Ramiro González Delgado, and Marta González González, eds., *La historia de la literatura greco-latina en España: de la Ilustración al Liberalismo (1778–1850)*, Málaga: Universidad de Málaga, 2013, 211–223 (esp. 212).

refieren, ni lo que significan, pasa en sociedad por un ignorante y se expone a no comprender ni las cosas que ve ni las cosas que oye. (26–27)¹⁰

This, then, is Mythology or Fable, the religion of the pagans, nonsensical, chaotic and even criminal. Among the Christians of today, it would have fallen into oblivion and the disregard that it deserves, were it not for the famed Greek and Latin poets who embellished it, singing its verses, and the excellent Athenian artists with their masterpieces, which were always oriented towards the worship of their false gods. Thus, embellished and poeticized, it has continued to supply images and allegories for poets, and models for artists, so that we continually find before us the lovely emblems created by the flowery imagination of those poets long ago, and copies of their perfect artistic works; such that if someone does not know what they refer to, or what they mean, he is taken to be ignorant, and risks being unable to understand what he sees or what he hears.

The didactic function of this work – republished after the Civil War, since Böhl de Faber was considered to be an eminent pedagogue by Francoist educational authorities – provides the stories it presents with an accompanying commentary. In these “comments”, the author warns about the “imaginary” nature of these narratives, an emphasis resulting from the fact that, generally speaking, all these textbooks wrongly identify mythological accounts with religious belief.¹¹

3. The Early Twentieth Century

At the turn of the century, Spain continued to be an extremely rural society with low literacy rates and clearly underdeveloped elementary schooling.¹² This educational situation, in effect, was a continuation of the dichotomous

¹⁰ Fernán Caballero, *La mitología contada a los niños e historia de los grandes hombres de la Grecia*, 4th ed., Barcelona: Librería de Juan y Antonio Bastinos, 1888 (ed. pr. 1867).

¹¹ Cf. García-Manso, “Mitología para niños”, 103–106.

¹² See Clara Eugenia Núñez, “Educación”, in Albert Carreras and Xavier Tafunell, eds., *Estadísticas históricas de España. Siglos XIX–XX*, vol. 1, Madrid: Fundación BBVA, 2005 (ed. pr. 1989), 164, who indicates that after some educational development during the second half of the nineteenth century, we can observe stagnation in the early twentieth century: “El 51% de la generación de 1876 no tenía estudios, frente a un 78% de la generación de 1832 y a un 58% de la de 1907. Sería la generación de 1915 la primera que superaría a la de 1876” (51% of the generation of 1876 were uneducated, compared to 78% of the generation of 1832, and 58% in 1907. The generation of 1915 would be the first to surpass that of 1876).

system developed by the nineteenth-century European bourgeoisie: basic education was available to the working classes, and secondary education, based on classical culture, was exclusively for the elite. The "Disaster of 98", that is, the loss of Spain's last colonies (Cuba and the Philippines) in the Spanish-American war, became a determining factor in raising awareness of the need to improve the Spanish educational system. As Antonio Francisco Canales Serrano¹³ points out, the intellectual movement called Regenerationism, which sought to make an objective and scientific study of the causes of Spain's decline as a nation and to propose remedies for this downturn, convinced politicians that Spain's weakness and its lack of technological and economic development could only be remedied if the state intervened decisively in the deplorable educational situation.

A radical overhaul of the Spanish educational system followed, adopting the French model (according to the reforms of Jules Ferry); this modernization was accompanied by an important social transformation in Spain, which was evolving into an urban society. The French pattern, however, imposed secularization on the educational system, which gave rise to growing reservations on the part of Catholic conservatives in Spain, and ended up causing tensions with the proponents of religious ideology. Thus, any modernizing position was ultimately identified with anticlericalism, and any progress in the state school was interpreted as an attack on the Catholic Church.¹⁴

All of these factors had a striking effect on the sphere of education under consideration here: both the progressivism that was hailed by certain social sectors, and the way that certain content was identified with Catholic ideology, gave rise to a drastic reduction in the teaching of Classics in primary and secondary education. To illustrate this, let us recall one noteworthy reform: the Bugallal Plan (1903),¹⁵ under which two years of Latin at the end of secondary education were instituted, in stark contrast to the usual seven years of Latin and three years of Greek in countries like Italy, Germany, and Austria. At the heart of such decisions was the idea that, in order to progress

¹³ Antonio Francisco Canales Serrano, "La modernización del sistema educativo español, 1898-1936", *Bordón* 65.4 (2013), 108.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 110. As Canales Serrano points out (111), this peculiarity is exclusive to Spain. Even countries where one might have expected a greater presence of the Catholic Church in the educational system, such as Italy, had systems that were much more secular (in this case, the reason was the pope's prohibition of Catholics collaborating in the Italian state). See also Valentina Garulli's chapter in this volume ("Our Mythical Fascism? Classical Mythology at School during the Italian Fascist Twenty-Year Period", 69-91).

¹⁵ Developed by the Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts, Gabino Bugallal Araújo.

and be competitive in the European context, Spain had to rid itself of the burden of the past.¹⁶

The modernizing programme of Spanish liberalism, however, was unable to overcome the backwardness of Spain's elementary education; the same cannot be said, however, despite its anti-democratic, anti-liberal character, of Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship which followed (1923–1930). Although the ultimate objective was to spread the values of the regime throughout Spanish society, schools received an important boost at this time, and the educational system became increasingly widespread with the creation of many new schools. The aims of modernization, which persisted during this era, continued the trend of the previous period, further reducing the Latin and Greek content in the curricula. As shown in the comparison in Table 1, the Reforma Callejo of 1926 was unique among European countries in terms of the low priority given to these subjects in the curriculum.¹⁷

Table 1: Comparison of the presence (in percentage) of certain subjects in the first four years of the curriculum of secondary education under the Callejo Reform, in contrast to their distribution in other European countries.

	Spain	France	Germany		Austria		Italy	
			Gymnasium	Ober-realschule	Gymnasium	Realschule	Ginnasio	Istituto tecnico
Latin and Greek	6.25	34.15	27.73	0.00	16.39	0.00	34.41	23.96
Modern languages	25.00	35.37	16.41	38.10	14.75	27.27	39.78	39.79
History and geography	18.75	14.63	10.16	9.52	12.30	12.40	18.28	12.50
Science and mathematics	25.00	15.85	17.97	20.63	22.13	23.97	7.53	12.50

Source: Table derived from Antonio Francisco Canales Serrano, "La modernización del sistema educativo español, 1898–1936," *Bordón* 65.4 (2013), 113. Available online at <https://recyt.fecyt.es/index.php/BORDON/article/view/Bordon.2013.65407> (accessed 1 July 2020). Translated by L.U.G.

¹⁶ It may be for similar reasons that the only instructional textbook about mythology to be published in the first two decades of the twentieth century (Manuel Ciges Aparicio and Felipe Peyró Carrió, *Los dioses y los héroes: mitología popular: oriental, greco-romana, escandinava, celtolibera, americana*, Madrid: Daniel Jorro, 1912) was not limited to classical mythology, although the latter was its primary focus (pp. 49–598).

¹⁷ Royal Decree of 25 August 1926. The plan is named after Eduardo Callejo de la Cuesta (1875–1950), Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera.

Apart from certain translations from other languages, the first textbook on classical mythology produced during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship was *Estudios elementales de Mitología*,¹⁸ also published in 1926. This is a radical Catholic interpretation of Greek myths, which are conceived of as a degradation of the Holy Scriptures, corrupted little by little by the descendants of Adam and Noah after the flood; it was only with the arrival of Jesus Christ, according to this interpretation, that the absurdities were clarified.¹⁹ Hence, it was a text appropriate for that time. It should also be noted that the translation of the well-known French textbook *Mythologie grecque et romaine* by Jean Humbert was also published in 1928, and, in fact, is still in print today.²⁰ The work, which aimed to be informative and accessible to a young audience, was acceptable in that era thanks to its brief introduction on the origin and utility of mythology, which offered an interpretive framework in allegorical and moralizing terms.

During the following period, the Second Republic, efforts at reform were again resumed, and secularism was promoted. This was clearly reflected in education, and also influenced how classical mythology was approached.²¹ Full access to manuals for classical languages produced during this period is not possible, but two notable works give us an idea of the trends with regard to mythology. The first of these is *Los dioses que se fueron* by the unjustly forgotten Luis de Oteyza (1883–1961).²² Although the first edition is dated 1929, it seems to be the second edition in 1931 that had real

¹⁸ *Estudios elementales de Mitología. 2ª, 3ª y 4ª clase*, Barcelona: Librería Católica Internacional, 1926.

¹⁹ See Navarrete Orcera, "Manuales de mitología", 32.

²⁰ Jean Humbert, *Mitología griega y romana*, Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1928 (translation of the 24th French ed.).

²¹ This period was fundamental for classical studies in Spain; the degree in Classical Philology was officially created by decree on 27 January 1932. Likewise, a ministerial order on 28 February 1933 established the Classical Studies section in the Center for Historical Studies, where the journal *Emerita* began publication immediately thereafter. In this regard, see Francisco García Jurado, "Los estudios de Filología Clásica", in Santiago López-Ríos Moreno and Juan Antonio González Cárcelos, eds., *La Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de Madrid en la Segunda República. Arquitectura y universidad durante los años 30*, Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales, 2008, 297–305; and Francisco García Jurado, "El nacimiento de la Filología Clásica en España. La Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de Madrid (1932–1936)", *Estudios Clásicos* 134 (2008), 77–104.

²² Luis de Oteyza, *Los dioses que se fueron. Mitología*, Madrid: Compañía Iberoamericana de publicaciones Renacimiento, 1931 (ed. pr. 1929). Regarding his literary production, see José Ignacio Rodríguez Hermosell, "Las letras del exilio extremeño: un repertorio bibliográfico de autores", *Revista de Estudios Extremeños* 66.1 (2010), 493–534 (esp. 515–518). The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War found him in Venezuela, where he occupied a diplomatic post; he was never to return to Spain.

impact. The book is organized into fifty-eight chapters, each of which is devoted to a mythological character (either a god, mythical being, or hero), who is briefly described in a colloquial, ironic, modern style, with frequent allusions to the contemporary world. This can be seen, for example, in the chapter devoted to Vesta:

Ahora bien; ¿dónde se agrupaban sus individuos?... Me refiero a los pasados tiempos, cuando no había Casinos para los caballeros, Asociaciones benéficas para las señoras y Hoteles de té con baile para las señoritas, ¿eh? ¡Entonces la familia se agrupaba en torno a la llama del hogar! (111)

Now then; where did individuals get together?... I refer to times past, when there were no Casinos for the gentlemen, charitable Associations for the ladies, or Hotels with tea and dancing for the young maidens, eh? At that time the family gathered around the hearth!

This light-hearted manner made for a less awkward approach to the traditional accounts, with candid acknowledgement of their sometimes unedifying nature. Very illustrative in this regard is the entry for Venus, who is compared to a *varietés* star (90):

Disfrutaron de sus favores Júpiter, Marte, Apolo, Adonis, Mercurio, Anchises, Baco... Pero dar la lista completa de los amantes de Venus saldría carísimo. Algún día, si se abarata el papel, será ocasión de publicar un apéndice a esta obra que contenga la referida lista. Hoy por hoy, sin embargo, puedo daros una idea de lo que ha de ser la lista tal diciéndoos que entre los títulos de Venus hay uno que la califica de Pandemos, palabra griega que quiere decir "la de todos". (92)

Among those who enjoyed her favours were Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, Adonis, Mercury, Anchises, Bacchus... But to offer the complete list of Venus' lovers would be rather costly. Someday, if the price of paper comes down, that would be the right time to publish an appendix to this work to contain the complete list. At this time, however, I can give you an idea of what that list would be if I say one of Venus' titles refers to her as Pandemos, a Greek word meaning "of all the people".²³

Since it was neither an educational text, nor a children's book, de Oteyza's work was well suited to a broad spectrum of readers, who now had easy access to the main stories of mythology. By contrast, *Flor*

²³ Compare this passage to the allusion to the goddess Venus cited below in section 4.

de leyendas, by Alejandro Casona,²⁴ targets a young audience and clearly reflects the pedagogical concerns of the Second Republic. This children's anthology, consisting of fifteen adaptations of world literature, such as the *Ramayana*, *La Chanson de Roland*, and *Cantar del mío Cid*, also includes a story entitled "Héctor y Aquiles". It is an adaptation from the *Iliad*, apparently following the translation by Luis Segalá y Estalella (1908), although it changes the order of the episodes given in the Homeric account.²⁵

4. The Franco Years

This breath of fresh air with regard to the educational approach, however, was cut short by the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and the Francoist educational programme that followed, which conclusively separated Spain from its European context and created an anomaly that lasted many years.²⁶ After the Civil War, Spain remained under the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco Bahamonde for thirty-six years (1939–1975), a regime that set the country back at every level, including in education. As Olegario Negrín Fajardo indicates,²⁷ the Franco regime led to a reversal of the liberal educational model of the Spanish Republic. Through the repression imposed by Franco during the first years of his regime, a process known as "purging", he attempted to wipe out any trace of the Republic's educational reforms.²⁸ The "national-Catholic" school system was characterized by a considerable amount of religious content and was under the direct control of the Catholic Church.²⁹ In a 1937 interview, Franco stated the following with regard to his educational ideals:

²⁴ Alejandro Casona, *Flor de leyendas*, Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1933 (with myriad reprintings until our day). Casona was awarded the National Prize for Literature in 1932 for this work.

²⁵ See Hualde Pascual, "... Soñaba con los héroes de la *Ilíada*", 86–92.

²⁶ This diagnosis is given by Canales Serrano, "La modernización", 115.

²⁷ Olegario Negrín Fajardo, "El Nacional-Catolicismo franquista: de la involución escolar al desarrollo tecnocrático", in Olegario Negrín Fajardo, ed., *Historia de la educación española*, Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 2006, 411–447 (esp. 421–424).

²⁸ See Francisco Morente Valero, *La escuela y el Estado Nuevo. La depuración del magisterio nacional (1936–1943)*, Valladolid: Ámbito, 1997.

²⁹ The *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* defines the term *nacionalcatolicismo* (national Catholicism) in the following way: "Durante el régimen franquista, situación caracterizada por la estrecha relación entre el Estado y la Iglesia católica" (During the Franco regime, the situation characterized by the close relationship between the State and the Catholic Church). On the impact of religion on education, see Enrique Gervilla Castillo, *La escuela del nacional-catolicismo. Ideología y educación religiosa*, Granada: Impredisur, 1990.

Si nosotros exigimos a los hombres del mañana que vivan conforme a los ideales que las generaciones presentes están amasando con su sangre, es evidente que, desde su tierna infancia, se les educará en principios patrióticos e ideas eternas. Por moderno que un sistema de educación sea, siempre será compatible con las enseñanzas cristianas y se apoyará en tres principios fundamentales: patriotismo, despertado desde los primeros años, ausencia de toda influencia extranjera y moral cristiana. (177)³⁰

If we demand from the men of tomorrow that they live according to the ideals that present generations are shedding their blood to uphold, it is evident that they must be educated from the earliest age in patriotic principles and eternal ideas. Regardless of how modern an educational system is, it will always be compatible with Christian teachings and will be supported by three fundamental principles: patriotism, awakened in the earliest years; an absence of every foreign influence; and Christian morals.

These three values were vigorously supported by the revival and promotion of classical content, as a way of getting back to the roots and to the essence of Spanish identity, a move that in all likelihood was much influenced by the Italian model of fascism and Benito Mussolini's reclamation of Roman antiquity.³¹ This renewed emphasis was made explicit in 1938 (Franco's first year as president over the rebel zone) in the Ley sobre la Reforma de la Enseñanza Media (*BOE*, 23 September 1938):³²

³⁰ *Palabras del Caudillo (19 de abril de 1937–31 de diciembre de 1938)*, Barcelona: Ediciones FE, 1939. This idea would take shape in the 1938 Ley sobre la Reforma de la Enseñanza Media (*BOE*, 23 September 1938), in the following terms: "Consecuentemente, la formación clásica y humanística ha de ser acompañada por un contenido eminentemente católico y patriótico. El Catolicismo es la médula de la Historia de España. Por eso es imprescindible una sólida instrucción religiosa que comprenda desde el Catecismo, el Evangelio y la Moral, hasta la Liturgia, la Historia de la Iglesia y una adecuada Apologética, completándose esta formación espiritual con nociones de Filosofía e Historia de la Filosofía" (Consequently, classical and humanistic training should be accompanied by eminently Catholic and patriotic content. Catholicism is the sum and substance of the History of Spain. Solid religious instruction is therefore essential, its scope should cover from Catechism, the Gospel and Morals, to Liturgy, History of the Church and proper Apologetics, completing this spiritual training with notions of Philosophy and the History of Philosophy).

³¹ On the appropriation of Latin in Mussolini's regime, see Han Lamers and Bettina Reitz-Joosse, "Lingua Lictoria: The Latin Literature of Italian Fascism", *Classical Receptions Journal* 8.2 (2016), 216–252. On its presence in education, see Paolo Fedeli, "Studio e uso del latino nella scuola fascista", in Giovanni Semerano, ed., *Matrici culturali del fascismo*, Bari: Università di Bari, 1977, 209–224. See also Valentina Garulli's chapter in this volume ("Our Mythical Fascism? Classical Mythology at School during the Italian Fascist Twenty-Year Period", 69–91).

³² Enrique Herrera Oria, who collaborated with the National Education Minister, Pedro Sainz Rodríguez, on the draft of this bill, offers several arguments in his *Historia de la educación española*,

La cultura clásica y humanística se ha reconocido universalmente como la base insuperable y fecunda para el desarrollo de las jóvenes inteligencias. Una apologética copiosísima y convincente pudiera invocarse a su favor. Bástenos enunciar entre sus decisivas ventajas: el poder formativo inigualado del estudio metódico de las lenguas clásicas; el desarrollo lógico y conceptual extraordinario que producen su análisis y comprensión en las inteligencias juveniles dotándolas de una potencialidad fecundísima para todos los órdenes del saber; el procurar esta formación, camino seguro para la vuelta a la valorización del Ser auténtico de España, de la España formada en los estudios clásicos y humanísticos de nuestro siglo XVI, que produjo aquella pléyade de políticos y guerreros – todos de formación religiosa, clásica y humanística – de nuestra época imperial, hacia la que retorna la vocación heroica de nuestra juventud; poder formativo político corroborado todavía notablemente con el ejemplo de las grandes Naciones imperiales modernas; y bastaría, finalmente, la consideración de la necesidad de dar en las circunstancias mundiales presentes, su plena valoración a los fundamentos clásicos, greco-latinos, cristiano-romanos, de nuestra civilización europea. (1385–1386)

Classical, humanistic culture has been recognized universally as unequalled, fertile ground for the development of young intelligences. An extremely copious, convincing defence could be asserted in its favour. Suffice it to outline here its decisive advantages: the unmatched formative potential of the methodical study of classical languages; the exceptional logical and conceptual development that is produced by their analysis and comprehension, equipping youthful intelligence with a most fertile capacity for every order of knowledge; that to obtain this training is a sure pathway back to the appreciation of Spain's authentic Being, to our sixteenth-century Spain that was educated in classical and humanistic studies, and produced that myriad of politicians and warriors of our imperial era – all of them with religious, classical, and humanistic training – to which the heroic calling of our youth harks back; political formative ability, still notably corroborated in the example of the great modern imperial Nations; and, finally, the worldwide circumstances of present day suffice to consider it necessary to fully appreciate the classical, Graeco-Latin, Christian-Roman foundations of our European civilization.

Barcelona: Ediciones Veritas, 1943, 413–419, on the importance of classical training for youth, further supporting them with the presence of classical content in educational systems of other European nations.

Specifically, the teaching of classical languages was formalized as follows:

Un ciclo sistemático de Lengua Latina durante los siete cursos, acompañados en los tres últimos del estudio de su Literatura. Y cuatro años de Lengua Griega, con el estudio de sus clásicos en los dos últimos años. (1389)

A systematic sequence of Latin Language over seven years, to be accompanied by the study of Latin Literature in the last three. And four years of Greek Language, with the study of Greek Classics in the last two.

Such attitudes demonstrate a reaction against the progressiveness of the educational reforms that preceded them, which reduced classical content, sometimes drastically (see section 2, Table 1), in the belief that other technical or scientific content was more necessary for the modernization of the country.³³

Following the end of the Civil War, although a few translations of foreign reference works were published, such as the well-known German work by Gustav Schwab, *Die schönsten Sagen des klassischen Altertums*,³⁴ and a few dictionaries,³⁵ there was a lack of scholarly work³⁶ and little was geared to schoolchildren or youth. Works for children, however, began to appear in the 1960s, concomitant with the developmentalist, liberalizing era of the Franco regime, which allowed a certain relaxation of the dogmatic nature of education of the preceding period.³⁷ Some of the most notable works

³³ Regarding this phenomenon, Herrera Oria, *Historia de la educación española*, 417, indicates, with excessive drama, that in the modern era “el latín y el griego en los Centros medios se habían refugiado en los Seminarios y en algunos claustros religiosos. Los claustros, desde hace ciento cincuenta años, han salvado en España de la barbarie masónico-liberal del siglo XIX los tesoros de Grecia y Roma, como los salvaron los monjes benedictinos en sus célebres claustros medievales. Hay excepciones honrosas, pero en la Universidad” (Latin and Greek in the halls of secondary learning took shelter in the Seminaries and in a few religious cloisters. In Spain, some 150 years ago, the cloisters saved the treasures of Greece and Rome from the Liberal-Masonic brutality of the nineteenth century, just as the Benedictine monks saved them in their famous medieval cloisters. There are honourable exceptions, but at the University).

³⁴ Gustav Schwab, *Las más bellas leyendas de la antigüedad clásica*, Barcelona: Labor, 1952 (translation of the 4th German ed. [Wien and Heidelberg: Verlag Carl Ueberreuter]).

³⁵ Thus, e.g., Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, *Ensayo de un diccionario mitológico universal*, Madrid: Aguilar, 1944; Antonio G. Gavalda, *Diccionario mitológico*, Barcelona: Sintés, 1962.

³⁶ The *Dictionnaire de la mythologie grecque et romaine* by Pierre Grimal, e.g., was originally published in 1951 but not translated into Spanish until 1965.

³⁷ As is seen in the Ley de Ordenación de la Enseñanza Media, dated 26 February 1953 (*BOE*, 27 February 1953).

were *La mitología contada con sencillez* by Emilio Gascó Contell,³⁸ *Leyendas heroicas de la antigua Grecia* by Rafael Ballester Escalas,³⁹ an adaptation of the *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes and other legends, such as those on Hercules and Theseus, with illustrations by Óscar Daniel and L. Beltrán Máñez, and *Mitología griega y romana: sus leyendas y metamorfosis*, by Luis R. Córdova Arvelo.⁴⁰ Some adaptations of the *Iliad* were also published during this period, including those by Ramón Conde Obregón and Martín Alonso.⁴¹

5. Case Study: Analysis of Mythological Content in Certain Latin Textbooks from the Late 1950s and Early 1960s

The omnipresence of Catholicism, however, which has already been noted in both the political and educational spheres, had clear effects on the selection, manipulation, or omission of mythological topics in the curricula. A brief review of a few Latin textbooks from this time gives an idea of the ways in which classical mythology was suppressed or manipulated ideologically. For this analysis, necessarily incomplete, four textbooks have been selected.

³⁸ Emilio Gascó Contell, *La mitología contada con sencillez*, Madrid: Escelicer, 1958.

³⁹ Rafael Ballester Escalas, *Leyendas heroicas de la antigua Grecia*, Barcelona: Mateu, 1960.

⁴⁰ Luis R. Córdova Arvelo, *Mitología griega y romana: sus leyendas y metamorfosis*, Madrid: Ograma, 1963. Although the author claims, in his introduction, that the work mainly targets Spanish and Latin American youth (13), not many concessions are made to this young audience, either in form or in content. The author's objective for this work was primarily utilitarian (it is indispensable to be fully familiar with classical and even Renaissance works; 13–14), and I do not find the same precaution visible in earlier works. The prologue by José María Pemán, however, while more conciliatory, provides the ideological framework in which the work was to be read: "[D]esde el momento en que el hombre vislumbraba la existencia de una realidad divina, de una exigencia de divinidad, tenían que ocurrir una de estas dos cosas: o Dios se hacía hombre o el hombre se hacía Dios. La Mitología es el máximo esfuerzo que pudo hacer el humanismo puro por convertirse en religión. Fuera de estas dos posiciones – Cristianismo o Mitología – no quedan más que roturas y divorcios de lo humano y lo divino" (9; From the moment when man first glimpsed the existence of a divine reality, of the demand for divinity, one of two things had to take place: either God were to become man or man would become God. Mythology is the greatest effort that pure humanism could make in order to turn itself into religion. Outside these two positions – Christianity or Mythology – there is nothing left but ruptures and divorces between the human and the divine).

⁴¹ Ramón Conde Obregón, ed., *La Ilíada*, Barcelona: Instituto de Artes Gráficas, 1963, with illustrations by Vicente Segrelles; Martín Alonso, ed., *La Ilíada*, Madrid: Aguilar, 1965, with illustrations by J.A. Sánchez Prieto.

The first of these is *Método de lengua latina* by José Vallejo (1896–1959).⁴² This text includes grammatical explanations and an ample selection of brief texts on alternating topics, as displayed in Table 2. The limited representation of mythological topics is apparent.⁴³ This distribution is remarkable when compared to the 1957 guidelines for the Bachillerato curriculum (the Spanish Baccaureate, to which this manual belongs), which expressly recommends the use of mythological texts.⁴⁴

Table 2: Distribution of topic areas represented in the selected texts of two Latin manuals.

Topic areas	José Vallejo (1959)		Ángel Pariente (1959)	
	Number of texts	Percentage	Number of pages	Percentage
Historical	51	35.2	51	56.1
Fables	25	17.2	13	14.3
Religious	23	15.9	6	6.6
Mythological	11	7.6	7	7.7
Other	35	24.1	14	15.3
Total	145	100.0	91	100.0

A somewhat different situation (with less prevalence of religious texts; see Table 2) is found in another manual for the same educational level: *Ludus Latinus. Método de latín para 3º y 4º año de Bachillerato* by Ángel Pariente (1909–1982),⁴⁵ where the selection of Latin texts is grouped according to topic.⁴⁶ The first topic area is entitled “Fabulae Latinae”⁴⁷ and includes

⁴² José Vallejo, *Método de lengua latina. III–IV cursos (plan de 1957)*, Madrid: Estades, 1959.

⁴³ The average length of religious texts is much greater than the rest, and includes both liturgical texts and texts from the Gospels. The historical texts are mainly about the history of Rome, although there are also some about Greece and even about Church history. The mythological texts, finally, appear to be selected because they include some type of moral message.

⁴⁴ “Los ejercicios de análisis y traducción se harán sobre textos sencillos (textos litúrgicos y narrativos del Nuevo Testamento, textos de latín simplificado, mitológicos y de Eutropio, etc.)” (The analysis and translation exercises will be performed on simple texts [liturgical texts and narratives from the New Testament, simplified Latin texts, mythological texts and texts by Eutropius, etc.]). *Plan de Bachillerato de 1957. Programas de tercer curso (con orientaciones metodológicas)*, Madrid: Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 1957, 13.

⁴⁵ Ángel Pariente, *Ludus Latinus. Método de latín para 3º y 4º año de Bachillerato*, Palencia: Diario-Día, 1959.

⁴⁶ The historical texts appear under different headings: first a miscellaneous group under “Ex historia romana narrationes”, with equal selections from Nepos and Caesar. The religious texts are mainly lives of saints, and appear under the heading “Ex christianis et medii aevi scriptoribus”.

⁴⁷ On the use of the word “fable” (*fábula*) in Spanish mythological tradition, and its resonances in the Spanish language, see above, n. 9.

nine texts on mythological topics.⁴⁸ In addition to the moralizing message that can be discerned in most of the selected myths (possibly a decisive factor in their selection), a clear intent to avoid any of the more salacious details can be seen. Typical of this procedure is the account of the Oedipus myth, where, after narrating that he killed his father and liberated Thebes from the threat of the Sphinx by solving its puzzle, it concludes:

Oedipus rex Thebanorum fuit et magna iustitia civitatem rexit. Postremo vita eius misera fuit, nam di immortales eum pro scelere necati patrisulti sunt. (44)

Oedipus was the king of the Thebans and governed the city with great justice. In the end, his life was unhappy because the immortal gods took vengeance for the crime of his father's death.

Nevertheless, these two textbooks are not the most lacking in mythological content; Luis Penagos (1908–1995), a Jesuit priest, produced a *Florilegio latino* in four volumes for the religious publisher Sal Terrae. It was intended for use both in Baccalaureate and in seminary, and has been reprinted on multiple occasions.⁴⁹ The editions adapted to the 1957 Baccalaureate curriculum also followed guidelines from the *Ordinationes ad Constitutionem Apostolicam "Veterum Sapientia" rite exsequendam*, a general curriculum specifically designed to implement the Apostolic Constitution *Veterum Sapientia*, promulgated by John XXIII on 22 February 1962, in order to encourage the study of the Latin language.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ "Proserpina rapta", "Prometheus", "Tantalus", "Orpheus", "Midas", "Oedipus", "Daedalus", "Theseus", "Troia expugnata". These texts occupy pp. 47–58 of the referred textbook.

⁴⁹ The most recent that I am aware of is the 27th ed. from 1998. The editions taken into account for this study are: Luis Penagos, *Florilegio latino (Volumen 1). Método de la lengua latina. 3º y 4º de Bachillerato y 1º de Seminarios*, 15th ed., Santander: Sal Terrae, 1964, and Luis Penagos, *Florilegio latino (Volumen 2). Método de la lengua latina. 5º de Bachillerato y 2º Seminarios*, 15th ed., Santander: Sal Terrae, 1971. According to the prologue of the first volume, it contains "textos sencillos para análisis, traducción, ya simplificados, ya en su original, tomados especialmente de Eutropio, Nepote, Fedro, César, Cicerón y de los Evangelios" (simple texts for analysis, translation, whether simplified or in their original, taken especially from Eutropius, Nepos, Phaedrus, Caesar, Cicero, and from the Gospels).

⁵⁰ The publication in Spain was *Sacra Congregatio de Seminariis et Studiorum Universitatibus*, "Ordinationes ad Constitutionem Apostolicam 'Veterum Sapientia' rite exsequendam", *Revista Española de Derecho Canónico* 50 (1962), 435–460. On its application, see José Jiménez Delgado, "Aplicación de la 'Veterum Sapientia'", *Helmantica* 49–51 (1965), 209–234.

In the first volume of the *Latin Anthology*, the first texts prepared for translation, after explanations and morphology exercises (starting from p. 42), there is a *ramillete de sentencias* (selection of maxims), the first of which have to do with God.⁵¹ Similarly, in the section titled “Narraciones escogidas” (58–71), brief fragments from Nepos, Eutropius, Sallust, Pliny the Elder, Seneca, and Cicero (letters) precede the account of the origin of the world according to Genesis (59–61) and episodes from the life of Christ (birth, worship of the Magi, etc.) as reported in the Gospels according to Luke and Matthew (61–65). Other historical texts and fables follow, but not one example of mythological content.

The same may be said of the second volume, where the only mythological text appears at the end (130–132) and, significantly, tells the episode of Hercules and Cacus.⁵² The choice is no coincidence, both on account of its moral teaching (*caco* is used in Spanish as a common noun, synonym for “thief”), and the fact that Hercules was considered the first king of Spain in medieval and humanistic chronicles.⁵³ Finally, a very short appendix on “Instituciones y costumbres romanas” includes a page and a half (134–135) on “Mitología”, with a very cursory description of the main deities (see Fig. 2). All this demonstrates a clear correlation between (lack of) mythological content and religious ideology.

The foregoing statement is confirmed even more clearly when this last manual is compared with the one by Santiago Segura Munguía (1922–2014). His Latin manual for the Baccalaureate constituted a great methodological advance, due to the interaction between linguistic and cultural content. In the material on Roman institutions found in the Year 5 volume,⁵⁴ the long chapter devoted to religion stands out (77–95).

⁵¹ These are the following: “§170. Deum non vides, tamen Deum agnoscis ex operibus eius. Cic. *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 29. Nihil est, quod Deus efficere non possit. Id. *De Divin.*, II, 41. Nihil rerum humanarum sine Dei numine geritur. Cor. Nep. *Timol.*, IV, 4. Non universo generi hominum, sed etiam singulis a diis immortalibus consuli et providere solet. Cic. *De Nat. Deor.*, II, 66”.

⁵² According to the narrative of Ovid, *Fasti* 1.539–82.

⁵³ Certain monarchs reinforced this tie – e.g., Charles V, who included the two Pillars of Hercules in his coat of arms; Francisco Franco joined this tradition in 1938 by incorporating the two pillars, abandoned in previous eras, into his coat of arms. See Benjamín García-Hernández, *El desafío de la rana de Salamanca. Cuando la rana críe pelos*, Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas, 2009, 142–147, 160–161.

⁵⁴ Santiago Segura Munguía, *Método de latín. 5º curso*, Salamanca: Anaya, 1964. After the part dedicated to syntax, the cultural contents continue as follows: family life, city life, economic life, religion, war, social, political, and administrative life, Caesar, Sallust, Cicero, Virgil. All of these begin with an explanatory section followed by a selection of illustrative texts in Latin.

3.º MITOLOGÍA

349. SATURNO. El Cielo se desposó con la Tierra. De este matrimonio nacieron Titán y Saturno. Titán como primogénito pretendía reinar; pero su madre con promesas y caricias consiguió que Titán dejase reinar a Saturno, pero con la condición de que éste exterminase a todo hijo varón que de él naciera. Saturno se casó con Cibeles y conforme el pacto devoraba a todos sus hijos varones; pero se escapó del desastre Júpiter, quien al llegar a la juventud destruyó a su padre. Saturno se retiró al Lazio y juntamente con el dios Jano civilizó aquella región y enseñó a los habitantes las artes útiles. En Roma todos los años en el mes de diciembre se celebran las fiestas Saturnales.



Minerva

JUPITER. Después de derrotar a su padre, compartió el imperio del mundo con sus dos hermanos. Asignó a Neptuno los mares y las aguas, a Plutón los infiernos, y él se reservó los cielos. Era el dios principal y soberano de todos, *diuum pater atque hominum*. Los romanos le llamaron *Optimus Maximus*. Se le representaba sentado en un trono de marfil, teniendo en la mano derecha el ceño y en la izquierda un haz de rayos; a sus pies una águila, símbolo del dios.

JUNO. Esposa de Júpiter y reina de todos los dioses. Era la protectora de la familia.

MARS. Dios de la guerra. Era muy venerado por los romanos, pueblo eminentemente guerrero; y además por ser, según la antigua tradición, el padre de Rómulo y Remo.

MINERVA. Diosa de la sabiduría, de las ciencias y de las artes de la guerra. Júpiter sufría grandes dolores de cabeza, y ordenó a Vulcano le abriera de un hachaño el cráneo. De éste salió Minerva, armada de punta en blanco y doncella de unos veinte años. Se suele representar a Minerva con casco empenachado, coraza, una pica en su mano derecha y un escudo; a sus pies un buho o lechuza o serpiente.

VENUS es la diosa de la primavera, de las flores, de la belleza y del amor.

BACO. Dios del vino. Es representado bajo la figura de un joven molietudo, coronado de hiedra o pámpanos.

PLUTÓN. Dios de los Infiernos. Son éstos unas moradas subterráneas a donde iban las almas de los muertos para ser juzgados según sus obras y recibir luego su pena en el Tártaro o su premio en los Campos Elíseos.

MERCURIO es el correo de los dioses; el dios del comercio. Se le representa ordinariamente con un caduceo en la mano y alas en los pies.



Mercurio ('Ερμής)

APOLLO, dios de la poesía y de la música. Grecia y Roma sentían un respeto extraordinario por sus oráculos, siendo los más célebres los de Delos.

DIANA, llamada también Luna, diosa de la caza. Se la representaba con un carcaj lleno de flechas y una cierva a sus pies.

VULCANO, dios del fuego y del metal. En su fragua se fabricaban las armas de los héroes (de Aquiles, de Eneas, de Hércules, etc.).

VESTA, diosa del fuego. En Roma tenía un templo en el que se mantenía encendido el fuego sagrado, símbolo de la perpetuidad del imperio. Las Vestales eran las sacerdotisas de Vesta, cuya misión era conservar siempre el fuego encendido. Debían guardar rigoroso celibato, con pena de enterrarlas vivas si no lo hacían.

Las MÚSAS eran protectoras de la poesía, de la música y de las demás bellas artes. Se enumeran nueve.

Las PARCAS son tres hermanas, Cloto, Laquesis y Atropos. Cloto tiene en sus manos la rueca, de la que penden hilos de todos los colores y calidad (de seda, de oro de lana); según sean los mortales que representen: felices, ricos, pobres, etc. Laquesis da vuelta al huso. Atropos intermite la labor de sus hermanas y cuando quiere, con sus tijeras corta el hilo fatal de la existencia de los mortales sin distinción de categorías.

Los PENATES O LARES son los dioses protectores de cada casa y familia.

Los MANES son las almas de los muertos.

Las NINFAS

4.º LA FAMILIA ROMANA. EL MATRIMONIO. LA CASA

350 LA FAMILIA ROMANA. El *paterfamilias* (genitivo arcaico en *-as*), padre o cabeza de la familia, era el único propietario, pues él solo podía vender, adquirir, legar. Tiene autoridad absoluta sobre su mujer (en el matrimonio *cum manus*), sobre sus hijos y sus esclavos.

La *matrona o domina*, la madre. Es más respetada que en Grecia. Hila, teje pero no está obligada a trabajos rudos como guisar, moler el trigo, etc. Cuida de sus hijos, sale poco de casa. Poco a poco la alición decaída al uso y la corrupción griega se introdujo en Roma; por esto aumentan las desavenencias entre los esposos, causa de muchos divorcios.

351. EL MATRIMONIO. CONDICIONES PARA CONTRAER MATRIMONIO.

1.º *Ius connubii*, derecho al matrimonio legal. Al principio sólo lo tenían los patricios; después del año 445 a. de C. los plebeyos y desde el año 14 a. de C., también los libertos. Los esclavos no tuvieron nunca el *ius connubii*.

2.º *Edad competente*. De 12 años para las mujeres y 14 para los hombres; pero en la práctica no se casaban antes de los 17 años.

3.º *Consentimiento del paterfamilias*.

El matrimonio entre parientes estaba prohibido; v. gr.: entre primos hermanos, primos segundos, etc.

FORMAS DEL MATRIMONIO. Dos son las formas.

1.º El matrimonio *cum manus* (poder, facultad), es decir, en el cual el poder del cabeza de familia pasa del padre de la futura esposa al esposo. La mujer en

Figure 2: Pages dedicated to mythology in the cultural appendix to Luis Penagos, *Florilegio latino* (Volumen 2). *Método de la lengua latina. 5.º de Bachillerato y 2.º Seminarios*, 15th ed., Santander: Sal Terrae, 1971, 134–135. Reproduced with permission from Grupo de Comunicación Loyola, © Editorial Sal Terrae, 1971.

There are sections devoted to the main deities and their mythical stories,⁵⁵ which are presented at length, although the more scandalous details are skipped over. For example, it is said of Vulcan: "Su esposa era Venus, lo que dio lugar a leyendas poco piadosas" (81; His wife was Venus, which gave rise to impious legends).⁵⁶ In the following section of Latin texts, however, the topics dealt with are not mythological, but about Roman religion, again except for a summary of the Hercules and Cacus episode, adapted from Livy (90).⁵⁷

⁵⁵ The following of the great gods are dealt with: Jupiter, Juno, Minerva; Venus, Mars, Mercury; Vulcan, Vesta, Neptune, and Pluto; Apollo and Diana; Ceres and Bacchus.

⁵⁶ Recall the description of the goddess Venus in *Los dioses que se fueron* by de Oteyza (section 3).

⁵⁷ The episode reappears in the next volume (Santiago Segura Munguía, *Método de latín. 6.º curso*, Salamanca: Anaya, 1964, 96–98), in Ovid's version.

Despite all these facts, in the *Diccionario ilustrado latino-español, español-latino* from the publisher Spes, the scholastic dictionary *par excellence*, students of these generations (and up to the modern day) had access to additional, if rather cursory, information about a certain amount of mythological content, through its twenty-four illustrations on religion and worship.⁵⁸ For example, the print dedicated to Jupiter and Juno (see Fig. 3), besides presenting the iconography of several gods, including a few allegorical deities, offers summarized information about the myth of the Ages, the upbringing of Zeus/Jupiter, the fact that he was brother and husband to Juno, and goes as far as to mention Ganymede, though omitting the homosexual dimension of this myth.

6. End of the Franco Dictatorship, and the Transition

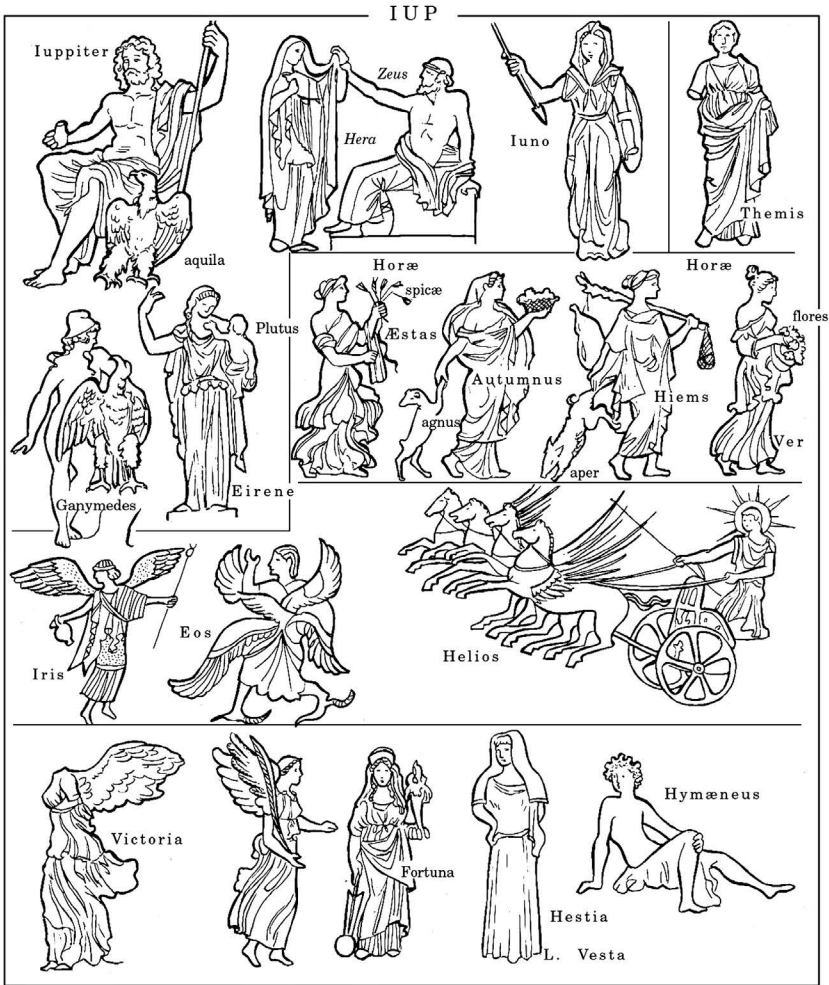
In 1969, with the Franco regime in its decline, and José Luis Villar Palasí (1922–2012) as Minister of Education, the Spanish educational system faced a new, substantial reform, for which a white paper was published: *La educación en España. Bases para una política educativa. Proyecto de Ley General de Educación y Financiamiento de la Reforma Educativa*. After bitter ideological opposition from the Catholic Church and the more conservative sectors, the Ley General de Educación y Financiamiento de la Reforma Educativa was passed on 4 August 1970, whereby primary education (ages six to thirteen), referred to as Educación General Básica (EGB) became compulsory and free of charge.⁵⁹

In 1975, the year of Franco's death, a textbook by Latinist Antonio Ruiz de Elvira Prieto was published,⁶⁰ and provided definitive support for the academic study of mythography in Spain, conferring on it the character of an independent discipline, with its own methodological framework. Significant academic works on mythology and mythography only began to be published after this development.

⁵⁸ The first edition from the Spes publishing house is dated 1943. The same publisher's dictionary of Ancient Greek does not include information of this type.

⁵⁹ BOE, 6–7 August 1970. In this regard, see María Concepción Álvarez García, "La reforma educativa española de 1970, la transición democrática y la España constitucional", in Olegario Negrín Fajardo, ed., *Historia de la educación española*, Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 2006, 449–495.

⁶⁰ Antonio Ruiz de Elvira Prieto, *Mitología clásica*, Madrid: Gredos, 1975.



JÚPITER Y JUNO.—El culto del Zeus griego nació probablemente en Tesalia, aunque su templo se hallaba en las cumbres del Olimpo. Zeus era hijo de Chronos (Saturno), el dios que devoraba a sus hijos por miedo de ser destronado; luego de nacido su madre Rhea lo libró de la voracidad de su padre Chronos, dándole a comer, en vez de a Júpiter, una piedra envuelta en pañales; y así salvado lo hizo criar ocultamente en Ida (Creta), donde con la leche de la cabra Amalthea (símbolo de la humedad fecundante) pronto fue más poderoso que su padre, al cual arrojó del Olimpo. || Al lado de Zeus figura su hermana y esposa Hera (Juno), que tiene también los atributos y la dignidad de la autoridad suprema. || En Roma el culto de IUPPITER y IUNO era inmemorial. Se les atribuía todo el poder supremo; Júpiter era el del rayo, fulgor; Juno la de la moneta, etc. ¶ GANYMEDES es un adolescente de Frigia, a quien Zeus hizo arrebatarse por un águila para llevarlo al Olimpo. ¶ IRIS es la mensajera de Juno. ¶ Eos, la aurora, es la distribuidora de rocío. ¶ HELIOS, el sol, se identifica a veces con Apolo, dios de la luz.

Figure 3: Sample illustration and explanations of mythological content in the *Diccionario latino-español, español-latino Spes*, 30th ed., Barcelona: Larousse Editorial, S.L., 2018, 270. Reproduced with permission from Larousse Editorial, S.L.

Following the death of Franco on 20 November 1975 and after Juan Carlos I was proclaimed king, Spain embarked on a complex process of restoring democracy and developing a constitutional system. This period takes the name of the *Transición española* and is usually considered to last until Partido Socialista Obrero Español won the October 1982 elections.⁶¹

7. The Era of Democracy: Mythology on the Rise

During the 1980s and 1990s, the socialist government (1982–1996) under Felipe González promulgated two fundamental laws for modernizing the Spanish educational system. The first of these, the Ley de Reforma Universitaria (LRU), dated 25 August 1983 (*BOE*, 1 September 1983), brought about a radical reorganization of the university system and had some important consequences for classical studies. Latin lost ground: apart from within a degree in Classical Philology, its presence was reduced from two years to a single academic year in some humanities degrees, and eliminated entirely in others. At the same time, however, the law established Classical Philology as a bachelor's degree across the map of Spain, with some twenty universities beginning to offer it. It also allowed for the creation of elective subjects available to other degree programmes. Classical mythology was always the most popular of the classical subjects offered within this framework, attracting students from every discipline.⁶²

The second law was the Ley Orgánica General del Sistema Educativo (LOGSE), dated 3 October 1990 (*BOE*, 4 October 1990), which replaced the Ley General de Educación promulgated by Franco in 1970. The new law extended compulsory education until the age of sixteen, but the presence of Latin and Greek was limited to the Baccalaureate in the Humanities and Social Sciences.⁶³ With this modification, it is estimated that the teaching of Latin, which formerly

⁶¹ In addition to many other references, see Santos Juliá, *Transición. Historia de una política española (1937–2017)*, Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2017. However, some recent analyses, such as Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, ed., *España en democracia, 1975–2011*, Barcelona: Crítica, 2017, limit the duration of the Transition to 1978, when the Constitution took effect.

⁶² Data are borrowed from Antonio Alvar Ezquerro, "Estado actual de la enseñanza del latín y del griego en España y perspectivas de futuro", *Estudios Clásicos* 123 (2003), 69–84 (esp. 69–72).

⁶³ Until this time, Latin had been compulsory for all second-year students of the Bachillerato Unificado Polivalente (BUP, a university preparatory programme for all disciplines); the Baccalaureate, however, was not compulsory under this plan.

reached about 40% of the school population, was reduced to about 11%.⁶⁴ By way of compensation, however, a new academic subject was created: *Cultura Clásica*. While an elective course for students in *Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria* (ESO), it was a required offering at all schools. The opportunity afforded by this subject was that, for the first time in the history of the Spanish educational system, standardized study of classical mythology was established.

While the ESO did not come into effect officially until the 1994/95 academic year, from 1992 certain secondary schools were implementing it on an experimental basis. That same year, the Ministry of Education and Science published a guide whose purpose was to offer "orientación al profesorado que, a partir de octubre de 1992, impartirá las nuevas enseñanzas de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria en los centros que anticipan su implantación" (orientation to teachers who, starting in October 1992, would teach the new material of *Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria* at early-implementation schools) and "facilitar a los profesores el desarrollo curricular de las correspondientes materias optativas, proporcionándoles sugerencias programación y unidades didácticas que les ayuden en su trabajo" (to facilitate their curriculum development for the corresponding elective subjects, providing suggestions for syllabuses and teaching units that would assist them in their work).⁶⁵ The three pillars of this new academic subject were:

1. the classical languages – the origin of the Romance languages;
2. the man of the classical world – his mark on the world of today;
3. the Romanization of Europe and Spain.

Two conceptual divisions are established under the second category: "El universo religioso: mitología" (The religious universe: mythology) and "El individuo y la sociedad" (The individual and society). The first subtopic, which is of interest to the present study, is in turn divided into the following sections: (a) mythology, religion, superstition, and magic; (b) reflections in Western culture: art, literature, music, cinema, language, folklore, etc.;

⁶⁴ See Alvar Ezquerra, "Estado actual", 71.

⁶⁵ Emilia Fernández de Mier, Nieves Gallardo Lucas, and José Antonio Pinel Martínez, *Cultura Clásica*, Madrid: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1992, 3. The design that was provided there, however, was later modified (*BOE*, 16 November 1994, 35136–35139). The second proposal put forward two levels of Classical Culture (A and B), the former focusing on cultural content, the latter having literary emphasis. While certain textbooks were drafted for the second level, it was never actually implemented.

(c) Spanish lexicon based on mythology.⁶⁶ Concerning mythological content, the guide proposes the following assignments in order to cover these concepts (19):⁶⁷

1. discovery of the principal Graeco-Latin myths through contemplation of pictorial works;
2. relating the myths to names of the stars;
3. analysis of texts by classical authors, identifying their literary contribution to works of Spanish literature.

It is clear, therefore, that great emphasis is placed on aspects of classical reception that favour the acquisition of mythological knowledge.

The detailed curriculum of this new subject was yet to be defined, however, and the resulting uncertainty led to the publication of works that sought to create and give structure to content that was not yet standardized, and, in the absence of prior mythological works, to guide the creation of new materials.⁶⁸ Seminal in this line was the eloquently named book *Pautas para una seducción*,⁶⁹ whose objective was to suggest ideas, focuses, or approaches that would be relevant and attractive in an introduction to the classical world. In their foreword, the editors state the following:

⁶⁶ Fernández de Mier, Gallardo Lucas, and Pinel Martínez, *Cultura Clásica*, 18. In any case, it must be taken into account that the transfer of powers from the central to the regional governments requires these regions to legislate 35% of the curriculum (45% in regions where there is more than one official language, that is, Galicia, Basque Country, Catalonia, Valencia, Balearic Islands), while the central ministry regulates the rest: 65% and 55% respectively.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, 19.

⁶⁸ It is only fair to recognize, however, that certain experiments had been carried out earlier, and they served as the basis for these new developments. Beginning in the late 1980s, within the framework of the so-called EATP electives (Enseñanzas y Actividades Técnico-Profesionales), some schools began to offer content such as etymology, cinema and history, astronomy workshops, and mythology, in lieu of subjects like home economics or drawing. For example, Mythology was offered in 1988/89 at the Herrera Oria secondary school in Madrid. And we can go back further still, to the late 1970s, when there was innovative work in etymology and mythology in the Movimientos de Renovación Pedagógica. The final deliverable from the Mythology seminar was the book titled *Los dioses del Olimpo*, by Grupo Tempe, which I will refer to shortly.

⁶⁹ Francisco Javier Gómez Espelosín and Joaquín L. Gómez-Pantoja, eds., *Pautas para una seducción. Ideas y materiales para una nueva asignatura: Cultura Clásica*, Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación, 1990. Many other proposals had been implemented at earlier times, including, e.g., Benjamín García-Hernández, "Cultura Clásica. Una disciplina para la primera etapa de la educación secundaria (14–16 años)", in *Actas del VI Congreso de la Sociedad Española de Estudios Clásicos*, vol. 3, Madrid: Sociedad Española de Estudios Clásicos, 1989, 839–844.

El nacimiento de una nueva asignatura, más si esta lleva por título la vaga e imprecisa denominación de Cultura Clásica, presenta siempre nuevos problemas al profesorado respecto a la determinación concreta de sus contenidos. [...] Se viene a unir a esta circunstancia de índole general la incertidumbre existente entre el profesorado de lenguas clásicas respecto a la orientación adecuada que la tal nueva materia ha de recibir, teniendo siempre a la vista no solo las inmediatas preocupaciones de subsistencia académica, sino también unos objetivos más a largo plazo que pueden derivar en el asentamiento y dignificación de nuestros estudios. Creemos en efecto que se nos ofrece una oportunidad inmejorable para llevar a cabo una tarea de esta envergadura si sabemos utilizar adecuadamente los medios con que contamos y no dejamos pasar la ocasión sin obtener de la misma el máximo partido posible. (7)

The emergence of a new subject, especially if its title is as vague and un-specific as Classical Culture, always presents teachers with new problems in defining its specific content. [...] Added to this general circumstance is the uncertainty among teachers of classical languages about how to properly orient this new material, keeping in view not only the immediate concerns of academic survival, but also longer-term objectives that would lead to the establishment and expansion of our studies. In short, we believe that we have been given an outstanding opportunity to carry out this far-reaching task if we know how to make adequate use of the means at hand and do not let this occasion pass us by without using it to the fullest.

Even so, content related to classical mythology was not strongly represented in this volume.⁷⁰ That same year, however, María Teresa Hernández Lucas published a volume devoted specifically to this issue: *Mitología clásica. Teoría y práctica docente*.⁷¹ The book contains contributions presented at a course held at the Centro de Profesores (in-service teacher development centre) in Madrid, including both studies from Spanish specialists and pioneering classroom experiences, with specific proposals and materials.

⁷⁰ From a total of seventeen contributions, the volume includes three that relate to mythological content. Shortly thereafter, when the Classical Culture subject was already in place, Francisco Javier Gómez Espelósín published the volume *Lecciones de Cultura Clásica*, Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación, 1995, in an attempt to offer new ideas and guidance for teachers. Mythology again finds a token presence: another three papers out of the total sixteen contributions.

⁷¹ María Teresa Hernández Lucas, ed., *Mitología clásica. Teoría y práctica docente*, Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas, 1990.

As a result of this change, and of the applied, systematic teaching of mythological content, new textbooks and teaching publications began to multiply in the 1990s. Worthy of special mention are those published under the name of Grupo Tempe,⁷² a group of very active secondary teachers who were involved in the design and implementation of the Classical Culture syllabus, and who published their proposals resulting from the Dirección General de Renovación Pedagógica. One of their notable publications was *Los dioses del Olimpo*,⁷³ divided into fourteen chapters, with a judicious selection of classical texts and a sampling of how the different myths are received in the arts, literature, and music.

Their Classical Culture textbook, *Europa, Europae. Cultura Clásica A. 2º Ciclo de ESO (3º y 4º)*,⁷⁴ moreover, will serve to exemplify how Spanish education experienced a radical paradigm shift in the 1990s. Chapter 8 of *Europa, Europae*, dedicated to "Religión: de dioses y hombres", opens (175), under the subheading "Cosmogonía según la Biblia", with the beginning of Genesis, a text that had already appeared (see section 3) among the selected texts in Luis Penagos's *Latin Anthology*. The same choice of text, however, demonstrates very different interests and the effects of the two examples are diametrically opposite. While in the Penagos selection, the choice of the Genesis text in lieu of similar texts from the Graeco-Roman culture is explained by the religious factors underlying this textbook, in the case of *Europa, Europae*, its inclusion right before the treatment of the Hesiodic cosmogony places the two texts on an equal footing, and gives the Genesis account a mythological treatment that would scarcely have been accepted during the Franco dictatorship. Even so, this example should not be interpreted as an active questioning of the Catholic religion, but merely as an effect of normalizing the teaching of classical mythology, whose interest to students is not primarily for theological concerns.

⁷² Its members are: Elena Cuadrado Ramos (I.B. "María Moliner", Coslada), Pilar Jiménez Gazapo (I.B. "Príncipe Felipe", Madrid), Mariano Martínez Yagüe (I.B. "Mirasierra", Madrid), Mercedes Morillas Gómez (I.B. "Enrique Tierno Galván", Parla), Francisca Morillo Ruiz (I.B. "Cardenal Herrera Oria", Madrid), M. Rosa Ruiz de Elvira Serra (I.B. "Cardenal Herrera Oria", Madrid). The acronym I.B. means "Instituto de Bachillerato" (high school). With this note I also express my very sincere appreciation for the help received from some of these individuals (Pilar, Francisca, and M. Rosa) in drafting this paper, which owes a great deal to their materials and to the account of their experiences.

⁷³ Grupo Tempe, *Los dioses del Olimpo*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998.

⁷⁴ Grupo Tempe, *Europa, Europae. Cultura Clásica A. 2º Ciclo de ESO (3º y 4º)*, Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas and Edelsa, 1995.

Although, seen from today's perspective, the rise of cultural content has meant a significant waning of linguistic content, a great deal of enthusiasm was experienced at that time, as some of the main players recount (members of Grupo Tempe in personal communication), and there was a hope that classical content would become stronger in the secondary curriculum. Beyond any doubt, this change created a lasting place for classical mythology in Spanish education; it has not been abandoned in later educational legislation that modified specific aspects of the LOGSE, without, however, revoking it entirely. For example, Royal Decree 1105/2014, dated 26 December 2014, which established the basic curriculum for compulsory and post-compulsory secondary education (*BOE*, 3 January 2015) and is currently in effect, affirmed that "merece especial atención el estudio de la mitología, cuya influencia resulta decisiva para la configuración del imaginario occidental" (the study of mythology deserves special attention, having had a defining influence in shaping Western consciousness). This statement is repeated on no less than three occasions, in reference, respectively, to the subjects of Greek, Latin, and Classical Culture (315, 350, 469).

8. Conclusions

The relationship between Spanish education and the classical languages has been problematic in modern times, and the same is true of mythological content, with the religious dimension having differing amounts of influence over time and in the varying educational systems. Despite the defence of classical studies during the Franco regime, the weight of Catholicism had the effect of limiting mythology content in the curricula; it was considered a minor area of knowledge, and its teaching continued to be justified in purely utilitarian terms, as an interpretive key for artistic and literary works. The teachings of mythology, generally speaking, were not considered to be edifying, nor could most myths be put to use for students' moral training. In that era, education in the classical subjects was closely tied to the grammatical study of Greek and Latin, and much less to cultural aspects, which were relatively problematic.

Later, although the tension between secularism and religion characterized the different educational systems under democracy, and religion prevailed in part, mythological content was gradually normalized. With the LOGSE and the establishment of Classical Culture as a school subject, a significant

nucleus of humanities subjects has been formed within compulsory secondary education. Although official data are not available, it can be said that Classical Culture is a popular subject, and this popularity has undoubtedly been helped by the increase and success of contemporary, youth-oriented products that make extensive use of mythology, such as Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* novels, or the recent films with mythological themes, which have created different expectations among learners.

Finally, as a result of this structural incorporation of mythological content into the Spanish educational system, and its attractiveness to students, it should be noted that early twenty-first-century Spanish society boasts a significant percentage of youth, roughly between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five, who know much more about classical mythology than their predecessors in most of the twentieth century. This fact can explain, for example, the large increase in mythological references in the press in recent decades. Offsetting this, however, the study of classical languages is at a low point, while the knowledge of biblical references has also clearly declined, given their limited study even within the subject of religion.

METAMORPHOSES OF MYTHOLOGICAL EDUCATION: OVID AND HIS METAMORPHOSES AS SUBJECTS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN GERMANY

I. Recent Reception of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the Anniversary Celebrations of 2017: Enthusiasm and Barriers

In the year 2017, the (supposed) bimillennium of Ovid's death in Tomi, near the Black Sea, was celebrated worldwide with a bulk of scholarly activity, books, articles and congresses for the academic community, creative events and even competitions for high school students and pupils, for example, *Celebremus Ovidium 2017*, organized and sponsored by the Arbeitskreis Humanistisches Gymnasium in Munich, Bavaria. A short drama entitled *Ovid – Ein Meister der Verwandlung*, written and staged by students from the Gymnasium Selb, won the first prize.¹ In an editorial of the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the author Heike Schmoll praised Ovid with reference to Hans Blumenberg as the main source of inspiration for European imaginative fantasy in general.² This enthusiastic appreciation in high culture as well as in arts, sciences, and popular culture, in which Ovid has become the most influential ancient inspiration for contemporary mythopoetic works for children and young adults,³ is in a certain contrast to the

¹ See "Celebremus Ovidium", Arbeitskreis Humanistisches Gymnasium, <https://www.klassische-bildung.de/celebremus-ovidium> (accessed 16 September 2018).

² Heike Schmoll, "Nicht ohne Ovid", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 January 2017, 1.

³ See esp. Markus Janka and Michael Stierstorfer, "Von Arkadien über New York ins Labyrinth des Minotaurus: Mythologische Orte in Ovids *Metamorphosen* und aktueller Kinder- und Jugendliteratur", *Gymnasium* 122 (2015), 1–44, available at Academia, https://www.academia.edu/31052296/Von_Arkadien_%C3%BCber_New_York_Ins_Labyrinth_des_Minotaurus_Mythologische_Orte_in_Ovids_Metamorphosen_und_aktueller_Kinder-_und_Jugendliteratur.pdf (accessed 22 May 2020); Markus Janka and Michael Stierstorfer, eds., *Verjüngte Antike. Griechisch-römische Mythologie und Historie in zeitgenössischen Kinder- und Jugendmedien*, Studien zur europäischen Kinder- und Jugendliteratur 5, Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2017 (with further references and discussions).

everyday routine in German grammar schools (gymnasia). Between the age of fifteen and eighteen, that is, from the tenth to the twelfth/thirteenth year of their school career, gymnasium students in German-speaking countries experience Ovid's main work, the *Metamorphoses*, and to some extent also parts of his amatory and exilic poetry. Despite various didactic innovations and creative multimedia impulses, the main focus of teaching Ovid is still on the so-called stataric, that is, precise and meticulous, translation of the original Latin verses into "adequate" German texts.

This approach constitutes the main problem for today's adolescents, who tend to have remarkable (and understandable) difficulties in deciphering and reconstructing Ovid's artful "Callimachean" poetry, full of innovation, learned allusions, innuendos, and subtle humour. The gap between high public esteem and creative appeal on the one hand and lack of learners' motivation – caused by linguistic and hermeneutic barriers – on the other turns out to be a challenge for Ovidian scholars and Ovidian didactics. This paper starts with a brief diachronic survey of the history of affection towards Ovid's opus as the core of mythological education. The central part of this contribution examines the main trends and tendencies in Ovid-based mythological didactics and high school (gymnasium) education in German-speaking countries from the nineteenth century onwards.

2. Brief Historical Survey of Ovidian Didactics from Antiquity to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century

The contemporary concept of mythological education through exemplary translation and interpretation of Ovid's fundamental works is rooted in a long and noble, though diversified, tradition of appreciation of the "lascivious" author and his polymorphic poetry in didactic contexts. In this part of the chapter, a rough sketch of the most important lines of development gives some hints on the most influential trends.

The first *aetas Ovidiana* lasts until about 150 years after the physical death of the author. Similarly to Virgil's canonical works, Ovid's poetry is quasi-omnipresent in the thematic invention and linguistic articulation of writers and orators. The rich *imitatio* (above all by poets whose versification broadly follows Ovidian traits) defies ambivalent judgements (*iudicia*), as represented, for example, by Quintilian. The classicism of the middle and later Roman Empire led to a reduction of the canon of school authors: whereas Virgil,

Terence, and Cicero remained untouched, Ovid's significance decreased. He was now treated more as a "mythological treasure trove" (*mythologische Fundgrube*) than as a linguistic and poetic "model" (*Sprachmodell*).⁴

From the end of the fifth century CE onwards, the canon of Latin school authors was again extended: Horace and Statius were included in the circle of poets read and interpreted in educational institutions. Ovid's works, however, served rather as a sourcebook for grammarians (like Priscian) and mythographers (like Fulgentius). In the early Middle Ages, renewed interest in Ovid resulted in numerous commentaries on Ovid as "a founder and inventor of myths" (*Mythenstifter*), whose poetic works were obviously eagerly read and interpreted as part of secondary education.⁵ This trend was strongly confirmed through the ages and led to the second *aetas Ovidiana* in the high Middle Ages, when Ovid's oeuvre as a whole (now commented on even more) functioned as a kind of encyclopaedic *didacticum*.⁶ This affectionate appraisal of Ovidian language, ideas, and humour is documented, for example, by the influential *Poetria nova* written in Latin hexameters by the Anglo-Norman rhetorician Geoffrey of Vinsauf (around 1200).⁷ This didactic poem, Ovidian in style and content, is considered "the most influential of all the medieval *artes poetriae*".⁸

The rich and complex didactic tradition⁹ noticeable, for instance, in France, was intensified even more by the trend of moralizing Ovidian

⁴ Pierluigi Leone Gatti, *Ovid in Antike und Mittelalter. Geschichte der philologischen Rezeption*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014, 63.

⁵ *Ibidem*, 165.

⁶ Cf. esp. Ralph Hexter, "Sex Education: Ovidian Erotodidactic in the Classroom", in Roy Gibson, Steven Green, and Alison Sharrock, eds., *The Art of Love: Bimillennial Essays on Ovid's "Ars Amatoria" and "Remedia Amoris"*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 298–317, with thorough discussion and bibliography. See *ibidem*, 301–302: "Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* achieves a variety of didactic purposes in medieval classrooms, but rarely if ever is the aim of educators to provide their pupils instruction in loving (which is not to say that pupils didn't learn a thing or two from their study of the poem *magistro nolente*)".

⁷ For this text and its particularly close intertextual relationship with Ovid's *Ars amatoria* and *Metamorphoses*, see Markus Janka, "Die 'Poetria nova' des Galfrid von Vinsauf: Eine mittelalterliche Regelrhetorik in der Tradition des antiken Lehrgedichts", in Wolfgang Kofler and Karlheinz Töchterle, eds., *Pontes III. Die antike Rhetorik in der europäischen Geistesgeschichte*, Innsbruck, Wien, München, and Bozen: Studien-Verlag, 2005, 175–190 (with further references).

⁸ Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter in the abstract of their *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300–1475*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, available at Oxford Scholarship Online, <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199653782.001.0001/acprof-9780199653782-chapter-36> (accessed 25 June 2020).

⁹ Hexter, "Sex Education", 306: "By the 12th century, masters were happily introducing their students to virtually the full range of Ovid's oeuvre". Wilfried Stroh, *Ovid im Urteil der*

lusus, as in the French *Ovide moralisé*, which is developed further in the Latin *Ovidius moralizatus* by Pierre Bersuire/Petrus Berchorius (around 1317–1328); there is a steady and productive output of school commentaries and collections of introductions to Ovid's works throughout the centuries, continuing "unabated into the 16th century and even beyond".¹⁰

The classicism of Renaissance humanists reached the German-speaking regions relatively late. The curricula were not particularly fond of mythological learning based on Ovidian *lascivia*.¹¹ In the decades before Martin Luther's reformation, Jakob Wimpfeling (1450–1528), for example, advocated a classical canon of Latin school literature, yet he excluded not only Ovid, but also Horace's *Odes* and all satires as morally damaging to juveniles.¹²

In the reformatory humanistic Latin school planned and established by Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560), the *praeceptor Germaniae* of the sixteenth century, there were three classes. On the highest level, reading of Cicero, Virgil, and Ovid was compulsory. The anti-pagan zeal of John Amos Comenius (1592–1670) censured the canon and led to a temporary exclusion of poets of love, sex, and humour, such as Catullus, Ovid, and Martial – which did not turn out to be long-lived. The philanthropist Christian Gotthilf Salzmann (1744–1811) considers the reading of Ovid's works clearly less important than the "general knowledge" conveyed by the natural milieu of the country house used by schools (*Landschulheim*), but nevertheless allows five hours of education in Latin a week.¹³

Nachwelt. Eine Testimoniensammlung, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969, 1–2, regards the era from the twelfth up to the seventeenth century as the "Periode seiner [Ovids] mächtigsten Wirkung" (period of his [Ovid's] most powerful influence). Unless stated otherwise, all translations are our own.

¹⁰ Hexter, "Sex Education", 310. See also p. 317: "It is in some sense remarkable that the *Ars Amatoria* hung on as long as it did, whether in 14th- and 15th-century Italy or early 16th-century England. Then as now, masters – joined soon by printers – had enormous power to direct young minds to look to Ovid's Latinity, his mythological learning, his rhetorical craft".

¹¹ Ulrich Schmitzer, "Examen in Liebe mit Note 1. Übersetzungen von Ovids *Ars amatoria* vom 15. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert", *Gymnasium* 125 (2018), 459, n. 109, points out that it has yet to be proved "[o]b die *Ars amatoria* zwischen dem 16. und dem frühen 20. Jahrhundert überhaupt jemals in der Schule gelesen wurde" (whether the *Ars amatoria* was ever read in [German] schools between the sixteenth and the early twentieth centuries).

¹² Manfred Fuhrmann, *Latein und Europa. Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts in Deutschland von Karl dem Großen bis Wilhelm II.*, Köln: DuMont, 2001, 37.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 107.

3. Mythological Education from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Century: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in German-Speaking Gymnasium Curricula as an Exemplary Case

The Latin curriculum of the so-called new humanistic gymnasium of the nineteenth century, designed according to the concept of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) and extremely influential in German-speaking countries, follows, for example, the didactic handbook by Friedrich August Eckstein (1810–1885). He is a severe censor of ancient literature of any genre, be it prose or poetry, based on stylistic and moral criteria. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are a fundamental read in the Tertia class (the equivalent of contemporary Grades 8 and 9, with students aged from thirteen to fifteen)¹⁴ as a propaedeutic subject of instruction, preparing for the reading and interpretation of Virgil's *Aeneid* (in Secunda) and Horace's lyric poems (in Prima); Catullus, the elegiac, and comic poets are sacrificed due to the prudishness of the century (because of the *meretrices*).

The didactic preferences of the Wilhelminian era (1871–1918) in Prussia and beyond follow the paths of the new humanistic Humboldtian tradition and are represented paradigmatically by Peter Dettweiler (1856–1907): he stresses the particular value of an extensive reading and interpreting of Ovid's works in both years of the Tertia stage. In particular, he emphasizes the educational value of mythological knowledge, aesthetic sensitivity, and propaedeutic skills useful for the subsequent reading of Virgil and Horace. This multifunctional approach has proven to be extremely successful in didactic reflections on mythical education based on Ovidian texts until today.¹⁵ Dettweiler recommends the following anthology for educational purposes:

1. 530 verses in Untertertia (Grade 8, thirteen- to fourteen-year-olds): Daedalus and Icarus, Philemon and Baucis, Midas, Lycian farmers and Latona, Orpheus and Eurydice, Perseus and Andromeda;
2. 900 verses in Obertertia (Grade 9, fourteen- to fifteen-year-olds): the Flood/Deucalion and Pyrrha, founding of Thebes by Cadmus, Phaethon,

¹⁴ For the structure of German gymnasial schooling in the nineteenth century, see Table 1 in Appendix 1 of this chapter.

¹⁵ See Hans Jürgen Apel and Stefan Bittner, *Humanistische Schulbildung 1890–1945. Anspruch und Wirklichkeit der altertumskundlichen Unterrichtsfächer*, Köln: Böhlau, 1994, 125–126; Peter Dettweiler, *Didaktik und Methodik des lateinischen Unterrichts*, 3rd rev. ed., ed. Wilhelm Fries, München: Beck, 1914 (ed. pr. 1895), 126.

Niobe, creation out of Chaos and **the Four Ages**,¹⁶ Caesar's apotheosis; in addition, according to the "vigour and ability of the students" (*Kraft der Schüler*), some elegiac poems (*Amores* and *Heroides*) as well as the *Tristia*.

During the Weimar Republic (1919–1933), Ovid's opus remained a staple, though often "eher etüdenartige Einleitung der Dichterlektüre" (a rather étude-like introduction to the reading of Latin poets);¹⁷ however, there are also fresh approaches to the thematic interpretation of Ovidian texts with a strong emphasis on historical learning. A school edition compiled by Anton Kurfess in 1930 and entitled *Kaiser Augustus und seine Zeit. Quellen zum Leben des Augustus und zum Verständnis des augusteischen Zeitalters*¹⁸ offers the following anthology compiled from Ovid's works: elegiac autobiography (*Tr.* 4.10); the inspiration of the poet (*Am.* 1.1); on Tibullus' death (*Am.* 3.9); Rome during the Age of Augustus (*Ars am.* 3.113–136); the Cyclops courts the beautiful Galatea (*Met.* 13.789–869); Caesar's apotheosis and glorification of Augustus; epilogos of the *Metamorphoses* (15.746–879); the beginning of the year (*Fast.* 1.63–294); glorification of Octavianus as Augustus (*Fast.* 1.587–616); Ara Pacis (*Fast.* 1.709–724); celebration of Anna Perenna on 15 March (*Fast.* 3.523–656, 3.697–710); hymn on Venus, the goddess of spring and ancestress of Augustus (*Fast.* 4.85–132); praise of Augustus (*Pont.* 3.6).

The restriction of Latin education and the imperialist, as well as racist, modification of reading preferences in the curricula of Nazi Germany's high school system (1933–1945) was ideologically motivated. Instead of the liberal poets Terence, Ovid, and Horace, students were to translate and interpret Caesar, Livy, and Tacitus. Caesar was presented as a proto-fascist strategic genius, Livy's annalistic historiography was reduced to a collection of stories about patriotic values and chauvinist "heroism", and Tacitus' ethnographical monograph *Germania* was instrumentalized as a glorification of the "[n]ordische [...] Rasse" (Nordic race).¹⁹

¹⁶ The myths marked in bold throughout this chapter occur frequently in educational anthologies.

¹⁷ Paul Hohnen, "Ovidlektüre in den zwanziger Jahren", *Der Altsprachliche Unterricht* 27.4 (1984), 53.

¹⁸ Anton Kurfess, *Kaiser Augustus und seine Zeit. Quellen zum Leben des Augustus und zum Verständnis des augusteischen Zeitalters; für den Schulgebrauch ausgew. und bearb. Text*, Bielefeld: Velhagen & Klasing, 1930.

¹⁹ Apel and Bittner, *Humanistische Schulbildung*, 307–308, 311–312.

The post-war (Latin) curricula in West Germany of the 1950s and 1960s are grounded in a revival of concepts of the Republic of Weimar, and they re-establish Ovid's position as a first poetic inspiration for learners in the middle grades (often the tenth year of school education). Primarily, the *Metamorphoses* are read, supplied with additional texts from the *Tristia* and *Fasti*.²⁰

Since the so-called great curricular turn at the beginning of the 1970s,²¹ the reading of Ovid's works in gymnasia follows the lines of the concept of "multivalency", that is, a multifaceted approach not restricted to linguistic and hermeneutic philological interpretation. The syllabus emphasizes the texts' timelessness, their reception in different genres of art, and their relevance for our modern society as well as for the personal development of the individual learner (*existentieller Transfer*). In this way, students are to become more and more aware of fundamental questions of human existence (for example, sex/gender, nature, culture, power, art).²² Due to this process, Ovid is again canonized as a standard author for the middle grades, although the canon of the curriculum is remarkably extended by the inclusion of medieval and neo-Latin authors.²³ After centuries of comparative didactic neglect, the erotodidactic poems (*Ars amatoria*, *Remedia amoris*) are rediscovered as a subject of mythological education in German gymnasia during the 1980s.

Based on new methodological approaches in the substantially renewed academic research on Ovid's works, there is an increasing appreciation of the postmodern playful and innovative (meta)poetics invented by Ovid also in didactic and curricular contexts.²⁴ In the new millennium, this development

²⁰ See Stefan Kipf, *Altsprachlicher Unterricht in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Historische Entwicklung, didaktische Konzepte und methodische Grundfragen von der Nachkriegszeit bis zum Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Bamberg: Buchner, 2006, 132–133, 144: "Klassikerlektüre als Unterrichtsrealität [...] Ovid (zumeist *Metamorphosen*, ergänzt durch *Tristien* und *Fasten*)" (Reading classical writers as classes' reality [...] Ovid [mostly *Metamorphoses*, supplemented by *Tristia* and *Fasti*]).

²¹ At that time, the German educational system was fundamentally restructured according to the subjects' social relevance in compliance with the "curricular theory" of Saul B. Robinsohn (1916–1972). Consequently, the curricula had to substantiate the so-called operationalized, i.e. specific, scopes of education, instead of listing catalogues of contents.

²² Kipf, *Altsprachlicher Unterricht*, 355–361.

²³ *Ibidem*, 446.

²⁴ See, e.g., Joachim Latacz, "Ovids 'Metamorphosen' als Spiel mit der Tradition", in Peter Neukam, ed., *Verpflichtung der Antike*, Dialog Schule – Wissenschaft. Klassische Sprachen und Literaturen 12, München: Bayerischer Schulbuch-Verlag, 1979, 5–49; Thomas Baier, "Überlegungen zur Lektüre von Ovids *Metamorphosen* in der Schule", *Die Alten Sprachen im Unterricht* 61.1 (2013), 4–22.

is strengthened by new impulses inspired by the everlasting and even intensified power of Ovid as a miracle of reception, especially in multimedia adaptations of fantastic mythopoetic works for children and young adults.²⁵ Reading and interpreting the *Metamorphoses* in the so-called *Werklektüre* (reading of just one work which considers also the broader contexts of single passages within the whole narrative) continues to resist the overwhelming trend towards anthological readings within higher-level thematic concepts (for example, literature and power, history and Augustan poets, art and nature). One important example of *Werklektüre* is the sequence "Mythos – Verwandlung und Spiel: Ovids *Metamorphosen*" in the current Bavarian curriculum.

The latest German anthologies of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* designed and edited for didactic purposes are representative of this trend. Let us consider some prominent examples:

1. *Ovid. Metamorphosen*, Classica, edition and commentary by Verena Datené, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2015 (featuring the proem, the creation story, **the Four Ages**, **Apollo and Daphne**, Narcissus and Echo, Latona, Medea and Jason, Daedalus and Icarus, Orpheus and Eurydice, Pygmalion);
2. *Welt und Mensch im antiken Mythos. Ovid, Metamorphosen*, Transfer, edition and commentary by Michael Dronia, Bamberg: Buchner, 2010 (featuring the proem, **the Four Ages**, the Flood, **Apollo and Daphne**, Arachne, Daedalus and Icarus, Orpheus and Eurydice, Aeneas, Augustus);
3. *Ovid. Metamorphosen*, Libellus, edition and commentary by Dennis Gressel and Karl-Heinz Pridik, Stuttgart and Leipzig: Klett, 2013 (featuring the proem, the creation story, **the Four Ages**, Assembly of the Gods, Europa and Jupiter, Narcissus and Echo, Pyramus and Thisbe, Latona, Daedalus and Icarus, Philemon and Baucis, Orpheus and Eurydice, Caesar and Augustus);
4. *Ovid. Metamorphosen*, Latein Kreativ, edition and commentary by Rudolf Henneböhl, 4th edition, Bad Driburg: Ovid-Verlag, 2011 (featuring

²⁵ Cf. Janka and Stierstorfer, "Von Arkadien über New York" as well as Markus Janka and Michael Stierstorfer, "Von fragmentierten Familienverhältnissen antiker Heroen zu Patchworkfamilien in der Mythopoesie der Postmoderne. Phaethon, Perseus, Theseus und Herkules in Ovids *Metamorphosen* und aktueller Kinder- und Jugendliteratur", in Rolf Kussli, ed., *Formen der Antikenrezeption in Literatur und Kunst*, Dialog Schule – Wissenschaft. Klassische Sprachen und Literaturen 50, Ebelsbach: Aktiv Druck & Verlag, 2016, 64–98.

the proem, the creation story, **the Four Ages**, the Flood, **Apollo and Daphne**, Europa and Jupiter, Cadmus, Actaeon, Narcissus and Echo, Pyramus and Thisbe, Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, Perseus and Andromeda, Pluto and Proserpina, Niobe, the Lycian farmers, Daedalus and Icarus, Erysichthon, Orpheus and Eurydice, Pygmalion, the Death of Adonis, Somnus and Morpheus, Fama, Pythagoras' speech, the Apotheosis of Caesar, the epilogue).

According to this short survey, and rather surprisingly, the passage on the Four Ages (Ov. *Met.* 1.89–162), which focuses on “scientific” learning concerning cosmogony and collective anthropogony but lacks individual metamorphosis, dramatic suspense, and mythological narration in a more narrow sense, remains a standard reading in German classrooms and turns out to be the most prominent one in our corpus. This is probably due to the fact that mythological education, in this case, is understood as philosophy of nature and man in elegant hexametric form. Apart from that, the motif of “creation” is familiar from the biblical tradition, which facilitates starting from a common level of recognition and knowledge. In second place, we find the narration about the unhappy “first love” of the versatile young god Apollo for the virgin nymph Daphne (Ov. *Met.* 1.452–567), inflicted on him as revenge by the almighty little Eros. This story, which was shown to be a “programmatically metamorphosis”,²⁶ introduces and proves the elegiac character of Ovid's grand epic, although the poet refashions the ancient mythological tradition in a neoteric manner. Thus, the widespread preference for this tale can be interpreted as a reaction of Ovidian didactics to more recent trends in Ovidian studies with their characteristic stress on intertextuality, sex/gender, and cultural history.²⁷

The most astonishing result of this little survey seems to be that – with the exception of Orpheus and Eurydice (Ov. *Met.* 10.1–85) – those heroes and stories that are most prominent in popular culture for children and

²⁶ See Markus Janka, “Zorn und Zeit: Die Metamorphosen von Homers *Ilias* in Ovids Verwandlungsepos”, in Rolf Kussl, ed., *Themen und Texte. Anregungen für den Lateinunterricht*, Dialog Schule – Wissenschaft. Klassische Sprachen und Literaturen 44, Speyer: Kartoffeldruck-Verlag, 2010, 79–128 (with further references).

²⁷ See, e.g., the introduction of Rudolf Henneböhl, ed., *Ovid. Metamorphosen*, Bad Driburg: Ovid-Verlag, 2006, 9–13, with many references to current Ovidian scholarship; see also Henneböhl's commentary for teachers (Rudolf Henneböhl, ed., *Ovid. Metamorphosen. Lehrerkommentar*, Bad Driburg: Ovid-Verlag, 2007) with even more bibliographical details.

young adults,²⁸ such as Perseus (for instance, *Percy Jackson*), Pluto, and Persephone, are of minor relevance in classroom contexts, since they are represented only once (in the exceptionally comprehensive anthology edited by Henneböhl). The reason for this seems to be primarily the power of didactic tradition, which only hesitantly widens the horizon and includes stories that, at first sight, offer less moral or philosophical depth.

The educational targets connected with the close reading, translating, and interpreting of these passages of Ovid's main opus are defined, for example, in the recent Bavarian curriculum for Latin at the level of the tenth grade of gymnasium.²⁹ They are formulated as follows:

1. Intense comparative analysis of evidence of the reception of Ovid in order to sharpen the learners' aesthetic sensibility and their power of judgement.
2. Exact interpretation and aesthetic evaluation of evidence of the reception of Ovid from all epochs and genres of art (that is, later Latin and vernacular texts, images, films, and other media to be compared with the originals and analysed with regard to the specific strategies of remodelling the Ovidian hypotexts).
3. Accumulation of substantial knowledge with regard to the most important myths and mythological figures and subjects from Greek and Roman antiquity.
4. Insight into processes of tradition and reception of literary subjects and motifs from antiquity up to contemporary high and popular culture.
5. Understanding of the playful, light-hearted, and ironic approach to the mythological tradition that links Ovid to contemporary works (such as Gerd Scherm's *Die Irrfahrer* or Paul Shipton's *The Pig Scrolls*).
6. Critical confrontation with different patterns of behaviour within a (tentative) identification with important mythological characters.
7. Knowledge of different points of view concerning the world and man as essential parts of European cultural history, which are transformed over the centuries up to postmodernism.

²⁸ For detailed discussion and references, see Janka and Stierstorfer, "Von Arkadien über New York" and "Von fragmentierten Familienverhältnissen".

²⁹ See "Latein (1. und 2. Fremdsprache)", Staatsinstitut für Schulqualität und Bildungsforschung München, <http://www.isb-gym8-lehrplan.de/contentserv/3.1.neu/g8.de/index.php?StoryID=26212> (accessed 30 November 2018).

These learning objectives can be tackled by learning stations (*Lernzirkel*) in addition to the teacher-centred instruction while translating and interpreting Ovidian passages. The following examples are taken from a sample designed and edited by Michael Stierstorfer, Markus Janka, and Martin Hofschuster in 2017. This sequence employs both content that meets students' interests and varying levels of difficulty to cope with individual needs of learners. As a method complementing the more traditional ways of teaching Latin, it can help to comprehend a wider range of artistic aspects.³⁰ It consists of four basic stages, two expert stages, and one final stage.

This programme explicitly focuses on passages vividly adapted in popular culture, but rather neglected in the canonical anthologies for classroom use mentioned above. In sections 1 and 2 (Cerberus and Hercules, Perseus and Medusa), the students work on comparative and partly creative tasks (such as rewriting or continuing texts or transforming their contents into a different artistic genre), based on German translations of passages from the *Metamorphoses*. In sections 3 and 4 (Phaethon and Helius, Apollo and Daphne), the Latin original is printed in the form of a synopsis beside the German translation so that questions about Latin expressions and style can be included. The expert section 5 (Theseus and the Minotaur) contains only the Latin text with translations of singular vocabulary items, and the final, sixth section (Orpheus and Eurydice) features only Latin text without annotations, so that a cumulative increase of difficulty is ensured. By the use of different media (texts, images, audiobooks, films), different senses are activated and heterogeneous types of learners are included. This allows for a multisensory enjoyment of ancient and postmodern mythopoetic adaptations. The different contemporary multimedia adaptations also encourage the students to draw parallels between the Ovidian "source" and the contemporary "target" medium and to develop analytical skills in detecting the strategies of functionalizing ancient myths for aesthetic, philosophical, and ideological purposes of our own culture.

By producing a synthesis of the results of the individual groups, the students are able to integrate their new knowledge within the complex and artful composition of the *Metamorphoses* as a whole. Sections 1 and 2 can be accomplished by a single student, sections 3 and 4 in pairs, and

³⁰ Cf. Marina Keip and Thomas Doepner, eds., *Interaktive Fachdidaktik Latein*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010, 175–190.

sections 5 and 6 by small groups of students, so that all learners can be involved in the tasks.

As an illustration of this didactic concept, we present the English translation of the second section of our programme, which gives instructions on how to compare the famous passage about Perseus' beheading of Medusa, as told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (4.776–786), with its cinematic adaptation in the film *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* (dir. Chris Columbus, 2010):

Section 2: Perseus and Medusa – If Medusa Ran a Shop with Statues

1. One myth – many variants: in the film, Percy is presented as the son of Poseidon. Find out about his ancestry and his childhood from a mythological lexicon and present a summary of your findings. What might be the reason for the film to deviate from the mythological tradition?
2. In the film, Medusa is beheaded with the help of an iPod after an exciting chase. Read the text printed below and find out how Medusa is defeated in Ovid's version. Write down your thoughts about how and why the film deviates from its literary source.
3. "I used to date your daddy!", Medusa says to Percy in the film. Consult a mythological lexicon and find out what her "love affair" with Percy's father has to do with her hair made of venomous snakes.
4. Read Ovid's text and watch the film scene. Then, explain why the myth of Medusa is particularly suitable for various stories of metamorphosis.

I. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.776–786 (Perseus and Medusa):

(At his wedding reception with Andromeda, Perseus reminds the audience of his former deeds.)

This [the eye of the Phorcyads] while being passed from one to the other,
he told, was cleverly
stolen by him [Perseus], pushing his hand secretly under, and through remote,
impassable, rocky land, paralysed by the rustling of the woods,
he reached Gorgo's home, and all around on the fields
and on the pathways, he saw phantoms of humans and animals
that were frozen in stone by the gaze of Medusa.
But he met the nightmare on the shield that his left hand held,
and saw it in a bronze mirror, the figure of Medusa.
When heavy sleep rested on her snakes and herself,

he cut the head off her throat, and the winged
Pegasus with his brother was born out of their mother's streams of blood.³¹

4. Conclusions

To sum up, there is a continuous and rich tradition of mythological education based on Ovid's main works that goes back to Ovid's own times. The later centuries, however, tended to reduce the educational value, especially of the *Metamorphoses*, to an inspirational source for aesthetic artistry and poetic versatility. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the gleaming brightness of Ovid's ingenuity was rather overshadowed by the other Augustan Classics, Virgil and Horace. Consequently, the reading and interpreting of the *Metamorphoses* was restricted to the middle level of secondary education and fulfilled a more or less propaedeutic function for the subsequent reading of Virgil and Horace. Only during recent decades, and especially in the new millennium, the multimedia appeal and the playful, quasi-post-modernist attitude of Ovid's poetry have been rediscovered as refreshing stimuli of a complex and intellectually demanding mythological education, based on the fascinating metamorphoses of the *Metamorphoses* in the current *aetas Ovidiana*.

³¹ English translation by M.J.

Appendices

I. German Gymnasium Structure

Table 1: Number of teaching hours per week in gymnasia schooling in the nineteenth century.

	Sexta (1 year) ≈ Grade 4	Quinta (1 year) ≈ Grade 5	Quarta (1 year) ≈ Grade 6	Tertia (2 years) ≈ Grades 7 and 8	Secunda (2 years) ≈ Grades 9 and 10	Prima (3 years) ≈ Grades 11, 12, and 13
Latin	6	6	8	8	8	8
Greek	–	–	5	5	7	7
Hebrew	–	–	–	–	(2)	(2)
German	6	6	4	4	4	4
History/ geography	3	3	3	3	3	3
Maths	6	6	6	6	6	6
Natural sciences	2	2	2	2	2	2
Religious education	2	2	2	2	2	2
Drawing lessons	3	3	2	2	–	–
Total	28	28	32	32	32 (34)	32 (34)

Note: Numbers in brackets refer to facultative subjects.

Source: Adapted from Manfred Fuhrmann's *Latein und Europa. Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts in Deutschland von Karl dem Großen bis Wilhelm II.*, Köln: DuMont, 2001, 149. Translated by M.J. and M.S.

Table 2: Number of teaching hours per week in current Bavarian gymnasium schooling (humanistic grammar school) for students from the age of ten (Grade 5) onwards (valid since 1 August 2018).

Compulsory subjects	Grade						
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Religious education/ethics	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
German	5	4	4	4	3	3	3
Latin/English	5	4	4	3	3	3	3
English/Latin	–	4	4	4	3	3	3
Greek	–	–	–	4	4	3	3
Maths	4	4	4	3	4	3	3

Table 2 (continued)

Compulsory subjects	Grade						
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Informatics	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Physics	-	-	-	2	2	2	2
Chemistry	-	-	-	-	2	3	-
Biology	-	-	-	2	2	2	-
Nature and technology	3	3	2	-	-	-	-
History	-	2	2	2	2	1	1
Politics and society	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Geography	2	-	2	-	-	2	2
Economics and law	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Art	2	2	2	1	1	1	2
Music	2	2	2	1	1	1	
Sports	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	3						
Compulsory intensification hours	3			-	-	-	-
Module for vocational orientation	-	-	-	-	0.5	-	-
Project seminar on study and vocational orientation	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total	30 each (+1/+2)			30	31.5	34	34
Optional intensification hours	6						

Source: Table derived from "Studentafeln für die Jahrgangsstufen 5 bis 11", Bayerische Staatskanzlei, http://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayGSO-ANL_1?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1 (accessed 30 May 2019). Translated by M.J. and M.S.

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DEVELOPING MULTILITERACIES THROUGH CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY IN BRITISH CLASSROOMS

1. Introduction

This chapter examines ways in which the study of classical mythology can boost the development of multiliteracies in British classrooms. Classical mythology does not feature as a compulsory element in national curricula in Scotland, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, many young people recount excitedly tales of their exposure to Greek and Roman myths and legends both within and beyond the classroom. I provide here two case studies which exemplify opportunities to embed the study of classical mythology in British classrooms in creative and innovative ways. I also demonstrate how classical mythology can act as a medium through which to enhance literacy. One case study focuses on primary school children aged seven to eleven, the other on secondary school pupils aged eleven to twelve.¹

2. An Overview of British National Curricula

Education is a devolved power in the UK, which means that the government in Whitehall, London, has jurisdiction only in England. This government sets the agenda for education in English schools and has oversight of curriculum and assessment through its Department for Education and the Office

¹ The author wishes to thank Susie Wilson from Astrea Academy Trust (primary school input) and Matthew Pinkett and Maria Vogler from Kings College Guildford (secondary school input) for their contributions to this chapter.

of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). Some schools in England are exempt from teaching the national curriculum (for example, fee-paying schools, free schools, and academies) which means that there is no coherent picture of exactly what is taught, to whom, when, and where in England. The Scottish government sets the curriculum taught in almost all Scottish schools. In the last decade, Scotland has introduced a new curriculum for young people aged three to eighteen called Curriculum for Excellence, which offers teachers flexibility in choosing content to help learners cultivate key skills and attributes of success. The Northern Ireland Assembly oversees education in Northern Ireland, and the curriculum is devised by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. In Wales, the Welsh government is currently undertaking a large-scale review of the curriculum and plans to design a new Curriculum for Wales for use in Welsh schools from 2022.

The result of this fragmented approach to curriculum design and implementation is that children educated at schools in each of the four nations of the UK enjoy a range of educational experiences that are difficult to document and describe with any accuracy. What are, perhaps, easier to identify are the cross-curricular priorities that are common in the curriculum policies of all four nations: literacy, numeracy, global citizenship, and health and well-being. It is for the enhancement of literacy that I consider the study of classical mythology to be particularly instructive.

3. Literacy, Multiliteracies, Pluriliteracies, and More

Proficiency in reading and writing is essential for educational success. President Bill Clinton highlighted the importance of literacy in his speech on International Literacy Day in 1994:

Literacy is not a luxury, it is a right and a responsibility. If our world is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century we must harness the energy and creativity of all our citizens.²

It is no surprise, then, that governments around the world have focused on teaching and learning interventions that aim to improve literacy.

² For the full text of this speech, see William J. Clinton, "Statement on the Observance of International Literacy Day", The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=49016> (accessed 2 April 2020).

“Literacy”, though, is a contested term in educational research as it can be interpreted in a variety of ways. I provide here four possible sub-sets of literacy, which illuminate the types of skills which teachers in British classrooms might cultivate in their students with respect to literacy. I also outline what is meant by multiliteracies and pluriliteracies, as these terms appear with increasing frequency in British educational policy and practice:

1. “Functional literacy” can be understood as “the level of skill in reading and writing that any individual needs in order to cope with adult life”.³ It covers basic skills of reading, writing, spelling, and the oral language required to complete everyday linguistic tasks within society.
2. “Information literacy” concerns the ability to learn to “recognise relevant and valid information, interpret it, and evaluate it in terms of its usefulness and reliability”.⁴ This is a more advanced skill than functional literacy as deeper interpretive skills are required to extract and evaluate information from a text.
3. “Cultural literacy” is often associated with a body of “core knowledge” that learners need to know to allow them to function as fully-rounded citizens. The term was propounded by Professor of English E.D. Hirsch in the US in the 1980s, and he concluded that, as some students were not exposed to this knowledge at home, they needed to be taught it at school. Hirsch created long lists of facts, words, and phrases whose significance every American child should know:⁵ for example, the Adirondack Mountains, the Alamo, Alaska, the Founding Fathers. The work of Hirsch attracted some attention and admiration in the UK, with Education Secretary Michael Gove citing him in a 2009 speech to the Royal Society of Arts:

A society in which there is a widespread understanding of the nation’s past, a shared appreciation of cultural reference points, a common stock of knowledge on which all can draw, and trade, is a society in which we all understand each other better.⁶

³ Denis Lawton and Peter Gordon, *Dictionary of Education*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996, 108.

⁴ Ministry of Education, *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8*, Wellington: Learning Media, 2006, 151.

⁵ Eric Donald Hirsch, *What Every American Needs to Know*, New York, NY: Random House, 1983.

⁶ For the full text of Gove’s speech, see “What Is Education For?”, Royal Society of Arts, <https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/blogs/gove-speech-to-rsa.pdf> (accessed 26 June 2020).

Hirsch links issues with reading with lack of knowledge:

We need to see the reading comprehension problem for what it primarily is – a knowledge problem. There is no way around the need for children to gain broad general knowledge in order to gain broad general proficiency in reading.⁷

This view is based on the premise that “knowledge builds on knowledge” and that the most important educational objectives – reading comprehension, critical thinking, and problem-solving – are functions of the breadth and depth of students’ knowledge. Cultural literacy remains a highly contested term.

4. “Critical literacy” involves deconstructing communication (written or spoken) in order to identify its dominant ideologies. It requires applying information literacy to identify key information, but expects a more advanced skill in critically evaluating ways in which the communication may have been framed to manipulate emotions or perpetuate inequalities. The critically literate learner will then explore responses to these inequalities and take action to remedy them.
5. “Multiliteracies” – in 1996, the New London Group coined the term “multiliteracies”, which views literacy as “continual, supplemental, and enhancing or modifying established literacy teaching and learning rather than replacing traditional practices”.⁸ The multiliteracies approach recognizes both the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in globalized society and the new variety of text forms from multiple communicative technologies.
6. “Pluriliteracies” – a pluriliteracies approach puts subject literacy development in more than one language at the core of learning. This approach is particularly beneficial in education systems where bilingualism is a goal, for example, English/Cymraeg in Wales and English/Gàidhlig in Scotland. The concept of pluriliteracies encompasses not just functional literacy in more than one language, but the raft of additional sub-skills associated with literacy development.

⁷ Cambridge Assessment, *What Is Literacy? An Investigation into Definitions of English as a Subject and the Relationship between English, Literacy and "Being Literate"*, Cambridge: Cambridge Assessment, 2013, 12, <https://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/Images/130433-what-is-literacy-an-investigation-into-definitions-of-english-as-a-subject-and-the-relationship-between-english-literacy-and-being-literate-.pdf> (accessed 9 May 2020).

⁸ Jennifer Rowsell, Claire Kosnik, and Clive Beck, “Fostering Multiliteracies Pedagogy through Preservice Teacher Education”, *Teaching Education* 19.2 (2008), 109–122.

4. What Role Can Classical Mythology Play?

Classical mythology includes many of the greatest stories of all time, including: tales of transformation, explanations for the workings of the natural world, descriptions of monsters and beasts, the interplay between gods and mortals, and much more besides. Mythology offers a wealth of quality literature through which to enthuse and engage young minds. Classical mythology (the myths originating from, or pertaining to, Ancient Greece and Rome are the most commonly taught, but some schools also include Egyptian and Norse examples) has especial value for children in British classrooms – it helps cultivate a sense of global awareness as well as supporting the development of historicity by enriching the study of the Greeks and Romans as history topics. Global awareness is an aim of the curriculum in England – teachers are tasked with helping their pupils to develop positive attitudes towards diversity and cultural difference, as well as foregrounding community heritage, interdependence, and exploring issues of identity. Many classical myths touch on exactly these themes and provide a rich bank of literature through which to explore complex issues, grounded in fictional narratives.

Currently, the Greeks and Romans appear as national curriculum history topics for children aged seven to eleven in England. Scottish pupils aged eleven to thirteen study the impact and legacy of historical peoples who visited and settled in Scotland. This means that the historical study of the Greeks and Romans already forms part of the curriculum in many British schools. The study of classical mythology is a valuable literary complement to these historical studies.

Classical mythology offers a multitude of benefits to busy classroom teachers. In the primary sector, teachers have responsibility for teaching the entire curriculum from mathematics to geography to dance to modern languages. Teachers search for ways to link curricular areas into meaningful learning experiences. Classical mythology can be combined with language learning to improve pupils' critical literacy and engagement with learning. One successful way in which this can be done is outlined in Case Study 1.

5. Case Study I: Astrea Academy Trust, South Yorkshire

The Astrea Academy Trust is a family of twenty-seven schools around England. The majority of these schools are primary schools in the north of England, located in ex-industrial South Yorkshire towns, such as Sheffield, Doncaster, Barnsley, and Rotherham. The demographic intake of these schools is varied, but the number of children who receive the Pupil Premium (formerly known as Free School Meals) owing to socio-economic deprivation is significantly above the national average, as is the number of pupils who speak English as a second (or third) language.

The Trust's National Director for English, Susie Wilson, led a project in 2017 to introduce the teaching of Latin and Classics in five primary schools with the aim of boosting cultural and critical literacy. Wilson had previously taught Latin and Classical Civilization in a London secondary school, so could offer subject-specialist support and advice to her colleagues. With funding from the national charity Classics for All, Wilson recruited a team of twelve primary teachers from within the Trust, who completed two days of training to equip them with the knowledge and skills to begin to teach Latin and Classics as part of the mainstream languages curriculum for children aged six to eleven. I delivered this teacher training and have enjoyed guiding the teachers' professional development and classroom practice.

A number of textbooks are aimed at primary learners of Latin. The one which seemed most appropriate for pupils in Astrea schools was *Minimus Book 1: Starting out in Latin*⁹ because it focuses on Latin grammar and vocabulary in a structured way and because each of its twelve chapters includes a section on mythology. It is how the teachers used the sections on mythology that forms the basis of the description henceforth.

Minimus Book 1 features twelve myths, which appear as short texts in English towards the end of each chapter. These are: Perseus and Medusa, Daedalus and Icarus, Pandora, Echo and Narcissus, the Druid and the Fisherman (a Celtic myth), Actaeon and Diana, Odysseus and the Trojan horse, Odysseus and the Cyclops, Procrustes, Midas, Pyramus and Thisbe, and the adventures of Mercury. The myths have been adapted to be suitable

⁹ Barbara Bell, *Minimus Book 1: Starting out in Latin*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

for use with young children. Teachers, during training, were briefed about the pedagogical dangers of mythology.¹⁰

Teachers in Astrea primary schools devised a method of using the myths to enrich and extend English literacy. First, they read the myth with the children. Then, they selected new items of vocabulary and asked the children to guess what they might mean, as part of a language analysis activity. Next, they asked the children to explore what they had learned about the characters in the myth, and the extent to which the success of the story depended on characterization. The next step involved the children reading alternative versions of the same myth in a variety of media (for example, published resources aimed at younger children in diary form, comics, picture books, collected mythographies, or graphic novels). Given a structured grid to complete, pupils were tasked with evaluating the alternative versions of the myths, focusing on extracting key information and making inferences between the versions. In some cases, this reading activity was used as a stimulus for creative writing. This is a model of good practice, supported by evidence from New Zealand:

When readers take apart a text they have read, examine it from their own viewpoint, and put it back together again, they make it their own. When they compare different texts, drawing out similarities and differences and deciding on the reasons for these, they create a new web of knowledge. Analysing and synthesising is a creative process that can enable readers to take ownership of the texts they read and the ideas and information in them.¹¹

Teachers in South Yorkshire have been using *Minimus* in their classrooms for a year. They have found that Latin helps their pupils develop functional literacy, but it is classical mythology that provides a catalyst for the development of information literacy, cultural literacy, and critical literacy. The children are able to make much faster and more significant progress when they embark on the analysis of comparative mythological texts in English than in Latin (as one would expect, given that their Latin language skills are at beginners' level). The teachers report high levels of engagement from

¹⁰ Eliana Dockterman, "Columbia Undergrads Say Greek Mythology Needs a 'Trigger Warning'", *TIME*, 15 May 2015, <https://time.com/3860187/columbia-trigger-warning-greek-mythology-metamorphoses/> (accessed 22 February 2021).

¹¹ Ministry of Education, *Effective Literacy Practice*, 150.

all children and requests for further training from staff. They want to extend the project to additional schools in the Trust.

6. Case Study 2: Kings College Guildford, Surrey

Kings College on the Park Bark estate in Guildford does not enjoy the same socio-economic prosperity of the surrounding council wards in Surrey, in the south-east of England. Of the 206 council wards in Surrey, the borough of Westborough (where the school is situated) is ranked number 1 on the Child Poverty Index. Of the school's intake, 43% qualifies for the Pupil Premium allowance, a figure that is significantly higher than the English national average (15.4%).

When English teacher Matthew Pinkett joined the school in September of 2016, two things were immediately clear. Firstly, students at Kings have a strong desire to learn and succeed. Secondly, certain elements of the curriculum needed to be adapted to accommodate the students' love for challenge. Pinkett thought that Classics was an obvious choice. Usually regarded as the preserve of the privately educated, introducing Classics to the Year 7 curriculum (pupils aged eleven to twelve) at Kings was not only a statement of intent – "At Kings, we're aiming high" – but a statement of belief too: "Boys and girls, we believe you can do this".

Pinkett believes that even a foundation knowledge of the Classics goes some way to developing students' multiliteracies:

[C]lassical texts provide students with access to a range of characters and stories regularly alluded to in the mainstream press, and in intelligent conversations of the sort we want them to be having as they mature and develop. Whether it is a Trojan horse, a Herculean effort, or a Sisyphean task, classical allusions are everywhere. The more "Classics-savvy" a student is, the more culturally literate they are.¹²

At Kings, teachers wanted the students to share in this learning experience. Maria Vogler, an English teacher and one of the leaders in implementing the Classics unit at Kings, explains how students liked what she terms "the flash-factor" studying Classics provided:

¹² Comments from Matthew Pinkett and Maria Vogler came via personal communication received on 2 February 2018.

My class spent time discussing the fact that Classics is not often taught in state schools. They took pride in talking to others about how they were studying Classics – I promised them it might come in handy at a dinner party in later years.

For Pinkett and Vogler, the biggest motivator behind the decision to introduce a classical text to the start of the Year 7 curriculum was the fact that

the Greeks knew how to tell a rollicking good story. Love, hate, jealousy, passion, violence: the stories of Homer, Ovid, and Virgil far exceed Quentin Tarantino in their ability to incite excitement, disbelief, and disgust. They offer a masterclass in storytelling.

They feel that there is too much focus on exams in the early years of secondary school:

[S]tudents in Years 7, 8, and 9 should not be practising GCSE exam questions. They should be revelling in stories told by masters. Masters who imbue every word, every setting, every character with a magic that is best felt, not necessarily by picking apart the verbs from the adjectives, or the metaphors from the similes (although of course, there is value in this), but from simply listening, enjoying, and discussing a good story.

Not all students at Kings have access to quality literature outside of the school environment. This void of cultural capital, it was hoped, could start to be filled by exposure to classical mythology.

Members of the English department at Kings College decided to use the Cambridge School Classics Project's *War with Troy* unit of work with the new Year 7 students.¹³ Based on Homer's *Iliad*, *War with Troy* details Achilles' journey from childhood to his death at Troy. The story is told using audio clips that students listen to in class. As the teacher's guide explains, *War with Troy*

is an oral production. The story is performed by two of Britain's leading storytellers. Both work in the original, oral tradition. In this tradition a story is planned and told before being written down. The end result is not

¹³ Cambridge School Classics Project, *War with Troy: The Story of Achilles*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

a “reading” of a script, but a live telling drawn from memory. This gives the language [...] a unique clarity and quality [...].¹⁴

The stories are beautifully told, employing many of the images and devices from Homer’s original poems. Pinkett did not want a “dumbed down” version of the *Iliad*. He wanted a beautiful and challenging narrative that would excite. Supplementary resources for teachers are plentiful, which makes it easy for teachers without a Classics background to use the unit in their teaching. Having the story broken down into sections was particularly useful, as it ensured regular checkpoints for student understanding, and the questions provided by the creators of the unit were useful in reinforcing the oral content. Often teachers used the questions to inspire a written task. In the context of the teacher workload crisis, introducing *War with Troy* had an additional professional advantage: teacher planning and preparation time was reduced as a result of having these learning and teaching activities readily available. Vogler explains the students’ reaction to the unit:

I feel the *War with Troy* unit went really well. Students found it challenging but engaging, and it was a new experience for most to listen to a story. The audio clips were expressive, which was helpful when getting students to understand some of the language. Many of the pupils had a good understanding of Greek mythology as they studied it at primary school, so it was useful to get students recapping their prior knowledge and it also supported their understanding of the text.

The fact that many pupils had a basic knowledge of the Greek gods and heroes was a huge plus. It meant that many students could begin secondary school with the feeling of “being smart” and “getting it right” from the start. And yet, at the same time, the intricacies of the plot, along with the depth and development of the characters in *War with Troy*, meant that students were able to feel that now, at secondary, they were “going deeper” than they had previously done. However, as with any unit of work, Vogler concedes that there were difficulties:

In terms of the storyline, students did struggle with understanding it straight away – particularly as there are so many characters to remember. However, by recapping and rereading sections in more depth and

¹⁴ Ibidem, 5.

using the transcripts of the audio, I feel students benefitted from the level of challenge it provided. It developed their skills in resilience and it demonstrated how breaking down texts and analysing them into chunks will be a useful skill throughout their learning of English.

Resilience was not the only skill cultivated by the students. One male student explained his realization that the story of Achilles had taught him that it “takes a lot of courage for a man to cry”. Another explained that he liked learning the “history of other countries”. *War with Troy* is not just a lesson in good storytelling. It is a lesson in multiliteracies, history, geography, and, for some students, personal discovery.

Most striking, after the unit had been completed, was the students’ love for the character of Achilles. Perhaps because they could identify with his emotional complexities? Despite their individual weaknesses, students will have to overcome multiple adversities if they are to attain academic glory. Provided there are no poisonous arrows flying around, their English teachers are confident that glory is what they will achieve.

7. Conclusion

Teachers who introduced Latin at Astrea Academy Trust commented on how useful Latin has been in supporting and developing their teaching of functional literacy. They identify Latin’s positive contribution to spelling, word awareness, and linguistic understanding. Teaching literacy through Latin helps students develop pluriliteracies where they become more confident users of more than one language.

Teachers from both case studies have identified the contribution of classical mythology to the development of multiliteracies: information literacy, cultural literacy, and, when used expertly, critical literacy. *Minimus* and *War with Troy* are resources which have been used successfully by British teachers with whom I have worked recently, but there are hundreds of additional published resources that can help teachers achieve similar results. In many ways, the individual myths themselves should not be the focus, but rather the ways in which mythological texts can be successfully used in the classroom to help learners explore and develop their literacy competency, whether in reading, writing, speaking, or listening.

While classical mythology does not exist in any discrete sense on British school curricula, it can certainly be accommodated within the teaching of English, history, or languages. Primary teachers regularly teach a range of subjects and are generally open to “upskilling” in new topics. Secondary teachers can sometimes be reluctant to move beyond their subject specialism, but when they do, the results are usually positive for both staff and pupils. Results to date regarding the introduction of classical mythology in both primary and secondary classrooms are promising, but we need to do more to raise the profile and benefits of classical mythology in British classrooms if we are to be successful in persuading school leaders to make space within an already crowded curriculum.

In the UK, support is available from a number of sources including Classics for All (CfA),¹⁵ Advocating Classics Education (ACE),¹⁶ and the Classical Association (CA).¹⁷ CfA is a national charity that provides funding to non-fee-paying schools to introduce the study of Classics (either linguistic or non-linguistic) at any level, both on- and off-timetable. Astrea Academy Trust and Kings College Guildford were the recipients of grants from CfA. Grants can be used to cover costs associated with project planning, teacher training, and other forms of professional development. Grant funding has made the introduction of Classics possible to around 55,000 children in around 800 schools since 2011.

ACE is a national project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and based at King’s College London, which seeks to raise the profile, status, and currency of Classics in British secondary education. It focuses specifically on the study of the classical world in English and seeks to promote the study of classical civilization and ancient history to students aged fourteen to eighteen. Co-directed by Prof. Edith Hall and myself, this project has sixteen partner universities around the UK, each of which is working closely with local schools and colleges to introduce Classics. Classical mythology has been featured by a number of these partner institutions as being particularly valuable to both teachers and learners.

The CA is the national subject association for Classics in England, with responsibility for Classics education in schools, colleges, and universities.

¹⁵ For more information, see Classics for All, www.classicsforall.org.uk (accessed 2 April 2020).

¹⁶ For more information, see Advocating Classics Education, www.aceclassics.org.uk (accessed 2 April 2020).

¹⁷ For more information, see The Classical Association, www.classicalassociation.org (accessed 2 April 2020).

The CA offers full bursaries for teachers to attend its annual conference and can provide grants to schools that want to enrich their Classics curriculum with special project days or new collaborative activities. Regional branches of the CA also hold free events, competitions, and activity days that offer a route into Classics for those whose schools do not offer any form of Classics provision. These events might include reading competitions (in English, Latin, and Greek) with prizes, storytelling days, craft workshops, and public lectures. It is hoped that the impact of these various initiatives is threefold:

1. Public perceptions of Classics (and classical mythology in particular) move away from “irrelevant, elitist, and exclusionary” to “enjoyable, inclusive, and useful”.
2. School leaders and classroom teachers value the contribution of Classics and apportion dedicated time in the school curriculum.
3. More children in British classrooms are given the opportunity to study Classics in some form, with classical mythology seeming a sensible place to start.

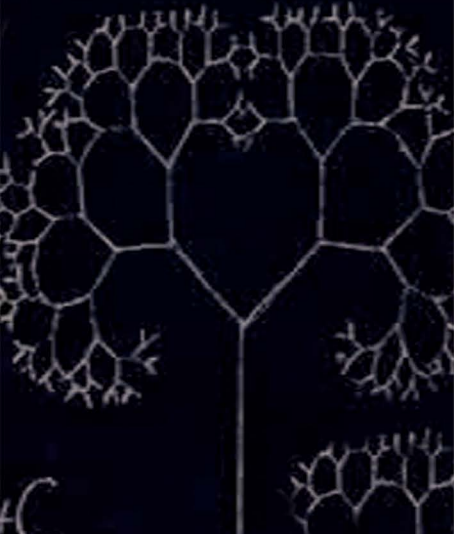
The onus is on classicists to communicate more clearly the benefits of our discipline. The reality is that most school leaders and classroom teachers practising today have not had much exposure to the study of Classics in their own education. Therefore, it is vital that we articulate the contribution classical mythology can make to the development of a curricular priority area: literacy. It is hoped that this chapter goes some way in doing so.

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 $\dots + a_n \sin^2 x + \cos$

МИФОЛОГИЯ

міфалогія

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Part II

OUR MYTHICAL EDUCATION
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN
EUROPE

LEARNING MYTHS IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

I. Introduction

Antiquity is often called the cradle of Western civilization.¹ It seems that this metaphor was understood literally in the history of the Soviet school. From 1934, when the chronological sequence was chosen as the organizing principle of historical education, the history of Ancient Greece and Rome (together with that of Mesopotamia and Egypt, India, and China) was studied in school in Grade 5, thus being taught to eleven- or twelve-year-old pupils. At this point they learned also the concept of history itself. A part of this learning was Greek mythology. The problem is that in their further school education Soviet pupils never returned to ancient history or ancient mythology. It remained only part of their childhood. Post-Soviet countries, Belarus and Russia included, have inherited this style of education, and so ancient history, in a way, still belongs to one's "mythical childhood".

In this paper I would like to examine textbooks on ancient history produced in the USSR for Russian-language schools, paying special attention to the representation of classical mythology and analysing what concepts were communicated during this study. In this way, we have an opportunity to look at knowledge transferred to all pupils across the USSR, as textbooks in other languages of the country were mostly translated from Russian. We may assume that often this was the only systematic knowledge of classical mythology readily available to children. Proper mythologies or books for further reading were obtainable to some degree – in fact, the book *Легенды*

¹ A draft version of the text was presented at the conference *Soviet Antiquity – 4. Human History in the System of Soviet Science, Culture and Education* in November 2018 in Minsk (Belarus), and I would like to thank my colleagues for their notes and comments, being especially grateful to Sergei Karpyuk and Sergei Krikh.

и мифы Древней Греции [Legendy i mify Drevnei Gretsii;² Legends and Myths of Ancient Greece, ed. pr. 1914] by Nicholas Kuhn was reissued over and over again in thousands of copies,³ and *Мифы Древней Греции* [Mify Drevnei Gretsii; Myths of Ancient Greece, ed. pr. 1941] by Lev Uspensky and Vsevolod Uspensky also gained considerable popularity. However, reaching for these books assumed some initiative and level of literary culture that was not necessarily common for the mass reader, especially in peripheral regions.⁴ On the other hand, programmes and textbooks on history as ideologically charged were of special attention for state and party authorities. School teachers were particularly sensitive to educational goals aiming at the standardization and universalization of knowledge. Information contained in textbooks often served as a basis for the perception of other texts of culture. The educational and cultural context of these textbooks will be presented in a historical perspective in order to outline the Russian and Soviet education policy concerning Greek mythology. As the topic may be less well-known to an English-speaking audience, please forgive me for including an extensive introduction describing earlier historical contexts.

2. The Beginnings of Soviet Education: Historical Contexts

The study of history aims not only at providing knowledge of major historical events or figures, but also at helping the students understand the contemporary world and often humanity itself by means of stories from previous epochs.⁵ In early modern times, ancient history and mythology formed the

² Transliteration of Russian names and titles is given according to the system of the American Library Association and the Library of Congress, with minor modifications: I omit diacritic signs and use "-sky" for "-skii" endings. Well-known Russian names that have their traditional spelling are written according to it.

³ Cf. Elena Ermolaeva, "Classical Antiquity in Children's Literature in the Soviet Union", in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Our Mythical Childhood... The Classics and Literature for Children and Young Adults*, Metaforms: Studies in the Reception of Classical Antiquity 8, Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2016, 243; see also in this volume Elena Ermolaeva and Lev Pushel, "Classical Languages, Culture, and Mythology at the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg", 189–208.

⁴ About the formation of Soviet readers, see Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature*, trans. Jesse M. Savage, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997 (ed. pr. in Russian 1997).

⁵ Compare the concept of "historical sense" defined by J. Carleton Bell and David F. McCollum in "A Study of the Attainments of Pupils in United States History", *Journal of Educational Psychology* 8.2 (1917), 257–274 (quoted by Irina Savelieva and Andrei Poletaev, *Социальные представления*

core of education itself, which focused on studying Latin and Greek and texts written in these languages. Ancient stories were used as a tool for moral and ideological education in Europe. They were also present in the Russian gymnasium education system established in the nineteenth century.⁶ It is interesting that the interpretation of the ideological meaning of classical education changed radically in nineteenth-century Russia. Thus, when Minister of Education Count Dmitry A. Tolstoy boosted the influence of Latin and Greek, it was to placate the revolutionary society of the 1860s. A decade earlier, in 1849–1852, Latin was viewed as a highly dangerous subject and was to be reduced in order to have the same effect of calming society.⁷

After the Bolshevik Revolution and the establishment of the USSR, great attention was paid to education.⁸ The system of classical gymnasiums was

о прошлом, или Знают ли американцы историю [Sotsial'nye predstavleniia o proshlom, ili Znaiut li amerikantsy istoriiu; Social Representations of the Past, or, Do Americans Know History], Moskva: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008, 9).

⁶ For more on the history of classical education in Russia, see Grigory Starikovskiy, "Men in Cases': The Perception of Classical Schools in Prerevolutionary Russia", in Zara Martirosova Torlone, Dana LaCourse Munteanu, and Dorota Dutsch, eds., *A Handbook to Classical Reception in Eastern and Central Europe*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017, 457–468; Eduard Frolov, *Русская наука об античности (историографические очерки)* [Russkaia nauka ob antichnosti (istoriograficheskie ocherki); Russian Studies of Antiquity (Historiographical Essays)], Sankt-Peterburg: Izdatel'skiy Tsentr "Gumanitarnaia Akademiia", 2006, 115–436; Svetlana Maksimova, *Преподавание древних языков в русской классической гимназии XIX – начала XX века* [Prepodavanie drevnikh iazykov v russkoi klassicheskoi gimnazii XIX – nachala XX veka; Teaching Ancient Languages in the Russian Classical Gymnasium of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century], Moskva: Greko-latinsky kabinet Iu. A. Shichalina, 2005; Aleksandr Nosov, "К истории классического образования в России (1860 – начало 1900-х годов)" [K istorii klassicheskogo obrazovaniia v Rossii (1860 – nachalo 1900-kh godov)]; On the History of Classical Education in Russia (from 1860 to the Early 1900s)], in George Knabe, ed., *Античное наследие в культуре России* [Antichnoe nasledie v kul'ture Rossii; Ancient Heritage in Russian Culture], Moskva: Izdatel'stvo RNIi kul'turnogo i prirodnogo nasledii, 1996, 203–229; Ivan Aleshintsev, *История гимназического образования в России (XVIII и XIX век)* [Istoriia gimnazicheskogo obrazovaniia v Rossii (XVIII i XIX vek); History of Gymnasium Education in Russia (the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries)], Sankt-Peterburg: Izdanie O. Bogdanovoi, 1912; Vladimir Grigoriev, *Исторический очерк русской школы* [Istoricheskiy ocherk russkoi shkoly; Historical Essay on Russian Schooling], Moskva: Tipografiia Mamontova, 1900, 294–587.

⁷ Starikovskiy, "Men in Cases'", 458; Maksimova, *Prepodavanie drevnikh iazykov*, 23; Nosov, "K istorii klassicheskogo obrazovaniia", 206.

⁸ For more on the system of education in the USSR, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union 1921–1934*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979; Lukian Bushchik, *Очерк развития школьного исторического образования в СССР* [Ocherk razvitiia shkol'nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia v SSSR; An Essay on the Development of School History Education in the USSR], Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk RSFSR, 1961.

abolished almost immediately.⁹ New forms of education were introduced, and new pedagogical theories were developed. For example, Anton Makarenko (1888–1939) was the author of a theory aimed at collective learning that paid close attention to self-government and collective labour. One of the main educational approaches developed by the Narkompros (People's Commissariat of Enlightenment) as early as in 1918 was the *kompleksnyi metod* (комплексный метод; complex method) intended to provide freedom in teaching and to cultivate democracy. This method abolished school subjects, eschewed textbooks, and diminished the significance of curricula themselves. It was based on the study of certain key topics (for example, the child, the village, the region, the USSR) from the point of view of three basic aspects: nature, society, and labour. The main types of lessons were class discussions and neighbourhood excursions for children.¹⁰ The learning of grammar or mathematics was only peripheral.

The reforms were implemented in an atmosphere of civil war and a rise in the number of homeless children, as well as in the context of the campaign against illiteracy waged in the Soviet Union especially during the 1930s.¹¹ Polytechnic schools teaching basic professional skills were promoted by the state and the Komsomol (Communist Youth League), and for some time they provided the only gateway to enrolling in a university.¹² The teaching of Greek and Latin as well as mythology was regarded as too distant from the main educational courses. It was furthermore condemned, as it belonged to the bourgeois school system of the *ancien régime*.

At the same time, during the 1920s and early 1930s, most of the educational staff remained the same as in the pre-revolutionary gymnasiums, and they used old methods and knowledge to convey the new ideology. With time, the attitude to teachers changed and they were often considered class enemies.¹³ However, the Narkompros and Anatoly Lunacharsky as its head tried to support the old intelligentsia, and at least until the purges of the 1930s most of them could teach at schools.

⁹ Despite the reforms, Latin was still taught in some smaller towns, in areas further from the authorities, cf. Iaroslav Isaievych, "Anti-Culture's War against Culture: Ukrainian Translators of Classical Literature as Victims of Political Repression", *Eos* 89 (2002), 346.

¹⁰ Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 7–8, 19–22; Bushchik, *Ocherk razvitiia shkol'nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia*, 103.

¹¹ Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 159.

¹² *Ibidem*, 50.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 30.

A revealing example of the coexistence of old and new cultures may be found in Grigory Belykh and Leonid Panteleev's novel *Республика ШКИД* [Respublika ShKID; The Republic of ShKID, ed. pr. 1926]. The novel depicts a newly organized boarding school for homeless children and delinquents, called Школа-коммуна имени Достоевского (Shkola-kommuna imeni Dostoevskogo – in short ShKID; Fyodor Dostoevsky Commune School for Difficult Teenagers), where the headmaster makes every effort to educate free, intelligent persons. The novel is autobiographical and was written by two former students of the school. The character of the headmaster is based on Viktor Nikolaevich Soroka-Rosinsky (1882–1960), called Vik-niksor in the novel. This model for the novel's protagonist was a Russian pedagogue and psychologist, a graduate of the history and classical philology department of Saint Petersburg University in 1906. He worked in the school together with his wife, Ella Liuminarskaia, a teacher of German. As we may see in the novel, though the students did not study classical subjects, they had self-government and formed a "republic". While composing their anthem, they choose a "[мотив] студенческой песни" (students' song)¹⁴ – "Gaudeamus" – as its basis.¹⁵ They even practised ostracism as a "средство от воров, патент на которое [...] взят две с половиной тысячи лет тому назад в Афинах" (measure to fight criminals [...] used 2,500 years ago in Athens).¹⁶ In this way, the pre-revolutionary idealistic intelligentsia was building a new society of equality based on traditions of Athenian and Roman democracy. Self-government by pupils was welcomed by the Narkompros also in ordinary schools, and it was intended "to be a practising ground for democratic political participation".¹⁷ However, in reality it often became a forum for exclusion of some members of the collective, and a culture of "denunciation" (*донос; donos*) was cultivated also at the school level. During the Thaw, the novel was adapted as a film (dir. Gennadi Poloka, 1966)¹⁸ that revealed a post-Stalinist nostalgia for the "real revolution" and in a sense promoted classical education.

¹⁴ Hereinafter the translation is my own if not stated otherwise.

¹⁵ Grigory Belykh and Leonid Panteleev, *Республика ШКИД* [Respublika ShKID; The Republic of ShKID], Moskva: AST Astrel', 2012 (ed. pr. 1926), 68–69.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 363–364.

¹⁷ Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 27.

¹⁸ Gennadi Poloka, dir., *Республика ШКИД* [Respublika ShKID; The Republic of ShKID], Leningrad: Lenfilm, 1966.

2.1. *A Textbook on Ancient History by Robert Wipper, 1924*

In the atmosphere of relative freedom given to teachers and schools in the early Soviet Union, some pre-revolutionary textbooks on ancient history continued to be used and published in new editions. I would like to mention *Учебник древней истории* [Uchebnik drevnei istorii; A Textbook on Ancient History]¹⁹ by Robert Wipper (1859–1954).²⁰ This work saw at least six editions after 1917, including editions as a textbook for regular as well as vocational schools. Another of Wipper's textbooks was called *Древняя Европа и Восток* [Drevniaia Evropa i Vostok; Ancient Europe and the East] and was published in three editions before 1924,²¹ being a reworking of the textbook with the same title written for younger gymnasium classes (the first edition appeared in 1914). Wipper adhered to a so-called sociological approach in history, and he paid special attention to economics and sociology in studying historical issues. This gave him the possibility of being published in the USSR. According to the Soviet historian of education Lukian Bushchik, this was the reason why Wipper's texts were not popular in tsarist Russia.²² However, Wipper's *Учебник древней истории: С рисунками и историческими картами* [Uchebnik drevnei istorii: S risunkami i istoricheskimi kartami; A Textbook on Ancient History: With Illustrations and Historical Maps]²³ had nine editions between 1900 and 1913, which evidently

¹⁹ Robert Wipper, *Учебник древней истории* [Uchebnik drevnei istorii; A Textbook on Ancient History], *Учебники и учебные пособия для трудовой школы* [Uchebniki i uchebnye posobiia dlia trudovoi shkoly; Textbooks and Manuals for Vocational Schools], 4th ed., Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1924 (ed. pr. 1900).

²⁰ For more on textbooks by Wipper, see Artëm Frank, "Р. Ю. Виппер и развитие школьного исторического образования в первой четверти XX века" [R. Iu. Wipper i razvitie shkol'nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia v pervoi chetverti XX veka; R. Iu. Wipper and the Development of School History Teaching in the First Quarter of the Twentieth Century], *Сибирский педагогический журнал* [Sibirskiy pedagogicheskyy zhurnal; The Siberian Pedagogical Journal] 2 (2014), 150–154; Mikhail Novikov and Tatiana Perfilova, "Р. Ю. Виппер и конструирование 'образа' античной истории в учебной литературе" [R. Iu. Wipper i konstruirovanie "obraza" antichnoi istorii v uchebnoi literature; R. Iu. Wipper and Designing the "Image" of Ancient History in Textbooks], *Ярославский педагогический вестник* [Yaroslavskiy pedagogicheskyy vestnik; Yaroslavl Pedagogical Bulletin] 4.53 (2007), 57–65.

²¹ Robert Wipper, *Древняя Европа и Восток* [Drevniaia Evropa i Vostok; Ancient Europe and the East], *Учебники и пособия для школы I и II ступеней* [Uchebniki i posobiia dlia shkoly I i II stupenei; Textbooks and Manuals for School of the First and Second Levels], 3rd ed., Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1924 (ed. pr. 1914).

²² Bushchik, *Ocherk razvitiia shkol'nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia*, 62.

²³ Robert Wipper, *Учебник древней истории: С рисунками и историческими картами* [Uchebnik drevnei istorii: S risunkami i istoricheskimi kartami; A Textbook on Ancient History: With Illustrations and Historical Maps], 9th ed., Moskva: I. N. Kushnerev i Co., 1913 (ed. pr. 1900).

shows its acceptance. In 1922, Wipper was criticized by Lenin in the latter's work *О значении воинствующего материализма* [О znachenii voinstvu-iushchego materializma; On the Significance of Militant Materialism], and accused of "прислужничество господствующей буржуазии" (toadying to the ruling bourgeoisie).²⁴ In 1924, Wipper emigrated to Latvia to work at the university in Riga, but then "returned" to the Soviet Union with the annexation of Latvia in 1941. Obviously, in the USSR his textbooks were tolerated only for some time, as "[и]х идеалистическая сущность теперь бросалась в глаза" (their idealistic nature was blatant), as described by Bushchik.²⁵

3. Ancient History Renewed: The 1930s

The 1930s brought changes to the system of education.²⁶ The reforms were organized by the Communist Party's Central Committee, with Stalin himself taking part. The main shift in education is described as a return to the old school model with proper subjects and defined programmes, and textbooks that were obligatory for all schools across the country. History was restored as a school subject and the chronological principle was chosen to organize the material. Classical mythology got its place in history classes in Grade 5 during the discussion of Ancient Greece and Rome.

The general approach to history was fundamentally revised according to Marxist thought. Socio-economic factors were considered to be the most influential, and the timeline was divided according to changes in social formations. Class struggle and slave rebellions were given a prominent place in the study of the history of different regions, Classical Antiquity included. This approach needed new textbooks. The Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a decree on 12 February 1933 entitled "Об учебниках для начальной и средней школы" [Ob uchebnikakh dlia nachal'noi i srednei shkoly; On Textbooks for Primary and Secondary Schools], which ordered

²⁴ Vladimir Lenin, "On the Significance of Militant Materialism", trans. David Skirsky and George Hanna, in Vladimir Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 33, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972 (ed. pr. in Russian 1922), 227–236, available at Marxists Internet Archive, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1922/mar/12.htm> (accessed 2 April 2020).

²⁵ Bushchik, *Ocherk razvitiia shkol'nogo istoricheskogo obrazovaniia*, 189.

²⁶ Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 209–255.

that they be ready by 15 July 1933. As a result, more than 100 textbooks on various subjects were published, and in over 50 million copies.²⁷

3.1. History: Pre-Class Society by Nikolai Nikolsky, 1933

The first school textbook on ancient history published in the USSR was *История. Доклассовое общество* [Istoriia. Doklassovoe obshchestvo; History: Pre-Class Society] written in 1933 by Nikolai Nikolsky (1877–1959). The textbook was published in 200,000 copies and translated into 15 languages,²⁸ but it was strongly criticized for being insufficiently Marxist.

Nikolsky was a Soviet and Belarusian historian and ethnographer, head of the ethnography department at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, and he had graduated from Moscow State University. As an ancient historian he specialized in Oriental studies. Working far from the centre of the Soviet Union gave him a possibility to produce and adhere to historical concepts that were not necessarily popular in Moscow.²⁹ As he was writing the textbook, he was also in opposition to Vasily Struve, an Orientalist and rival candidate for writing the text,³⁰ on the concept of defining the formations of the ancient world, as we will see shortly.

Nikolsky had only a few months to prepare the material. As this was the first Soviet textbook on ancient history, it had to define the social formations of the ancient states. Nikolsky made different judgements for different regions. He described Egypt, Mesopotamia, and China as feudal states, and Greece and Rome as slave-owning ones. The feudal interpretation was

²⁷ Oleg Malyugin, "От большевистского Иловайского до учебника без авторов: Из истории создания школьного учебника по древней истории в 1930-х годах" [Ot bol'shevistskogo Ilovaiskogo do uchebnika bez avtorov: Iz istorii sozdaniia shkol'nogo uchebnika po drevnei istorii v 1930-kh godakh; From the Bolshevik Ilovaisky to the Textbook without Authors: History of the Creation of the School Textbook on Ancient History in the 1930s], in Mikhail Bukharin et al., eds., *Scripta Antiqua: Ancient History, Philology, Arts and Material Culture*, vol. 6, Moskva: Sobranie, 2017, 407.

²⁸ Ibidem, 411.

²⁹ Sergei Krikh, "Н. М. Никольский и рождение периферийной советской историографии древности" [N. M. Nikol'sky i rozhdenie periferiinoi sovetskoi istoriografii drevnosti; N. M. Nikol'sky and the Birth of a Peripheral Soviet Historiography of Antiquity], *Журнал Белорусского государственного университета. История* [Zhurnal Belorusskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Istoriia; Journal of the Belarussian State University: History] 4 (2017), 17–22.

³⁰ Another candidate for writing the textbook, Aleksandr Tiumentev, was also an Orientalist. See Malyugin, "Ot bol'shevistskogo Ilovaiskogo", 408.

criticized by Struve, who was an advocate of the slave-owning definition.³¹ Soon Struve's concept would be the official position of Soviet historiography, but Nikolsky's textbook was, nevertheless, accepted. A new edition was drawn up in 1934, and it was commonly used until 1940, when a newer textbook appeared.

The language in this textbook is concise. It aims to transfer basic knowledge by simplifying it to some degree for a children's audience. It would be the prototype for the next variants of textbooks, and Sergei Krikh supposes that it was based on the ancient history of Wipper.³² However, the description of Greek mythology in Nikolsky's book is not rooted in the pre-revolutionary model.

Nikolsky's book features black-and-white illustrations based on ancient depictions. Including visual material in Russian textbooks on history was an innovation introduced at the beginning of the twentieth century, and at first it was used only in books for small children.³³ Pre-revolutionary textbooks contained illustrations presenting famous pieces of art and historical persons. Pictures in the first Soviet books were chosen to show "social life" and "civil history".³⁴ As a result, Nikolsky's book does not include any portraits of a historical person, nor is the role of any one person emphasized in the main text. According to Krikh, twenty-five of the seventy-one pictures here present everyday life (agriculture, crafts, trade, shipping, etc.), eight war, seven architecture, and six religion (priests, rituals, and myths).³⁵ However, the sections depicting Greek religion and the Homeric poems include five pictures, not necessarily presenting rituals.

Mythical topics in the book start with Homer's epics, which are described in section 72.³⁶ This section is quite short, taking up only one page,

³¹ Krikh, "N. M. Nikolsky", 18.

³² Sergei Krikh, "Картинки в книжке: Изобразительный ряд в советских школьных учебниках по древней истории" [Kartinki v knizhke: Izobrazitel'nyi riad v sovetskikh shkol'nykh uchebnikakh po drevnei istorii; Pictures in the Book: Artistic Images in the Soviet School Textbooks on Ancient History], in Mikhail Bukharin et al., eds., *Scripta Antiqua: Ancient History, Philology, Arts and Material Culture*, vol. 6, Moskva: Sobranie, 2017, 362–363.

³³ Aleksei Vagin, *Методика преподавания истории в средней школе: Учение о методах. Теория урока* [Metodika prepodavaniia istorii v srednei shkole: Uchenie o metodakh. Teoriia uroka; Methods for Teaching History in Secondary School: A Study of Methods. Theory of the Lesson], Moskva: Prosveshchenie, 1968, 184.

³⁴ Ibidem, 185–186.

³⁵ Krikh, "Kartinki v knizhke", 369.

³⁶ It is section 82 in the 2nd ed. of the textbook. Nikolai Nikolsky, *История: Доклассовое общество. Древний Восток. Античный мир. Учебник для средней школы 5 год обучения* [Istoriia: Doklassovoe obshchestvo. Drevnii Vostok. Antichnyi mir. Uchebnik dlia srednei shkoly 5 god

including an illustration. It starts with an introduction to oral epic poetry and the Homeric question. The text says that the epics were composed at the courts of the aristocracy and were aimed at glorifying “военные и разбойничьи походы своих господ и их предков” (the military and predatory campaigns of masters and their ancestors).³⁷ This allows the narrative to explain the presence of gods in the texts as follows: “А так как каждый басилевс считал, что его род идет от какого-нибудь бога, то в качестве действующих лиц в песнях постоянно фигурировали и боги” (And since every basileus believed that his family derived from some god, the gods constantly appeared as characters in the songs).³⁸

The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are presented as aristocratic poetry. The *Iliad* describes “military life” (*военный быт*) during the Trojan War. Contradictions between royal interests and those of “ordinary militants” (*рядового воинства*) are emphasized. The militants are presented as farmers who long “for their plough-lands” (*пашен*). They “took all the cattle of the Trojans” (*угнали весь скот троянцев*) among other spoils after the victory. The presence of gods and their “alleged” (*будто бы*) participation in the war is mentioned, but none are named.

The *Odyssey*, according to the textbook, presents the “adventures” (*приключения*) of one of the kings fighting at Troy, while on his way home. From among the exploits of Odysseus, Nikolsky lists Scylla and Charybdis, the Sirens, and the giant Cyclops. Scylla is explained to be “водоворот около теперешней Сицилии” (a whirlpool near contemporary Sicily),³⁹ thus providing a geographical location for it. The story of the Sirens (“злых духов в образе птиц-женщин *сирен*”; evil spirits in the form of female birds, *sirens*)⁴⁰ has an illustration based on the Siren Vase from the British Museum.⁴¹

obucheniia; History: Pre-Class Society. The Ancient East. Antiquity. Secondary School Textbook, Grade 5], Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe uchebno-pedagogicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1933, 106–107; Nikolai Nikolsky, *История: Доклассовое общество. Древний Восток. Античный мир. Учебник для 5 класса средней школы* [Istoriia: Doklassovoe obshchestvo. Drevnii Vostok. Antichnyi mir. Uchebnik dlia 5 klassa srednei shkoly; History: Pre-Class Society. The Ancient East. Antiquity. Textbook for Grade 5 of Secondary School], 2nd ed., Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe uchebno-pedagogicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1934, 97.

³⁷ Nikolsky, *Istoriia: Doklassovoe obshchestvo* (1st ed.), 106.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ Ibidem, 107.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ Museum no. 1843,1103.31; see “The Siren Vase”, The British Museum, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=399666&partId=1 (accessed 2 April 2020).

The caption under the picture emphasizes the reliability of its depiction of a ship. The textbook mentions that it was Athena who helped the main hero. Also in this case it underlines the importance of the poem as a source of knowledge of “как жили, вели хозяйство, управляли полисами сам Одиссей и другие басилевсы, к которым он заезжал по дороге” (how Odysseus and other basileis lived, cared for households, and governed the poleis).⁴²

The poems are called “образцовы[ми] поэтически[ми] произведения[ми], которые] имеют мировую известность” (exemplary poetic works of world renown).⁴³ They are presented as historical sources for the social and economic history of Ancient Greece. The reality of Troy is confirmed by excavations.

The coverage of Greek religion⁴⁴ begins with Demeter and Dionysus, presenting them as gods popular among rural people. It seems to be natural for Nikolsky as an ethnographer to start with rural deities. The myth of Dionysus and the spring and autumn rituals in his honour are described. Dionysus is presented as a resurrecting god, alluding to Christ. The section finishes with a description of the autumn Dionysia as a holiday of “пляски, песни, хороводы и беспробудное пьянство” (dances, songs, and binge drinking)⁴⁵ and an illustration of a dance from a Greek vase. This aspect was probably used in antireligious propaganda, as it gave material for a comparison of the Dionysia with traditional Christian holidays. On the other hand, Dionysus was especially popular in early twentieth-century Russia, which was believed to be a place of the third, Slavonic Renaissance. Prominent philologists, such as Tadeusz Zieliński, as well as the men of letters of the Silver Age,⁴⁶ aimed to revive the Hellenic tradition through dithyrambs and Dionysian dances.⁴⁷ Most probably the textbook did not aim to continue this tradition, but it did so in a way.

⁴² Nikolsky, *Istoriia: Doklassovoe obshchestvo* (1st ed.), 107.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ It is section 90 in the textbook (103 and 104 in the 2nd ed.). Nikolsky, *Istoriia: Doklassovoe obshchestvo* (1st ed.), 129–131; Nikolsky, *Istoriia: Doklassovoe obshchestvo* (2nd ed.), 119–121.

⁴⁵ Nikolsky, *Istoriia: Doklassovoe obshchestvo* (1st ed.), 130.

⁴⁶ As mid-nineteenth-century Russian literature was considered to be its “Golden Age”, the next epoch is commonly called “Silver”.

⁴⁷ For more on the Slavonic Renaissance, see Nina Braginskaya, “Славянское возрождение античности” [Slavianskoe vrozozhdenie antichnosti; Slavonic Renaissance of Antiquity], in Sergei Zenkin, ed., *Русская теория, 1920–1930-е годы* [Russkaia teoriia, 1920–1930-e gody; Russian Theory, the 1920s and 1930s], Moskva: Rossiisky Gosudarstvennyi Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2004, 49–80; Catriona Kelly, “Classical Tragedy and the ‘Slavonic Renaissance’: The Plays of Vjačeslav

The Olympic gods are presented as city patrons in the context of the Olympic Games. Only Athena, Zeus, and Apollo are mentioned. Athena is the goddess of Athens, who has her temple built by the famous artist Phidias. Apollo is presented as a god of prophecy, and the Delphic oracle is mentioned as a way of enriching the state treasury:

Так как у дельфийских жрецов были тайные корреспонденты во всех греческих полисах, то они хорошо разбирались в политических отношениях и в делах купцов и промышленников и давали ловкие ответы.⁴⁸

Since the Delphic priests had secret correspondents in all the Greek poleis, they were well versed in political relations and in the affairs of merchants and industrialists, and gave clever answers.

The section finishes with strong antireligious emphasis, depicting the priesthood as a system of usury, and mentioning trials against atheists and freethinkers (*безбожников и свободомыслящих*), such as that against Socrates.

3.2. History of the Ancient World, edited by Aleksandr Mishulin, 1940

Although Nikolsky's textbook was criticized, a new version was not prepared and published until 1940.⁴⁹ The writing of this textbook took six years during the harshest political era for the USSR, famous for Stalin's purges and

Ivanov and Innokentij Annenskij Compared", *The Slavic and East European Journal* 33.2 (1989), 235–254; Katherine Lahti, *The Russian Revival of the Dithyramb: A Modern Use of Antiquity*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2018; Nikolai Nikolaev, "М. М. Бахтин, Невельская школа философии и культурная история 1920-х годов" [М. М. Bakhtin, Nevel'skaia shkola filosofii i kul'turnaia istoriia 1920-kh godov; M. M. Bakhtin, the Nevel School of Philosophy, and the Cultural History of the 1920s], in Vitaly Makhlin, ed., *Бахтинский сборник* [Bakhtinsky sbornik; The Bakhtin Collection], vol. 5, Moskva: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2004, 259–268; Henry Stead and Hanna Paulouskaya, "Classics, Crisis and the Soviet Experiment to 1939", in Barbara Goff and Michael Simpson, eds., *Classicising Crisis: The Modern Age of Revolutions and the Greco-Roman Repertoire*, London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2020, 128–147.

⁴⁸ Nikolsky, *Istoriia: Doklassovoe obshchestvo* (1st ed.), 130–131.

⁴⁹ Aleksandr Mishulin, ed., *История древнего мира: Учебник для 5–6 классов средней школы* [Istoriia drevnego mira: Uchebnik dlia 5–6 klassov srednei shkoly; History of the Ancient World: Textbook for Grades 5 and 6 of Secondary School], Moskva: Uchpedgiz, 1940.

repressions.⁵⁰ The published textbook mentions only the name of its editor, Aleksandr Mishulin (1901–1948), an ancient historian, head of the ancient history department of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, editor-in-chief of *Вестник древней истории* [Vestnik drevnei istorii; Journal of Ancient History].⁵¹ Its other authors were historian of Ancient Rome Sergei Kovalëv (1886–1960), the already-discussed Nikolsky, and the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Ancient History*, a graduate of the University of Jena and ancient historian of Georgian origin, Aleksandr Svanidze (1886–1941). Initially the group had been given time until the end of 1934, and the first version of the book was prepared before the deadline.⁵² However, it was criticized because of its definition of the social formation of the ancient East (this part was again written by Nikolsky). The second version of the book attracted disapproval for its “популярный характер [...] и отсутствие иллюстраций” (popular character and lack of illustrations).⁵³ During further work on the textbook, two of its authors were arrested: Svanidze (a former friend of Stalin) in 1937 and Kovalëv in 1938. Also Nikolsky was replaced – by the scholar Struve, Nikolsky’s chief opponent in the debate on social formations. Ultimately, the textbook was published in 1940 without mentioning the names of the authors. It went through twelve editions before 1953 and was called “первым марксистским учебником для средней школы” (the first Marxist secondary school textbook [on history]) in the USSR.⁵⁴

Greek mythology is described in section 30, which is devoted to Greek religion.⁵⁵ In the first version it was most probably written by Sergei

⁵⁰ The difficult history of producing the textbook is described by Malyugin, “Ot bol’shevistskogo Ilovaiskogo”. For more on conceptualizing ancient history in the USSR in that period, see Sergei Kar-ruuk, “A posle byla voina: Diskussia 1940 goda o kharaktere krito-mikenskoj tsivilizatsii” [A posle byla voina: Diskussia 1940 goda o kharaktere krito-mikenskoj tsivilizatsii; Afterwards Was the War: The 1940 Discussion on the Nature of the Cretan-Mycenaean Civilization], *Вестник древней истории* [Vestnik drevnei istorii; Journal of Ancient History] 2 (2015), 195–205.

⁵¹ Sergei Krikh, “A. V. Мишулин и его Спартак” [A. V. Mishulin i ego Spartak; A. V. Mishulin and His Spartacus], *Вестник древней истории* [Vestnik drevnei istorii; Journal of Ancient History] 1 (2015), 178–189.

⁵² Malyugin, “Ot bol’shevistskogo Ilovaiskogo”, 413.

⁵³ Ibidem, 415.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, 411.

⁵⁵ Here and in what follows, I will base my survey on the 3rd ed. of the textbook: Aleksandr Mishulin, ed., *История древнего мира: Учебник для 5–6 классов средней школы* [Istoriia drevnego mira: Uchebnik dlia 5–6 klassov srednei shkoly; History of the Ancient World: Textbook for Grades 5 and 6 of Secondary School], Moskva: Uchpedgiz, 1943, 72–85.

Kondratiev (1872–1964), a classical philologist and translator.⁵⁶ This textbook contains much more information on mythology and religion than the previous one. From this point of view, it is more similar to pre-revolutionary gymnasium models. It starts by explaining the origins of myths as interpretations of natural phenomena. The first myth describes the origins of the world as arising from chaos. The story of the successive generations of gods is presented (with an illustration of the Titanomachy based on the famous bas-relief from the Pergamon temple), but the text does not contain graphic detail. For example, Zeus replaces his father Kronos “after a fierce war” (*после ожесточенной войны*),⁵⁷ and the episode of the swallowing of the children is not mentioned.

The main Olympians are briefly presented with a description of their areas of patronage.⁵⁸ Pictures of Athena (based on the Athena Giustiniani sculpture⁵⁹), Apollo (Apollo Belvedere), and Artemis (Diana of Versailles) are found a few pages further,⁶⁰ providing the most famous images of the gods. It is also mentioned that people believed in many more gods, and the concepts of polytheism and anthropomorphism are introduced. Prometheus and the origins of the human race have their own subsection.⁶¹ The creation of human beings out of clay as well as their gift of fire despite the will of Zeus are described, and also the punishment inflicted by Zeus (with a picture of the Zeus of Otricoli) and the steadfast sufferings of Prometheus. The description is summarized as follows:

В мифе о Прометее выражено преклонение греков перед мужеством и стойкостью героя, который не побоялся выступить против богов и принять на себя жестокие страдания.⁶²

⁵⁶ Although in 1935 Mishulin declared that he would write the parts on the history of Greece, India, and China himself, cf. Malyugin, “Ot bol’shevistskogo Ilovaiskogo”, 414. Sergei Karpyuk (whom I would like to thank for this note heartily) assumes the author was Kondratiev, based on the materials of *Стенограмма заседания, посвященного памяти А. В. Мишулина* [Stenogramma zasedaniia, posviashchënno pamiati A. V. Mishulina; Transcript of the Meeting in Memory of A. V. Mishulin], 25 December 1948, Архив Российской Академии Наук [Arkhirv Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk; Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences], 1577-2-198.

⁵⁷ Mishulin, ed., *Istoriia drevnego mira* (3rd ed.), 73.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, 73–74.

⁵⁹ A copy of this statue is located in the Peterhof near Saint Petersburg in the garden of Venus near the Marly Palace built in 1720–1723.

⁶⁰ Mishulin, ed., *Istoriia drevnego mira* (3rd ed.), 77.

⁶¹ Ibidem, 74.

⁶² Ibidem.

This myth shows how the Greeks admired the courage and fortitude of the hero that was not afraid to stand against the gods and accept cruel suffering.

That is, the textbook emphasizes the revolutionary character of the Titan. Pandora, on the contrary, is described as “женщина, известная не только своей красотой, но и крайним любопытством” (a woman, famous not only for how lovely she was, but also her extreme curiosity).⁶³ She is introduced as a “beauty” (*красавица*), and it seems that she was just an ordinary woman who found a box and caused all the misfortunes. Such opposition is openly antifemale. The idea of the origins of suffering is continued in the next subsection, where the myth of the Four Ages is mentioned.⁶⁴

Even more space in the textbook is given to Greek heroes (compare sections 31–32).⁶⁵ It is emphasized that they “отдавали свои силы и способности на помощь людям” (gave their efforts and talents to help people),⁶⁶ which was especially important in ancient times, when people had to contend with wildlife. The first character to be presented is Heracles, called “настоящий народный герой, могучий труженик и страдалец” (a real people’s hero, a mighty worker and sufferer), who was enslaved “у ничтожного и корыстного царя” (by a paltry and selfish king).⁶⁷ Thus, Greek demigods obtain the features of proper “heroes”, which was especially important in the period during and after World War Two (the textbook was published from 1940 to 1953).

Among the labours of Heracles, the Nemean Lion, the Lernaean Hydra, and the Stymphalian Birds are mentioned. There is also a description of the rescue of Prometheus with a picture based on a vase from the Vatican Museum depicting the Titans Atlas and Prometheus. However, most of the attention (in its own subsection) is focused on the myth of Antaeus and Heracles. This was the myth mentioned by Stalin during his speech at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on 5 March 1937,⁶⁸ when Stalin compared Bolsheviks to Antaeus:

⁶³ Ibidem.

⁶⁴ Thus following Ovid (*Met.* 1.89–150), not Hesiod (*Op. et Dies* 108–201). Mishulin, ed., *Istoriia drevnego mira* (3rd ed.), 74–75.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, 75–80.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, 75.

⁶⁷ Ibidem.

⁶⁸ It was the plenum that fully started the Great Purge in the Soviet Union.

Они так же, как и Антей, сильны тем, что держат связь со своей матерью, с массами, которые породили, вскормили и воспитали их. И пока они держат связь со своей матерью, с народом, они имеют все шансы на то, чтобы остаться непобедимыми.⁶⁹

They, like Antaeus, are strong because they maintain connection with their mother, the masses, who gave birth to them, suckled them, and reared them. And as long as they maintain connection with their mother, with the people, they have every chance of remaining invincible.

Stalin calls Heracles an enemy (*враг*) in this fragment, and he speaks in favour of Antaeus. Mishulin's text does not have such a connotation, but he does call Antaeus "этим знаменитым героем" (this famous hero), expressing respect for him, and states that "он [...] поражал всякого чужеземца, приходившего в его страну" (he [...] defeated every outlander who came to his country).⁷⁰ Talking about Gaia, the author uses the phrase "mother earth" (*мать-земля*; *mat'-zemia*), a collocation that, while normal for retelling this myth,⁷¹ also sounded especially familiar to readers at the time when the textbook was published, because "the Motherland" (*Родина-Мать*; *Rodina-Mat'*, literally "homeland-mother") was one of the most important concepts in patriotic propaganda during World War Two in the USSR.⁷² The section features a picture of the hero based on the

⁶⁹ Iosif Stalin, "Заключительное слово товарища Сталина на Пленуме ЦК ВКП(б) 5 марта 1937 г." [Zakliuchitel'noe slovo tovarishcha Stalina na Plenumе TsK VKP(b) 5 marta 1937 g.; The Last Speech during the Plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Bolsheviks on 5 March 1937], *Правда* [Pravda; Truth] 90 (1 April 1937), 3. This idea was repeated in the retelling of myths about Heracles by Lev Uspensky; cf. Lev Uspensky and Vsevolod Uspensky, *Мифы Древней Греции* [Mify Drevnei Gretsii; Myths of Ancient Greece], Leningrad: Detskaia literatura, 1976 (ed. pr. of this part as Lev Uspensky, *Двенадцать подвигов Геракла* [Dvenadtsat' podvigov Gerakla; The Twelve Labours of Heracles], Moskva and Leningrad: Detizdat, 1938), 136.

⁷⁰ Mishulin, ed., *Istoriia drevnego mira* (3rd ed.), 76.

⁷¹ Cf. Heinrich Wilhelm Stoll, *Мифы классической древности* [Mify klassicheskoi drevnosti; Myths of Classical Antiquity], vol. 1, trans. V. I. Pokrovsky and P. A. Medvedev, Moskva: Tipografiia Mamontova i Co., 1877 (ed. pr. in German 1860), 117.

⁷² Oleg Riabov, "'Родина-Мать' в советском дискурсе сталинградской битвы: Военная пропаганда и коммеморация" ["Rodina-Mat'" v sovetskom diskurse stalingradskoi bitvy: Voennaia propaganda i kommemoratsiia; The "Motherland" in the Soviet Discourse of the Battle of Stalingrad: War Propaganda and Commemoration], *Лабиринт. Журнал социально-гуманитарных исследований* [Labyrinth. Zhurnal sotsial'no-gumanitarnykh issledovaniï; Labyrinth: Journal of Social and Humanities Studies] 1 (2017), 21–34.

Farnese Heracles⁷³ and Heracles' fight against Antaeus based on a vase painting from the Louvre.

The next character in the textbook is Theseus, the main hero of Attica ([г]лавны[й] геро[й] Атики), whose "подвиги во многом напоминают подвиги Геракла" (deeds resemble those of Heracles).⁷⁴ The myth of the killing of Procrustes is used to explain the expression "Procrustean bed". The main story in this section is the story of the Minotaur, the Labyrinth, and Ariadne. As one would expect from a textbook written during the war, the myth is explained as "освобождение своей страны от тяжелой и страшной дани" (the liberation of [Theseus'] country from a severe and terrible tribute).⁷⁵ Theseus' promise to change the sails of his ship to white is also described, as well as his forgetting about that promise, which leads to the subsequent death of Aegeus, who gave his name to the Aegean Sea. It is worth mentioning that these elements of the rich mythology of Theseus are almost the only ones present in a later Soviet animated feature *Лабиринт. Подвиги Тесея* [Labirint. Podvigi Teseia; Labyrinth: The Deeds of Theseus] by Aleksandra Snezhko-Blotskaia (1971).⁷⁶

The textbook also contains myths about Oedipus⁷⁷ and the Argonauts.⁷⁸ The first one starts with the encounter of Oedipus and Laius and ends with the exile of the now-blind Oedipus. It includes the riddle of the Sphinx, which might be interesting for children to solve on their own. This section does not explain the possible meanings of the myth.

An introduction to the myth of the Argonauts includes familiar geographical names: the Caucasus and the Black Sea. From the many stories of the Argonauts, the editors choose only a few: how they rescued King Phineus from the Harpies ("спасли его от голода"; saving him from starvation),⁷⁹

⁷³ Original in the National Museum in Naples, museum no. 280; see "Farnese Herakles", Museum of Classical Archaeology Databases, <http://museum.classics.cam.ac.uk/collections/casts/farnese-herakles> (accessed 24 June 2020). At least three copies of the statue were present in Leningrad at the time when the textbook was being produced.

⁷⁴ Mishulin, ed., *Istoriia drevnego mira* (3rd ed.), 76.

⁷⁵ Ibidem.

⁷⁶ Aleksandra Snezhko-Blotskaia, dir., *Лабиринт. Подвиги Тесея* [Labirint. Podvigi Teseia; Labyrinth: The Deeds of Theseus], Moskva: Soyuzmultfilm, 1971. See a description of the movie in *Our Mythical Childhood Survey*: Hanna Paulouskaya, "Entry on: Labyrinth. The Deeds of Theseus [Лабиринт. Подвиги Тесея] by Aleksei Simukov, Aleksandra Snezhko-Blotskaia", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Susan Deacy, *Our Mythical Childhood Survey*, Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018, <http://www.omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/55> (accessed 2 April 2020).

⁷⁷ Mishulin, ed., *Istoriia drevnego mira* (3rd ed.), 78–79.

⁷⁸ Ibidem, 79–80.

⁷⁹ Ibidem, 79.

how they sailed between the Clashing Rocks, and how they obtained the Golden Fleece with the help of an enchantress, Medea. In order to get the Fleece, Medea baked bread and gave it to a dragon, which then fell asleep after eating it. Jason took the Fleece and went home. Medea accompanied him because she had fallen in love with him. The other deeds of Jason in Colchis are not mentioned. Describing the way back, the story of Orpheus and the Sirens is provided: "Орфей заиграл и заморозил их своей игрой. Сирены забыли обо всем и пропустили аргонатов" (Orpheus started to play and charmed them with his music. The Sirens forgot about everything and let the Argonauts go).⁸⁰ The section concludes that this myth preserves ancient memories of the Greeks about their distant journeys in search of precious metals. The Golden Fleece is explained as a metaphor for the gold that was mined in Colchis. The text does not mention explicitly Georgia or the fact that what used to be ancient Colchis now belonged to the USSR, but this information might have been included in the teacher's own comments on the text.

A separate section is devoted to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The description starts with Homer, "a blind singer from Asia Minor" (*слепой певец из Малой Азии*).⁸¹ It goes on to say that "[с]емь греческих городов спорили между собой из-за чести считаться родиной Гомера, но ни один из них не мог доказать, что Гомер родился именно в нем" (seven Greek cities fought for the honour of being Homer's native land, but none of them could prove that Homer was born in exactly this place).⁸² The picture of Homer shown is based on the bust from the National Museum in Naples.⁸³

The story of the *Iliad*⁸⁴ begins with the Apple of Discord and subsequently tells of the Trojan War, as well as about the anger of Achilles, the death of his best friend, Patroclus, and Achilles' revenge: "Храбро сражался Гектор с Ахиллом, но он не мог своим копьем пробить доспехов, выкованных Гефестом" (Hector fought bravely with Achilles, but he could not pierce his armour forged by Hephaestus).⁸⁵ Thus, the strongest warriors from both sides are presented with equal respect, but it was the gods' help and craft that was the reason for Hector's defeat. The scene of mourning on the

⁸⁰ Ibidem, 80.

⁸¹ Ibidem.

⁸² Ibidem.

⁸³ Museum no. 1130; see "Head of Homer", Museum of Classical Archaeology Databases, <http://museum.classics.cam.ac.uk/collections/casts/head-homer> (accessed 2 April 2020).

⁸⁴ Mishulin, ed., *Istoriia drevnego mira* (3rd ed.), 80–82.

⁸⁵ Ibidem, 81.

walls includes “the father and the mother” of Hector, not Andromache. This appears natural in a book for children, where “family” means “parents” rather than “partners”.⁸⁶ Although the text does not contain any explicit reference to the war experience common to this generation of readers, the details of the story and the choice of words are typical of war narratives. The concepts most often mentioned in the chapter are “heroism”, “bravery”, “audacity”, “overcoming fear”, “cowardice”, as well as “rage”, “ruthlessness”, “friendship”, “help”, “death”, and “revenge”.⁸⁷ Contrary to Homer, Hector did not run from Achilles around Troy, he only “дрогнул, но, преодолев свой страх, лицом к лицу встретил Ахилла” (faltered, but, having overcome his fear, met Achilles face to face).⁸⁸ This story features no illustrations.

The description of the *Odyssey*⁸⁹ is also selective and brief. It includes the “adventures” (*приключения*) caused by the Cyclops Polyphemus, Aeolus’ winds, the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, the Phaeacians, as well as the return of Odysseus to Penelope and Telemachus, and the killing of the suitors with the help of Athena. This retelling is narrated more in the style of an adventure story or a fairy tale. It starts as follows:

Однажды бурное море прибило Одиссея и его спутников к острову циклопов – одноглазых великанов. Одиссей с частью своих спутников забрел в пещеру самого страшного из них – циклопа Полифема.⁹⁰

Once a stormy sea drove Odysseus and his companions to the island of the Cyclopes, who were one-eyed giants. Odysseus with some of his companions wandered into the cave of the most terrible of them, the Cyclops Polyphemus.

The words are more colloquial, the sentences are shorter, and superlatives occur often. The description of the poem includes two illustrations: Odysseus and the Sirens, based on the Siren Vase from the British Museum,

⁸⁶ Astyanax, the son of Hector, is also not mentioned, so Hector is presented as a son but not as a husband or father.

⁸⁷ The text is much more full of words with such meanings compared with other retellings of myths, cf. Nicholas Kuhn, *Легенды и мифы Древней Греции* [Legendy i mify Drevnei Gretsii; Legends and Myths of Ancient Greece], Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe uchebno-pedagogicheskoe izdatel'stvo Ministerstva prosveshcheniia RSFSR, 1954 (ed. pr. 1914), 324.

⁸⁸ Mishulin, ed., *Istoriia drevnego mira* (3rd ed.), 81.

⁸⁹ Ibidem, 82–85.

⁹⁰ Ibidem, 82.

similarly to Nikolsky, and Penelope and Telemachus at a loom, based on the vase from Chiusi.⁹¹

In conclusion, I would like to underline that the description of Greek religion significantly differs from the description of the myths or the poems. In the first part, the authors made a visible effort to prove that the Greek gods (and by extension the Christian god) did not exist. In the second part, they seem to be more relaxed, retelling the myths without adding corrective notes. However, not all the gods of the myths are included in the textbook, especially from the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. In any case, this textbook pays much more attention to mythology and contains many more details and illustrations. The sections described are printed over fourteen pages and feature eleven illustrations based on the most famous ancient sculptures or vase paintings.

4. Wartime and Post-War Reforms

It should also be mentioned that an unusual move towards antiquity was made by, most probably, Stalin himself after World War Two.⁹² For some time Latin was returned to school education, albeit not universally, being taught only in some secondary schools in larger cities.

This was part of a wider initiative of educational reform conducted by the new head of the Narkompros, Vladimir Potëmkin (1874–1946), in 1940,⁹³

⁹¹ "216789, ATHENIAN, Chiusi, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, 63.564", Classical Art Research Centre, <http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/XDB/ASP/recordDetails.asp?id=F322BAD4-652B-4E56-AFE7-E51A636F2E81> (accessed 2 April 2020).

⁹² Alexander Gavrilov, "Jakov M. Borovskij: Poet of Latin in the Soviet Union", in György Karsai, Gábor Klaniczay, David Movrin, and Elżbieta Olechowska, eds., *Classics and Communism: Greek and Latin behind the Iron Curtain*, Ljubljana, Budapest, and Warsaw: Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts; Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Study; and Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw, 2013, 28; Solomon Lurie, "Из воспоминаний о Марке Наумовиче Ботвиннике" [Iz vospominanii o Marke Naumoviche Botvinnike; Reminiscing about Mark Naumovich Botvinnik], *Древний мир и мы* [Drevnii mir i my; The Ancient World and We] 1 (1997), 187. On the Stalinist reintroduction of Classics, see also Pamela Davidson, "Cultural Memory and Survival: The Russian Renaissance of Classical Antiquity in the Twentieth Century", Inaugural Lecture at University College, London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 2009, 17–18, <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/69111/1/Cultural%20Memory%20FINAL%20REVISED%20VERSION.pdf> (accessed 2 April 2020).

⁹³ Ann Livschiz, "Pre-Revolutionary in Form, Soviet in Content? Wartime Educational Reforms and the Postwar Quest for Normality", *History of Education* 35.4–5 (July–September 2006), 541–560.

aiming at restructuring the school system according to the pre-revolutionary system. In fact, these reforms had been planned during the 1930s, but were postponed for some time because of the war. The main aim was to continue work on improving administration and schools' disciplinary system. Some of the changes were initiated during the war, as an experiment on a smaller scale.⁹⁴ For example, single-sex education (Boys' Gymnasium and Girls' Gymnasium) started in some secondary schools in Moscow in the second semester of 1942/43, was expanded to 76 cities in the following year and to 176 cities in 1952.⁹⁵ In August 1943, the Rules of Conduct were introduced in schools, as well as other administrative laws strengthening discipline. Changes in the grading system brought in final exams and gold and silver medals for graduates. One of the most remembered effects was the introduction of fees for the upper grades in 1940. Not all of these reforms were appreciated by parents and/or children. However, as Ann Livschiz notes, "[n]either the supporters nor opponents of the revival appeared to focus on the humanist educational aspect, but rather on the socialising and disciplining aspect of the system".⁹⁶

In January 1944, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences was established. This body carried out comparative research on Western educational systems and pre-revolutionary gymnasia. One of the results was the introduction of Latin for pupils of the upper grades (8–10). As the school system and facilities were hugely destroyed during the war and the population faced poverty, proceeding to the upper grades was a very rare phenomenon. Thus, Latin courses similar to the bourgeois gymnasia became a part of elitist education. Nevertheless, new textbooks were prepared and published in multiple editions.⁹⁷ They were written by Sergei Kondratiev, the author of the Greek part of Mishulin's textbook, and Aleksei Vasnetsov. Thus, dozens of pupils got a chance to read about gods and heroes in Latin. In the course of these reforms, new textbooks on ancient history also appeared.

⁹⁴ Ibidem, 545–546.

⁹⁵ Evgeny Medynsky, *Народное образование в СССР* [Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR; Public Education in the USSR], Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii pedagogicheskikh nauk RSFSR, 1952, 85.

⁹⁶ Livschiz, "Pre-Revolutionary in Form", 550.

⁹⁷ Sergei Kondratiev and Aleksei Vasnetsov, *Учебник латинского языка: для 8–10 классов средней школы* [Uchebnik latinskogo iazyka: dlia 8–10 klassov srednei shkoly; Latin: Textbook for Grades 8–10 of Secondary School], Moskva: Uchpedgiz, 1948.

4.1. *History of the Ancient World by Sergei Kovalëv, 1954*

Kovalëv was one of the authors of the previous textbook edited by Mishulin, but his name did not appear in the credits there because of his arrest. (His arrest was also something often left unmentioned in his biographies.)⁹⁸ Kovalëv was a specialist in Ancient Rome. He belonged to the first generation of Soviet ancient historians. Although he has not become one of the acknowledged figures in Soviet historiography, he was responsible for many important concepts.⁹⁹

Kovalëv was the author of the outline of the previous textbook together with Nikolsky,¹⁰⁰ and he wrote a section on the history of Rome in the first version of Mishulin's book.¹⁰¹ Already in 1925, Kovalëv wrote a popular "self-education" book on the history of antiquity entitled *Всеобщая история в популярном изложении для самообразования* [Vseobshchaia istoriia v populiarnom izlozhenii dlia samoobrazovaniia; Popular Universal History for Self-Education].¹⁰² The textbook under consideration here, *История древнего мира* [Istoriia drevnego mira; History of the Ancient World] was published in 1954 and went through two editions before 1956. In its description of mythology it is very dependent on Mishulin's book, as we will see further.

Homer's poems are presented in section 40, "Общественный строй древнейшей Греции" [Obshchestvennyi stroi drevneishei Gretsii; The Social System of Archaic Greece].¹⁰³ Its title declares the way in which the

⁹⁸ Sergei Krikh and Anastasiia Tarasova, "С. И. Ковалев и 'открытие' эллинизма в советской историографии" [S. I. Kovalëv i "otkrytie" ellinizma v sovetskoj istoriografii; S. I. Kovalëv and the Discovery of Hellenism in Soviet Historiography], *Вестник Омского университета* [Vestnik Omskogo universiteta; Herald of Omsk University] 1 (2014), 56; Bogdana Koprjiva-Lurie, *История одной жизни* [Istoriia odnoi zhizni; The Story of One Life], Parizh: Atheneum, 1987, 166.

⁹⁹ Krikh and Tarasova, "S. I. Kovalëv i 'otkrytie' ellinizma", 56.

¹⁰⁰ They presented it in the following article: Nikolai Nikolsky and Sergei Kovalëv, "Как преподавать древнюю историю в 1934–35 учебном году" [Kak prepodavat' drevniiu istoriiu v 1934–35 uchebnom godu; How to Teach Ancient History in the 1934–35 School Year], *История в средней школе* [Istoriia v srednei shkole; History in Secondary School] 3 (1934), 39–48. Cf. Malyugin, "Ot bol'shevistskogo Ilovaiskogo", 413.

¹⁰¹ Malyugin, "Ot bol'shevistskogo Ilovaiskogo", 414.

¹⁰² Sergei Kovalëv, *Всеобщая история в популярном изложении для самообразования* [Vseobshchaia istoriia v populiarnom izlozhenii dlia samoobrazovaniia; Popular Universal History for Self-Education], Leningrad: Priboi, 1925.

¹⁰³ Sergei Kovalëv, *История древнего мира: Учебник для 5–6 классов средней школы* [Istoriia drevnego mira: Uchebnik dlia 5–6 klassov srednei shkoly; History of the Ancient World: Textbook for Grades 5–6 of Secondary School], Moskva: Uchpedgiz, 1954, 59–65.

poems are interpreted, though it starts with a typical presentation of the text as “народные сказания о богатырях” (folk tales about heroes),¹⁰⁴ emphasizing the common character of Slavic *byliny* (былины – oral narrative epics) and Greek epic. The next sentence describes the Homeric poems as magical tales where “действуют боги, появляются страшные чудовища, герои совершают чудесные подвиги” (gods act, terrible monsters appear, and heroes perform wondrous feats).¹⁰⁵ Finally, the author emphasizes that even this fantasy narrative preserves a memory of the social life of the distant past. Contrary to the previous textbook, the author mentions the Homeric question and concludes that the poems were probably written by many authors.

The content of the *Iliad* is described very briefly, on one page, starting with the siege of Troy in the tenth year of the Trojan War. The text includes the main themes from the Greek epic and is written in a simple and concise way. The details of the text differ slightly from Mishulin’s edition (which does not always make them closer to Homer). For example, in Kovalëv’s version it is Achilles who sends his friend Patroclus into war. The wife of Hector is included in the narrative (as should be the case) and is present on the city walls together with Hector’s father and mother, witnessing the death of the Trojan hero and the desecration of his body. Contrary to Mishulin’s edition, the narrative does not end here but presents Patroclus’ funeral and the meeting of Achilles and Priam: “Растроганный Ахилл не в силах был отказать старику и отдал ему тело сына” (Achilles, being touched, was unable to refuse the old man and gave him his son’s body).¹⁰⁶ Thus, the emphasis is placed on “grief”, “empathy”, “forgiveness”, “pity”, and “friendship.” “Bravery” or “courage” are not mentioned once in the text, but the war is severe (ожесточенная), and “[с]ами боги принимали в ней участие. Одни помогали грекам, другие троянцам” (the gods themselves took part in it. Some of them helped the Greeks, others the Trojans). The Trojan horse and the defeat of Troy end the description of the *Iliad*.

In comparing the description of war with that by Mishulin, we notice that it is very similar in emphasizing problems that contemporary society was familiar with at the time. Although Kovalëv depicts war in an intense and

¹⁰⁴ Kovalëv, *Istoriia drevnego mira*, 59.

¹⁰⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁶ Ibidem, 60.

thrilling way, his work also points to the problems of the post-war community that has to deal with forgiveness and pity.

The *Odyssey* is presented in the traditional way – as a story about the “adventures” of a hero “coming home” (“В ней говорится о необычных приключениях, которые испытал Одиссей, возвращаясь на родину”).¹⁰⁷ The main character is called “smart and brave” (*умный и храбрый*). The description of the poem includes all the episodes from the previous textbook, except Aeolus’ winds. The text does not mention Telemachus, similarly to the lack of Astyanax in the *Iliad*. It includes the same illustrations as in Mishulin’s book, namely Odysseus and the Sirens on the base of the Siren Vase from the British Museum,¹⁰⁸ and Penelope and Telemachus at a loom based on the vase from Chiusi.¹⁰⁹

Unlike in Mishulin’s work, the section does not end here. It continues with a description of agriculture, cattle breeding, manufacture, trade, family and neighbour communities, slavery, etc., based on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. For example, Kovalëv includes Thersites’ speech to the assembly (*Il.* 2.212–270), and he praises the possibilities of democracy of that time and notes its consequences.¹¹⁰ The statement might be influenced by the personal experiences of Kovalëv, who had to testify against his colleagues during Stalin’s purges.¹¹¹

Section 41 talks about Greek religion,¹¹² referring to Homer frequently. It starts with the Olympic gods, omitting the creation of the world. In a similar way to Mishulin, the main Olympians are presented with their characteristics, as well as the “духи моря, рек, источников, лесов, гор и ветров” (spirits of sea, rivers, springs, woods, mountains, and winds).¹¹³ The Greeks, like other ancient nations, are depicted as dependent on nature, which was the reason that they believed in gods. Kovalëv also mentions that the gods were thought to be very similar to humans, having “те же желания, те же чувства и те же недостатки” (the same desires, the same feelings, the same vices).¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem, 61.

¹⁰⁹ Ibidem, 62.

¹¹⁰ Ibidem, 65.

¹¹¹ Koprjiva-Lurie, *Istoriia odnoi zhizni*, 166.

¹¹² Kovalëv, *Istoriia drevnego mira*, 66–70.

¹¹³ Ibidem, 66.

¹¹⁴ Ibidem.

The section includes only the myths present in Mishulin's book: about Prometheus, Heracles, and the Argonauts (omitting Theseus and Oedipus). It contains only one illustration, that is, the Farnese Heracles,¹¹⁵ also known from the previous book. The myth about Prometheus is presented as an explanation of the "origins of culture". It does not mention the creation of human beings. Suffering Prometheus "не покорился Зевсу, не стал молить его о пощаде" (did not submit to Zeus, and did not beg for mercy).¹¹⁶ The punishment of Zeus was to destroy the rock to which Prometheus had been chained and to throw him into the abyss – as in Aeschylus' interpretation in *Prometheus Bound*.

Among the labours of Heracles, Kovalëv describes all those from Mishulin's work (the Nemean Lion, the Lernaean Hydra, the Stymphalian Birds) but adds the capture of Cerberus from Hades. A deed that is described in detail is the journey of Heracles to Atlas for the Apples of the Hesperides, including the fight between Antaeus and Heracles. These episodes of the myth became the foundation of another animated film by Snezhko-Blotskaia, *Возвращение с Олимпа* [*Vozvrashchenie s Olimpa*; The Return from Olympus].¹¹⁷ The section concludes as follows: "Миф о Геракле был самым любимым в Греции. Геракл изображается в нем, как великий народный герой" (The myth of Heracles was the most beloved in Greece. Heracles is presented in it as a great national hero).¹¹⁸

The myth of the Argonauts is also similar to Mishulin's. It is a little shorter, lacking the Phineus episode. The myth is presented in conventional fairy-tale narration. The ship is called "magical" (*волшебный*), the Fleece belonged to a "marvellous" (*чудесный*) sheep, Medea is an "enchantress" (*волшебница*, similarly to Mishulin), and the dragon is a "monster" (*чудовище*). Medea makes the dragon fall sleep with the help of "spells and magic potions" (*заклинаниями и волшебными снадобьями*). The section ends with an explanation of Greek religion and mythology as fictional stories:

¹¹⁵ Ibidem, 68.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem, 67.

¹¹⁷ Aleksandra Snezhko-Blotskaia, dir., *Возвращение с Олимпа* [*Vozvrashchenie s Olimpa*; The Return from Olympus], Moskva: Soyuzmultfilm, 1969. See also Hanna Paulouskaya, "Entry on: The Return from Olympus [*Возвращение с Олимпа*] by Aleksei Simukov, Aleksandra Snezhko-Blotskaia", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Lisa Maurice, *Our Mythical Childhood Survey*, Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018, <http://www.omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/59> (accessed 2 April 2020).

¹¹⁸ Kovalëv, *Istoriia drevnego mira*, 68.

Никаких богов в действительности не было, но греки представляли их похожими на людей, причем не на простых людей, а знатных. Семья олимпийцев с Зевсом во главе напоминает большую царскую семью. Боги по своему характеру и нравам также похожи на знать. Они жестоки, коварны, они любят насилие и не терпят никакого противоречия.¹¹⁹

There were no gods in reality, but the Greeks imagined them akin to people, and not simple people but nobility. The family of Olympians with Zeus at their head resembles the tsar's family. The gods by their nature and morals are also similar to the nobility. They are cruel, insidious, they love violence, and do not tolerate any opposition.

The inclusion of the tsar's family and the gentry refers to stereotypes produced in Soviet times. Readers of the textbook in 1954 had no possibility of knowing first-hand of the nobility from the previous epoch. It was a part of the mythical past, present in fairy tales and the Soviet official (or private, unofficial) narrative. The cruelty of the gods is confirmed by repeating the myth of Prometheus.¹²⁰ It seems that in this case the author alludes to Stalin, but he does not include the idea of the "wrong Soviet authority" in the text explicitly. The textbook contains only three illustrations, all used in the previous version.

5. The Late Soviet School

The Soviet school after the 1960s presented a totally new social reality. Although the school was still ideologically tense and aimed at forming true Soviet citizens, the implementation of this ideology as well as the common atmosphere in the post-Thaw society was significantly freer.¹²¹ It is traditionally characterized as individualized and humanized. Maria Mayofis shows

¹¹⁹ Ibidem, 69.

¹²⁰ Ibidem, 69–70.

¹²¹ For more on changes in the politics of school education from the late 1940s, see Maria Mayofis, "Предвестия 'оттепели' в советской школьной политике позднесталинского времени" [Predvestiia "ottepeli" v sovetskoi shkol'noi politike pozdnestalinskogo vremeni; Foretokens of the "Thaw" in Late Stalinist Soviet School Policy], in Ilya Kukulin, Maria Mayofis, and Pëtr Safronov, eds., *Острова утопии. Педагогическое и социальное проектирование послевоенной школы (1940–1980-е)* [Ostrova utopii. Pedagogicheskoe i sotsial'noe proektirovanie poslevoennoi shkoly (1940–1980-e)]; *Islands of Utopia: Pedagogical and Social Design of the Post-War School (1940–1980s)*], Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2015, 35–106.

how these changes had their roots in the aforementioned wartime reforms. Pedagogy as a science, along with psychology, gained a prominent place in school education. The programmes of education became child-centred, which influenced also the content and appearance of textbooks.

5.1. History of the Ancient World by Fëdor Korovkin, 1957, 1970, 1984

The textbook on the history of antiquity by Fëdor Korovkin (1903–1981) was first written in 1957, and then it kept being revised and republished right up until the end of the USSR (it was still in print in 1993). In 1973, the textbook was awarded the USSR State Prize. For the first time, a textbook author had pedagogical experience, for Korovkin worked as a school teacher from 1925 to 1957. Afterwards, he worked at the Institute of Content and Methods of Education at the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the USSR. Thus, contrary to the previous authors, who were theoretical scholars aiming to construct proper Marxist historiography, Korovkin concentrated on pedagogical methods of relaying knowledge.

I will analyse a version of the book published in 1984,¹²² comparing it with previous versions (1957, 1970)¹²³ in order to give an example of later historical narration. The textbook is much more child-friendly. It starts with an introduction for children describing the text's structure and organization. It also refers to other books that are worth reading in order to understand history better. It has many illustrations, including small pictures in the page margins (even in the table of contents). Being more modern, the textbook is colourful. Some pictures are in the style of children's drawings. Quotations from original sources are also included, usually below the main text and in smaller type. Every section ends with questions and tasks for children,

¹²² It was the first ed. of the textbook after Korovkin's death, prepared by Vasily Kuzishchin, Olga Bakhtina, and others.

¹²³ Fëdor Korovkin, *История древнего мира: Учебник для 5–6 классов средней школы* [Istoriia drevnego mira: Uchebnik dlia 5–6 klassov srednei shkoly; History of the Ancient World: Textbook for Grades 5–6 of Secondary School], Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe uchebno-pedagogicheskoe izdatel'stvo Ministerstva prosveshcheniia RSFSR, 1957; Fëdor Korovkin, *История древнего мира: Учебник для 5 класса* [Istoriia drevnego mira: Uchebnik dlia 5 klassa; History of the Ancient World: Textbook for Grade 5], 9th ed., Moskva: Prosveshchenie, 1970; Fëdor Korovkin, *История древнего мира: Учебник для 5 класса средней школы* [Istoriia drevnego mira: Uchebnik dlia 5 klassa srednei shkoly; History of the Ancient World: Textbook for Grade 5 of Secondary School], 1st rev. ed., ed. Vasily Kuzishchin et al., Moskva: Prosveshchenie, 1984.

including creative ones (for example, to make up their own stories). Some of the Greek myths are quoted under the body of the text, and thus they do not appear only in the main text.

The history of Ancient Greece, like in the textbooks discussed earlier, starts with a description of nature and geography, and it includes a history of Crete and Mycenae. This section contains the myths of Daedalus and Icarus, and of Theseus.¹²⁴ Myth as a concept is introduced in the following way in section 25:

Древнейшая история Греции, однако, сохранилась в памяти народа. Сказители передавали устно из поколения в поколение древние мифы, добавляя к ним новые подробности. Поэты-певцы, подыгрывая себе на лирах, пели о "златообильных" и "крепкостенных" городах, о подвигах и приключениях героев, о великанах, о богах.¹²⁵

The oldest history of Greece, however, was preserved in the memory of the people. The storytellers passed the ancient myths down orally from generation to generation, adding to them new details. The poet-singers, accompanying themselves on the lyre, sang of "gold-abundant" and "strong-walled" cities, of the deeds and adventures of heroes, of giants, and of gods.

Thus, the idea of oral tradition is presented, without referring to class struggle or antireligious propaganda. Archaic compound words are used in the text to introduce epic poetry. The author concludes by mentioning the importance of the songs as a historical source, stating that, alongside fantasy stories, the poems contain many details about everyday life and common beliefs. The text is illustrated with a picture of a bronze statue of a singer with a lyre from the Archaeological Museum in Heraklion, Crete.

Further, the section describes the myth of the Argonauts.¹²⁶ It differs from the narration of the previous textbooks. Although the journey of the Argonauts is less detailed (only the Clashing Rocks are present), the adventures in Colchis are more specific. For the first time we see the fire-breathing bulls, the ploughing of the field, and how it was sown with dragon's teeth, with all the consequences. As usually, an "enchantress" (*волшебница*), Medea, helps Jason and makes the dragon fall asleep, allowing the Greek hero to take the Fleece and go home. Medea's love or her accompanying Jason

¹²⁴ Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st rev. ed.), 110–111.

¹²⁵ *Ibidem*, 114.

¹²⁶ In the earlier versions of the book the myth of Heracles precedes that of the Argonauts.

is not mentioned. The picture in the margin presents the departure of the Argonauts based on a Greek vase painting (the Talos vase from the Archaeological National Museum in Jatta).¹²⁷ It is interesting that in the earlier versions of the book Medea is not mentioned; however, Jason uses magic himself: "Ясон натер мазью свое тело, и оно приобрело нечеловеческую силу" (Jason rubbed the magic ointment into his body, and it gained super-human strength).¹²⁸

Under the main text, the myth of Heracles is presented. In this case, we see the standard set of labours (the Nemean Lion, the Lernaean Hydra, the Stymphalian Birds,¹²⁹ and Atlas) with the addition of the Augean Stables, though the fight with Antaeus is omitted. The myth is presented in a dynamic way to retain the reader's attention. It has more imaginative details than in the previous versions. Traditionally, Heracles is presented in the manner of a Russian *bogatyr* (богатырь), a hero from among the people. The illustration provided is Heracles struggling with the Nemean Lion, based on a marble statue from a Roman sarcophagus of the second-third centuries AD from the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg.¹³⁰

The following section 26 presents the poems of Homer.¹³¹ For the first time the text provides also excerpts from the poems. Although the manuals advised teachers to recite historical literature during classes, especially Homer and mythology, already in 1947,¹³² only Korovkin's textbook includes it in the main text (at least from 1970). The reader is told that traditionally the poems are attributed to Homer, and an illustration is presented that is based on the bust from the Naples Museum, similarly to Mishulin's edition.

The description of the *Iliad* contains many details of social and economic life expressed in the poems. It does not only retell the main episodes of the poem, but it also provides some historical facts. For example, the

¹²⁷ Museum no. 1501; see "217518, ATHENIAN, Ruvo, Museo Jatta, 36933", Classical Art Research Centre, <http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/XDB/ASP/recordDetails.asp?id=4A8E2FED-DC0D-4268-9142-0A6F55D1850F> (accessed 2 April 2020).

¹²⁸ Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st ed.), 71; Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (9th ed.), 98.

¹²⁹ The birds are omitted in the previous versions of the textbook.

¹³⁰ Museum no. 5600 (A. 498); see "Heracles Struggling with the Nemean Lion", *История Древнего Рима [Istoriia Drevnego Rima; History of Ancient Rome]*, <http://ancientrome.ru/art/artworken/img.htm?id=2574> (accessed 24 June 2020).

¹³¹ Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st rev. ed.), 116–119.

¹³² Natalia Andreevskaja and Viktor Bernadsky, *Методика преподавания истории в семилетней школе [Metodika prepodavaniia istorii v semiletnei shkole; Methodology of Teaching History in the Seven-Year School]*, Moskva: Uchpedgiz, 1947, 81–82.

first episode described is the assembly and Thersites' speech (which was also present in Kovalëv's book). It depicts arms and armour, and provides illustrations of these. It is interesting that there is no mention of the rage of Achilles or about him not participating in the war. His friend Patroclus dies, but the text does not explain why.¹³³ The combat between Hector and Achilles is mentioned in the main text, as well as in a quotation from the *Iliad* in the translation of Vikenty Veresaev (1867–1945)¹³⁴ and in an illustration based on a Greek vase. However, there is no scene on the city walls – nobody is watching, neither the parents nor Andromache. On the other hand, in the edition of 1984 the funeral of Patroclus is described in detail, as well as the competitions held. Korovkin also describes animal and human sacrifices: "Ахилл сам зарезал двенадцать пленных юношей троянцев. Автор поэмы осудил этот кровавый поступок, сказав, что Ахилл `совершил нехорошее дело'" (Achilles himself stabbed twelve captured young Trojan men. The author of the poem condemned this bloody act, saying that Achilles had committed a "bad deed").¹³⁵ After the *Iliad*, the author describes the death of Achilles and the defeat of Troy with the help of the Trojan horse.¹³⁶

The description of the *Odyssey* is more conventional but very concise, taking up less than a page plus a quotation of a classical translation by Vasily Zhukovsky (made in 1842–1846) about the Cyclopes' island (*Od.* 9.187–193). The text starts as a "fairy-tale narration", like in the other textbooks, but describes only misfortunes caused by winds and tempests. After arriving on Ithaca after ten years of wandering, Odysseus meets a slave: "Этот раб родился в свободной семье, но еще ребенком его украли финикийцы и продали в Итаку" (This slave was born to a free family, but as a child he was kidnapped by Phoenicians and sold to Ithaca).¹³⁷ Following this, a short description of Odysseus regaining authority in his house with the help of Athena is presented. Neither Penelope, nor Telemachus, nor any other character from the *Odyssey* is referred to. They were mentioned shortly in the first

¹³³ In the previous versions of the textbook even Patroclus is omitted. However, he is mentioned in additional materials in the 1970 edition; cf. Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (9th ed.), 99–100, 111.

¹³⁴ *Il.* 22.306–316. The translation of Homer's poems was prepared in the 1940s and published only after the death of the author, the *Iliad* appearing in 1949 and the *Odyssey* in 1953.

¹³⁵ Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st rev. ed.), 117.

¹³⁶ Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st ed.), 73–74; Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (9th ed.), 100; Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st rev. ed.), 118.

¹³⁷ Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (9th ed.), 101; Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st rev. ed.), 119.

editions of the book,¹³⁸ but disappeared in the later ones.¹³⁹ The illustration alongside the text shows the already-known vase depicting the Sirens.

Section 28 presents the religion of the Ancient Greeks.¹⁴⁰ It starts with the fear of nature and continues with an introduction of the Olympic gods (Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, and Demeter), also describing Hades and the three-headed dog, as well as the satyrs and nymphs. As a literary example, a fragment from the *Odyssey* about the destruction of the last ship is quoted in Zhukovsky's translation (*Od.* 2.401–411, 415–419). Dionysus, Hephaestus, and Hermes are presented as patrons of agriculture, manufacture, and trade, respectively. It is said that the Greek religion reflects inequality among people:

Боги живут во дворцах, носят нарядные одежды, часто пируют. [...] Боги так же властолюбивы, жестоки и мстительны, как многие знатные люди.¹⁴¹

The gods live in palaces, wear elegant clothes, often feast. [...] Gods are as power-hungry, cruel, and vindictive as many nobles.

This description resembles in large measure that of Kovalëv. The only myth presented in the main text is about Prometheus¹⁴² bound in the mountains of the Caucasus for bringing fire to the human race:

Несмотря на страшные муки, гордый и мужественный Прометей не примирился с Зевсом. В образе Прометея греки чтили борца с несправедливыми и злыми богами за счастье людей.¹⁴³

Despite the terrible torments, proud and courageous Prometheus did not reconcile with Zeus. In the image of Prometheus, the Greeks honoured a fighter for the happiness of mankind against the unjust and evil gods.

The myth retold under the main text is more literary and tells the story of Demeter and Persephone. The section contains pictures of the Athena

¹³⁸ Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st ed.), 75.

¹³⁹ Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (9th ed.), 100–101.

¹⁴⁰ Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st rev. ed.), 123–125.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 124–125; similar ideas are found in Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st ed.), 79; Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (9th ed.), 108.

¹⁴² Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st ed.), 81; Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (9th ed.), 109; Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st rev. ed.), 125.

¹⁴³ Korovkin, *Istoriia drevnego mira* (1st rev. ed.), 125.

Parthenos by Phidias, a hierarchical depiction of the Olympians as well as satyrs and nymphs, Zeus in the temple at Olympia by Phidias, a model of a Greek temple, and a fresco of Demeter's head from Kerch, Crimea.

It seems that this textbook stood at the peak of the evolution of historical education on the subject of antiquity in the Soviet Union. It is clearly based on the previous models, for example, in the choice of myths and illustrations for them. At this stage, however, there was no need to wage fierce antireligious propaganda, since the problem was considered to have been mainly resolved. Also, the Marxist understanding of history was clearly defined, helping to construct an integral and coherent narration. Although the text is much simpler and has in mind an audience of small children, at the same time the readers are intelligent enough to read Homer or to learn about harsh details of ancient life. The Homeric issue, the functioning of orality, and the authenticity of historical sources are introduced, preparing children for independent historical research. The book is richly illustrated and contains pictures on every page, eight of them in the sections analysed.

6. Conclusions

Although Greek mythology was covered only in a few sections and only during one of the earliest grades in the Soviet school, it was nonetheless present there. This early encounter with mythology drew children's attention to fantasy and mythic elements, which surely endowed all ancient history with a taste of fantasy and magic in the children's eyes. The presence of only a few myths and a few heroes left children with a feeling of dissatisfaction, but this feeling forced them to seek out further sources and to look for antiquity around themselves.

From the beginning, the textbooks aimed to present children with the main masterpieces of Greek art. It is also important that objects located in the museums and parks of Soviet cities were chosen for illustrations. This expanded the identity of Soviet children as belonging to a common Greek heritage, gave them pleasure when they came across the Greek gods on Soviet streets. The perception of Heracles or Prometheus as Soviet heroes and revolutionaries fighting for the people confirmed this identity in even greater measure.

It is striking how rarely the new textbooks appeared and how deliberate the narration was. It is especially true for the latest historical period that

is supposed to have been the freest and most progressive era. The textbook by Korovkin was re-edited for more than thirty years, having educated generations of pupils. However, at the same time various methodic manuals for teachers were published, as well as chrestomathies with quotations from literary sources. Paradoxically, the stability of the textbook also gave more freedom, and enabled creativity on the part of individual teachers, who were able to elaborate their own narrations during the classes over the entire period of their careers.

It seems that, officially, there were only a few main ideas concerning Greek mythology and religion transferred to pupils over the decades. The antireligious issue was probably the most constant. Emphasis on heroes and giving them the features of the ideal "Soviet" man was another important aspect. The descriptions of myths are very concise and often contain an explicit message. Thus, ancient mythology is simplified and lacks its most important characteristic – diversity and openness to interpretation. Nevertheless, the textbooks themselves are witnesses of their time and close reading of the texts proves their variety and the plenitude of ideas contained. And one will never know what stories were being told by the teachers during the lessons; how much magic, creativity, and openness of thinking was added by them in explaining the myths, and what *dei ex machinis* were on the alert to help pupils to create narrations of their lives.

CLASSICAL LANGUAGES, CULTURE, AND MYTHOLOGY AT THE CLASSICAL GYMNASIUM OF SAINT PETERSBURG

This chapter examines a specific Russian school, the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg, School No. 610 (see Fig. 1). Here the description and analysis are provided from the point of view of both a teacher, Elena Ermolaeva, and a student, Lev Pushel. Each provides a personal perspective on how Classics in general, and classical myth in particular, form an important part of both the principles and daily practice within the curriculum of the school.



Figure 1: Gymnasium Classicum Petropolitanum (Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg, School No. 610), Saint Petersburg, Russia. Photograph from the archive of Sofia Egorova; used with permission.

Elena Ermolaeva

I. The Perspective of a Scholar and a Teacher

How could a scholar and a university lecturer enjoy simultaneously being a school teacher at a gymnasium? I would like to share a short anecdote from my work at the gymnasium, which, I hope, will shed some light on how rewarding an experience I have found it to be.

While recently preparing a course on Ancient Greek literature for my students, I remembered having sat in on a lesson a colleague of mine taught to fifth-graders on *Oedipus Rex*. She asked her young students, "After Oedipus learns from the oracle that he is fated to kill his father, what should he do?" There were a lot of different answers given by the students, but one, offered by a young girl, particularly drew my attention. She said, "Just in case, Oedipus should not kill anybody, not even the tiniest little insect". The comment reinforced in me the belief that teaching works both ways, and especially young students are likely to think outside the box.

I.1. A Brief General Overview of the History of Classical Education in Russia¹

In 1685–1687, the first higher education establishment, called Славяно-греко-латинская академия (Slavyano-greko-latinskaya academia; the Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy), was set up in Moscow, where Greek and Latin composition and the *septem artes liberales* were taught under the direction of the Leichoudes brothers, Ioannikios (1633–1717) and Sophronios

¹ My thanks go to Leonid Zhmud and Valery Dymshits for the useful corrections and suggestions. The overview is a shorter version of my section "Russia", in Filippomaria Pontani and Stefan Weise, eds., *The Hellenizing Muse: A European Anthology of Poetry in Ancient Greek from the Renaissance to the Present*, forthcoming. See also Aleksandr Gavrilov, "Russland", in Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, eds., *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 15, Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2002, 1014–1030 (English translation in Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, and Manfred Landfester, eds., *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopedia of the Ancient World. Classical Tradition*, vol. 5, Leiden: Brill, 2010, 1–18, s.v. "Russia"); Aleksandr Gavrilov, "Античное наследие в России (IX–XX вв.)" [Antichnoe nasledie v Rossii (IX–XX vv.); Ancient Heritage in Russia (Ninth–Twentieth Centuries)], in Olga Budaragina, Aleksandr Verlinsky, and Denis Keyer, eds., *О филологах и филологии* [O filologakh i filologii; On Philologists and Philology], Sankt-Peterburg: Izdat. Dom Sankt-Peterburgskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2010, 12–32.

(1653–1730).² At the beginning of the eighteenth century, after the reforms of Peter the Great (1672–1725), the importance of Latin increased, since the entry of Russia into the family of European countries, initiated by Peter, required acquaintance with the basic values of European culture, for which Latin was the perfect tool.³ The beginning of the eighteenth century saw the founding of two institutions in Saint Petersburg: Академия наук (Akademia nauk; the Academy of Sciences) and a European-style gymnasium in which both of the ancient languages were taught.⁴ At the same time, the Greek language remained obligatory in religious schools, where future Orthodox priests were educated. In the nineteenth century, the Russian gymnasium was modelled on the German classical gymnasium; at this time, the extensive net of classical education extended to almost every big Russian city, since access to universities was open only to graduates of classical gymnasia.⁵ Knowledge of ancient culture, including mythology, became a key attribute of the educated Russian man. After 1917, during the Soviet era, however, classical education in schools was discontinued, and the classical courses offered at universities were limited for many years.⁶ Nevertheless, generations of Soviet pupils knew Greek myths from books, mostly from *Легенды и мифы Древней Греции* [Legendy i mify Drevnei Gretsii; Legends and Myths of Ancient Greece] by Moscow professor Nicholas Kuhn (1877–1940).⁷

² Nikolaos A. Chrissidis, *An Academy at the Court of the Tsars: Greek Scholars and Jesuit Education in Early Modern Russia*, DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2016.

³ Marinus A. Wes, *Classics in Russia 1700–1855: Between Two Bronze Horsemen*, Leiden, New York, NY, and Köln: Brill, 1992.

⁴ A fundamental work on the Russian school in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is Aleksei Lyubzhin, *История русской школы* [Istoria russkoi shkoly; The History of the Russian School], 3 vols., Moskva: Nikea, 2014–2015.

⁵ Georg Karl Schmid, *История средних учебных заведений в России* [Istoriia srednikh uchebnykh zavedenii v Rossii; The History of High Schools in Russia], trans. A. Neilsov, Sankt-Peterburg: Tipografiia V. S. Balasheva, 1878 (in German 1882).

⁶ Aleksandr Gavrilov, "Классическая филология в СССР (1992)" [Klassicheskaia filologiia v SSSR (1992); Classical Philology in the USSR (1992)], in Olga Budaragina, Aleksandr Verlinsky, and Denis Keyer, eds., *О филологах и филологии* [O filologakh i filologii; On Philologists and Philology], Sankt-Peterburg: Izdat. Dom Sankt-Peterburgskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2010, 277–292 (the article was based on the English version published by Gavrilov as "Russian Classical Scholarship in the 20th Century", in Gregory Nagy and Victor Bers, eds., *The Classics in East Europe: Essays on the Survival of a Humanistic Tradition*, Worcester, MA: American Philological Association, 1995, 61–81).

⁷ Elena Ermolaeva, "Classical Antiquity in Children's Literature in the Soviet Union", in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Our Mythical Childhood... The Classics and Literature for Children and Young Adults*, Metaforms: Studies in the Reception of Classical Antiquity 8, Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2016, 243: "This compilation had its origins in a course Kuhn created in 1914 for grammar school

1.2. The Rebirth of Classical Education in Schools since 1989

The rebirth of classical education began during the *perestroika* in the late 1980s.⁸ In 1989, the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg (CGSP, or, in Latin, Gymnasium Classicum Petropolitanum)⁹ was founded under the auspices of the city authorities by a group of enthusiastic teachers, including classicists, with the assistance of Prof. Iakob M. Borovsky (1896–1994) and Prof. Alexander I. Zaicev (1926–2000).¹⁰ In 1990, the Russian Orthodox

pupils. In the Soviet Union this book was translated into different national languages and was reprinted many times in large runs, albeit with passages removed by Soviet censors, and with quotations from Engels, Marx, and Lenin added to the preface. The book is still popular today, edited with rich illustrations and without any ideological prefaces". See also above, in Hanna Paulouskaya's chapter, "Learning Myths in the Soviet School", 155–187.

⁸ Kerstin Hohn, "Homer und Cicero statt Marx und Lenin. Experiment und Wandel an den russischen Schulen und Hochschulen", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 January 1992, available online at Санкт-Петербургская классическая гимназия №610 [Sankt-Peterburgskaia klassicheskaia gimnaziia №610; Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg No. 610], <http://610.ru/school/press/archive/frankfurter.html> (accessed 9 July 2020); Marie A. Westbrook, Lev Lurie, and Mikhail Ivanov, "The Independent Schools of St. Petersburg: Diversification of Schooling in Postcommunist Russia", in Anthony Jones, ed., *Education and Society in the New Russia*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994, 110–112; Leonid Zhmud, "Санкт-Петербургской классической гимназии – семь лет" [Sankt-Peterburgskoi klassicheskoi gimnazii – sem' let; The Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg Is Seven Years Old], *Древний мир и мы* [Drevnii mir i my; The Ancient World and We] 1 (1997), 274–281; Lev Lurie, "Из истории Санкт-Петербургской классической гимназии" [Iz istorii Sankt-Peterburgskoi klassicheskoi gimnazii; From the History of the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg], *Абарис* [Abaris] 1 (2000), 2–3; Sergei Buryachko, "Классическая гимназия и грядущая реформа" [Klassicheskaiia gimnaziia i griadushchaia reforma; The Classical Gymnasium and the Upcoming Reform], *Абарис* [Abaris] 1 (2001), 2–3. For classical education in the communist era, see Hanna Paulouskaya's chapter, "Learning Myths in the Soviet School", 155–187.

⁹ Further on the CGSP, see the school's website: Санкт-Петербургская классическая гимназия №610 [Sankt-Peterburgskaia klassicheskaia gimnaziia №610; Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg No. 610], <http://610.ru/> (accessed 5 May 2020); and its Wikipedia page: "St Petersburg Classical Gymnasium", Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Petersburg_Classical_Gymnasium?fbclid=IwAR1lajBLJrAB9X7zRTNLix73sZOOhv9mpOp1t3P6Wv7CAr2ALi1L-jPNPuVNw (accessed 5 May 2020). Also, Headmaster Sergei Buryachko and Boris Startsev have written about the CGSP and the problems of modern education in Russia. See Boris Startsev, "В классической гимназии учат древние языки..." [V klassicheskoi gimnazii uchat drevnie iazyki...; Ancient Languages Are Studied at the Classical Gymnasium...], Higher School of Economics, <https://www.hse.ru/school-for-life/spb610/> (accessed 5 May 2020).

¹⁰ Leonid Zhmud, "А. И. Зайцев и классическая гимназия" [A. I. Zaicev i klassicheskaiia gimnaziia; A. I. Zaicev and the Classical Gymnasium], *Абарис* [Abaris] 1 (2000), 12–15; Olga Budaragina, "Alexander Zaicev: A Non-Conformist from Ancient Greece", in David Movrin and Elżbieta Olechowska, eds., *Classics and Class: Greek and Latin Classics and Communism at School*, Warsaw and Ljubljana: Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw; Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts; and Wydawnictwo DiG, 2016, 55–65.

Church opened the first private classical school, the Gymnasium Radonezh, in Moscow, and, in 1993, the Classical School was founded under the auspices of Museum Graeco-Latinum in the same city by the classicist Yuriy Shichalin.¹¹ Currently, besides these schools, only a few others can be accurately called classical (humanist) gymnasia, where both Latin and Ancient Greek are taught. However, all over Russia, there are a few dozen schools and classes in which Latin is taught. They can be divided into those with a strong Latin study programme (three hours per week for three to seven years) and those offering Latin as part of a cultural programme that introduces students to ancient civilization, mythology, and literature for one to two hours per week over one or two years. Concerning Ancient Greek, the situation is different. There are the Orthodox Church schools, supported by the Russian Orthodox Church and the Patriarchate, in which the main goal of the curriculum is studying the language of the New Testament and the Church Fathers, Orthodox liturgy, and Byzantine Greek. Most of these schools are private and quite small. On average, Ancient Greek is taught there once or twice a week for one or two years. In secular schools that offer a thorough Ancient Greek programme, pupils study the language for one to three hours per week for one to five years.

1.3. Mythology, Ancient Greek, and Latin at the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg

The CGSP remains the only state school in Russia where the study of both ancient languages is obligatory; it presently has a student body of around 700.¹² The school was founded with the aim of recreating the educational programme and tradition of the classical gymnasia in pre-revolutionary Russia and to connect these with modern European pedagogical strategies:

¹¹ The publishing house of Yuriy Shichalin's Museum Graeco-Latinum issues classical texts, translations, and studies. In 1991, its first book was a reprint of Aleksandr Weismann, *Древнегреческо-русский словарь* [Drevnegrechesko-russky slovar'; The Greek-Russian Dictionary], 5th ed., Sankt-Peterburg, 1899. See Yuriy Shichalin's Museum Graeco-Latinum, <http://www.mgl.ru/en> (accessed 25 July 2020).

¹² See Vsevolod Zelchenko, "Gymnasium Classicum Petropolitanum", *Hyperboreus* 19.1–2 (2013), 289–296. This article by a classical scholar and Vice-Principal of the CGSP presents an overview of the school's history. The author discusses the aims and principles of the school and analyses its programme of Greek and Latin in comparison to the classical schools of modern Europe and pre-revolutionary Russia.

The core of the academic programme is the compulsory study of the classical languages (Latin and Ancient Greek), two contemporary languages (English and German) as well as mathematics. To ensure that every student receives a classical education we offer a single set curriculum for all students. The founding principle of the institution is “teaching the skills of learning” meaning every student develops critical thinking skills and receives support in the search for knowledge.¹³

Pupils, who are selected through entrance examinations, which determine their general development and their aptitude for analytical thinking, start studying at the CGSP in Grade 5 (ten to eleven years old) and study for seven years up to Grade 11 (seventeen to eighteen years old). From Grade 5, pupils are given lessons in ancient civilization, mythology, and Greek and Roman history.¹⁴ The ancient mythology course not only narrates and discusses the myths but also involves quizzes, workshops, role-playing games, the school theatre, and more. The most popular activity is art, as part of which the students draw ancient gods and heroes, and illustrate mythological plots; exhibitions of these pictures decorate the school walls.

Likewise, Latin begins in Grade 5 and continues until the final year, with four to five academic hours per week in Grades 5–7 (covering Latin grammar and syntax), three hours in Grades 8–11 (reading ancient authors: Caesar, Cicero, Ovid, Horace, Livy, Virgil, Tacitus, and Petronius). Ancient Greek starts in Grade 7 (twelve to thirteen years old) and continues throughout with three hours per week. The curriculum aims to teach Ancient Greek grammar and syntax for three years, after which students begin reading texts in the original: Attic prose (the *Anabasis* and *Memorabilia* or *Cyropaedia* by Xenophon, and the works of Plato, Lysias, and Lucian), followed by Homer in Grade 10, and, in the final year, Herodotus and a tragedy of Euripides or Sophocles, or a comedy of Aristophanes. Testing is carried out via continuous assessment (different kinds of texts, grammar tests, translations from Russian into Latin and Greek) and a final oral examination after almost every level. This examination involves translation of an unseen text (with a dictionary), a grammar test, and translation of a text that has been read during the year (without a dictionary). After Grade 10, there is a written test on Homer, including translation, grammar tasks, and converting Homeric

¹³ The Classical Gymnasium of St Petersburg, School #610, <http://610.ru/en/> (accessed 5 May 2020).

¹⁴ See the programme appended to this chapter.

dialect into the Attic one. There is also an obligatory year-long course on the history of Ancient Greek and Latin literature.

Extracurricular activities are also an important source of classical education at the school. There is a club, *Classica*, where students, with the assistance of their teachers, work on topics of their interest and give presentations, the best of which have been published in the school annual magazine, *Абарис* [Abaris], which, between 2000 and 2008, was edited by teachers Vsevolod Zelchenko and Olga Budaragina with the help of students and other teachers from the school (see Figs. 2–7). It is important to note that the CGSP is in close contact with the Bibliotheca Classica Petropolitana (BiCL), a Classics reference library and a research centre,¹⁵ which shares a building with the gymnasium; some BiCL staff are even simultaneously teachers of Classics at the school. Thus, students have the opportunity to do research and prepare their presentations at the BiCL with the assistance of scholars. Some of these talks were devoted to mythological subjects, to motifs and patterns in myths, for example: Julia Khokhlova, “Χαῖρε, ὦ Χάρων: Charon in Ancient Greek and Latin Literature” (teacher: Elena L. Ermolaeva, 1999); Svetlana Kleiner, “The Unicorn in Ancient Greece” (teacher: Tatiana M. Andronnenko, see in: *Abaris* 3 [2002], 4); Ksenia Shnol, “Gello who Loved Children to Death, Sappho fr. 178 Lobel-Page” (teacher: Alexandra J. Enbekova, see in: *Abaris* 3 [2002], 33–37).

Additionally, since 2005 the CGSP has been taking part in a Greek competition in Italy, *Certamen della Tuscia*, organized by the Lyceum Mario Buratti and the university in Viterbo – on two occasions the school’s students have won the first prize.¹⁶ In 2006–2009, the Gymnasium Classicum Petropolitanum also participated in the Annual European Student Competition in Ancient Greek Language and Culture organized by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs of Greece. During the summer holidays, students regularly took part in archaeological excavations at the sites of former Ancient Greek colonies: Chersonesus, Nymphaion, Odessa, and Pontic Olbia, as well as in Deultum (Bulgaria). Classicists from the gymnasium presently

¹⁵ Bibliotheca Classica Petropolitana, <http://www.bibliotheca-classica.org/en/frontpage> (accessed 25 July 2020).

¹⁶ Arseni Vetushko in 2007 and Kristina Vashpanova in 2019. See “Certamen Viterbiense 2019: un’edizione che parla di equità”, *TusciaUp*, 7 April 2019, <https://www.tusciaup.com/certamen-viterbiense-2019-unedizione-che-parla-di-equita/132581?fbclid=IwAR0TjSzw-Qk6nZFflbr0XSol4UIUJh-qxV05uUCUvr-GZ5VWwJruJ8s8XdbQ> (accessed 8 September 2019).

organize original programmes of cultural tourism in Greece and Italy for the CGSP students and teachers.

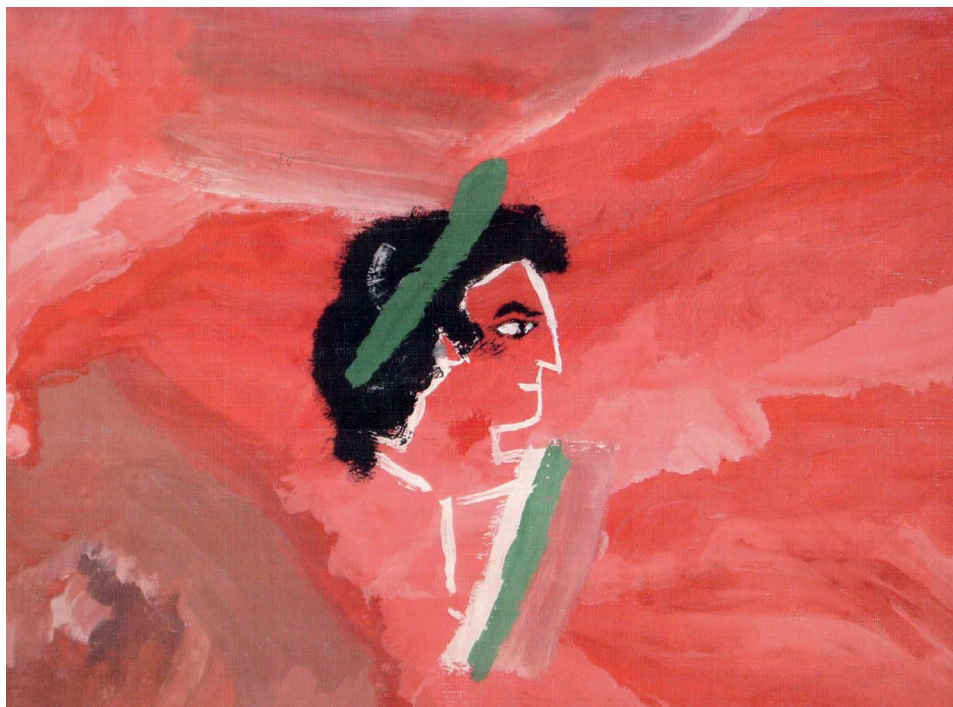


Figure 2: “Одиссей” [Odisei; Odysseus] by Konstantin Antonov, Grade 5, *Абарис* [Abaris] 7 (2006), back cover. Reproduced with permission from *Abaris*.

It is also worth mentioning the publishing activities of the CGSP, which is engaged in translating Greek and Latin textbooks and manuals from German and in publishing them.¹⁷

¹⁷ Kurt Person, *Propulaia: Griechisches Unterrichtswerk (Griechisches Lese- und Übungsbuch)*, Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1967, as Kurt Person, *Propulaia: Хрестоматия по древнегреческому языку* [Propulaia: Khrestomatiia po drevnegrecheskomu iazyku; Propulaia: Ancient Greek Textbook], trans. Vanda P. Kazanskene, Sankt-Peterburg: Sankt-Peterburgskaia klassicheskaia gimnaziia, 1993 (2nd ed. 2013); Matthias Stehle, *Griechische Sprachlehre*, Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1950, as Matthias Stehle, *Грамматика древнегреческого языка* [Grammatika drevnegrecheskogo iazyka; Ancient Greek Grammar], trans. Vanda P. Kazanskene, Sankt-Peterburg: Sankt-Peterburgskaia klassicheskaia gimnaziia, 1993; Horst Holtermann and Hans Baumgarten, *Ianua nova*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986, as Horst Holtermann and Hans Baumgarten, *Ianua nova*, trans. Aleksandr Chernoglazov, Sankt-Peterburg: Sankt-Peterburgskaia klassicheskaia gimnaziia, 1993 (2nd ed. 2016).



Figure 3: “Одиссей – хитрый, сильный, умный” [Odisei – khitryi, silnyi, umnyi; Odysseus the Cunning, Strong, and Wise] by Sasha Knyaginina, Grade 5, *Абарис* [Abaris] 9 (2008), back cover. Reproduced with permission from *Abaris*.



Figure 4: “Ясон и Медея” [Jason i Medeia; Jason and Medea] by Sasha Khodot, Grade 5, *Абарис* [Abaris] 6 (2005), back cover. Reproduced with permission from *Abaris*.

The school has also published *Древнегреческий язык: Задания и тесты* [Drevnegrecheskii iazyk: Zadaniia i testy; Ancient Greek: Tasks and Tests] by Vsevolod Zelchenko (2011), a witty collection of grammar, linguistic, lexical, and translation assignments, among which mythological topics can also be found.

On a wider scale, there functions an association of school teachers of classical languages, *Societas Russica Magistrorum Linguarum Classicarum*,¹⁸ which aims to preserve and improve the status and quality of classical language and mythology teaching in secondary schools and to promote classical education. The association is part of Euroclassica, a European association of teachers of classical languages and civilizations.¹⁹

¹⁸ Либрариус [Librarius], <http://librarius.narod.ru> (accessed 30 March 2020); Российская ассоциация преподавателей древних языков/Societas Russica Magistrorum Linguarum Classicarum [Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia prepodavatelei drevnikh iazykov; Russian Association of Teachers of Ancient Languages], <https://librarius-narod.ru/pro/srmlc.php> (accessed 5 July 2020).

¹⁹ Euroclassica, <https://www.edugroup.at/praxis/portale/euroclassica> (accessed 30 March 2020); Anton van Hooff, “Saint Petersburg, the Gate to Euroclassica”, *Абарис* [Abaris] 2 (2001), 50–53.

“МЕТАМОРФОЗЫ”

В ИЛЛЮСТРАЦИЯХ ГИМНАЗИСТОВ



НАРЦИСС (III, 417–419)

Spem sine corpore amat, corpus putat esse, quod umbra est;
adstupet ipse sibi vultuque inmotus eodem
haeret, ut e Pario formatum marmore signum.

Любит без плоти мечту и призрак за плоть принимает.
Сам он собой поражен, над водою застыл неподвижен,
Юным похожий лицом на изваянный мрамор паросский.

(здесь и ниже переводы С. В. Шервинского)

Рисунок Саши Филипповой, 5 класс

ПИГМАЛИОН (X, 252–255)

...Miratur et haurit
pectore Pygmalion simulati corporis ignes.
Saepe manus operi temptantes admovet, an sit
corpus an illud ebur...

Диву дивится творец и пылает к подобию тела.
Часто протягивал он к изваянию руки, пытая,
Тело пред ним иль слоновая кость...

Рисунок Юли Поляковой, 6 класс



Figure 5: “Метаморфозы: Нарцисс” [Metamorfozy: Nartsiss; Metamorphoses: Narcissus] by Sasha Filippova. Grade 5; “Пигмалион” [Pygmalion; Pygmalion] by Julia Polyakova, Grade 6, *Абарис* [Abaris] 4 (2003), 5. Reproduced with permission from *Abaris*.



ПРЕВРАЩЕНИЕ ФИЛЕМОНА И БАВКИДЫ (VIII, 717–720)

Mutua, dum licuit, reddebant dicta “vale” que
“o coniunx” dixere simul, simul abdita textit
ora frutex: ostendit adhuc Thyneius illic
incola de gemino vicinos corpore truncos.

Тихо успели они обменяться приветом: “Прощай же,
Муж мой!” — “Прощай, о жена!” — так вместе сказали,
и сразу
Рот им покрыла листва. И теперь обитатель вифинский
Два вам покажет ствола, от единого корня возросших.

Рисунок Саши Лиминой, 10 класс

ЕВРОПА И ЮПИТЕР В ОБРАЗЕ БЫКА (II, 858–861)

Pacem vultus habet. Miratur Agenore nata...
Sed quamvis mitem metuit contingere primo,
mox adit et flores ad candida porrigit ora.

Мирным выгладит бык: Агенорова дочь в изумленье...
Но хоть и кроток он был, прикоснуться сначала боялась —
Вскоре к нему подошла и к морде цветы протянула.

Рисунок Бори Лебедева, 6 класс



Figure 6: “Метаморфозы: Филемон и Бавкида” [Metamorphozy: Filemon i Bawkida; Metamorphoses: Philemon and Baucis] by Sasha Limina, Grade 10; “Европа и Юпитер” [Evrropa i Jupiter; Europa and Jupiter] by Boris Lebedev, Grade 6, *Абарис* [Abaris] 4 (2003), 6. Reproduced with permission from *Abaris*.



Ио, ПРЕВРАЩЕННАЯ В Телку (I, 610–612)

Coniugis adventum praesenserat inque nitentem
Inachidos vultus mutaverat ille iuvencam;
bos quoque formosa est.

Бог же супруги приход предчувствовал и незамедля
Инаха юную дочь превратил в белоснежную телку;
Но и теллицей она хороша...

Рисунок Миши Гурая, 5 класс

Афина и Арахна (VI, 43–47)

Tum dea "venit!" ait formamque removit anilem
Palladaque exhibuit... Sola est non territa virgo,
sed tamen erubuit, subitusque invita notavit
ora rubor rursusque evanuit...

Тут ей Афина: "Я здесь!" говорит и, образ старухи
Сбросив, явила себя... Не трепещет пред нею Арахна.
Все же вскочила; на миг невольным покрылось румянцем
Девы лицо и опять побледнело...

Рисунок Лизы Малининой, 5 класс



Figure 7: "Метаморфозы: Ио" [*Metamorfozy: Io; Metamorphoses: Io*] by Misha Gurai, Grade 5; "Афина и Арахна" [*Afina i Arakhna; Athena and Arachne*] by Liza Malinina, Grade 5, *Абарис* [*Abaris*] 4 (2003), 7. Reproduced with permission from *Abaris*.

The CGSP itself takes part in the annual Euroclassica Greek and Latin examinations,²⁰ while the Euroclassica congress that took place in Saint Petersburg in September 2007 contributed to the popularity of classical education and brought new members into the Russian association.²¹

²⁰ Henriette van Gelder and Elena Ermolaeva, "When Russian and Dutch Pupils Meet for EGEX and ELEX...", *Euroclassica Newsletter* 23 (January 2015), 39, https://www.edugroup.at/fileadmin/DAM/Gegenstandsportale/Latein/Dateien/Euroclassica_documents/Newsletter/Newsletter_2015.pdf (accessed 7 May 2020).

²¹ Elena Ermolaeva, "Annual Conference in Saint-Petersburg", *Euroclassica Newsletter* 15 (January 2007), 12–16.

1.4. The Summer School in Classics (*Academia Classica Aestiva*)

One of the projects of the *Societas Russica* was to organize in Russia a summer school for pupils in order to popularize ancient languages, civilization, and mythology. The Summer School in Classics (*Academia Classica Aestiva*) has been held from 2009 annually on 1–10 August in the school buildings of the small village Rozhdestvo (the name “Rozhdestvo” means “Nativity”), which is situated halfway between Saint Petersburg and Moscow.²² The main aim of the Summer School, organized with the assistance of Русский фонд содействия образованию и науке (Russky fond sodeistviia obrazovaniuu i nauke; The Russian Foundation for Support of Education and Science), is the enjoyment of Latin and Ancient Greek, history, and mythology.

About forty students, aged from thirteen to seventeen, and hailing from both large and small Russian cities and towns, take part in the summer school each year. These participants are either winners of the competition Ежегодная общероссийская олимпиада по латинскому языку (*Ezhegodnaia obshcherossiiskaia olimpiada po latinskому iazyku*; The Annual National Competition in Latin)²³ or are particularly successful in studying Latin and Ancient Greek. During the programme, they attend lectures and participate in seminars and workshops on different fields of Classics, such as ancient literature, history, science, theatre, mythology, cartography, vase painting, papyrology, everyday life; all of these talks are given by professors, lecturers, and PhD students from the universities of Saint Petersburg and Moscow. Extracurricular activities include staging a Latin play in the original, cooking a Roman feast, making clay tablets and writing in Linear B, playing ancient games, reading Pompeian inscriptions, and writing and deciphering the students’ own “Latin Pompeian” inscriptions. The obligatory hour-long seminar “Viva Latina” is run by teachers who have learnt spoken Latin at the *Accademia Vivarium Novum* in Italy.²⁴

²² “Летние школы по изучению античности” [*Letnie shkoly po izucheniiu antichnosti*; Antiquity Summer Schools], Либрариус [*Librarius*], <http://librarius-narod.ru/pro/lsha.php> (accessed 8 September 2019).

²³ “Олимпиады по латинскому языку” [*Olimpiady po latinskому iazyku*; The Annual National Competitions in Latin], Либрариус [*Librarius*], <https://librarius-narod.ru/pro/olympiads.php> (accessed 21 July 2020).

²⁴ *Accademia Vivarium Novum*, <https://www.vivariumnovum.net/en/academy> (accessed 8 September 2019).



Figure 8: Logo of the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg. Reproduced with permission from the School.

Lev Pushel

2. A View from the Other Side of the Desk: Latin at Our School

From the foundation of the classical gymnasium, the study of Latin has been a fundamental element of the education provided here. The in-depth learning of, and engagement with, this language starts in the third term of Grade 5. From then on, every year, except for Grades 8 and 10, ends with an exam that tests the student's knowledge of the grammar and lexis covered during the year, and, from the point of view of a person who has passed all five of them, I can definitively state that, if you did not work consistently over the school year, or are ill-prepared, passing the tests is extremely challenging.

2.1. Mythology at the Gymnasium from the Point of View of Pupils

When we study the so-called dead languages, our main aspiration is to become able to read the texts written in these languages. But if students do not understand the content of the passage, if they cannot appreciate the development of the story, it is an extremely complicated task to make them even slightly interested in what they are trying to translate in the classroom and at home. That is one of the most necessary things in contemporary

pedagogy – to connect student experience with the content covered in the classroom.

The main topics of the reading passages used at school are those taken from mythology. In fact, it is hard to think of an ancient text that contains no myths at all, for so much of ancient Mediterranean literature consists almost entirely of myths and legends. Therefore, studying mythology is one of the most significant stages in preparing to read these famous texts in their original language.

To this end, our gymnasium teachers often begin the high school year with an introduction to the plot of the relevant text. For example, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is the work traditionally read in our Grade 9. In order to make it easier and more interesting to read, teachers spend hours retelling the myths of transformation that are the subject of this text. In my case, we read the section describing the Four Ages. The teacher's explanation given before launching the process of immersion in the text helped greatly and allowed us to enjoy the text in a way that would have been impossible without this account; the story would have been so obscure that, combined with the difficulty of interpreting the foreign language, comprehension would have been very difficult indeed. The same approach was taken with all the myths selected from Ovid's poem, both those that were famous and some that were less so. The teachers choose the stories from the *Metamorphoses* according to individual preference. We, for example, studied the tales of the Great Flood and of Apollo and Daphne.

Another example is that of Horace's poetry, generally studied in Grade 10. Though consisting, primarily, of the author's thoughts, trials, and sufferings, his work is also peppered with Roman mythology, including references to characters such as Ilia, Proteus, Pyrrha, and many more. Here, the task faced by the teacher is to provide students with information (or to give them homework) about these stories in order to enable them to understand what they are reading.

Our school is not only renowned for studying Latin. Ancient Greek texts are also full of myths. In Grade 10, pupils encounter real mythological stories. These are, of course, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

2.2. The Festival of Great Dionysia at the Gymnasium Classicum Petropolitanum

Another ancient tradition that has successfully been renewed at the Gymnasium is the festival of Great Dionysia of Athens. This project was the brainchild of Natalia Kuznetsova, a teacher of ancient languages. Even though drama had previously been studied at the school, the Gymnasium Festival of Great Dionysia (see Fig. 9), which has already been held for twelve years, gave new inspiration to young actors. It takes place over three days in one of the months of the third term, and the contest is judged by a team of six jurors, three of whom are permanent appointments: the headmaster, Sergei Buryachko, the head of the school theatre, Elena Venzel, and one of the most renowned teachers working at the Gymnasium, Elena Gracheva. The other three members vary from year to year, and can include alumni, teachers, and friends of the Gymnasium. The decision of the committee is usually announced ten days after the contest.



Figure 9: Festival of Great Dionysia: Zeus, Saint Petersburg, 2015. Photograph by Vladimir Ivanov; used with permission.

Performances start at 4 p.m. every day, and each should take no more than twenty minutes, although this rule is not always adhered to strictly. Each troupe is led by a director (primarily teachers working at the Gymnasium or alumni of the school), described in the Ancient Greek tradition as the *choregos*, who selects members of the troupe several months in advance, in the autumn, when the theme of new Dionysia is announced. The *choregos* decides what play they want to produce. The theme is, of course, a modern addition, since the ancient Dionysia had no such concept, but the introduction of a unifying topic in the school context makes the contest easier to judge. During the twelve years of its existence, the themes of the Dionysia have covered (in chronological order of the festivals) Faust, Shakespeare, non-fiction literature, memoirs, twentieth-century drama, Pushkin, scenes from Romeo and Juliet, poets and poetry, playwrights, genres of literature, and Herodotus. What is most impressive is the fact that twice the Dionysia productions have been staged in Ancient Greek on mythological topics.

Like in ancient Athens, the performances of the young actors and their adult directors and the contest between the troupes are the key element of the Dionysia. Nevertheless, in contrast to the original Dionysia, the competition is held in the comfortable surroundings of the school theatre, which also possesses an excellent sound and lighting system, items not found in a stone amphitheatre. Another difference between the Saint Petersburg contest and the Athenian one is the number of awards. In contrast to the three contestants of Athens, twenty-four troupes fight for more than fifteen shared awards and a number of special awards from the judges. Although each troupe receives a reward of some kind, there is still the main prize, the Grand Prix, won by the production that boasts the best costumes, music, directing, and acting. There is also a prize for the best actor; several past winners have gone on to make theatre a part of their lives thereafter. The mix of ancient practice with modern innovation, as embodied by the Dionysia, is typical of the Gymnasium, which inspires its students through ancient customs that have been slightly modified to create a new and fresh tradition.

3. The Importance of Studying the Classical World: A Personal Assessment

Antiquity surrounds us. In Saint Petersburg, the ancient world is everywhere. We cannot cross a street in the centre of the city without seeing

it; no palace is without it. Look at architecture. Our city is replete with examples of the imitation of ancient architecture, even including simple replicas of ancient buildings, such as the Bourse by Jean-François Thomas de Thomon (1805–1810), inspired by the Temple of Hera in Paestum. The ancient system of orders is the backbone of the most frequently appearing style, namely classicism. Ancient gods abound; Poseidon on the front of the Bourse, Apollo on the roof of the Alexandrinsky Theatre, Athena on the Academy of Arts, and many others. Mythological personages peer at us from the roofs, balconies, and pediments of the buildings, as if they were asking if we know them. The atlantes, caryatids, sphinxes, and gryphons are believed to be the guards of our city. Similarly with paintings. In the State Hermitage Museum you can study antiquity just by wandering through the halls. Therefore, in our school there are mandatory excursions to this museum, where we especially examine examples of usage of mythological stories in paintings and sculpture.

Even in the confines of our homes we cannot avoid meeting mythology in the context of popular literature, where so many motifs come from the ancient writers. *Pan Tadeusz* [Sir Thaddeus, 1834] by Adam Mickiewicz, for example, one of the most famous Eastern European books, features many allusions to the *Iliad*. The renowned Russian writer Nicolay Gogol was inspired by poems of Homer, and Leo Tolstoy even tried to learn Ancient Greek, although he was already of mature age, in order to read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in the language of their origin.

The sheer abundance of the classical world that surrounds us is for me the prime reason why studying antiquity and ancient languages is a necessity, not just for philologists and historians, but for all people, in order to understand the world we live in.

Appendix

The Gymnasium's Ancient Civilization and Mythology Programme for Grade 5

First term (September and October) – 9 weeks, 27 hours:

1. Introduction – 1 hour
2. Continental Greece: geography, population, peoples, mountains, rivers; Hesiod, *Theogony* – 3 hours

3. Islands and navigation – 2 hours; Crete – 2 hours
4. The Trojan War; Schliemann – 2 hours
5. The Peloponnese: Argolis (without Epidaurus), Sparta, Messenia – 3 hours
6. Heracles – 1 hour
7. Elis; the Olympics – 1 hour
8. The Peloponnese: test – 1 hour
9. Epidaurus – 1 hour
10. Corinth: Sisyphus, Bellerophon, Perseus, Arion – 2 hours
11. Attica: overview – 1 hour
12. The founding of Athens: Cecrops and Erechtheus – 1 hour
13. Theseus – 1 hour
14. Ceramics and pottery – 2 hours
15. Review and test – 2 hours
16. Summary – 1 hour

Second term (November and December) – 7 weeks, 21 hours:

1. The Acropolis and ancient architecture – 3 hours
2. The agora, topography, painting – 2 hours
3. Private houses and daily life – 3 hours
4. Athenian festivals: the Panathenaea, the Dionysia, the Eleusinian mysteries – 2 hours
5. Beotia, Thebes – 3 hours
6. Delphi – 3 hours
7. Review – 2 hours
8. Test – 1 hour
9. Northern Greece: Epirus, Calydon – 2 hours

Third term (January) – 6 hours in the beginning:

1. Thessaly; Argonauts – 4 hours
2. Aeneas – 2 hours

GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGY IN CLASSICAL EDUCATION IN POLAND AFTER 1945

I. Introduction

It is difficult to clearly indicate the methods of teaching mythology in a Polish school. This is mainly due to the fact that the content of education is scattered and mythological elements are included in other issues. Topics related to mythology are implemented in Polish language classes, where Jan Parandowski's *Mitologia. Wierzenia i podania Greków i Rzymian* [Mythology: Beliefs and Legends of the Greeks and Romans] is obligatory reading,¹ in history classes in the context of the iconographic material with a range of architecture and art, and in Latin language classes. In the case of Latin, two levels of teaching mythology can be distinguished. The first one includes the reading of Latin texts on mythology. The second one covers all kinds of comments and supplements in Polish, both with iconographic sources, which serve to supplement the content of Latin texts and to systematize the students' knowledge on the topic of the presented issues.

In fact, the place of classical languages and ancient culture in general education has been a matter of debate in Poland for many years. These debates have been particularly important within the development and implementation of further structural and programme reforms, the result of which has been a progressive marginalization of institutional teaching of Latin and ancient culture. Polskie Towarzystwo Filologiczne (Polish Philological Association) has played a vital role in these debates as an organization representing Polish classical philologists and bringing together researchers from many academic institutions, teachers, and all sympathizers and supporters

¹ Jan Parandowski, *Mitologia. Wierzenia i podania Greków i Rzymian* [Mythology: Beliefs and Legends of the Greeks and Romans], Lwów: Księgarnia Wydawnicza H. Altenberga, 1924.

of teaching classical languages.² The main statutory activity of the association is to cultivate and disseminate knowledge about antiquity in Poland, as well as to undertake activities to maintain classical teaching in Polish education, which, under the present conditions of organization and programmes, is limited to optional Latin language teaching and selected content in the field of ancient culture, carried out both in Latin teaching and in other humanities-related lessons. The roots of classical education's current situation should be sought in the successive structural and programme reforms that have taken place. When analysing the history of Polish education after 1918, it is easy to note that the main feature is the constant restructuring of the school system, motivated by political and ideological factors. It is clear that these successive reforms have led, over the span of the twentieth century, to a complete change in the form and concept of the Polish school. These changes have been particularly visible in the field of classical education, which in the 1930s was the basis of humanities education but is now almost absent from institutional secondary education. This is evidenced by statistical data, according to which, in the school year 2016/17, Latin was taught as a compulsory subject to less than 3% of high school students.³ In 2017, only 109 students across the country took the matriculation examination in the subject Latin Language and Ancient Culture.⁴ This dramatic situation for Classics in Polish education makes us reflect on the condition of the humanities in Poland and the direction of further changes in humanities education.⁵ The educational reforms introduced in 2017/18 will not bring positive changes in this area. The effects of the reforms relating to high school general education will be assessed at the earliest in 2023. Still, for a year or so now, classical philologists have been expressing concern that the proposed changes might altogether remove the Latin language from Polish schools.⁶

² Detailed information on the history, structure, and activities of the Polish Philological Association can be found on their website: Polskie Towarzystwo Filologiczne, www.ptf.edu.pl (accessed 29 April 2020).

³ *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2016/2017* [Education and Upbringing in the 2016/2017 School Year], Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2017, 101.

⁴ *Sprawozdanie z egzaminu maturalnego 2017. Przedmioty humanistyczne* [Report on the Matriculation Examination 2017: Humanities], Warszawa: Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna, 2017, 71–76.

⁵ Stanisław Stabryła, "Żeby nie został nawet ślad" [Not Even a Trace Will Remain], *PAUza akademicka* [Academic PAUse] 152 (2012), 2–3.

⁶ The description of activities undertaken by the Polish Philological Association and the "Traditio Europae" Foundation can be found on their websites: Polskie Towarzystwo Filologiczne,

2. Classics in Polish Education after 1945

In the history of post-war education in Poland, several periods are to be distinguished, every one of which introduced successive educational reform. Along with the alterations in the structure and programme, the place and role of classical languages in general education changed. In all the reforms, however, tendencies to gradually limit and marginalize the teaching of Classics were clearly visible. In the post-war era, classical education was reduced to the optional teaching of Latin language and the elements of ancient culture contained in Latin and Polish language and history lessons.

The pre-war system of general education introduced in 1932, based on the common school (an equivalent of primary school), middle school, and high school, was the last in which the widespread teaching of Classics was assumed.⁷ After the end of World War Two, the reconstruction of the schooling system, conducted by the communist authorities, sparked criticism of education from before the war, as well as a decision about the necessity of educational reconstruction in the spirit of ongoing changes in the political and social arenas.⁸ The concept of new humanism was developed, in which the role of classical languages and ancient culture was marginalized, defining them as relics of the past, useless in today's world. Communist authorities acknowledged that one of the main priorities in the reconstruction of the country would be creating a new system of education, focused on teaching science-related subjects and educating the younger generations in the spirit of the ideology of communism.⁹

The first structural reform was introduced in 1948 and was based on the creation of an eleven-year general education programme, consisting

www.ptf.edu.pl and Fundacja "Traditio Europae", Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu, <https://www.human.umk.pl/student-kierunki-filologia-klasyczna-i-studia-sroziemnomorskie/traditioeuropae/> (accessed 1 July 2020).

⁷ Bolesław Potyrała, *Przemiany oświaty w Polsce w latach 1944–1948* [Changes of Education in Poland in the Years 1944–1948], Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1991, 27.

⁸ A detailed account of the programme discussions can be found in *Ogólnopolski Zjazd Oświatowy w Łodzi. 18–22 czerwca 1945 r.* [National Education Convention in Łódź: 18–22 June 1945], Warszawa: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1945.

⁹ Witold Wyspiański, "O podstawowe założenia nowej szkoły" [On the Basic Assumptions of the New School], in *Ogólnopolski Zjazd Oświatowy w Łodzi. 18–22 czerwca 1945 roku* [National Education Convention in Łódź: 18–22 June 1945], Warszawa: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1945, 23.

of a seven-year primary school and four-year high school.¹⁰ The high school classes included the optional teaching of Latin language in the dimension of three hours per week, and the programme curriculum included elements of ancient culture. Another change, introduced in 1961, reduced the number of Latin language classes to two hours per week. The school system from 1961, based on the eight-year primary school and four-year high school, functioned until the reform of 1999. From that year, the four-year high school structure was finally abandoned.

In the 1970s, a new concept of a ten-year general education followed by a two-year school of directional specialization was developed. It was based on systems operating in other communist countries. Those changes were not introduced; however, in panel programming discussions about new schools, the concept of increasing the number of Latin language hours appeared and a new subject was created, Greek Language and Ancient Culture, which would be implemented in particular classes.¹¹ An extremely important element of classical education was introduced in 1980 at the Bartłomiej Nowodworski High School No. I in Kraków, where classical classes were created. This programme was then expanded to selected experimental schools.¹² As a result of discussions and conducted activities, the new programme of teaching with separate curricula for classical, general, and biology-chemistry classes was introduced. The differences between these classes concerned not only the number of hours but also the teaching content. The most comprehensive programme encompassing the teaching of Latin and Greek languages and elements of ancient culture, naturally, was implemented in classical classes. The programme for general classes (humanities and mathematics-physics) contained, above all, language teaching and, in a lesser degree, teaching culture. In biology-chemistry classes, however, education was focused on specialized language and vocabulary from the fields of natural sciences, medicine, and pharmacy.

¹⁰ *Instrukcja programowa na rok szkolny 1948/49* [Programme Manual for the 1948/49 School Year], Archiwum Akt Nowych [AAN; Archives of New Acts], section Ministerstwo Oświaty, Departament Reformy Szkolnictwa i Wychowania, reference no. 2/283/0/4266.

¹¹ "Wstępna wersja programu języka łacińskiego i elementów kultury antycznej dziesięcioletniej szkoły średniej" [The Initial Version of the Latin Language Programme and Elements of Ancient Culture of a Ten-Year Secondary School], *Języki Obce w Szkole* [Foreign Languages in School] 1 (1977), 44–52.

¹² The classical programme at the Bartłomiej Nowodworski High School No. I in Kraków was established as a university-bound course and was the result of this school's collaboration with the Institute of Classical Philology at the Jagiellonian University.

In 2002, a three-year high school was introduced. The situation of the Latin language significantly deteriorated because, along with the shortening of the cycle of teaching in high school, the total number of hours dedicated to teaching Latin dropped.¹³ That status was not improved along with further programme changes that were successively introduced starting in 2012.¹⁴ In 1999, the name of the subject was changed from Latin Language to Latin Language and Ancient Culture, which was accompanied by corresponding alterations in the requirements and the structure of graduation exams. The content in the field of culture was as important as the knowledge of Latin itself. The Latin language, in accordance with the objectives of the reform, was considered solely as a tool to understand the culture, and this teaching of the language was determined to be subordinate to learning about the cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome. It was a revolutionary change in the perception of the role of teaching Classics. However, the basic programme that was developed was not adjusted to suit the small number of subject hours and consisted of content and objectives that were impossible to achieve.

The latest change in Polish education is a return to the eight-year elementary and four-year high school, beginning with the school year 2019/20 (for elementary school since 2017/18). The status of the Latin language within the reform is not changed. Despite many actions and activities promoting the teaching of Latin, undertaken by the environment of classical philologists, the status of Latin as an optional subject (that is, as one of the three subjects that students choose to be taught at an extended level), is maintained. The 2018 core curriculum, similarly to the previous one, provides 240 hours per cycle for the implementation of the subject Latin Language and Ancient Culture.¹⁵

¹³ Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu z dnia 26 lutego 2002 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół [Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 26 February 2002 on the Core Curriculum for Pre-School Education and General Education in Specific Types of Schools], *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], 2002, no. 51, item 458.

¹⁴ Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 7 lutego 2012 r. w sprawie ramowych planów nauczania w szkołach publicznych [Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on Framework Plans for Teaching in Public Schools], *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], 2012, item 204, vol. 1.

¹⁵ Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 30 stycznia 2018 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, technikum oraz branżowej szkoły drugiego stopnia [Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 30 January 2018 on the Core Curriculum for General Education in Generalist High Schools, Technical High Schools, and Trade

3. Curricula and Core Curricula

In all of the curricula and core curricula published after 1945,¹⁶ one can see a perennial approach to organizing the teaching process on three planes: language training (language competence), ancient culture (cultural competence), and the so-called formal-educational aspect (metacompetence).¹⁷ Waldemar Pfeiffer divides the learning objectives into three categories: practical and communication goals, cognitive goals, and educational goals.¹⁸ This classification, though it was created in relation to modern languages, in principle coincides with the terms used in classical education.

In all the programmes and curricula, the main element and goal of the teaching process is developing language skills, but teaching classical languages also has other, more extensive goals. Thus, in the first years after the war, knowledge of the language was only to be a means to read, understand, and interpret cultural content from antiquity. In the 1950s, a balance

Schools of the 2nd Level], *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], 2018, item 467. Recently, this regulation has been modified to allow for the teaching of Latin at the basic level (one class a week in the first grade of high school). See *Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 24 czerwca 2020 r. zmieniające rozporządzenie w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, technikum oraz branżowej szkoły drugiego stopnia* [Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 24 June 2020 Modifying the Regulation on the Core Curriculum for General Education in Generalist High Schools, Technical High Schools, and Trade Schools of the 2nd Level], *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], 2020, item 1248.

¹⁶ Until 1949, the pre-war programme, modified on the basis of one-year programme instructions, was formally in force. New curricula were published in 1949, 1950, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1966, 1981, 1985, 1987, and 1994. In the late 1990s, uniform ministerial programmes were abandoned for the core curriculum. Subsequent versions of the core curriculum were developed in 1999, 2002, and 2008 (modified in 2012). In connection with the current implementation of the structural and programme reform of Polish education since 2016, a new core curriculum for each educational stage is being developed and successively published. The programme basis for the third educational stage (i.e. for post-primary schools), also including Latin Language and Ancient Culture guidelines, was published in 2018 (modified in 2020) and applies to new types of high schools starting from the school year 2019/20. In the 2020 core curriculum, the subject Latin Language and Ancient Culture may be introduced also at the basic level (in addition to the extended level) – in the first grade only (30 hours per cycle). The school headmaster decides which of the four optional subjects (Latin Language and Ancient Culture, Philosophy, Arts, and Music) will be taught.

¹⁷ Janusz Ryba, "Wiedza o języku w kształceniu klasycznym w Polsce po 1945 roku" [Knowledge about Language in Teaching Classical Languages in Poland after 1945], in Agata Rozumko and Elżbieta Awramiuk, eds., *Wiedza o języku w kształceniu filologicznym* [Language Studies in Philological Education], Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2018, 49–50.

¹⁸ Waldemar Pfeiffer, *Nauka języków obcych. Od praktyki do praktyki* [Learning Foreign Languages: From Practice to Practice], Poznań: Wydawnictwo Wagros, 2001, 153.

was maintained between linguistic and cultural skills, but all changes were subordinate to the purposes of education and propaganda. In the following years, the authors of the programmes paid attention primarily to the utilitarian aspects of classical education. They emphasized relationships between modern languages and Polish, between European culture and achievements of Graeco-Roman civilization, and the knowledge of Latin was treated as the key to reading and correctly interpreting them. Also, due to the systemically non-obligatory nature of the subject, the aims and content of Latin teaching began to be subject to profiling, in accordance with the current school system's strategy of splitting pupils into educational pathways. These tendencies are particularly visible in the programmes prepared for the ten-year school, and then in programmes from the 1980s, which were slightly modified and obligatory until 1999. Three basic directions can be observed in these publications: the expansion of objectives and content of teaching in the field of language and cultural competence – in programmes of classical classes; development and expansion of language skills with some knowledge of the basic elements of ancient culture – in science (mathematics and physics) and humanities programmes; and the limitation of the cultural content and general language within specialized language teaching – in biology and chemistry programmes.

From the end of the 1990s onwards, the situation changes. In the core curricula from the period 1999–2020, there is a clear increase in the importance of cultural content on Ancient Greece and Rome, the reception of antiquity, also in popular culture, as well as the reception and interpretation of cultural texts. The modified name of the subject – Latin Language and Ancient Culture – appeared for the first time in the document from 1999,¹⁹ and this is not only a terminological change, as it also involves further-reaching changes in the teaching process and the matriculation examination. In this way, a new type of dichotomous and block-shaped modular programme subject structure was introduced into the Polish education system. Thus the language-teaching content under the new guidelines' programmes was limited to themes from ancient culture. In addition, a principle defining intercultural skills as of higher importance than the language ones was adopted. This means that language is an element of culture and a tool for

¹⁹ Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 15 lutego 1999 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego [Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 15 February 1999 on the Core Curriculum for General Education], *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], 1999, no. 14, item 129.

learning about it. It is worth emphasizing that these changes are consistent with the post-methodical direction of glottodidactics²⁰ development and the concept of “intercultural communication competence”.²¹ In the case of classical languages, communication skills are primarily limited to receiving, understanding, and translating text. All the discussed changes are related to, among other things, limiting the content of broadly understood ancient culture in the teaching programmes of other subjects of the humanities, which resulted in a general decline in knowledge about antiquity and students’ awareness about the relationship between contemporary culture and the Graeco-Roman tradition.

4. Mythology as an Element of the Content of Education

4.1. Reading Texts

In the case of classical languages, the content from the field of ancient culture is closely related to the subject matter of texts (prepared and original) used in the teaching process. Hence, when discussing the issue of teaching ancient culture, one must pay special attention to the following issues: the subject matter of non-original texts, selection of original texts, formulation of the historical, literary, and cultural commentary for reading Latin texts, selected texts in Polish, expanding students’ knowledge of antiquity,²² and the correlation of content taught in classical language lessons with history and Polish language programmes. The process of teaching ancient culture itself takes place on three levels which do not occur linearly. The first level

²⁰ Maria Jodłowiec and Anna Niżegorodcew, “W stronę post-metodycznej dydaktyki języków obcych” [Towards Post-Methodical Didactics of Foreign Languages], in Maria Jodłowiec and Anna Niżegorodcew, eds., *W stronę nowoczesnego nauczania języków obcych* [Towards Modern Foreign-Language Teaching], Kraków: Tertium, 2008, 15–21.

²¹ Anna Lubecka, “Interkulturowa kompetencja komunikatywna – jak wykorzystać gry symulacyjne do jej osiągnięcia” [Intercultural Communicative Competence: How to Use Simulation Games to Develop It], *Biuletyn glottodydaktyczny* [Glottodidactic Bulletin] 4 (1998), 59–74; Marcin Maciejewski, “O kształceniu interkulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej” [On Teaching Intercultural Communication Skills], in Marta Dąbrowska, ed., *Język trzeciego tysiąclecia III: język polski i języki obce – kontakty, kultura, dydaktyka* [Language of the Third Millennium: The Polish Language and Foreign Languages. Contacts, Culture, Didactics], Kraków: Tertium, 2005, 363–370.

²² Particular attention is paid to this issue by Aleksandra Klęczar, who in her own Greek curriculum has a very comprehensive list of Polish texts regarding ancient culture and its reception in later eras.

is to become familiarized with the basic information about a given issue based on reading the Latin text. At this stage, the student gets to know not only the content of the reading but, above all, the Latin vocabulary referring to specific cultural issues. The second level is extending the information based on the historical, literary, or cultural commentary, formulated in Polish. In this way, the student is simultaneously acquainted with the language and culture in interconnected contexts. The third level is characterized by working with original texts, treated as products of culture and source material.

An examination of teaching programmes shows that in Latin teaching after 1945 there was a perennial set of ancient authors, excerpts of whose works were chosen and used in the educational process. Thus, one can talk about a canon of so-called school authors: Cornelius Nepos, Caesar, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, and Horace. There also appeared, albeit less frequently and to a lesser extent, passages from Livy, Tacitus, Seneca, Lucretius, and Catullus. This choice corresponds to the programme guidelines mainly concerning teaching of classical Latin. In programmes from the 1980s, there was a tendency to introduce extracts by modern authors, that is, Poles writing in Latin, such as Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, Jan Kochanowski, Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, Klemens Janicki, Mikołaj Kopernik, or Marcin Kromer, which was clearly related to the demand that Latin teaching pay attention to the influences and connections of antiquity with Polish culture. This tendency is also present in the current core curriculum, where the reception of antiquity in modern culture has been recognized as one of the primary aims of teaching Latin language and ancient culture.

In the case of Greek teaching programmes, it is much harder to pinpoint the authors forming a canon. All programmes feature fragments of works by Aesop, Xenophon, and extracts from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Selections from the works of Lucian, Herodotus, and Pausanias are rarer, but the programmes include a clear recommendation to adapt the original text to the needs of schooling.

4.2. Communist Ideologization in Programmes from 1949 to 1954

In the first years after the war, education was closely monitored by the communist education authorities. Content that was inconsistent with the policy of education and the ideological assumptions of the new school and new programmes was removed from pre-war programmes and textbooks.

Special emphasis was placed on the functions of education. This process of introducing ideology was also present in the case of Latin language and ancient culture. Under the guise of adapting education to the changed organizational conditions and a reduced number of hours of Latin, almost all the content concerning ancient culture was removed.²³ Classical studies was mainly associated with pre-war schooling and the Catholic Church, while the idea of a new, communist state swept away all the traditions of pre-war Poland along with the existing model of education. Communist authorities distanced themselves from the civilization of Western Europe. They sought to create a new ideal of the citizen, while the legacy of the Graeco-Roman ancient heritage, present in the humanities, was a factor which undeniably connected Poland with the culture of the West and the Christian identity. New Poland was to be a secular and workers' state, connected in terms of identity and ideology with the communist countries of the Eastern Bloc.²⁴ Education was to be based on the teaching of mathematics, the natural sciences, and engineering, which, according to the authorities, suited the new, post-war political, social, and economic reality better.

In the programmes from the years 1949–1954, the division of the Latin teaching cycle into two stages was consistently maintained and is also visible in the organization of teaching content in the field of ancient culture. In Grades 8 and 9, in which the material was primarily linguistic, non-original texts were used in the didactic process, and the topics of these texts were closely related to the cultural component. Thus, in the programmes from 1949, 1950, and 1954 it was assumed that in Grade 8 content related to Romans' everyday lives should be implemented: the home, the family, learning, traditions, and home customs, while the programme for Grade 9 mainly covered issues related to Rome's social, political, and cultural life: the social and political system, topography and architecture of Rome, the most important works of art and figures of eminent Romans. In the second semester of Grade 9, fragments of original texts from the works of Cornelius Nepos and Caesar were introduced, which thematically corresponded to the

²³ *Instrukcja programowa na rok szkolny 1948/49* [Programme Manual for the 1948/49 School Year].

²⁴ For this aspect in the region, see the multi-author volume edited by György Karsai, Gábor Klaniczay, David Movrin, and Elżbieta Olechowska, *Classics and Communism: Greek and Latin behind the Iron Curtain*, Ljubljana, Budapest, and Warsaw: Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts; Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Study; and Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw, 2013.

cultural content being implemented: the struggle of the Greeks against the invaders, profiles of prominent leaders, Caesar's conquests, and Gallic and Germanic customs. Grades 10 and 11 were primarily devoted to reading original texts. These included fragments from Ovid and Virgil containing legends from the history of Rome, excerpts from Livy and Cicero related to the most important moments of Roman history, fragments of the philosophical works of Cicero, Seneca, and Lucretius, and selected works by Horace and Catullus.

It should be noted that in these programmes, in principle, there was no content associated with mythology and religion, which was directly related to the state's education policy based on Polish education's ongoing shift to an ideological character²⁵ and the propagandic nature of school publications. The significant reduction in the programme of Latin language, mythology, and religion is one of the most interesting aspects of the changes instituted in education in the early years after the war. In the introduction to the 1949 programme, it was recommended directly that the cultural content should be treated collaterally, as a supplement to teaching language, and not an equivalent component of the process of teaching. In the programme from 1950, we can find the information that in teaching Latin only passages of the works of authors representing the materialistic trends should be used, rather than those that supported outmoded beliefs and religious superstitions. The programme of 1954 continued the previous ideological assumptions, with the further removal of two pieces from Livy that were deemed of objectionable nature: Livy 5.27.1–11 and 25.50.²⁶

In these programmes, there was no precise information on the permitted topics on mythology and religion. To get a full picture of the situation, textbooks should be analysed, as they had to obtain the approval of the Minister of Education before being authorized for use in school. The main textbook used in this period for Latin language teaching was the post-war edition of *Elementa Latina* by Stanisław Skimina.²⁷ Compared to its pre-war

²⁵ Barbara Brzuska, "Latin and Politics in People's Poland", in David Movrin and Elżbieta Olechowska, eds., *Classics and Class: Greek and Latin Classics and Communism at School*, Warsaw and Ljubljana: Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw; Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts; and Wydawnictwo DiG, 2016, 272.

²⁶ In the introduction to the programme there is information that the two passages from Livy should be removed because they lack educational content.

²⁷ Stanisław Skimina, *Elementa Latina. Podręcznik do nauki języka łacińskiego* [*Elementa Latina: A Textbook for the Study of the Latin Language*], Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, 1949.

version, this manual was thoroughly changed. The contents that the education authorities deemed not to match the ideology of the new state were removed. With little material relating to mythology and religion in the manual, only some non-original texts in Latin were preserved: "De templo", "De Vergilii Aeneidis deis", "De Apolline", "De aurea aetate", "De Aeneae erroribus", "De Daedalo et Icaro", "De deorum cultu" and some Polish texts ("Legenda o Eneaszu" [Legend of Aeneas], "Religia Rzymian" [Religion of the Romans], "Kult bogów i wróżbiarstwo" [Cult of the Gods and Divination]), which were to supplement the information contained in Latin readings.

It seems that the choice of mythological topics present in the manual was not random, and the texts in Latin were constructed in such a way that they did not arouse ideological reservations. In the reading "De templo" in principle there is no information on the subject of Greek or Roman religion, so the attention of students is focused on the architecture and the components of the construction of the temple. Texts "De aurea aetate" and "De deorum cultu" did not contain any new grammatical material. As concluded from the programme instruction, it was to serve as revision material and, if needed, could be omitted by the teacher. Treating such important material optionally, despite the fact that the worship of deities was a central feature of Roman culture, demonstrated the conscious efforts of the authorities of educational institutions, whose aim was marginalizing mythology and religion in Latin teaching in favour of information about history and everyday life. Furthermore, the myth of the Golden Age of mankind was interpreted, above all, as praise for peace and prosperity, and for what humanity can achieve, and the idea had to, therefore, be clearly associated with the new political and social order of communist Poland. The text "De Daedalo et Icaro" reflected the ideological assumptions of the new school. The mythical Daedalus was presented, above all, as a brilliant craftsman, diligent designer and builder. One of the aims of the new regime was to develop technical education and raise young people within the cult of work. The myth of Daedalus fitted precisely into this narrative, telling the story of a man who, thanks to his practical skills and work, could liberate himself and his son from captivity, and at the same time achieve what had previously not been possible for any man – to rise up in the skies. The messages of education were endorsed by the story: since man, through his work and skill, can achieve anything, the task of schools should be to shape, above all, practical skills, useful in the contemporary world, through which a plan for the development of civilization

and the economic state of the country could be implemented. Similarly, the texts about Aeneas had an ideological and educational spin. Aeneas, as a man tormented and troubled by war, undertakes a mission to find a new homeland. The texts, in principle, omitted information about the royal descent of Aeneas, mentioning only that his mother was the goddess Venus. The main features of the hero are strength, diligence, persistence, and consistency in the pursuit of the aim, which is a new, independent homeland – built according to new rules. Aeneas bravely faces all adversities of fate, standing up to the interference of hateful gods, as a result of which he realizes his plan.

A clear and unambiguous picture emerges from the analysis of the curricula of 1949–1954 and the textbook *Elementa Latina*. Neglected issues from ancient culture were subordinated to topics related to the history, the military, and the everyday life of Greeks and Romans. Mythology was limited to a few issues to which educational and propagandic functions were attributed. The use of myths was not didactic, but ideological. The idea was not to familiarize students with mythology, but to show attitudes consistent with the ideological assumptions of the education policy and the new school, based on selected myths.

4.3. The Return of Mythology in Programmes from 1959 and 1964

The political changes that took place in the second half of the 1950s also influenced educational policy. In the programme from 1959 and its revised and expanded version published in 1964, issues from ancient culture were presented in Grades 8 and 9. Educational content related to the economic, social, political, and cultural life of Rome was implemented in Grade 8. In Grade 9 the following issues were presented: the geography of Italy, labour, agriculture, slaves, craftsmen, trade, roads, urban and rural citizens, social classes, the situation of women, struggles for political and social liberation, class conflicts, the struggles of the Greeks with the Persians and of the Iberian tribes with the Romans, customs, upbringing, mythology, art, literature, science and technology. The precise setting of original texts for the tenth and eleventh grades was abandoned, leaving the choice of specific readings to the authors of textbooks, as well as to teachers. Only a general canon of authors was defined, which included Caesar and Ovid in Grade 10, and Cicero, Virgil, and Horace in Grade 11.

The official school ideology after 1956 did not change,²⁸ but some innovations were visible in the programmes of teaching the Latin language. First of all, more attention was paid to the need to take into account a wider range of content from the scope of ancient culture and mythology. Programmes from the years 1959 and 1964 were not so heavily ideologically marked, and one of the main objectives of classical education was linking Polish culture with the heritage of Graeco-Roman antiquity. In the course of learning Latin, students were to become familiar with the central achievement of Roman culture, namely its lasting value in the development of human culture. In the context of those changes, mythology was included in the programmes of teaching as one of the key elements of knowledge about the ancient world.

As a result of a contest held by the Ministry of Education, two manuals emerged: *Lingua Latina* by Stefan Staszczyk, Jadwiga Daabowa, and Zbigniew Sabiłło²⁹ and *Schola Latina* by Zofia Kwiecińska, Rudolf Niemiec, and Stanisław Skimina.³⁰ The manual *Schola Latina* both in form and content alluded to previous works by Skimina and, in principle, was a new edition of *Elementa Latina*, adapted to the changed requirements and content of the programme. One of the greatest and most visible changes was that the content on mythology was significantly improved. In the manual, there were new texts in Latin and Polish, as well as illustrative material referring to the gods of Greeks and Romans (Zeus, Hera, Apollo, Diana, Athena, Latona, Saturn), the worship of gods and religion, and Aeneas and myths about the founding of Rome.

The textbook *Lingua Latina*, released for the first time in 1958, was much more interesting and innovative. In the first part, mythology appears in sections on the war of Troy, the fall of Troy, the journey of Aeneas and the foundation of Rome. The second part contained the myth of Tantalus, the figure of the god Asclepius and his cult in Rome, the story of Sybil and the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, figures of the Muses, oracles, and the figure of Romulus. The Latin texts were supplemented with illustrations thematically referring to cultural issues and presenting rich iconographic material

²⁸ In 1956, after the death of Bolesław Bierut, internal policy changed and was liberalized.

²⁹ Stefan Staszczyk, Jadwiga Daabowa, and Zbigniew Sabiłło, *Lingua Latina. Podręcznik języka łacińskiego* [Lingua Latina: A Latin Language Textbook], Warszawa: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1958.

³⁰ Zofia Kwiecińska, Rudolf Niemiec, and Stanisław Sikimina, *Schola Latina. Podręcznik języka łacińskiego* [Schola Latina: A Latin Language Textbook], Warszawa: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1958.

from later periods, in which references to Greek and Roman mythology were visible. The manual did not have, however, any Polish texts, which would complement and systematize the cultural aspects discussed.

Analysis of programmes and textbooks from the years 1959–1964 demonstrates the expansion of mythological content; however, it must be emphasized that, in general, it was still marginal. Topics related to history, mainly military, wars, social conflicts, class struggle, and issues relating to the everyday life of different layers of society dominated. Mythological issues were selected and discussed individually, but they did not form a uniform whole, which would give the students a broad and systematic knowledge in the field of mythology. Communist propaganda played a lesser role in the employment of didactic materials, although the issues of ancient culture were still selected according to specific guidelines based on ideological assumptions.

4.4. Mythology in Programmes after 1966

Still more regulations were included in the programme from 1966 that proposed a shortened, eight-hour Latin teaching cycle. Guidelines included in this programme are formulated in a very general way and do not contain any specific elements. The authors of the programme limited themselves to the general statement that in the first and second grades content related to the economic, social, political, and cultural life of Rome would be implemented. The third-grade programme included reading and translating fragments from the works of Cornelius Nepos, Caesar, and Florus, in adapted and original versions. Also, the canon of authors intended for the fourth grade was abandoned and limited to selected texts, mainly from the works of Roman prose writers, related thematically to the social, economic, political, and cultural life of the Romans.

The analysis of the textbook *Vox Latina*³¹ by Wiktor Steffen and Jan Horowski provides far more information on the specific content of education. It was created on the basis of the new programme guidelines, issued together with the introduction of the reform. The reduction of the number of hours

³¹ Wiktor Steffen and Jan Horowski, *Vox Latina I–IV. Podręcznik do nauki języka łacińskiego* [Vox Latina, Grades I–IV: A Textbook for the Study of the Latin Language], Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1966.

of Latin language teaching and further marginalization of classical education caused the range of material utilized during Latin lessons to be limited. Practical tips for teachers on the subject under the new organizational and programme conditions were included in the methodical guide prepared by the authors of the textbook. In the section on the subject of Latin readings, information could be found regarding the scope of topics on ancient culture, which were selected according to their educational and didactic qualities. It was stressed that the teaching of ancient culture should be centred around universal values that were not only present in ancient times but also in the modern world. The manual does not, however, contain detailed information and only generalizes the overall picture of the cultural issues to be discussed, which, according to need, could be complemented and extended by the teacher. Nevertheless, the authors of the guide state directly that the main purpose of the programme is language instruction, and thus the discussion on background issues should not be excessively expanded, as Latin language classes should not turn into ancient history and culture classes at the expense of language content. According to this approach, ancient culture is still a language supplement and not an equivalent element of the teaching process.

The lack of strict guidelines from the Ministry, and some freedom left to the authors of textbooks and teachers in their selection of content for teaching in the field of ancient culture, meant that a number of topics from the field of mythology could be found in the manual *Vox Latina*. In addition, the methodical guide recommended that the contents of the manual should be supplemented with *Mythology* by Parandowski, through which students gained a broad and systematic knowledge of Greek and Roman mythology, and not only within the scope of selected, individual examples that corresponded to ideology. Hence the textbook for the first grade contained texts in Latin thematically linked with the cult of the goddess Vesta, the myth of Latona and her children, myths about the gods (Neptune, Aeolus, Mars, Diana), the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, the trial of Paris, the fall of Troy, and the journey of Aeneas and the foundation of Rome. Textbooks for Grades 2–4 did not contain topics from the scope of mythology, and the majority of the Latin passages in the original were historical works.

Subsequent programmes from the years 1981–1994, appearing in three versions intended for different profiles, had a similar structure and contained the same regulations regarding teaching ancient culture. It should be noted that in these programmes the linear system was abandoned, that

is, the cultural content was spread evenly over four years of study, and the original texts were meant to supplement and complement the educational process in Grades 3 and 4. In the basic version for the humanities classes were issues related to the life of Greeks and Romans (school, home, private and public life, myths and cult, conversations, letters, cartoons, anecdotes, games, sentences) in the first grade; issues connected with the social and cultural life of Greeks and Romans (work, agriculture, slaves, trade, roads, the life of patricians and plebeians, the political system, social struggles, the state, law, offices, customs, education, upbringing, art, and technology) in the second grade; issues related to the life of slaves, the struggles of the Greeks for freedom, the army and the Roman military expansion, mythology, drama, architecture, and science in the third grade; and content tracing the influence of antiquity on later culture (the contribution of Greeks and Romans to the development of literature, culture, and science, and echoes of antiquity in Polish culture) in the fourth grade. In addition, there was a canon of texts in the third and fourth grades that included original-text excerpts from the works of Cornelius Nepos, Caesar, Cicero, Livy, Valerius Maximus, Ovid, Virgil, Horace, as well as Janicki, Kochanowski, and Modrzewski.

The programme for the classical profile was the same as for the humanities in the first and second grades, but it differed significantly in the next two grades, where the canon of texts was expanded and thoroughly defined. In Grade 3, the following were obligatory: one abbreviated text from Cicero's speeches (to be chosen by the teacher from *In Catilinam I*, *Pro Archia poeta*, *In Verrem – De signis*), selected excerpts from Cicero's letters (for example, the description of the return from exile, letter to the ailing Tiro), excerpts from the works of Valerius Maximus (for instance, "De verecundia", "De humanitate et clementia", "De mortibus non vulgaribus"), Ovid (for example, the Four Ages of Man, Daedalus and Icarus, Niobe and Meleager, Arion, *Fasti* 2.83–118, *Tristia* 4.10.1–42), and Janicki ("De se ipso ad posteritatem"). The canon of Grade 4 included, in turn, Virgil (*Aeneid*: invocation, fragments of Book 2), Livy ("C. Mucius Scaevola" 2.12, "Cloelia virgo" 2.13, "De discordia inter patres plebemque orta" 2.23, "De Menenio Agrippa" 2.32, "Cn. Marcius Coriolanus" 2.39–40, "Cincinnatus" 3.26–29, "De Romanorum clade ad lacum Trasumennum" 23.4–7), Horace (*Sermones* 1.9, 2.6, *Epodon* 2, *Carmina* 1.1, 3, 4, 9, 11; 2.3, 10; 3.9, 30; 4.3), selected excerpts from the works of Jan Długosz (description of the Battle of Grunwald), Modrzewski, and Kromer (characteristics of the Polish nobility of the sixteenth century). In Ancient Greek classes, a language programme was

implemented which also included cultural topics on Greek life (school, home, private and public life, sport, religion, and mythology), social and cultural life (agriculture, slaves, trade, state systems, offices, customs, science, art, technology, fighting of the Greeks in defence of the homeland), and reading selected fragments from the works of Xenophon and Herodotus, as well as selected tales of Aesop and fragments of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

The third variant of the programme for biology and chemistry classes included the following: how the Ancient Greeks and Romans lived (family, slaves, houses) and the natural environment (gardens, fields, meadows, forests, mountains, rivers, the sea, flora and fauna, the life and work of farmers, shepherds, fishermen, merchants, soldiers, sailors, and teachers) in Grade 1; thematically related issues on man, animals, and plants (construction, nutrition, life, health, healing agents, surgical instruments) and the history of medicine (the schools of Asclepius, Hippocrates, Celsus, Galen, etc.) in Grade 2; issues related to living conditions, healthcare, and prescription patterns in Grade 3; and examples of prescriptions, diagnoses, and descriptions of diseases and the naming of drugs in Grade 4. Those were complemented by fragments from the works of Pliny, Varro, Vitruvius, Celsus, Vegetius, Cicero, Caesar, Cornelius Nepos, and Florus, and selected fragments from the writings of ancient authors and later writers in Latin on biology, medicine, veterinary medicine, chemistry, and pharmacology.

Programmes differentiation for individual profiles matching the real needs of students was a very revolutionary solution. The scope of the ancient culture content was most tailored to students' needs in the programme for the biology-chemistry classes. In the humanities and classical streams, on the other hand, the differences concerned linguistic content, while the scope of information from ancient culture was the same. The guidance programme directs that the content of ancient culture should be presented through Latin texts (either prepared, adapted, or original), complementary Polish texts, and iconographic material. A detailed list of mythological issues discussed at school could be determined on the basis of an analysis of the textbook *Lectio Latina* by Stanisław Wilczyński and Teresa Zarych,³² used at that time.

The textbook expanded the mythological contents significantly, which was linked to a departure from the strict ministerial guidelines. In addition,

³² Stanisław Wilczyński and Teresa Zarych, *Lectio Latina I–IV*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1984.

the authors instituted an arrangement consisting of the division of language material into small thematic units with a short Latin text assigned to each of them. In this way, certain thematic cycles covering several subsequent lessons were created. In Part I of the textbook, as many as twenty-two units (*lectiones*) out of forty-nine contained mythological topics. This is in contrast to the other three parts, where the issues rarely appeared (twice in Part II and once in Part III), and texts were focused primarily on the issues of ancient history and literature. That might be the result of an assumption that the knowledge of mythology had an introductory role, and, moreover, that it was easier for the students. Among the mythological themes contained in the manual are the myths about the gods (readings "De Diana", "De Minervae statua", "De Herae ira", "De Romanorum deis", "De Neptuno deo", "De Iove", "De Iunone", "De Minerva", "De Cerere", "De Apollinis oraculo Delphico"), myths about the Trojan War, the fall of Troy, and Aeneas' journey (readings "De bello Troiano", "De equo Troiano", "De Aeneae somnio", "De Troiae exitio", "De Heleni oraculo", "Troianos in Italiam venire", "Romae futurae fata ab Aenea cognoscuntur", "De Latino, Latii domino ac regulo"), myths associated with the founding and beginnings of Rome (readings "De Rhea Silvia", "De Romanorum proavo", "De Romulo et Remo", "De regibus Romanis", "De Sabinis puellis raptis"), and those concerning the characters of Prometheus and Tantalus. Mythological knowledge was complemented by original texts in the fourth part of the manual, which was thematically related to the figures of Odysseus and Penelope (*Heroides* 1.1–6, 11–14, 23–28, 30–36, 46–50, 57–58, 109–116), the myth of the Golden Age (*Metamorphoses* 1.1–4, 89–113), Daedalus and Icarus (*Metamorphoses* 8.183–235), Niobe (*Metamorphoses* 6.301–312), Orpheus and Eurydice (*Metamorphoses* 10.11–63), and the Trojan War (*Aeneid* 1.1–11, 13–53; 2.201–240).

Despite the challenging and complex political situation of the country, programmes of teaching Latin and Greek developed in the 1980s were characterized by a certain worldview openness and innovation, and, above all, were free from propaganda and the ideology of communism. Those curricula were formed on the basis of material developed by a team of experts, preparing guidance and instruction for the planned reform.³³ Among the

³³ The Commission was composed of Prof. Maria Cytowska (Chairman); Prof. Jerzy Łanowski (Vice-Chairman); Wanda Popiak, MA (Secretary); and Irena Borzymińska-Maj, MA; Tamara Simla, MA; Jan Lasocki, MA (members).

discussions about the shape of the new school system, the issue of teaching classical languages and ancient culture and the consent of educational authorities to strengthen classical education, mainly by creating Classics profile classes in selected schools,³⁴ played an important role. At the same time, the way of looking at the goals of teaching Latin changed, as it was not seen at the time as a relic of the past related mainly to the Catholic Church, but as an element of Polish identity, undeniably associated with the Graeco-Roman cultural heritage. Moving away from a strongly ideological Latin language teaching programme allowed for the introduction of new elements of knowledge from the fields of culture, antiquity, and, above all, from mythology. The result of freedom in choosing topics from mythology was the fact that not only myths which were thought to have educational value but also those which were free from ideological issues were chosen. The latter ones played a key role in the reception of ancient tradition in Polish culture. These programmes were so unbiased that they were not fundamentally modified after the change of regime in 1989 and were used in schools until the end of the 1990s.

4.5. Mythology in Core Curricula after 1999

In the core curriculum of 1999, the educational content was introduced in a basic and extended scope, with the issues formulated in a general way and without division into specific years of study. The basic level included: the chronology of antiquity, elements of history and geography of the ancient world, mythology (selection of Greek myths, legends related to the beginnings of Rome, the function of myth in culture), ceremonies, holidays, celebrations in Greece and Rome, the role of the Olympic Games and theatrical performances, selected issues from literature and Greek and Roman art, selected issues from the everyday life of Greeks and Romans, and basic information about the history of the languages and their writings. Guidelines for the extended level, in addition to issues from the basic level, also included the following: selected excerpts from the texts of Caesar, Cicero (letter, speech, treatise), Horace, Ovid, Virgil, and Polish-Latin authors, features of poetry and Latin prose, ancient drama, the genesis of selected literary

³⁴ See Katarzyna Marciniak and Barbara Strycharczyk's chapter, "*Macte animo!* – or, The Polish Experiment with 'Classics Profiles' in Secondary School Education: The Warsaw Example", 237–291.

genres, selected philosophical issues, elements of knowledge about antiquity as a commentary and background for translated texts (chronology, state institutions and forms of governance, law and the judiciary, the military, centres and peripheries of Mediterranean civilization and culture), the influence of Latin on modern languages and contemporary culture (Latin as a language of literature, means of language communication, the sacral language, the language of scientific texts, Greek and Latin borrowings in modern languages, the importance of the heritage of antiquity), and the achievements of the ancients in mathematics, the natural sciences, and the technical sciences.

Another version of the core curriculum, published in 2002 and intended for a three-year general high school, assumed the teaching Latin as a second or third foreign language. However, no differences were made in the content of education, and only in the case of Latin taught as a second foreign language was it recommended to increase the number of fragments of original texts. An important change was that any set canon of texts was totally eradicated; teachers now had to select texts on their own. This change was directly related to the abandonment of central ministerial guidelines in favour of autonomy for the teacher instead.³⁵ The document contains very general statements on the following themes: Latin as a language of literature, means of language communication, the sacred language, the language of scientific texts, Latin as a common language for Europeans (the influence of Latin and Greek on the structure and lexical resources of contemporary European languages), the canon of antiquity in literature and art (how to read myths, concepts, symbols), elements of knowledge of classical languages sufficient to understand basic terms, concepts, sayings, proverbs, and the etymology of the words present in Polish and other modern languages, the importance of ancient heritage for Polish culture, selected fragments of works by Greek and Roman authors in translation (sufficient for understanding the canon of Polish and world literature), the history of literary genres, examples of the most outstanding works (epics, lyric poetry, idylls, Attic drama, old and new comedy, historiography, Greek and Roman rhetoric, the beginnings of Christian writing), and other knowledge about antiquity necessary for the translation, analysis, and interpretation of texts.

³⁵ Grażyna Czetwertyńska, "Expectations and Disappointments: Latin and Antiquity as Components of the Education System in Poland at the Beginning of the Nineties", in David Movrin and Elżbieta Olechowska, eds., *Classics and Class: Greek and Latin Classics and Communism at School*, Warsaw and Ljubljana: Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw; Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts; and Wydawnictwo DiG, 2016, 289.

Even more general guidelines on ancient culture were contained in the basic curriculum from 2008. The contents covered by the educational cycle are:

- the influence of the Latin language on Polish (Latin words functioning as terms in different areas, connections between the Polish language and the Latin language, Latin etymology of Polish words);
- knowledge of antiquity as the key to reading the meaning of original texts and of translated texts about ancient myths;
- Greek and Roman art and architecture, philosophy, and political life (the systems of Athens, Sparta, and Rome);
- Greek literature (literary genres and their most distinguished representatives from Homer to the Hellenistic period);
- Roman literature (literary genres, literature);
- selected issues from the daily life of Greeks and Romans (family, home, a Roman's ordinary working day, school, theatre, games, baths);
- relationships between European culture and ancient culture (references to antiquity found in the most outstanding literary works, art, and European architecture, works of selected Polish poets writing in Latin, elements of Roman law, various attitudes towards the state in antiquity, connections of Polish noble culture with the Roman republican tradition, the influence on these areas in European culture permeated by antiquity and Christianity);
- the most important achievements of ancient culture (Roman law, Greek tragedy, science and inventions in antiquity, civic attitudes).

Basic curricula between 1999 and 2008 did not specify topics from mythology that should be included in the process of teaching Latin Language and Ancient Culture. Ministerial guidelines were designed in a very general way and only defined the areas of knowledge on the culture of Ancient Greece and Rome. The selection of particular individual topics to be taught was left to the authors of textbooks and teachers. Therefore, from the point of view of educational law, it was possible that manuals constructed according to the same assumptions could include completely different content from the field of mythology. In practice, however, the marginal place of teaching Classics in the high school curriculum and the very sparse number of students learning the Latin language led to no new textbooks appearing on the editorial market. Teaching the Latin language was dominated by the textbook *Porta Latina* and its newer version, *Porta Latina*

nova, by Stanisław Wilczyński, Ewa Pobiedzińska, and Anna Jaworska.³⁶ In practice, the manual *Disce Latine* by Teodozja Wikarjak and Wojciech Mohort-Kopaczyński remained in use,³⁷ but due to its unsuitability with regard to the new guidelines, the programme did not receive ministerial approval for use in school until after 2002. The textbook by Anna Osipowicz, *Lingua Latina, lingua nostra*, which featured too much content in both the linguistic and the cultural aspect, was a failed experiment and did not fit the organizational conditions of education.

The manual *Porta Latina* contained a number of mythological narratives: the Trojan War and the fall of Troy, journey of Aeneas, the myths associated with the foundation of Rome and Romulus and Remus, as well as the myth of Latona, the labours of Heracles, and information on Apollo and the oracle at Delphi. Cultural content was introduced mainly through texts in Latin, which required additional supplements and the systematization of students' knowledge during lessons. The new edition of *Porta Latina* contained the same texts in Latin, and therefore the same range of cultural material, but new sources of iconography and Polish texts complementing and referring to the topics presented in the Latin readings were added. Hence the lessons dedicated to the Trojan War (texts "De bello Troiano" and "De Troiae exitio") included information about the epics of Homer, the deeds of heroes, and the traditions of the oral culture of epic poetry. The myth of Latona (text "De Latonae miseriis") was supplemented with additional information on the concept of *hubris*, and lessons on the founding of Rome (two passages on "De Romulo et Remo") contained Polish texts on the journey of Aeneas and myths associated with the characters of Romulus and Remus. A structured lecture about Greek religion and the notion of myth were included as a complement to topics related to the god Apollo and the oracle of Delphi (text "De Apollinis Delphici templo") and the myth of the Twelve Labours of Heracles (text "De Herculibus laboribus").

³⁶ Stanisław Wilczyński, Ewa Pobiedzińska, and Anna Jaworska, *Porta Latina. Podręcznik do języka łacińskiego i kultury antycznej* [Porta Latina: A Textbook for the Study of the Latin Language and Ancient Culture], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Szkolne PWN, 2005, and *Porta Latina nova. Podręcznik do języka łacińskiego i kultury antycznej* [Porta Latina nova: A Textbook for the Study of the Latin Language and Ancient Culture], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Szkolne PWN, 2012.

³⁷ Teodozja Wikarjak and Wojciech Mohort-Kopaczyński, *Disce Latine. Podręcznik do języka łacińskiego dla szkół średnich* [Disce Latine: Latin Textbook for Secondary Schools], Warszawa and Poznań: Wydawnictwo Szkolne PWN, 2000.

In the programmes from 1999, 2002, and 2008, there is a visible tendency to formulate content in the field of ancient culture more generally and to leave teachers the freedom to choose. However, completely opposite assumptions were made by the authors of the most recent core curriculum for a four-year general high school, published in 2018 and modified in 2020. This document contains specific cultural topics and a defined canon of texts, which was a response to the demands of the teaching community, since the lack of detailed guidelines had previously made it difficult to prepare pupils for the matriculation exam. From the school year 2019/20, this new core curriculum is being implemented. In the field of ancient culture, it includes content on Greek and Roman mythology, the history of Ancient Greece and Rome, the history of Greek and Roman literature, ancient philosophy, material culture in antiquity, the public and private life of the Greeks and Romans, ancient traditions, and classical reception. The canon of texts includes excerpts from Cicero's works (*De amicitia*, *De senectute*, *In Verrem*, *In Catilinam*, *Pro Archia poeta*, selected letters, *Disputationes Tusculanae*), Caesar (*Commentarii de bello Gallico*, *Commentari de bello civili*), Cornelius Nepos (*De viris illustribus*), Livy (*Ab urbe condita*, Book 1), Hyginus (*Fabulae*), and Seneca (*Epistulae morales ad Lucillum*).

The latest core curriculum clearly and very precisely defines the scope of language and cultural material. Thus, all the didactic materials and examination requirements must be consistent with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education. Certain topics from Greek and Roman mythology are included in the programme:

- myths about the creation of the world;
- myths about the Olympian gods and other deities from the Greek pantheon;
- myths about the main heroes (Prometheus, Heracles, Theseus, Jason and the Argonauts);
- myths about the Trojan War and the heroes returning from Troy;
- aetiological myths explaining the emergence of phenomena;
- the relationship between Greek and Roman mythology;
- myths about the journey of Aeneas;
- myths and legends about the creation of Rome.

Moreover, during the course of Latin language, students will become acquainted with information about the worship of gods (temples, offerings, oracles, prophecies), mythological literature (poems of Homer, selected

tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Livy's *Ab urbe condita*), ancient architecture, painting, and sculpture.

In the latest curriculum, ancient culture plays an essential role, and, in principle, the teaching of language is subordinated to cultural content. Latin is to be a tool for understanding ancient culture, especially its literature in the original. The guidelines contain a consistent programme of teaching culture, in which one of the main areas is mythology, which is considered to be an element common to literature and other fields of art. Therefore, it is the key to reading the universal meaning and values of the Graeco-Roman ancient heritage.

The 2020 core curriculum for teaching Latin Language and Ancient Culture at the basic level, which can be implemented at post-elementary schools starting in the school year 2020/21,³⁸ also includes extensive material on ancient culture and its reception. Among the cultural issues, there also figure themes related to mythology; authors of the core curriculum define mythology as a "code to understand meanings since antiquity up to contemporary popular culture",³⁹ strongly emphasizing the need to highlight and make students aware of the presence of mythological motifs in contemporary culture, including popular culture. As examples, in the core curriculum, figure: the Trojan cycle, myths about Heracles, Dionysus, Apollo, as well as the Ovidian metamorphoses. The section about Rome and its importance, as the political, cultural, and spiritual capital of the Western world, also contains mythological elements. In this context, students should first learn myths dealing with the foundation and origins of Rome. The creators of the curriculum assumed that the subject labelled "Latin Language and Ancient Culture", taught in correlation with other humanities (especially Polish language and history), should mainly provide an opportunity to show students the influence of Latin and the Graeco-Roman culture on languages and the culture of later centuries. This is the reason why a broad range of cultural themes was proposed, also including elements of mythology.

³⁸ As an elective subject (to be chosen from a group comprising also Music, Arts, and Philosophy).

³⁹ Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 24 czerwca 2020 r. zmieniające rozporządzenie w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, technikum oraz branżowej szkoły drugiego stopnia [Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 24 June 2020 Modifying the Regulation on the Core Curriculum for General Education at Generalist High Schools, Technical High Schools, and Trade Schools of the 2nd Level], Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], 2020, item 1248.

4.6. *Mythology* by Jan Parandowski as a Basic Textbook of Mythology in Polish Schools

Parandowski's *Mythology*⁴⁰ holds a position which no one can ignore while analysing the process of teaching mythology in the Polish school. The book, whose first edition was published in 1924, has become a permanent part of the canon of obligatory readings in Polish language and literature classes, and in principle is the main source of Polish students' knowledge on Greek and Roman mythology. The author avoided morally controversial topics or used very euphemistic language, thanks to which *Mythology* did not arouse opposition from the educational authorities and could be used as school reading.

The work is divided into two parts. The first part covers preliminary information on mythology and beliefs of the Greeks, and the myths associated with the creation of the world, the residents of Olympus (Zeus, Hera, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Hermes, Hephaestus, Aphrodite, Eros, the Charites, Ares), the gods of light and air (Helios, Eos, Selene, Iris, constellations and celestial bodies, winds), gods of the earth, sea, and the afterlife (Hestia, Demeter, Dionysus, Pan, Satyr, nymphs, Asclepius, Poseidon, Hades), gods of fate and human affairs (Eirene, Hymen, Hypnos, the Moirai, Nemesis, Nike, Thanatos, Themis, Tyche), heroes (Heracles, Theseus, Tantalus, Oedipus, Sisyphus, the Dioscuri, Minos, Daedalus, Argonauts), and the history of the Trojan War (siege and fall of the city, the return of the heroes, Odysseus' wanderings). Next to the Greek names, their Latin counterparts are listed, through which the author draws attention to the mythological Roman and Greek relationships. The second part, in turn, includes the following topics: general information on the peculiarities and the nature of the religion of Rome, the cult of the dead and household deities, major gods (Janus, Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Mars), deities of land, fields, forests, and springs, personifications, the influx of foreign religions to Rome, the cult of the Caesars, and Roman legends (the journey of Aeneas, the rise of Rome).

Mythology by Parandowski is, of course, not the only Polish-language publication of such range,⁴¹ but others, though very interesting and compe-

⁴⁰ Jan Parandowski (1895–1978) – Polish writer, essayist, and translator of literature. An expert in ancient culture, as well as its promoter, he was the author of numerous publications on mythology and translations of ancient literature into Polish. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature twice (in 1957 and 1959).

⁴¹ See, e.g., Wanda Markowska, *Mity Greków i Rzymian* [Myths of the Greeks and Romans], Warszawa: Iskry, 1987; Zygmunt Kubiak, *Mitologia Greków i Rzymian* [Mythology of the Greeks and

tently prepared, were never included in the high school canon of reading and thus did not play a significant role in school teaching. Thereby, Parandowski's work remains the main source of teaching Greek and Roman mythology to Polish high school students.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of educational acts of law, programmes, and curricula, as well as the most important textbooks used in Latin language and culture teaching after 1945, makes it clear that mythology was a constant element in classical teaching in Poland. The scope and the details of subjects covered in the course of the teaching process were modified together with successive reforms of Polish education. In addition, the place and importance of mythology in the general high school education programme changed along with the progressive marginalization of Latin as a school subject and due to changes in the perception of the role and vision of classical education.

In the first years after the war, emphasis was mainly placed on the ideological and propaganda reinterpretation of myths. The teaching of Latin, as was the case with all education at the time, was subordinate to political goals and the creation of the new communist identity of the country. Hence, such a strong and unequivocal severance of the traditions of the pre-war school led to the construction of a new model of education in the humanities, in which there was no a place for Latin language and ancient culture. The Polish schools in the 1940s and 1950s were steeped in communist ideology. Educational authorities controlled all of the curricula, Latin language and culture included. Ancient culture was only seen as an adjunct to linguistic teaching and was minimally taught, mainly covering historical and military themes. Few mythological topics were chosen, and only those to which educational values were attributed and that could be interpreted in accordance with current ideology.

Along with changes in the educational programmes of the early 1960s, the communist ideology was gradually limited in Latin language teaching in favour of emphasizing connections between Polish culture and Graeco-Roman

Romans], Warszawa: Świat Książki, 1997; Katarzyna Marciniak, *Mitologia grecka i rzymska. Spotkania ponad czasem* [Greek and Roman Mythology: Meetings beyond Time], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2018 (ed. pr. 2011).

antiquity. Subjects of ancient culture began to play an increasingly important role in classical education defined in this way. Although mythological content was still not taught extensively in high schools, the rules of selecting stories changed, as ideological interpretation gave way to scientific objectivity. Thus, programmes and textbooks contained those mythological tales which were thought to be important in order to aid students' comprehension of ancient literature and art, and which were present as motifs in the culture of later epochs. Then, the scope of the programmes and manuals from the early 1980s was completely revolutionary, as it varied and was adapted to different profiles, included extended content, and, above all, for the first time in the post-war school, systematized information on Graeco-Roman mythology.

One of the phenomena of Polish education is the smooth transition of classical studies programmes despite the political-system changes of 1989, and their implementation in schools until the end of the 1990s. This was possible since the programmes developed from 1981 onwards were not marked by ideology and did not contain communist propaganda, but included content that gave an objective picture of the ancient world. Interestingly, changes in the political system and the democratization of public life and Polish schools did not contribute in any way to an improvement in the situation of classical education. In fact, quite the opposite: from 1989 further marginalization of classical education was observed, and the process is visible also today. However, the model of teaching was in constant flux. Gradually linguistic content was limited in favour of topics of classical culture; the new and expanded name for the subject, Latin Language and Ancient Culture, is the best evidence that the cultural content has been recognized as an equivalent element in the educational programme.

The analysis of changes taking place in teaching Latin in Poland leads to a conclusion that together with the successive educational reforms, the situation of traditional classical education worsened. At the same time, the teaching of ancient culture has gained more and more importance, and along with those changes, the scope of mythological issues has increased in significance, as opposed to the propaedeutic function previously attributed to the teaching of Greek and Roman myths. Mythology, in fact, was perceived as a common element in various fields of ancient culture and the key to a correct reading of its meanings, thanks to which mythological themes were present in all programmes of classical studies after 1945.

MACTE ANIMO! – OR, THE POLISH EXPERIMENT WITH “CLASSICS PROFILES” IN SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION: THE WARSAW EXAMPLE

After World War Two, Poland, separated from the West by the Iron Curtain, had at its disposal a powerful tool in the fight for preserving links to the free world – namely, ancient tradition. The Classics, widely read in European schools throughout the ages, had established a common spiritual heritage upon which the Polish intelligentsia could draw to maintain ties with the West. Thus, no slogans similar to *À bas le latin!* were heard from rioters in Poland.¹ On the contrary, Latin (also associated with the language of the Catholic Church, then one of the centres of opposition) and ancient culture were perceived here as a vital connection with the Mediterranean community in the realm of the spirit – beyond geographical and political borders. The intelligentsia also cherished the ancient tradition in the belief that it helped defend their identity from the attempts to create captive minds.

High School No. XI in Warsaw,² bearing the Latin motto *Macte animo!* (see Figs. 1 and 2) and the name of Mikołaj Rej – the sixteenth-century poet and writer – has long been a place of special significance for Classical Antiquity in Polish education. Founded in 1905 by the Protestant clergyman Julian Machlejd (1866–1936) as an institution of the Lutheran Church (Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession), the school quickly became famous for encouraging freedom of thought and religious tolerance. To this day, to meet a pastor, both a Catholic and an Orthodox priest, and

¹ This slogan, coined in 1933 by Régis Messac, returned to the barricades in France during the cultural revolution of the 1960s. See, e.g., Françoise Waquet, *Latin, or, the Empire of a Sign: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, trans. John Howe, London and New York, NY: Verso, 2001 (ed. pr. in French 1998) 339, and Alain Bosquet, “A bas le latin”, *Combat*, 9 October 1968, 1.

² In Poland, schools are referred to by their number, assigned to them by the local authorities and in the case of secondary education institutions expressed in Roman numerals.

a rabbi together taking part in school festivities is nothing extraordinary at Mikołaj Rej High School.

In 1970, the first class of a humanistic profile was established at Rej (transformed into a state institution shortly after World War Two, in 1952). In 1982, in turn, the school opened a class with the "Classics profile".³ This was an educational experiment undertaken by only a few high schools across the country, and one that to many seemed impossible in that time of communist censorship and ideological pressure in many respects. In the present chapter we take a look at the Warsaw example of the Classics profile – how it came into being, how its curriculum was shaped over the decades, and how it changed after 1989 – as a testimony to the joint mission of teachers and researchers of antiquity to provide young people with an education that would help them become adults with critical minds, aware of their choices. We will also examine which elements of that experiment continue on to the present day.

Ours is an unusual look, for it originates from the differing perspectives of the two authors of this chapter: that of a teacher (Barbara Strycharczyk) engaged in the school reforms, who shaped and taught Rej's Classics classes for thirty years (1982–2012), and her student (Katarzyna Marciniak), a graduate of that profile in the late 1990s, who today, as a scholar at the University of Warsaw, researches the reception of Classical Antiquity with a special focus on youth culture. Our analyses are complemented by an interlude – a commentary by the author of the concept of the Classics profile at Rej, the Headmaster of this school in the difficult 1970s and 1980s, Prof. Witold Kaliński.

³ This profile included obligatory courses in Latin, Greek, and Ancient Culture, along with special tailoring of other courses in order to highlight the presence of the classical tradition, and with an interdisciplinary approach being maintained throughout – this concerned such subjects as maths, physics, and modern languages (Polish, French, and English were all compulsory). An absolute novelty for the 1990s, an IT course, including the basics of programming, was also obligatory in the aim of providing students with a broad education. For the history of this profile, see section 1.2. "The Origins and Development of the Classics Profile". For similar profiles in other schools see the chapter by Janusz Ryba ("Greek and Roman Mythology in Classical Education in Poland after 1945") in the present volume, 209–236.



Figure 1: The inscription *Macte animo* on the Mikolaj Rej High School No. XI building in Warsaw (detail, adapted). Fragment of a photograph by Adrian Grycuk, Wikimedia Commons.

Barbara Strycharczyk

I. On the Benefits of Writing on Walls; or, A Brief History of the Classics Class at Mikolaj Rej High School No. XI in Warsaw

The history of Latin teaching at Rej High School in Warsaw needs to start with an explanation of the benefits of writing on walls. Although this may raise eyebrows, since I am supposed to be presenting classical education at school, I think some information on how old and widespread such writing is could be important for what follows.

I.1. In the Beginning There Were Words...

If we look closer at writing on walls as a trend, we can notice it almost everywhere, to mention only the Temple of Apollo at Delphi (for example, γνῶθι σεαυτόν – “Know thyself!”), the University of Oxford (*Dominus illuminatio mea* – “The Lord is my light” from Psalm 27), and the Jagiellonian University

in Kraków (*Plus ratio quam vis* – “Reason rather than force”).⁴ The sources of the quotations are the three great pillars of our culture: the Greek tradition, the Roman tradition, and the Bible. The language of these strange graffiti from the modern age is Latin. Couldn’t these sentences and adages, which can be hard to remember, have been written in the native vernacular everyone understands? It seems, though, that since these are quotations from our cultural depository, this is precisely the reason they were written down and passed on in a language that protects this depository from variability. The living languages we use in everyday communication are subject to change. Thus, the irreplaceability of Latin is connected with its timeless character. It helps pass on and understand all that is lasting, fundamental, and constant – values and rules of conduct. Writing on walls in Latin thus has a centuries-long, rich tradition. Invoking that tradition, at a time when almost every school had its Latin motto, over a hundred years ago the inscription *Macte animo* was placed over the entrance to the school named after Mikołaj Rej. In spite of appearances, a simple translation is not enough to fully understand these words. It is also important to know the hidden meaning linked to the context from which they were taken. Thus, reading this motto, we are discovering what is essentially the axiological foundation of the school and the starting point for its educational vision – all deeply rooted in classical mythology.

The words *Macte animo* – most often translated as “Be bold!” or “Do not waver!” – come from Statius’ epic poem the *Thebaid*. The poet quite often uses the expression *Macte animo* throughout the text – especially when his fighting protagonists – two sons of King Oedipus: Polynices and Eteocles – grow weaker and lose heart. As if wanting to shake them out of their torpor, encourage them, and rouse them to fight, Statius calls: “Go ahead! Be bold! Don’t waver! Come on!” In one book he even cries: “*Macte animo iuvenis! Medios parat ire per enses / nudaque pro caris opponere pectora muris*” (*Theb.* 7.280–281) – “Bravo, young man! He means to go through the midst of swords and protect the walls he loves with his bare chest”.⁵ Today it is actually hard to believe that this – encouragement to fight – could have been

⁴ This adage was long erroneously attributed to the elegiac poet Cornelius Gallus, see Anna Maria Wasyl, “Plus ratio quam vis’. Od mimochodem rzuconej sentencji do dewizy uniwersyteckiej” [“Plus ratio quam vis”, or, The Career of a Sentence], *Terminus* 15.1 (2013), 15–34, <https://doi.org/10.4467/20843844TE.13.001.1048> (all the links quoted in this chapter were accessible as of 8 September 2019, unless stated otherwise).

⁵ Trans. by D.R. Shackleton Bailey, from his edition of Statius, *Volume I: Thebaid. Books 1–7*, Loeb Classical Library 207, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004, 419–421.

the only message of *Macte animo* – despite the circumstances in which our school was founded and the first years of its operation at a time when Poland as a country had not existed on the map of the world for over a century.⁶ Therefore, in order to extract the full meaning of our motto, we need to go back to the model on which Statius based his poem.

The motto *Macte virtute! Macte animo!* – understood to mean “Be daring! Go boldly! Be positive!” – was popular as far back as Cato the Elder’s time. Again, however, the mythological context is important here, and it is not connected to some minor theme but one that was of the utmost importance to the Romans, as it was linked to the origin myth of Imperium Romanum. Praising the valour (*virtus*) of Aeneas and then his son, Iulus, Virgil in the *Aeneid* has Apollo use the words: “*Macte nova virtute, puer, sic itur ad astra*” (*Aen.* 9.641) – “Be valiant, my son, that is the way to the stars”. These words, also thanks to the popularity and significance of the *Aeneid* in Rome, were quoted so often that they turned into a saying repeated in abbreviated form as *Macte virtute!* or *Macte animo!*, or as a longer sentence: “*Mact(e) animo, generose puer, sic itur ad astra*”.⁷ No wonder Statius, invoking tradition, refers so often to valour, which the Romans considered one of the main civic virtues. However, even with this we have not reached the end of our adventure with the motto *Macte animo!*

Let’s go back to the *Aeneid* and take a closer look at Aeneas. The gods put this man – soldier, husband, and father – in a tough and unenviable situation. He is supposed to drop everything and, with a group of others like him, desperados who survived the burning of their city, set off on an indeterminate journey because he has been chosen to search for a place for his new homeland. Worse still, the benefits of this find will only be felt by future generations, sometime in the indeterminate future. Of course, we immediately think such a story is pure fiction and will never happen to any of us, yet in fact the myth of Aeneas portrays human struggles with daily

⁶ Poland lost its independence in the years 1772–1795, as a result of partitions carried out in stages. Its territory was divided among three powers: Russia, Austria, and Prussia. Warsaw ended up in the Russian partition. Poland regained its independence in 1918. On Mikołaj Rej High School’s history after World War Two, in the times of Stalinism, see Krzysztof Jan Wojciechowski, *Liceum imienia Mikołaja Reja w Warszawie 1950–1955 (apogeum stalinizacji) widziane z Cafe Gruz* [Mikołaj Rej High School in Warsaw 1950–1955 (the Height of Stalinization) Seen from Cafe Gruz], Pruszków: Wydawnictwo M.M., 2006.

⁷ See, e.g., Voltaire, *Recueil des lettres 1775–1778*, in his *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 63, [n.p.]: De l’Imprimerie Société Littéraire-Typographique, 1785, 44 (“Lettre XXV, à M. de la Harpe”, 31 March 1775).

life.⁸ Hardship, fatigue, discouragement, fear, anger – these are weaknesses we have to keep overcoming on the way to our goals.

The founders of Rej High School knew well that each and every one of us leaving school and crossing the threshold of adulthood would face the same obstacles that both Aeneas and his son, Iulus, and the heroes of the *Thebaid* struggled with in mythological tales. That is why, just like them, we need support and encouragement to fight our own limitations. The heroes of Roman poems acting in accordance with the encouraging call *Macte animo!* are valiant because they have persevered in fulfilling whatever they consider to be their duty. And because they are valiant, they can also judge the circumstances accurately and fulfil their tasks prudently and patiently in order to see the best fruits of their bravery. And this is the meaning of the inscription above the school entrance. According to the message of the words *Macte animo* and the intention behind its placement over the entrance, we are all heroes of a mythical story who need constant encouragement to overcome obstacles every day.

Since 1905, when the school was founded, its teachers and students have often served as examples of bravery and perseverance. First under Russian rule, then after Warsaw was seized by the Germans in 1915, and later during World War One. Very soon after the school opened and in its first years, many young Rej High School alumni testified to Statius' call from the *Thebaid*. On 1 September 1939, when another – thirty-fourth – school year was due to start at Rej High School, the entire school community was busy preparing for war. Today plaques on the school's walls commemorate those students and teachers who in 1915–1918 and 1939–1945 showed determination and dedication in fulfilling the saying inscribed over the entrance.

⁸ See also Bob Dylan's remarks on a similar aspect of the *Odyssey* in his lecture upon receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature ("Nobel Lecture", The Nobel Prize, 5 June 2017, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2016/dylan/lecture/>): "*The Odyssey* is a strange, adventurous tale of a grown man trying to get home after fighting in a war. He's on that long journey home, and it's filled with traps and pitfalls. [...] In a lot of ways, some of these same things have happened to you. You too have had drugs dropped into your wine. You too have shared a bed with the wrong woman. You too have been spellbound by magical voices, sweet voices with strange melodies. You too have come so far and have been so far blown back. And you've had close calls as well. You have angered people you should not have. And you too have rambled this country all around. And you've also felt that ill wind, the one that blows you no good. And that's still not all of it".

I.2. The Origins and Development of the Classics Profile

The classical languages – Greek and Latin – played an important role in the canon of school subjects. They were taught by outstanding teachers, who were later often fondly remembered by former students and who are commemorated in the School Tradition Room. One of the most famous of them was philosopher and ethicist Prof. Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1886–1981). After studying at the Jagiellonian University, in Darmstadt, and in Lviv (Philosophy and Classical Philology), in 1912 he started working as a teacher of classical languages at Rej High School. In those days, school teaching experience was valuable in that it prepared future professors for research and teaching in the academic community. Prof. Kotarbiński worked at Rej until 1918, when he became a lecturer and later an Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Warsaw.

After World War Two, as work continued on rebuilding the school, teaching began in temporary premises. Latin was taught at Rej High School from 1947 until the Classics profile was established in 1982 on the basis of official ministerial curricula.

The year 1982 is an important date; one might call it the close of the twentieth century, abundant in important and difficult events in Poland and in Warsaw (martial law in 1981–1983 and the start of political system change). At Rej High School, a Classics class was launched in the 1982/83 school year. Expanding the curriculum to incorporate more humanities content was partly the effect of the tradition at the school, which from the moment of its founding in 1905 had been famous as a humanities high school. On the other hand, it was an attempt to supplement the traditional curriculum of a general high school with knowledge that could facilitate deeper ties with European heritage. The return to the tradition of a wider humanities education at Rej High School was initiated by Headmaster Witold Kaliński – a Polish studies teacher with an excellent grasp of the school’s role in preparing the young generation to read, understand, and inherit the cultural depository. The first major step was to invoke an old school tradition and revive the Rej Middle and High School Alumni Club, followed by the start of work on organizing the School Tradition Room, and then another reference to the pre-war tradition of a humanities school: opening a Classics class. Looking back now, this profile’s history can be divided into three stages:

- Stage I: 1982–1989 – working with the nationwide Polish curriculum for teaching Latin and Greek;

- Stage II: 1990–2000 – following a newly developed, original curriculum;
- Stage III: from 2002 – beginning of enrolment for the Classics class in the three-year high school – up to the school year 2018/19.⁹

When I look back today at the earliest stage, I think the decision to “introduce Classics” at Rej High School was a sign of extraordinary courage. Remember what those times were like? *O tempora, o mores!* There were no computers, no Internet, and although photocopiers existed, they were a luxury item. Original Latin texts and textbooks? Well... you could import a copy of Caesar’s *Gallic War* or Horace’s *Odes* from London at 25 pounds apiece (an astronomical amount of money for Poland back then, when the average monthly salary was about 20 US dollars), and only if you knew someone who could buy it over there and bring it over here. A university textbook teaching Greek, *Wstępna nauka języka greckiego* [Preliminary Study of the Greek Language, ed. pr. 1926] by Marian Goliás (1887–1966), available on the Polish market and published mainly for students of university courses in classical philology and philosophy, was the only textbook our students could use. We also used pre-war Latin textbooks for humanistic classes, and we copied – on typewriters or by hand – long excerpts from textbooks found in our school library and the Latin classroom.

You could say that all the students in the Classics class and their teachers, under Headmaster Kaliński’s leadership, operated like a special task force which had to overcome many a barrier together. Gradually, years of work and experience enabled Rej High School to elaborate a humanities education that worked specifically for this school. We developed our own curricula for teaching the classical languages as an important element of education in the new general high school. We started a collaboration with the Department (later: Institute) of Classical Philology at the University of Warsaw and with the Polish Philological Association.¹⁰ Rej High School teachers working together with University teachers developed a core curriculum according to which a special role in the curriculum framework and the curriculum itself, besides Latin and Greek, was assigned to Polish, history, foreign languages (French and English), and mathematics.

⁹ After the latest reform, the 2019/20 year brought back the four-year high school – time will tell how the final official core curriculum for Latin and Ancient Culture will develop. On the changes in the structure of Polish education over the past seventy-five years, see Janusz Ryba’s chapter (“Greek and Roman Mythology in Classical Education in Poland after 1945”) in the present volume, 209–236.

¹⁰ For more about the Polish Philological Association and consecutive stages of the reform, again see the chapter by Janusz Ryba.

Therefore, we can say that 1990 marked the start of a new, second stage in the history of the Classics profile. We were becoming increasingly professional: we started sharing the experience we gained at Rej High School with other schools and even educational institutions. Our teachers of the classical languages were invited to work on a new core curriculum and to develop the concept of a new school-leaving exam (*matura*). After ten years of experience and having introduced original curricula, we knew there was nothing that teaching Latin at school needed more than new teaching methods and a broad cultural context. The school was getting more and more University teachers to teach classes in which they referred to ancient history and culture. It also should be added that the moment of moving from the first to the second stage of the Classics class’s development was crowned with the successes of our students, who were prize-winners and finalists of national-level Latin-language school competitions. In 1991, fourth-year Classics class student Marcin Morawski won the third prize and a bronze medal at the *Certamen Ciceronianum* – international Latin competition in Italy, in Arpinum – Cicero’s home town. In the course of twenty-five years,¹¹ among Rej High School’s 141 national school competition prize-winners and finalists, 72 were prize-winners and finalists of the Latin-language competition. This was made possible by the relentless hard work and enthusiasm of the students, but also thanks to support from the teachers: Alicja Zielińska, Dariusz Zawistowski, Agnieszka Jasińska, Bożena Lesiuk, Anna Wojciechowska, as well as class tutors and school headmasters. I remember times when four Latin teachers worked at Rej High School and additionally University teachers came in once a week for two hours, including the most distinguished professors, such as Jerzy Axer, Oktawiusz Jurewicz, and Anna Świderkówna. Our students and alumni confirm that an education in Classics has played an enormous role in their lives and careers. Here are a few examples:¹²

I am a graduate of the Faculty of Painting at Warsaw’s Academy of Fine Arts. My graduation project *Et in Arcadia Ego*, inspired by ancient mythology and literature, won me the Dean’s Distinction. After graduation I went to Italy for three years on a scholarship from the Italian government. I graduated with honours from a course on Byzantine mosaic at the Academy in Ravenna (Italy); for producing the best graduation project, I received

¹¹ The period here refers to the Classics profile before its transformation into the “Polish studies-Classics class”.

¹² Input collected for the school’s website (now archived).

a six-month scholarship to Saint Petersburg. I can assure everyone with absolute certainty that being in the Classics class at school shaped me intellectually and enabled me to experience Herbert's "power of taste",¹³ and from a practical viewpoint, it gave me a tool for learning foreign languages. (Matylda Tracewska, graduated in 1997)

Learning Latin and understanding and translating texts by Roman authors was above all a way of communicating with people from antiquity. It was exactly this ability to communicate with people I've never met and never will meet that became the foundation of my current work. My job is to develop e-learning training courses, and every day I do my best to put myself in the situation of course participants so as to design the optimal training adapted to their individual needs. Thus, imagination is a key skill in my work, but I equally need logical thinking, attention to detail, and the ability to simultaneously see individual elements and the end result. Latin taught me all that. (Marta Kozak, graduated in 2000)

I have gone quite a long way away from Latin – although it is invaluable when you're learning Roman law. However, learning in the Classics class above all gave me a language background and the ability to build statements precisely, skills that are priceless in further learning and work. The girls and boys from my class chose all kinds of different university courses, but all of us received a good foundation for further studies from being in the Classics class. (Tomasz Pietrzak, graduated in 2009)

Thus, it appears that a classical education which encompasses not just language but also culture is still an irreplaceable tool that helps us understand the reality around us, enables us to move around the world of signs as if it were a familiar place, opens the door to knowledge about the past, the present, and the future, but, above all, it makes it easier to understand our own identity, which is especially important in periods of rapid social and cultural transformations, such as the times after 1989 in Poland.

At this point I would like to share a personal thought. When I started working at Rej High School in 1982, I had just defended my MA thesis at the Department of Classical Philology, but of course had no experience or even

¹³ A reference to the work of the great Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert (1924–1998), famous for his dialogue with classical mythology; see also the second part of the present chapter by Katarzyna Marciniak, "Why the Classics? – or, On the Use of Classical Mythology in Education and the Side Effects Thereof". It is worth observing that the author of this reference to Herbert, Rej's graduate Matylda Tracewska, is also the artist who painted the symbol for the *Our Mythical Childhood* programme (see Fig. 5).

any idea not only of what working in a Classics class would be like, but even what we were seeking to achieve. I can say quite honestly that working at Rej High School shaped me as much as it did the students – we “boldly jumped over obstacles” together and obtained knowledge together, including the knowledge that we still had a lot to learn.

The year 2002 saw changes in how the Classics class functioned, a consequence of broader curriculum changes in Polish education after middle schools and three-year general high schools were introduced. From the classical languages, only Latin and Ancient Culture – as one subject – were left in the obligatory curriculum framework. But the curriculum changes that affected high schools¹⁴ and unquestionably caused the range of specialist subject teaching to be limited, did not restrict our inventiveness in any fundamental way. You could say that in this skirmish we had to give up Greek, but we seized Rome. A new idea for the Classics class appeared: a study trip to Rome, conceived of as a week-long expedition to the Eternal City, invoking the tradition of the nineteenth-century Grand Tour – a mandatory trip for any educated, young person to supplement their theoretical knowledge by experiencing and seeing sites of culture. During daily walks, Rome became a school lab in which we looked carefully at everything the past had left behind. Until then, we had learned about the past from maps, texts, stories, films, and sources available to us at school. Now we looked for Ancient Rome in the heart of a noisy, tourist-filled city. You could say our expedition consisted in tracking down Rome in Rome. It was and still is a fantastic adventure.

The next original element incorporated into the Classics class’s curriculum at this third stage was a school course in rhetoric, concluding with an oratory display in the White Room of Wilanów Palace – a building with plenty of references to mythology, and especially to the myth of Hercules, with whom King John III Sobieski (1629–1696), Wilanów’s founder, identified. The art of speech is a rare skill, although – especially today – a very useful one. It would be hard, however, to find rhetoric in the education canon

¹⁴ The reformation of the educational system in Poland in 1999 not only introduced middle schools (*gimnazja*), but also affected the high schools (*licea*), which from then on covered three, not four years. This, in turn, resulted in changes in the core curricula, including the status of Latin, henceforth to be taught only in high school. In 2019/20 the latest change in the Polish school system was pushed through, following the reform of 2018/19 (i.e. the elimination of middle schools and a return to four-year high schools), yet the implementation of this reform has proven complicated to say the least, and it is too early to sum up its effects (see above, n. 9).

in Poland. That is why at our school hours spent on translating Latin texts, identifying grammatical structures and figures of speech, and analysing historical and cultural realities also enabled us to develop oratory skills that we decided to proudly show off, to demonstrate that by practising rhetoric we learn to organize our thoughts and statements but also to overcome fear and insecurity.¹⁵

1.3. The Classics as the Key to Interdisciplinary *artes liberales* Teaching

Today I look from the perspective of 2019 at what we managed to achieve at Rej High School in terms of education in Classics and the humanities; I hope we have not fallen short of the school founders' expectations and, as far as capabilities and circumstances allowed, we were faithful to the motto *Macte animo!* This was made possible by the teachers who set up and later revived the Classics class, who wrote the curricula, oversaw their implementation, and shared their experience. Each of them contributed something valuable, and the whole venture was based on an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach.¹⁶ Moreover, the academic contacts flourished. Work on the Latin and Greek curricula was overseen by Dr Jerzy Mańkowski from the Institute of Classical Philology at the University of Warsaw in association with Rej High School's teachers. With time, new Latin teachers joined the group.¹⁷

All of the teachers of the classical languages, regardless of their experience and length of service at Rej High School, have contributed to the

¹⁵ There is no such subject as classical studies in Poland, nor is there a syllabus in this field that would specify the relevant requirements in detail. There is, however, a core curriculum for the subject Latin Language and Ancient Culture. It defines the content of the subject, which, apart from Latin, also includes mythology, elements of ancient history, rhetoric, ancient art, and ancient philosophy. The solutions at Rej High School were experimental (e.g., we paid attention to teaching writing skills and practising oratory presentations). For the mythological component of Rej's courses in particular, see the next section of the present chapter: "Why the Classics? – or, On the Use of Classical Mythology in Education and the Side Effects Thereof" by Katarzyna Marciniak.

¹⁶ I wish to mention especially Julia Tazbir – history teacher and author of the history curriculum; Tomasz Kowalczyk – Polish studies teacher and author of the Polish studies curriculum; Alicja Zielińska – Latin and Greek teacher in the Classics classes; Antonina Ponder – maths teacher and author of the maths curriculum. I was in charge of the Greek and Latin curriculum.

¹⁷ The aforementioned: Bożena Lesiuk, Dariusz Zawistowski, Agnieszka Jasińska, Anna Wojciechowska.

Classics class’s development, which has included original curricula for teaching the classical languages, the curriculum of the introductory subject Mediterranean Culture, which was taught by Latin teachers in classes with a maths-science and biology-chemistry profile, sharing experiences and proposing new solutions for education in the humanities on a nationwide scale, establishing collaborations with the academic community, the programme for the study trips to Rome, the annual rhetorical contests at Wilanów, the students’ successes in national competitions, and, currently, participation in international projects connected with Classical Antiquity as part of the *Our Mythical Childhood* programme.

I think I can take the liberty of making a bold comparison here. If I remember rightly, in 2012 at the University of Warsaw, the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” at the initiative of Prof. Jerzy Axer was set up – a special humanities centre for interdisciplinary research, with a curriculum referring extensively to the Greek and Roman tradition, originating from the Centre for Studies on the Classical Tradition (OBTA).¹⁸ I am convinced that from the very inception of the Classics class at Rej High School, the curriculum taught there was compatible with the concept of *artes liberales*. In fact, since 2016 the Faculty has been exercising patronage over the Classics class, which today is called the “Polish studies-Classics class”.

It is easier to understand these ties when we take a wider look at the general obligatory model of education – with only a limited amount of knowledge, sufficient to get through consecutive stages of education all the way to training for some profession or other. This is the knowledge described in the core curriculum, its amount being measurable according to certain rules. Measurements and ranking lists show what stage of curriculum implementation we have achieved, which in fact allows us to stop at the “minimum”. Liberal education enables us to look more broadly – it proposes education through problem-solving, refers to original texts and not just abridged versions and extracts, underlines the role and support of teachers, who have their own educational ideas for their students and the ability to modify schemas and propose their own original solutions. This is what we might call “first-hand education”. In this model, “education in culture” is extremely important. If you wanted to elaborate on this idea, you could

¹⁸ See Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Antiquity and We*, Warsaw: Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw, 2013, also available online: http://al.uw.edu.pl/pliki/akt/Antiquity_and_We_eBook.pdf.

say that school students obtaining knowledge according to the principles of *artes liberales* learn mathematics, for example, not only to pass their school-leaving exam or calculate their taxes, but perhaps above all – to read Plato.¹⁹ Interdisciplinary and parallel reading of works from different areas of the arts – literature, for instance, the medieval Latin text *Requiem* by Thomas of Celano; music, for example, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's great funeral mass *Requiem in D Minor*; painting, for instance, *The Last Judgment* by Hans Memling – becomes an incredible adventure for students and teachers alike, also thanks to Latin and knowledge of mythology. There are many educational situations in which teachers from different disciplines, thanks to the collaboration and support of teachers of the classical languages, can help students discover completely new and unknown realms.

* * *

After thirty years of working at Rej High School, I decided to share the experience I had gained there with another school and another group of teachers. In 2011, the *Sternik* Education and Family Support Association, invoking an education model popular in English-speaking countries and Spain, founded the "Strumienie" High School for girls in Józefów near Warsaw. I was invited to take part in developing the concept for the curriculum, especially in developing an original humanities curriculum. In a group composed of teachers of Polish, history, cultural studies, and Latin (working with Rej High School teacher Anna Wojciechowska, with whom I collaborate on a regular basis, also in the *Our Mythical Childhood* programme), we designed a curricular block called Culture and Tradition, which combines the curricula of three subjects – Polish studies, cultural studies, and Latin – into one whole. The main emphasis here is on considering phenomena of Polish and European culture in conjunction with Mediterranean tradition and culture. In the process of instruction and education at the *Sternik* schools, special importance is given to a return to sources. In our Culture and Tradition

¹⁹ According to Plato, it was important to learn mathematics, which was helpful in achieving a higher level of knowledge and understanding of the world of ideas. At his Academy, mathematics (especially geometry) was also considered a field that helped in acquiring virtues and shaping character. There was an inscription at the entrance to the Academy: ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδεὶς εἰσίτω – "May no one untrained in geometry enter". See also below, section 2.1. "Telemachus' Crew", by Katarzyna Marciniak. Cf. M.F. Burnyeat, "Plato on Why Mathematics Is Good for the Soul", in Timothy Smiley, ed., *Mathematics and Necessity: Essays in the History of Philosophy*, Proceedings of the British Academy 103, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 1–81, <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/pubs/proc/files/103p001.pdf>.

curricular block, the Latin curriculum *Ad fontes* answers the question about the purpose of and need for keeping content related to Graeco-Roman antiquity a part of school curricula. We believe this is still an essential and irreplaceable tool for reading and understanding the recorded depository of European culture. And it is this content that is slowly disappearing from the core curriculum of general education at public schools.

At this point it seems important to underline that in Poland up to the end of the eighteenth century, Latin was the Poles' second national language, a fact that has had a major impact on the unique character of our national heritage. Therefore, in order to be not only well educated but also to responsibly take care of European and especially Polish heritage, you need to know Latin. And wherever Latin is still appreciated as a tool that teaches thinking, good speaking, and writing, people believe that if someone has completed a Latin course and successfully translated original Latin texts, they can be trusted with a responsible job.²⁰ And things being as they are – *quae cum ita sint* – as Cicero would probably say, since passing on shared heritage and taking care to preserve it is hard and often thankless work, it requires proper preparation all the more. It appears that schools have and will continue to have an important and responsible role to play in this.

Today, in the face of another change in Polish education, the question arises about what will happen to Latin and Ancient Culture at school, and particularly at general high schools. And once again the motto *Macte animo!*, which the founders of Mikołaj Rej High School No. XI placed above the entrance, reminds us of its message. How wise were those people who knew what challenges emerge for education in all times and circumstances. Today I would add a thought from an old Latin textbook we used at Rej High School for a few years, in the good times. It references mythology again, this time an Olympian god who has the gift of seeing the future. If I remember correctly, in one chapter Apollo says to a follower: “Noli timere, tempus est novum cursum vitae inire” – “Fear not, the time has come to start a new life”.

²⁰ See, e.g., Andy Bloxham, “MI5 Boss Attracted by ‘Intrigue’ of ‘I, Claudius’”, *The Telegraph*, 4 October 2010, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culturenews/8039653/MI5-boss-attracted-by-intrigue-of-I-Claudius.html>; J.K. Rowling, “The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination”, *Harvard Magazine*, 5 June 2008, <https://harvardmagazine.com/2008/06/the-fringe-benefits-failure-the-importance-imagination>; Christopher Perrin, “10 Reasons to Study Latin First”, Classical Academic Press, 12 November 2019, <https://classicalacademicpress.com/10-reasons-to-study-latin/>.

Appendix

Witold Kaliński

The Idea of a “Classics Class”

Witold Kaliński is a retired teacher, active community volunteer, long-time headmaster of renowned Warsaw secondary schools, including Mikołaj Rej High School No. XI, where he initiated the Classics class.²¹

The word “Classics” already contains the kernel of “class”. Need we say more? And yet, I shall add a few words, because it is great to discern when looking into the essence.

If truth be told, I never understood how you could be a philologist without knowing Greek, although that was exactly the kind of philologist I became. But should a good teacher repeat his deficiency in his students? A rhetorical question.

(Neither did I ever understand how you could get your school-leaving certificate without the rudiments of philosophy. In other words, I’ll die a fool.)

Due to the “first Solidarity” (*pierwsza Solidarność*) movement, the system of supervision began to shake, and when the breeze of history touched the education authorities as well, we started digging into that crumbling wall. A city whose population exceeded a million at the time, Warsaw should have more to offer in education than three to four so-called profiles, three to four foreign languages. Life – even the life of a university – is much richer than that.

And, it is the mission of a high school to prepare students for university. At least that was the mission then (and those were proper university studies then). At Rej High School, the great majority of the teaching staff (led by the modest and brilliant Dr Julia Tazbir) fully understood this mission, while the Education Board was becoming happy not to interfere.

The idea of a Classics class? Let’s be clear: if a person is a special union of body and spirit, then the classic style is a natural environment for both. For the body – because it praises physicality and scorns death. See also: Greek sculpture. For the spirit – because it was the Pre-Socratics, Plato,

²¹ Barbara Strycharczyk’s and Witold Kaliński’s texts have been translated into English by Joanna Dutkiewicz.

and their successors who created the notional categories for describing the human condition, Greek historians lent it rhythm, and Greek tragedians brilliantly expressed both pity and fear. See earlier: Greek myths.

Then came Latin, and long afterwards – as one might impressively conclude – there was Constantine Cavafy.

I think that for “those like me”, Horace would be enough to teach Latin. Not necessarily to learn it first. It needs saying that Horace has had some excellent translators in Poland, Adam Ważyk not being the last of them.

Meanwhile, even before feminism dawned, we took delight in Sappho. It’s truly wonderful that almost every decade the image of Ancient Greek poetry assumes still watercolour but nonetheless ever-deeper hues. We discover new fragments of that poetry. As if it were being written today.

Thanks to the Classics, we live livelier lives, nothing left to say!



Figure 2: The inscription *Macte animo* on the Mikolaj Rej High School No. XI building in Warsaw (the classical column in the foreground belongs to the Holy Trinity Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession). Photograph by Katarzyna Marciniak.

Katarzyna Marciniak

2. Why the Classics? – or, On the Use of Classical Mythology in Education and the Side Effects Thereof

Once upon a time there was a king who had a grandson. Because the boy was his hope for the future and the heir of his huge empire, the king wanted to provide him with only the best. And he could indeed do so, for he was a very rich and powerful king. He understood that knowledge was the key to authority and that it formed character. And this was exactly what the prince needed, as now, at the age of seven, he was considered to be an exceptionally hot-headed and spoiled child. The king brought together the most eminent tutors and teachers in the land. One of them achieved spectacular pedagogical success, acknowledged even by his most ardent enemies.²² The boy matured and started showing an impressive sense of duty.

However, this story is not a fairy tale and hence there is no happy ending. Not only did the king fail to thank the tutor, but he dismissed him, then banished him, and never let him return to the royal palace ever again. The king's rage was caused by a book the tutor had written to improve the course of the prince's education. This was a truly mythical education, as we could call it, and at first sight the book seemed to be utterly detached from reality. François Fénelon (for he is the tutor in our story) wrote for his pedagogical purposes a text that he christened a "prose epic" – a novel about the adventures of Odysseus' son Telemachus (*Les aventures de Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse*, ed. pr. 1699). Louis XIV (for he is the king in our story) saw himself in the mirror of Classical Antiquity, as it was polished by Fénelon. Thus, suddenly, the myth from a remote past, with no apparent link to seventeenth-century France, turned out to be a commentary on that precise period. The character of Mentor, whose form was taken by Athena in the novel – Athena who for her part became the alter ego of Fénelon – provided Telemachus, and through him Louis XIV's grandson – Louis, Duke of Burgundy (for he is the student in our story) – with a clear lesson on the absolute monarchy's depravity.

²² See Louis de Rouvroy Saint-Simon, *Mémoires inédites du Duc de Saint-Simon sur le siècle de Louis XIV et sur la régence*, Paris: Chez les marchands de nouveautés, 1838, chapter 19, esp. 257–259.

2.1. Telemachus’ Crew

The king could get as mad as he wanted, but not without reason does the term “education” originate from the Latin verb composed of the preposition *e* and the verb *ducere*. Thus it means ‘to lead out’ (from a lower condition up onto the highlands of the human mind through knowledge). As Craig Evan Anderson observes, “we find the notion of positional leadership within the Latin *ducere* in the English derivative ‘duke’”.²³ Who has once been led out in that way, cannot be forced to return. S/he becomes the ruler of their own mind. For the transformation takes place once and for all. Nor is there even any preposition to describe its – at least purely theoretical – reversal, as *de-ducere* or *in-ducere* denote completely different actions, while *re-ducere* – ‘to bring back’ (the army or Cicero from exile) – acquired the meaning ‘to bring to an inferior condition’ as late as in the Middle Ages, and mostly in the context of material status or military rank.²⁴ This is hardly surprising in light of one of the fundamental laws that govern the world of ancient mythology: once a metamorphosis has been carried out, it cannot be undone.²⁵ Louis XIV’s grandson, called Le Petit Dauphin, declared himself in favour of limiting absolutism.

However, as I have mentioned, this is not a fairy tale and there is no happy ending. Fénelon’s ward died at the age of thirty and thus we will never know how history would have developed had he received an opportunity to implement the ideals of his mentor and Mentor. The power of myth and good literature consists nonetheless in the fact that they have no “expiry date”. On the contrary: each new reader as an individual, and each new generation as a community, can discover the same story anew and they can

²³ Craig Evan Anderson, “Exodus from the Cave: Moses as Platonic Educator”, in Matthew Ryan Hauge and Andrew W. Pitts, eds., *Ancient Education and Early Christianity*, London and New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2016, 25, n. 1.

²⁴ See A. Vos, H. Veldhuis, E. Dekker, N.W. den Bok, and A.J. Bekk, eds., *Duns Scotus on Divine Love: Texts and Commentary on Goodness and Freedom, God and Humans*, Abingdon and New York, NY: Routledge, 2017 (ed. pr. 2003), 210, n. 8 (the editors comment on their English translation of Scotus: “In the translation we have rendered ‘reducere’ by ‘reduce’, although the Latin term does not have the connotation of ‘boiling down’ or ‘making smaller’. ‘Reducere’ means ‘tracing something back to its origin’”). For the meaning of *reducere* in alchemy, see William R. Newman, *Newton the Alchemist: Science, Enigma, and the Quest for Nature’s “Secret Fire”*, Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018, xvi.

²⁵ Midas’ and Tiresias’ fates are very particular exceptions to the rule: in Midas’ case the power of his golden touch was “transposed” onto the river Pactolus, while Tiresias “had to” change from man into woman and back to be used by Zeus and Hera in their bet, and in the end he paid for these multiple transformations with his sight.

find therein content that is valid in their own times, even millennia after the given story's origin.

Louis XIV, despite his rage and power, could not stop the "damage" done to absolutism by Telemachus, a Greek hero from the ancient past. Manuscripts do not burn, not even Fahrenheit 451 would be enough, for our mythical library is located within our hearts, souls, and minds (delete where not applicable). So *The Adventures of Telemachus* did not end with the death of Le Petit Dauphin, nor even with that of Louis XIV or Fénelon. For the myth revived in the imagination of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and it inspired his ideas that forever changed the notion of civilization – we feel their consequences to this day. Still back in the eighteenth century, one of the most avid readers of the novel was Thomas Jefferson, a Founding Father of the United States of America, its third president, and the author of the Declaration of Independence – a document not only still valid in his country, but also still inspirational for the shapers of political systems all over the twenty-first-century world. Fénelon's novel was also the favourite childhood book of one of the greatest classical philologists in the history of our discipline – Tadeusz Zieliński (1859–1944), the author of the seminal *Cicero im Wandel der Jahrhunderte* (1897) and *Tragodumenon libri tres* (1925).²⁶

This eminent and charismatic scholar of a shattered *curriculum vitae*, who declared himself to be a professor of the University of Warsaw until the very end of his life in Germany, but who in communist Poland was sentenced to *damnatio memoriae*,²⁷ decided to engage in the dissemination of Greek mythology among young people already at the turn of the twentieth century. He then faced accusations of being a bungler and wasting the precious time of a scholar on second-rate activities.²⁸ But Zieliński did not belong

²⁶ Thaddaeus Zieliński, *Cicero im Wandel der Jahrhunderte*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1897 (the last ed. rev. by Zieliński was published in 1929 and reprinted in 1967), and his *Tragodumenon libri tres*, Cracoviae: Sumptibus Polonicae Academiae Litterarum, 1925.

²⁷ On his biography and works for youth, see my chapter "(De)constructing Arcadia: Polish Struggles with History and Differing Colours of Childhood in the Mirror of Classical Mythology", in Lisa Maurice, ed., *The Reception of Ancient Greece and Rome in Children's Literature: Heroes and Eagles*, *Metaforms: Studies in the Reception of Classical Antiquity* 6, Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2015, 67–75.

²⁸ Tadeusz Zieliński, *Autobiografia. Dziennik 1939–1944* [Autobiography; Diary 1939–1944], ed. Hanna Geremek and Piotr Mitzner, Warszawa: OBTA and Wydawnictwo DiG, 2005, 181. See also Tadeusz Zieliński, *Queen of the Wind Maidens: Prologue*, introd. Michał Mizera, trans. from the Russian original Katarzyna Tomaszuk, English trans. and textual notes Elżbieta Olechowska, Warsaw: Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw, 2013 (ed. pr. in Russian 1917), 7, www.al.uw.edu.pl/zielinski_queen; and my chapter "(De)constructing Arcadia", 69.

to those who permit critics to discourage them. Perhaps remembering his own emotions while reading, as a child, *The Adventures of Telemachus*, he understood how important it was to educate and to acquaint young people with the heritage of Classical Antiquity. So he wrote for them *Starożytność bajeczna* [Fabulous Antiquity, in Russian 1922–1923, in Polish 1930] – a mythology exceptional, indeed, on a global scale, as he based it on the Greek tragedies he researched. He also took part in the national debate on education by publishing such studies as *Starożytność antyczna a wykształcenie klasyczne* [Classical Antiquity and Classical Education, 1920] and “Kilka uwag o wykształceniu klasycznym” [A Few Remarks about Classical Education, 1927].²⁹

Finally, a devoted Fénelon reader and member of “Telemachus’ crew” already as a child was the writer who became the most important figure for Polish classical culture and antiquity-oriented education: Jan Parandowski (1895–1978), the author of *Mitologia. Wierzenia i podania Greków i Rzymian* [Mythology: Beliefs and Legends of the Greeks and Romans], known simply as *Mythology* – a book that has been uninterruptedly reissued since its first publication in 1924 in Lviv, canonical reading for all subsequent generations of Poles at least up to the turn of the twenty-first century.³⁰ Perhaps Parandowski was influenced by *The Adventures of Telemachus* also while preparing the most popular Polish translation of Homer’s *Odyssey* in an “epic prose” style (1953) and, even earlier, when he published its special adaptation for children, *Przygody Odyseusza* [The Adventures of Odysseus, 1935].³¹

While both of Parandowski’s books were required school reading (*The Adventures of Odysseus* and *Mythology* in elementary school, for circa eleven-year-olds; and *Mythology* once again, in high school), education in the

²⁹ Tadeusz Zieliński, *Starożytność antyczna a wykształcenie klasyczne* [Classical Antiquity and Classical Education], Zamość: Zygmunt Pomarański i Spółka, 1920; “Kilka uwag o wykształceniu klasycznym” [A Few Remarks about Classical Education], *Kwartalnik Klasyczny* [Classical Quarterly] 1.2 (1927), 6–10. See also Elżbieta Olechowska, “Teaching Latin and Greek in Inter-War Poland”, in David Movrin and Elżbieta Olechowska, eds., *Classics and Class: Greek and Latin Classics and Communism at School*, Warsaw and Ljubljana: Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw; Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts; and Wydawnictwo DiG, 2016, 213–228.

³⁰ On his biography and works for youth, see my chapter “(De)constructing Arcadia”, 61–67, and Janusz Ryba’s remarks in the present volume, 209–236.

³¹ See Jan Parandowski, *Mitologia. Wierzenia i podania Greków i Rzymian* [Mythology: Beliefs and Legends of the Greeks and Romans], Lwów: Księgarnia Wydawnicza H. Altenberga, 1924; *Przygody Odyseusza* [The Adventures of Odysseus], Lwów: Księgarnia Wydawnicza H. Altenberga, 1935; Homer, *Odyseja* [The Odyssey], trans. Jan Parandowski, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1953.

field of Greek and Roman myths in Polish school classes of a "Classics profile" had a much broader scope. Below I present the case of the "Classics class" from the late 1990s at Mikołaj Rej High School No. XI in Warsaw – the school famous for its support for the ideas of religious tolerance and the tradition of intellectual liberty, where the Classics profile was an interdisciplinary endeavour.

To be admitted to a class of this profile, you had to pass a special exam, and not even the diploma of a winner in any of the elementary school competitions ("Olympics", as they were called – in my case, in biology) could assure you entrance, as was typical for the majority of Polish high schools. The exam took place early in the spring, not to deprive the young people of their chance in the standard procedure in case they failed. Skills in the creative use of Polish language were tested and – in a similarly demanding way – so was knowledge of mathematics, which heralded an interdisciplinary education in a Platonic spirit: ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδεὶς εἰσὶτω – "May no one untrained in geometry enter".

The Classics profile was an experiment at that time, at its second stage. Its programmes were still evolving. In this respect, I have a unique opportunity to present its idea from the perspective of a graduate in possession of the complete set of my notes from the main subjects that were constitutive for Rej High School "Classics". Thus, I dare assume here the difficult dual task of a researcher of and a witness to a certain endeavour. Owing to this and striving to proceed *sine ira* (or rather *favore*) *et studio*, I am able to reach to the very essence of this experiment. So first, I characterize the unique nature of the Latin and Greek classes; then I present some examples of the interactions between the subjects with a special focus on the most important one, called Ancient Culture; finally, in reference to the societal and educational aspect of the international research programme *Our Mythical Childhood*, I show which elements of the Classics profile experiment are still in force.

From among different aspects that were important for Rej High School "Classics", I pay particular attention to the presence of classical mythology in this experiment, including the "side effects" thereof. For as we have seen with the example of Le Petit Dauphin, myths are by no means neutral. King Louis XIV – *le Roi Soleil* – knew this well when he was presenting himself as an incarnation of the solar god Apollo: as the patron of the arts whose daily rhythm – including his rituals of getting up and retreating – regulated his citizens' life cycle, next to the Palace of Versailles, full of Apollonian

attributes, such as laures, lyres, and tripods.³² However, it did not come to the King’s mind (or it did, but not until it was too late) that mythology was a double-edged sword, and it educated the people not only into his admiration, but also into their desire for freedom. What is more, the full potential of mythology manifests itself exactly when it stops being an instrument in the hands of a ruler who uses it for his temporal politics, and becomes a heritage that builds a community.

May my case study be food for thought for all who still care and wish to make a change in the education systems today, not counting on short-term profits, but aiming to save this heritage for the long term, κτήμιά τε ἐς αἰεὶ – “a possession for ever”, to quote Thucydides (1.22.4), for the generations to come who deserve the chance to resolve on their own the question: “Why the Classics?”

2.2. “I Drank a Poison and I Sing”: Greek and Latin as the Keys to Mythology

“Disce puer Latine, ego faciam te mościpanie” – “Study Latin, my boy, and I will make you a mościpanie”, that is, a nobleman. According to an anecdote famous in Poland, that was the promise which, in macaronic Latin, King Stephen Báthory (1533–1586) was supposed to have made to a pupil whom he met during his visit to a school in the city of Zamość. A noble title for the knowledge of Latin? Indeed, Latin played a special role in Polish culture. This phenomenon is the subject of Jerzy Axer’s analysis in the volume *Łacina jako język elit* [Latin as the Language of the Elites, 2004]. The heterogenic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth deemed itself an heir to Rome, and it was none other than the language of the Romans that welded together the members of the gentry nation.³³ The Roman republican ideals of liberty were so firmly rooted in the soil of the Commonwealth that the various forms of absolutism could hardly develop.³⁴ From the sixteenth century, Polish kings

³² See the website of the Palace of Versailles: “Louis XIV (1638–1715)”, Château de Versailles, <http://en.chateauversailles.fr/discover/history/great-characters/louis-xiv>.

³³ See Jerzy Axer, ed., *Łacina jako język elit* [Latin as the Language of the Elites], Warszawa: OBTA and Wydawnictwo DiG, 2004; see also Katarzyna Marciniak, “Zum *Mocium Panem* zu werden... Kleine Gedanken zu einem grossen Buch”, *Eos* 97 (2010), 297–307.

³⁴ On Jefferson’s reading list there was an English version of the treatise *De optimo senatore* (1568) by Wawrzyniec Goślicki, a professor of the Jagiellonian University, who postulated the limitation of the king’s authority. The treatise, today nearly forgotten, is said to have inspired Jefferson

were elected by the gentry in a procedure called the “free election”. Such a king was also Báthory, who ascended the Polish throne, also *iure uxoris*, in 1576. As he was not a Pole by birth – in fact, he was the Prince of Transylvania and a native Hungarian – he communicated with his new “republican subjects” in the only language possible then: Latin.

Even if the vision of making a career thanks to Latin does not convince many today, another argument is still valid – namely, the one put forth by Wilfried Stroh in his *Latein ist tot, es lebe Latein!* (2007), a bestseller of Germany’s largest weekly, *Der Spiegel*. Prof. Stroh, a Latin speaker himself, writes about “the Experience of the Masterpieces” (*das Erlebnis der Meisterwerke*) – an upbeat emotional sensation that can be gained only via direct contact with the given text, that is, in its original language. So, it is a strange paradox how highly traumatic memories are shared by people who have studied Latin or Greek as part of their school education. A fan of Stroh’s book and the author of one of its enthusiastic reviews at Amazon.de has the following flashback:

Mein Lateinlehrer in der 3. Klasse Gymnasium (7. Klasse in Deutschland) war ein kleinwüchsiger Giftzwerg, der seine Komplexe an den Schülern ausliess, völlig irre Strafen verteilte, noch bevor man etwas getan hatte, etwa nur weil man lächelte etc. Der Teufel möge ihn peinigen!

My Latin teacher in the third grade of gymnasium (seventh grade in Germany) was a small and poisonous dwarf who vented his complexes at the students and meted out completely insane penalties even before you had done anything, just because you smiled, etc. May the devil torment him!³⁵

After the publication of the famous book by Françoise Waquet *Le latin, ou l’empire d’un signe* (1998; in English as *Latin, or the Empire of a Sign*, 2001), which called into question the presence of ancient languages in general education, Jerzy Axer organized at the University of Warsaw’s Centre for Studies on the Classical Tradition (OBTA) a “court” session, *Łacina na*

in his work on the Declaration of Independence; see Mark F. Bielski, *Sons of the White Eagle in the American Civil War: Divided Poles in a Divided Nation*, Philadelphia, PA and Oxford: Casemate, 2016, 12.

³⁵ Echo 1954, “Ja, so hätte ich mir den Lateinunterricht gewünscht!”, Kundenrezensionen, Amazon.de, 28 August 2008, https://www.amazon.de/product-reviews/3548608094/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_paging_btm_2?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending&pageNumber=2. See also my paper “Zum *Mocium Panem* zu werden...”, 305. English translations of all the quotations are mine (K.M.), unless stated otherwise.

ławie oskarżonych [Latin in the Dock, 2004]. During the session, more testimonies similar in nature were gathered, and by renowned thinkers and authors. Of course, their statements were embedded in the intentionally comic style of an “act of indictment”;³⁶ nonetheless, they are significant. Chronologically, Bolesław Prus (1847–1912), one of the best Polish writers (the author of the outstanding psychological novel *Lalka* [The Doll] and the great historical fiction *Faraon* [The Pharaoh]), stated: “Out of a hundred philologists – each one has an ailing liver and stomach, each one is caustic, and each one is ever so wise with a wisdom whose *kingdom is not of this world*”.³⁷ In his satirical inclinations, Prus was soon joined by Julian Tuwim (1894–1953), a distinguished poet of the interwar period, who – in the poem “Łacina” [Latin], widely read at Rej High School – summed up his study of the conjugations and declinations as follows: “What a torment, how great the drama!”³⁸ On top of that, even the eminent classicist poet Zbigniew Herbert (1924–1998) recalled: “So we studied Latin with Grześ [the nickname of his teacher]. How? In pain”.³⁹ And the Nobel Prize in Literature laureate Czesław Miłosz (1911–2004) stated: “Latin was mostly a terrible bore to us”.⁴⁰

Things were not any better for Greek. Let’s quote Prus again: “[F]or it has been proven that the people who can choose between Ancient Greek language and Hell – they choose the latter”.⁴¹ Moreover, another Polish Nobel Prize in Literature laureate, the author of the globally acclaimed *Quo vadis*, Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916), remarked melancholically:

³⁶ The prosecutor was Prof. Małgorzata Borowska and she played her role superbly. See the booklet (incl. a DVD), AA.VV., *Łacina na ławie oskarżonych* [Latin in the Dock], Warszawa: OBTA and Wydawnictwo DiG, 2004.

³⁷ One of Bolesław Prus’s feuilletons republished later in the collection *Kroniki* [Chronicles], vol. 4, ed. Zygmunt Szweykowski, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1955, 350: “Ze stu filologów – wszyscy są chorzy na wątrobę i żołądek, wszyscy skwaszeni i wszyscy bardzo mądrzy tą mądrością, której *królestwo nie jest z tego świata*”. I owe the information about Prus’s remarks on Latin and Greek to Prof. Borowska.

³⁸ From the collection *Jarmark rymów* [The Market of the Rhymes], Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1955 (ed. pr. 1934), 301: “Jaka to męka! Co za dramat!”.

³⁹ Zbigniew Herbert’s essay “Lekcja łaciny” [Latin Lesson], in his *Labirynt nad morzem* [A Labyrinth by the Sea], Warszawa: Fundacja Zeszytów Literackich, 2000, 186: “Więc uczyliśmy się łaciny u Grzesia. Jak? W męce”.

⁴⁰ See Aleksander Fiut, *Rozmowy z Czesławem Miłoszem* [In Conversation with Czesław Miłosz], Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1981, 67: “Łacina była dla nas straszną nudą przeważnie”.

⁴¹ In Bolesław Prus, *Kroniki* [Chronicles], vol. 3, ed. Zygmunt Szweykowski, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1954, 212: “[P]rzekonano się bowiem, że ludzie mając do wyboru grecką albo piekło – wybierają to ostatnie”.

Grecja dała światu dużo arcydzieł, ale też zostawiła taką plagę ludzkości pod postacią swego języka, że gdyby cholera była wydusiła za czasów Peryklesa wszystkich Greków, świat byłby może dziś weselszy, a ludzie zdrowsi. Mogłaby to jeszcze poniekąd cholera wynagrodzić, wydusiwszy wszystkich filologów.⁴²

Greece gave the world a lot of masterpieces, but it also left such a plague of humanity in the form of its language, that had the cholera in Pericles' times strangled all the Greeks, the world could be merrier today, and the people healthier. Cholera could still compensate for this to a certain degree by strangling all the philologists.

However, those philologists (indeed, lucky to deal with an exceptionally grateful subject) managed to awaken in Sienkiewicz his great and eternal love for Greek culture and its language:

Zbyt lubię Homera, Sofoklesa, zabytki Grecji i jej ogromną tradycję, która, choć często o tym nie wiemy, płynie jak krew w naszych żyłach – i żyć bym już bez tego nie mógł!

I like Homer, Sophocles, Greece's monuments and its huge tradition too much. This tradition, although often we are not aware of it, circulates in our veins like blood – and I would not be able to live without it anymore!

Reading *Quo vadis* we have no doubts that Sienkiewicz felt similarly towards Latin tradition. The motif of the circulation of Latin in the veins returns also for Tuwim, who concluded his famous poem about the tortuous (or even torturous) process of studying this ancient language as follows:⁴³

Aż nagle – nagle wszystko umiesz,
Już krąży w twojej krwi łacina
I dumny jesteś, że rozumiesz:
Quousque tandem, Catilina?...

I już ci nie żal szkolnej pracy,
Gdy żyje, kwitnie każde słowo,

⁴² This and the next quotations come from Henryk Sienkiewicz's letters (to Karol Potkański, 30 October 1897; Maria Wrotnowska, 2 February 1886; and Maria Radziejewska, 12/13 June 1903), quoted after Borowska's splendid oration in *Łacina na ławie oskarżonych* and her *Mormolyke*, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1996, 9, n. 1.

⁴³ English translation mine (K.M.).

A ty z Wergilim i Horacym
Przeżywasz stary Rzym na nowo!

I myślisz: wieczny pomnik wzniesli,
Choć nad nim czas burzami leciał!
Jakiż to martwy język, jeśli
Nie więdnąc przetrwał tysiąclecia!

I potem ci się *terra, terram*
I *amo, amas* przypomina:
I kochasz ziemię, *amas terram*,
Z którą złączyła cię łacina.

I ona kocha cię (*amaris*),
I jużście się zrozumieli
Z italskim morzem (*mare, maris*),
Z italskim niebem (*caelum, caeli*).

All of a sudden you gain the skills,
And Latin courses through your veins,
And you are proud to understand this:
Quousque tandem, Catiline?...

And you don't see your school as wasted,
When each word is a blooming rose,
While you along with Horace, Virgil,
May now feel ancient Rome's new force!

You think: for all times they erected
A monument – in stormy weather!
Thus what dead language, and neglected?
It's been flourishing since forever!

And you recall then *terra, terram*
And *amo, amas* with no patin:
You love the land then, *amas terram*,
That you are joined with thanks to Latin.

And then it loves you (*so, amaris*),
And you have known each other fairly
With Italy's sea (*mare, maris*),
With Italy's sky (*caelum, caeli*).

The study of the ancient languages in the Classics class at Rej High School started precisely with Latin, from the very first year, in the amount of four hours per week. After a short but inspiring contact with a young classicist Joanna Derda, Latin was taught by Barbara Strycharczyk, who managed to sweeten the bitterness of repeating the conjugation and declination patterns by sharing with us the fascinating cultural context.

As soon as the second week, we came to know the maxim *Per aspera ad astra*, and clearly it was a significant pedagogical message to us (nearly a warning: "Beware! It will not be easy!"), as well as an ethical one too, for it enabled us to understand the background of the school's motto (Stadius, *Theb.* 7.280, in reference to the Virgilian verse, *Aen.* 9.641: "Macte nova virtute, puer, sic itur ad astra"). In the third week, as in a follow-up to this motto, we had our first Close Encounter of the Third Kind with the *Aeneid* as such – one of the texts for the sake of which ("the Experience of the Masterpieces"!) we were supposed to go *per aspera*. We read its famous opening "Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris". The beginnings were not easy, indeed, and we even kept a class register of our translation slips (unbelievable, but nonetheless true: "I drank a poison and I sing" in regard to the *Aeneid's* incipit – probably because of the similarity between the nouns *vir* and *virus* – or the Horatian *Memento mori* as "Do not forget to die!"), but over time our skills grew. At the lessons of Latin, classical mythology also played an important role – present already in the handbooks and language exercises of various kinds.

As the programme of the Classics profile was experimental, we had no predefined manual. We used *Lingua Latina* (1958) by Stefan Staszczuk, Jadwiga Daabowa, and Zbigniew Sabińo; the photocopies (or the handwritten copies) of the preparations⁴⁴ from the British, French, German, and Italian textbooks that Prof. Strycharczyk or her colleagues "grabbed" in various ways – often owing to the kind help of scholars abroad (*Asterix Latinus* was an extra bonus when we did particularly well in our tests); and the exercises drafted by Rej's teaching staff. Soon we also started reading original fragments. Staszczuk et al.'s textbook was centred on the issues of slavery and agriculture, in line with the post-war policy of the Polish state, but it also contained some mythological references, both to Roman legends ("De

⁴⁴ "Preparacje" (preparations) is a technical term in the Polish tradition of learning ancient languages – it refers to texts in Greek or Latin that are indeed prepared on the base of originals. These "preparacje" are simplifications that help prepare students for direct contact with ancient masterpieces at later stages of education (as in *Wheelock's Latin* model for the USA).

Romulo”, “De lupa Romana”) and to Greek myths (“De bello Troiano”, “De equo Troiano”), while the maps of the regions discussed in the texts and the pictures of the monuments (Homer’s bust, the walls of Troy, the Luperical Cave), despite the terrible resolution of their photocopies, contributed to holistic learning.

We practised the ACI (*Accusativus cum infinitivo*) construction on a mythological story, too – mainly, Daedalus’ crime. It was easier to understand the grammar when we were already familiar with the content of the exercises. Thus, we created various configurations of phrases based on the starting point in the form of the sentence: “Daedalus discipulum suum necavit”, that is, “Fama est Daedalum discipulum suum necavisse”, “Dico Daedalum discipulum suum necavisse”, etc. Even if the nature of this crime reached us in a slightly mitigated form (the murder of his pupil, not precisely his nephew), it was shocking nonetheless. Indeed, the myth of Daedalus and Icarus is usually reduced to its main, that is “Cretan”, core – the episode of their imprisonment and flight towards liberty; hence their tragedy seems to be (*nomen omen*) “suspended” in a kind of vacuum. Thus, this kind of learning made it possible for the students to look deep into the tissue of mythical tales.⁴⁵ Besides, the Latin course ran in parallel with the studies on the myths we were expected to carry out on our own: in my notes I can see a test on Parandowski’s *Mythology* scheduled already for the second month of the term.

The Greek lessons – two hours per week from the third year – were also organically linked with learning about the myths. After a crash course on the alphabet, we translated such sentences (mainly from Greek into Polish, but sometimes also the other way round), as: “The Gods admire Hermes’ art”, “The olive trees are sacred, they are under Athena’s care”, and “The young boys worship Hermes”, prepared by our teacher Alicja Zielińska. Greek, due to its “otherness” (as we saw it at that time), plain already at the level of the alphabet, seemed to us a true language of “transition” – the key to Fabulous Antiquity, to use Tadeusz Zieliński’s term (the similarity of his and our teacher’s surnames was coincidental, but maybe mythical...).

⁴⁵ I recall having come across the full version of the myth during my childhood readings of the “adult” elaborations on mythology, but only at high school, recasting the story word by word (as a side effect of this process), for the first time did I become aware of such “hidden” connections between mythological events and only then did I grasp consciously the need to incessantly search for the mechanisms that rule the world (of myths, at least).

Along with the materials prepared by Prof. Zielińska, an old collection of preparations by Marian Golias (1887–1966), *Wstępna nauka języka greckiego* [Preliminary Study of the Greek Language, ed. pr. 1926], was in use in the Classics profile.⁴⁶ It opened with some easy readings; thereafter the degree of difficulty grew, and the collection closed with fragments of some simple originals. A short biography of Homer appeared as early as lesson 11, next to a reproduction of his bust, again in very poor resolution. Subsequently, we read about the Muses and next, about Daedalus – his myth was our first longer reading in Greek, in two parts, with the information that the pupil killed by the architect was the son of his sister. Thus, the main version of the story, studied at the elementary level of the Polish education system,⁴⁷ and deepened at Latin lessons within Rej's Classics profile, revealed its full dramatic dimension with Icarus' death in the cause-and-effect chain of crime and punishment. The text of the myth was again complemented by a visual element: a faint reproduction of a relief showing the image of the protagonists.

Other myths in Golias's preparations, in order of their appearance, were the following: the Argonauts; the Four Ages of Man; Arion; Delphi; Frixos and Helle; the Danaids; the Sphinx; Achilles and Odysseus; the Greek Gods; Zeus, Prometheus, and Momus according to Aesop; Hercules at the Crossroads according to Xenophon (in three parts); Cadmus; Tantalus' Crimes; Perseus; Achilles at Skiros (also in three parts); Hercules and the Wagoner – the original text of Babrius. Some images from Greek vases featuring the relevant mythological protagonists were a precious enrichment of learning.

Along with Golias's preparations we did a few early units from the manual *Hellenike Glotta* by Agnieszka and Kazimierz Korus – an academic couple from the Jagiellonian University (Kazimierz Korus is Professor of Greek

⁴⁶ On the place and role of Golias's manual, see, for a change, the critical voice by Bogdan Sobillo, "Golias for ever, czyli dlaczego (nie) należy nauczać greczyzny z anachronicznego podręcznika?" [Golias For Ever, or, Why You Should (Not) Teach Greek from an Anachronistic Textbook?], 25 November 2015, a lecture given at the conference *Nowoczesna dydaktyka akademicka języków klasycznych* [Modern Academic Teaching of the Classical Languages] organized by Monika Mięka and Magdalena Popiołek at the Institute of Classical Studies at the University of Warsaw, available at Academia, https://www.academia.edu/32279188/Golias_for_ever_czyli_dlaczego_nie_nale%C5%B-Cy_naucza%C4%87_greczyzny_z_anachronicznego_podr%C4%99cznika_1.

⁴⁷ Until our times usually in the fourth or fifth year of primary school; see the document *Podstawa programowa – język polski – szkoła podstawowa* [Core Curriculum: Polish Language. Primary School], Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej, <https://archiwum.men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/podstawa-programowa-%e2%80%93-jezyk-polski-%e2%80%93-szkola-podstawowa-%e2%80%93-klasy-iv-viii-.pdf>.

Literature). The book, published in 1996, was a pioneering step in teaching Greek. The material was to a large degree original, with the predominance of Greek historians, Plutarch, the Bible, and some “must-haves” of an educated person, like the Lord’s Prayer and the Hippocratic Oath. The mythological stories were present in the manual, for example, via *Dialogi deorum* by Lucian, but we did not get that far during the course.

My class was also lucky to work with the groundbreaking handbook by Małgorzata Borowska, *Mormolyke* (1996), whose very title refers both to classical mythology and Modern Greek folk tradition. This eminent researcher of Greek and Modern Greek culture, endowed with literary talent and an amazing sense of humour,⁴⁸ opens her manual by quoting Prus’s words about the Hell of the Greek language. Next, she presents her vision of education:

Mormo, Lamia, Gelo, Gorgo, czy też wilkołak Mormolyke należą do sporego zastępu wiedźmowatych demonów, którymi nianie greckie zwykły straszyć małe dzieci. [...] Mormolykami szkoły średniej od niepamiętnych czasów były języki klasyczne: łacina i greka, dręczące pokolenia uczniów.⁴⁹

Mormo, Lamia, Gelo, Gorgo, or the werewolf Mormolyke belong to quite a big host of witchery demons used by Greek nurses to scare small children. [...] From time immemorial, the Mormolykai of high school have been the classical languages: Latin and Greek, tormenting whole generations of students.

Borowska does not promise an easy way to Greek (*Per aspera ad astra!*, as we remember...), but she wishes to make it appealing (as she recalls, “according to Greek myths, Mormo was a beautiful girl”), and indeed, she achieves her aim – by giving voice to the ancient authors. The special character of her manual consists in the fact that it contains *only* original texts, even if in the first units they are limited to the short *gnomai*. The choice of the material covers the whole of antiquity, including Plato, the Bible, the tragedians, Menander, epics, and *Homeric Hymns* – for example, the *Hymn to Dionysus*, a precious source to learn about his myth. *Mormolyke* is also rich in the iconography. For example, the fragment from Pseudo-Apollodorus’ *Library*

⁴⁸ See *Łacina na ławie oskarżonych*. It was Prof. Borowska who collected the aforementioned testimonies to studying the ancient languages by eminent Polish poets and writers. Her speech was a daring and thrilling palinody.

⁴⁹ Borowska, *Mormolyke*, 7. All the page references provided in parentheses are from this edition.

(3.5.3) on Dionysus and the pirates is illustrated by a reproduction of the famous kylix by Exekias, the Dionysus Cup (390), with the information on its current location (Staatliche Antikensammlung in Munich). Thus the students could be sensitized to Greek art and made aware of the role of extratextual sources in the research into antiquity. Although this aspect was present in the previous manuals, its interactive potential is used by Borowska fully and consequently at each lesson. Indeed, they conclude with “iconographic riddles” for the students. The riddles are far from obvious and – although there is a key with the answers in the final section of the book – the author challenges our ambition: “Are you able to recognize these gods by their attributes?” (28); “Hermes Kriophoros – which functions of this god are linked to this image?” (64); “What happened in the end with the Gorgon’s head?” (226), etc. The questions refer to classical mythology and they focus on the elements that are important in the context of the reception of myths, like the Hermes Kriophoros iconography, crucial for the later motif of Christ the Good Shepherd.

Borowska is aware of the demanding character of her manual. She also suggests the supportive use of Golias’s and Parandowski’s books. During our Greek lessons, of course, we managed to take up but a few first units of *Mormolyke* (it is circa 400 pages long),⁵⁰ but in spite of certain difficulties, unavoidable at the high school level, it gave us the precious sensation of direct contact with the word (and the world) of the Ancients – a splinter of what Wilfried Stroh would call later “the Experience of the Masterpieces”.

Summing up the programme of Latin and Greek in the Classics profile in relation to mythology, it can be said that it was precisely this direct contact with the sources that was the most valuable aspect of the courses. We learnt the languages, at the same time expanding our knowledge of the myths and the relevant iconography. Mythology as one of the subjects of the readings also worked the other way round – that is, it made the tedious process of studying grammar more attractive. That programme was complemented by elements of ancient history (which is outside the scope of the present volume, so I leave this aspect for another occasion) as well as by universal maxims, aiming at developing both the linguistic skills of the students and their character, including the ambitious Greek exhortation: γνῶθι σεαυτόν – “Know thyself!” – quite appropriate for maturing youth building their identity. We gained the opportunity to look into the ancient *Logos* ruling the world that was perhaps cruel, as in the myth of Daedalus and Icarus, but not

⁵⁰ I met *Mormolyke* again and in a wider scope during my studies at University.

devoid of meaning, and where destiny and free will mingle in a dynamic, often dramatic interaction.

2.3. *Universitas*: Education in a Mythical Community

The hallmark of the Classics profile at Rej High School that in my opinion merits wide application was the interdisciplinary character of the education – in the spirit of *artes liberales*, as mentioned by Barbara Strycharczyk. Such an approach required that the teachers collaborate with additional effort across the disciplines while building and adjusting their programmes. Owing to this, however, different pieces of knowledge could consolidate in the minds of the students who became aware of the links between ostensibly remote subjects. In the field of the sciences this aspect was obviously limited, but it did occur, too, for example in physics – in regard to the “mythological” terminology in astronomy. And it is worth adding that the founders of Rej’s Classics profile did not wish to “absolve” the students from science subjects – on the contrary, the Classics class had an obligatory IT course, two hours per week, including the rudimentary skills of programming – in the 1990s a rarity even in the mathematical profiles.⁵¹

Of course the idea of activating the links between the areas of knowledge was carried out to the fullest in the humanistic classes. The Polish lessons – for three out of four years held by Małgorzata Sucharska – are a good illustration of this practice. The first word I wrote down in my notebook during the first lesson of Polish was: “Myth” – in green ink to emphasize its importance. And indeed, classical mythology, as the main component of ancient literature, was the subject of our classes throughout the opening term. We began by learning about different definitions and functions of myth, with a particular focus on the analysis of the origin myth, while confronting the vision of the Greeks with the Judaic and Christian traditions. The homework then was to compose our own myth of creation – a perfect exercise to make us practise and consolidate the knowledge we had acquired, and great fun as well. Subsequently we analysed Homer’s *Iliad*. Our homework was to describe a plum cake in Homeric style. That was how my *Cookeid* came to life – a hexameter poem, in which the plums displayed some Achilles-shield-like

⁵¹ This was the merit of the then Headmaster, Jerzy Gniadek, who had an understanding of a truly interdisciplinary education and encouraged it at Rej High School.

scenes on the pastry, and finally a *katasterion* happened – the cake was placed in the sky by Athena, while the recipe remained on Earth. Next it was time for the *Odyssey*. We focused on *Telemachia* in terms of the maturation process of a young man. We also compared Achilles to Odysseus – a thread that would return later to be expanded on – during the lessons on Ancient Culture (see below). Greek myths accompanied us also while learning about Athenian theatre, with the compulsory reading of Sophocles' *Antigone*.

After a quick insight into Hellenistic poetry, we arrived in Rome. There we faced Virgil: his *Eclogue* 4 and the *Georgics* – the latter being a poem of particular importance for Polish culture, as not only did the gentry in Poland speak Latin, but they also identified themselves with Roman farmers.⁵² Thus the *Georgics* – and not the *Aeneid* – was the favourite poem by Virgil in Polish lands. But of course we also discussed Aeneas' adventures for the literary value and importance of the *Aeneid* in culture, both globally and in Poland (for example, in the Romantic era). We read the most famous of Horace's *Odes*, analysing the mythological references present therein, and finally fragments of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, with a particular emphasis on the myth of the Golden Age.

Summing up the semester course in relation to classical mythology, it is worth emphasizing three elements: solid knowledge of the works and their authors, focus on the threads important for Polish and global culture, and – next to the traditional school-tests and chores – some creative tasks as homework. Last but not least, the references to myths returned in the subsequent years, during the lessons on the literature of later epochs: from *Odprawa posłów greckich* [The Dismissal of the Greek Envoys], a drama of 1578 by one of the most eminent Renaissance poets, Jan Kochanowski (1530–1584); through the national Polish epic *Pan Tadeusz* [Sir Thaddeus] of 1834 by the Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855; with one of the male protagonists called even the "Slavic Dido", as he saved the life of two hot-headed noblemen by making them duel at the distance of a bear's skin – he had cut it into thin strips, as the Phoenician Queen when demarcating the land of Carthage); up to Henryk Sienkiewicz with his *Quo vadis*; and the contemporary poetry by Zbigniew Herbert and Czesław Miłosz.

⁵² A similar "trend" can be observed also in the history of the United States of America with George Washington as "a Cincinnatus of the West"; see Carl A. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment*, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1994, 71.

An analogous programme based on a holistic approach to the humanities was carried out at history lessons. As it contained but a small component of classical mythology, again, I leave it outside of the present study. It is worth emphasizing, however, that the person in charge of the programme was Dr Julia Tazbir – an academic historian who also taught at the University of Warsaw. In an interview given in 2017 to Rej High School students she compared her didactic work in these two circles with the following conclusion: “Uczenie studentów nie różni się zasadniczo od uczenia młodzieży w liceum. To jest podobne towarzystwo” (Teaching students is not essentially different from teaching young people in high school. This is a similar company).⁵³ The idea of a company in the sense of a Community and of a link between high school and the University leads us to the key and absolutely fundamental element of the Classics profile – the subject called Ancient Culture.

Ancient Culture took two hours a week through the whole four-year high school cycle. The best (and half-mythological) term to define the subject was “the Chaos Controlled”, and I mean it as the highest compliment. On the one hand, its programme was carefully defined. For example, for the first class an introductory course was foreseen. In the beginning, each student received a detailed list of the topics that would be discussed during the school year. For Greece: ancient chronology; Aegean, Cretan, and Mycenaean cultures; Greek colonization; the lawmakers; the tyranny; Cleisthenes’ reforms; Sparta and Athens; Delphic Amphictyony; Ionian school of the philosophy of nature; religion and mythology; literature and art of Archaic Greece. For Rome: the population of Italy and its distribution; the Etruscans; Rome in the regal era; Rome after the expulsion of the kings; the rudiments of Latin art and literature. We also received a bibliography that in the first year included the excellent introduction to the ancient world, *Historia kultury starożytnej Grecji i Rzymu* [History of the Culture of Ancient Greece and Rome, 1955] by Prof. Kazimierz Kumaniecki (1905–1977)⁵⁴ and of course Parandowski’s *Mythology*. Kumaniecki’s work was at that time

⁵³ The interview (in Polish) is available online: RejMedialni, “Naprawdę znałam całego Reja. Rozmowa z Panią Prof. Julią Tazbir” [I Really Did Know the Whole Rej High School: Interview with Prof. Julia Tazbir], RejMedialni, 7 November 2017, <https://rejmedialni.wordpress.com/2017/11/04/naprawde-znalam-calego-reja-rozmowa-z-prof-julia-tazbir/>.

⁵⁴ On Prof. Kumaniecki, see Jerzy Axer, “Kazimierz Kumaniecki and the Evolution of Classical Studies in the People’s Republic of Poland”, in György Karsai, Gábor Klaniczay, David Movrin, and Elżbieta Olechowska, eds., *Classics and Communism: Greek and Latin behind the Iron Curtain*, Ljubljana, Budapest, and Warsaw: Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts; Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Study; and Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw, 2013, 187–211.

used as an academic textbook at the courses of classical philology at the University of Warsaw. And it was the scholars from this University who were invited to hold lessons within the framework of the Ancient Culture subject.

The tradition of close collaboration between the school and the University has deep roots in Poland. As Elżbieta Olechowska writes in her analysis "Teaching Latin and Greek in Inter-War Poland": "In order to retain their *venia legendi* the holders [of PhDs] were required to teach one class per trimester for two years".⁵⁵ The scholars' school activity was often continued for years due to their difficult economic situation – teaching as a parallel job seemed the best choice to them, due to its social significance, understood also by many as a mission: their contribution to educating the youth. Thus, Polish high schools hosted among their teachers such outstanding researchers and academics as Prof. Tadeusz Sinko (1877–1966) – a Graecist and pioneer in classical reception studies; Prof. Władysław Witwicki (1878–1948) – a philosopher and the translator of the whole corpus of Plato into Polish; Prof. Kazimierz Kumaniecki in person; and – at none other than Rej High School – Prof. Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1886–1981), the eminent ethicist, a graduate of Philosophy and Classics at the Jagiellonian University, Darmstadt University, and the University of Lviv.⁵⁶

The cooperation with the Classics profile drew on this tradition and the faith in the joint mission of the school and the University – nonetheless, no formal contract or remuneration were foreseen for the academics involved. Simply, Prof. Strycharczyk invited the scholars to propose a topic embedded somehow in the general programme. The topic resulted from their research interests. Once a week, for a two-hour lesson of Ancient Culture, which corresponded to a University lecture, a different scholar came and shared with us – on a fully volunteer basis – their knowledge and passion. They represented various branches of ancient studies, such as classical philology (in the majority of cases), history, philosophy, archaeology. They were at various stages of their research paths: highly experienced professors, young faculty members, PhD students. It seems something more than a coincidence that nearly all of them are today recognized experts and

⁵⁵ Olechowska, "Teaching Latin and Greek in Inter-War Poland", 217.

⁵⁶ Ibidem. See also the project *Gnôthi Seauton! – Classics and Communism: The History of the Studies on Antiquity in the Context of the Local Classical Tradition. Socialist Countries (1944/45–1989/90)*, established by Profs. Jerzy Axer, György Karsai, and Gábor Klaniczay (<http://www.obta.uw.edu.pl/pliki/Gnothi%20Seauton.pdf>), now further developed by David Movrin and Elżbieta Olechowska.

organizers of the research environment. Their willingness to join the didactic process in a scholars–teachers Community (thus going back *ad fontes* to the all-embracing word *Universitas*) and their faith in the meaning of sharing their time with the youth seems now a testimony to a set of features that might be necessary to become a Scholar with a capital S. And their participation in the educational experiment could be somehow a test for those features and an opportunity to cultivate and develop them. Again some food for thought for those who suggest to separate research from teaching.

As it was difficult to coordinate the time schedules both for the school and the University, the programme of Ancient Culture was not always implemented “linearly”; in fact, it rarely was. In addition, the scholars were coming to us with their own fresh theories and discoveries, and often they did not stick to the arrangements – they were led by their passion and the willingness to share their research results with us. Thus, what was supposed to be a lecture happened to develop into a vivid conversation – sometimes so intense that my notes started resembling *notae Tironis* mixed with hieroglyphs or a bizarre mind map. This was typical of, for example, the classes held by Prof. Jerzy Axer, the founder (in 1991) of the Centre for Studies on the Classical Tradition (OBTA), transformed later (in 2012) into the Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, and the creator of experimental study curricula in the spirit of liberal education in Poland.⁵⁷ What needs to be emphasized is the fact that the conversation was authentic – the scholars really wanted to hear our opinions and were willing to open up to digressions and unexpected discussions. They certainly treated us as a public that would be able to understand their research. And we strove to meet those expectations. Of course, the necessity to follow different kinds of discourses and jumping from topic to topic required an extra effort (*Per aspera...* again), but precisely this “untamed” character of the classes was the essence of their charm,

⁵⁷ OBTA was awarded twice (1999, 2000) the Hannah Arendt Prize “for the best innovative research and educational establishment in East-Central Europe”; see Jerzy Axer, “Antiquity and We – The Perspective of the Period of Transformation”, in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Antiquity and We*, Warsaw: Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw, 2013, 45, also available online (http://al.uw.edu.pl/pliki/akt/Antiquity_and_We_eBook.pdf). Many educational initiatives created by Prof. Axer have also been “exported” abroad (e.g., the system of Inter-Area Individual Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences – the so-called MISH, adapted in Ukraine). Among the most recent projects by Prof. Axer the joint curriculum – Anthropozoology (since 2017/18) – of the Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, Faculty of Biology, and the Faculty of Psychology should be mentioned, the first curriculum of its kind in Poland, and the International PhD Program “Nature–Culture” (since 2018/19; see <https://nature-culture.al.uw.edu.pl/>), all rooted in the humanistic tradition of *artes liberales* and the Classics.

and it helped us better understand the non-linear relationships between the subjects, in particular regarding Classical Antiquity and its reception. Hence my atypical compliment to define those lessons – “Chaos Controlled”. We never knew what to expect and that is why each Thursday (eight o’clock in the morning!) was the day that we really awaited.

The first lesson in Ancient Culture was conducted by Adam Łajtar – then a PhD student, today Professor of Archaeology and one of the organizers of the 27th International Congress of Papyrology in 2013. We expected a lecture on Greece or Rome and we received a fascinating conversation about Egypt, we wrote our first hieroglyphs, and we learnt – from a practitioner in reading papyri and participant in archaeological excavations – an outline of the history of Mesopotamia and the Middle East, with Classical Antiquity’s chronology against that background. We also got acquainted with some Egyptian, Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian myths concerning the beginnings of the world, and that complemented the knowledge we gained from the lessons of Latin and Polish. The subsequent classes were devoted to the development of the writing systems, and they were vigorously conducted by Prof. (then a doctor) Małgorzata Borowska, concluding at that time her work on the *Mormolyke* handbook, and by Prof. Oktawiusz Jurewicz – an eminent linguist, the translator of Horace’s corpus into Polish, long-time director of the Department (now Institute) of Classical Philology at the University of Warsaw, and finally a cherished member of OBTA, who won our respect and admiration with his vast knowledge and his pre-war gentlemanly demeanour. He made us search for connections between different languages and for the etymology of words as a key to understanding the given culture and its people. In the first year, classical mythology was present (complementarily to the Polish classes) mainly at the lessons on Greek vases, Homer, Hesiod, and ancient drama.

One of the most valuable experiences we gained from the course on Ancient Culture was the awareness that scholars might not know something and that instead of “one fundamental thesis” it was possible to deal with several theories (as, for example, on the origin of tragedy or in regard to the text transmission process). Suddenly, nothing was taken for granted, and this encouraged openness, curiosity, and the need for posing questions in a constant dialogue with the lecturer and the texts.

Of course, it was not required from us that we read all the texts under discussion, but the character of the lessons encouraged such extra-curricular engagement in further reading. A precious added value was in fact that

of the bibliographical hints we received from the scholars and our teachers. Their passion and personalities had a better effect than any kind of book marketing or didactic pressure. That is how I came across, among others texts, the stunning novel about Ovid, *Nazo poeta* [Naso the Poet, 1969] by Jacek Bocheński, the poignant *Laughter of Aphrodite* (1965) by Peter Green, and the breath-taking *Story of San Michele* (1929) by Axel Munthe. It was also during the course on Ancient Culture that I came to know Tadeusz Zieliński's difficult *curriculum vitae*. Whole decades of ostracizing him by communist censorship in Poland removed him from collective memory. After 1989, his books could again be published, and in fact I had at home the first three parts of his tetralogy *Świat antyczny* [The Ancient World],⁵⁸ including *Fabulous Antiquity* printed still outside of Poland (1988),⁵⁹ so I could immerse myself in it as a child, but I gained the awareness of his tragic fate from my Masters whom I met at Rej High School and who preserved the memory of their Masters, *antiquorum non immemores*.⁶⁰

In sum, the Classics profile was an education in Community, where all the parts involved (scholars, teachers, and students) learnt responsibility for the transmission of the ancient heritage and were presented with opportunities to develop their horizons in the study process, taking place according to the principles of *docere, movere, delectare*.

⁵⁸ The fourth part, *Cesarstwo rzymskie* [Roman Empire], was republished for the first time after World War Two as late as in 1995 in Warsaw.

⁵⁹ Tadeusz Zieliński, *Starożytność bajeczna* [Fabulous Antiquity], Zagreb: Wydawnictwo “Śląsk”, 1988 (re-ed. of 1939; ed. pr. in Polish 1930, ed. pr. in Russian 1922–1923), with a foreword by the famous Polish historian of Classical Antiquity and popularizer of history Prof. Aleksander Krawczuk.

⁶⁰ *Antiquorum non immemores* is also the title of a monograph on the history and on the remarkable members of the Polish Philological Association; see Jerzy Łanowski and Alicja Szastyńska-Siemon, eds., *Antiquorum non immemores... Polskie Towarzystwo Filologiczne 1893–1993* [*Antiquorum non immemores... Polish Philological Association 1893–1993*], Warszawa and Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Filologiczne and OBTA, 1999, incl. Zieliński's biography by Jerzy Axer, 332–334. On Zieliński, see also Marian Plezia, “Tadeusz Stefan Zieliński 1859–1944”, in Iza Biezuńska-Małowist, ed., *W kręgu wielkich humanistów. Kultura antyczna w Uniwersytecie Warszawskim po I wojnie światowej* [In the Circle of Eminent Humanists: Ancient Culture at the University of Warsaw after World War One], Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1991, 38–53; Marian Plezia, *Z dziejów filologii klasycznej w Polsce* [From the History of Classical Philology in Poland], Warszawa: Polskie Towarzystwo Filologiczne, 1993, chapters: “Z młodzieńczych lat Tadeusza Zielińskiego” [From the Years of Tadeusz Zieliński's Youth], 168–180 (first published in *Meander* in 1982), and “Dziecię niedoli. Ostatnie dzieło Tadeusza Zielińskiego” [“Child of Misery”: The Last Work of Tadeusz Zieliński], 181–235 (first published in *Analecta Cracoviensia* in 1983).

2.4. Prometheus “the Internet-Bearer”: Our Mythical Education Today

In December 2017, a newspaper report from a British school captured the attention of public opinion not only in the United Kingdom. Its popularity was not surprising, as the school in question stated to have found a method for teaching its students how to distinguish fake news from the facts – a competence crucial in the present-day world. This was done mainly by training young minds with excerpts from the ancient philosophers.⁶¹ The method seems reasonable all the more so as we are still in debt to the Ionian school of the philosophy of nature and the inquisitiveness of their representatives, whose rudimental questions – repeated later by Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, et al. – have never stopped guiding us through the mysteries of the world. And there are more arguments for the presence of the Classics in education, including the concept of “the Experience of the Masterpieces” as articulated by Wilfried Stroh. To renounce the legacy of Greek and Roman antiquity by eliminating it from school means to sever ties not only with the ancient masterpieces that indeed make us think deeper and more sharply (woe to fake news!), but also, due to the mechanisms of reception, with many masterpieces of post-antiquity art, literature, and thought – all still breathtaking and with the potential to inspire successive generations of artists and thinkers, as well as us – their public.

And, in fact, you cannot give up on this heritage all that easily. Ancient culture, as noticed by Sienkiewicz and Tuwim, courses through our veins. It is enough to look around. Bob Dylan dedicates a crucial part of his 2016 Nobel Prize Lecture to Homer. Helen Oyeyemi conquers the British (and not only)⁶² book market with her novel *Icarus Girl* (2005), in which she combines traditions of the Yoruba tribe with the Greek myth that is foundational for Western civilization. Biologists name a recently discovered gene that prevents obesity in sheep after Aphrodite Kallipygos (Venus of the Beautiful Buttocks)⁶³ and a genus of octopus discovered in 1998 in extremely

⁶¹ Camilla Turner, “Leading Private School Uses Greek Philosophers to Teach Pupils How to Spot ‘Fake News’”, *The Telegraph*, 29 December 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2017/12/29/leading-private-school-uses-greek-philosophers-teach-pupils/>.

⁶² In 2007 Helen Oyeyemi visited Poland (Lublin, Warsaw, Toruń, and Łódź) and met with her Polish readers within the programme *Faces & Places – New British Writing*; see [British Council], “Helen Oyeyemi w Polsce” [Helen Oyeyemi in Poland], Afryka.org, 8 May 2007, <http://afryka.org/helen-oyeyemi-w-polsce/>.

⁶³ Noelle E. Cockett, Maria A. Smit, Christopher A. Bidwell, Karin Segers, Tracy L. Hadfield, Gary D. Snowder, Michel Georges, and Carole Charlier, “The *Callipyge* Mutation and Other Genes

hot hydrothermal vents is christened in honour of the Roman god of fire, Vulcan, as *Vulcanoctopus hydrothermalis*.⁶⁴ The trails of Hercules can be found all over the world. Near Kraków he left his Club, as a huge limestone stack is called (Maczuga Herkulesa). The Spaniards would point out to us the Pillars of Hercules, which again, though *mutatis mutandis*, in our times of a new wave of great migrations, are a symbol of the gate to the new world. The hero also signs the Treaty of Waitangi in the artworks of the New Zealand artist Marian Maguire;⁶⁵ he is called on for help in the American Wild West by Bonnie Tyler in her famous hit of the 1980s “Holding Out for a Hero” (“Where’s the street-wise Hercules / To fight the rising odds?”); and he features in The Chainsmokers and Coldplay’s “Something Just Like This” of 2017 (together with Achilles: “I’ve been reading books of old / The legends and the myths / Achilles and his gold / Hercules and his gifts”). The twenty-first century brings us ever new Classical Antiquity-inspired works, to mention only *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling and the *Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins for youth, the female perspective on the ancient world in the fascinating novels by Natalie Haynes, Madeline Miller, and Pat Barker, a number of Netflix series with classical references (from the obvious *Troy* to the enigmatically Sisyphean *Before I Fall*), a moving report from Daniel Mendelsohn’s journey with his father on Odysseus’ trails (*An Odyssey: A Father, a Son, and an Epic*, 2017), etc. I have mentioned here but a few crumbs from the great table of Homer and his ancient colleagues. There are more, and they provide us with solid nourishment at all stages of our lives. In fact, if we have a classical background, we can feed on them and draw strength from the past to create the present for the future. We can read the messages left by the great artists and thinkers in the world that suddenly proffers meaning and gives us insight into its Mystery.

Three exceptional minds, in different periods of tensions – Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1850), T.S. Eliot (1944), and J.M. Coetzee (1990) asked what was a Classic, each time arriving at the paradoxical definition that it was the work of an author who – anchored in tradition, but well aware

that Affect Muscle Hypertrophy in Sheep”, *Genetics Selection Evolution* 37 (2005), Suppl. 1, 65–81, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1297-9686-37-S1-S65>.

⁶⁴ Angel F. González, Angel Guerra, Santiago Pascual, and Patrick Briand, “*Vulcanoctopus hydrothermalis* Gen. et Sp. Nov. (Mollusca: Cephalopoda): An Octopod from a Deep-Sea Hydrothermal Vent Site”, *Cahiers de Biologie Marine* 39 (1998), 169–184.

⁶⁵ Marian Maguire, “The Labours of Herakles”, 2008, <https://www.marianmaguire.com/2008--the-labours-of-herakles.html>.

of the challenges of his/her times – would lead humankind a step forward.⁶⁶ And why the Classics? The answer to this question is more complex and it is not very “comfortable”. Classical Antiquity, and Greek and Roman mythology in the first place, offer us some lessons – ones difficult for both the students and the teachers who transmit them. For example, on the “Law of the Contrite Heart”, as it was called by the Polish philosopher Adam Krokiewicz (1890–1977), a professor at the University of Warsaw, but earlier also a teacher of ancient languages at a Kraków middle school. He discovered this law while reading the scene of the *Iliad* (Book 24) in which King Priam comes to the tent of Achilles and kisses his hands still covered with Hector’s blood. They lay down their anger and pride, and unite in grief, for there is no victory in war for those who have lost their near and dear.

There is also the “Law of the Appreciation of Life”, as we may call the lesson taken by Odysseus from the ghost of Achilles at the entrance to the Underworld:

μη δὴ μοι θάνατόν γε παραύδα [...];
βουλοίμην κ’ ἐπάρουρος ἐὼν θητευέμεν ἄλλω,
ἀνδρὶ παρ’ ἀκλήρω, ᾧ μὴ βίωτος πολὺς εἶη,
ἢ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν. (Hom. *Od.* 11.488–491)

Say not a word [...] in death’s favour; I would rather be a paid servant in a poor man’s house and be above ground than king of kings among the dead.⁶⁷

The next crucial law is discovered while pondering Oedipus’ fate – a myth particularly important in the context of the Rej High School motto.

⁶⁶ Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, “Qu’est-ce qu’un Classique?”, *Le Constitutionnel*, 21 October 1850; T.S. Eliot, *What Is a Classic? An Address Delivered before the Virgil Society on the 16th of October, 1944*, London: Faber & Faber, 1945; J.M. Coetzee, “What Is a Classic?” (1990), in his *Stranger Shores: Literary Essays, 1986–1999*, New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2001, 1–16. See also the recent, most interesting study *Forward with Classics: Classical Languages in Schools and Communities*, edited by Arlene Holmes-Henderson, Steven Hunt, and Mai Musié, London and New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2018. See also my introductory chapter “What Is a Classic... for Children and Young Adults?”, in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Our Mythical Childhood... The Classics and Literature for Children and Young Adults*, Metaforms: Studies in the Reception of Classical Antiquity 8, Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2016, 1–26, and my chapter “The Ancient Tradition in the 21st Century – Cui Bono?”, in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Antiquity and We*, Warsaw: Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw, 2013, 209–281, also available online (http://al.uw.edu.pl/pliki/akt/Antiquity_and_We_eBook.pdf).

⁶⁷ Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Samuel Butler, New York, NY: Race Point Publishing, 2015, 135.

A good man who gave up his throne and accepted the life of an exile to avoid a destiny which for him meant harming his near and dear, fulfilled it to the very end. But his tragedy is not devoid of meaning. It offers us a glimpse into the divine order of the world – its *Logos*. We may not understand the complex tissue of things, but our limitations are not relevant. Maybe we are not meant to. After all, the most cursed of men brings finally a blessing to Athens, the cradle of democratic values for millennia to come.

The story of Oedipus’ descendants teaches us yet another law: that we are born “to share love not hate” (Soph. *Ant.* 523: οὔτοι συνεχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφυν), and that only this shared love can save us – a very particular species, as defined by Sophocles: “Numberless are the world’s wonders, but none / More wonderful than man” (*Ant.* 332–333: πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄν- / θρώπου δεινότερον πέλει) – which is both the highest compliment to humankind and the highest warning we should never forget, unlike it happened to Daedalus.

There is finally the “Law of Irreversibility of a Metamorphosis”, as we know it from Orpheus’ myth and King Louis XIV’s mythological experience with Fénelon. You cannot undo a transformation that has already taken place, not even if you go to Hell and back. Not even if you are a mighty king who has the means to send your defiant subject there.

All such laws contribute to building young people’s identity and character – whereas, as Zieliński wrote, the “force of mind is not the product of an easy but of a hard school”.⁶⁸ In view of this, classical education has consequences – side effects in the form of constant doubts – natural when you present students with the powerful tool of the knowledge acquired from the great minds that have shaped our world and shown to us our strengths and our frailties. Young people learn to question and at the same time to respect the authorities, for the real ones will not be harmed, as Coetzee remarked. They also become part of the millennia-old mythical Community, where they are encouraged to think independently and to test and set the limits of their own freedom.

⁶⁸ Zieliński, “Kilka uwag o wykształceniu klasycznym”, 10, quoted also by Olechowska, “Teaching Latin and Greek in Inter-War Poland”, 227. See also Barbara Brzuska, “Latin and Politics in People’s Poland”, in David Movrin and Elżbieta Olechowska, eds., *Classics and Class: Greek and Latin Classics and Communism at School*, Warsaw and Ljubljana: Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw; Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts; and Wydawnictwo DiG, 2016, 229–286 (on the situation until the school year 1993/94), and Janusz Ryba’s chapter in the present volume.

Sadly, the potential of this kind of education and the experience of the Classics profile – let’s admit it: difficult both for students and their teachers as freedom is a demanding value – has not been fully used after the turn of the third millennium.⁶⁹ The subsequent reforms tend to eliminate the Classics from the school curriculum in Poland (a ray of hope: thirty hours as an elective course since 2020/21),⁷⁰ the main argument being always the same: the necessity to give space to the most recent discoveries. Yet paradoxically, they will soon be obsolete – taking into consideration the light-speed development of the sciences, while the base of the Classics will never change, the fundamental questions will still require answers, and the gesture of Antigone who sprinkles a handful of soil on her cursed brother’s body will never be forgotten by those who have witnessed it on their education path.

Fortunately, there are ever more bottom-up initiatives to popularize Classical Antiquity at schools, such as the efforts of the Polish Philological Association on the national scale, or the Ancient League (a kind of school competition) in Toruń.⁷¹ The Classics classes are still kept (*mutatis mutandis*),⁷² and headmasters all over the country, also in small towns, with ever-growing support from parents, try to preserve Latin lessons. Nonetheless, the situation is very difficult. Latin as a school subject is on the verge of extinction in Poland: for now it is learnt only by 3% of high school students.⁷³

The Classics will survive, I have no doubts. The stake here is not the future of ancient culture, but of the present generations of students who may be deprived of this source of their strength, of this, to quote Thucydides, κτήμα τε ἐς αἰεὶ – “a possession for ever”, if the educational process

⁶⁹ See Grażyna Czetwertyńska, “Expectations and Disappointments: Latin and Antiquity as Components of the Education System in Poland at the Beginning of the Nineties”, in David Movrin and Elżbieta Olechowska, eds., *Classics and Class: Greek and Latin Classics and Communism at School*, Warsaw and Ljubljana: Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw; Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts; and Wydawnictwo DiG, 2016, 287–298.

⁷⁰ See the report *Nauczanie łaciny w Polsce – stan obecny* [Teaching Latin in Poland: The Current Situation] on the website of the Polish Philological Association (Polskie Towarzystwo Filologiczne, <http://www.ptf.edu.pl/nauczanie-laciny-stan-prawny/>).

⁷¹ Just a small observation in this context: one of the organizers of the Ancient League, Prof. Barbara Bibik from Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, is a graduate of Rej High School.

⁷² For example, in Bartłomiej Nowodworski High School No. I in Kraków, where Dr Janusz Ryba, the author of the chapter “Greek and Roman Mythology in Classical Education in Poland after 1945” in the present volume, is currently a teacher of Latin and the tutor of the ancient culture-oriented initiatives.

⁷³ See the report *Nauczanie łaciny w Polsce* [Teaching Latin in Poland] on the website of the Polish Philological Association.

is focused on short-term benefits only. May this volume be our cry *de profundis* to join forces, both regionally and globally, to help the shapers of the school curricula to see the value of this ancient possession.

One of the crucial roles of the *Our Mythical Childhood* programme, as I have seen it from the very beginning in 2011, is to build an international milieu to succour the Classics in education. Since the programme’s stages supported by the Loeb Classical Library Foundation Grant (2012–2013) and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Alumni Award for Innovative Networking Initiatives (2014–2017), we have been collaborating on a regular basis with two schools in Poland, a venture possible due to the highest engagement of the teachers and the kind consent of the school authorities and parents.⁷⁴ Since 2016, the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” has been a patron of the Polish studies-Classics profile at Rej High School with the aim of continuing and developing in new circumstances the traditions elaborated by our eminent predecessors.⁷⁵

Already in 2014/15 I decided to apply for an ERC Consolidator Grant for the project *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children’s and Young Adults’ Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, including the idea of citizen science also here, to make full use of this great chance for us to expand Our Mythical Community on an unprecedented global scale. The application was successful,⁷⁶ and since 2016, educational activities have been a vital part of this newest stage of the *Our Mythical Childhood* programme. We come from different regions of the world – team members from Australia, Cameroon, Israel, Poland (including a colleague from Belarus), and the United Kingdom, cooperating with experts from Germany, Italy, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland, the USA, and New Zealand. But we all share the same vision, or hope: together to make a change by combining research and education to create a new holistic

⁷⁴ Mikołaj Rej High School No. XI and “Strumienie” High School, which in itself shows the potential of the classical Community that collaborates and teaches its members, including the students, the spirit of open-mindedness and respect for different approaches: Rej High School is a public, old educational institution in Warsaw, with Evangelical traditions, and “Strumienie” High School – a private, Catholic school on the outskirts of the capital. I wish to thank for their excellent collaboration and engagement in particular two teachers *sine quibus non*: Barbara Strycharczyk and Anna Wojciechowska, as well as the headmasters of both schools, and the teacher teams.

⁷⁵ It is worth noticing that Prof. Axer’s successor as the Dean of the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” is Prof. Robert A. Sucharski, who as a PhD student also gave lectures for the Classics profile at Rej High School.

⁷⁶ For basic information on the project, see its website: Katarzyna Marciniak, “About OMC”, *Our Mythical Childhood...*, <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/about>.

model of collaboration in the humanities. Thus, we invite students to make their first steps in research work under the guidance of teachers. As a result, more than a hundred high school students have prepared their first scholarly presentations so far, and they showcased them at our key conferences and meetings.⁷⁷

During the *Our Mythical Hope* conference in 2017, the students gave presentations about the reception of classical mythology in the works they reach for when in need of guidance in their coming-of-age issues. At the workshops *The Present Meets the Past* in the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH 2018), they analysed the traces of Classical Antiquity around them, in the context of some poignant events from the history of the twentieth century up to this day, and reconstructed the fate of a boy who paid with his life for his participation in clandestine education during the Nazi occupation of Warsaw in World War Two.⁷⁸ In 2018/19, for the second stage of the ERC project – *Our Mythical History: Children’s and Young Adults’ Culture in Response to the Heritage of Ancient Greece and Rome* – we developed a collaboration with four schools: next to Mikołaj Rej High School in Warsaw and “Strumienie” High School in Józefów, the challenge was taken up by Nicolaus Copernicus University Academic Junior and Senior High School in Toruń and Bartłomiej Nowodworski High School No. I in Kraków. The students entered into the role of Publius Cornelius Nepos and chose four figures from Polish history who appreciated the classical tradition and whose lives may still serve as *exempla* in our times. The students, guided

⁷⁷ These data regard Poland, but similar endeavours take place in other countries, to mention the event for children organized by Lisa Maurice and Ayelet Peer at Researchers’ Night in Israel in September 2018; Daniel A. Nkemleke and his colleagues’ workshops for teachers in Cameroon; Elizabeth Hale’s talk at the conference of the Classical Languages Teachers Association in Australia in October 2018; and the conference *Classics and Education*, organized by Susan Deacy, Frances Foster, and Sonya Nevin at the University of Cambridge in September 2017, with its second instalment in February 2020, incl. a presentation by Hazel Pearson (English teacher at “Strumienie” High School) and Barbara Strycharczyk, “Mythology as a Source of Creative Inspiration and an Element of Interdisciplinarity”, on the endeavours within the programme *Our Mythical Childhood*; see the post by Hazel Pearson, Barbara Strycharczyk, and myself: “Mythology and Education at the University of Cambridge”, *Our Mythical Childhood Blog*, 19 March 2020, <https://ourmythicalchildhoodblog.wordpress.com/2020/03/19/mythology-and-education-at-the-university-of-cambridge/> (accessed 28 April 2020).

⁷⁸ See the school project’s booklet *Okruchy pamięci: Scraps of Memory*, edited by Barbara Strycharczyk (http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/assets/images/present/4_School_project_booklet_English.pdf).

by their teachers,⁷⁹ presented the results of their task in the collection *De viris mulieribusque illustribus*.⁸⁰ In 2017 we also established the Cluster “The Past for the Present: International Research and Educational Programme”, to make full use of the potential of our academic work and to support teachers in various countries in developing special programmes to engage students with the Classics.⁸¹

It is worth noticing that these programmes also include artistic activities, like the staging of a fragment on Pyramus and Thisbe from Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* – and in Latin,⁸² or the video competition *Antiquity–Camera–Action!* we organize in Poland.⁸³ In its first edition, devoted to classical mythology,⁸⁴ one of the teams created a story about a modern Prometheus who gives the humans not fire, but... the Internet. Indeed, owing to this medium we can do more today⁸⁵ – for example, we

⁷⁹ Barbara Strycharczyk from “Strumienie”, Anna Wojciechowska from Mikołaj Rej, Barbara Bibik from Nicolaus Copernicus, and Janusz Ryba from Bartłomiej Nowodworski High Schools. The book *De viris mulieribusque illustribus* is also available online (<http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/dvm.pdf>). For a presentation of the book, see the short reportage by Mirosław Kaźmierczak, “De viris mulieribusque illustribus: ERC Our Mythical Childhood & Schools (2019)”, YouTube, 29 July 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVECLB5LYKs&>.

⁸⁰ The *mulier* from the collection is the audacious secret agent Krystyna Skarbek who might have inspired Ian Fleming in his creation of Vesper Lynd in James Bond’s adventures.

⁸¹ The Cluster has been established by the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” of the University of Warsaw, the Faculty of History and Cultures and the Faculty of Classical Philology and Italian Studies of the University of Bologna, and the Faculty of Languages and Literatures of the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in May 2017 and was joined by the Faculty of Education of the University of Cambridge in 2019. See a short reportage about the Cluster by Krzysztof Korwin-Piotrowski, “A Reportage about the Research Cluster The Past for the Present 2018”, YouTube, 10 September 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfypV5PUMUc&t=>. In December 2019 we also organized a school panel during the Ciceronian Congress *Cicero, Society, and the Idea of Artes Liberales* in Warsaw. The panel was excellently moderated by Caroline Bristow from Cambridge School Classics Project; see also the Congress’s website: <http://www.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/en/cicero-congress-schools>.

⁸² See a clip from the event available online: “Our Mythical Childhood ERC Consolidator Grant”, YouTube, 6 July 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIFey_V6RPw&t=.

⁸³ We draw in this also on the experience of Dr Sonya Nevin, our team member, and also Prof. Ingo Gildenhard from the University of Cambridge, where a similar competition has been organized by the Faculty of Classics for several years now. By the way, this kind of exchange of experiences shows the strength of our research Community to collaborate with the aim of supporting the Classics globally.

⁸⁴ See the competition’s website: *Antyk–Kamera–Akcja!*, <https://antykkameraakcja.wordpress.com/>. The second edition (2018/19) was focused on the reception of ancient history. The theme of the third edition (2019/20) is ecology and environmental issues in relation to the ancient tradition.

⁸⁵ See, e.g., the results of the panel organized by Prof. Markus Janka within the international conference *Digitale Bildung – zwischen Hype und Hybris* by the Münchener Zentrum für Lehrerbildung, on 10 October 2018, at the University of Munich.

are able to share the winning movies worldwide or we can try to encourage Internet users to reach for the works for youth with classical references by the means of the *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* – an Open Access database of a global coverage.⁸⁶

The Internet and the opportunities offered by digital instruments provide precious support to the life of the Classics. Still, whatever method of education we choose, high-tech or rather old-fashioned, we need to remember one important factor. As the case of Rej High School and the adventures within the *Our Mythical Childhood* programme demonstrate, the Classics are a social phenomenon, one that works best if shared, revived, and experienced in a Community based on a vibrant and direct exchange of ideas, both via online, but “live”, sessions (as we practise, for example, in the cycle *OBTAmistic Meetings*⁸⁷), and during traditional gatherings, whenever the circumstances and the logistics permit. This is even more important the more advanced technologies we have or will have to our disposal in the future. The Classics Community is also mentioned by Sienkiewicz, who speaks of the ancient tradition that “circulates in our veins like blood”, even if we are not aware of this, and by Tuwim, who addresses his poem to a “you” – potentially each one of us. Thus, instead of a “passive education” through giving instructions (be it from a computer screen or in a crowded classroom, in the big centres or in the province), it is crucial to encourage dialogue and creative engagements. And although artists usually create their works in seclusion, and many scholars appreciate the calm peacefulness of their ivory towers, the true conversations and dialogues between various milieux and generations, at least sporadically, are priceless, as the last case I wish to mention here shows.

Closing the first edition of the video competition for schools, we wanted to offer to the laureates – next to the laurel wreaths and the Oscar-like

⁸⁶ See *Our Mythical Childhood Survey*, Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2016–, <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey>.

⁸⁷ This cycle was inaugurated in 2014, with an online meeting with Prof. Jo-Marie Claassen from Stellenbosch University in South Africa, on “Gained in Translation: Greek and Roman Classics in Afrikaans Literature”, and is continued up to now, both with the use of Internet communicators and in traditional academic format, depending on the circumstances and opportunities. For example, in 2015 we were honoured to host online Natalie Haynes and to talk about “The Amber Road, or Keeping Up with Electra & Co.”, while in 2019 we hosted Dr Hamish Williams from Leiden University in the seat of the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” to discuss “Classical Worldbuilding among the Inklings: J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis”.

Athenas (see Fig. 3)⁸⁸ – something immaterial that would stay with them for a long time, if not for ever: the Experience of a Meeting. And so it happened, during the workshops *The Present Meets the Past* (see Fig. 4). We invited the victorious teams with their teachers (as it turned out, they were not only from Warsaw and the nearby centres, but also from distant villages) to practise Ancient Greek dance with us under Dr Helen Slaney’s guidance. We painted Greek vases together at a workshop held by Dr Sonya Nevin and Steve K. Simons, who at the same time, still within the *Our Mythical Childhood* project, are preparing five animations based on the vessels with mythological images from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw (also to be available online).⁸⁹ Summing up, during our meeting we could experience the mythical Community and, to quote Ms Anna Rogala-Goj, the tutor of the students’ team from the Elementary School in Tworóg (distinguished for the movie *The Epitaph for Troy*),⁹⁰ this Community offered to young people “an alternative that helps you think differently”. It is significant that the words of the teacher from a school that has never been in contact with Rej High School in Warsaw fit so perfectly as to universalize also the case of the Classics profile, thus being a testimony to the potential of ancient culture in education as a tool of offering more than sterile knowledge – a tool that permits us to open new paths together and to rely on the Classics to make a step forward:

My thirty years of work as a teacher have convinced me that much can be done if a way is shown to the students, when one turns on the light of faith in their own abilities, and above all when their passion is ignited, and their cognitive curiosity.⁹¹

⁸⁸ An artwork by the young Belarusian sculptor Vitali Paliakou.

⁸⁹ See the project’s website, where you can already watch the first animation on *Iris – Rainbow Goddess* (published in May 2020) and also find some creative activities prepared by Dr Sonya Nevin and Steve K. Simons: “Animating the Ancient World”, *Our Mythical Childhood...*, <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/animating-the-ancient-world>.

⁹⁰ The movie is available online: Alicja Warzecha, “Epitaph for Troy Epitafium dla Troi”, YouTube, 13 April 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsDGAc3nTNA>.

⁹¹ See the reportage by Mirosław Kaźmierczak, “The Present Meets the Past: Our Mythical Childhood Workshops 2018”, YouTube, 21 June 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RizU-WYMW0Q&>. I wish to acknowledge the support from the “*Artes Liberales* Institute” Foundation in covering the travel and accommodation expenses of the competition winners. Ms Anna Rogala-Goj’s words are quoted from her email to me, with her permission.



Figure 3: *Athena* – a statue by Vitali Paliakou for the winners of the video competition *Antiquity–Camera–Action!* Photograph by Katarzyna Marciniak.



Figure 4: Our Mythical Community during the international workshops *The Present Meets the Past*, Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw, May 2018. Photograph by Robert Przybysz; used with permission.

Indeed, we do not give easy solutions or simple answers to the fundamental questions, but we try to offer an alternative, and we search for it for ourselves too. Needless to say, it does us good to leave our ivory towers. This meeting with the young people and their passionate teachers was a reward to us, too. We repeated it in 2019, within the second instalment of the video competition, during the ERC Grant conference *Our Mythical History: Children’s and Young Adults’ Culture in Response to the Heritage of Ancient Greece and Rome*,⁹² and it helped us think differently in many respects.

* * *

This unexpected coda to my chapter is dictated by the coronavirus pandemic that broke out in the early months of this year. The current situation only

⁹² See the reportage by Mirosław Kaźmierczak, “Our Mythical History, May 2019”, YouTube, 12 August 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVeEjWSCXD8>.

confirms what we have learnt through our experiences of late on the sense and the ways of studying the Classics. I am writing these three paragraphs in May 2020 – in the very week when we were all supposed to have met in Warsaw for the conference summarizing the stage of the project entitled *Our Mythical Nature: The Classics and Environmental Issues in Children's and Young Adults' Culture*. With a new instalment of the video competition (its topic: *Ecology*) and three schools working on their understanding of the theme, we were avidly awaiting the students' presentations, both artistic and scholarly. And we are still awaiting them – indeed, ever more avidly. For we have changed only the course, and not the destiny of our journey. *Our Mythical Nature* will take place online, with "live" discussions open to everybody, and the deadline for the video competition and the form of the school presentations will be adjusted to meet safety measures. Nor do we complain. We are not the only ones affected. The whole world is facing this terrible challenge.

With many work groups, starting with healthcare professionals, putting themselves at personal risk to help us function in this new reality, we embrace with gratitude the opportunity they give us and thus we try to do our best to press onward – both as a research team and within a broader societal scope – in *Our Mythical Community*, now passing this test, as I believe, outstandingly. The school "environmental" project has manifested a new potential in the present circumstances. We are now working on a booklet showing its results thanks to the excellent engagement on the part of the teachers and students who took care to write down their reflections and discoveries. The telecommunication solutions we apply with the team members in our everyday work within the project (we are from distant continents, and yet in touch on a daily basis via emails and Internet communicators) make all the new necessary adjustments, even if not always easy, then at least not scary. We also try to support the efforts of educators at least to a small extent: within the initiative *Find the Force!* we prepare research and creative activities to be performed with pupils and students at various stages of education – or simply during family time at home, when mobility is limited. We aim to publish them in more languages in order to make their range as broad as possible across societies worldwide.⁹³ We can see the potential

⁹³ For now we have English, Italian, and Polish versions, expanded on a voluntary basis: "Find the Force!", *Our Mythical Childhood...*, <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/find-the-force> (accessed 10 May 2020). I wish to invite all to contribute. See, e.g., the "Paint the Muses" activity (<http://www.omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/paint-the-muses>).

of this initiative and therefore wish to continue it also once the pandemic is over, as the Classics accompany us not only for worse, but for better, too.

Yet with all this focus on as constructive an approach as possible, we yearn for the next Experience of a Meeting. The year 2021 brings the tenth anniversary of the *Our Mythical Childhood* programme and hopefully an international gathering will again be safe then, or shortly thereafter. In the meantime, we are sailing, or rather surfing, with Telemachus on the waves of the Internet, and learning from the Classics the meaning of freedom in both the smaller and bigger choices between one’s own wishes and the needs of our local and global communities. In short, a millennia-old journey of the γνῶθι σεαυτόν kind, with *Macte animo!* on our flag.

* * *

To sum up, a combination of study and art seems to be the key to the hearts and minds of young people, and, as the process is mutual, their positive feedback strengthens the Community of the Classics, which is so much needed by all generations. Why? Because the side effect of this education is the courage to doubt and to strive for intellectual autonomy, followed by the sense of responsibility for others and respect for Nature – all this so important even in our everyday decisions that can transform the world in more ways than we think. As in Rej’s motto *Macte animo!* from Statius’ *Thebaid* filtered through Virgil’s *Aeneid* – the poem that for ages has been posing the dire question, never voiced by Augustus loudly, about the real prize of building an empire.⁹⁴ And in the darkest times, returning not that rarely in the past, many people answered this question with their lives.

From the faith in the Classics as a tool for saving the new generations from such times was the Classics profile at Rej High School born. This idea united the young people, their teachers, and the scholars from the University of Warsaw who engaged in its implementation. Within the *Our Mythical Childhood* programme we try to continue their venture and adjust it to the regional and global challenges of our times, with the aim of educating the youth who will go on to make a change and become a courageous elite

⁹⁴ See Craig Kallendorf, “Historicizing the ‘Harvard School’: Pessimistic Readings of the *Aeneid* in Italian Renaissance Scholarship”, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 99 (1999), 391–403, and, more recently, Daniel Mendelsohn, “Is the *Aeneid* a Celebration of Empire – or a Critique?”, *The New Yorker*, 8 October 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/10/15/is-the-aeneid-a-celebration-of-empire-or-a-critique?fbclid=IwAR2PeIQGLwgtddVYPaRZCZ2jhNdj9_qRe7Sg-XHvtXl8_07D_h47Z1X1xq4.



Figure 5: Matylda Tracewska, *Our Mythical Childhood* (2013) – artwork symbolizing the programme *Our Mythical Childhood*. Reproduced with permission from the Author.

in terms of the mind – regardless of (or even contrary to) the needs of the reigning ideologies and particular interests. An approach not quite distant from the educational concepts of Fénelon and the host of his followers who felt the ancient myth clash with the absolutisms of their epochs. We all are members of Telemachus' crew. Only it is a paradox of history that today, in times of the apparent freedom of the mind, the vision of classical education again needs support – now perhaps more than ever before.

In the poem "Dlaczego klasycy" [Why the Classics] from the volume *Napis* [Inscription, 1969], Zbigniew Herbert refers to an episode recalled by Thucydides in his κτήμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ for us – *Peloponnesian War*, Book 4. The historian describes there his expedition from Athens to Amphipolis. It ended with a disaster. Thucydides sailed to succour that colony and did not make it; Amphipolis fell into the hands of the Spartan Brasidas, and Thucydides was banished from his beloved city in punishment for his failure. In the second section of his poem, Herbert juxtaposes that ancient episode with contemporary history shaped by people without a "classical backbone", thus

giving one of the simplest answers to the question of why the Classics – quite compatible with Rej’s *Macte animo!* and a homage to the side effects of being educated by our ancient Masters:⁹⁵

generałowie ostatnich wojen
jeśli zdarzy się podobna afera
skomlą na kolanach przed potomnością
zachwalają swoje bohaterstwo
i niewinność

oskarżają podwładnych
zawistnych kolegów
nieprzyjazne wiatry




Tucydides mówi tylko
że miał siedem okrętów
była zima
i płynął szybko

generals of the most recent wars
if a similar affair happens to them
whine on their knees before posterity
praise their heroism and innocence

they accuse their subordinates
envious colleagues
unfavourable winds

Thucydides says only
that he had seven ships
it was winter
and he sailed quickly

⁹⁵ The poem has been translated by Peter Dale Scott and Czesław Miłosz in Zbigniew Herbert, *Selected Poems*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968, 137.

$\langle \phi_n | P | \phi_n \rangle = i \sqrt{\frac{\hbar}{2m}}$
 $y = f(x)$
 $(a) = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & \sqrt{1} & 0 & 0 & \dots \\ 0 & 0 & \sqrt{2} & 0 & \dots \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \sqrt{3} & \dots \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & \sqrt{1} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots \end{bmatrix}$
 $\langle \phi_0 | \alpha \rangle = \dots$
 $U = \int_a^b \pi f^2(x) \phi_n(x) = \left[\frac{1}{2^n n!} \left(\frac{\hbar}{m} \right) \dots \right]$



mythology
 $\frac{1}{2m} \langle P^2 \rangle = \dots$
 $\psi(x) = \dots$
 $i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \dots$
 $\frac{1}{d} \alpha = \dots$
 $\lambda_1 |\phi_1\rangle + \lambda_2 |\phi_2\rangle$
 $f^{(n)}(x) \Leftrightarrow | \dots \rangle$

Part III

OUR ANTIPODEAN MYTHICAL EDUCATION

MYTHS OF CLASSICAL EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA: FOSTERING CLASSICS THROUGH FABRICATION, VISUALIZATION, AND RECEPTION

I. Introduction: Teaching Classics in New South Wales?

While Classics is nominally taught throughout Australia, and the Australian National Curriculum has established a framework to support the teaching of Classics and Classical Languages wherever schools can sustain a programme, the bulk of Classics teaching occurs on the east coast, and mostly in the states of New South Wales and Victoria. This chapter takes New South Wales as its focus and uses examples from Sydney Classics teachers as case studies.

Classics teachers in New South Wales work across two educational frameworks: the Australian National Curriculum, overseen federally through the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA); and the New South Wales Syllabus, overseen by the NSW (New South Wales) Education Standards Authority (NESA). The reason for this is historical: while some of Australia's six states use the National Curriculum, New South Wales uses its own state-based syllabus, which nevertheless references the Australian Curriculum. In this chapter, we will refer to both sets of standards, which were developed in consultation with Classics teachers from New South Wales and other states.

ACARA operates both at F–10 (that is, from the first year of primary school, known as Foundation, to Year 10 – age fifteen in the September of any school year) and at senior secondary school level (ages fifteen to eighteen, Years 11 and 12), thus setting consistent national standards in order to (as its website states) “improve learning outcomes for all young Australians”.¹ It sets out, through content descriptions and achievement

¹ Australian Curriculum, <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>; Australian Government, “The Australian Education System”, Study in Australia, <https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/english/australian-education/education-system> (both accessed 8 September 2019).

standards, what students should be taught and achieve, as they progress through school. It is the base for future learning, growth, and active participation in the Australian community. While there is no set curriculum for ancient history or Classics within primary school teaching as evident in the ACARA website, senior secondary education has a section dedicated to ancient history, alongside geography and modern history. The subject of Ancient History consists of a total of four units (1: Investigating the Ancient World; 2: Ancient Societies; 3: People, Power, and Authority; 4: Reconstructing the Ancient World).²

ACARA's senior secondary curriculum for Ancient History moves beyond Graeco-Roman antiquity and includes the Celts, the Battle of Kadesh, Cao Cao (Eastern Han dynasty), and the early Christians. The curriculum itself encourages critical thinking: in unit 1 students may select two of the following topics to investigate:

1. historical authentication and reliability;
2. preservation, conservation, and/or reconstruction of ancient sites;
3. cultural heritage, ownership, and the role of museums;
4. treatment and display of human remains.

Students further study at least one ancient site, event or change, individual, or group, chosen from the topics presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Selected topics from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's senior secondary curriculum for Ancient History.

Ancient site	Events and changes	Individual	Group
Ancient Thera (Santorini)	The Battle of Kadesh	Alexander the Great	The Celts
Masada	The destruction of Troy	Cleopatra	The Early Christians
	The "Fall" of the Roman Empire in the West	Cao Cao	
	The Roman Games		

Source: Adapted from "Ancient History", Australian Curriculum, <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/senior-secondary-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/ancient-history/?unit=Unit+1%3A+Investigating+the+Ancient+World&unit=Unit+2%3A+Ancient+Societies&unit=Unit+3%3A+People%2C+Power+and+Authority&unit=Unit+4%3A+Reconstructing+the+Ancient+World> (accessed 8 September 2019).

² See detailed analysis for Senior Secondary Level at "Ancient History", Australian Curriculum, <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/senior-secondary-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/ancient-history/?unit=Unit+1%3A+Investigating+the+Ancient+World&unit=Unit+2%3A+Ancient+Societies&unit=Unit+3%3A+People%2C+Power+and+Authority&unit=Unit+4%3A+Reconstructing+the+Ancient+World> (accessed 8 September 2019).

The New South Wales Ancient History curriculum, as set out by the NE-SA,³ aims at precisely enhancing students' critical skills and strives for equity and excellence by focusing on diversity in the ancient world. The curriculum targets North African, Near Eastern, Chinese, and Celtic civilizations. New South Wales curricula have a global perspective with regard to the study of the ancient world rather than Eurocentric one, since Australia's geographic position and demographics are rather global.⁴

While no strand is specifically dedicated to classical myth, aspects of myth appear in all of these areas, and are able to be taken up by teachers and students who are interested. Students in New South Wales who are interested in Classical Antiquity, myth, and language can encounter classical mythology through a number of strands, including Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE), Languages, and English Literature.

Students across global school curricula are gradually encouraged to think of Greek and Roman history and culture in terms of classical reception. This chapter advances the argument by showing how creative fabrication and visualization, as well as classical reception, are tools and methodologies that informally facilitate the teaching of Greek and Roman myth in Australian schools. Focusing on school curricula and teaching practices within the state of New South Wales, we show first that classical myth is not taught in the upper high school levels, but that there are literature classes and junior classes that use myth. As in earlier anglophone educational models (UK, USA), the teaching of classical myth in New South Wales does not compose a module on its own, but it accompanies the study of Greek and Latin language; it further features sporadically in subjects such as drama and English. While the school curriculum in New South Wales does not formally include mythology, this chapter argues that Greek and Roman myths are indeed taught in innovative and creative ways, while deeply rooted within Australian history and culture.

³ NSW Education Standards Authority, <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/home> (accessed 8 September 2019).

⁴ Australians of British descent comprise 67.4% of the population. This is followed by other European ethnicities: Irish (8.7%), Italian (3.8%), and German (3.7%). Those of Chinese ethnicity represent 3.6% of the population, and the Aboriginal and Indigenous Australians comprise 3% of the population. Other ethnicities can also be found, though in smaller numbers: Indian (1.7%), Greek (1.6%), Dutch (1.2%), and Other (5.3%). The "Other" ethnicity includes individuals from many countries, particularly European and Asian. See Amber Pariona, "Demographics and Ethnic Groups of Australia", *WorldAtlas*, 18 July 2019, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/ethnic-background-of-australians.html> (accessed 8 September 2019).

What follows in this chapter is an explanation of some contexts at the state level, and then an examination of how individual teachers have used both their creativity and their understanding of children's needs to teach classical myth. Often myth plays a role in supporting students' understanding of ancient culture, aspects of daily life, religion, literature, art, and language. Rather than being an end in itself, it appears as a taster, in a curriculum that is necessarily crowded, and becoming more so, in an educational culture that is increasingly expanding to take in multicultural views of antiquity, emphasizing creative and communication skills and literacy rather than in-depth, textbook knowledge.

2. Teaching Classics in a New South Wales Context: Fabrication, Visualization, and Reception

New South Wales classical educators feel they are participating in a venerable culture, and support it through an energetic Classics association scene, especially in Sydney, led through the three large city universities,⁵ and in the regions by the Universities of Newcastle and New England. The Australasian Society for Classical Studies meets annually, in venues in Australia or New Zealand. There is a New South Wales Classics association, and the universities support public lectures, language and literary competitions, and more. The Classical Languages Teachers Association meets annually in Sydney. Reading competitions, performances in classical languages, and new initiatives, such as the *Rusticatio* (that is, a full-immersion living-language workshop, usually held in the countryside) and other living-language educational elements, mean that learning Latin and ancient cultures is alive and well in New South Wales.⁶ Often, an approach to language is driven by the specific textbook being used, with teachers generally preferring to use the *Oxford Latin Course*.

These choices are usually driven at a state level, following negotiation with NESA (combining staff from NESA and advisors from the universities and schools). Classical subjects are studied within specific subject areas, and are elective, meaning that students are largely enrolled owing to interest.

⁵ Sydney, New South Wales, and Macquarie.

⁶ See John Kuhner, "Rusticatio", *Septentrionale Americanum Latinitatis Vivae Institutum*, 7 October 2016, <https://latin.org/wordpress/rusticatio/> (accessed 8 September 2019).

In what follows, we discuss some case studies of how individual Australian teachers of classical languages, culture, and literature use mythology and develop innovative approaches to the classroom to work within a conservative system that nevertheless offers room for individual ideas. In the teaching of classical myth, as we argue here, individual teachers are often inspired by methods deployed by the cultural heritage and the entertainment industry: scientific reconstructions most precisely. Rather than concentrating on the properties of digital representations as such, students are encouraged to think in terms of creative fabrication, visualization, and reception of antiquity. This new creative expression of antiquity integrates more traditional modes of understanding and enables diversity.

3. Fabrication

Learning in practice with LEGO, storytelling, filming, painting, and other acts of making are generally referred to as fabrication. Fabricating as a process of learning can help engagement with the world and creating connections between people through experimentation and play where both critical and creative practices are intertwined.⁷ Learning through making signals a desire to connect two modes of engagement: (a) critical thinking, typically understood as verbally explained through primary and secondary scholarship; and (b) physical “making” – goal-based material work.⁸ Any fabricating project ideally includes literature review and a compilation of relevant concepts and theories. Ideas then are sketched into material prototypes and explored through fabrication. While it is nowhere stated in the curriculum that fabrication is in fact part of the learning process of the teaching of Classics, groups of students have the freedom to jointly design and assemble a collection of materials (short film, online pages). This methodology aims at connecting student knowledge and communication skills, eventually providing the means for conceptual creative exploration and to enhance their own critical skills. The final iterative process of visualization and reflection in the classroom involves a negotiation of the visual aesthetics that express, critique, and extend relevant concepts, theories,

⁷ David Gauntlett, “The LEGO System as a Tool for Thinking, Creativity, and Changing the World”, in Mark J.P. Wolf, ed., *LEGO Studies*, New York, NY: Routledge, 2014, 189–205.

⁸ Matt Ratto, “Critical Making: Conceptual and Material Studies in Technology and Social Life”, *The Information Society* 27 (2011), 252–260, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2011.583819>.

and models of historical knowledge. One example of “fabrication” within the Australian Curriculum is Anthony Gibbins’s Legonium.

3.1. Anthony Gibbins’s Legonium

Legonium, where Latin meets LEGO, is the Latin-instruction website of Anthony Gibbins, Latin Master at Sydney Grammar School.⁹ Set in a LEGO world, Legonium uses storytelling combined with short sentences, repetition, illustrations, and an engaging storyline to help students read and learn Latin. The Legonium site features *fabulae*, ongoing original tales that are in turn illustrated with images of LEGO figures, posed in a LEGO set. A new episode is posted on the first day of every month.

Legonium’s core story is of a daring jewel-heist by Jessica, a mysterious woman in black, who appears on a rooftop in the first episode. Gibbins uses the LEGO Modular City layout as a backdrop for his story, and the name Legonium combines the words LEGO and Londinium. He creates a humorous fantasy space, where the inhabitants of Legonium both act out scenes from everyday life (cleaning a clock, playing pool, buying a painting) and solve an ongoing mystery. Gibbins explains that he was inspired by reading a number of modern Latin novels, including the Harrius Potter translation. Legonium incorporates brightly coloured photographs of the Legonium characters. In encouraging students to try out conversational Latin, Gibbins is part of a worldwide movement: in 2018 he organized the first *Rusticatio Australiana*, an immersive programme of conversational Latin, developed in association with SALVI (Septentrionale Americanum Latinitatis Vivae Institutum; the North American Institute of Living Latin Studies).

Working with LEGO, Gibbins is part of a lively community of Sydney classicists who use LEGO for outreach and for fun, including Sydney University’s Nicholson Museum, and the LEGO classicist Liam Jensen. Gibbins uses Legonium in his classes, and reports that other teachers enjoy using the website, challenging their students to read and compose in response (see Legonium blog). Legonium also provides LEGO versions of major classical texts, such as the *Aeneid*, developing LEGO figures of the main characters. In this, Gibbins is firmly in line with the Australian Curriculum’s approach: not emphasizing mythology above other aspects of Latin, but incorporating

⁹ Legonium, <http://www.legonium.com/> (accessed 8 September 2019).

it where relevant, and enjoying its creative and playful qualities. He noted that his students enjoy playing with mythology – working out family trees and tracking down curious or obscure gods and monsters.

While Legonium does not as yet have a mythological focus, in its Twitter feed (@tutubuslatinus [*tutubus* = YouTube]), Gibbins shares information about Roman mythology, including the origins of naming conventions (the days of the week), events and festivals during the year, and puzzles and quizzes, such as a recent survey: “Just curious: Hermes suddenly appears with three competing goddesses. It’s up to you! To whom do you give the golden apple?” (@tutubuslatinus, 1 November 2018),¹⁰ which as of 2 November 2018 had elicited 966 votes, with 13% going to Hera, 59% to Athena, and 28% to Aphrodite. Athena’s popularity may be because Gibbins’s sample population is biased towards the intellectual, or because, as CatzMeow (@emilinalala) comments, “Athena is armed, so that’s an easy call”, or because, as (((Nate))) (@natroniks) comments, “I’ve no doubt [Athena would] concoct a plan to make the other goddesses believe they’d won”. Such light-hearted unscientific quizzes invite audience participation, are useful for classroom discussion, and promote a wide community of Classics students, scholars, and teachers enjoying participating in a playful encounter with myth and classical learning.

3.2. LEGO Pompeii, Sydney University’s Nicholson Museum, the Brickman, and Lego Classicists

One of the main Legonium characters, Claudia, is described as a *femina docta*, interested in antiquity (“[S]aepe placet loqui de monumentis antiquis”, see Season 1, Part 2), and so Gibbins arranged for an episode of Legonium (Season 1, Part 12) in which Claudia visits the LEGO version of Pompeii, housed in Sydney University’s Nicholson Museum (which houses the largest collection of classical antiquities in the Southern Hemisphere). Claudia writes to her friend: “Heri in Italiam adveni. Volans super Pompeios aeroplano, totum oppidum pulcherrimum despicerere poteram”. This large-scale LEGO reconstruction of Pompeii was made by Ryan “The Brickman” McNaught,¹¹

¹⁰ Legonium (@tutubuslatinus), “Just Curious: Hermes Suddenly Appears with Three Competing Goddesses. It’s Up to You! To Whom Do You Give the Golden Apple?”, Twitter, 1 November 2018, <https://twitter.com/tutubuslatinus/status/1058070540861108224> (accessed 2 November 2018).

¹¹ Brickman, <http://www.thebrickman.com/> (accessed 8 September 2019).

the only LEGO-certified professional in the Southern Hemisphere, who leads a team of artists and craftspeople to build models. The Brickman Wonders of the World exhibition, for instance, tours the Southern Hemisphere, showcasing scale LEGO models of famous buildings and artefacts, including a large LEGO Trojan horse. McNaught's LEGO models of the Acropolis and the Colosseum have toured the world and were initially commissioned by the Nicholson Museum, under then Director Michael Turner, as part of a drive to draw children to the Museum.

LEGO Pompeii (and its predecessors LEGO Acropolis and Colosseum) demonstrate the power of fabrication and play, combined with aspects of classical reception, to attract the public; LEGO Pompeii is notable for its inclusion of aspects of its modern, as well as its ancient, history, including sections where archaeologists and famous classicists can be seen, such as minifigures of a bicycling Mary Beard and a busy "Indiana Bones", that is, Estelle Lazer, University of Sydney, whose groundbreaking application of medical imaging to Pompeii casts has enhanced understanding of Pompeii's demographics.

These LEGO fabrications are not precisely mythological in intent, but with them we can see the Brickman and the Museum engage with a different type of mythology, that is, the mythology of the star researcher, the popular classicist, whose expertise underpins an ability to communicate widely and enthusiastically, and whose profile adds to the field's ability to perform outreach. It also has much to do with the power of the LEGO brand, which has grown exponentially in recent years, owing both to aggressive marketing, development of collectables and a wide range of novelty sets, and to the development of LEGO clubs, enthusiasts, and educational outreach. Indeed LEGO operates a LEGO Ideas platform, to which Gibbins has submitted ideas, such as a Roman villa set; as well as encouraging educational experimentation through its STEM-based educational platforms.

Liam Jensen, another Sydney-based LEGO enthusiast, taps into another aspect of LEGO play, with his Lego Classicists project, in which he devises custom-made LEGO figurines of select classical scholars from Australia and beyond. His first LEGO classicist was Associate Professor Tom Hillard (Archaeology, Macquarie University), himself a popular archaeologist. Jensen studied at Macquarie and began his collection of LEGO classicists there: since then it has grown considerably, and he presides over a lively Facebook site, and Instagram and Twitter feeds, in which a playful approach to Classics is characterized by jokes, puns, and memes. For instance, a recent

Halloween LEGO joke showed a “zombie Caesar” tapping an alarmed Brutus on the shoulder, with the caption “Zombie Caesar’s revenge: ‘Now you, Brutus!’”.¹² Jensen’s LEGO Mary Beard appeared on the BBC news site.¹³ Each of Jensen’s LEGO classicists is highly personal and carefully constructed, emphasizing the serious side of play: classicists who find themselves immortalized in LEGO are often delighted by the honour.

Cora Beth Knowles writes in her *Classical Studies Support* blog that LEGO is an “important academic tool”.¹⁴ She identifies Legonium and the Lego Classicists among a worldwide movement of educators using LEGO for teaching and outreach purposes, including the UK group Brick to the Past, who recreated Hadrian’s Wall, and a number of creators who film stop-motion LEGO re-enactments of Greek drama and epic battles. Knowles observes that “LEGO has great potential; but it is under-utilised by the Higher Education sector as a whole. [...] maybe the world is not yet ready for the LEGO Revolution!”¹⁵

4. Creative Textbooks: Emily Matters’s *Eureka!* *An Introduction to Classical Greek for Young Australians*

Moving away from the idea of fabrication, but retaining concepts of play, creativity, and experimentation, we turn to an innovative classical Greek textbook, devised by Emily Matters (Classics, North Sydney Girls High School) and written in collaboration with two former students, Emily Kerrison and Alexander Anstey. Matters has been a stalwart proponent of classical learning at school in Australia. She founded the Classical Languages Teachers Association and was its long-term president, and was part of the group of teachers consulted in the ACARA and NESA curriculum process. She has advocated for the discipline for decades. Under the name Emily Frenkel, she wrote a novelization of the *Aeneid*, entitled *Aeneas: Virgil’s Epic Retold*

¹² Lego Classicists (@LegoClassicists), “Zombie Caesar’s Revenge ‘Now You Brutus!’ Happy All Saints’ Eve (AKA #Halloween) Everyone from Lego Classicists”, Twitter, 31 October 2018, <https://twitter.com/LegoClassicists/status/1057532262449864704> (accessed 8 September 2019).

¹³ “Lego Model of Cambridge Classicist Prof Mary Beard Created”, BBC News, 27 January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-42816995> (accessed 8 September 2019).

¹⁴ *Classical Studies Support*, <https://classicalstudies.support/> (accessed 8 September 2019).

¹⁵ “The Wall: Rome’s Northern Frontier”, Brick to the Past, <http://www.bricktothepast.com/the-wall.html> (accessed 8 September 2019).

for Younger Readers.¹⁶ *Eureka! An Introduction to Classical Greek for Young Australians*, published in 2017, may be unique in the world in not only using the classical myths of Ancient Greece to introduce young readers to classical Greek, but to do so in an Australian context. With her co-author, Kerrison, and illustrator, Anstey, she situates the learning of classical Greek in modern Australia, through a frame narrative in which four young Australians from diverse backgrounds decide to learn Ancient Greek in order to enter a competition to travel to Greece. Explanatory sections show the influence of classical Greece in Australia – through language, architecture, and works of public art – and the textbook further contextualizes the mythic imagination by detailed explanations of parallels with Indigenous Australian myth from the Dreamtime, and important legends from the formation of the modern Australian nation. It is an ambitious and interesting work that aims to situate the learning of classical Greek in a unique modern context.

Eureka! shares ten stories, drawing from myth and history, beginning with the creation myths, and working through recognizable elements of gods, men, heroes, stars, and science. The myths presented in *Eureka!* are referred to as “Stories” (that is, “The First Story”, “The Second Story”, etc.) and include the creation myth; the birth of Zeus; the stories of Prometheus, Pandora, Deucalion and Pyrrha, the Pleiades, Perseus and Medusa, Hercules and the Hydra, Jason and the Argo, and the story of Archimedes. Each Story is illustrated by Anstey, and accompanied by Greek grammar and vocabulary instruction, as well as letter charts, explanations of specific constructions, exercises for reinforcing skills in reading and writing, such as find-a-word exercises, puzzles, and more.

This emphasis on the Australian context and readership of its production makes *Eureka!* unusual, if not unique. In finding parallels between Greek and Indigenous Australian myths, and making those parallels explicit through explanatory pieces, images, artwork, and more, the book notes that the Australian Aboriginal culture is at least as “ancient” as that of Ancient Greece, and encourages students to think comparatively about their notions of culture and antiquity. Parallels between these myths would be comparatively well known in Australia: thus, the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha, and the Aboriginal Dreamtime Flood myths, encourage students to reflect on the ubiquity of flood myths worldwide. The story of the Pleiades has significant

¹⁶ Emily Frenkel, *Aeneas: Virgil's Epic Retold for Younger Readers*, Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1991.

parallels to the Aboriginal Seven Sisters myth. Greeks and Aborigines are among a number of cultures who developed stories about that constellation, which is visible on the horizons of both hemispheres – known, for instance, in New Zealand as Matariki and in Japan as Subaru.

Dane Drivas, Latin teacher at Cranbrook School, a private school in Sydney's East, who has used *Eureka!* in the classroom, shared that its use of mythology provided an easy entry for students, who enjoy "discussing the various mythological traditions for each of the stories, analysing their meaning, and debating which version is 'best'".¹⁷ Drivas leads discussions that encourage comparison of myths across cultures, such as the flood myths: Deucalion and Pyrrha, the Rainbow Serpent, Noah's Ark. Drivas noted that students come to the subject already having a lively interest in mythology: for example, the more "interesting" stories of the *Cambridge Latin Course Book 2*, in comparison with the perceived dryness of *Athenaze*, led one bright student to stay with Latin rather than moving to Greek.

Eureka! was written following the 2015 roll-out of the ACARA National Curriculum for Classical Languages, and the slightly later NESA revision of its Ancient History curriculum, both of which emphasize the understanding of a broad range of ancient history from a number of cultures. For example, the NESA Ancient History Stage 6 Syllabus gives case studies including the Old Kingdom of Egypt, Tutankhamen's Tomb, Deir el-Medina, Alexandria, Thera, Troy, the Roman Games, the Celts, Boudicca, Ancient Australia, the Shang Dynasty, Ashoka, Nineveh, Persepolis, Masada, Palmyra and the Silk Road, Teotihuacan, and the Emergence of Early Societies.¹⁸

This emphasis on cultural diversity acknowledges that high school teachers need to be able to teach across a broad range of topics, and also shows a growing understanding of the diversity and wealth of ancient cultures. For instance, based on its consultation with teachers of classical and non-modern languages, the ACARA board decided to establish a framework that would allow teachers to propose courses in a number of different classical languages, beyond Latin and Greek (that is, Hindi, Hebrew, and more). These proposed courses (and the broad suite of modern languages programmes developed through the ACARA's parallel board on modern languages) reflect the growing diversity of Australia's population. *Eureka!*'s inset narratives,

¹⁷ Dane Drivas, personal communication, 7 November 2018.

¹⁸ See the 2017 NESA Ancient History Stage 6 Syllabus, 36–53, available online as "Framework for Classical Languages", Australian Curriculum, <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/languages/framework-for-classical-languages/> (accessed 24 June 2020).

written by Kerrison, provide a fictional framework intended to ease Australian students into understanding the contexts of Ancient Greek. They show that diversity in conversations between four Australian teenagers: Shona, an Aboriginal girl; Andrew, who is Australian of Greek descent; Wendy, who has Chinese ancestry and is “from another great civilisation with unbroken ties to its ancient traditions”; and Liam, a “typical Aussie with a laconic can-do attitude to new adventures”, who represents the traditionally dominant culture of Australians of Anglo-Irish descent.¹⁹ In their conversational frame narratives, these child characters come to grips with the history of Ancient Greek, globally, and in Australia.

Images of Greek heritage and the influence of the Greek diaspora as an integral part of Australian culture are scattered through the textbook: extracts of Greek-language Melbourne newspapers, and photographs of Greek- and Roman-inspired architecture in parts of Sydney. In the first of the mythical stories discussed, about the Creation and the Titans, Echidna, the mother of all monsters, is discussed alongside a description of the Australian Echidna, a spiny monotreme – a mammal that lays its young in leathery eggs (like the more famous platypus), and that takes its scientific name from the mythical figure.²⁰

Eureka!'s approach to myth is playful and allusive. It rewards the reader who enjoys the way that myths flow into one another, inviting discussion of parallels and counterpoints. Australian readers will appreciate the contextualization and discussion of different aspects of their society, the identification of influences and echoes, and more. The book concludes by returning to its title, the word *eureka* referring to the scientist Archimedes' famous discovery of the principle of water displacement. The word *eureka*, of course, is now synonymous with ideas about discovery and invention. While not a myth, Archimedes' is a story so well known as almost to be a myth, and its connection to the tenets of philosophy, and through that to the principles of democracy, is drawn out by its connection to a famous story from Australian settler history. In the state of Victoria in 1854, in the height of the Australian Gold Rush, at a place known as Eureka, miners rebelled against the colonial authority's taxation system. It is considered

¹⁹ Emily Matters, *Eureka! An Introduction to Classical Greek for Young Australians*, Sydney: Sydney Press, 2017, ix.

²⁰ Ibidem, 14: “The Aboriginal Dreaming story of ‘Bigibila, the first echidna’ is given: a story in which young hunters take revenge on an older hunter named Bigibila for eating a woman at the river, and hurl spears, which stick in his back”.

a major act of political democracy in Australia, and the word *eureka*, applied first in Australia to a miner's discovery of gold, now has this additional sense for Australians, as *Eureka!* points out.²¹

The word *eureka* could also be applied to the joy one feels in learning Ancient Greek, and the volume is a text that plays with mythology – for serious reasons, and in a respectful manner – balancing a respect for learning Ancient Greek with a respect for the more than equal antiquity of Aboriginal cultures, an interest in Australian history and in Australian legends, and the application and reception of Greek culture.

5. Visualization

Visualizations of the ancient world come in a variety of forms. They can range from LEGO reconstructions²² to simple graphs to word clouds, to film and games, or geospatial, time-interactive maps; there is, further, a large amount of online data about the ancient world. The imminent assessment and representation of historical data has admittedly challenged the boundaries of historical knowledge and generated new research questions.²³ The process of reconstructing, visualizing, and rendering historical data has equally developed together with technology. This is the case in both academic and outreach, citizen science contexts.

Visualizing myth in a secondary school class is often the result of more creative, interactive, fabricating, and playful teaching, surpassing the myth of classical stuffiness. A prime example of using visualizations of ancient myth is Dane Drivas (Cranbrook School), who "incorporate[s] a lot of game-based learning and team challenges", such as a "Capua gladiatorial school activity, in which the class progresses (in full costume and with props) through the various stages of a gladiator's journey. From being examined and bought in the slave-market, to training in the gladiatorial school, to ultimately fighting before the emperor in the arena".²⁴ Drivas involves the

²¹ Ibidem, 85.

²² See LEGO reconstructions of the Parthenon in the new Acropolis Museum: "Scenes from the LEGO® Acropolis Model", Acropolis Museum, <https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/content/scenes-legor-acropolis-model> (accessed 8 September 2019).

²³ Johanna Drucker, "Is There a 'Digital' Art History?", *Visual Resources: An International Journal on Images and Their Uses* 29.1–2 (2013), 5–13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973762.2013.761106>.

²⁴ Dane Drivas, personal communication, 7 November 2018.

whole class in this activity, giving each student a role to play. He is also incorporating exercises in spoken Latin in the classroom, ranging from simple question-and-answer activities, to teaching grammar in Latin, and encouraging sustained conversations in Latin, using Latin texts to stimulate discussion.

Drivas is not alone in this kind of engaging work, as Matters notes: the Classical Languages Teachers Association, based in Sydney, hosts a “range of student-centred activities” in evening functions, such as “a classical quiz for Years 7 to 10 (ages 12–16) and a Latin reading competition for Year 9, with individual and choral sections interspersed with Latin community singing”. Each summer, children in Year 8 “can attend a weekend Classics camp with a very full and varied programme. There are indoor activities (bingo with Latin numbers, film snippets, trivia quiz), crafts, outdoor exercise (bushwalk to the ‘Underworld’, ancient athletics), role-play (gladiatorial school) and drama (mythology plays)”.²⁵ This camp has been held annually since 1976, and is one example of the lively outreach and extension activities organized by Classics teachers and academics (including summer schools in ancient languages, conferences, lecture series, and more). Well-known Australian children’s author Ursula Dubosarsky, whose young adult novels often incorporate classical themes and intertextual references, wrote a series of short plays retelling classical myth, published in the New South Wales *School Magazine* (and soon to be republished as a collection through Armidale-based Second Look Publishers, under the title *The Boy who Could Fly and Other Magical Plays*).

Teachers who are not classicists also incorporate some mythology into their classroom. For example, Helen Foster, who teaches at Bronte Primary School, a public school in Sydney’s East, gives daily readings from the *Odyssey*, and involves classical myth and learning in class exercises in a variety of subjects. She emphasizes the role of classical languages in English etymology, and asks students to write “eyewitness reports” of famous classical events or to make composite monsters inspired by the monsters of classical mythology. Foster incorporates thinking about the “golden ratio” in mathematics classes: “I use a scenario where the students are tailors, measuring different aspects of their partner to approximate the golden ratio, to produce imaginary clothing”. Foster states that her goals in incorporating classical mythology into primary learning are:

²⁵ Matters, *Eureka!*, 52.

1. enjoyment, first and foremost;
2. extending understanding of the development language;
3. promoting the understanding of why myths were created (an attempt to understand the world around them);
4. extending student understanding of the role of myth in the development of philosophy, literature, science, and society;
5. appreciation of the significance of myth in history of the development of civilization.²⁶

In all of these exercises, Foster emphasizes collaborative learning and group work.

6. *Winged Sandals*

As Matters notes, the state of Victoria has a lively Classics scene, and more mythical work outside of the classroom could be seen in the 2003 *Winged Sandals* animation and game collaboration between Chris Mackie²⁷ and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). At the time, the ABC was expanding its online presence and developing educational games, drawing on mythology and other forms of storytelling. The *Winged Sandals* website, which can be viewed now only through the Wayback Machine web archive, comprised games, puzzles, and short animated videos retelling different classical myths.²⁸ Presiding over all is an animated Hermes, who flits around the site, wearing the winged sandals of its title. *Winged Sandals* provides a brief introduction to key figures from Greek mythology, providing statistics-cards, retelling some of the stories through animation, and through games and quizzes. Participants can “make” their own Greek vase, or submit questions to the Pythian oracle. Though *Winged Sandals* is no longer hosted on the ABC’s website, it represents an innovation in collaboration between tertiary educators and a public broadcaster.²⁹

²⁶ Helen Foster, personal communication, 21 September 2018.

²⁷ Then of Melbourne University, now at Latrobe University, also in Melbourne.

²⁸ Perseus and Medusa, Demeter and Persephone, Orpheus and Eurydice, how Apollo got his oracle.

²⁹ *Winged Sandals*, ABC New Media and Digital Services and University of Melbourne, 2004, http://www.abc.net.au/arts/wingedsandals/sandals_fixed.html. Currently only available at Wayback Machine, 22 October 2004, https://web.archive.org/web/20041022074943/http://www.abc.net.au:80/arts/wingedsandals/sandals_fixed.html (accessed 8 September 2019).

7. Conclusions

While the New South Wales State School Curriculum does not formally include the teaching of classical myths, myths are consciously taught through the lens of diversity and in connection to Australian contexts. Meaning-making of ancient myths is achieved through fabrication and visualization in Australia. First, thinking of Classics through the lens of diversity is highly encouraged in the curriculum, and, as a consequence, the study of ancient civilizations is not limited to Greek and Roman myth/religion and society. Second, there is a stark lens of classical reception: while Australian schools are geographically remote from the Mediterranean, Australian audiences have access to the same popular culture as the rest of the anglophone world, which facilitates teaching of Classics through a common lens of classical reception. Third, the educational landscape of New South Wales encourages individual and group creative activities, evident in the fabrication, storytelling, and visualization of the ancient world (*Legonium, Eureka!*). This creative assemblage of all things ancient facilitates a visualization of ancient myth and a direct engagement in praxis.

Moreover, more traditional forms of Australian and largely colonial education have given way to a form of playful postcolonialism: a revision of Classics that aims to challenge colonialism.³⁰ Justine McConnell has recently examined how within postcolonial contexts Classics often become playfully diverse: "Postcolonial responses to the ancient world are a vital part of the reception of Classics, and form an ever-expanding body of material and performances".³¹ In *Eureka!*, for example, emphasis is given in collecting the cultural landscape of Greek diaspora in Melbourne and at the same time in positioning Greek and Roman myth against Indigenous Australian contexts. Connecting Greek culture to a New South Wales context, inclusive of diasporas and indigenous cultures, *Eureka!* aims at familiarizing students with an ancient context by analogy. In conclusion, while teaching myth does not constitute a separate strand of the New South Wales curriculum, it is sensibly taught through New South Wales pupils' experiences, contexts, and needs, and relies on diversity, reception, and fabrication as methods to understand ancient myth in a classical context.

³⁰ Lorna Hardwick and Carol Gillespie, eds., *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199296101.001.0001>.

³¹ Justine McConnell, "Postcolonialism and Classics", APGRD Archive of Performances of Greek & Roman Drama, <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/learning/short-guides/postcolonialism-and-classics> (accessed 8 September 2019).

ODYSSEUS DOWN UNDER: CLASSICAL MYTH IN NEW ZEALAND SCHOOL EDUCATION

Classical Studies, taught in translation, is a very popular subject at New Zealand high schools.¹ A number of schools also offer Latin classes. In 2013–2017, over 10,000 students in New Zealand took the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) exams in Classical Studies each year. Student numbers for Latin NCEA for the same time period range from 245 to 175.² As part of both subjects, mythical topics are taught. However, when trying to determine which myths are taught in New Zealand schools and with which learning outcomes, one feels somewhat like Odysseus, trying to find the way, as each school or even individual Classics teacher in New Zealand chooses which myths to teach and in which ways. The reason for this is the way the New Zealand curriculum is conceptualized: it only provides high-level directives and prides itself on giving teachers and schools the freedom to fill in the details of what exactly is taught, depending on the needs and interests of their students or the strengths of their teachers:

¹ In New Zealand, high schools are called “colleges”, but in this chapter I will refer to them as high schools to avoid confusion with “college” referring to tertiary education in North America. I would like to thank all the teachers and students who kindly told me which myths they are teaching or have been taught at school, especially Belinda Gibson of St Mary’s School and Kim Tattersall of Wellington College. I would also very much like to thank Rebecca Essery – Senior Policy Analyst, Schooling and System Policy at the Ministry of Education, Kay Hancock – Literacy Consultant for Ready to Read and *Junior Journal*, and Catherine Edser – Senior Data Analyst and Report Writer, Psychometrics, Reporting and Statistics at New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for providing information for this chapter.

² This data was supplied to me by NZQA on 24 April 2018. Since I wrote this chapter, unfortunately, the situation for Latin and Classics NCEA is likely to change. In February 2020, the Ministry of Education has proposed to abolish Latin as a subject at all levels of NCEA. Latin is the only subject which is to be abolished. Classical Studies is proposed to be dropped as an independent subject in NCEA level 1. At this level, if the proposal is accepted, Classical Studies can only be taught as a very small possible topic in level 1 NCEA History. See “Review of Achievement Standards (RAS): Provisional NCEA Level 1 Subject List”, Kōrero Mātauranga, <https://consultation.education.govt.nz/ncea/ras-provisional-subject-list/consultation/intro/> (accessed 21 March 2020). Classics will continue to be taught as an independent subject at NCEA levels 2 and 3.

The national curriculum provides the framework and common direction for schools, regardless of type, size, or location. It gives schools the scope, flexibility, and authority they need to design and shape their curriculum so that teaching and learning is meaningful and beneficial to their particular communities of students. In turn, the design of each school's curriculum should allow teachers the scope to make interpretations in response to the particular needs, interests, and talents of individuals and groups of students in their classes. [...] [I]t is a framework rather than a detailed plan. This means that while every school curriculum must be clearly aligned with the intent of this document, schools have considerable flexibility when determining the detail.³

Before delving into more detail about Classics teaching, a short overview of the structure of the New Zealand school system should be helpful. In New Zealand, children generally start school on their fifth birthday, or the first school day thereafter. New Zealand primary schools can cover six or eight years. Children who attend primary school for six years go on to intermediate school for Years 7 and 8. College (high school) lasts from Year 9 to 13.

While many high schools offer Classical Studies and some Latin, Ancient Greek is not taught in New Zealand schools. It depends on the school how many years of Classical Studies or Latin students can take, ranging from five years to only one year. For instance, at Wellington College, boys can take Latin for all five years of high school (Years 9 to 13), while other schools merely offer one or two years of Classical Studies. This chapter will discuss which myths tend to be taught in New Zealand schools, why specific myths are chosen, and with which learning objectives in mind.

To return to the flexibility of the New Zealand curriculum, teachers are encouraged to use local contexts for their teaching and internal assessments, as this approach has been shown to lead to higher levels of success in exams. This allows them the freedom to take into account, when choosing texts or topics for the classes, such factors as culture, gender, literacy needs, specific learning differences, and styles. They may consider changing the content they teach from year to year, depending on students' needs and interests. The following two examples are mentioned in the Ministry of Education's subject guide for Classical Studies:

³ *The New Zealand Curriculum*, Ministry of Education, 2007, 39, available at New Zealand Curriculum Online, <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum> (accessed 22 June 2020).

- If a teacher had a class with high levels of interest in drama and music, he or she could choose Sophocles' tragedies instead of Homeric epic to explore the key concept of citizenship and society. This would also allow for a performance element. Gifted students could choose a classical literary work that they were interested in. Different cultural viewpoints could be shared and explored through relevant inquiry and debate. Contexts may be different for different students, but each student would still be working towards the same learning outcome.
- The Olympics or similar major sporting event could be a context for learning about culture and identity for a class keen on sport. A visit to the local sports stadium might be included in order to set student learning in a real-life context.⁴

The actual topics to be taught and assessed are thus not only variable from school to school and teacher to teacher, but also from class to class. In keeping with this ideology, the curriculum guidelines only propose high-level learning outcomes, such as: "Demonstrate understanding of ideas and values of the classical world", "Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between aspects of the classical world and aspects of other cultures", or "Analyse the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world".⁵ The learning objectives for Classical Studies are summarized as follows:⁶

Students will gain knowledge, skills, and experience to:

Level 6

Thinking critically about sources

Understand how social, political, artistic, and technological aspects of the classical world influenced the lives of Greeks and Romans living in those times;

Examining values

Understand that ideas and values of the classical world have influenced other cultures, including New Zealand.

⁴ Subject guide for Classical Studies (version of 1 July 2010), 21, available at "Classical Studies", New Zealand Curriculum Guides: Senior Secondary, <https://seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz/Social-sciences/Classical-studies> (accessed 19 March 2018).

⁵ Ibidem, 22–23.

⁶ Level 6 refers to approximately Year 11, but ranges from Year 9 to 13, Level 7 approximately Year 12, Level 8 up to Year 13. Cf. the "Years and Curriculum Levels" chart at New Zealand Curriculum Online, <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/content/download/1110/11995/file/Charts1.pdf> (accessed 25 April 2018).

Level 7

Thinking critically about sources

Understand the relationships between social, political, artistic, and technological aspects of the classical world and how these aspects influenced the lives of Greeks and Romans living in those times.

Examining values

Understand that ideas and values of the classical world have influenced other cultures, including New Zealand.

Level 8

Thinking critically about sources

Understand the complexity and diversity of social, political, artistic, and ideological aspects of the classical world and how these aspects influenced the lives of Greeks and Romans living in those times.

Examining values

Understand that ideas and values of the classical world have influenced other cultures, including New Zealand.⁷

This flexible approach has not only positive, but also less desirable effects. While it is positive that teachers are able to play to their own strengths and to follow students' interests, such an approach also means that the wheel is re-invented by each school, or even each teacher. It also results in each class focusing on different aspects of a topic, which can be a disadvantage for the students sitting scholarship exams (additional, voluntary national exams for the best students, through which they can win financial help towards university study), and it means that university lecturers cannot assume that all their students who are starting a Classics degree at university will arrive with similar knowledge, even if they have taken the subject at high school. For this particular chapter, the fact that each Classical Studies and Latin class in the country may discuss different myths means that parts of my discussion are based on anecdotal information, as I was able to obtain it. It is, however, possible to determine general trends; and the Ministry of Education's subject guide for Classical Studies lists the following subject areas as ideas from which teachers can choose and which they can adapt to fit their own preferences:

Classical studies is the study of the people, places, and events of the classical world and how they influence the modern world.

⁷ Subject guide for Classical Studies, 28.

Classical studies is an interdisciplinary subject: students engage with literature, languages, art, history, science, technology, religion, and philosophy.

Students explore community, cultural identity, values, and perspectives and think critically about human behaviour and relationships to appreciate the civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome, understand the past and the present, and to imagine possible futures.⁸

The subject guide for Latin in the New Zealand Curriculum emphasizes that “Latin needs to be studied as a language with communicative intent [...] situating the language use within sociocultural contexts, increasing the focus on ‘texts’, and exploring values across cultures and [...] over time”.⁹

In both subject descriptions, the importance of providing students with a broader context is stressed, including links between ancient and modern civilizations. More detail is provided in the list of key concepts, that is, ideas which students are hoped to retain long-term after being taught Classical Studies in high school:

Citizenship and society

The interaction of status, gender, family, rights, responsibilities, and freedom and their importance to wider society.

Culture and identity

Social conventions and values, role models, mythology, and belief systems in relation to cultural and social identities, ranging from political and religious to scientific and philosophical ideologies.

Empire and power

The rise and fall of individuals and groups; the reasons for cultural, economic, and political imperialism; the causes and consequences of social and political change; the importance of place and environment to individuals and societies.

Conflict

The contesting relationships between individuals, groups, and ideas, in both historical and literary contexts and the way that conflict can be a force for both continuity and change.

⁸ Subject guide for Classical Studies, 2.

⁹ Subject guide *Latin in the New Zealand Curriculum*, 2013, 1, available at “Latin in the New Zealand Curriculum”, New Zealand Curriculum Guides: Senior Secondary, <http://seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz/Learning-languages/Latin> (accessed 19 March 2018).

Art and aesthetics

The perception of beauty, ideals of harmony and balance, design, creativity, and invention; the influence of classical literature; how art, literature and aesthetics inform cultural values and traditions.

Heritage

How and why the ideas and values of the classical world have influenced other cultures.¹⁰

The guidelines suggest a large range of possible context elaborations, some of which include the study of mythical connections: the exploration of heroism (for instance, in the mythological figures of Odysseus, Heracles, Perseus, Theseus, and Achilles); justice and conflict (as is portrayed in mythological texts, such as the *Odyssey*); the role of the gods, creation and foundation myths and their impact on cult and religion; the influence of classical mythology on modern cinema,¹¹ performance and literature; and the question "What makes a good story?" in reference to literary texts, including those dealing with myths.¹² The subject guide recommends inquiry-based learning.

New Zealand is a bicultural society, so it is central to teaching any subject that *tikanga Māori* (Māori culture) is taken into account. In the section on creating an inclusive learning environment and suggested approaches for *kaupapa Māori* pedagogy, the subject guide, among other examples for comparing Ancient Greek and Roman ideas with Māori concepts, mentions classical myth: "The underworld [could be] compared with modern cultural beliefs about life after death, such as Māori ancestors, Pasifika myths and legends, Christian notions of heaven and hell: what possibilities are there for life after death?"¹³

To provide an example of the variety of topics a Classical Studies course might focus on, this is the description of such a programme of study, taken from Wellington College's 2018 subject area online guide (which does not mention mythology as such, but it would not be possible to teach a number of the topics without examining the relevant myths):

¹⁰ Subject guide for Classical Studies, 4.

¹¹ David Frauenfelder, "Popular Culture and Classical Mythology", *The Classical World* 98.2 (2005), 211, lists a number of movies in which themes from classical myth are alluded to. His study focuses on teaching at university level, but most of these films would also be known by or suitable to watch by high school-aged students.

¹² Subject guide for Classical Studies, 30–41.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 16.

Students undertake an in-depth study of historical, literary and art historical aspects of the Greek and Roman worlds. Topics covered at Year 12 include: Roman Social Life, Roman Politics at the time of Caesar, Homer and Greek Art and Architecture. At Year 13, students study the career of Alexander the Great, Socrates, Virgil or Aristophanes, Greek Vase Painting or Roman Art and Architecture.¹⁴

Since every Classical Studies class in New Zealand may cover different content, the only way to gather more specific information was to ask teachers and students about which myths they have been teaching or have been taught in their classes. Since the following discussion is based on individual responses, it is important to keep in mind that these are examples only and there may be Classical Studies classes in New Zealand which focus on different myths. Despite this caveat, it is clear that teachers favour certain myths.

From the responses I received, it appears that, except for the occasional topic on the Greek and Roman gods,¹⁵ myth is not usually taught as a specific unit. Only very few schools responded that they had a unit on a specific god or mythological character. A Classical Studies class at Newlands College focused on Dionysus and one at Hutt Valley High on Oedipus. Year 11 Latin students at Wellington Girls' College study either the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice or that of Theseus and Ariadne, as told by different Latin and English authors. Like in these examples, usually mythology is integrated into units on ancient literary texts, art, and sometimes history. The *Odyssey* and *Aeneid* appear to be the texts most commonly taught in Classical Studies, sometimes also the *Iliad*. In Latin, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a popular choice of text. Mythical connections are made to these texts. Sometimes certain mythical characters in literary works are the focus, for instance, a former Onslow College student remembers that her class studied the mythological characters of the Cyclops and Calypso in great detail, as part of a wider unit on the *Odyssey*. Many Classical Studies programmes focus strongly on ancient art/material culture, and mythology becomes necessarily a part of such units. In connection with art, mythology can be employed by topic, for example, in a unit on death in antiquity with a strong component about the god Hades and associated myths, as taught at Samuel Marsden Collegiate

¹⁴ Wellington College's subject area online guide, <https://www.wellington-college.school.nz/about-us/learning-areas/learning-languages> (accessed 5 April 2018; no longer active).

¹⁵ A former Onslow College part-time teacher tells me that, in 2013, as part of a Social Studies class, she taught a unit on Egyptian gods.

School, or linked to specific art works. At St Mary's College in Wellington, Year 12 Classics students, for one of their internal exams, are asked to choose a myth and find an ancient piece of art or vase painting relating to the myth. In addition, students find two modern interpretations of the myth and discuss similarities and differences in the depiction of this myth in their chosen work of art, including possible reasons for the artist's choice of depiction of certain elements of the myth. From this, students draw conclusions about ancient culture and values. The learning objectives are to link art and myth and for students to gain a better understanding of ancient life and culture.

A very popular high school unit in ancient history is on Alexander the Great. A former Newlands College student recalls that his Classical Studies class, as part of this particular unit, discussed the myths and legends connected with this historical figure. Mythology is also part of the Latin curriculum. Myths are studied as part of the work on ancient literary texts, in comparison with English versions of the myths, as general mythological topics (such as Roman gods in Year 9 Latin at Wellington Girls' College) and as specific research assignments on mythological topics (for example, in Year 10 Latin at Wellington Girls' College in 2018).¹⁶

Myth, then, does feature prominently in Classics teaching at New Zealand secondary schools, even though it is usually not taught for its own sake, but embedded in and linked to wider topics. Certain myths are often taught because of and with a focus on their classical reception. While the teaching of mythology at universities in recent decades has been focusing more and more on theories of myth,¹⁷ school teaching tends to teach the myths as stories to help students understand the ways in which Ancient Greeks and Romans thought and lived and to interpret the literature and art works which they created.

In New Zealand pre-secondary education, the focus is on Māori myths rather than on classical myth. In both early childhood and primary education, Māori myths are taught as part of the bicultural curriculum, for instance, the popular myth explaining the origin of the Matariki festival

¹⁶ "Wellington Girls' College Year 9 & 10 Course Booklet (2018 Junior Courses)", Wellington Girl's College, <http://wgc.school.nz/sites/default/files/2018%20Junior%20Courses.pdf> (accessed 10 April 2018; no longer active). For the 2020 course booklet, see "Wellington Girls' College Year 9 & 10 Courses 2020", 2020 Junior Courses, Google Drive, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uCn-_dI3Rgnb9EviO5pj6BXmZLizfxa3 (accessed 28 June 2020). In 2020, Year 9 Latin still covers the Roman gods and goddesses as the course's mythological topic. Year 10 Latin only discusses religious festivals, but not mythology in its own right.

¹⁷ Gregory A. Staley, "Myth and the Classical Tradition", *The Classical World* 98.2 (2005), 206.

(referring to the Pleiades constellation)¹⁸ which is celebrated at the end of May or in early June.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education publishes its own series of early-reader booklets, called Ready to Read, which are followed by the *Junior Journal* and *School Journal* for more advanced readers. Ready to Read booklets generally feature one single story with a focus on teaching literacy rather than specific content. As students' reading ability increases, the stories often consist of several chapters, while *Junior* and *School Journals* contain a number of different texts, often centred around certain topics. As with the secondary curriculum, primary school teachers, too, have very much freedom to decide individually which reading booklets they use, based on their own interests and that of their students. According to the online list of Ready to Read books available in 2015 and 2017 and the information kindly provided by Kay Hancock, Literacy Consultant of the series, there are no booklets on Greek and Roman myth. One booklet, however, *The Lion and the Mouse*, and the play *The Ant and the Grasshoppers* deal with Aesop's fables (Aesop, *fab.* 146 and 373 Perry).¹⁹ The play is followed by the story "The Ants and the Grasshopper: The Sequel", which sets the fable in a New Zealand context, including local insects, such as wētā and huhu, as characters.²⁰ Furthermore, a new Ready to Read booklet, entitled *Crow Tales: Two Stories from Aesop*, has recently been published.²¹ The stories in this booklet are "Silly Crow" (about a fox tricking the crow by flattery to drop her piece of cheese, based on Aesop, *fab.* 124 Perry) and "Clever Crow" (about a crow dropping stones into a water-jug until she can reach the water, based on Aesop, *fab.* 390 Perry). A number of other Aesop's fables were retold in older *Junior Journals* which are not included in the online catalogue and do not seem to be used in schools anymore. Some Ready to Read and *Junior/School Journals* deal with Māori and Indian myths and under development

¹⁸ See also Claudia C.J. Fratini's chapter in this volume: "Crossing the Parallel Universe(s): An Experimental, Multicultural, and Interdisciplinary Approach to Using Mythology in the South African Classroom", 419–442.

¹⁹ Kate Boyle, *The Lion and the Mouse*, Ready to Read, Wellington: Learning Media, 2009 (reprint of ed. pr. 1995); Dawn McMillan, *The Ant and the Grasshoppers*, Ready to Read, Wellington: Learning Media, 2004.

²⁰ Dave Armstrong, "The Ants and the Grasshopper: The Sequel", *School Journal* (June 2014), 2–9.

²¹ Tricia Glensor and Giselle Clarkson, *Crow Tales: Two Stories from Aesop*, Ready to Read, Wellington: Ministry of Education, 2018. I am very grateful to Kay Hancock for making this booklet available to me before its publication.

are a Ready to Read booklet about a Chinese myth of the moon goddess. The mixture of international myths and folk tales used in the booklets reflects the striving for inclusive teaching, of both Pākehā (New Zealanders of European descent) and Māori students as well as children of recent immigrant families from Asian countries.

In primary schools, anecdotally, neither ancient history nor ancient myths are usually taught as “topics”, but sometimes they feature in intermediate school teaching. An exception seem to be private primary schools, especially those which do not use the New Zealand curriculum, but the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP; for Years 1 to 6) curriculum, which is based on a transdisciplinary framework of units of inquiry which change throughout the school year.²² In a similar way to the New Zealand curriculum, PYP teachers are encouraged to choose the specific contents of these units of inquiry, following students’ interests. In the last few years, I have been invited to speak to a number of classes at single-sex boys’ Scots College Preparatory School and co-educational St Mark’s Church School, both of which use the PYP curriculum, and all girls’ Samuel Marsden Collegiate Primary School, which follows the New Zealand curriculum. In all these classes, the children were keenly interested in antiquity, and, in some way or another, aspects of ancient mythology came up every time. In Year 3 at Scots College I talked with the students about the Greek and Roman military, in Year 4 about Archimedes’ inventions, and in Year 5 about Greek drama, at St Mark’s in Year 0 and 1 about Roman houses and in Year 2 about archaeology and Roman artefacts, and at Marsden Years 3 and 6 about various aspects of ancient technology. When telling the Year 3 students at Scots College about ancient armour, I mentioned that a common decoration for shields was the face of the Medusa. It turned out that most students were familiar with the basics of the myth from having seen the *Percy Jackson* movies and were very keen to learn more about it. The final activity I had planned for them was making their own Roman helmets from cardboard and Christmas tinsel. The students used sharpies to decorate their helmets with decorative patterns which we had discussed earlier. The boys were still so fascinated with the Medusa myth that most children chose to draw an image of the Medusa – complete with snake hair, large eyes, and tongue sticking out – on the front of their helmets and kept talking about the myth while they were working.

²² See the IB website: “Primary Years Programme”, International Baccalaureate, <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/primary-years-programme/> (accessed 25 April 2018).

The Year 3 boys at Scots College are no exception in their love of classical mythology. Many children of primary and intermediate school age have in the last two decades been introduced to ancient myth by books and movies such as Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* series and the *Harry Potter* novels, and they find the subject fascinating. As Miriam Riverlea points out, "Young adult literature has come to play a crucial role in the dissemination of myth in the modern age".²³ Primary schoolers already know the basics of many myths and are very eager to learn more. While in a 1963 survey of students and teachers from primary school to university levels in the United States, conducted by Lloyd Jeffrey, the fact stood out that primary school teachers were some of the strongest supporters of teaching classical myth in order to help students understand modern literature,²⁴ this attitude towards teaching classical mythology in primary schools seems either to have changed over the last decades or happens to be different in this part of the world. New Zealand primary schools, as we have seen, do not usually teach classical myth, not even comparatively to Māori myth. This is the case even though children of this age group clearly are fascinated by the subject.

The student interest in Classics (including classical myth) is, however, reflected in the large number of students who choose Classical Studies or Latin in high school. Both Classical Studies and Latin courses always include some myth. Myths connected to famous Greek and Roman heroic epics (the *Odyssey* and *Aeneid*) appear to be the focus in most Classics programmes at high school. These are likely chosen because they are some of the most famous works of ancient literature, as well as for their engaging stories of heroes on adventurous quests and for their accessibility to modern students. Moreover, mythology is frequently taught as a form of classical reception, and for its use in ancient art. The focus is both on well-known myths, which will help students recognize frequent allusions to these stories in Western culture, and on relevance, that is, myths which lend themselves to be compared to young adults' own lives and aspects of New Zealand culture.

As this discussion shows, myth has an important place in the New Zealand school curriculum, at least for high school students who choose to study Classical Studies or Latin. There are many reasons why students will study classical myth. An education in ancient myth is still vitally important.

²³ Miriam Riverlea, "'Icarus Is Seventeen, Like Me': Reworking Myth in Young Adult Fiction", *Melbourne Historical Journal* 40.2 (2012), 26.

²⁴ Lloyd N. Jeffrey, "The Teaching of Classical Mythology: A Recent Survey", *The Classical Journal* 64.7 (1969), 311–312. The survey this article refers to was started in 1963.

"[W]hen we study classical myth, we also study the roots of Western culture. Ancient works of art play a valuable role in helping students visualize mythical figures and events as the ancients themselves did".²⁵ Furthermore, classical mythology has recently also been shown to offer unique ways for providing an inclusive education for children with special needs.²⁶ Mythology, unsurprisingly, is an aspect of Classics that attracts large numbers of students, as can be seen clearly at university level where large myth courses are the bread and butter for many Classics departments all over the world as well as in the enthusiasm for classical myth shown by children of both primary and secondary school ages.²⁷ Most importantly, classical mythology is full of gripping and thought-provoking stories, which provide modern readers of all ages with immense pleasure. The popularity of the reception and retelling of ancient myths in recent books for children and young adults shows that classical myth is still speaking to us in an engaging way. In this vein, I would like to conclude with a quote from Klaus Bartels's advocacy for Latin at schools:²⁸

Anders als etwa das alte Ägypten ist die Welt der Griechen und Römer *unsere* Alte Welt. Sie ist uns nahe genug, uns einiges zu bedeuten, und zugleich fern genug, uns auch einiges zu sagen.

Unlike, say, ancient Egypt, the world of the Greeks and Romans is *our* ancient world. It is close enough to mean much to us and at the same time distant enough to tell us a thing or two.²⁹

²⁵ Barry B. Powell, *Classical Myth*, 6th ed., New York, NY: Pearson, 2009 (ed. pr. 1995), ix.

²⁶ See Susan Deacy's project on mythology and autism: *Autism and Classical Myth*, <https://myth-autism.blogspot.co.nz> (accessed 25 April 2018), and pages 479–482 of Lisa Maurice's chapter "Classical Mythology and the Israeli Educational System" in this volume.

²⁷ Kenneth F. Kitchell, "The Role of Myth Courses on College Campuses", *The Classical World* 98.2 (2005), 187. See also the chapter by Emily Gunter and Dan Curley in this volume, "'The Greatest Stories Ever Told': US Classical Mythology Courses in the New Millennium", 325–348.

²⁸ In Germany, Classics is only taught in the form of Latin and Ancient Greek classes, not in classical studies courses in translation.

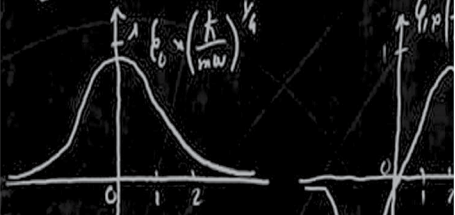
²⁹ Klaus Bartels, "'Jung seid ihr allesamt...'. Ein Plädoyer für den humanistischen Unterricht", *Antike Welt* 32.6 (2001), 672. My translation and emphasis.

$$\langle \phi_n | \phi_0 \rangle = i \sqrt{\frac{\hbar}{2m\omega}} \left[\sqrt{n+1} \delta_{n,n-1} - \sqrt{n} \delta_{n,n-2} \right]$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} 0 & \dots & - \\ \sqrt{2} & & \\ \sqrt{3} & & \\ \dots & & \\ 0 & 0 & \sqrt{n} \end{bmatrix} \text{mythologie} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ \sqrt{1} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \sqrt{2} & 0 \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \\ 0 & 0 & \sqrt{n} \\ \dots & \dots & \dots \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\langle x \rangle = \langle \alpha | \phi_0 \rangle = \left(\frac{m\omega}{\pi \hbar} \right)^{1/4} e^{-\frac{1}{2} \frac{m\omega}{\hbar} x^2}$$

$$\langle p \rangle = \left[\frac{1}{2^n n!} \left(\frac{\hbar}{m\omega} \right)^{n/2} \left(\frac{m\omega}{\pi \hbar} \right)^{1/4} \right] \left[\frac{m\omega}{\hbar} x - \frac{d}{dx} \right]$$



mythology

$$\langle P^2 \rangle = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \phi_n^*(x) \frac{d^2}{dx^2} \phi_n(x)$$

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \psi(\vec{r}, t) = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \Delta \psi$$

$$\Delta = \partial^2/\partial x^2 + \partial^2/\partial y^2 + \dots$$

mitologia

$$\lambda_1 |\phi_1\rangle + \lambda_2 |\phi_2\rangle \Rightarrow \lambda_1^* \langle \phi_1| + \lambda_2^* \langle \phi_2|$$

$$|\phi(r)\rangle \Rightarrow E = \langle K \rangle$$

Part IV

OUR AMERICAN MYTHICAL EDUCATION

“THE GREATEST STORIES EVER TOLD”: US CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY COURSES IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM*

I. Introduction

In 2005, the academic journal *Classical World* featured a special pedagogy section entitled “Teaching Classical Mythology”. In the introductory article, “The Role of Myth Courses on College Campuses”, Kenneth Kitchell asserted that mythology was important “to the lifeblood of most Classics departments”¹ and presented testimonials on the capacity of mythology courses to recruit majors and minors.² He conceded that the understanding of these courses was, at that time, largely anecdotal, and called for a data-driven approach:

There is surprisingly little written on what we should be teaching in such courses, how they should be taught, and how all this relates to our role as classicists in the twenty-first century.³

Kitchell framed the need for data with a series of questions, noting that “the profession could serve itself well by conducting a survey [...] relevant to these issues”.⁴ Among his questions were the following:⁵

* Thank you to Lisa Maurice for inviting an essay on US myth courses and providing guidance. Thanks also to Skidmore College’s Faculty-Student Collaborative Summer 2017 Research Program for supporting our project, and to Kelly Platt (Skidmore Class of 2018), our stalwart third reader. Above all, we express our utmost gratitude to the instructors who so generously shared their time, thoughts, and syllabi with us. Their support and collegiality were invaluable to this project.

¹ Kenneth F. Kitchell, “The Role of Myth Courses on College Campuses”, *The Classical World* 98.2 (2005), 187.

² *Ibidem*, 189.

³ *Ibidem*, 187.

⁴ *Ibidem*, 191.

⁵ Here we paraphrase Kitchell’s longer series of questions (*ibidem*, 191–192).

- Do such classes have discussion sections?
- Is there a writing component?
- What percentage of first-hires are asked to teach myth?
- What percentage of myth classes is taught by adjunct faculty?
- What type of texts are used?
- What percentage of the class features theory?

Heeding Kitchell's call for data and taking guidance from his questions, we have conducted a census of mythology courses after collecting syllabi from institutions of higher learning in the United States. In addition to addressing many of the issues raised above, we consider which departments offer myth courses; the structures of the courses themselves; which Graeco-Roman gods, heroes, and myths are taught; and what themes and motifs are addressed. We also discuss some current and emerging trends that define, or have the potential to define, the twenty-first-century mythology classroom.

1.1. Designing Our Database

Our first task was to compile a list of colleges and universities in the United States where classical mythology courses are or have been taught. Our initial list was derived from the US Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) website, which encompasses over 7,000 higher-learning institutions. The database tracks seventy-one variables, including the degree(s) an institution offers; its classification as public, private not-for-profit, or private for-profit and as a four-year or two-year institution; an indication if it is a historically Black college or university or a tribal college; its geographic status as city, suburb, town, or rural; and the institution's student population. The IPEDS database also includes different levels of Carnegie Classification data, which recognize the diversity and variety of US colleges and universities. The Carnegie data track undergraduate profiles, instructional programmes, and enrolments, as well as institutional size and setting. Overall, the IPEDS data enabled us to filter our initial list of 7,000 institutions and reduce it to a master list of about 3,000. One important filter was institution type: most focusing on nursing, law, cosmetology, veterinary practice, rabbinical studies, or the like were excluded on the grounds that classical mythology courses historically or practically have not been taught there.

I.2. Typologies of Institutions and Courses

For the remaining 3,000 colleges and universities, we searched online course catalogues for key terms ("myth", "Greek", "Greece", "Roman", "ancient", "hero", "gods", and "legend" – common descriptors in titles or summaries) to identify the presence of myth courses in the curricula. Based on these search results, we categorized each school into one of four types (see Appendix, Table 1). Type 1 schools have independent Classics departments that offer majors and/or minors. These include traditional liberal-arts colleges like Skidmore College as well as research institutions like Columbia University. Type 2 schools house Classics programmes in larger departments or offer only a minor, such as the University of Alabama, where the Classics programme is a part of the Department of Modern Languages. Type 3 schools offer Classics-themed courses, but have no department, programme, major, or minor affiliation. An example is Northwest University in Washington state, which, due to its Christian affiliation, offers Greek language and ancient history courses, but has no formal Classics curriculum; many community colleges also fall into this category. Type 4 schools offer no other courses with substantial classical content, apart from those featuring classical mythology. Ultimately, we identified 1,143 institutions that offer classical mythology courses among all four types.

Reviewing the catalogues, we sorted the mythology courses themselves into three categories: (a) traditional classical mythology surveys, here defined as courses that cover exclusively Graeco-Roman myth and focus on the creation of the universe, major gods and goddesses, major heroes and heroines, and various kinds of saga; (b) classical mythology courses with a specialized focus, such as gender in myth or myth in ancient art; (c) Western and non-Western mythology surveys covering both classical myths and myths from around the world. We discuss each category of course further in sections 2–4, taking stock of content and format.

I.3. Requesting and Quantifying Syllabi

After categorizing schools and sorting courses, we began to request syllabi via email. Requests were addressed to the instructors or (when the instructors themselves could not be identified) to department chairs, administrative assistants, registrars, or divisional deans. Each request shared a brief

overview of the project and asked for the syllabus of a specific course listed in the catalogue. For institutions where no specific myth courses were found, but where there was evidence they might be taught, we requested syllabi of any courses featuring classical myth.

The response from across the country was largely enthusiastic and is reflected in our response rate (54%). Emails were sent out to the first half of our mailing list during Summer 2017, and to the second half during Fall 2017. The response rate remained virtually unchanged between these two terms (55% and 53%, respectively). From these responses, we received 589 syllabi, far more than expected.⁶ The syllabi date from the years 1993 through 2018 (Spring), with 398 (68%) from 2016 onward. Thus, the majority of the documents offer very recent information about myth courses at US institutions.

As we received syllabi, we undertook the process of sampling and reading them. We developed a list of 250 distinct variables in order to quantify the documents and to extrapolate the contents of the courses themselves. We refined or added variables throughout the reading process. The list of variables encompasses not only course content, but also other kinds of information, including:

- official listing in institutional catalogues (for example, course rubric, number, and title);
- the sponsoring department and any cross-listed departments;
- the term and year offered;
- assessments, like exams and papers;
- usage of primary (both ancient and modern) and secondary sources;
- which Graeco-Roman gods, heroes, and myths are taught;
- other materials, motifs, and themes addressed in the course.

The variables were entered into a spreadsheet, with numerical values representing our interpretation of the courses' contents and formats, usually (1)s or (0)s. When a variable was unknown, or not easily deduced from the syllabus, we left a blank. Three different syllabi readers were responsible for populating the spreadsheet. The number of readers was small enough to minimize variation of interpretation, but large enough to maximize the

⁶ Of the 589 syllabi we received, a substantial number (219 or 37%) were repeats or revisions of prior courses by the same instructors. We incorporated around 40 repeat syllabi into our reading process for control purposes.

number of syllabi read. We made every effort to read syllabi from as many different institutions as possible, and from every region of the country.

1.4. Limitations to Our Approach

First, human error. Though we coordinated the reading process and normalized it among the three readers, quantifying the syllabi was an empirical, and therefore a subjective enterprise. Second, geographical sweep. Our initial goal was to cover mythology courses in all of North America, including Canada and Mexico, but time constraints made this goal too daunting; hence we have limited our focus to the United States. Third, sample size. We performed keyword searches on all 589 syllabi, and read and quantified a significant portion of them (40%). Nevertheless, our data, though helpful for identifying major tendencies and trends, should not be read too prescriptively.

2. Survey Courses

The most common kind of classical mythology course is the survey, an overview of the major stories, characters, and themes of Graeco-Roman myth. The fullest surveys often follow the overarching chronology of the myths themselves, from the creation of the cosmos, to the rise of Zeus and his fellow Olympians, to adventures of heroes and heroines, to various kinds of saga, to the founding of Rome. Surveys are offered at every type of institution, especially Type 1 and Type 2. They are found at Type 3 institutions as well, but in the absence of a Classics department or programme they are (a) likely to be offered as English literature courses; and (b) less common than courses on global mythology (see section 4, below). If a Type 1 or Type 2 institution offers just one classical mythology course, it is likely to be a survey. Typical survey titles, which speak to the broad nature of such courses, include "Classical Mythology", "Greek Mythology", "Graeco-Roman Myth", and "Myths of the Greeks and Romans". Surveys may be cross-listed with other departments or programmes, such as English or religious studies, and they typically fulfil, in addition to Classics major or minor requirements, humanities requirements within their broader institutional curricula.

2.1. Survey Courses: Content

Instructors of survey courses draw heavily from primary and secondary authors. Our study tracked as many Graeco-Roman authors as possible, from staples like Hesiod and Ovid to outliers like Pherecydes and Plautus, in order to get the fullest view of the sources that inform mythology courses at US colleges and universities. The two most popular authors in survey courses are Homer (71%) and Euripides (58%). In addition, half of all surveys (45–55%) incorporate Hesiod, the *Homeric Hymns*, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Ovid. Some survey courses (between 20% and 40% of them) rely on a second tier of primary sources, including Plato, Apollodorus, and Virgil. Primary sources are almost always encountered in English translation. Of course, upper-level Greek and Latin courses will cover the authors and texts mentioned above and many others, but such courses are rarely advertised as mythology courses *per se* (the lone exception in our study is a specialized Latin course: “Ovid and Classical Mythology”, Lucas Herchenroeder, University of Southern California, Spring 2017). Note that primary sources are not limited to classical literature: ancient and modern art as well as contemporary screen media (movies and television programmes) are also fixtures of mythological surveys.

Fully half of all survey courses use textbooks, not only for delivery and analysis of primary sources, but also for presentation of the various historical, cultural, and religious topics attending classical mythology. Barry B. Powell’s *Classical Myth* (Pearson) is the most frequently used, followed by Mark Morford, Robert J. Lenardon, and Michael Sham’s *Classical Mythology* (Oxford University Press). (Table 2 in the Appendix to this chapter ranks the most common textbooks by tiers of popularity.) It is also customary for survey courses to incorporate scholarship: one-quarter of surveys (26%) use scholarship in some way, usually to fuel classroom discussion. Other secondary sources, such as news services, blogs, guest lectures, exhibitions, and educational videos are rarely, if ever, utilized in surveys.

As noted above, the content of survey courses ranges from Greek cosmogony to the foundation of Rome, with particular attention paid to deities, heroes and heroines, and saga. Naturally, the exact ratio of these subjects will vary from course to course. Nevertheless, all surveys explore the Graeco-Roman pantheon (though some deities, such as Ares, Hephaestus, and Pan, are less frequently featured). Similarly, all surveys incorporate Graeco-Roman heroes and heroines to some extent, with the following featured

in more than half of all courses: Odysseus (76%), Jason and Medea (72%), Heracles/Hercules (68%), Oedipus (56%), Theseus and Ariadne (55%), and Perseus (50%). These heroes and heroines usually appear by way of certain authors. Ovid is usually the primary source for Perseus, Theseus and Ariadne, and Heracles; Sophocles for Oedipus; Euripides for Jason and Medea; and Homer for Odysseus. Although these heroes and heroines appear in other authors and works, the aforementioned correlations are strong.

Apart from myths of gods and heroes, the other myth to appear in all surveys is the Cosmogony/Theogony. This is not surprising, since the creation of the universe is a fundamental mythological narrative, the bedrock for the generations of characters that follow. Other common cosmogonic myths are those of Prometheus (45% of surveys), Pandora (38%), and the Titanomachy (31%). Hesiod, of course, is the primary source for all of these stories. Covering vast tracts of mythological ground, either literally or generationally, or both, sagas are especially fertile areas for survey courses. Most popular is the Trojan War (featured in roughly 90% of surveys), followed by the Theban (61%) and Mycenaean sagas (47%). The inclusion of these myths ensures prominent places for Homer and the tragedians on the reading lists. Other common myths in survey courses are Orpheus and Eurydice (43% of surveys), Deucalion and Pyrrha (36%), Daedalus and Icarus (25%), Narcissus and Echo (24%), Pygmalion and Galatea (22%), and Tereus, Procne, and Philomela (18%) – all of whom are featured in Ovid.

While survey courses have great latitude in terms of which ancient myths are included and excluded, or foregrounded and backgrounded, that latitude infrequently goes beyond the classical Mediterranean. A third of surveys (34%) devote attention to material outside Greece and Rome, largely for comparative purposes. Of these, nearly two-thirds (60%) feature Near Eastern texts (such as *Enuma Elish* and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*), and a similar amount (57%) feature biblical texts (such as the Book of Genesis). There is a correlation between the two: if a course incorporates Near Eastern texts, it is quite likely (60%) to incorporate biblical texts as well.

2.2. Survey Courses: Formats

Survey courses with a lecture-only format are rare and are found at larger institutions (10,000 or more students). Most other survey formats incorporate some amount of in-class discussion, to foster both student investment

in the material and peer-to-peer interaction. Of these almost half (44%) are fully discussion-based, while nearly a quarter (23%) balance lecture and in-class discussion, and an eighth (12%) employ large lectures with separate discussion groups. The last is an enduring format at large universities, where graduate students often lead discussions as part of their professional and pedagogical training. A small but growing percentage of surveys (13%) have an online format, whether as distance-learning courses or as courses with “flipped” classrooms, in which lectures are delivered virtually and class time is devoted to discussion and other activities.

The overall means of assessing student performance in survey courses – not including routine course management, such as tracking attendance and class participation – are similar, but specific permutations vary widely. Tests of one kind or another are common. Most surveys (73%) require a final exam, and of these most (88%) require one or more midterm exams, while a minimal percentage (11%) require only a final. Quizzes are also frequent: they are required in over half of surveys (58%), of which a small proportion (24%) are quiz-only, with no other kinds of testing. A surprising number of surveys (38%) at institutions of every size and type require quizzes, midterms, and finals. Nevertheless, there is a tendency for survey courses at larger schools to require less testing – perhaps only quizzes or a final – than at smaller schools.

Expository writing assignments provide another means for assessing student mastery of the material. They take various forms: response papers or journals (one page or less of writing), short essays (two to five pages), long essays (five to ten pages), and term papers (ten to fifteen pages, which usually require in-depth research). Most survey courses (85%) require one or more of the above, and, given that many syllabi imply but do not explicitly mention writing, we suspect the actual percentage is even higher. Short essays are the preferred form (44% of courses), followed by response papers/journals (34%), then term papers (24%), and finally long essays (14%). In addition, over one-quarter of surveys (27%) require more than one form of writing, usually response papers/journals combined with another form. Most surveys strike a balance between testing and writing, though a rare few opt for one or the other. The survey course at New College of Florida (Carl Shaw, Spring 2012), for example, eschews tests altogether in favour of response papers/journals, short essays, and term papers. Conversely, the survey at Eastern Michigan University (James Holoka, Winter 2017) favours all forms of testing but requires no writing. Institution size – the

undergraduate college versus the doctoral research university – might have bearing on these course configurations. As with testing, surveys at larger schools tend to require less writing.

Additional assessments in survey courses include co-curricular activities, such as museum visits or cultural events, both on- and off-campus; in-class presentations; group- or teamwork; and creative projects. Co-curricular activities, dependent on local resources and robust campus life, seek connections with course material beyond the classroom. Whereas museum visits tend to occur in larger metropolitan areas and at colleges and universities with their own museums, cultural events like dramatic performances or film screenings are common at institutions of every size and locale. In-class presentations in surveys, although uncommon (required in 22% of courses), typically provide brief but significant moments of peer-to-peer instruction. Examples include reports on deities (Ellen Finkelppearl and Michelle Berenfeld, Scripps College, Spring 2016; Renae Mitchell, University of New Mexico-Los Alamos, Fall 2017) and receptions of myth in the post-classical world (Cory Hackworth, University of Iowa, Spring 2017). Group- or teamwork is rarely required in surveys (6% of courses), perhaps due to the typically rapid pacing or large class size. Such work is often combined with in-class presentations, such as the deity reports noted above, or with other activities like debates (Robert Groves, University of Arizona, Spring 2017; Evi Gorigianni, University of Akron, Fall 2017). Nevertheless, it is likely that many surveys feature impromptu group- or teamwork not listed on their syllabi.

Distinct from testing, expository writing, and other instruments, creative projects are an uncommon (less than 20% of surveys) but significant means of assessing student learning. They take many forms, from performances to artwork to creative writing. Examples of the last, which is arguably the most common kind of project, include creating a metamorphosis story for a local object or landmark (Carolin Hahnemann, Kenyon College, Fall 2016), embedding a new episode into an extant mythic cycle (Aaron Wolpert, Wright State University, Spring 2018), or writing an original myth based on ancient themes and motifs (Michael Overholt, University of Iowa, Spring 2017). The balance between creative projects and testing or expository writing can be a delicate one. Although projects are sometimes required in testing-intensive surveys (University of Iowa, again), generally speaking, the greater the number of tests, the less likely a project is to be required. The same is more or less true in surveys with greater numbers of expository writing assignments. Regardless of how they are mixed with

other assessments, creative projects engage students in the mythographic process, offering opportunities to encode rather than decode.

3. Specialized Courses

The other most common kind of classical mythology course is the special-topics or specialized course, which favours thematic approaches over broad surveys. Themes cohere not only around particular characters or particular clusters of myth, such as the Trojan War, but also around story patterns, genres, or media. Regardless of theme, specialized courses are somewhat more interdisciplinary than surveys, bringing various authors, materials, and modes of inquiry to bear on their topics. Unsurprisingly, these courses are found mostly at Type 1 institutions, whose Classics departments and programmes have the curricular infrastructure to support them; hence, they are infrequently cross-listed. Unlike surveys, their core audience is Classics majors, minors, and other students with prior experience of Classical Antiquity, and they often fulfil specific departmental and programmatic requirements apart from general education requirements. Perhaps due to their concentrated nature, specialized courses are seldom the only myth courses available: institutions that offer them usually offer surveys as well.

A selection of specialized course titles demonstrates the diversity and richness of this approach:

- "Female Figures in Classical Myth, Literature, and Religion" (Margo Kitts, Hawaii Pacific University, Fall 2015);
- "Ovid and Classical Mythology" (Lucas Herchenroeder, University of Southern California, Spring 2017);
- "The Good Life: Individual and Community in Ancient Greek Myths" (Emily Katz Anhalt, Sarah Lawrence College, Fall 2016);
- "Classical Myth on Screen" (Dan Curley, Skidmore College, Fall 2016);
- "Classical Mythology in Western Art" (Alyson Hanson, Central Arizona College, Fall 2017);
- "The Mythology of Hercules" (Vincent Tomasso, Ripon College, Spring 2015);
- "Greek Myth in Opera, Ballet, and Modern Dance" (Grace Ledbetter, Swarthmore College, Spring 2009);
- "The Ancient Greek Hero: Mythology and Facing Death" (Gregory Nagy, Harvard University, Fall 2017);

- “Women Writers and Classical Myth” (Marsha Bryant and Mary Ann Eaverly, University of Florida, Spring 2015);
- “Gods and Heroes in Greek Literature” (Timothy Wutrich, Case Western Reserve University, Fall 2016);
- “Epic, Lyric, and Tragedy” (Achim Kopp, Mercer University, Spring 2017).

Evident in these titles is the customary interdisciplinarity of specialized courses, with the study of myth meeting gender studies, media studies, the performing arts, and other disciplines. Also evident, or at least implicit, is a certain degree of depth, as opposed to the breadth inherent in survey courses.

3.1. Specialized Courses: Content

Because the topics of specialized courses vary, it is difficult to identify overarching trends. Nevertheless, a few generalizations are possible. Homer and Euripides, the two most popular primary sources in surveys, remain so in specialized courses (55% and 60%, respectively). The second tier of primary sources in surveys – Hesiod, the *Homeric Hymns*, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Ovid – also obtains here, with the addition of Herodotus. The difference is one of degree: the use of the above authors and texts decreases in specialized courses (by roughly 25% to 50%). This overall decrease owes to the focused nature of the topics, which in turn require a more eclectic remit of materials. Textbook use also becomes more diverse in specialized courses. Although nearly half require textbooks (40%), survey mainstays like Powell or Morford, Lenardon, and Sham are no longer clear favourites. (See Table 3 for a breakdown of specialized-course textbooks by popularity.) Finally, as might be expected, the use of scholarship increases versus surveys: one-third (33%) of specialized courses incorporate scholarship.

The coverage of specialized courses is as eclectic as their source materials. The Graeco-Roman pantheon is still important, but broad survey gives way to more selective portraits. For example, in “Female Figures in Classical Myth, Literature, and Religion” (Hawaii Pacific University, above), attention is given to Athena, Aphrodite, Artemis, Demeter, and Hera in addition to lesser goddesses, like Leto, Metis, Themis, and Hecate. Trends for heroes and heroines are similar. Perseus, Oedipus, Theseus and Ariadne, Heracles/Hercules, Jason and Medea, and Odysseus remain prominent across the board, but courses tend to highlight only one or two. “The Mythology of Hercules”

(Ripon College, above) exemplifies this tendency, locating the hero in contexts as diverse as tragedy, epic, comedy, philosophy, politics, Christianity, and modern screen media. This said, certain specialized courses favour a survey approach. For instance, "Classical Mythology and Western Art" (Central Arizona College, above) covers the same myths, characters, and topics as traditional surveys, as well as works of art and architecture inspired by them. Other myths conform to these trends. Some, like the sagas, continue to bulk large in specialized courses. This is especially true of the Trojan War, which can have entire courses devoted to it (for example, "The Mythology of Troy", Vincent Tomasso, Ripon College, Spring 2015), or which will naturally factor into certain genre-oriented courses (for example, "Myth and Epic", Ted Ruml, California State University-San Bernardino, Spring 2017). Finally, as was the case for surveys, material from outside the classical world rarely appears in specialized courses, with the exception of Near Eastern myths.

3.2. Specialized Courses: Formats

Given the inherent depth of specialized courses, one might expect a greater degree of discussion versus surveys. Such is the case: almost all specialized courses (87% – the remaining 13% are online courses) incorporate in-class discussion, with a sizeable majority (65%) being fully discussion-based, seminar-style experiences. One might also expect testing to be less common than in surveys, but this is not the case. Although about one-fifth of specialized courses (19%) require all forms of tests (quizzes, midterms, and finals – compared to nearly 40% of surveys), other testing permutations are viable. For example, nearly two-thirds of specialized courses (64%) require a final exam, and of these three-quarters (77%) also require one or more midterms. In addition, almost half of specialized courses (45%) require quizzes. Demonstrated mastery of the material, therefore, remains a priority, however much the format of tests in specialized courses might differ from their survey counterparts.

A third expectation regarding specialized courses involves the amount of writing, which one might anticipate to be higher than in surveys. Again, this is the case: the overwhelming majority of specialized courses require one or more of the forms of writing described above. Of these, roughly half require only one form: short essays (47% of courses), followed by term papers and response papers/journals (24% each). The other half require more

than one form, including long essays, although no single combination is preferred to any other. One of the most preferred forms of writing is the term paper (50% of all specialized courses). This preference is consonant with the seminar style of specialized courses, which affords room for students to develop and explore a research topic over the course of many weeks.

In other kinds of assessments, particularly those involving peer-to-peer interaction, specialized courses differ somewhat from surveys. Although group- or teamwork, for instance, is marginally more frequent (10% of courses), presentations are by far more common than in surveys: over half of specialized courses (51%) require in-class presentations, often as preludes to term papers. Still other activities, such as co-curricular events and creative projects, are on a par with those of surveys – further testimony that the study of myth lends itself to hands-on experiences, even in the more focused environs of specialized courses.

4. Global Courses

The rise of multiculturalism over decades in US post-secondary curricula has seen an increase in courses that survey myths from around the world, hence our term “global courses”. Offered under titles like “World Mythology” or “Comparative Mythology”, or even “World Literatures”, they cover Graeco-Roman myth as part of a sweeping mythological agenda that incorporates material from other cultures, particularly the non-Western. Whereas classical survey and specialized courses usually glance at myths outside the Greek and Roman tradition, such as Near Eastern creation myths and epics, global courses tend to make considerable room for classical myth. A culture-by-culture survey, for example, might contain a full-fledged unit on Greek mythology – essentially a classical survey in miniature – situated alongside similar units on Sumerian and Norse mythology. Alternatively, in a thematic survey, a unit on afterlives might place Greek, Egyptian, Japanese myths, and Judeo-Christian tradition side by side. The vast majority of global courses are offered at Type 3 and 4 institutions, which (a) often renders these courses the sole option on campus for sustained engagement with Graeco-Roman antiquity; and (b) routinely places them under the purview of English departments and programmes, particularly when a “great books” approach is followed. That said, it is not uncommon to see both survey and global courses listed in institutional catalogues.

4.1. Global Courses: Content and Formats

The general format of global courses encompasses means and methods similar to those of classical surveys – hybrids of lecture and discussion, varieties of testing, writing assignments, creative projects, and so forth – and so need not be described at length. Moreover, since the content of these courses is to a large degree un-classical, only a few observations in light of our previous discussion are necessary. First, other cultures with which Greece and Rome are frequently juxtaposed include (but are not limited to) those of the ancient Americas (49% of courses), India (40%), ancient Egypt (30%), Scandinavia (30%), and Africa (30%). The rich mythological legacies of these cultures offer many points of comparison and contrast with classical myth, particularly in regard to cosmogonies, pantheons, heroes and heroines, and afterlives; the Trojan War also receives substantial treatment in global courses as a topic in and of itself. Second, given the compendious nature of global courses, textbook usage is quite common (53% of courses), with Eva M. Thury and Margaret K. Devinney's *Introduction to Mythology: Contemporary Approaches to Classical and World Myths* (Oxford University Press) being the most popular. (See Table 4 for a breakdown of global mythology textbooks by popularity.) Third, where classical primary sources are used, Homer, Hesiod, the *Homeric Hymns*, the great tragedians, and Ovid remain the most important authors and texts. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, global courses tend to devote a remarkable amount of attention to essentializing theories of myth, such as Jungian archetypes or Joseph Campbell's monomyth (both occurring in 34% of courses). Such topics used to be staples of classical surveys and even specialized courses, but are now largely passed over or minimized (10% or less in both surveys and specialized courses) in favour of other theories and trends.

5. Personnel

Our census makes it possible to address and expand on the queries of Kitchell regarding the teaching personnel of myth courses. Our own institutional typology, although useful for describing pedagogical issues, is insufficient for personnel matters. The following discussion, therefore, draws upon the 2000 Carnegie Classification index from the IPEDS website, which ranks institutions according to the highest degree granted: doctoral, master's,

baccalaureate, and associate’s. These classifications correspond, more or less, to the vernacular designations research universities, state universities, liberal-arts colleges, and community colleges, respectively – the terminologies most widely used in discussions of academic hiring in the United States.

At all US colleges and universities, tenured faculty (full and associate professors) deliver almost two-thirds of survey, specialized, and global courses combined (62%). At master’s and baccalaureate institutions, they deliver three-fourths or more of courses (75% and 88%, respectively). Tenure-track faculty (assistant professors) deliver an additional tier of myth courses nationwide (14%), with the strongest contributions at doctoral and baccalaureate institutions (21% and 14%, respectively). Thus, the overwhelming majority of myth courses across the United States (76%) are taught by faculty hired, or on a track to be hired, into permanent positions. Those hired into temporary positions, or so-called contingent faculty, deliver roughly a quarter (22%) of all myth courses nationwide. The figure for contingent faculty at doctoral institutions is similar to this nationwide average (23%). Figures for contingents at master’s and baccalaureate institutions, however, are lower (17% and 15%, respectively). At associate’s institutions, the figure is also near the national average (25%), but we suspect it is much higher (perhaps as high as 58%).⁷ The latter figures are reflected in national trends: baccalaureate institutions tend to hire fewer contingent faculty, while associate’s institutions tend to hire more.⁸

The gender distribution of teaching personnel nationwide is robust, with male and female instructors sharing responsibility for nearly every type of myth course at doctoral, master’s, baccalaureate, and associate’s institutions. Overall, male instructors deliver over half of myth courses in the United States (54%), while female instructors deliver just under half (42%). (No faculty member on the syllabi we collected self-identified for non-binary gender expression.) That said, our data show some gender clustering. At doctoral institutions, for example, male instructors deliver most classical surveys (66%), while at baccalaureate institutions female instructors deliver most specialized courses (73%). On the one hand, these figures reflect broader gender distributions: at doctoral institutions, male instructors teach

⁷ Instructors were not always listed in the syllabi we obtained from associate’s colleges. The figure 58% assumes the unnamed instructors are contingent faculty. If none of them are contingents, the figure remains 25%.

⁸ Steven Hurlburt and Michael McGarrah, *The Shifting Academic Workforce: Where Are the Contingent Faculty?*, Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, 2016, 7, 11.

nearly two-thirds (64%) of all myth courses overall, while at baccalaureate institutions females teach just over half (51%). On the other hand, the figures are doubtless affected by our response rate and our sample size. Generally, it seems a safe assumption that specific gender distributions for any given type of course owe more to the vicissitudes of institutional staffing than to any one design or system.

6. Twenty-First-Century Trends

As we bring our discussion to a close, we would like to address three current or emerging trends in US myth courses: (a) the prevalence of screen media in the classroom; (b) the use of gaming to create more immersive experiences; and (c) the increased application of gender and sexuality theory, and how it is handled on the syllabi. Not only have these trends begun to transform the teaching of mythology in the United States, but they are also purely twenty-first-century phenomena from the standpoints of technology and student culture. As such, they clearly demarcate the courses in which they appear from prior generations of mythology courses, and point the way to the future.

6.1. Screen Media

Teaching with screen media (film and television shows) continues the venerable enterprise of classical reception, which, although ongoing since antiquity, has become a full-fledged sub-discipline in recent decades. Nearly half of all myth courses (45%) rely on screen media, whether as companions to ancient sources (often the case with surveys) or as objects of study in and of themselves (typically in specialized courses). Regardless of approach, screen media afford opportunities to consider a range of mythographic issues, such as tradition versus innovation, presentation and narrative, and the sociopolitical concerns underlying the choices of screenwriters, producers, directors, and actors – all in addition to mining a rich vein of popular and (sometimes) timely representations of myth.

What makes screen media a twenty-first-century trend is less the concept of using film and television to illuminate classical myth than the ubiquity of these media in the digital age. Indeed, courses of the "Screening

Myth” variety are hardly new; James J. Clauss (1996) offers a late twentieth-century epitome of the approach.⁹ Nevertheless, due to the ease with which screen media can be accessed over streaming platforms and deployed in the classroom, either in full-length form or in clips, the once cumbersome process of isolating relevant scenes and sequences has become far more manageable. The result is that screen media are now commonplace in the mythology classroom, even as new films and television shows based on classical myth continue to be produced.

6.2. Gaming

Gaming in the mythology classroom is still an emerging trend, but one with enormous potential for harnessing student engagement. Video games are the form of gaming most frequently mentioned in mythology syllabi. A third type of screen media, they are often assigned for reception-based exercises, with students invited to compare and contrast the mythical scenarios in games with ancient sources, just as they might do for a film or a television show. Such assignments acknowledge the reality, reported by Paul Christesen and Dominic Machado, that “video games are the medium through which a large and growing percentage of students get their primary exposure to the ancient world”¹⁰ – even more than from other screen media.

At least three courses in our survey leverage the interactive potential of video games as “tool[s] for stimulating students’ curiosity about the ancient world”.¹¹ Vincent Tomasso (Trinity College, Fall 2016) required students to play the retro game *Don’t Look Back* (Kongregate, 2009), inspired by the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Meanwhile, Amy M. Green (University of Nevada, Spring 2018) has assigned more recent games, such as *Final Fantasy XV* (Square Enix, 2016), asking that students also write journal entries following gameplay to generate topics for in-class discussion. In these examples, students move from being observers of mythical games to being players. The fullest manifestation of this arc is *Mythos Unbound*, a combined video game and myth course overseen by David Fredrick (University

⁹ James J. Clauss, “A Course on Classical Mythology in Film”, *The Classical Journal* 91 (1996), 287–295.

¹⁰ Paul Christesen and Dominic Machado, “Video Games and Classical Antiquity”, *The Classical World* 104 (2010), 107.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 109.

of Arkansas, Summer 2017). Developed at the University of Arkansas Tesseract Center, *Mythos Unbound* immerses students in ancient social and mythological narrative as they take on the role of a Pompeiian slave, circa 65 CE. Students advance through the game's levels not only by exploring virtual-reality depictions of Pompeii, but also by completing readings, answering brief questions, and writing essays. As Fredrick affirms in his syllabus,

Mythos Unbound does not have any intention of replacing reading classical texts [...] with video game action [...]. Rather, the course aims to bring out the wealth of comparisons that can be made between the two forms, recognising that video games are moving into a new phase of deeper emotional engagement and narrative elaboration.

Another form of gaming – one well established in classical history and culture courses, but still in its infancy in classical myth courses – is role-immersion, whereby students are given detailed, carefully researched scenarios with particular objectives and take on the personae of specific characters, usually historical. Designed to last as little as one class period or as much as an entire term, role-immersion games have been hailed for their transformative effect on traditional humanities pedagogy, integrating both oral and written argumentation, as well as close reading, with competitive strategy.¹² Best known to classicists is the *Reacting to the Past* series of games, beginning with *Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.*, created by Mark C. Carnes and Josiah Ober in the 1990s.¹³ *Threshold of Democracy* has since spawned other games set in antiquity and beyond, with more under development and no signs of abating.¹⁴

Given the orientation of *Reacting to the Past* series towards political and social history, its utility in myth courses would appear limited. Nevertheless, Martha J. Payne has used the microgame *Athens Besieged: Debating Surrender* (by Mark C. Carnes and Naomi Norman) in her survey (Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis, Spring 2017). Set during the

¹² Mark C. Carnes, *Minds on Fire: How Role-Immersion Games Transform College*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014.

¹³ Bret Mulligan, "Coniuratio! *Ethopoeia* and 'Reacting to the Past' in the Latin Classroom (and Beyond)", *The Classical Journal* 110 (2014), 107–108, offers a brief but useful history of the genesis of *Reacting to the Past* series.

¹⁴ See Christine L. Albright, "Harnessing Students' Competitive Spirit: Using 'Reacting to the Past' to Structure the Introductory Greek Culture Class", *The Classical Journal* 112 (2017), 364–365, for a recent update on the series and its horizons.

Spartan blockade of Piraeus in 405/404 BCE, the game puts players in the Athenian assembly to weigh possible terms of surrender. Payne’s goal was for students to confront first-hand the realities of Greek myth and religion – which can be overlooked in the rush to cover as many stories and characters as possible – at a particularly fraught moment in Athenian history. Payne also used *Athens Besieged* as a prelude to her own experimental microgame, *Happy Ending? Medea and Jason’s Divorce Trial*, which takes place within the literary milieu of Euripides’ *Medea*.¹⁵

In what is perhaps the most sustained effort at mythological role-immersion, Kyle C. Helms has developed a game entitled *The Fate of Heroes: Words, Deeds, and Undying Glory*, using the *Reacting to the Past* curriculum as a template (University of Puget Sound, Fall 2017). Players, assuming the roles of Underworld souls and judges, debate the ultimate fate of Theban characters, such as Actaeon, Pentheus, Oedipus, and Antigone. Helms reports that students “engaged much more deeply with the core texts” and key issues in both spoken and written modes, especially those students “who otherwise had not been strong participants in the more traditional lecture-discussion format”.¹⁶ Whether other myth instructors will follow suit and harness the creative and competitive energy of role-immersion games remains to be seen. But, like video games, they show promise for diversifying and transforming the mythology classroom, particularly at institutions that incentivize gamified classrooms.

6.3. Gender, Sexuality, and Trigger Warnings

Incorporating gender and sexuality theory, whether applied to individual myths in surveys or made the topic of a specialized course, is the most persistent trend across all mythology courses (43%). Its persistence correlates with the emergence of gender studies, following the genesis of women’s studies in the 1980s and 1990s, as a formal academic discipline at US colleges and universities. It has long been recognized that Graeco-Roman myth, born of patriarchal cultures and (at its most extreme) laden with episodes of rape and other forms of violence, offers case studies for intersections of gender and power. The formalization of gender studies, however, has

¹⁵ Martha J. Payne, personal communication, 30 May 2018.

¹⁶ Kyle C. Helms, personal communication, 9 July 2018.

provided a convenient disciplinary platform for instructors to interrogate classical mythology, even to the point of cross-listing courses with gender studies departments and programmes. Such courses, in turn, have the potential to interest populations of students with no prior experience of myth.

Even as instructors of myth have more theory at their disposal for teaching sensitive narratives and images, focusing on such material is not without hazards, particularly where it impacts the personal lives of students. There is, for example, ongoing controversy over whether syllabi should feature so-called trigger warnings – advisories to students about potentially disturbing content. The notion of trigger warnings has gained traction in the years following the Obama administration’s application of US Title IX Law (also known as the Education Amendments of 1972) towards ending sexual harassment and violence at institutions of higher learning. With colleges and universities prioritizing students’ physical safety, concern for their emotional safety has also become a priority, especially on the part of the students themselves. In an example relevant to classical studies, students at Columbia University published an op-ed piece decrying the Ovid unit of a core Literature Humanities (Lit Hum) class. The unit featured the rapes of Daphne and Persephone and triggered traumatic memories for a student, a sexual-assault survivor. “Having difficult experiences in a Lit Hum or Contemporary Civilization class”, they suggested, “may actually be part of the norm. Unfortunately, not all professors seem equipped to be effective facilitators in the classroom”.¹⁷

Academics have debated the merits of trigger warnings. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) issued a statement against them, criticizing “the presumption that students need to be protected rather than challenged” as both “infantilizing and anti-intellectual”.¹⁸ Similarly, jurisprudence professor Brian Leitner, exploring the legal implications of providing trigger warnings to students with trauma, has noted that “[t]he whole point of trigger warnings – as the real PTSD cases show – is to enable students to avoid engagement with materials. But how can that be

¹⁷ Kai Johnson, Tanika Lynch, Elizabeth Monroe, and Tracey Wan, “Our Identities Matter in Core Classrooms”, *Columbia Daily Spectator*, 30 April 2015, <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/opinion/2015/04/30/our-identities-matter-core-classrooms> (accessed 30 May 2018).

¹⁸ Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure, “On Trigger Warnings”, American Association of University Professors, August 2014, <https://www.aaup.org/report/trigger-warnings> (accessed 30 May 2018).

compatible with the ethical imperative of educating young people?”¹⁹ Yet some see trigger warnings differently. In their review of the *Feminism and Classics VII: Visions* conference (Seattle, 2016), Catherine Connors and Elin Rummel report “a collective emphasis [among papers] on the value of context and discussion, and on facilitating intentional and thoughtful processes of curricular planning around texts and images depicting sexual violence”.²⁰ They further cite Angela Holzmeister’s conference paper on contextualizing imagery in mythology courses and her caution “against becoming desensitized to images of sexual violence”²¹ in the classroom. An alternative take on trigger warnings underlies comments like these, in which advisories could be deployed both to build trust between instructors and students, and to promote leaning into discomfort. That is, warnings might serve as invitations, not obstructions, to critical thinking.

Of the 589 syllabi we collected, 53 (almost 10%) featured some form of trigger warning. The majority were attached to survey courses (55% classical, 32% global), whose general audiences, possibly having little or no background in Graeco-Roman culture, would seem to benefit from content advisories. Conversely, a relative fraction of warnings (13%) were attached to specialized courses, presumably because their audiences, being more familiar with classical patriarchy and its motifs, require less guidance. Perhaps most telling, almost half of all trigger warnings (49%) appeared in syllabi from 2017, more than double the totals from the years 2016, 2015, and 2014 combined (19%, 21%, and 2%, respectively, or 42% total). Clearly, instructors of myth courses, whether of their own volition or mandated by institutional policy, have begun to make issuing trigger warnings standard practice. In the wake of the worldwide #YesAllWomen and #MeToo movements, which have sought to raise public awareness of sexual harassment and violence against women, we postulate that syllabi will continue to give content advisories.

¹⁹ Brian Leitner, “Academic Ethics: The Legal Tangle of ‘Trigger Warnings’”, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 13 November 2016, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Academic-Ethics-The-Legal/238356> (accessed 30 May 2018).

²⁰ Elin Rummel and Catherine Connors, “Visions, Voice, and Experience: A Report from Feminism and Classics VII”, *The Classical Outlook* 91.3 (2016), 81.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

7. Conclusions and Future Directions

We have arrived at some answers to Kitchell's series of questions. We have found discussion, writing, and theory to be important instructional components across all myth courses. We know which authors and texts are the most popular in these courses. We have seen that faculty of all ranks teach myth courses, including adjunct professors and lecturers, but most of all those with tenure. Moving beyond Kitchell's inquiries, we have noted the persistence of certain authors and myths across all varieties of courses, as well as some established and emerging trends. Though further questions remain, the data we collated have yielded more information about mythology courses in the United States than previous anecdotal efforts.

Nevertheless, there is only so much to be gleaned from our approach. For this reason, a supplemental survey of faculty would be helpful. The survey might address factors like class size and enrolments, frequency of offerings, and the potential to attract Classics majors and minors. The last factor is extremely important. It is an article of faith, according to Kitchell, that mythology courses – in addition to serving all-college or university-wide curricula – are gateways to other Classics courses.²² In other words, a putative motive for teaching myth is departmental or programmatic self-interest, if not self-survival. It would be enlightening to know how much purchase this motive has in reality.

Regardless of how mythology courses fit their institutional profiles, the syllabi radiate contagious enthusiasm for the material, suggesting that the best reason for teaching myth is myth itself. It is appropriate, then, to close by letting instructors speak for themselves. The following selection of course descriptions, taken directly from the syllabi, testify to the modern era's ongoing delight and fascination with the mythical legacies of Greece and Rome:

Welcome to [...] some of the greatest stories ever told. (Roger Travis, University of Connecticut, Spring 2017)

[Mythology] brings to light unconscious and preconscious roots of our development. Our development into conscious beings mirrors in profound ways our mythic inheritances. (Marcia Dobson, Colorado College, Block 5 2014)

²² Kitchell, "The Role of Myth Courses", 189.

Myths might set codes or rules by which individuals can orient themselves, establishing a template for what it means to be a human, to be a citizen, or to live with certain choices. (Alex Purves, University of California, Los Angeles, Spring 2017)

Myths teach us in symbolic ways, helping us to feel or sense our way to realms of knowledge and experience that might otherwise be inaccessible. (Jane Caputi, Florida Atlantic University, Summer 2017)

These are some of the more powerful stories that humans tell and retell. Some of them are stories that structure the universe, [...] some of them are stories that remind us not to sleep with wolves. Some of them are stories which inform almost every aspect of our lives, from the books we read or films we watch to the names of towns, or shoes, or minivans. And some are just good stories. (Jeremy Downes, Auburn University, Spring 2011)

Appendix

Table 1: Typology of institutions with Classics curricula.

Type	Classics curriculum	Example institution
1	Independent Classics department	Skidmore College (Saratoga Springs, NY)
2	Embedded Classics programme	University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa, AL)
3	Some Classics/Western surveys	Northwest University (Kirkland, WA)
4	No Classics courses	The Juilliard School (New York, NY)

Table 2: Textbooks used in survey courses, ranked by popularity.

Popularity	Author, title, and publisher
1	Barry B. Powell, <i>Classical Myth</i> (Pearson)
2	Mark Morford, Robert J. Lenardon, and Michael Sham, <i>Classical Mythology</i> (Oxford University Press)
3	Richard Buxton, <i>The Complete World of Greek Mythology</i> (Thames & Hudson) Stephen L. Harris and Gloria Platzner, <i>Classical Mythology: Images and Insights</i> (Mayfield Publishing)
4	Thomas Carpenter, <i>Art and Myth in Ancient Greece</i> (Thames & Hudson) Helen Morales, <i>Classical Mythology: A Very Short Introduction</i> (Oxford University Press)
5	Carolina López-Ruiz, <i>Gods, Heroes, and Monsters</i> (Oxford University Press)

Table 3: Textbooks used in specialized courses, ranked by popularity.

Popularity	Author, title, and publisher
1	Mark Morford, Robert J. Lenardon, and Michael Sham, <i>Classical Mythology</i> (Oxford University Press)
2	Edith Hamilton, <i>Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes</i> (Grand Central Publishing)
3	Susan Au, <i>Ballet and Modern Dance</i> (Thames & Hudson) J.F. Bierlein, <i>Parallel Myths</i> (Ballantine) Jane Caputi, <i>Goddesses and Monsters: Women, Myth, Power, and Popular Culture</i> (Popular Press) Eric Csapo, <i>Theories of Mythology</i> (Wiley-Blackwell) Fritz Graf, <i>Greek Mythology: An Introduction</i> (Johns Hopkins University Press) Stephen L. Harris and Gloria Platzner, <i>Classical Mythology: Images and Insights</i> (Mayfield Publishing) Mary R. Lefkowitz, <i>Women in Greek Myth</i> (Johns Hopkins University Press) Isabelle Loring Wallace and Jennie Hirsch, <i>Contemporary Art and Classical Myth</i> (Routledge) Barry B. Powell, <i>Classical Myth</i> (Pearson) Nigel Spivey, <i>Greek Art</i> (Cambridge University Press) Ytasha Womack, <i>Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture</i> (Chicago Review Press)

Table 4: Textbooks used in global courses, ranked by popularity.

Popularity	Author, title, and publisher
1	Eva M. Thury and Margaret K. Devinney, <i>Introduction to Mythology: Contemporary Approaches to Classical and World Myths</i> (Oxford University Press)
2	Edith Hamilton, <i>Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes</i> (Grand Central Publishing) Scott A. Leonard and Michael McClure, <i>Myth and Knowing: An Introduction to World Mythology</i> (McGraw-Hill Education) Donna Rosenberg, <i>World Mythology</i> (McGraw-Hill Education)
3	Karen Armstrong, <i>A Short History of Myth</i> (Canongate U.S.) Richard Buxton, <i>The Complete World of Greek Mythology</i> (Thames & Hudson) Thomas Bulfinch, <i>Bulfinch's Mythology</i> (Canterbury Classics)
4	J.F. Bierlein, <i>Parallel Myths</i> (Ballantine) Lucilla Burn, <i>Greek Myths</i> (University of Texas Press) Ioan Petru Couliano, <i>The Tree of Gnosis: Gnostic Mythology from Early Christianity to Modern Nihilism</i> (HarperCollins) Kenneth C. Davis, <i>Don't Know Much About Mythology</i> (Harper Paperbacks) Jane F. Gardner, <i>Roman Myths</i> (University of Texas Press) Mark Morford, Robert J. Lenardon, and Michael Sham, <i>Classical Mythology</i> (Oxford University Press) Barry B. Powell, <i>Classical Myth</i> (Pearson) Martha Sims and Martine Stephens, <i>Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions</i> (Utah State University Press)

RECONCILING CATHOLICISM WITH THE CLASSICS: MYTHOLOGY IN FRENCH CANADIAN CATHOLIC EDUCATION*

I. Introductory Remarks

The winter of 1864 to 1865 brought storms of a different sort than the usual frigid winds and heavy snowfall that perennially battered the city of Quebec during the season. A debate originating in France had lately been raging among Quebec City's clergy tasked with the education of the archdiocese's young faithful, only to spill onto the front pages of the region's newspapers on 25 November 1864 with the anonymous publication of a blistering editorial that brought this particular clerical debate well and firmly into the public sphere. The situation, according to the article entitled "Christianisme et Paganisme", was one of the utmost gravity: schoolchildren throughout the Catholic world in their most tender years were being subjected to incessant veneration of the nefarious pagan ways of the Greeks and Romans through the enforced study of their history, poetry, and, above all, their pagan mythology and religion.¹ In place of exalting the eternal truths of Christ revealed through Holy Mother Church, the article lamented:

* Ce chapitre est dédié à la douce mémoire de mon grand-père, Ernest Lefebvre, un homme qui nous a tous montré que l'intelligence ne passe pas exclusivement par l'éducation, et que la perfection d'une âme est une œuvre graduelle qui continue tout au long d'une vie.

¹ Anonymous, "Christianisme et Paganisme", *Le Courrier du Canada*, 25 November 1864, front page of the newspaper, currently available through the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (henceforth BANQ). The article was jointly published (anonymously) by two priests, Abbé Alexis Pelletier and the French cleric Abbé Jacques-Michel Stremier, both of whom were teaching at the Séminaire de Québec. The article includes quotations from Abbé Firmin Verost's book *Le peuple de Dieu et le monde païen*, as well as Msgr Jean-Joseph Gaume's book *Révolution*. All translations from French and Latin to English are my own. The reader should note that I do not presume to provide a comprehensive or definitive bibliography on many of the subjects covered below, which, given their breadth, would be impractical. At any rate, I only cite those titles or articles that are germane or have direct bearing on the narrative and argumentation of this paper.

Des prêtres aux cheveux blancs, des religieux vénérables rivalisaient sur les éloges de la blonde (Vénus), de Junon aux bras blancs, de Jupiter aux noirs sourcils, d'Achille aux pieds légers, de Nestor aux lèvres de miel.

White-haired priests and venerable religious had been competing with one another in their exaltation of the blonde goddess (Venus), Juno of the pale arms, black-browed Jupiter, swift-footed Achilles, and honey-lipped Nestor.

"Notre éducation est toute païenne" (Our education is completely pagan), one priest, Abbé Grou, is quoted as opining, and this results in entire generations of young Catholics who are Christian only on the outside; deep down, they are true pagans in spirit, heart, and conduct.² The formation of tender young souls through pagan authors and their pagan sensibilities amounted to nothing less than a profound betrayal:

Pour la jeunesse, la séductrice est la littérature grecque qui montre le beau dans la gloire des armes, le bon dans la volupté, le vrai dans les fictions impies et insensées des poètes.

For the young, this seductress is Greek literature that argues for beauty in the glory of warfare, for good in pleasure-seeking, and for truth in the impious and nonsensical fictions of the poets.

This was nothing short of the work of the Devil: "Quand Satan a implanté son règne quelque part" (When Satan plants his influence in some place), the author warned,

il déprave tellement les institutions sociales qu'elles pervertissent jusqu'à l'enfant au berceau; il convertit tous les éléments de vie en instruments de mort, il fait du père et de la mère des corrupteurs, de l'éducation un empoisonnement.

² All direct quotations are taken from the 25 November 1864 article cited above. On the broader context of Gaume's influence in Canada, see Manon Brunet, "Les réseaux gaumistes constitutifs du réseau littéraire québécois du XIXe siècle", *Globe. Revue internationale d'études québécoises* 7 (2004), 147–180; Thomas Charland, O.P., "Un gaumiste canadien: l'abbé Alexis Pelletier", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 1.2 (1947), 195–236; and Jacques Cotnam, "La percée du gaumisme au Bas-Canada", in Aurélien Boivin, Gilles Dorion, and Kenneth Landry, eds., *Questions d'histoire littéraire: Mélanges offerts à Maurice Lemire*, Québec: Nuit Blanche Éditeur, 1996, 107–119. On the intellectual context of French Canadian education and the Classics, see the excellent study of Irena Trujic, *L'intertextualité classique dans la production littéraire du Québec des années 1850–1870*, PhD dissertation, Université de Montréal, 2011, 20–41.

he depraves social institutions to the point that they pervert even the baby in the cradle. He makes the elements of life into the instruments of death, turns mothers and fathers into corruptors, and education into poison.

The admonition of Saint Paul (2 Tim 2:26) should have been heeded by educators more than anyone else: "Profana et vaniloquia devita: multum enim proficiunt ad impietatem" (Avoid profane and untrue chatter, because they have led many to impiety).³

In the longer history of education in French Canada, it is perhaps surprising that such a vociferous debate over the place of Greek and Roman authors in Catholic education took so long to arise.⁴ Greek and Roman authors had lain at the heart of education in Lower Canada since the establishment of its very first schools, and remained at the core of its curriculum until the publication of the findings of the *commission Parent* in 1964 at the height of the Quiet Revolution, which resulted in the laicization of public education in Quebec.⁵ In the field of education, as in so many other ways, French Canada presents something of an enigma, which renders it a particularly fascinating case study for the role of mythology in education. The colony of Nouvelle-France was since its very foundation a fundamentally Catholic enterprise, and the role of the Church extended far beyond religion into an essential monopoly on education, healthcare, and social services.⁶ With the Conquest of New France by the British in 1760, the region was severed

³ This quotation from 2 Timothy appears early in the article and is quoted by the anonymous authors.

⁴ On this early controversy in response to contemporary debates in France about the place of the Classics in Catholic education, see Trujic, *L'intertextualité classique*, 33–41.

⁵ On French education in Canada, see, as we shall discuss below, Lionel Groulx, *L'enseignement français au Canada, Tome I: Dans le Québec*, Montréal: Éditions Albert Levesque, 1931; and more recently the report of Richard Leclerc, *Histoire de l'éducation au Québec*, Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur du Québec, 1989. On the system of *collèges classiques*, see the study of Claude Galarneau, *Les collèges classiques au Canada français (1620–1970)*, Montréal: Fides, 1978.

⁶ For an up-to-date history of Canadian Catholicism, see Terence Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, Toronto: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002. Specifically, see pp. 3–48 for the early missionary origins of the Church in Canada; 29–47 for the experience of the conquest; and 97–119 for Catholic education in the context of ultramontanism. Although he is a blatantly confessional historian with a patently nationalist agenda, Lionel Groulx, *Le Canada français missionnaire*, Montréal: Fides, 1962, crafts a fascinating narrative of the missionary origins of French Canada. For the tumultuous year surrounding the *commission Parent* and the Church's relationship with this review of education, see Michel Gauvreau, *Les origines catholiques de la révolution tranquille*, Montréal: Fides, 2008, 247–306.

from the influence of the French crown, but the Church was curiously unscathed – if anything it was strengthened – by the transition from the *fleur de lys* to the Union Jack. The Quebec Act of 1774 guaranteed the free practice of the Catholic faith, recognized the Church's right to impose and collect tithes, restored the French *code civile*, and removed any reference to the Protestant faith from the Oath of Allegiance to the Crown.⁷ These privileges were retained and extended to all of Lower Canada by another Act of Parliament in 1791. In the century and a half that preceded and followed this transition, thus for much of the history of French Canada, there was essentially no distinction between public education and Catholic education.

Given the centuries-long monopoly of the Church over education in French Canada, the consistent prominence of Greek and Roman authors, and of course their religious and mythological context, comes as something of a paradox. How did this educational system that implicitly prepared its students for religious life as laypeople or consecrated members of the clergy reconcile its deeply Catholic moral and theological emphasis with the fact that so much of the material studied was written by pagan Greek and Roman authors? Considering the place of mythology in the French Canadian educational system provides the ideal window through which to study this question of how such a Catholic education focused so intensely on pre-Christian authors and societies. In reaching back into the pre-Christian past, Catholic educators in French Canada as elsewhere were treading on uncomfortable ground: on the one hand, the Church celebrated its own antiquity – it was and is, after all, the Roman Catholic Church – but, on the other hand, embracing that very antiquity necessitated contact with a pre-Christian culture and its religious traditions that were incompatible with the Catholic faith. How then was Greek and Roman mythology taught in French Canadian Catholic schools? Was it communicated with a heavy dose of scepticism and disdain, or filtered through the lens of Catholic morality? Above all, why was it taught, and to what end? How can we explain the remarkable endurance of this classical tradition in this most unlikely of educational systems?

This chapter aims to answer these questions by tracing the place of Greek and Roman authors and mythology from the earliest schools in Nouvelle-France through to the established curricula of the nineteenth century and into the

⁷ For a general narrative overview of this period, see Robert Bothwell, *The Penguin History of Canada*, Toronto: Penguin Books, 2007, and see Fay, *A History*, 29–47, for the Church after the British Conquest.

twentieth. A variety of contemporary educational materials will provide us with an overview of what was being taught, while the arguments of contemporary and later commentators and critics will provide us with the social context necessary to understand why this material was taught. Beginning with the early days of French colonization, education was seen as a means of linking the colony more deeply to France itself. After the British Conquest, French Canadian education continued to develop apace even though many connections with France itself had been severed. Contemporary debates in France regarding the morality of teaching Greek and Roman religion manifested themselves in French Canadian clerical circles with no small measure of drama, though in the end the status quo was maintained and the Classics remained at the heart of Catholic education. Throughout, I argue that the prominence given to Greek and Roman mythology in French Canadian education extended beyond its simple recognition as an intrinsic pedagogical good, and rather was integral to the creation of an emergent national myth in which the people of French Canada were cast as the direct heirs of the classical tradition.

2. Tracing the Origins of Mythology in French Canadian Schools

Before turning to the eruption of the debate regarding “pagan” subjects being taught in Catholic schools in Quebec, a brief survey of the development of classical education in French Canada is needed to grasp the prominence with which pagan mythology figured in the curriculum that came under scrutiny in 1864. Pre-Christian Greek and Latin authors, of course, provide the vehicle through which Greek and Roman mythology were taught to students, and thus tracing the presence in school curricula of authors that contain mythological material is a straightforward means of simultaneously gauging the prominence of mythical material itself. It may seem a facile methodological point, but nevertheless one that needs to be made: a student who is translating and reading authors such as Ovid, Virgil, and Horace on the Latin side, and Homer, Herodotus, or the tragedians on the Greek side, would naturally have been exposed to the mythical traditions related by each author. Wherever we find the authors, in other words, we shall also find the myths.

The history of education in French Canada is as old as the colony of New France itself. Despite the small population of New France and the

vast distances separating its constituent settlements, schools appeared with remarkable speed in the decades following its foundation, and institutions teaching Latin authors came shortly afterwards. In 1635, although the permanent population of New France was barely 200, the inhabitants of Quebec built a school and the Jesuits began teaching in the new edifice.⁸ This was not the first time that Catholic teaching took place in French Canada, but it does represent the establishment of the first permanent school.⁹ Even before there were children of school age in Ville-Marie, the fledgling colony that would become Montreal, Sister Marguerite Bourgeoys began teaching whatever students she could find on 25 November 1657, in a stone stable given to her by Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve.¹⁰ Although many of the schools that would be formed over the rest of the seventeenth and into the eighteenth centuries would be small parochial schools concerned with teaching students to read and write, Latin nevertheless appeared in this environment. According to the records of the Petit Séminaire de Québec, out of the 130 students enrolled between 1693 and 1703, 75 were below the age of ten, 23 had already begun studying Latin, and 68 knew to read and write in French alone.¹¹ Extensive study of Greek and Roman materials appeared in the curricula of some institutions since the mid-seventeenth century. The Collège de Québec mentioned above, established by the Jesuits in 1635, was teaching by 1655 a curriculum involving lessons in grammar, the humanities, literature, and rhetoric, as well as a two-year philosophy course.¹² Teaching staff were found among Jesuit missionaries who were resting, recovering from wounds and illness, or retired in Quebec. Literature courses at the Collège involved the teaching of Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Seneca, and others, and while Latin predominated, Greek was also taught to a smaller subset of students.¹³ Among the prizes given to the

⁸ Groulx, *L'enseignement français*, 13–14, citing the Canadian census of 1870–1871 and the *Relations Jésuites* of 1636.

⁹ Various Catholic missionaries had held schools in different corners of New France: in 1616 the Franciscan Recollect Friar Pacifique Duplessis taught in Trois-Rivières; in 1613 the Franciscan priest Joseph Le Caron held an open school in Tadoussac; and the Jesuit Abbé Paul Le Jeune taught in Quebec in 1632. All mentioned by Groulx, *L'enseignement français*, 13, n. 11.

¹⁰ Groulx, *L'enseignement français*, 33, and Amédée Gosselin, *L'instruction au Canada sous le Régime français 1635–1760*, Québec: Typ. Laflamme & Proulx, 1911, 212.

¹¹ Groulx, *L'enseignement français*, 20, citing Gosselin, *L'instruction au Canada*, 136.

¹² Groulx, *L'enseignement français*, 23.

¹³ This overview of the early structure of education in French Canada is taken from Groulx, *L'enseignement français*, 13–30; see also Trujic, *L'intertextualité classique*, 250–303, for an annotated bibliography of resources for the study of Latin in French Canada.

most talented students at the Collège were commentaries on the *Aeneid*, the speeches of Cicero, the poetry of Horace, and volumes containing the works of Florus, Pliny, Livy, and Polybius. Such a volume of Latin and Greek study would involve a corresponding volume of mythological content, and although we cannot gauge it with the same precision, it is inevitable that the students would have been exposed to a substantial portion of the Greek and Roman mythical tradition. The preponderance of “pagan” Latin authors versus the Church Fathers in this curriculum is also noteworthy.

Quebec was not the only emergent centre of Latin and classical education in the colony. In addition to the Collège and Petit Séminaire de Québec, there were smaller Latin schools designed to supplement parochial primary schools and other colleges. Near Quebec, Latin schools were found in Pointe-de-Lévy, Saint-Joachim, and Château-Richer.¹⁴ By the beginning of the eighteenth century there were two Latin schools in Montreal, one founded by the Sulpician Order, the other by the Jesuits.¹⁵ Given the tendency of early schools in French Canada to model their curriculum on their counterparts in France, and their use of imported French textbooks, we can presume that a similar list of Greek and Roman authors would have been taught at these smaller Latin schools as well. At any rate, this seventeenth-century base of Latin education expanded throughout the region with the appearance of various religious orders in Nouvelle-France, among them the Ursulines, the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, and the Sœurs de la Charité de Montréal (Sœurs Grises). Alongside schools run by these religious orders was also an emerging network of parochial schools run by local priests in towns and villages.¹⁶ The diversity of institutions is remarkable, but there does appear to have been a common pedagogical thread running through them, as Abbé Lionel Groulx writes:

¹⁴ Groulx, *L'enseignement français*, 30–35.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 24.

¹⁶ See also Fay, *A History*, 3–47, for the early organization of the Church and its schools. In the context of Montreal, see Robert Gagnon, “Education in the Nineteenth Century”, in Dany Fougères and Roderick MacLeod, eds., *Montreal: The History of a North American City*, vol. 1, Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2018, 604–630; Norman Perron, “The Spread and Influence of the Catholic Church in Montreal”, in Dany Fougères and Roderick MacLeod, eds., *Montreal: The History of a North American City*, vol. 1, Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2018, 714–742.

[C]e système s'était organisé selon le vieux dessin franco-latin: à la base, l'instruction, les langues et les humanités intégrales; en haut, des antennes orientées vers les hautes régions de la morale et de la foi.¹⁷

This system had been organized according to the old Franco-Latin plan: at its base was the instruction of ancient languages and integral subjects of the humanities, and above there were branches reaching out towards the higher regions of morality and of the faith.

Although the primary evidence for education in these pre-Conquest French Canadian schools is not as robust as what we shall shortly encounter for the nineteenth century, we can nevertheless gain some indirect insight into how and where mythology would have figured in the Latin curriculum of these schools. A lengthy rallying cry for defending the humanities in French Canadian education, penned by Abbé Georges Courchesne in 1927 at the Séminaire de Nicolet, provides a historical review of how Latin was traditionally taught in contemporary France – and, by extension, in French Canada.¹⁸ In order to elevate Latin education above a mere dry grammatical lesson, seventeenth-century French Latin education was based on extensive reading of ancient authors. Ideally, after two hours of recitation or grammatical commentary, three hours should be given to translation of ancient authors and meditation on the content of the text.¹⁹ Even in the midst of pedagogical arguments over the course of this century and the next that variously emphasized composition or applied Latin language, translation and commentary of primary texts remained the core means by which Latin was taught in schools.²⁰ In light of the authors such as Ovid, Virgil, and Horace that we have encountered above in early French Canadian schools, it follows logically that students would have been extensively exposed to the Graeco-Roman mythological tradition through translation and comment upon their texts. Mythological themes would have prominently emerged from even this linguistic approach of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As we shall shortly see, the presence of mythology in this curriculum would only increase over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as it began to be taught as a subject in its own right, rather than just being carried by the surrogate of Latin or Greek language.

¹⁷ Groulx, *L'enseignement français*, 35.

¹⁸ Georges Courchesne, *Nos humanités*, Nicolet: École normale supérieure de Nicolet, 1927.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 480.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, 480–490.

3. *La querelle des classiques*: Mortal Souls in Nineteenth-Century Mythological Peril

Perhaps the best gauge of the prominence with which Graeco-Roman religion and mythology figured in nineteenth-century French Catholic education is the intensity with which it was attacked by contemporary critics. The polemic of the 1864 article we have encountered above was neither the first nor the last time dissenting voices would decry the infiltration of “pagan” material in Catholic education in French Canada. “De toutes les controverses qui passionnèrent les intellectuels canadiens de la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle” (Of all the controversies which impassioned Canadian intellectuals in the second half of the nineteenth century), Séraphin Marion wrote in 1949, “[i]l en est une qui paraît presque entièrement oubliée aujourd’hui [...]. Ce triste débat opposa aux partisans des classiques païens et les partisans des classiques chrétiens” (there is one which seems almost entirely forgotten today [...]. The sad debate which set the partisans of pagan Classics and the partisans of Christian Classics against one another).²¹ Although the debate raged with the hottest intensity in the 1860s, its first flames were fanned into existence several decades earlier by an incident in the Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe, a school on the banks of the Yamaska River in a town roughly fifty kilometres to the east of Montreal. Among the *contrariétés* (nuisances or frustrations) recounted by Msgr Charles-Philippe Choquette’s 1911 history of the school is a somewhat vaguely-recounted incident. “La curiosité inquisitive d’un élève” (The inquisitive curiosity of a student), he writes, “fit ouvrir les yeux, en 1829, sur les dangers de l’absurde et immorale mythologie païenne” (opened [our] eyes in 1829 to the dangers of the absurd and immoral mythology of the pagans).²² Although the precise dangers of this mythology and the indiscretion it blamed for having prompted are not specified, the school’s reaction was swift. The *Appendix de diis et heroibus poeticis*, a 1764 summary of Greek mythology, was promptly confiscated and proscribed from being taught in the future. Abbé Joseph-Sabin Raymond, one of the school’s most renowned faculty, penned a pamphlet in 1835

²¹ Séraphin Marion, *Lettres canadiennes d’autrefois. Tome VI: La querelle des humanistes canadiens*, Ottawa: Éditions de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1949, 12. For an excellent narrative and overview of the Gaumist controversy in Quebec, see Trujic, *L’intertextualité classique*, 33–45, which is followed here.

²² Charles-Philippe Choquette, *L’histoire de Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe depuis sa fondation jusqu’à nos jours*, Montréal: Imprimerie de l’institution des sourds-muets, 1911, 422.

in which he “confia au grand public [...] les inquiétudes que suscitait dans son cœur de prêtre et d’éducateur l’importance que notre enseignement classique accordait au paganisme des Anciens” (confided to the public [...] the worries that were provoked in his heart, as a priest and as an educator, by the importance our classical education accords to the paganism of the Ancient authors).²³ A decade later, Raymond recommended at the end of the 1847 academic year that pagan authors be replaced by Christian Classics, especially the writings of the Church Fathers. The fear of Raymond, it seems, was that by being taught the language and style of authors like Virgil and Ovid, young students would thereby be exposed to the corrupting influence of their pagan mythological context.²⁴

The moral concerns of the teaching faculty of the Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe mirrored those of their contemporaries in France, who were increasingly ardent in their opposition to the inclusion of such pagan materials. Given that this debate in Canada was fanned into flames again in 1861 by the arrival in Quebec of a staunchly anticlassicist priest from France, it is necessary to track the development of these ideas on the continent before they were exported to French Canada and grafted into a different cultural and intellectual milieu. In 1851, then-abbé Jean-Joseph Gaume, an ultramontanist priest and at the time Vicar-General of the Diocese of Nevers in Bourgogne, published an extensive attack on the inclusion of pagan authors in Catholic education entitled *Le ver rongeur des sociétés modernes*. Unlike his earlier works on the topic, the book was enthusiastically backed by the Archbishop of Reims and the Bishop of Arras, and ignited what would come to be known as the Gaumist controversy in the nineteenth-century Catholic Church. As elsewhere in the Catholic world, Gaume’s ideology would provide the intellectual basis for opposition to the teaching of non-Christian authors in French Canada’s Catholic schools. There was far more at stake in this, of course, than simply the inclusion of a few pre-Christian authors in primary education. According to Gaume’s argumentation, essentially all of the evils that beset contemporary French society could be traced back

²³ Marion, *Lettres canadiennes d’autrefois*, 16, and Choquette, *L’histoire de Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe*, 423.

²⁴ Nevertheless, as Trujic notes in *L’intertextualité classique*, 33, it must be highlighted that the clergy of Quebec were by no means unanimous in sharing the opinion of Raymond. In 1853, Msgr Pierre-Flavien Turgeon, the Archbishop of Quebec, wrote extensively in support of the study of Greek and Latin in his letter establishing Université Laval. See Cotnam, “La percée du gaumisme”, *non vidi*.

to the Renaissance, which in his view represented nothing less than the resurrection and glorification of paganism.

“Pagan” ideas and ideals, which had up to this point been conquered by the triumph of Christianity, were thrust by Renaissance humanists back onto the centre stage. Centuries of this glorification of paganism resulted in nineteenth-century Europe’s exultation of what Gaume laments as nefarious pagan ideals – to the point that this society itself became pagan in many aspects. To quote Marion’s summary of Gaume’s convictions, the world of the nineteenth century was

[p]aïen dans son attachement aux droits de l’homme et dans son oubli des droits de Dieu, païen dans sa poursuite immodérée du plaisir, païen dans sa recherche d’une morale laïque qui équivaut à la négation de la morale de l’Évangile, païen surtout dans sa littérature et ses arts fréquemment au service de l’impudeur et de l’immoralité.²⁵

pagan in its attachment to the rights of man and disdain for the rights of God, pagan in its immodest pursuit of pleasure, pagan in its quest for a secular kind of morality, which amounted to a negation of the moral truth of the Gospel, and above all pagan in its veneration of literature and arts frequently in service of immorality and impropriety.

Such ideals had infiltrated society, he argues, through a system of education which teaches the history of the gods of Olympus, the fables of Phaedrus and Aesop, the stories of Ovid, Virgil, Horace, and Homer as models to young Christians, rather than the Christian Classics of sacred scripture and the acts of the martyrs. His definition of what constitutes “classical literature” is particularly interesting in the context of our current discussion: “[L]es livres classiques proprement dits sont: les histoires des dieux du paganisme, les fables du paganisme, les livres des grands hommes du paganisme” (These books are, strictly speaking, the stories of the gods of paganism, the fables of paganism, and the works of the great men of paganism).²⁶ Proof of this pagan infiltration, he later writes, could be found in how so-called learned men promote the cult of ancient paganism by discussing religion purely by pagan names, no longer afraid “de souiller la sainteté du christianisme par les fables ridicules de la mythologie” (to sully the sanctity of Christianity by

²⁵ To quote the concise summation of Marion, *Lettres canadiennes d’autrefois*, 16.

²⁶ Jean-Joseph Gaume, *Le ver rongeur des sociétés modernes, ou le paganisme dans l’éducation*, Paris: Gaume Frères, 1851, 101.

the ridiculous stories of mythology).²⁷ Education had popularized mythology to the point that the taint of paganism had spread everywhere:

[C]omme on avait traduit en langue vulgaire, dans l'intérêt du peuple, les ouvrages les plus obscènes de l'antiquité, les sculpteurs chrétiens reproduisirent à Tenvi les anciennes statues de tous les dieux et de toutes les déesses de l'Olympe [...]. Les graveurs les multiplièrent à l'infini, et souvent même ajoutèrent à l'obscénité du modèle. Par ce moyen, toutes les infamies mythologiques devinrent si communes que tout chrétien, si pauvre qu'il fût, se vit en état de se procurer au lieu des portraits de Notre-Seigneur et de la sainte Vierge, la gravure ou la statue de Jupiter, de Vénus, de Cupidon, de Diane et des autres.²⁸

Because the most obscene works of antiquity have been translated into the vulgar tongue, in the so-called interest of the people, now even Christian sculptors reproduce at Tenvi the ancient statues of all of the gods and goddesses of Olympus [...]. Engravers multiply them to infinity, and often even add yet more obscenity to the scene. By this means, all of these mythological villainies become so common that every Christian, no matter how poor he may be, can acquire an engraving or a statue of Jupiter, of Venus, of Cupid, of Diana, and of others, instead of portraits of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin.

The chain of mythological corruption was quite clear to Gaume: it began with the rediscovery of dangerous Latin and Greek texts by pagan authors during the Renaissance, which were then introduced into school curricula and taught to impressionable young Christians in the name of literary education.²⁹ The manner in which the beauty of a text's language was extolled by Catholic educators served only to mask the perversity of its content, and thus the dangerous ideals of pagan mythology masqueraded as educated refinement as they were taught to subsequent generations of young faithful, who came to know more and more of pagan religion, but less and less of Christian Truth. Small wonder, in Gaume's eyes, that the France in which he wrote his treatises was so profoundly corrupt and misguided. Paganism had triumphed again over Christianity, and was now bearing the social fruits of its victory. The cure to all of this, as far as Gaume was concerned, was

²⁷ Ibidem, 146.

²⁸ Ibidem, 187.

²⁹ Again, following the argumentation of Gaume, *Le ver rongeur*, and summary of Marion, *Lettres canadiennes d'autrefois*.

to excise the corrupting pagan influence at the core of education and replace it with Christian authors – in essence he advocated returning to what he viewed as the medieval model of education. In the same way as paganism had infected nearly all of society through the vector of childhood education, so too, he proposed, could the antidote be delivered.³⁰

Unsurprisingly, Gaume's passionate arguments provoked equally impassioned responses both within clerical circles and without. Pope Pius IX published a fairly equivocal encyclical on the "Classics Question" in March 1853, that was claimed as a victory by both sides in the debate which continued into the next decade.³¹ While Gaume's arguments were met with more disdain than support in France itself, the issue struck a particular chord in French Canada. Irena Trujic has identified a convincingly straightforward reason why: the Classics Question had much higher stakes on the other side of the Atlantic, where the Church had a *de facto* monopoly on public education, while in France public education had been in the hands of the state since the Revolution.³² The conflict at any rate quite literally came to Canadian shores in August of 1861 with the arrival of Abbé Jacques-Michel Stremler, a priest from Lorraine who had been invited by Université Laval's rector, the future cardinal, Msgr Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau, to teach theology.³³ The French priest proved quite popular in the Archdiocese of Quebec, and gained the ear of Msgr Charles-François Baillargeon, administrator of the Archdiocese during the illness of Msgr Pierre-Flavien Turgeon.³⁴ Stremler, however, was an ardent disciple of Gaume and advocated removing the dangerous influence of pagan subjects from Catholic education. He quickly gained followers

³⁰ See Marion, *Lettres canadiennes d'autrefois*, 16–17, for summaries, and Gaume, *Le ver rongeur*, 331–389, for his plan of rectifying this and his proposal for a Christian library and course of studies. See also the summary of the Gaumist school of thought by Trujic, *L'intertextualité classique*, 28–32. Interestingly, Gaume did not advocate the complete removal of pagan authors from the school curriculum, but suggested that they not be taught until the final three years of an eight-year programme.

³¹ The encyclical was entitled *Inter multiplices*, published 21 March 1853. The tone struck by the Pope was more of an appeal to unity than a concrete ruling on either side, hence the perhaps deliberate ambiguity on the debate itself.

³² Trujic, *L'intertextualité classique*, 32.

³³ Charland, "Un gaumiste canadien", 195. On the role of Taschereau and Msgr Charles-Félix Cazeau in this affair, see Nive Voisine, "Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre", in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12, University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2003–, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/taschereau_elzear_alexandre_12E.html (accessed 12 September 2018).

³⁴ Lucien Lemieux, "Baillargeon, Charles-François", in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9, University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2006, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/baillargeon_charles_francois_9E.html (accessed 12 September 2018).

among the teaching faculty of the Séminaire de Québec, notably Abbé Alexis Pelletier and Abbé Désiré Vézina, who quickly became fervent supporters of the cause of reforming Catholic education.³⁵

The debate over the place of pagan literature and mythology in Catholic schools began among the teaching clergy of the Séminaire de Québec, but rapidly spilled into the public sphere. We have already encountered the first public salvo in this debate at the outset of this chapter: Stremler, along with his ally Pelletier and others writing anonymously, together penned the scouring article "Christianisme et Paganisme" published on 25 November 1864 in *Le Courrier du Canada*. An article entitled "Les causes de la révolution française", featuring excerpts of Gaume's work on the topic, was published early in the next month, and a heated discussion emerged in letters to the editor and other anonymous contributions to the newspaper.³⁶ In the public sphere, the clergy were divided into the "chrétiens", advocating the removal of pagan (that is, pre-Christian) Greek and Roman material from the classroom, and the derisively-named "païens" supporting the continued prominence of classical works in Catholic education.³⁷ Msgr Charles-Félix Cazeau, the Vicar-General of the Archdiocese, was irate: he penned a communiqué to the editor of the newspaper, unobtrusively encouraging it to publish extracts from the encyclical of Pope Pius IX, which he claimed "a mis fin à la dispute qui s'était élevée quelque temps auparavant sur cette question brûlante dans certains journaux catholiques de la France" (had put an end to this dispute which had arisen a while ago on this pressing question that had appeared in certain Catholic newspapers in France).³⁸ A memoir of the winter of 1864–1865 at the Séminaire de Québec lamented that

³⁵ On Taschereau, see Voisine, "Taschereau, Elzéar-Alexandre". On Pelletier, see also Nive Voisine, "Pelletier, Alexis", in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 13, University of Toronto and Université Laval, 2003–, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/pelletier_alexis_13E.html (accessed 12 September 2018); Gérard Vézina, *Nos aïeux Vézina*, L'Ancienne Lorette: Gérard Vézina, 2006.

³⁶ For instance, an anonymous letter to the editor of the *Courrier* ("Lettre à la rédaction") in the edition of 23 December 1864 bemoaned the predominance of pagan authors in education by writing that "sortant des collèges ne savent rien de la Bible, des SS. PP. etc.; que l'on étudie les *classiques* pendant 8 à 10 ans et qu'on ne fait que lire superficiellement le catéchisme" (students graduating from these colleges know nothing about the Bible, about Sts Peter and Paul, etc.; one [i.e. they] study the *Classics* for between eight and ten years, but they are only made to read the Catechism superficially).

³⁷ Charland, "Un gaumiste canadien", 196, and David Gosselin, *Les étapes d'une classe au Petit Séminaire de Québec, 1859–1868*, Québec: Imprimerie H. Chasse, 1908, 139–140.

³⁸ Charland, "Un gaumiste canadien", 196.

[c]ette campagne fut attristante, parce que les belligérants de l'avant-garde étaient des frères, vivant sous le même toit, associés à la même oeuvre, poursuivant la même fin, également sincères, que l'on vit se fusiller mutuellement sous les yeux du public.³⁹

this campaign was saddening because the belligerents on the front lines were brothers, living under the same roof, working in the same profession, pursuing the same goal, equally sincere, but now whom we saw firing away at each other in the eyes of the public.

Students eagerly awaited the latest edition of the newspapers of each faction, *Le Courrier du Canada* for the Gaumists, and the *Journal de Québec* for the Classicists.

Despite the Vicar-General's protestations, the Gaumists continued the offensive in their war against the infiltration of Catholic education by pagan religion and mythology. Anonymity, in such a small intellectual milieu did not last long and the real authors of each salvo quickly became known to students and teachers alike. The Gaumists published another anonymous article, "La beauté de la vie des saints", in the *Courrier*, which included various hagiographic episodes meant to show that pious reading could be as interesting and entertaining as pagan mythology.⁴⁰ In response to this, Cazeau, the Vicar-General, published a letter to the newspaper under the name "A Subscriber" with the following request:

Si votre correspondant X tient à continuer d'encombrer votre feuille de ses articles, ayez donc la bonté de lui suggérer de mieux choisir les exemples dont il prétend nous édifier.⁴¹

If your correspondent X wishes to continue lading your pages with his articles, please at least have the kindness to suggest that he makes a better choice of examples with which he is pretending to enlighten us.

Another article, published on 20 February 1865, wrote specifically of myth that

dans le but de faire comprendre aux jeunes gens les auteurs païens, il est nécessaire de fouiller continuellement dans la mythologie et dans l'antiquité

³⁹ Gosselin, *Les étapes d'une classe*, 139.

⁴⁰ Charland, "Un gaumiste canadien", 196-197.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 197.

païennes, et de remplir leur tête de choses rarement utiles et trop souvent fausses ou scandaleuses.⁴²

in order to make young people understand pagan authors, it is necessary to delve continually into the mythology and the history of pagans, and in the process to fill their [the students'] heads with things that are rarely useful, and all too often false or scandalous.

Even in the public eye, then, the danger of pagan mythology was again that it provided a vehicle by which sin and licentiousness could be imparted on young students under the guise of edification.

As this public debate wore on into the spring of 1865, Cazeau resorted to more direct means. Encouraged by his success at publishing anonymous retorts against the Gaumists and wishing to keep the upper hand, he took to the streets of Quebec and paid impromptu visits to all the city's printers with a pointed request to cease publishing anything that was in favour of Christian reform to Catholic education, lest they incur his wrath and the disdain of the Séminaire and the Archbishop himself.⁴³ The Gaumists, publicly known as the *chrétiens*, were not finished: Pelletier, along with Stremmler, switched media and produced two anonymous pamphlets supporting Gaume and his quest to cleanse Catholic education of pagan influences, in the process reiterating that such pagan ideals were the root cause of the French Revolution, Voltairianism, and Protestantism. The cloak of anonymity quickly slipped away in the spring of 1865 as it had in the winter of 1864, and Cazeau and Baillargeon readily became aware of the author of the anonymous pamphlets.⁴⁴ More direct action was needed, and was taken by the Superior of the Séminaire de Québec, Taschereau, on his return from Rome. With the blessing of the Archdiocese, all of the Gaumists at the Séminaire were purged either by encouragement or coercion.⁴⁵ Vézina was dismissed and chose to leave the Séminaire shortly after Holy Saturday of 1865 (15–22 April) rather than teach out the rest of the academic year as his superiors had proposed. He went on to teach in a small primary school in the parish

⁴² Anonymous, "Discours prononcé à Rome par Mgr. l'évêque d'Aquila dans la séance de clôture de l'académie de la religion catholique", trans. Editors, *Le Courrier du Canada*, 20 February 1865.

⁴³ Charland, "Un gaumiste canadien", 197.

⁴⁴ For the narrative of this period, see Marion, *Lettres canadiennes d'autrefois*, 15–25, which is followed here.

⁴⁵ Trujic, *L'intertextualité classique*, 34–35.

of Saint-Nicolas.⁴⁶ Stremier, the original Gaumist, departed the Séminaire on 24 June 1865; so too did the fellow reformers Abbés Félix Buteau, Ferdinand Laliberté, and Damase Gonthier take their leave over the course of the summer to unspecified destinations.⁴⁷ Pelletier was likewise dismissed, and found a sympathetic superior at the Collège de Sainte-Anne de la Pocatière, where he carried on the good fight until he was compelled to publicly recant his ideas on 19 January 1877 in the Catholic periodical *Le Franc-Parleur*.⁴⁸

The victory of the *païens* was complete by the end of 1866, and life in the Séminaire and the Archdiocese returned to normal. But the character of the *querelle des classiques* and the rival ideologies it brought so fervently to the fore are telling.⁴⁹ To the Gaumist *chrétiens*, the threat posed by classical authors to Catholic society was nothing short of existential: venerating these authors and the texts they had written in turn venerated their dangerous pagan subject material, replete as it was with the scandalously heretical stories of their religion and its myths. This form of education, in which paganism was the wolf disguised in the sheep's clothing of pious Catholicism, had inspired to most horrific excesses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Revolution, Protestantism, atheism, rationalism, and the exaltation of man above God that was identified as the Enlightenment. In France, the Gaumists concluded, this infection manifested itself in the manic disease of the French Revolution, which toppled the ideal order of society in the ultimate victory of paganism. By the vagaries of fate, French Canada, however, had been severed from its infected host by the British Conquest, and as such was spared the experience of the Revolution and remained untouched – at least for the moment. The anxiety, it seems, on the part of the Gaumists was that French Canada would perhaps fall prey to the same continental pagan folly as its motherland had in recent years, hence the ardour with which the *querelle des classiques* was waged on Canadian shores. With the backing of the hierarchy and of Rome, the *païens* had emerged victorious, and the place of classical literature and the mythology it contained in French Canadian education was secured for decades to come.

⁴⁶ Vézina, *Nos aïeux Vézina*, 15–54; Gosselin, *Les étapes d'une classe*, 66.

⁴⁷ The departure of each is recorded in Gosselin, *Les étapes d'une classe*, 139–142.

⁴⁸ Trujic, *L'intertextualité classique*, 34–35, citing the article of Pelletier published in *Le Franc-Parleur* on 19 January 1877. See also Charland, "Un gaumiste canadien", 196–199.

⁴⁹ The identification of each group as the *païens* and *chrétiens* by all accounts seems to have been contemporary to the original struggle, and the monikers adopted by each faction themselves. Gosselin, *Les étapes d'une classe*, 139–140, mentions that the faculty of the Séminaire divided themselves into these camps.

4. *Les belles histoires des faux dieux: Mythology in French Canadian Education, 1865–1963*

In spite of the victory of the *païens*, the *querelle des classiques* left an indelible mark on how pre-Christian classical material was taught in Catholic schools, and this is especially true of mythology. Although it remained part of the curriculum throughout French Canada, the religious traditions of the Greeks and Romans were now taught with a healthy dose of condescension and no small measure of disdain. In this sense, the Gaumists had at least partially won the battle of the preceding decades, and the perceived “threat” of pagan morality to Catholic youth was taken somewhat more seriously. The solution seems to have been simple: keep “pagan” classical material, but make it abundantly clear to students that such pre-Christian religious materials were little more than the fanciful literary creations of a pre-Christian society that had not yet been exposed to Catholic Truth. A textbook of mythology written by Abbé Claude-Joseph Drioux in 1887 and subsequently used in Catholic schools neatly captures this revised attitude. In his preface to the textbook, Drioux writes that he finds it regrettable that mythology, in some schools, is no longer put into the hands of students, and that this leaves a large lacuna in the broader course of study. He justifies teaching mythology by arguing that

il est très important que les jeunes gens sachent la religion de ces peuples, pour comprendre leurs poètes et saisir une foule d’allusions qu’ils rencontrent dans leurs orateurs et leurs historiens.⁵⁰

it is critical that young people understand the religion of these peoples [the Greeks and Romans] in order to understand their poets, and to grasp the myriad allusions that they encounter in their orators and historians.

Mythology thus becomes necessary to understand the context of classical works, and to better comprehend their meaning.

Although it is necessary to understand classical authors, Drioux makes it abundantly clear throughout his textbook that students should not admire these pagan religious traditions. Under the guise of anthropological objectivity, he explains the errors of pagan religions as a misunderstanding of the

⁵⁰ Abbé Drioux, *Précis élémentaire de mythologie*, Tournai: Typographie de J. Casterman et fils, 1887, v.

natural world due to primitive ignorance. The children of Noah, scattered from Babel, forgot the true God and instead became fascinated with the things that most vividly struck their senses: the sun, the moon, the stars, fire, wind, air – “voilà les dieux que les hommes ont cru les arbitres du monde” (these were the deities that men believed were the arbiters of the world).⁵¹ From there, primitive men deified animals and natural objects without reason, they worshipped those things which were useful to them in order to gain more of their favours, and worshipped those which were harmful to divert their maleficence.⁵² A sense of Catholic self-superiority mixed with almost pity for the misguided beliefs of early mankind pervades much of the rest of the textbook. The Greek and Roman understanding of destiny as a deity, he writes,

est un travestissement de la croyance primitive en un Dieu qui gouverne tout et qui tient tout sous ses lois. Seulement, au lieu d'admettre une Providence éclairée et sage, libre dans ses actions, respectant la liberté de toutes les créatures intelligentes et raisonnables, les païens croyaient en un Dieu aveugle dont la force irrésistible en chaîne et subjugué le monde entire.⁵³

is a travesty of a primitive belief in a God which governs all and holds all under His laws. Rather than believe in an enlightened, wise Divine Providence, which is free in its actions and respects the freedom of all intelligent and reasonable creatures, instead the pagans believed in a blind God whose power was an irresistible chain reaction which subjugated the entire world.

Pagans, he later writes, did not have the consoling belief in a benevolent god, and instead staked their trust in deities that were blind and deaf to their prayers and needs.⁵⁴ In the end, however, he describes them as nothing more than mere fictions.⁵⁵ Fear and passion in equal measure lay behind the misguided priorities of ancient religion, but to Drioux this was precisely what made the study of mythology important:

⁵¹ Ibidem, 8.

⁵² Ibidem, 8–9.

⁵³ Ibidem, 11.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, 99.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, 9.

[E]lle nous fait connaître toutes les erreurs dans lesquelles les hommes sont tombés en suivant leurs passions, et nous montre par-là les bienfaits du christianisme qui a dissipé toutes ces ténèbres.⁵⁶

It makes us understand all of the errors into which mankind has fallen by giving in to its passions, and from such a low point reveals to us the benefits of Christianity which had dissipated all of these shadows.

In an ironic twist, the study of pagan mythology by Catholic students serves to help them better appreciate the beauty of the Catholic faith. The subtle hint of a smile, perhaps, would have cracked the expressions of even the most ardent Gaumists at this new pedagogical approach.

An examination of various programmes of study and teaching materials from the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth reveal the continued prominence of Greek and Roman religion in Catholic education, albeit with this new pedagogical tone. A curriculum overview prepared by the École normale Laval for the Chicago Columbian Exhibition of 1893 indicates that second-year students were taught one and a half hours of mythology by M. C.-J. Magnan, and third-year students had two hours of Greek and Roman history per week taught by M. Joseph.⁵⁷ This was not limited to the education of boys: a course outline for the École d'enseignement supérieure pour les jeunes filles in Montreal required the study of both pagan and Christian Greek and Latin literature alongside mythology and biblical history for all of the young women on its usual course of study.⁵⁸ A grammar textbook containing spelling exercises and principles of composition from 1902 tasked young students with distilling a moral lesson from Aesop's fables.⁵⁹ Knowledge of and familiarity with ancient material, especially mythological traditions, was requisite for various professional examinations in the province of Quebec – even in fields unrelated to the humanities, like dentistry and pharmacology. A manual preparing students for their baccalaureate examinations stresses that they must understand the context and content of classical authors rather than simply translate from

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, 9.

⁵⁷ Thomas-Gregoire Rouleau, *Notice sur l'École normale Laval de Québec pour l'exposition de Chicago*, Québec: Imprimerie L. Brousseau, 1893, 9.

⁵⁸ Anonymous, *École d'enseignement supérieur pour les jeunes filles*, Montréal: La Congrégation de Notre-Dame, 1908.

⁵⁹ Anonymous, *Exercices d'orthographe*, Lévis: Mercier & Cie pour les Frères du Sacré-Coeur, 1902.

Latin to French.⁶⁰ The entrance exams to Université Laval required a strong knowledge of the Greek and Latin literary tradition, and students were tested on their knowledge of prose and poetry in each ancient language.⁶¹ With such a strong presence in the studies of students of all ages, an energetic dialogue emerged among primary school teachers regarding the finer points of mythology they encountered in their classrooms. The trade newspaper *L'enseignement primaire*, for instance, featured articles explaining the association between Jupiter and the eagle (16 February 1885), the powers of Pluto, "the prince of hell" (15 November 1883), the derivation of the word "hero" from the goddess Hera (2 October 1882), the agricultural traditions of the goddess Ceres (2 November 1882), and the various domains of action of the god Bacchus (15 January 1883).⁶² Textbooks for the study of mythology, ancient languages, and ancient literature were advertised in the *Journal de l'instruction publique* from the 1860s until the 1930s. Even textbooks that did not deal specifically with mythical material, such as the *Méthode pratique et raisonné de style de composition*, published in 1881, took care to emphasize the superiority of Christianity over earlier traditions. One exercise in this manual prompts young children to write a story about a visit to Rome in which they reflect on the victory of Christianity over paganism represented by the Pantheon's dedication to Catholic saints rather than pagan deities.⁶³ Pagan religion was strictly consigned to the realm of poetic imagination in discussions of literary history.

But such condescension in teaching mythology did not completely neutralize the danger it posed to young students. A case vividly documented by the Dominican priest André Bissonnette in the *Revue Dominicaine* of April 1922 reveals that even sixty years after the Gaumist controversy, mythology could still pose a dangerous menace to young, impressionable souls.⁶⁴ Bissonnette tells the story of a boy named only as "Alcippe", whose identity he wishes to keep secret. Alcippe was at first an exemplary student, but then came across Greek mythology, Latin Classics, and the ancient stories

⁶⁰ Adrien Leblond de Brumath, *Programmes et résumés des principales matières exigées pour les différents examens de la province de Québec*, Montréal: Cadieux et Derome, 1899, 6.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 16.

⁶² All available through the digital archives of the BANQ.

⁶³ A textbook written by Abbé E. Robert, of the Clercs de St-Viateur, *Méthode pratique et raisonné de style de composition*, Montréal: Clercs de St-Viateur, 1881, 28.

⁶⁴ The following is a summary of Bissonnette's article: "Alcippe – la chute d'une âme", *La Revue Dominicaine* (April 1922), 153–164. The original publication is available through the digital archives of the BANQ.

of ancient divinities contained therein. His interest in these stories quickly turned into an obsession: he never had any other reading material to hand, his face transformed with perverse enthusiasm when he described the beauty of these fables and the influence of these divinities on ancient people. His obsession followed him home as well. His father's house became the island of Ogygia, home of Calypso, and he delved into Latin and Greek poetry day and night to the expense of his other studies. His character, Bissonnette concludes, lacked the strength and formation necessary to avoid falling prey to such dangerous pagan Classics. Without restraint, they inflamed his passion without limit. His veneration of mythology led him to advance scandalous ideas on religion, morality, and the authority of the Church to his pious classmates. He became arrogant, hostile to all direction and advice, and no longer sought the guidance of his betters. He went through the motions of Catholic devotions, but his mind was clearly absent. His faith and his piety were not strong enough to weather the storm of the pagan readings that so fascinated him. Distant to his friends and educators, he became remote from his family when he graduated the college and went on to study law. He became a curious amusement to those he held to be his friends, the sort of oddity at a party that provoked consternation and conversation but little else. Distancing himself from the True Faith he plunged ever more into his books, questioning the very basis of existence, law, and morality. Alcippe, having given up on work and indulging his poetic interests, died of a flu, unremarkably. Yet he should be the object of our pity, not hatred, as, according to Bissonnette:

La foudre qui frappe le sommet d'un arbre, et le dépouille de son verdoyant feuillage, fait moins de ravage que ces insectes qui se logent sous son écorce et en détruisent la sève [...]. Cette parole d'un moraliste s'applique admirablement à l'influence pernicieuse du livre. Il insinue peu à peu la pensée de son auteur dans celle du lecteur.⁶⁵

The lightning which strikes the top of a tree and strips it of its verdant foliage does less harm than the insects who live under its bark and destroy its sap [...]. This example of a moralist applies admirably well to the pernicious influence of a book: it injects bit by bit the thinking of its author into the mind of the reader.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, 163–164.

Alcippe was nothing more than an unwitting victim to an ancient, ancestral evil.

The list of specific teaching materials and case studies of mythology in education could go on and on, but the point remains clear: the years following the *querelle des classiques* saw the entrenchment of pre-Christian literary Classics, and thus mythology as well as Graeco-Roman religion, in the curricula of French Canadian Catholic schools. From primary through to secondary and post-secondary education, students throughout French Canada were required to be *au fait* with the literary and religious traditions of the Greeks and Romans, though the inferiority of the latter to Catholic doctrine was emphasized with newfound vigour following the disputes of the 1860s. This would continue to be the case until the upheavals of the 1950s and the Lesage government's creation of the Royal Commission of Investigation on Education in the Province of Quebec on 21 April 1961, chaired by Msgr Alphonse-Marie Parent. The sweeping findings of what came to be known colloquially as the *commission Parent* were published in five volumes in 1963–1964, and the recommendations for reform contained therein forever changed the face of public education in Quebec. Education was to be brought under the auspices of the state rather than the Church with the creation of the Quebec Ministry for Education, which would be accountable to the citizens and government of the province. Specialized teachers, lay-people rather than consecrated religious, were to be given more extensive training, and curricula were re-organized with an eye towards teaching practical skills that would be useful in the workplace. A new generation of polytechnic and vocational schools were created, universities were brought under government management, and in general education was taken out of the hands of the Church and given to the newly nationalist state. Education became public and secular. Suddenly the fraught debates of the 1860s on the morality of teaching classical materials became irrelevant as such curricula became artefacts of what was now a bygone age. With no small measure of irony, the end of Catholic education in Quebec would also spell the end of mythological education.

5. Conclusion: Creating a National Mythology

In spite of the reforms of the 1960s, the curious fact remains: in this conservative, deeply Catholic northern corner of the world in which the Church

enjoyed a near-total monopoly on education for over three centuries, the study of pre-Christian authors and their religion consistently lay at the heart of Catholic education. Even now this is not ancient history: my own grandfather, Ernest Lefebvre, born to a poor family in French Ontario, was taught the Latin Classics in primary school and for his achievements was chosen to attend the local Collège Jesuite in which he learnt Ancient Greek. He did not become a priest, nor did he go to university, but went on to work for Canada Post for much of his life. His humanist education, and the natural intellect which it sharpened, can in no way be thought to have been wasted on him or the generations of French Canadians that came before him. We have established the primacy of pagan material in Catholic education, but the question nevertheless remains: why here, at an end of the world so geographically removed from the Graeco-Roman past, did pagan mythology cast such a long and enduring shadow?

The answer, I argue, lies in the perceived relationship of French Canada with the pre-revolutionary French past and the proto-national myth cultivated by French Canadian clergy. The infamous Msgr Gaume, in his *Ver rongeur* that we have encountered above, argued that the perversion and corruption of French society caused by the penetration of pagan religion in Catholic education manifested itself most clearly in the radical social upheaval of the French Revolution of 1789. The social rot that had produced this reversal of the natural order of things, he writes, had only worsened by the mid-nineteenth century, and these social ills had become entrenched to the point of being idealized. But by the vagaries of history French Canada had taken a vastly different path than its ancestral motherland: the British Conquest of 1760 had severed many of its external links with France, and the new British administration had further entrenched the power of the Church in French Canadian society. Cut off, at least politically, from France, French Canada never knew the violence and turmoil of the French Revolution. The *ancien régime*, in a sense, was never overthrown in this colony of France as it had been in France itself, and many of the old sensibilities reigned much longer in Canada than they had in France. French Canada, on a societal level, remained as a living spectre of France's pre-revolutionary past, a characterization which many French Canadian clergy eagerly embraced. The overthrow of the Church in France and the monarchy that it had supported were viewed by French Canadian and French clergy alike as an unholy act, a desecration of a holy society and the perversion of the divinely ordained social order. French Canada became the last bastion of the way that things

once were, and ever should remain. Because it had never rejected the power of the Church, French Canada had remained faithful where its continental ancestors had erred; in a sense, it remained truly French.

The lineage, however, did not end there. According to French Canadian clerical commentators, the thread reached from French Canada to pre-revolutionary France, and then further back to Christian and pre-Christian Rome, and ultimately Greece. Pre-revolutionary France was the direct successor to the cultural genius of antiquity, and the contemporary possessor of its legacy as well as its responsibility. France had erred in its ways, and the Revolution had severed its link with the glories of antiquity, but leaving French Canada as the sole living heir. Groulx, in his history of the French in Canada, notes this explicitly:

Quand nous parlons, en effet, de culture française, nous ne l'entendons pas au sens restreint de culture littéraire, mais au sens large et élevé où l'esprit français, fils de la Grèce et de Rome, nous apparaît comme un maître incomparable de clarté, d'ordre et de finesse, le créateur de la civilisation la plus saine et la plus humaine.⁶⁶

In fact when we speak of French culture, we do not mean this simply in the limited sense of literary culture, but in the broader and higher sense by which the French spirit, which is the son of Greece and Rome, appears to us as an incomparable master of clarity, order, and finesse, and as the creator of the most sane and human civilization.

Elsewhere, he writes that the guardians of this sacred tradition of culture and humanity were the clergy themselves and the Church they served: "[Les] Prêtres de l'Eglise romaine, gardienne antique des humanités traditionnelles [...] inclinera toujours vers les disciplines qui font l'homme éternel" ([The] priests of the Roman Church, which is the ancient guardian of the traditional humanities [...] will always incline itself towards the disciplines which make humanity eternal)."⁶⁷ Courchesne communicated the same point a few years earlier in his long monograph *Nos humanités*:

Notre humanisme ne peut pas ignorer que le présent de nos élèves a son origine dans le passé, et ce passé, chez nous, c'est – sans mépris pour

⁶⁶ Lionel Groulx, *Le français au Canada*, Montréal: Éditions Albert Levesque, 1932, 124.

⁶⁷ Groulx, *L'enseignement français*, 194.

l'héritage d'autres nationalités – une civilisation très ancienne dont nous sommes les héritiers.⁶⁸

Our sense of humanism cannot deny that the historical presence of our current students has its origins in the past, and that past, for us, is, without contempt for the heritage of other nationalities, a very ancient civilization to which we are the heirs.

The prominence of classical mythology in French Canadian education can thus be explained by two observations. The first is that French Canada perceived itself as the direct inheritor of the classical past which France had relinquished during the turbulence of the Revolution. French Canada thus had a duty in the present to maintain and perpetuate an ancient sense of truth and beauty, which had originated with Greece and Rome, was passed to the early Church, and then to the culture of France. The second is that the break with France that came with the British Conquest of 1760, as Laurent Mailhot put it of French Canadian literature, "obligea les Canadiens à chercher chez eux, fidèlement et difficilement, une voie originale" (obliged French Canadians to search among themselves, faithfully and with difficulty, for their own path).⁶⁹ This view of French Canada as the successor of the classical past in turn became part of the emerging national myth of French Canadians. Teaching the ancient past became a way of reinforcing and living this myth in the present, and in turn passing it on to the next generation. Encountering ancient mythology in education became a means of living a new mythology in the present, and in the process the bonds of a new society, of a new nation, were woven and strengthened. The closing thoughts of Groulx provide the most fitting summation:

Dieu, qui a fait les races diverses, ne les a point également faites pour les mêmes activités, ni pour les mêmes triomphes. Chaque civilisation ou chaque culture a ses points de faiblesse et ses points d'excellence. C'est par l'ensemble qu'entre toutes, la compensation, l'équilibre se rétablit. Et c'est en excellant dans le sens de son génie particulier qu'une nation atteint,

⁶⁸ Courchesne, *Nos humanités*, 287.

⁶⁹ Laurent Mailhot, *La littérature québécoise*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975, 7, quoted in Trujic, *L'intertextualité classique*, 27. See also the preceding discussion of Trujic on the impact that this rupture of ties with France had on developing French Canadian literary ideals, especially *L'intertextualité classique*, 23–27.

comme un individu, son plus haut point d'originalité, qui est aussi son plus haut degré de puissance.⁷⁰

God, who made diverse people, did not make them equally for the same activities and neither did He destine them for the same triumphs. Each civilization or each culture has its points of weakness and its points of excellence. It is by looking at the whole picture among all of them that compensation and equilibrium are established. And it is by excelling in the sense of its own particular genius that a nation, just as it is for individuals, attains its own height of originality, which is also the height of its potential.

⁷⁰ Groulx, *L'enseignement français*, 315.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF GRAECO-ROMAN MYTHOLOGY TO THE FORMATION OF BRAZILIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

I. Introduction

The goal of this piece is to demonstrate how the use of mythology reveals and highlights the official public educational policies of Brazil according to the changes to the public educational system implemented in different periods. Since the general aim of education is the formation of the individual, the focus in this work is on how mythology has influenced the formation of the Brazilian citizen. This investigation is carried out from the perspective of cultural history, concentrating on human elements and their relationship to culture, symbols, meanings, and discourses, but also on iconographies and documents.¹

This was no simple task because, although the teaching of mythology has been practised in one way or another since the beginning of the history of Brazil, most of the material reveals only the content of what was taught rather than how it was used. In order to understand the role of mythology, therefore, a search was conducted for these elements in the documents found in the educational archives of Brazil, in particular documents produced by teachers and students. The results were then supplemented with information from official documents, such as laws and, when relevant, books that were officially adopted or endorsed by the public system. Such a search was an extremely complex task due to the fact that Brazil still has neither a central nor a digitalized educational archive, and it was therefore necessary

¹ Roger Chartier, *A história cultural: entre práticas e representações* [Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations], trans. Maria Manuela Galhardo, Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand-Brasil, 1993. The book is a translation of a collection of eight articles which appeared originally in French between 1982 and 1986 and were then published together in English in 1988 under the title *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations* (trans. Lydia Cochrane).

to go through multiple centres in the hope of finding materials that would be of use. Furthermore, in many instances rooms were filled with boxes and files that lacked any categorization, and in some cases were not even catalogued. Not all places permitted public visits, and even photocopying material was often impossible without going through tremendous bureaucracy. Despite these difficulties, enough material has been collected to enable the presentation of a description that is the first of its kind, and that, it is to be hoped, may open doors to further investigations. With regards to structure, the paper provides a brief summary of the Brazilian official educational policies in each given era, and then outlines the way in which mythology was used during these periods.

2. From the Discovery of Brazil to the Republic: 1500–1889

Brazil was discovered by Portugal in 1500, and the arrival of the Jesuits forty-nine years later marks the beginning of the history of Brazilian education. In 1599, the *Ratio studiorum* was published – a set of pedagogical rules that were to be followed in Jesuit schools, where the study of the humanities was considered to be of utmost importance.² Excerpts from authors such as Homer, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristotle, Cicero, Caesar, Virgil, and Horace were studied as part of this programme, the goal of which was the moral and religious formation of the Christian man according to the canon of the Catholic Church as expressed in the ideals of the Society of Jesus. Classical mythology was used to situate the students in high culture, and to help them comprehend the world and human behaviour.

This period produced chroniclers, historians, poets, and orators, all of whom were active members of the incipient society of the Portuguese colony. It is possible to see these traces in the writings of the most famous student of the period, Father Antônio Vieira (1608–1697). His sermons, delivered both in Brazil and in Europe, contain references to the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, to the *Ethics* of Aristotle, and to Plato when it comes to the government system. Plautus and Terence are used as authors whose comedies portrayed life's mishaps, the vanity of the world, and other points of moral doctrine. Virgil, Horace, and Ovid also feature in his sermons.

² For a more detailed study on this period, see Tito Lívio Ferreira, *História da educação luso-brasileira* [History of Luso-Brazilian Education], São Paulo: Saraiva, 1966.

By 1759, when the Jesuits were expelled from Brazil, they had created twenty schools and twelve seminaries following this curriculum. The expulsion of the Jesuits was caused by the Pombaline Reforms, led in Portugal by Marquis de Pombal, an enlightened despot who had an interest in the industrialization of Portugal. Considering the presence and influence of the Jesuits in Brazil to be against the interests of Portugal, he expelled them, thereby destroying the only system of education in existence.

The intention of the Pombaline Reforms was to popularize education and make it more practical, making people more suited to address new commercial demands and the desires of an elite whose values were closer to those of the Enlightenment. The Jesuit system was decreed to be uniform, dogmatic, authoritarian, and excessively literary. In its place were substituted the so-called *aulas régias*, general courses that had no relationship with one another. While in Portugal the change in the administrative structure was accompanied by a change in pedagogical practice, this did not happen in the same way in Brazil.

Given the scarcity of books and teachers, the *aulas régias* in Brazil were limited. Most of the teachers who arrived in Brazil were priests with a humanist education, and the content ended up being a toned-down version of what had previously been taught by the Jesuits. Nevertheless, the appearance of the Academicist movement (1816–1931), which aimed to preserve and develop humanist studies, including classical studies as a whole, is notable.

In summary, therefore, this period may be characterized by the following points:

1. Education was limited to a small intellectual elite.
2. Mythology was taught through Greek and Latin texts and was part of a humanist education.
3. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was opposition towards humanist education, which was regarded as outdated, but no significant modification took place.
4. The humanist base, notwithstanding its critics, served as one of the elements of the political mentality of the country, which was at that time in its formation period.

3. The First Republic: 1889–1930

After the proclamation of the Republic in 1889 and the subsequent expulsion of the Portuguese Royal Family from Brazil, the organization of Brazilian society changed. New social classes appeared: the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, the urban middle class, and the industrial proletariat. Furthermore, different ideological groups coexisted: socialists, anarchists, Catholics, nationalists, and militarists. All the social, political, and economic changes that occurred in this period created a thrust towards education and a movement against illiteracy, which was seen as an obstacle to the development of Brazil. Education in this period must be considered in light of three elements:

1. enthusiasm for education, as demonstrated by the effort put into educating an elite that was intended to be at the forefront of Brazil's development;
2. pedagogical optimism, reflected in the belief that education was a vital tool for the development of Brazil;
3. experimentalism, marked by consecutive attempts to implement different and new forms of education.

With regard to this last element, there were a range of different educational reforms. The Benjamin Constant Reform (1890) and the Epiácio Pessoa civil code (1901) promoted a system of education in which history, literature, and classical studies gave way to mathematics, physics, and biology. Both reforms were strongly influenced by Auguste Comte's positivism.³ In a different vein, the Rivadávia Corrêa Reform (1911–1915) abolished mandatory school attendance, eliminated certificates, and was marked by a strong liberal tone, which, like the positivism, was opposed by the Catholics. In the 1920s, there were many regional reforms inspired by João Luiz Alvares and Rocha Vaz's reform of 1925, according to which education was again regulated, certificates reinstated, and once again the balance shifted from liberalism to positivism. Although education was intended to reach a wide mass of people, in practice it was still relatively restricted to the upper classes. The rate of illiteracy was still high, and most people did not continue

³ The influence of positivism in Brazil during this period was very strong. The Brazilian flag still carries the positivist motto: "Ordem e Progresso" (Order and Progress).

their formal education after the age of fourteen, at which point they usually joined the workforce.

Classical mythology can still be found in this period, through Latin and Greek literature, although to a lesser extent than previously. In this period, however, examples of mythology being used to achieve a specific goal can already be identified. A 1967 manual of sociology, when discussing the period of the First Republic, describes the three different historical moments as presented by Comte, who divided society into three levels of development: (1) the theological level, when explanations of phenomena were attributed to supernatural forces, myths, and religion; (2) the metaphysical level, marked by a search for the meaning of things; and (3) the positive level, epitomized by the true observation of phenomena through the lens of the scientific method.⁴ In this manual, it was explained that myths are important because they transmit general ideas about real phenomena, thus enabling the subsequent understanding of the development of nations and their ideas.

This idea was present in every school which adopted the positivist approach, which is to say, practically in all public schools. Of all periods of Brazilian education, this is the one which placed the greatest emphasis on discussing the function and value of mythology, and it is safe to say that this was the official view presented to all students in public schools. Although such an interpretation implies that mythology has no intrinsic value for the enlightened positive man, it is notable that mythology was consciously used to promote the values of positivism.

An example of this in the form of a description of Plato's Myth of the Cave is found in a teacher's manual discovered in one of the archives.⁵ There, it is suggested that the students "[c]ompare o Mito da Caverna com os três estágios do desenvolvimento da sociedade" (compare the Myth of the Cave with the three stages of development of society). The answer expected to be derived from this is that the real light that came out of the cave was equivalent to the values of positivism, that is, the search for objective knowledge based on science. Those trapped inside represented the civilizations which had still not achieved the third stage of development; their revolt, which breaks out after true knowledge is revealed, represents the difficulties

⁴ Gustavo Sedras, *Sociologia para jovens do século 20* [Sociology for Youth of the Twentieth Century], Rio de Janeiro: Editora Ao Livro Técnico, 1967.

⁵ Acervo da Escola Municipal Julieta Botelho [Collection of Julieta Botelho Municipal School], *Proposta pedagógica para o ensino de filosofia* [Pedagogical Proposal for Teaching Philosophy], document no. 117, Rio de Janeiro, 1934. The translation of all the fragments cited in this paper is ours.

of change and adaptation. In this example, myth was not only seen as a tool to learn history but actually as a way to boost the premises of positivism.

This period may, therefore, be summarized by the following:

1. Catholic education was replaced by two other systems, namely liberal and positivist education. Catholic education continued to exist but only in the private sphere.
2. Emphasis on the formation of the Brazilian citizen as the creator of the order and the progress of the nation. The ideal citizen that is to be the product of this education has moved away from religion and myth towards knowledge, modernity, and progress.
3. Mythology is used as a tool to boost the mainstream ideological view on the one hand, while on the other is itself understood and taught only through the lens of that same view.

4. The Vargas Period, Capanema Reform, and Escola Nova Movement: 1930–1961

One year after the financial crisis of 1929, Getúlio Vargas rose to power. In 1934, a new constitution was drafted, which tended to concentrate power in the central government and which contained some fascist elements. This period was marked by a struggle between Catholics and conservatives on one side, and liberals and communists on the other, and by many ideological struggles between the government and the communists. In 1937, Vargas alleged that the communists, after a failed attempt two years before, were again plotting to take control of the government and shut down the Congress in a *coup d'état*. Between 1937 and 1945, strong nationalism, civism, and state propaganda were prominent features of society.

The difference between these two periods can be seen by looking at how physical education was officially treated. Thomaz Mazzoni remarks that before Vargas became a dictator “[e]m São Paulo, uma autoridade policial, ao ser-lhe solicitada licença para uma corrida pedestre, respondeu que a polícia não tinha tempo para cuidar de diversões de vagabundos!” (in São Paulo, when the police were asked for a permit to allow a running competition, the answer was that the police did not have time to deal with bum fun).⁶ Mazzoni

⁶ Thomaz Mazzoni, *O esporte a serviço da pátria* [Sport in the Service of the Motherland], São Paulo: Olympicus, 1941, 22.

relates that there was even a literary contest, the goal of which was to ridicule sports. There is no doubt that these ideas were still a hangover from the previous period when physical education often was ignored or kept in the background. However, a significant shift in mentality can be seen after 1937 – the idea of *Mens sana in corpore sano* appears frequently, connected with the new, strong, patriotic citizen, who was ready to defend his motherland.

With regard to education, the culmination of this period is reflected in the Capanema Reform (1942–1946), named after Gustavo Capanema, the Minister of Health and Education, who had occupied the position since Vargas came to power. The reform had two goals: to endow the majority of citizens with technical competence and gear them towards work and love of the motherland; and to create an elite that was intended to receive higher education at a university. Therefore, after seven years of study the students were divided into two groups, one of which received an education geared towards commerce, industry, or agricultural work, and the other an education geared towards future university study.

Two instances of activities which used mythology to boost the patriotic spirit in the students should be noted. The first is found within the framework of a literature class in which the students read the *Aeneid* in Latin and were asked to write an essay and answer the following questions:

1. Qual era o conceito de *pietas* em Roma Antiga?
 2. Enéas personificava esse conceito em todos os momentos? Traga três passagens onde ele parece personificá-la e também três onde ele parece não fazê-lo e defenda a sua posição.
 3. O que você aprende desse conceito no que tange a ser um cidadão brasileiro?⁷
-
1. What was the concept of *pietas* in Ancient Rome?
 2. Did Aeneas embody this concept at all times? Find three passages where he seems to embody it and three where he seems not to, and defend your position.
 3. What can you learn from this concept when it comes to being a Brazilian citizen?

No student essays answering these questions were found in the archives. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that the teacher aimed to create a sense

⁷ Arquivo Municipal da Cidade de Santo Antônio de Pádua [Municipal Archives of Santo Antônio de Pádua County], series L.6581q, 1944, 11.

of pride and duty about being a Brazilian citizen. It should also be noted that this seems to be an early example of interdisciplinary work, since the *Aeneid* was studied in the Latin classes and yet this task was set by the literature teacher.⁸

The second activity that touches on mythology is also connected with the desirable ethos of the Brazilian citizen.⁹ In this case, the subject is domestic economy and the students are teenage girls. The teacher's class plan is entitled "O mito de Belerofonte e a virtude da humildade – a ser desenvolvido em três aulas" [The Myth of Bellerophon and the Virtue of Humility – To Be Developed in Three Classes], and is accompanied by the following scheme:

1. Apresentação do mito de Belerofonte nas obras clássicas.
 2. Contar a estória desde o nascimento até a queda, enfatizando sua arrogância.
 3. Dividir a turma em quatro grupos de modo que cada um irá discutir a estória e responder as perguntas do professor:
 - 3.1. Qual foi a causa da queda de Belerofonte?
 - 3.2. A sua queda foi justa?
 - 3.3. O que ele poderia ter feito para evitá-la?
 4. Como tarefa de casa, os grupos serão requeridos a escolher uma personalidade que obteve sucesso em vencer a sua arrogância ou então em mostrar humildade mesmo quando ele estava em uma posição de superioridade.
 5. Apresentação e discussão da tarefa, enfatizando a relação entre humildade e respeito à hierarquia (pais, marido, religião e Estado).
 6. Tarefa de casa: cada grupo deve explicar a importância de respeitar os pais, o marido, a Igreja e o Estado.
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1. Presentation of the myth of Bellerophon in the classical texts.
 2. Telling of the story, from his birth until his fall, while placing emphasis on his arrogance.
 3. Class will be divided into four groups and each group will discuss the story and answer questions provided by the teacher:
 - 3.1. What was the cause of Bellerophon's fall?
 - 3.2. Was his fall justified?
 - 3.3. What could he have done in order to avoid it?

⁸ We have found anecdotal evidence that cases of interdisciplinarity were not as rare as some assume. However, when such cases occurred, it was on the initiative of the individual teacher since this issue has only been given importance in the Brazilian educational system since 1996.

⁹ Arquivo Municipal da Cidade de Santo Antônio de Pádua [Municipal Archives of Santo Antônio de Pádua County], series L.6602f, 1944, unpaginated.

4. As a home assignment, the groups will be asked to choose a personality who succeeded in overcoming his arrogance or in displaying humility even when he was in a position of superiority.
5. Presentation and discussion of the assignment, emphasizing the relationship between humility and respect for hierarchy (parents, husband, religion, and the State).
6. Home assignment: Each group must explain the importance of respecting parents, one's husband, the Church, and the State.

Clearly the teacher who developed the lesson plan was less concerned with Bellerophon or Greek mythology than with using it in order to advance a certain world view. It is also notable how religion was intertwined with education during this period. Catholic priests were commonly responsible for teaching Latin, and they would open and close classes with a prayer in Latin. Obedience to one's parents and submission to one's husband can presumably be understood as a reflection of the religious spirit of the time. Finally, the submission to the State is noteworthy. The four elements in the teacher's plan present the following order: parents, husband, Church, and State. It is possible that the order was randomly chosen, but it is equally possible that there is an expected hierarchy playing a part here. If that is so, while obedience to religion is important, and more important than family, obedience to the State takes precedence over the rest, providing an example of the fascist elements which crept into the educational system during this period.

In order to understand the events from the end of the Vargas period until 1961, it is necessary to return to the 1930s to understand the birth of the Escola Nova movement. The educational system of the previous period and Capanema's view on education were already denounced as being too academic, too conservative, and not geared towards the needs of the people.¹⁰ Opposition took form at first in the Pioneers' Manifest of 1932, which was a document produced by communist and liberal educators who strived for education for all, mandatory, free, and without religious and conservative influences. During the entire Vargas period, and after, this group was very active, writing books and leading the call for change in education. In the 1950s, Brazil was experiencing an economic boom caused by a growing industry, which required more people who were able to read, comprehend, and write. The economic demand found fertile ground in the voices of those

¹⁰ Otaíza Romanelli, *História da educação no Brasil (1930/1973)* [History of Education in Brazil (1930/1973)], São Paulo: Vozes, 1978.

who opposed the traditional educational system. The Ministry of Education, therefore, heavily invested in teaching and in the creation of centres geared towards the formation of teachers with a different mindset.

This new group occupied important positions and became influential in educational politics especially during the very long debate which culminated in the promulgation of a new education law in 1961. The ideology of these people centred on the idea of the creation of a new man for a changing society. It was believed that to produce this new man, education should pay more attention to the skills necessary for work, while the man himself would strive to dominate nature and change society, in his search for a better future. Consequently, education was strongly influenced by John Dewey's pragmatism,¹¹ coloured by communist ideas.¹²

One of the practical consequences of this mentality in the 1961 law was the abolishment of the students' obligation to learn another language. This meant that there was no more mandatory Latin; it also led to a diminished use of classical texts in literature classes. Nevertheless, there are two interesting examples in which classical myth was used to promote this new educational agenda. In a locally produced manual for history teachers of Grade 6 students, mythology was used to explain a new historical fact. The title of the exercise is "Hefesto e os autômatos: homens e máquinas, ontem e hoje" [Hephaestus and the Automatons: Men and Machine, Yesterday and Today], and under the title it is explained in the following way:

Hefesto criou autômatos para ajuda-lo com diferentes tarefas. Ao dar para cada um uma habilidade específica e atribuindo uma tarefa específica, ele pôde realizar muito mais do que poderia sozinho. A Revolução Industrial colocou em prática a idéia de Hefesto graças ao advento de novas máquinas.

As máquinas permitiram a produção laboral sem interrupções que outrora era realizada por muitas pessoas. Tal como o autômato, cada máquina foi especialmente criada para realizar uma tarefa específica. Entretanto, a máquina não trabalha sozinho e também são necessárias pessoas

¹¹ Anísio Teixeira, *Educação não é privilégio* [Education Is Not a Privilege], Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2001 (ed. pr. 1957); Anísio Teixeira, *A escola progressiva: pequena introdução à filosofia da educação* [The Progressive School: A Short Introduction to the Philosophy of Education], Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2001 (ed. pr. 1968); Anísio Teixeira, *A educação e a crise brasileira* [Education and the Brazilian Crisis], Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2001 (ed. pr. 1956).

¹² Jayme Abreu, *A escola como agente de mudança cultural* [School as the Agent of Cultural Transformation], Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1960.

especialmente treinadas para operar as máquinas. Assim como a máquina tem uma especialização, normalmente o trabalhador irá se focar em fazer uma só tarefa e assim irá fazê-la melhor e mais rápido. Desta forma ele irá produzir mais, de forma mais eficiente e gerar mais lucro para seu empregador e consequentemente para ele próprio.¹³

Hephaestus created automatons in order to help him with different tasks. By giving each a specific ability and putting it in charge of a specific task, he was able to accomplish much more than he was able to do on his own. The Industrial Revolution put Hephaestus' idea into action, thanks to the arrival of new machines.

The machines made it possible to produce nonstop work, which before had to be done by many people. Like the automaton, each machine was specially designed to perform a specific task. However, the machine does not work by itself and there is also a need for people specially trained to operate the machine. Just as the machine has a specialty, so usually the worker will focus on doing one specific task, thus making it better and faster. Therefore, he will produce more, and more efficiently, generating more profit for his employer and consequently for himself.

As with most of the examples found in the course of this research, there is no indication from where the myth presented was taken. The myth is assumed to be known by the teacher and, as in the previous examples, the myth itself is not the focus. Instead, the myth is a tool to advance a political and/or educational agenda. In the present case, the myth of Hephaestus and the automatons is used to explain the idea behind the Industrial Revolution.

Two elements that are inherent in this explanation must, however, be pointed out. The first is the clear position regarding the Industrial Revolution. The fact that machines took over people's jobs, and the fact that people needed to specialize in one function, is presented as positive for both employers and employees. As detailed above, at this time Brazil was going through a period of economic growth, and there was a strong need for workers capable of understanding and operating machines, and for factory workers. This history lesson served to support this system, and there is an implication that the students should see themselves in it.

¹³ Romualdo Gontijo, "Hefeisto e os autômatos: os homens e as maquinas ontem e hoje. Trecho de atividade de história sobre a Revolução Industrial" [Hephaestus and the Automatons: Men and Machine, Yesterday and Today. Fragment of a History Assignment about the Industrial Revolution], in *Caderno de atividades de história geral* [General History Activity Book], Campinas: Pioneira, 1962.

The second point that should be made is that, notwithstanding the clear political agenda, the myth appeared as something living and somehow timeless. When the writer says that the Industrial Revolution put Hephaestus' plan into action, it is implied that the myth is not just an ancient element but something that can teach contemporary society about its present and future. The fact that the Industrial Revolution was presented in such a positive light enhanced the importance of the myth as not only something from the past but having a life of its own.

The second example is, unfortunately, less descriptive. In a geography lesson plan, the following entry was found: "Triptólemo e o valor do trabalhador rural" [Triptolemus and the Value of the Agricultural Worker].¹⁴ Nothing more than the title was found, but, from the title, it can safely be assumed that it was intended to be a lesson about the importance and value of agricultural workers. Industrialization in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s caused a radical change with regard to agricultural workers. Eliseu Alves, Geraldo da Silva e Souza, and Renner Marra note that in 1960, 17.4% of the urban population in Brazil was originally from rural areas and arrived in the cities as a result of internal migrations.¹⁵ Working in the city was perceived as being more lucrative, providing more options, and giving a better perspective on life in general. Furthermore, the increasing use of machines led to a scarcity of work, especially for those who were uneducated.

An informed guess regarding the motives for the exhortation of the agricultural worker would suggest that this line of work was being increasingly perceived as something inferior and unworthy. This popular perception ran against the economic interests of the country – agriculture was and still is one of the main products of Brazil – and it might well be that the teacher was trying to at least present the students with another view of the topic, if not trying to pull them in line with the spirit of the time. It was probably considered that using the figure of Triptolemus would boost the importance of agriculture as a whole, and its workers in particular, giving it a noble and divine association.

¹⁴ Arquivo do Colégio Estadual Souza Soares [Archives of the Souza Soares State School], "O mito de Triptolemo e o valor do camponês. Plano de aula de geografia" [The Myth of Triptolemus and the Value of the Peasant: Geography Lesson Plan], *Caderno de atividades do Professor Aléssio Pederneiras* [Activity Book of Professor Aléssio Pederneiras], document no. 118, Rio de Janeiro, 1961.

¹⁵ Eliseu Alves, Geraldo da Silva e Souza, and Renner Marra, "Êxodo e sua contribuição à urbanização de 1950 a 2010" [The Exodus and Its Contribution to Urbanization from 1950 to 2010], *Revista de Política Agrícola* [Journal of Agricultural Policy] 20.2 (2011), 80–88.

Education and the use of mythology in this period may, therefore, be summarized as follows:

1. The ideological struggle between the communist and liberal left and the conservative and religious right influenced the official educational policies. In the first half of the period, the right had more influence, and after 1945 the balance shifted to the left.
2. Mythology was used as a tool to promote the values perceived as important by the educational mentality *en vogue* at the time.
3. Latin stopped being mandatory and, as will be argued below, this marked the beginning of a decline in the use of classical mythology.

5. From Military Rule to the 1996 Education Law: 1961–1996

In the 1960 elections, Brazilians could vote for the president and the vice-president separately. As a result, a right-leaning president (Jânio Quadros) and a left-leaning vice-president (João Goulart, also known as Jango) came to power. The president resigned less than one year after, and the country entered a period of turmoil because of the relationship between the new president, Goulart, and the communists.

Following Cuba's revolution, organized groups attempted to take power in the country, carrying out attacks against civilians and military forces. These groups had sympathizers among the intellectual elite, if not regarding their methods, at least regarding their goal. As the new president grew even closer to the communists and made clear his intention to promulgate laws that would give the government power, among other controversial actions, to take land away from people, he lost support. Opposed by the mainstream media, which openly asked him to resign, by a large part of the civil society, and by his own military, and fearing for his safety, the president ended up fleeing the country in 1964, and in the same year Congress voted to put the military in power.

Concerning education, there was open fear on the part of the teachers, in particular until 1979 when the Amnesty Law was passed, of being associated with, or seen as a sympathizer of, the communists. However, while it could be expected that in 1964 the new military government would repeal the educational law that had been instituted by the left-wing president, and would again swing the pendulum towards a more conservative education, in reality a new law came only in 1971, and the modifications were few: a mandatory

course on civics was introduced, religious education became optional (instead of non-existent as had been the case previously), and physical education and arts became mandatory. Nevertheless, as a continuation of the previous period, education retained a strong technical/industrial direction, as Brazil continued to enjoy economic growth and accelerated industrialization. The reason for this was the “pressure cooker” doctrine of General Golbery do Couto e Silva, head of Brazil’s Intelligence Service at the time, which held that there should be some space for the communists and their supporters to vent their ideas. Notwithstanding the censorship that happened in public schools during the first half of the military period, the humanities as a whole were little by little shifting culturally towards what today is called the cultural left.

When it comes to the use of mythology in this period, two different categories can be distinguished. The first is a continuation of what was done before, that is, encouraging industrial and agricultural work. The second is geared towards values that were advocated by the regime in power. A manual of instruction for teachers of the People Studies Centre at Nova Friburgo School¹⁶ mentions Hesiod’s *Works and Days* in order to encourage the students to enjoy contact with nature and appreciate working the soil. In this material, teachers are encouraged to arouse reflection and thoughts in the students, recognizing the effort of the workers, both those in factories and the agricultural labourers, with emphasis on the latter.

Another example is found in the material created during the period of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) agreements in 1971, in a module of Programmed Learning of History. This module highlights excerpts from Virgil’s *Aeneid* in which elements of national bravery can be found, as well as the designation of courage and virility as values to be reinforced through illustrative pedagogical activities:

Professor, depois de ler a primeira parte da *Eneida* de Virgílio, enquanto contempla o mar e a sua terra, desenvolva uma atividade de redação encorajando os alunos a escrever os motivos pelos quais vale a pena lutar pela terra, mesmo estando longe de casa.¹⁷

¹⁶ Arquivo do Centro de Estudos de Pessoal do Colégio Nova Friburgo [Archives of the People Studies Centre of Nova Friburgo School], Centro de Estudos de Pessoal do Colégio Nova Friburgo, 1967, uncatalogued.

¹⁷ Proedes Arquivo Temático com relação ao MEC/USAID [Proedes Thematic Archive Related to MEC/USAID], Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1971.

Teacher, after reading the first part of the *Aeneid* of Virgil, while contemplating the sea and your land, develop an essay activity encouraging the students to write down the reasons for which it is worth fighting for their land even when they are far away from home.

The military period was also marked by pronounced encouragement of sport. In the same archive, an example was found aimed at the physical education teacher, using a legendary story to explain the Hans Selye General Adaptation Syndrome applied to physical training.¹⁸ The example given is that of Milo carrying a calf on his back since its birth. Milo became used to it, and as the calf got bigger and became a bull, Milo became the strongest man. This story is used to demonstrate that in order to achieve mastery in speed or power, one must train and gradually increase the intensity of the training. The legend here serves both as an educational tool and as an exhortation to value physical prowess, giving an impression that if one tried hard enough, there would be no limits.¹⁹

From the promulgation of the Amnesty Law, Marxist-oriented teachers became more influential and gradually a shift becomes apparent; from an education that focused on the values of work and nationalism, there is a move to one that critiqued the condition of the worker and also the power and class struggle between the poor and the rich. This change began at the end of the military rule and grew in force until the enactment of a new educational law in 1996.

6. A Partial Conclusion and an Example of a Brazilian Myth

Drawing on the evidence presented here, it may be established that during these different periods, Greek and classical mythology were used in a very particular way in Brazil. During the period reviewed, even though the

¹⁸ General Adaptation Syndrome is a model used to explain how biological organisms adapt according to the stress they undergo. When it comes to physical training, an exercise which reaches a certain threshold causes stress to the body. During rest, the body recovers and adapts, i.e. makes itself more able to endure a similar exercise. This is the most basic principle in physical training. For the model, see Hans Selye, "Stress and the General Adaptation Syndrome", *British Medical Journal* 1.4667 (17 June 1950), 1383–1392.

¹⁹ Acervo do Colégio Conselheiro Josino [Collection of Conselheiro Josino School], *Diário escolar de professor de educação física* [School Diary of a Physical Education Teacher], series H.131.2, Itaboraí, 1968.

teaching of Graeco-Roman mythology was not part of an official syllabus, it made its way into the course of study through the curricula in literature, Latin, history, geography, civics, and even physical education. The myths were re-interpreted according to the current political/ideological view of education at each stage.

As a final illustration, an example of a figure used in different ways for more than a century, according to the ideological view of the various periods. Joaquim José da Silva Xavier (1746–1792), known as Tiradentes, was a revolutionary leader of a movement which wanted to break away from Portuguese rule and declare independence. The movement was suppressed by Portugal, and Tiradentes was executed publicly and his body dismembered. In 1890, one year after the beginning of the Republic, the date of his execution (21 April) was proclaimed a national holiday,²⁰ and Tiradentes was praised as a man who had understood what was just for the Brazilian people, and as an example of a man who embodied the values of the doctrine of positivism, which was popular at the time. The Vargas government also praised Tiradentes, focusing on the military aspect of his life, and set him up as the patron of the Civil and Military Police in Brazil. During the military period, Tiradentes was highlighted as an example of one who took his civic duty as far as death when it was necessary. He was named the Civic Patron by General Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco, the first military president after Jango relinquished power.

Before turning to Tiradentes's portrayal by the Marxists, it should be noted that in 1893 Tiradentes was painted in a way that consciously echoed Jesus (see Fig. 1). There are many elements which superimpose Tiradentes on Jesus: his appearance, the cross, the place where his quartered body stands, which is suggestive of an altar, and the position of his body parts, in a pattern that references other Christian works. Furthermore, his body is arranged in a shape that is similar to the Brazilian map. This iconography has been maintained ever since, and in practically all descriptions in books Tiradentes is graphically portrayed in a way that is reminiscent of Jesus.

Under the Marxists, in the 1980s, the iconography continued in a similar vein. However, the values upon which they chose to focus were different. The Marxist-oriented teachers presented the episode as an example of Brazil itself, fighting for its authenticity and for the poor.

²⁰ The holiday is still celebrated in contemporary Brazil.

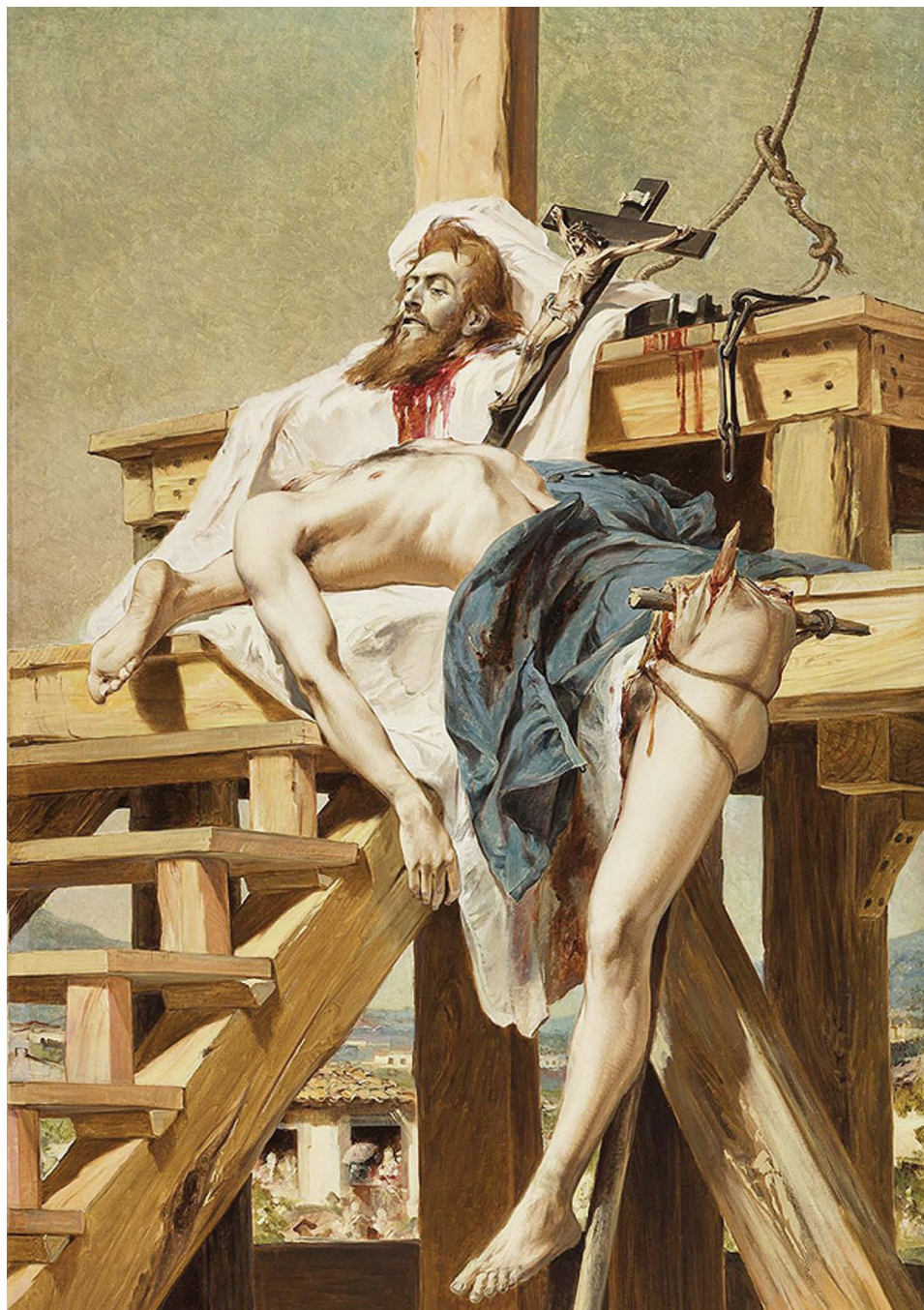


Figure 1: Pedro Américo, *Tiradentes Esquartejado* (1893), Mariano Procópio Museum. Scan by Dornicke from MAPRO: O Museu Mariano Procópio, São Paulo: Banco Safra, 2006, Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain.

This interpretation emphasizes how Tiradentes was betrayed by the bourgeoisie, who sold him to the Portuguese in exchange for money, making them traitors of the whole country and particularly of the poor. They stress that only through this revolution was Brazil later able to become independent from Portugal, turning Tiradentes into an example of a revolutionary leader.²¹ Thus, in a history book for teachers, written by Flávio Gomes and published by Melhoramentos, which was mandatory in elementary schools, the following statement can be found:

Tiradentes, o mártir da Conspiração de Minas Gerais, lutou para a independência do Brasil, sacrificando a sua vida para que o povo não empobrecesse ou sofresse com a dominação portuguesa e para que houvesse um mundo melhor no futuro. Proponha aos alunos uma atividade de redação sobre o valor do sacrifício e do altruísmo para um bem maior.²²

Tiradentes, the martyr of the Minas Gerais Conspiracy, fought for Brazil's independence, sacrificing his life so that the people would not be impoverished or suffer from Portuguese domination, and so that there could be a better world in the future. Suggest that the students write an essay about the values of sacrifice and altruism for a greater good.

Brazil is a very Christian country and so the association with Jesus, and particularly with Jesus' crucifixion, makes Tiradentes a Brazilian hero in the eyes of the people. Once he is portrayed as a hero, the discourse about Tiradentes becomes one about the ideological movement which is promoting it. Tiradentes, then, becomes a myth, being redefined through the lens of each, and being used to enhance a political/ideological discourse, just as Graeco-Roman mythology.

7. Epilogue: From 1996 to the Present

This study is very much a preliminary investigation, limited by the fact that some of the internally produced materials, such as student essays and teacher plans, have mostly not yet arrived at the big archive centres. Obtaining

²¹ This description is still present today in most didactic books on Brazilian history.

²² Flávio Gomes, *Manual do professor da história do Brasil* [History of Brazil: Teacher's Manual], São Paulo: Melhoramentos, 1981, 68.

the material directly from the schools is hampered by their reticence and fear of scrutiny, which could put the school or its board in a bad light.

Nevertheless, it is possible to present this last period broadly. The 1996 education law and its 2003 amendment were strongly influenced by Marxist-oriented educators and marked a departure from everything previously noted with regard to classical mythology. The law is explicit in stating that Afro-Brazilian culture, history, and elements must be taught in the literature, arts, and history courses. This came on the heels of the opposition of the Frankfurt School and Antonio Gramsci to traditional Western values. Graeco-Roman mythology has commonly been perceived as a representative of such culture and has largely been relegated to the background and replaced by other values. It is possible to see this shift by considering the requests for books to be officially endorsed by the government, where some requests were denied under the heading "Não ajuda a promover a diversidade" (Does not help to promote diversity).

This rejection of Graeco-Roman mythology as Western imperialism can be illustrated by a conversation the authors had with a high school philosophy teacher. He explained that while he teaches Plato's myth of the cave, he also explains how the light and the truth can be read as a metaphor for one "right" culture, the one which saw the light, which desires to impose itself on the unenlightened. He ends his lesson with a debate about whether the "unenlightened" were right to react against their friend who was trying to impose the truth on them.

The pendulum at present has swung to the left, and while this trend has gained even more adherents, there is a countermovement that is trying to resurrect the importance of studying Graeco-Roman literature, including mythology. This movement began with the philosopher Olavo de Carvalho, known as "Olavo" in Brazil, who alone managed to persuade about 20,000 students to enrol in his online philosophy courses. He is responsible for the creation of a conservative movement, which elected a president who has very different views on education from his predecessors. Olavo himself has written books and essays about the importance of myths,²³ and it is possible that this will influence the public policy in the coming years and maybe move the pendulum in the other direction once more.

²³ Olavo de Carvalho, *Dialética simbólica* [Symbolic Dialectics], São Paulo: Vide Editorial, 2015; Olavo de Carvalho, *História essencial da filosofia* [Essential History of Philosophy], 32 vols., São Paulo: É Realizações, 1998.

$$= \frac{d^2 r}{d\varphi^2} \left(\frac{J}{\mu r^2} \right) - \frac{z}{r^2} \cdot \frac{J}{\mu} \cdot \left(\dots \right)$$

mitologie

$$W(\beta) = \frac{dw}{d\beta}$$

itan aye atijo

$$\sin\left(\frac{\theta}{\theta_0}\right) - A \sin\left(\frac{\theta_1}{\theta_0}\right)$$

$$\frac{d^2 r}{dt^2} = -\omega^2 r$$

מיטולוגיה


$$(\vec{r} \cdot \vec{F})_x = 2H_1 \sin \alpha$$

mythology

$$M \ddot{x} = -Cx \quad \ddot{x} + \frac{C}{M} x = 0$$

$$x = -A \sin(\omega_0 t + \varphi)$$

$$v_0 = \omega_0 A \cos \varphi$$

$$x = A \cos(\omega_0 t)$$

$$E^2 = p^2 c^2$$

$$= M c^2 \left[\dots \right]$$

$$\frac{d}{dt} \cos^2(\omega_0 t + \varphi) = \frac{2 \cos(\omega_0 t + \varphi) (-\sin(\omega_0 t + \varphi) \omega_0)}{2\pi/\omega_0}$$

$$\Delta t' = \Delta t$$

神話

Part V

OUR FAR-FLUNG MYTHICAL EDUCATION: AFRICA, ASIA, AND THE MIDDLE EAST

REVISIONING CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY
IN AFRICAN DRAMATURGY: A STUDY
OF SOPHOCLES' OEDIPUS REX
AND OLA ROTIMI'S
THE GODS ARE NOT TO BLAME

The complex nature of the world has always propelled humanity into efforts to understand its surroundings. It is within this context that Uwem Affiah remarks that "there are several fundamental questions concerning man's existence in the cosmos begging for answers to this day".¹ These questions, to an extent, find expression in the congregation of world cultures and civilizations. Links abound between world mythologies and cultures. Such bonds help us to understand the elements that shape human identity, even with regional differences. Differences between world mythologies have been much admired as they give a unique identity to each people. In spite of this, resemblances, as well as bonds, exist between different mythologies. These links show and reinforce the unity of behavioural patterns across cultures and civilizations. In an attempt at defining themselves at a crossroads and/or bridging gaps between world civilizations, some African scholars, through their writings, continue to amplify the link between African mythology and other world mythologies. They have subscribed to dredging up structural configurations, archetypal patterns, and thematic concerns of classical writings as models for reinventing themselves within the global milieu. Thus, many scholars within this platform have taken upon themselves the duty to transculture classical templates as models for their literary productions, though at the same time accentuating their indigenous identities. Cases in point are Wole Soyinka in *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite*

¹ Uwem Affiah, "Aristotelian Tragic Drama, Man and the Contemporary World: Pseudoclassicism in Ola Rotimi's 'Kurunni'", *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 6.4 (2013), 50.

and Ola Rotimi in *The Gods Are Not to Blame* (which is our focus in this chapter), who imaginatively subscribe to these classical prototypes as means of redefining the self and/or bonding both traditions.²

I. Mythical Crossroads between Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*

Ola Rotimi, a Nigerian writer, transplants, adopts, and adapts the Greek myth of Oedipus in his play *The Gods Are Not to Blame*. Historically, Rotimi's play is set in late twentieth-century Nigerian society, far from that of Sophocles, who was writing in the classical period of antiquity. Rotimi's adaptation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* is an attempt to project the links that exist between Greek traditions and the Yoruba pantheon, and to show that humankind's identity formation and cultural patterns are not purely monopolistic in nature but are linked with those of others. Thus, Rotimi presents some thematic concerns, structural patterns, and archetypal patterns of classical mythology as a means of elucidating the bonds that exist between world civilizations. Looking at the artistic ingenuity of some African writers, Kelvin J. Wetmore confirms that two forms of *Classica Africana* exist on the contemporary stage:

Afrocentric adaptation, in which the playwright transculturates an ancient text into an African or African diaspora context [...] or through casting actors of African descent in roles in production. What Ola Rotimi has done is to an extent the latter.³

In this light, this chapter examines the structural patterns and behavioural traits of characters in Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. The discussion also points out that Rotimi's play, like those of other prominent African writers (including Soyinka), who are familiar with the Greek tradition, is rooted in rituals, and other accompanying dramatic elements, like dance, songs, and chants. Finally, the chapter brings into the limelight the fact that the introduction of such cross-cultural models

² Ola Rotimi, *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971. Rotimi's play is an adaptation of the Greek myth of Oedipus, in the African context of the Yoruba people in Nigeria.

³ Kelvin J. Wetmore Jr, "Black Skin, Greek Masks: Classical Receptions, Race Reception, and African-American Identity on the Tragic Stage", *Revue de littérature comparée* 4 (2012), 488.

in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, particularly in Africa, can serve as a catalyst for improving inter-cultural competence and sparking learners' thinking skills.

Intertextuality theorists (including Julia Kristeva and Gérard Genette) firmly believe that a text is not an independent entity, and consequently cannot exist as a self-sufficient whole of a closed system, given that its form and content textualize other texts. The works of playwrights and other writers are products of influences and experiences because writers themselves are not islands.⁴ Thus, even Sophocles, whose template is used, to an extent, by Rotimi today, must have been inspired by other templates, be it from humanity or nature. These contacts, be they physical, metaphysical, or psychic, continue to inform many a writer. Rotimi's play almost replicates Sophocles'.

The structural patterns and behavioural traits of characters in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame* are similar in many ways, though they exhibit some differences. Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, like Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, adheres to the classical theorization on the nature of tragedy as conceptualized by Aristotle. In the *Penguin Companion to Literature*, Donald Reynolds Dudley and David Marshall Lang, quoting Aristotle, establish that

tragedy is the representation of a series of events in which the hero, who is neither saint nor villain, brings disaster on himself through error, and not through accident or wickedness; and disaster should come about unexpectedly through a sudden change of circumstances, or recognition of someone hitherto unrecognized or better still both together.⁵

From this perspective, a tragic hero should be of noble birth and should undergo a reversal of fortunes, through his error of judgement or flaw. The trajectory of the tragic hero, according to Aristotle, should move from his noble birth to *hamartia* (frailty in judgement), to *peripeteia* (reversal of fortune), to *anagnorisis* (self-realization), and to *catharsis* (purging of emotions), a trend that both Sophocles and Rotimi respect.

⁴ Michael Worton and Judith Still, *Intertextuality: Theories and Practice*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990, 1.

⁵ Donald Reynolds Dudley and David Marshall Lang, *Penguin Companion to Literature*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965, 168.

2. Plot of *The Gods Are Not to Blame*

The play dramatizes the demise of Odewale, a tragic hero who attempts to escape his destiny. It opens in Kutuje, with King Adetusa and Queen Ojuola, who are at a shrine to seek blessings and prophecies for their newborn son, Odewale, as custom demands. The seer they have come to see, a priest of the Ifa, Baba Fakunle, reveals that the child will kill his father and marry his mother. Worried about this revelation, and in attempt to avert it, they tie the child's feet with strings of cowries, and order Gbonka, a palace guard, to abandon him in Ipetu, an evil forest, as sacrifice to the gods. Gbonka arrives in the bush and instead hands the child to Alaka, a hunter, from Ijekun, the neighbouring village. The hunter takes the child to the childless King Ogundele and Queen Mobike. The child grows up in the new palace and believes that it is his place of origin, and his parents are Ogundele and Mobike. One day, he overhears Ogundele referring to him as a butterfly that thinks himself a bird. He goes to an oracle to decode this saying, and is told that he will kill his father and marry his mother. The message destabilizes him. Like his parents, he tries to avert the curse by running away to Ede. While in Ede, he purchases a piece of farmland on which he cultivates yams.

Sometime later, an old man (King Adetusa) and his servants invade the farm, and the old man asks his servants to harvest Odewale's yams. Odewale confronts the man but the man insults his village, Ijekun. Both engage in a battle of charms and incantations, and Odewale succeeds in striking the old man to death with his hoe, not knowing he is his biological father, and thus fulfilling the first part of the prophecy. Filled with panic over shedding an old man's blood, Odewale escapes from Ede to Kutuje. When he arrives there, he sees the people in trouble – their land has been invaded by the Ikolu people, and they are helpless and desperate. Odewale decides to help them. He rallies the village warriors, and together they fight, and defeat, the Ikolu. The people of Kutuje reward him by making him king, given the vacancy in the kingdom. As king, tradition demands that he marries the widowed queen. He obeys, and later has four children with her and in this way fulfils the second part of the prophecy.

Eleven years later, a mysterious sickness attacks the land of Kutuje and kills many people. Aderopo, the late king's son (conceived after King Adetusa and his wife got rid of Odewale), is sent by Odewale to Orunmila, the all-knowing god in Ile Ife, to seek advice about the plague. Aderopo returns

with an unclear revelation, which simply states: the murderer lives peacefully among the people. King Odewale and Aderopo decide that the culprit has to be found and punished. Odewale further swears to the god Ogun that he will find the murderer and gouge out his eyes, and then banish him. Aderopo then brings Baba Fakunle, the soothsayer, to the palace, and he refuses to reveal the murderer. Instead, he calls King Odewale a bed-sharer. This "supposed" accusation angers Odewale, and he suspects and accuses Aderopo and Baba Fakunle of plotting against him because he is a stranger on "their" land and throne, and believes Aderopo wishes to overthrow him.

Not long after, Odewale's friend Alaka, from the Ijekun, arrives to inform him about his father's death. Odewale shares old-time jokes with Alaka and tells him about a man he killed on his farm. In the course of their discussion, Queen Ojuola tells Odewale that Baba Fakunle is a liar because he had earlier said the deceased king would be killed by his own son. While narrating, she refers to Gbonka, who witnessed the king's death. Odewale sends for Gbonka, who comes in and explains how the king was murdered. Alaka recognizes Gbonka, the man who gave him a baby many years before and reminds Gbonka about their encounter in the Ipetu bush. Gbonka confirms that he handed a child, Odewale, to Alaka some years back. He also explains where the late king was murdered (where three footpaths meet) and Odewale's mind becomes clear about his killing of his own father, King Adetusa. Queen Ojuola is shocked to find out that she has married and has had children with her own son. She rushes to her bedroom and stabs herself to death. Odewale follows, pulls the knife from her stomach, and gouges out his own eyes, as he had promised to do to the murderer. Instantly, Aderopo comes in, and Odewale apologizes to him for his false accusations. Thereafter, Odewale and his four children leave the palace and wander far away from Kutuje. As he leaves, the people of Kutuje sorrowfully observe him, and he places a curse on whoever will try to stop him from fulfilling his own promise of banishing Adetusa's murderer.⁶

⁶ On this play, see also Daniel A. Nkemele's entry on *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, peer-reviewed by Divine Che Neba and Elizabeth Hale, in *Our Mythical Childhood Survey*, Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018, <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/218> (accessed 10 July 2020). For an analysis of this play, see, e.g., P.J. Conradie, "'The Gods Are Not to Blame', Ola Rotimi's Version of the Oedipus Myth", *Akroterion* 39 (1994), 27–36, <https://doi.org/10.7445/39-1-528>.

3. Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame* versus Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*

This section focuses on the points of convergence and divergence of both plays. Though a series of actions in *The Gods Are Not to Blame* are drawn from Sophocles' template, Rotimi convincingly satisfies his audience with images that help to paint a unique picture of the Yoruba pantheon. Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, like Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, depicts the life of its tragic hero, Odewale, in accordance with the parameters laid down by Aristotle. Like Oedipus, Odewale is of royal lineage and has to interpret the message of the gods as expressed by the priest, Baba Fakunle, who represents Sophocles' Tiresias. Odewale believes that accusations are made against him because he is a stranger, in this case, not a member of the Ijekun tribe, but of the Kutuje community. His thoughts resemble those of Oedipus as far as their supposed strangeness to the throne is concerned. Odewale and Oedipus are worried that they may be murdered like their predecessors. This brings up the question of the legitimacy of kingship in classical and Yoruba traditions. In this respect, Sophocles places the Greek tradition of legislation at the forefront. As we are dealing here with a complex, diverse, and evolving reality – Homeric kingdoms and their later development into historical city-states, among them democratic Athens and military Sparta ruled by two hereditary kings – the wisest choice would be to limit our analysis to the archaic/Homeric period, the main source of themes for Greek tragedians. From such a perspective, it would have been unusual for a stranger to become a king.⁷ Rotimi's adaptation, like its classical counterpart, equally shows that legislation is not a tradition unique to the Greeks. The notion of tribal origins is also vital to the Yoruba tradition. It is partly due to Odewale's strong attachment to tribal origin that his downfall is precipitated. Rotimi, through his protagonist, Odewale, shows that tribal allegiance blurs the Yoruba vision of a pan-African identity, as most of the focus is on indigenous identities. This draws our attention to the question of identities across cultures. Similarly, Oedipus interrogates himself: "Who am I?" This question transposes itself beyond frontiers, given that all humans are often tempted to ask such existential questions, especially when they are confronted with

⁷ See Nino Luraghi, "Ruling Alone: Monarchy in Greek Politics and Thought", in Nino Luraghi, ed., *The Splendors and Miseries of Ruling Alone: Encounters with Monarchy from Archaic Greece to the Hellenistic Mediterranean*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013, 11–24.

identity issues. Such existential questions posed by Sophocles' and Rotimi's heroes serve as catalysts for their downfall.

Oedipus Rex begins with a chorus that cries out because a plague has affected the Thebans, with Tiresias' elaborate account of the calamities. Rotimi does the same by showing the suffering that his Yoruba people undergo in neocolonial Nigeria. However, he uses a group of women and other citizens to express these grievances. At the beginning of the play, the women of Kutuje complain about the tragedies that have befallen them. Their lamentations are slightly different from Tiresias' in *Oedipus Rex*, who is as aggressive as Rotimi's women. Unlike Oedipus, who is purely sympathetic towards the people's cries, Odewale, after being sympathetic, criticizes their inactive nature in seeking solutions to the calamities occurring in their land. He is a Yoruba and as such believes that if people have problems, like the plague, the first place to seek assistance is the priest, or one can look for curative herbs in the forest. In his adaption, Rotimi therefore captures the classical role of the chorus as community commentators and adapts it to his cultural context.

Besides the above, Creon, in *Oedipus Rex*, is blatant in revealing the message of the oracle before the elders and chorus, whereas Aderopo, his equivalent in *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, is more hesitant to disclose the information obtained from the shrine of Orunmila because in the Yoruba tradition he who brings bad news is severely punished. Thus, unlike Creon, who bursts out pronouncing the bad news in front of the elders and the chorus, Aderopo only whispers in Odewale's ear. To him, it is "hard" to deliver such a message, and his hesitation angers the elders.

In addition, Odewale, intrigued, interrogates: "This curse – is it in the / body of a man, in the womb of a woman, in the / head of some animal, in the air – where?" (Act 1, Scene 2, page 19). Like Oedipus, upon discovering that the killer of the king is among them, Odewale directly accuses the people and declares that the murderer should be caught and punished: "He shall be put into lasting / darkness, his eyes tortured in their living sockets until / their blood and rheum swell forth to fill the hollow / of crushed eyeballs" (Act 1, Scene 2, page 24). Unlike Oedipus, however, Odewale vents his anger on the people directly, and accuses them of taking bribes to usurp his throne. The cause of enmity, as expressed by both protagonists, Oedipus and Odewale, is, however, that they are strangers.

Using the same dramatic pattern as Sophocles, Rotimi proceeds with his portrayal of the Yoruba version of the Greek Tiresias. Baba Fakunle is praised

by Odewale and later rebuked when he tells the truth – which reveals that Odewale is the true cursed murderer of King Adetusa. In Sophocles' version, Tiresias makes long, obscure, and poetic speeches concerning Oedipus' atrocities, whereas in Rotimi's version Baba Fakunle openly calls Odewale a "bed-sharer" – a victim of an incestuous marriage. Also, in *Oedipus Rex*, Jocasta interrupts the argument between Creon and Oedipus in a bid to calm Oedipus. Later, both husband/son and wife/mother discuss their past secrets. The mother/wife talks of the prophecy they received years before, and the son/husband also recalls the oracle about his parents and his killing of a man in Corinth, where three roads meet. It is then that he discovers that the man (Polybius) whom he took to be his father was not his father, and the one he considered to be his enemy (Laius) was really his father. Rotimi gives a similar treatment to these intrigues, though with many changes. In contrast to Sophocles' incestuous couple who quarrel and later reveal their past secrets, Odewale withholds the secret from Ojuola and does not immediately argue with Aderopo. Further, after summoning the chiefs, his childhood friend Alaka arrives. Alaka represents the Corinthian messenger in *Oedipus Rex*. He has a dual function: a stranger and Odewale's friend, unlike the messenger in *Oedipus Rex*, who is just a messenger. Gbonka tells the story about his conflict with an old man in Corinth. At this stage, the truth about Odewale's origin is revealed. Here, Rotimi's adaptation of this event brings in more details of how Odewale quarrelled with the old man over his piece of land. The play depicts the episode as starting calmly but later escalating, as tempers flared and the scene degenerated into a fight, resulting in the old man's death. Rotimi's aim in this scene is to expose the guilt of his protagonist, who, according to Yoruba tradition, is not supposed to raise his hand against an elder, except, as Bernth Lindfors states in *Interviews with Eight Nigerian Writers*, when the elder encroaches onto the land of the younger one.⁸ This act accounts partly for Odewale's guilt after killing the man (in contrast to his Greek counterpart, Oedipus, who has no remorse after murdering King Laius). For this reason, Odewale escapes Ede and runs to Kutuje. He says:

The whole world ceased to be. Ogun...
I have used your weapon and I have killed

⁸ Bernth Lindfors, ed., *Dem-Say: Interviews with Eight Nigerian Writers*, Austin, TX: African and Afro-American Studies and Research Center, 1974, 351.

a man. Ogun! With my own hands... with my own hands I have killed [...].
 (Act 3, Scene 1, page 49)

This process of indigenizing language, not only through ordinary expressions, as seen above, but also through local idioms, redefines Yoruba culture within world cultures.

Concerning the language of the play, Rotimi uses the English language spiced with African idioms. *The Gods Are Not to Blame* is replete with Yoruba linguistic expressions. For example, Baba Fakunle's calling of Odewale "bed-sharer" does not imply what the expression means literally. Rather, it denotes a victim of an incestuous act, or, simply put, a prey to the Oedipus complex syndrome. This idiomatic use of language does not only highlight issues related to the Yoruba identity but proceeds to show how language can help in communicating world-shared cultures. Conversely, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* is written in heightened, poetic, and embellished language,⁹ which is one of the key features of the genre of tragedy, as defined later by Aristotle. Rotimi's transportation of the play, however, does not strictly follow this tradition – he uses ordinary language as a means of reaching out to his target audience (Yoruba) in particular, and to a wider audience in general. Rotimi's abrogation of aspects of the native English permits him to freely use Yoruba vocabulary, proverbs, and speech patterns that do not respect conventional English norms. For example, Baba Fakunle says: "Your hot temper, like a disease from birth, / is the curse that has brought you trouble" (Act 2, Scene 1, page 29), and Odewale declares: "[L]et her cool spirit enter my body, and cool the / hot, hot hotness in my blood – the hot blood of a / gorilla!" (Act 2, Scene 4, page 39). In another instance he describes:

When Ogun, the god of iron,
 was returning from Ire,
 his loincloth was
 a hoop of
 fire.
 Blood... the deep red stain
 of victim's blood
 his cloak.
 (Act 3, Scene 1, page 49)

⁹ Luigi Battezzato, "The Language of Sophocles", in Andreas Markantonatos, ed., *Brill's Companion to Sophocles*, Leiden: Brill, 2012, 305–324.

He even imagines the gods ordering him to shed blood: "This is... Ogun / and Ogun says: Flow! / Flow... let your blood flow" (Act 3, Scene 1, page 49).

Further, Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame* is equally rooted in rituals and other accompanying elements, like dance, song, and chants. These cultural elements contribute to the formation of identity in young adults. Ritual and theatre are synergetic, just as are other Aristotelian classical elements: costumes, spectacle, melody, and heightened speech. In Ancient Greek tragedies, for example, the chorus was part and parcel of the entire performance. *Oedipus Rex* features a combination of songs and dance that is adapted by Rotimi in *The Gods Are Not to Blame*. In the former, for example, the chorus introduces the prologue with songs that reveal the calamities that have befallen the Thebans. Later, after Tiresias accuses Oedipus, the chorus sings a melancholic song that prefigures the tragic news that Oedipus is the real murderer of King Laius, his father. Similarly, the Royal Bard in Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame* ironically sings a praise song in order to pledge allegiance to Odewale and Ojuola after their discoveries of calamitous realities:

Whoever thinks he can
rule better than our king,
let him go home and
rule his wives
then he will know how hard to rule
is hard. Meat that has fat
will prove it by the
heat of fire [...].

(Act 2, Scene 3, page 37)

This reveals that all beings, whether from Yoruba or Greece, are subject to fate. Similarly, there is singing and miming in *The Gods Are Not to Blame* when the attack on Kutuje is presented. People go out with song and dance to gather herbs in the bush in order to cure their children. Again, Ojuola also sings a song to her children, and invites the spirit of the Iroko to help them out of trouble. This introduces us to some beliefs and the cosmology of the Yoruba people.

In *Oedipus Rex*, divinity is vital to the people's lives. Prior to Oedipus' birth, King Laius and Queen Jocasta have to consult the oracle to learn about the fate and faith of their unborn child. This tradition is a cross-cultural practice, given that African societies are also accustomed to such acts. Rotimi mostly adapts the spine of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* because many of the

rituals and other activities in the play are equally part and parcel of the Yoruba tradition and the general world view. Before Odewale is born, King Adetusa and Queen Ojoula invite Baba Fakunle, the priest of Ifa, to prophesy about their unborn child. Just like the oracle in *Oedipus Rex*, Baba Fakunle reveals that the child will be a curse to the royal family. According to the oracle, the child will dislike (kill) the father and get married to the mother (which Sigmund Freud later conceptualizes as the Oedipus complex). However, as opposed to the revelations in *Oedipus Rex*, which are clear, those of *The Gods Are Not to Blame* come in parables, stating that the child is a "butterfly", and later "a bird". This calls into question the child's true identity. Thus, Odewale wanders around different areas, and most importantly goes to the Ifa oracle, on a quest to find his true self.

On the basis of the above, it could be said that the Yoruba and Greek pantheons are closely related. The Yoruba god of iron, Ogun, has the ability to control war, promote creativity, and liberate people in times of trouble. Likewise, the Greek god Dionysus and his followers control fertility, wine, vegetation, pleasure, madness, and fury. While Dionysus carries the thyrsus, Ogun carries a willowy pole embroidered with palm fronds. In both plays, although Dionysus himself is not mentioned, the gods are instrumental in the people's lives. The audience does not see Ogun physically in *The Gods Are Not to Blame* (a factor that reveals the gods to be the colonizers, who are no longer physically present in neocolonial Nigeria), but Odewale constantly refers to him as the great one, especially when he curses himself. In relation to the backstage prominence of Ogun during Odewale's curses, Odewale says:

Before Ogun the God of Iron, I stand on oath.
 Witness now all you present that before the feast of
 Ogun, which starts at sunrise, I, Odewale, the son of
 Ogundele, shall search and fully lay open before
 your very eyes the murderer of King Adetusa:
 And having seized that murderer, I swear by this sacred arm
 of Ogun that I shall straightway bring him to the
 agony of slow death...

(Act 2, Scene 1, page 24)

Judging by Odewale's speech, Ogun's importance, although not physically present in the text, cannot be underestimated. Therefore, the Yoruba, just like the Thebans, have gods that protect them in times of troubles.

Rotimi is very skilful in his adaptation of the storyline of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. He politicizes the storyline, although not overtly, to suit the political atmosphere of Nigeria from 1967 to 1970. The original play from which he draws inspiration focuses on the role of the gods and fate in the tragic demise of its tragic hero, Oedipus. The same tragic vision exists in *The Gods Are Not to Blame* as Odewale walks away from his high and revered position to his tragic death. However, Rotimi's version does not focus on a single individual's fate as is the case with Sophocles. In Rotimi's play, Odewale's fate is a symbolic embodiment of the fate of his community. The story represents the Nigerian civil war, which lasted for three years (1967–1970). Commenting on the cause of the civil war, Rotimi says that "[t]he root cause of that war was tribal distrust".¹⁰ The gods in *The Gods Are Not to Blame* metaphorically represent the colonial masters, while Odewale represents the Yoruba tribes. Odewale says that the gods should not be blamed. This is because the Yoruba believe that one's fate is one's own doing. He says:

No, no! Do not blame the Gods.
Let no one blame the powers. My people learn from my fall.
The powers would have failed
if I did not let them use me. They knew
my weakness; the weakness of a man easily moved to the
defence of his tribe against others [...].
(Act 3, Scene 4, page 71)

In the myth of Oedipus, prominence is given to the downfall of a hero, while in the Yoruba version the focus is on intertribal conflicts that result in the calamity of the people. In addition, in contrast to the Greek myth, where hubris and fate cause tragic catastrophes, land dispute and tribal hostilities, incarnated by individuals representing the society, are at the centre of Rotimi's play. Odewale, in a flashback, relates the events in Ijekun that lead to his killing of an old man:

OLD MAN [stops laughing] You from the bush tribe come to these parts
and boldly call me "THIEF"?
ODEWALE Where am I from?
OLD MAN [calls his men] Gbonka... Olojo – come, come,
come quickly – come and listen to this man's tongue.

¹⁰ Bernth Lindfors, ed., *Africa Talks Back: Interviews with Anglophone African Writers*, Trento, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000, 351.

[Two men run over with their hoes.]

ODEWALE'S VOICE That is the end. I can bear insults to myself, brother, but to call my tribe bush, and then summon riff-rafs to mock my mother tongue! I will die first.

(Act 3, Scene 1, page 46)

As a result of the dispute, Odewale kills his own father, goes to Kutuje, marries his mother, thereby becoming king, and makes Baba Fakunle's prophecy come true.

Rotimi's adaptation has been criticized for making a stranger become king in an African setting. Critics believe that Rotimi should have changed the situation. However, Rotimi repudiates this criticism because he believes that the critics are unaware of their traditions and history; they are more attached to British history. He opines:

Let them [Nigerians] read their history. And I don't mean English history, for I'm sure those same Nigerian critics know all about the battle of Hastings in 1066 [...]. But they'll be ignorant of the fact that assumption of kingship by a stranger of greater military or physical prowess was also quite a common experience in our own African mythology and history [...]. African, and for that matter, world history abounds in kingship being decided upon the human incidence of "survival of the fittest man!"¹¹

The above quotation shows that, had the Yourba people painstakingly studied their history, they would have known about the ascension of strangers on Yoruba thrones. What accounts for this is that Yoruba history has many heroes who, because of their might, ventured into other territories and became leaders of those lands. An example is Ogunmola, who as a foreigner became *Bashorun* (prime minister) of Ibadan in the nineteenth century. He was not a son of Ibadan – he "hailed from Fesu, near Iwu, sixty miles north of Ibadan".¹² Rotimi's adaptation thus depicts clear links between world traditions. It shows that both traditions (Greek and Yoruba) permit the ascension of strangers on foreign thrones, depending on circumstances.

Finally, while adapting the myth of Oedipus in an African milieu, Rotimi makes changes to suit the new location of the adaptation. The riddle of the Sphinx is removed from Rotimi's version because the myth of the Sphinx

¹¹ Lindfors, ed., *Dem-Say*, 64.

¹² *Ibidem*, 164.

is not part of Yoruba mythology. Thus, Odewale does not become king because he outwits the Sphinx, but because he rescues the people of Kutuje from enslavement. In the prologue, unlike Oedipus, who solves the riddle of the Sphinx, Odewale recommends that the people should:

“Get up,”

“Get up” [...]

[...] “not to do something is to be crippled fast. Up, up, all of you to lie down resigned to fate is madness.

Up, up, struggle: the world is struggle.”

(Prologue, page 6)

This intentional twist authenticates and legitimizes Rotimi’s art.

4. The African *Oedipus Rex* in the ESL Classroom

These cross-cultural exchanges showed in both works not only inform humanity of the shared links and/or bonding between world cultures, but also serve as catalyst for improving cultural competence and thinking skills of ESL learners, if such primary material is introduced as authentic material in classrooms. The adapted version of the play, which highlights cultural issues in Greece and Nigeria, can serve as a platform for cultural dialogism in the ESL classroom, particularly in Africa. Greek texts, as well as adapted versions, are therefore relevant to contemporary audiences in milieus of reception. Thus, looking at one’s self through the other becomes inevitable in cross-cultural studies. This is related with what W.E.B. Du Bois terms “double consciousness”, that is, a “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others”.¹³

The reception of cross-cultural texts or works that fully or partly draw their inspiration from classical Greece helps not only to broaden one’s knowledge of Ancient Greece but also to bridge the gap between world cultures and generations.¹⁴ Using such works in ESL classrooms creates greater awareness

¹³ As quoted in: Dickson D. Bruce Jr, “W.E.B. Du Bois and the Idea of Double Consciousness”, *American Literature* 64.2 (June 1992), 299–309.

¹⁴ Charles Chiasson, “Re-Politicizing Euripides: The Power of the Peasantry in Michael Cacoyannis’ *Electra* (1962)”, in Anastasia Bakogianni, ed., *Dialogues with the Past (1): Reception Theory and Practice. Proceedings of the Reception of Ancient Greek and Roman Drama Conference*, BICS Supplement, London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2013, 207–223; Verna A. Foster, ed., *Dramatic Revisions*

in learners. Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, or excerpts from a text which traverses cultures, can help acquire a broad cultural competence and ignite learners' imagination. The end result of such an exercise is language awareness, text awareness, and cultural awareness. Such awareness can improve learners' critical abilities and knowledge on identities in cross-cultural environments. The knowledge of African mythology and other related mythologies inherent in the text can effectively propel learners to adapt and situate themselves within individual and global milieus. By so doing, the interrelation between cultures will be defined by cultural influences, suggesting the dynamic nature of cultures and mythologies worldwide, thus allowing the play to serve as authentic material in the ESL classroom in a cross-cultural environment. Scholars such as Gillian Lazar and Lindsay Clandfield espouse this idea when they opine that literature as authentic material in the ESL classroom helps learners, as it engages their emotions and cognitive faculties and ignites their imagination and critical abilities.¹⁵ Learners' identities in relation to their individual culture and other cultures help situate them within their indigenous and global cultures. This shows that one's identity in the present conditions is defined by aboriginal and global factors. Subsequently, students should be exposed to cultures and mythologies other than their own. Simon Gikandi, commenting on this, after reading Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, declares:

[R]eading *Things Fall Apart* brought me to the sudden realization that fiction was not merely about a set of texts which one studied for the Cambridge Overseas exam which, for my generation, had been renamed the East African Certificate of Education; on the contrary, literature was about real and familiar worlds, of culture and human experience, of politics and economics, now re-routed through a language and structure that seemed at odds with the History or Geography books we were reading at the time.¹⁶

of Myths, Fairy Tales and Legends: Essays on Recent Plays, Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2012; Theodoros Grammatas, "The Reception of Ancient Greek Tragedy in Late Modernity: From the Citizen Viewer of the City-State to the Consumer Viewer of the Global Cosmopolis", *Gamma: Journal of Theory and Criticism* 22.1 (2014), 41-52; and Peter Green, "Myth, Tradition, and Ideology in the Greek Literary Revival: The Paradoxical Case of Yannis Ritsos", *Arion* 4.2 (1996), 88-111.

¹⁵ Gillian Lazar, *Literature and Language Teaching: Guide for Teachers and Trainers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993; Lindsay Clandfield, "Teaching Material: Using Literature in ESL/EFL Classroom", OneStopEnglish, <http://www.onestopenglish.com/methodology/teaching-articles/teaching-materials/teaching-materials-using-literature-in-the-efl/-esl-classroom/146508-article> (accessed 9 September 2019).

¹⁶ Simon Gikandi, "Chinua Achebe and the Invention of Culture", *Research in African Literature* 32.3 (2001), 3.

For Gikandi, literary texts should not only be studied as objects of exams; rather, familiarity with world cultures should push readers to analyse the texts. The texts feature cultural patterns that reflect those of other cultures. Consequently, the texts should be studied in order to trace recurrent symbols that help define them in their individual and global milieus. It is on this premise that a text like *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, an adaptation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, fits well within the scope of cross-cultural texts, and can therefore serve as authentic material in ESL classrooms.

At the beginning of the class the teacher should let learners know that Rotimi recontextualizes Greek tragedy because he has found a living image for Nigeria's (Yoruba culture of Western Nigeria) current sociopolitical issues.

As a brainstorming exercise, the teacher can ask learners to discuss the nature of the African world view about man and fate. Here, the expected answers from students who know about their world view will be that the African man has two paths, that of prosperity and catastrophe, and when man chooses the path to catastrophes, the gods punish him, although not immediately, since he is given some time to offer sacrifices to atone for his wrongs.

Different excerpts from the play can help kindle interest in the students about different cultural and thematic concerns which the students are familiar with. For example, the theme of heroism can be brought to the attention of the students, using the excerpt wherein Odewale talks to the people. He says:

I gathered the people of Kutuje under
My power, [...] we attacked the people of
Ikolu, freed our people, seized the lands of
Ikolu [...].
Kutuje prospered.
In their joy, the people made me KING, me,
Of Ijekun tribe [...].

(Prologue, pages 6–7)

Here, learners can be asked questions about Odewale's actions that justify his heroism. At this point, based on the students' knowledge of the text, they will identify the moment that Odewale saves the people from the neighbouring tribe's attacks, Odewale becomes a king, secures the people, and looks for solutions to the people's plights – qualities that are worth emulating.

Learners, especially from Africa, can easily understand the play, given that the cultural and mythical symbols therein are familiar to them. Rotimi's adaptation is instrumental in identity formation as it brings into the lime-light the links that Greek traditions share with the Yoruba tradition. Also, the language of the play, as discussed above, is accessible to all categories of learners. Learners will not be alienated or frustrated by any strange elements while reading the play. The language of the play is also accessible to learners, given that it does not blindly respect the heightened and poetic language that Aristotle prescribes for dramatic texts, but rather exploits Yoruba local idioms and proverbs (for instance, the Royal Bard in the play says "Kolanut lasts long in the mouths / of them who value it" [Prologue, page 7]) to convey his message to the target population. In this way, the text is easily accessible to learners of Rotimi's milieu. From a cultural standpoint, the play focuses on a number of issues that ESL learners see and face daily. Thus, *The Gods Are Not to Blame* integrates the people's culture and at the same time exposes them to Greek culture, explicitly or implicitly.

Also, the joy that comes with birth will not be strange to ESL learners in an African context. In Yoruba land, the birth of a child and most importantly that of a prince is a source of blessing to the whole community. The students, therefore, will immediately identify the instance where Odewale is born into the royal family. The narrator in the Prologue relates:

The struggles of a man begin at birth.

It is meet then that our play begins with the birth of a child.

The place is the land of Kutuje.

A baby has just been born to King Adetusa and his wife Ojuola, the King and Queen of this land of Kutuje.

(Prologue, page 1)

In an ESL classroom, therefore, it will be vital to emphasize the role of childbearing in the Yoruba tradition. This Prologue can also serve to evoke the mood of the exposition of the play and a foreshadowing of the impending conflicts in the play. Learners can identify the setting as the shrine. In terms of plot, learners can trace what comes after the exposition and identify the role it has in the text and in their lives. The conflict sets in immediately before the palace, and all the townspeople are present to inform the king about their suffering in the hands of the enemy. Further, the teacher can ask learners to deduce the role attributed to the king in this extract. The

expected answers from learners will be that the king is eulogized, trusted, and respected because he is the overseer of the community and supposed to be honoured, which accounts for complaints being brought to him. The play, thus, although an adaptation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, teaches learners about their cultural practices.

In addition, cultural patterns, character behaviours, songs, dances, chants, and other cultural elements from Rotimi's play do not only show the connection between the play and *Oedipus Rex*, but also help to expose learners to other universal issues, such as suffering. The play can also be used to teach different language skills, such as speaking, writing, reading, and listening. This corroborates Christine Savvidou's view that there is a connection between language and literature because both complement rather than contradict each other.¹⁷

Another tenable method of exposing cross-cultures to ESL learners is the dramatization of certain excerpts from the text. For example, the excerpt in which Odewale discovers that he is the true murderer of King Adetusa can be acted out by learners. This choice results from the fact that the excerpt regroups most of the dramatic and memorable scenes in the play (from exposition, through conflict, to rising action), focusing on the untold truth about the person behind the king's death (the cause of the plague in Sophocles' version). Here, the teacher can guide learners to simulate different roles while taking note of characters' gender, position in society, voice modulation, etc. After acting, learners can debate on the significance of fate in the excerpt and in life as a whole. Fate lies at the centre of the excerpt. It can inspire learners to respond to the enigmatic question on whether the gods are really to blame or not in Rotimi's play, and, by extension, in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. A resolution of such a quandary can reconcile learners to the fact that, though fate has a role to play in most tragedies (as is the case in both plays), *hamartia*, or the flaw of each character, is at the centre of his or her downfall, be it among the Greeks or the Yoruba.

At the end of the lesson, learners can be asked to discuss the allegorical nature of the play. Here, the teacher will want them to relocate the context of Rotimi's adaptation, given that the play was written after the civil war in Nigeria. This allegorical representation will help learners to understand

¹⁷ Christine Savvidou, "An Integrated Approach to Teaching Literature in the EFL Classroom", *The Internet TESL Journal* 10.12 (2004), <http://www.iteslj.org/Technique/savvidou-Literature.html> (accessed 9 September 2019).

not only the play but also their history. In their attempts to answer, learners will realize that Rotimi's version presents the Nigerian civil war as a war that resulted from ethnic bigotry. To justify their claims, they will make reference to the title of the play itself, a sharp contrast to the Greek version. Rotimi's title is informative for learners, as it excludes the idea that blame should be put on the gods – representations of colonial masters in Nigeria during colonization and the Biafra war of the 1960s. This allegorical title will help learners understand that, unlike in *Oedipus Rex*, where blame is shared by Oedipus and fate (though not equally), Rotimi's presentation weighs more on the individual, who is plausibly responsible for his actions – a metaphor and lesson for Nigerians and Africans who virtually lay all the blame for their downfalls on the gods (European powers) rather than reflecting on the internal causes of the conflict, like ethnic distrust and tribalism, the banes of most African countries.

All in all, the play is an important tool that can create cultural, text, and language awareness in the ESL classroom in Africa and the world at large, given its mythological and historical significance, its folkloric depictions, its presentation of traditional and cultural values, proverbs, and idioms, and its adaptation of Sophocles' play, which is imbued with archetypal figures and motifs.

5. Conclusions

This chapter has examined the reception of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* in African context. By extension, it has investigated the degree of adaptation and usefulness of such adapted material in ESL classrooms and its implications for cross-cultural understanding. Our discussion espoused Diana Mafe's view that

although the allegorical content of the play is obscured and thus problematic, the playwright's intentions remain legitimate. Consequently, Rotimi's adaptation does not inanely mimic Western drama.¹⁸

¹⁸ Diana Mafe, *Race, Rhyme, and Ritual: Intertextual Tropes of Africa(ness) in 20th Century Yoruba Plays and Contemporary Adaptations of "Othello"*, MA thesis, 2003, 35, available at Canadian Adaptions of Shakespeare Project, http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/multimedia/pdf/mafe_race_rhyme_ritual.pdf (accessed 8 May 2019).

The playwright incorporates the Yoruba tradition, history, world view, and civilization as a whole in the play as a means of defining the indigenous self. Besides, the adaptation process helps in exposing the links between world cultures and asserting the fact that no writer writes in a vacuum. Such multicultural contexts in plays become platforms for ESL learners to involve their emotional and cognitive faculties as means of stimulating their thinking skill, and situating themselves properly within the local and global milieus. In sum, Rotimi brings into the limelight elements of classical Greek drama for his target population (the Yoruba), while also redefining the position of Yoruba tradition within world cultures – a depiction of cross-cultural dialogism.

*CROSSING THE PARALLEL UNIVERSE(S):
AN EXPERIMENTAL, MULTICULTURAL,
AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH
TO USING MYTHOLOGY
IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CLASSROOM*

**I. Navigating the Wormholes of Transformation:
The South African Educational Context**

Before any suggestion of how to use mythology, classical or African, in the South African classroom can be made, the context of the classroom and curriculum needs to be explained. Clarifying the changes to the South African educational system in the past twenty-five years may seem to those who have not experienced them first-hand like trying to navigate a dark universe with meteor showers bombarding your already shaky ship. However, it is through traversing these murky and sometimes troubled nebulae that an understanding of the how and why of the proposed teaching project will become clear.

The South African educational system is haunted by a fractured past in which historically “white” and “black” education followed separate routes. Although some attempts were made pre-1994 to address these inequalities from the past, the curriculum still posed many challenges especially in terms of ideology, approach, and equality of education. Following a national audit of teaching in South Africa held in 1995, the newly elected, democratic government, through the Department of Basic Education, implemented a new curriculum policy. This policy, known as Curriculum 2005, took effect in 1997 and introduced radical changes in ideology, content, and pedagogical approach, adopting an “outcomes-based” model that at the time was being implemented in highly developed countries around the world. The primary objectives of Curriculum 2005 were meant to redress the inequalities

of the past by promoting the new constitution; rebuilding a divided nation through the establishment of a sense of national identity in general, especially in an educational sector which had for decades been race-based with educational departments following different curricula. It was intended to be inclusive in both broad and narrow terms, to provide equal educational opportunities for all, to inspire consistency, previously lacking in educational dispensations and policies, and to establish the transmission of socially valued knowledge to future generations.¹ Although the principles on which these objectives were based were sound, the approach that was taken in their implementation proved problematic.

The outcomes-based model, which was to place South African education on a par with leading international curricula, was fraught with challenges, especially when attempts were made to implement it in the more remote, rural schools across the country. Two years into its adoption and application, the then Minister of Education, Prof. Kader Asmal, called for a review of the curriculum and instituted the Curriculum Review Committee. The *Curriculum 2005 Review Report*, published in June 2000, recommended:

- the design of the curriculum be simplified;
- curriculum overload be addressed, including the reduction in the number of Learning Areas in the Intermediate Phase;
- the terminology and language of the curriculum be simplified;
- assessment requirements be clarified;
- content be brought into the curriculum (in the form of subject-specific, prescribed texts), and specified;
- a plan be developed to address teacher training for the successful implementation of the new curriculum;
- textbooks and reading be re-introduced as a widely recognized means to bridge the gap between teacher readiness, curriculum policy, and classroom implementation.²

Although the curriculum itself was not changed, the alterations proposed a more “rationalized” approach. Nonetheless, rather than clear the murky waters of “outcomes-based education”, what the new policy managed to do was cause further confusion. A lack of clear guidelines and communication

¹ Department of Basic Education, *Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement*, Pretoria: Government Printers, 2009, 11.

² *Ibidem*, 12–13.

resulted in many schools receiving information in diluted form. That same year, in an attempt to breach the skills gap found to be present in schools, the Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE) was published by government. The NSE proposed a “competence-based” approach to teacher education and set out in general terms what the Department of Education expected from teachers in relation to knowledge, values, and skills.

Notwithstanding the various changes that took place between 1995 and 2000, there were still large lacunae in the educational system. The gap between previously disadvantaged schools, many of which are to be found in the rural and township areas, and mainstream, previously “white” schools in urban areas, remained. Teachers became ever more frustrated with a teaching approach that was clearly designed for an environment where “prior knowledge” of the subject and basic reading and writing skills were present in both the home and teaching environment.

In 2002, the Department of Basic Education responded by reconstructing the curriculum into the Revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS). However, a lack of clear communication and training once again left teachers and schools in the dark. Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of the NCS was the approach and implementation of the language policy. Although the NCS provided clear directives in terms of language and mother-tongue instruction, these were never clearly communicated to schools. Accordingly, the language policy states that it is preferable for children to learn in their home language in the Foundation Phase, but that they should get a solid grounding in the Language of Teaching and Learning (LTL; in most cases English) as a subject from Grade 1. However, many schools across all provinces continue to start teaching English only in Grade 3, based on Curriculum 2005 provincial policies, leaving children unready for the change to LTL in Grade 4.³ This legacy persists to date with the majority of learners who come from a mother-tongue Foundation Phase school being unable to meaningfully read and correctly write in English. According to the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), 78% of South African learners are unable to read for meaning.⁴

³ Ibidem, 14.

⁴ Sarah J. Howie, Celeste Combrinck, Karen Roux, Mishack Tshela, Gabriel M. Mokoena, and Nelladee McLeod Palane, *PIRLS Literacy 2016: South African Highlights Report*, Pretoria: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, 2017, <http://www.shineliteracy.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/pirls-literacy-2016-hl-report.zp136320.pdf> (accessed 9 September 2019).

Challenges faced in the implementation of the new NCS prompted the Minister of Basic Education in 2009 to appoint a panel of experts to investigate the matter. In 2011, the NCS was again reviewed and further amendments made. The newly amended document was called the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The CAPS does not propose a new curriculum, rather it is to be read as an amendment to the NCS and follows the same processes and procedures stipulated in the NCS.⁵ What the CAPS does, however, provide is the *what* and *how* of teaching a subject.

Notwithstanding this new approach and “curriculum”, the mode of teaching and how knowledge is imparted continues to be problematic. This is partly due to the decontextualization of knowledge. Learning best takes place when it is contextualized, made relevant to the learner and his/her field of experience. For learning to take place, educators need to ask the question: How do our children learn and engage with knowledge?

The multicultural classroom is no easy terrain to traverse, especially when you have learners that come from varying backgrounds and cultures of learning. What is being taught and how it is being taught is, in many instances, still regarded as being enshrined in Western ideology. One might argue that the changes implemented by the Department of Basic Education to address the injustices of the past, whilst presenting a practice that attempted to introduce the principles of *ubuntu* to teaching,⁶ were still doing so through the lens of the past. Subjects, especially in the sciences, continue to be taught from an exclusively Western perspective, marginalizing, if not completely ignoring, local traditional knowledge and modes of teaching that could aid in promoting understanding. According to Michael Omolewa, the use of

cultural items as resources in teaching and learning can be very effective in bringing traditional African education alive for learners. It allows them to conceptualise places and issues not only in the local area but also beyond their immediate experience.⁷

⁵ A.J.E. Pinnock, *A Practical Guide to Implementing CAPS: A Toolkit for Teachers, School Managers and Educational Officials to Use to Assist in Managing the Implementation of a New Curriculum*, Cape Town: NAPTOSA, 2011.

⁶ *Ubuntu* is a word that conveys qualities such as love, truth, peace, happiness, eternal optimism, and inner virtue. It is thought to be the divine spark inherent within creatures and is the essence of a human being. See Barbara Nussbaum, “African Culture and Ubuntu”, *Perspectives* 17.1 (2003), 1–12.

⁷ Michael Omolewa, “Traditional African Modes of Education: Their Relevance in the Modern World”, *International Review of Education* 53 (2007), 600–601.

What this means, however, is that for the change to manifest in schools, the manner in which teachers are instructed and taught at tertiary level needs to include local content.

The Rhodes Must Fall student protests of 2015/16 may have originated in the upper echelons of higher education, but the fallout was felt also in basic education, especially in schools with strong colonial traditions.⁸ The effects of these protests are still being felt today both at tertiary and secondary level: universities across the country are “decolonizing” and “Africanizing” curricula, valorizing the local, trying to find new ways of teaching by making the local, global. But what is meant by these terms, and how does one begin to problematize their implementation?

1.1. Decolonization and Africanization: Various Interpretations

In a country like South Africa, where the voice of decoloniality and Africanization is becoming ever louder, and where schools and universities are being called upon to “decolonize” and “Africanize” the curriculum, educators are challenged to question the what and how of the teaching of their respective disciplines within a framework of transformation. Many may falter, reticent to change, not knowing exactly what is meant by these illusive words, freely pronounced, but rarely plainly defined. The initial response from traditionalists is instinctive: a knee-jerk reaction to an approach that seemingly proposes to “throw the baby out with the bathwater”, while others adopt a “wait and see” approach. As a means towards problematizing the concepts and open debate on the question of how to implement decolonization and Africanization in education, the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE), published an article in November 2017 which seeks not only

⁸ On 9 March 2015 a movement that would become known and referred to as Rhodes Must Fall was born. The initial movement was directed towards the removal of the statue of Cecil John Rhodes from the campus of the University of Cape Town. Soon, this grievance became a symbol of “decolonizing” education across South Africa and gained not only a physical but also virtual following through social media, both locally and internationally. The movement has been criticized both in South Africa and abroad, becoming the focus of much debate both in political and academic circles. However, what the Rhodes Must Fall movement has managed to highlight and still today continues to bring to the fore is that although it would seem as if transformation is being implemented, in many cases it is just superficial and does not adequately address the need for in-depth academic debate on the subject of decolonization and Africanization.

to provide some clarification, but also to debate the various positions on the subject.⁹

Departing from what Achille Mbembe¹⁰ calls a “negative moment” in higher education, characterized by the emergence of new antagonisms while the old remain unresolved, creating uncertainty and fractured moments where everything is uncertain, the article argues that it is this very uncertainty of the “negative moment” that “creates the conditions for a deep re-examination of current hegemonies and for a re-imagining of how to shape the outcome of that interaction”.¹¹ The acceptance of a “negative moment” has opened the discussion on what is meant by “decolonization” and “Africanization” in terms of the curriculum. In traversing this plane fraught with meteor showers, four key areas of debate emerge. Does transformation to a decolonized and Africanized curriculum mean (a) changing the content; (b) changing not only content but how the content is taught, thus increasing access to knowledge; (c) revisiting and altering what is understood by the term “knowledge” and defining “whose knowledge it is”; (d) changing the source of the knowledge and who teaches/researches it. Each perspective presents its own set of challenges and implications not only for the curriculum, but for the structures of education in South Africa, which are historically based on Western constructs. For the purpose of this chapter, the first two areas of the debate will be considered as they address the questions of *what* is taught and *how* it is taught more directly.

Changing the content may seem the easiest and most expedient route towards transformation. This is especially true for the humanities, where in many instances departments are moving away from a Eurocentric “canon”, replacing it with locally sourced and produced texts. This may work to some degree for disciplines such as archaeology and anthropology, even history, but in disciplines such as English studies, which are rooted in the Western literary canon, the exercise becomes more “threatening”, in as much as to many purists it touches the very identity of the discipline: “What, no more Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton,

⁹ Council on Higher Education, “Decolonising the Curriculum: Stimulating Debate”, *Briefly Speaking* 3 (2017), 1–12, available at <https://psychology.ukzn.ac.za/?mdocs-file=1222> (accessed 9 September 2019).

¹⁰ Achille Mbembe, “Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive”, lecture delivered at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research, <https://wiser.wits.ac.za/system/files/Achille%20Mbembe%20-%20Decolonizing%20Knowledge%20and%20the%20Question%20of%20the%20Archive.pdf> (accessed 9 September 2019).

¹¹ Council on Higher Education, “Decolonising the Curriculum”, 2.

Eliot?"; "What are we to make of language? Will we now be teaching African-English?" The fact is that this option aligns itself with the "baby and bathwater" scenario and in many respects has underlying concerns of isolationism and the exclusion of South African students from the global, real-world experiences. It also does not address the question of how the subject is taught.

Option 2 in the debate on "decolonizing" and "Africanizing" the curriculum proposes not only a change in what is taught, but also how it is taught. As a result, this perspective on decoloniality introduces the fundamental element of the learner. According to the CHE, this approach of "decolonization" addresses "how academic literacies are experienced" and develops the notion of the "decontextualized" learner, which is argued to underlie the way in which 'mainstream' [...] teaching takes place in South Africa".¹² The concept of the "decontextualized" learner is perhaps the most relevant to the "mythology experiment" proposed in this chapter, as the learner's context becomes central to how knowledge is imparted, contextualized, and assessed. Chrissie Boughey and Sioux McKenna in their article "Academic Literacy and the Decontextualized Learner" define the decontextualized learner as being "divorced from her social context, with higher education success seen resting largely upon attributes inherent in, or lacking from, the individual".¹³ Although their study focuses on literacy in higher education, the same principles can be applied at primary and secondary school level. The discourse flows both ways: the problems faced in higher education with regards to literacy cannot solely be addressed without re-evaluating teaching and learning at the foundations of education.

In the preface to the updated edition of her book *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth*, Wendy Doniger¹⁴ sees in John Keay's¹⁵ definition of myth as "the smoke of history" a striving to separate the ethereal nature of smoke (myth) from the physical flames of fire (history). However, what she proposes is that myths can become the fire when they are not merely regarded as a response to history, but drivers of history: there is no

¹² Ibidem, 4.

¹³ Chrissie Boughey and Sioux McKenna, "Academic Literacy and the Decontextualized Learner", *CriStaL: Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning* 4.2 (2016), 1.

¹⁴ Wendy Doniger, *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011, xv.

¹⁵ John Keay, *India: A History*, New York, NY: Grove Press, 2000, 2.

smoke without a fire. This is especially true in the African context, where myth is an integral part of history and lived reality.

Myth is both a *story* and *reality*. In Sudan, storytellers begin their tale by following a traditional narrator–audience refrain:

NARRATOR I am going to tell you a story.
AUDIENCE Right!
NARRATOR It is a lie.
AUDIENCE Right!
NARRATOR But not everything in it is false!
AUDIENCE Right!

This simple interaction between storyteller and audience creates the bond between myth and reality/history. The audience acknowledges that the storyteller will be narrating a *story* and that it is false, but they also acknowledge that within that *story* there is truth. Credo Mutwa, a renowned South African, Zulu *Sangoma*, traditional healer, author, and artist,¹⁶ opens his book *Indaba, My Children: African Tribal History, Legends, Customs and Religious Beliefs* in the following manner:

Many will find it hard to believe much of what I have revealed in this book, but I am not in the least concerned, because whether I am believed or not, everything I write here is *true*.¹⁷

In this opening, the *story* or myth is the fire, while the smoke or “murkiness of untruth” is not to be found in the story, but, rather, in the perception of the story by the audience. Extending this metaphor to the previous sections in this chapter on transformation of the curriculum, decolonization and Africanization – resistance is not created by the concepts, but the perception of the concepts by those who are called upon to implement them – the educators.

¹⁶ Mutwa’s cosmic and medicinal beliefs border on fantasy and science fiction, according to academic research, but his grasp of culture is sound.

¹⁷ Credo Vusa’mazulu Mutwa, *Indaba, My Children: African Tribal History, Legends, Customs and Religious Beliefs*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 1998, xvii.

2. Myth and Its Intrinsic Value to Decolonizing and Africanizing the Classroom

Mythology permeates our lives and our identities through the spaces and traces of time, forgotten by our waking selves, but living in the dark crevices of our childhood memories. It is in moments of fracture, when our identities are challenged and we seek to (re)create an identity that speaks to our “true” selves, that we can turn to myths, to help reconcile our splintered sense of self. These myths are to be found not in books or libraries but in the ghostly mists of our past, the shattered earthen pots and the ashes of ritual fires, long doused by the waters of time and history. In a country like South Africa, where these memories and identities have been violently suppressed through a lack of understanding and self-proclaimed “privilege”, the value of myth as a tool of understanding and “knowing” is incredibly powerful – it is through knowing our stories that we learn to know each other and understand our contexts of knowledge. Mutwa argues that most conflicts in Africa can be explained by a deep-rooted misunderstanding, predominantly from the West, that has failed to engage meaningfully with Africa and the African ways of being and knowing. Most of what is known about Africa and African culture is seen through the lens of objectification, the African seen as “other”, with many of the traditional practices and knowledges relegated to “curiosity”.¹⁸

The social and cultural history of society finds its origins in myth. A simple example is the myth about the creation of the city of Rome – Romulus and Remus, abandoned and suckled by the She-Wolf. Empirical, archaeological, and anthropological evidence aside, the myth and its association with identity persist to this day, to be found not only in tourist curio shops but in statues around the city (Capitoline She-Wolf) and the insignia of the Premier League football club AS Roma, to name but a few. In this respect, myth is a means of expression of tradition. However, whereas in Western culture, to a greater or lesser degree, myth has become a *simulacrum* of tradition and belief, in Africa, myth continues to be integral to society. Douglas E. Thomas explains that in Africa:

Creation myths are the building blocks for maintaining strong cultural and group affiliations. Traditional African political and social mores were developed from the myths that are the foundational stones of their society. It is important to explicate a people’s myths because they shape perspective

¹⁸ Ibidem, xvii–xviii.

and form their ideological understanding of life. Undergirding such narratives lie the people's notion of existence.¹⁹

In traditional African education, myth is an integral part of learning. It is not only that myths are passed on from one generation to another, but the myths themselves become a vehicle through which knowledge is disseminated. Myths are the craft through which children learn language, proverbs, morals, and ways of being:

Knowledge is controlled among the Bantu by the orders of the Chosen Ones. Only certain knowledge is passed on to particular High Ones of the Tribes, such as they are required to know to execute their duties [...]. Knowledge of history, legend, mythology – what White people would refer to as Classics – is always strong among the Bantu.²⁰

Many students in the South African classroom struggle with language, especially when the LTL is other to their Home Language (HL). Modes of expression create misunderstanding and the child is often regarded as being rude, uncooperative, and, in some cases, not being “intellectually” on par with his/her peers. This perception is further entrenched at institutions of higher education, where the discourse remains impenetrable as it emanates from “privileged” social spaces.²¹ When the child's learning experience is decontextualized from his/her lived experience, a sense of “chaos” is created that destabilizes the psyche and causes the mind to “shut down”. Thomas explains that “[t]he acceptance of one's cultural-self brings mental clarity, especially when one embraces those aspects of [...] tradition that Europeans have programmed black people to hate”.²² It therefore follows that incorporating modes of learning that are familiar to the learner would help dissipate the sense of alienation and “chaos”. This not only valorizes the learner's lived experience, but allows for shared lived experiences to become part of a community of learning. The idea of a “community of learning” is central to the principles of *ubuntu* and was the basic premise behind the various reformulations and reformations of the South African curriculum. When this notion is embraced, it becomes easier to understand the rampant call within education to “decolonize” and

¹⁹ Douglas E. Thomas, *African Traditional Religion in the Modern World*, London: McFarland and Company, 2005, 8.

²⁰ Mutwa, *Indaba, My Children*, 654.

²¹ Boughey and McKenna, “Academic Literacy”, 4.

²² Thomas, *African Traditional Religion*, 9.

"Africanize". Seen from this perspective, decolonization and Africanization becomes an inclusionary process. It is not the content that needs to be changed, but rather the perspective from which the content is taught. Lazarus Donald Mokula "Oupa" Lebeloane maintains that a decolonization of the school curriculum will prove beneficial in creating a reciprocal discussion of ideologies of class, gender, ethnicity, ethnocide, inequality, and race that to date have only been addressed from a dominating, Western perspective.²³

Although mythology, legends, and folklore are a prescribed theme in the CAPS document of the South African Department of Education for the teaching of English (Home Language, First Additional Language, Second Additional Language), the theme is underutilized, with teachers venturing in uncharted waters and often either excluding the theme from their teaching practice, or not quite exploiting it for its intrinsic subject and interdisciplinary value. Myth, legend, and folklore fall under the "enrichment" section of the English curriculum, together with film, television series/documentaries, radio dramas, essays, biographies, and autobiographies. Educators are given an option to choose from this selection. However, mythology could be used as an invaluable tool within the classroom to create a multicultural and interdisciplinary conversation within the South African school environment, and in so doing work towards a "decolonized" and "Africanized" teaching practice. In the following section, an example is presented of how mythology can be used in the classroom to journey through the wormhole that links contextualized learning to the parallel universes inhabited by the debates on decolonization and Africanization of the curriculum.

2.1. My Myths, Your Myths, Our Myths

I count which stars and had to give up?

[Answer:] *The Pleiades*

Venda riddle²⁴

The heavens and especially the stars occupy a significant place in African mythology. The Pleiades, part of the constellation of Taurus, inhabit a space

²³ Lazarus Donald Mokula "Oupa" Lebeloane, "Decolonizing the School Curriculum for Equity and Social Justice in South Africa", *KOERS: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 82.3 (2017), 7–8.

²⁴ Clarissa Hughes, *Flowers in the Sky: A Celebration of Southern African Starlore*, Cape Town: Creda Communications for Clarissa Hughes, 2012, 30.

of great importance to southern African communities, and thus in the multicultural classroom the myth can be used to great effect to teach skills and concepts that may be “alien” to the learner.²⁵ The appearance in the southern skies of this star cluster is a period linked to tradition and ritual and signifying the beginning of a new year. This is not a time for planting, but rather a time to prepare the land to receive new life. Appearing in the sky in June, towards the winter solstice, the Pleiades bring new life. As a link to earthly endeavours, the Pleiades also feature as a constellation linked to the seasons and agriculture in Greek tradition and mythology. Hesiod writes in *Works and Days*:

When the Pleiades, the Hyades, and mighty Orion set,
remember the time has come to plough again –
and may the earth nurse for you a full year’s supply.²⁶

In many southern African tribes, the Pleiades are referred to as the Digging Stars, the Ploughing Stars, and the Hoeing Stars. To the Xhosa the isiLimela (Pleiades) signify the beginning of the initiation season, when boys, from the age of sixteen, go into seclusion to learn how to become responsible members of society. When they return, they shun their old ways and lives, acquiring new possessions and new friends. This is symbolic of having passed from the old ways of childhood to a new life as an adult. To the Xhosa, the childhood years, or “birth years”, do not hold great significance – it is the years that follow initiation that count, as can be seen in the manner in which age is expressed. To show experience and seniority, a Xhosa male would refer to having “four isiLimela”, meaning that four years have passed from when he was initiated.²⁷ The importance of this is not only traditional, but can have sociocultural implications in schools, where effectively a sixteen-year-old boy may still be considered a child and treated as such. This could cause conflict not only between his peers from a different culture, but also in terms of classroom behaviour towards educators. These are sensitivities that need to be taken into consideration in the multicultural classroom.

²⁵ On a different cultural perspective on the Pleiades, see Babette Puetz’s chapter, “Odysseus Down Under: Classical Myth in New Zealand School Education”, where she discusses the Māori Matariki festival, 311–322.

²⁶ Hesiod, *Theogony; Works and Days; Shields*, trans. Apostolos N. Athanassakis, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004, 80.

²⁷ Hughes, *Flowers in the Sky*, 32.

The link between the Pleiades and new life is echoed in practices of the San/Bushmen, who will lift their newborn children to the stars and teach them to lift their hands to the Pleiades as a recognition of renewal and new life. This ritual creates a connection between our earthly lives and how they are linked to the universe. To the Shona, the stars are considered something unnatural or abnormal, they are called Chirema (Abnormal). This may be linked to the fact that one is not always able to see all "Seven Sisters", as reflected in the Venda riddle, and thus there is something "wrong" with the constellation. Whatever the belief or tradition linked to the Pleiades, the constellation and its related myths can be used to great effect in the multi-cultural classroom.

2.2. Working with Myth

The following lesson plan is based on the guidelines to an integrated pedagogy as explained in the first section of this chapter, which covered the various changes in the South African curriculum since Curriculum 2005, and recent debates on decolonization, Africanization, and the decontextualized learner. The guiding principles behind the pedagogy are that the learning takes into consideration the learners' lived experience and that the educator is there as a mediator of learning, rather than an "oracle" of knowledge. According to M.M. Nieman and R.B. Monyai, "mediators of learning" should not ignore the learners' cultural background and the existence and value of prior knowledge.²⁸

The lessons are aimed at learners in the Intermediate Phase, Grades 4–6 (nine to twelve years of age). They are based on five thirty-minute classes presented over a week, and focus on the three key language competencies of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, and are based on three core learning intentions: Knowledge (What will the learner "know" how to do at the end of the lesson?), Value (What is the value of what is being taught?), and Skills (What skills will the learner have gained?). As mentioned previously, learners in this phase, especially if entering the system from an HL Foundation Phase school, struggle with English, especially given that in the Intermediate Phase all teaching is done in the LTL, which in most cases is English.

²⁸ M.M. Nieman and R.B. Monyai, *The Educator as Mediator of Learning*, Pretoria: Van Schaik, 2015, 7.

2.3. Lessons in Mythology and English

Table 1 delineates and defines the core learning intentions which need to be incorporated in each lesson and lesson plan.

Table 1: Core learning intentions.

Knowledge	Value	Skills
Know how to read a text for meaning Know how to express ideas coherently through speaking and writing Know how to create a definition of something	Myths hold intrinsic sociocultural knowledge and teach valuable life lessons Appreciation of the value of <i>ubuntu</i> and learning from each other Self-worth/happiness	Working with others Sharing experiences from different cultural backgrounds Transferral of oral narratives to written texts

2.3.1. Lesson I – Period I

Inherent in any myth is a story. In order to explore the narratives of myth, learners are exposed to the workings of “story” as a narrative trope. In many cultures, there are myths about stories and the creation of stories. A popular Ghanaian myth from the Ashanti people involves the trickster character of Anansi the spider and recounts how he came to own all the tales that are told by “stealing” them from the sky god, Nyame, through trickery.

In this lesson, the learners are engaged in sharing their own knowledge of stories. How are stories told? Where do they come from? What is the difference between a story and a myth?

1. **Localizing details**
Subject: English (Grades 4–6).
Time: 30 minutes.
Number of learners: 29.
2. **Learning intentions of the lesson**
Knowledge: What are stories? Identifying, naming, and describing how stories are told.
Skills: Discussion, cooperative learning, listening.
Values: Principles and values related to different experiences of “story”.
3. **Curriculum content topic related to this lesson**
 Language competency: Listening.
4. **Lesson theme**
 How are stories created?

5. **Methods, teaching support aids, and learning materials**

Methods: Discussion, direct teaching, and learner participation.

Step 1: Read two texts that explore the origin of stories and which have a folkloric aspect to their narrative: "How Stories Began" available on the Nal'ibali website (<https://nalibali.org/story-library/multilingual-stories/how-stories-began>) and "How Anansi Came to Own All the Tales that Are Told",²⁹ which is a graphic representation of the original Ashanti myth. The Nal'ibali text is available in Afrikaans, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, and English, but should be read in English and the alternative-language text only made available after the lesson if necessary. The Ashanti myth is a graphic representation of the story. The story can be projected on the screen as learners listen to the narrative. The value of having texts available in different South African languages and with visual content is to assist understanding.

Step 2: Discussion. Ask learners to discuss how stories are told in their home/culture. What types of stories are told? When and how are they told?

Step 3: Introduce myth as a type of story. Ask the learners if anyone in the class can tell you what a myth is. Write down keywords on the board. Get the learners to use the keywords to create a definition of myth.

Aids and materials:

- Computer with internet connection.
- Projector and screen.
- Whiteboard and whiteboard markers.

Online resources:

- "How Stories Began" (<https://nalibali.org/story-library/multilingual-stories/how-stories-began>).
- *African Sky Stories* (<https://www.penguinfilms.co.za/projects/african-sky-stories/>).
- Books used: *Graphic Mythology: African Myths*, edited by Gary Jeffrey and illustrated by Terry Riley.

6. **Place of the lesson in the curriculum**

Preceding content: Theme/Topic: Dictionary work.

²⁹ Ashanti people of Ghana, "How Anansi Came to Own All the Tales that Are Told", in Gary Jeffrey and Terry Riley, *Graphic Mythology: African Myths*, New York, NY: Rosen, 2006, 28.

Following content: Theme/Topic: Working on grammar/writing stories.
Lesson content:

- What are stories?
- Definitions and explanations of different types of stories.
- Reasons why we tell stories.
- Additional information from learner discussion.
- Group discussion and consolidation of ideas.

7. **Lesson preparation**

- Make sure all the equipment is in working order and that the internet connection is working.
- Bookmark the websites and have them ready before the lesson so that no time is wasted searching for the sites.

8. **Pattern of the lesson**

- Actualization or recall of existing knowledge.
- Ask learners if they know of any types of stories.
- Introduction of the lesson topic through setting a scene: reading the stories of how stories began.
- Explanation of the new subject matter (myth) in relation to the stories they have heard.
- **Teacher contribution:** The teacher will ask learners to explain how the two stories differ based on what they heard and saw. He/she will ask them to briefly discuss if the stories remind them of other stories they may have been told.
- **Active listening by learners during the lesson:** Learners actively listen to the stories, to each other's contributions, and to the teacher.
- Monitoring the understanding of new subject matter during the lesson.
- **Functionalization/assessment:** Creation of a definition of myth by the end of the lesson.

9. **Extension tasks:** Learners are encouraged to go to the library and source books on myth and mythology. They are to select a myth that they find interesting to present as a prepared reading exercise.

2.3.2. Lesson 2 – Period 2

The appearance of the Pleiades (Digging Stars/Ploughing Stars/Seven Sisters) in the night sky between June and September is of great significance to southern African populations. It is a time of new beginnings and the dawn of the new year. Using images of the Pleiades as a starting point, learners

will share their own stories on the constellation and begin writing their own myths, either based on existing cultural stories or of their own creation. It should be noted that every story, however tenuous, has its origin in lived experience. Through the telling and writing of these stories, essential grammar and vocabulary work will be addressed intrinsically. Grammar is not taught formally, but rather through writing practice where the learner is encouraged to write in English. Errors in grammar are addressed through peer assessment and formal “mediator” assessment at the end of the lesson, when the compositions are collected.

1. **Localizing details**

Subject: English (Grades 4–6).

Time: 30 minutes.

Number of learners: 29.

2. **Learning intentions of the lesson**

Knowledge: Writing stories.

Skills: Discussion, cooperative learning, writing, use of grammar.

Values: Principles and values related to varied experiences of different stories with a common theme.

3. **Curriculum content topic related to this lesson**

Language competency: Writing.

4. **Lesson theme**

Creating your own myth.

5. **Methods, teaching support aids, and learning materials**

Methods: Discussion, direct teaching, and learner participation.

Step 1: Project different images of the Pleiades. The images should be both representative of the constellation and symbolic. Use images from various cultures.

Step 2: Discussion. Ask learners to describe the images and discuss what they may represent. Write down their descriptions on the whiteboard. These will be used as initiators to the stories they will write.

Step 3: Introduce the students to various myths of the Pleiades. The myths can be delivered using various media as well as simply reading the myths to the students. YouTube videos that include text work well in this scenario as they offer both visual stimulation and get the students to read short sentences that allow them to “fill in” the story.

Aids and materials:

- Computer with internet connection.

- Projector and screen.
- Whiteboard and whiteboard markers.

Online resources:

- "Myth of the Seven Sisters" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrunKVWsZMs>).
- "Story of Orion and the Pleiades" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukVm69aemuQ>). This site may be a little advanced for Grades 4 and 5, but can be used for more advanced learners in Grade 6.
- "The Pleiades – Myths from Around the World" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eMmdFbTob4>).
- Image of the Pleiades from the Iziko Planetarium in Cape Town (https://images.slideplayer.com/15/4718978/slides/slide_3.jpg).
- Books used: *Flowers in the Sky: A Celebration of Southern African Starlore* by Clarissa Hughes.

6. Place of the lesson in the curriculum

Preceding content: Theme/Topic: How stories came to be.

Following content: Theme/Topic: Speaking/telling stories.

Lesson content:

- Stories about the stars: the Pleiades.
- Different myths that tell the story of the Pleiades.
- Significance of the star cluster to different peoples.
- Additional information from learner discussion.
- Group discussion and consolidation of ideas.
- Written compositions from learners.

7. Lesson preparation

- Make sure all the equipment is in working order and that the internet connection is working.
- Bookmark the websites and have them ready before the lesson so that no time is wasted searching for the sites.

8. Pattern of the lesson

- Actualization or recall of existing knowledge.
- Ask learners if they know of any myths on the Pleiades.
- Introduction of the lesson topic through setting a scene: reading different myths on the Pleiades, watching videos that narrate different myths.
- Explanation of the new subject matter, writing your own myth in relation to the stories they have heard/seen.

- **Teacher contribution:** The teacher will provide information on the Pleiades, both scientific and folkloric. He/she will ask learners if they have come across myths of the Pleiades or if they know if the star cluster has any significance in their culture. Relevant responses will be noted on the whiteboard for further reference during the lesson.
 - **Active listening and writing by learners during the lesson:** Learners actively listen to the stories, to each other's contributions, and to the teacher. Learners will get to write down their stories and share them with their classmates.
 - Monitoring the understanding of new subject matter during the lesson.
 - **Functionalization/assessment:** Writing a myth on the Pleiades. Learner compositions will be peer-assessed and then handed in to the teacher for final assessment.
9. **Extension tasks:** Learners are encouraged to interact with family and members of their community to gather information and stories on the Pleiades. The information they gather will be used in their compositions.

2.3.3. Lesson 3 – Periods 3 and 4

This lesson builds on previous lessons and focuses on the language competence of speaking. Given the time constraints of a thirty-minute lesson, this lesson is spread over two periods. Having reworked their myths, learners will present them to the class. They need to present their myth, providing its origin and significance to their lived experience. In this lesson, the learner becomes the storyteller, re-enacting practices that are known to them, thus valuing their contribution to knowledge. Learners are encouraged in this lesson to use traditional modes of storytelling. This may include refrains which encourage class and teacher participation as well as incorporation of expressions from the HL.

1. **Localizing details**

Subject: English (Grades 4–6).

Time: 60 minutes.

Number of learners: 29.

2. **Learning intentions of the lesson**

Knowledge: Telling stories.

Skills: Discussion, cooperative learning, speaking, modes of expression.

Values: Principles and values related to generating knowledge, respecting alternative beliefs, sharing sociocultural practice and tradition, as well as valuing the contribution HL can make to acquiring English.

3. **Curriculum content topic related to this lesson**

Language competency: Speaking.

4. **Lesson theme**

Telling stories/myths.

5. **Methods, teaching support aids, and learning materials**

Methods: Sharing, indirect teaching, and learner participation.

Step 1: Indirect teaching. Explain to the learners how the lesson will proceed and that they will each get a turn to tell their stories to the class. To prevent disruption, it will be easiest to work alphabetically; however, if there is a learner that wishes to go first, this should be encouraged.

Step 2: Sharing. Learners recite their myths to the class.

Step 3: Discussion. After the presentation, classmates are encouraged to ask questions and engage with the myth. Where did the myth originate? Does it hold cultural and traditional significance? Is it based on “lived experience”?

Aids and materials: Although the teacher may not use the aids and materials, learners may want to make use of the facilities for their presentation.

- Computer with internet connection.
- Projector and screen.
- Whiteboard and whiteboard markers.

Online resources: None.

6. **Place of the lesson in the curriculum**

Preceding content: Theme/Topic: Telling stories.

Following content: Theme/Topic: Reading for understanding and meaning (comprehension).

Lesson content: Myths written by the learners in accordance with Lesson 2.

7. **Lesson preparation**

- Make sure all the equipment is in working order and that the internet connection is working.
- Ensure that each learner is given equal time and opportunity to present their myth.

8. **Pattern of the lesson**

- Actualization or recall of existing knowledge.

- Introduction of the lesson through explaining how the presentations will be executed.
- Explanation of the new subject matter, telling your own myth, in relation to the stories the learners have heard/seen/collected. Explain the importance of sharing information in relation to knowledge and experience.
- **Teacher contribution:** Teacher contribution is indirect and limited to maintaining order during the presentation. The teacher may facilitate interaction during the discussion section of the presentation. Monitoring the understanding of new subject matter during the lesson.
- **Active speaking and listening by learners during the lesson:** Learners orally present their myths to their classmates and teacher. During each presentation, learners actively listen to the myth so that they can participate in the discussions following the presentation.
- **Functionalization/assessment:** Use of the spoken English language. Peer assessment and formal in-class assessment of each presentation by the teacher.

9. **Extension tasks:** None.

2.3.4. Lesson 4 – Periods 5 and 6

Throughout the various lessons, learners engaged with different language competencies of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In this final lesson, the learners' ability to read for meaning will be assessed using myth and mythology. This will be done by selecting a myth and getting the learners to read the myth attentively and then answer questions in writing. The exercise can be done in groups, especially to assist weaker students. In this manner, students learn from each other and share in the communal learning experience. For this exercise, the teacher could make use of the Baringa myth of the Wonder-Worker of the Plains,³⁰ which recounts the story of the sacred African-plains buffalo and its link to prosperity and life. The myth teaches lessons of obedience, the sanctity of tradition, and the link between nature and man. Elements of this myth can also be found in a retelling of the myth, "The Ox of the Wonderful Horns", by Ashley Bryan from her collection

³⁰ Virginia Schomp, *The Ancient Africans*, New York, NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009, 48–53.

of short stories.³¹ Both texts are fairly long and will need to be reworked by the teacher to suit the reading speed of the learners. Alternatively, the texts can be given to the learners to read before the lesson.

1. **Localizing details**

Subject: English (Grades 4–6).

Time: 60 minutes.

Number of learners: 29.

2. **Learning intentions of the lesson**

Knowledge: Understanding myth.

Skills: Reading comprehension.

Values: Principles and values related to understanding the written word, seeing the value of committing oral myth to print.

3. **Curriculum content topic related to this lesson**

Language competency: Reading for meaning.

4. **Lesson theme**

Reading and understanding.

5. **Methods, teaching support aids, and learning materials**

Methods: Indirect teaching and learner participation.

Step 1: Indirect teaching: Read the myth to the students and explain to the learners that after having the story read to them, they are to read the story for themselves and answer the questions supplied. The reading should be done individually. Once each learner has read the myth for themselves and answered the questions, they can break into groups and compare their answers. The individual responses will then be collected for formal assessment.

Step 2: Reading. Learners are given a copy of the myth with questions related to the myth and its narrative. Explain to the learners that like in Lessons 3 and 4, where they presented their myths to the class and answered their classmates' questions, they are now going to read a myth and answer the questions based on what they have read.

Step 3: Discussion. After the exercise is completed individually, the learners are divided into groups by the teacher. In their groups they will discuss and compare their answers. The teacher facilitates these discussions by going from one group to the next. After group discussion,

³¹ Ashley Bryan, *The Ox of the Wonderful Horns and Other African Folktales*, London: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1993, 29–41.

the learners elect a spokesperson for the group that will give the group's communal answers to the questions.

Aids and materials:

- Computer.
- Sufficient copies of the text and questions to distribute to the learners.
- Projector and screen to be used in the projection of possible answers to the questions.

Online resources: None.

6. **Place of the lesson in the curriculum**

Preceding content: Theme/Topic: Understanding stories/myths.

Following content: Theme/Topic: None.

Lesson content: A selected myth to be used as a comprehension text.

7. **Lesson preparation:**

- Make sure all the equipment is in working order.
- Ensure that each learner has a copy of the text with relevant questions.

8. **Pattern of the lesson**

- Actualization or recall of existing knowledge.
- Introduction of the lesson through explaining how the lesson will be executed.
- Explanation of the new subject matter, the importance of understanding what one reads and reading for meaning. The importance of learning from each other and accepting being wrong.
- **Teacher contribution:** Teacher contribution is both direct and indirect in as much as he/she both provides information and facilitates the production of information by the learners in the execution of their responses.
- **Active listening and reading by learners during the lesson:** Learners listen to the story being read by the teacher and then read the text for themselves. In the reading process, learners are encouraged to underline key phrases and words they may not understand for explanation by the teacher or discussion in the group.
- **Functionalization/assessment:** Reading for meaning. Peer assessment and formal assessment of each individual comprehension submitted by the learners.

9. **Extension tasks:** None.

3. The End, but Not Quite (Conclusion?)

In keeping with the traditions of African mythology and storytelling, where the story remains open-ended, so too is this conclusion. It is short, a “warp-speed” return to the reality of trying to “decolonize the mind” and Africanize the curriculum through the use of myth – tapping into its intrinsic value to teaching and learning in a multicultural, multilingual environment. At times, crossing the parallel universe(s) is not easy; it is fraught with meteor showers and inhospitable planets. However, as soon as one begins to listen to what is being said, rather than fall back on preconceived notions of what knowledge is and how it should be transmitted (meteors), one begins to understand that what we are trying to achieve is no different to how teaching and learning is practised elsewhere. In order to know the world, you first need to know the world you inhabit and who you are in that world. A sense of identity and belonging is key to any successful enterprise. If we want our children to become active participants in their learning, then we need to first teach them from their “lived experience”, before introducing them to new “experiences” – the learner needs to be “contextualized” in order for solid foundations of knowledge to be cast. Mythology and its link to African education practice is a tool that needs to be explored and exploited both outside and inside the classroom. The examples of lesson plans present in this chapter may be specific to the teaching of English, but mythology is now being incorporated in astronomy, science, and medicine. The story may be done, but the ending is still to be written.

*THE EMPEROR, THE SUN, AND OLYMPUS: MYTHOLOGY IN THE MODERN JAPANESE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

From its beginnings at the time of Japan's seclusion in the seventeenth century, Japan's educational system has developed and changed considerably, from a focus on ancient texts and Chinese Classics to modernization in the Meiji era, pre-World War Two society, and then a new approach after World War Two and until our contemporary times. The current modern curriculum has evolved from training in temples, monasteries, and private tutelage aimed only at boys and young men from the higher echelons of society, based on mainly Chinese views of good education and training, through expeditions to the West and exposure to other philosophies and ideas of learning, to its present situation. With time, education has encompassed various institutional levels, from elementary schools to universities, each evolving via new educational doctrines.

The role of Japanese mythology in education has been a point of great dissension in the past. The mythological origin of the Imperial Family and the land of the Japanese was taught during history classes from the establishment of the modern educational system in the 1870s, and the emphasis on nationalism, reinforced, *inter alia*, by the teaching of Japanese mythology, grew *a fortiori* prior to and during World War Two.¹

Western education and methods greatly influenced the development of Japanese education after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. While at first the focus was on learning Western technology and engineering, today world history is taught in Japanese high schools in addition to the basic classes, such as maths, Japanese language, social studies, music, science, English, etc.

* Note on bibliography: for Japanese names we use the common Japanese system of family name first. We also use the Hepburn romanization system.

¹ See, e.g., Harry Wray, "The Fall of Moral Education and the Rise and Decline of Civics Education and Social Studies in Occupied and Independent Japan", *Japan Forum* 12 (2000), 15–41.

While the classical world and the mythology of Europe are not part of the official curriculum, nonetheless Japanese youth take interest in them through children's books, manga, and television. This chapter will take a closer look at the role Japanese mythology and Japanese Classics are given in the national curriculum. Further, it will explore the exposure of Japanese children and youth to classical Graeco-Roman mythology.

Japanese mythology, similarly to the role of mythology in many parts of the world, has often been employed by elites to create unity and a common identity in the population. This chapter asks whether Japanese mythology is still used in this way, and to what extent this can be identified in the curriculum and textbooks. First, we shall address some illuminating events in the development of the Japanese school system, from the nineteenth century to modern times, covering various time periods, but not of all them, due to lack of space in this current chapter. In the second part, we shall explain the delicate and complicated issue of the use of Japanese mythology in Japanese education, and the third part will relate to the uses of Western mythology in the Japanese education system. This will enable us to present a fuller and broader portrayal of different stages of development of the Japanese school system, as well as discuss more critically the use of mythology in education.

I. A Brief Introduction to the Japanese School System

In 1853, when Commodore Matthew Perry arrived at Uraga harbour, he carried more than just a hidden threat from the US president Millard Fillmore. He was forcefully ushering in a new age for Japan. The treaty between the two nations, signed in 1854, regulated trade between the two, but in time it also meant that the Japanese education system had to change.

Forced out of its self-proclaimed 250 years of isolation under Tokugawa rule (1603–1868), the government of Japan was now confronted with the power and new technologies of the West. Faced with such overwhelming power and with little-known or understood technologies, it quickly became clear that the old teaching of the Japanese traditional school would not be sufficient were Japan ever to compete with the Western powers.² Whereas

² There would have been some knowledge of the difference in learning and development between Japan and the West, e.g., because of the *ran-gaku* (蘭学; Dutch studies), but this did not comprise the mainstream of Japanese education. For more about *ran-gaku*, see, e.g., Marius B. Jansen, "Rangaku and Westernization", *Modern Asian Studies* 18 (1984), 541–553.

previously education was mainly available to the upper classes and samurai families,

[i]n the process of groping to modernize the nation in the mid-19th century, a consensus was formed with the aim of abolishing the traditional class system and offering an equal educational opportunity to all people of Japan.³

This new education for all included girls and women as well. During the Tokugawa period the so-called *terakoya* (寺子屋) schools accommodating commoners had gradually spread all over Japan. It has been estimated that by the end of the Tokugawa period between 40 and 50% of boys and 10% of girls had received education in a *terakoya*.⁴

As part of the massive reforms of the newly formed Meiji government, in 1871 the Ministry of Education was formed and in 1872 the 学制 (Gakusei), "education plan", was issued: "Since the Gakusei was specifically designed by the newly formed Ministry of Education as a national system of public education, a more appropriate reading renders it the First National Plan for Education".⁵ This was the first time the nature and aims of a national public education system for Japan were addressed.

The Japanese were contemplating the best centralized system for their country, having in mind the European and the new American systems. But as Benjamin C. Duke argues, the European education system of the nineteenth century proved to be challenging to follow:

European patterns of education were characterized by high academic standards of classical curricula that catered to the ruling classes. Although the well-known European classical humanistic schools produced some of the greatest leaders of the period in many fields, it also resulted in wide gaps between the highly educated elite and the poorly educated masses.

³ "Education in Japan: Past and Present", NIER – National Institute for Educational Policy Research, <http://www.nier.go.jp/English/educationjapan/pdf/201103EJPP.pdf> (accessed 7 March 2018).

⁴ Marie H. Roesgaard, *Moving Mountains: Japanese Education Reform*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998, 30. Based on Ronald Dore, "The Legacy", in Edward R. Beauchamp, ed., *Learning to Be Japanese*, Hamden, CT: Linnet Books, 1978, 13–41, and Herbert Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*, Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1982 (ed. pr. 1965).

⁵ Benjamin C. Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education: Constructing the National School System, 1872–1890*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009, 1.

One of the major purposes of the Meiji educational leaders was to provide a public education for every child regardless of social background.⁶

Interestingly, classical education and the focus on classical curricula deterred the Japanese as they seemed too elitist and therefore not appropriate for the stated purpose of educating the people, not just the elite. This is probably not the only reason that the European Classics were not introduced into Japanese education, but could indicate how this foreign canon was initially perceived – as exclusive (perhaps even snobbish), difficult, and not suitable for mass education, in any case not suited for mass education in Japan. It should be noted, however, that not all Western material was rejected. While Confucian morality and filial piety played a large role particularly in ethics classes, a reader for language instruction, which was very popular in the 1880s, the 尋常小学読本 [Jinjō shōgaku tokuhon; Ordinary Primary School Reader] included adaptations of Aesop's fables and other foreign sources, as well as three chapters about the story of Robinson Crusoe. This reader had relatively fewer references to filial piety and loyalty than earlier textbooks, but included historical figures such as Sugawara no Michizane and Kusunoki Masashige as examples of loyalty to the emperor, and Kusunoki's son, Matsura, as an example of loyalty to his father and the emperor.⁷

In 1890, the 教育勅語 [Kyōiku chokugo; Imperial Rescript on Education] was issued, ending two decades of heated debates on the matter of the most proper education for the modern Japanese country:

Basing its stance on ideas drawn from Confucian culture and the Japanese classics, the Rescript set out the standards of behaviour expected from the Japanese people and strongly emphasized the virtues of patriotism and loyalty to the Emperor.⁸ For the next 50 years, until the end of World War II, the Imperial Rescript on Education continued to have a great influence on Japanese education.⁹

⁶ Ibidem, 5.

⁷ Patricia E. Tsurumi, "Meiji Primary School Language and Ethics Textbooks: Old Values for a New Society?", *Modern Asian Studies* 8 (1974), 247–261. See also Beata Kubiak Ho-Chi, "Aesop's Fables in Japanese Literature for Children: Classical Antiquity and Japanese", in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Our Mythical Childhood... The Classics and Literature for Children and Young Adults*, Metaforms: Studies in the Reception of Classical Antiquity 8, Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2016, 189–200.

⁸ See also Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.

⁹ "Education in Japan"; Wray, "The Fall of Moral Education", 16–19.

After the Japanese defeat in World War Two, and under the strong influence of the occupying Allied Forces, a massive educational reform took place. In 1947 the Fundamental Law on Education was enacted. This law replaced the more nationalistic Imperial Rescript on Education,¹⁰ and soon other laws followed, which established the democratized school system.¹¹

In late March 1946, the Occupation Authorities under the command of General Douglas MacArthur proposed various reforms of the Japanese education system, such as the single-track 6-3-3-4 system, which has since been in use. The Japanese system of schooling today thus comprises six years of elementary school (小学校; *shōgakkō*), three years of middle school (中学校; *chūgakkō*), three years of high school (高等学校; *kōtōgakkō*), and four years of university (大学; *daigaku*). The model has developed slightly with integrated middle and high schools becoming popular. The first two levels are compulsory, but in practice more than 96% of all age cohorts have received secondary education since the middle of the 1970s.¹² In addition, a large proportion of the five-year-olds will have been to kindergarten (稚園; *yōchien*) where they will have learnt group behaviour and simple writing.¹³

This does not mean, of course, that Japanese education has remained unchanged since 1946. Like all educational systems, it has changed with the challenges of new times. As Ian Gibson summarizes:

[T]here are essentially three key stages comprising the Japanese education system's modern formulation: the Meiji restoration, the post-war occupation and the internationalization policy promoted by the Nakasone administration during the 1980s.¹⁴

¹⁰ This did not happen without a lot of discussion; see, e.g., Wray, "The Fall of Moral Education", 16, or Robert King Hall, *Shushin: The Ethics of a Defeated Nation*, New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1949, 243; Kaizuka Shigeki, 道徳教育の教科書 [Dōtoku kyōiku no kyōkasho; The Textbooks of Moral Education], Tōkyō: Gakujustu Shuppankai, 2009, 43–44.

¹¹ Nakayasu Chie, "School Curriculum in Japan", *The Curriculum Journal* 27.1 (2016), 135.

¹² 数字で見る高等学校 [Sūji de miru kōtōgakkō; High Schools in Numbers], Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan, http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo3/047/siryu/___icsFiles/afiedfile/2011/12/15/1313846_02.pdf (accessed 12 March 2020).

¹³ See Lois Peak, *Learning to Go to School in Japan: The Transition from Home to Preschool Life*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991.

¹⁴ Ian Gibson, "Flowers in the Cracks: War, Peace and Japan's Education System", *Journal of Peace Education* 8 (2011), 106.

The present efforts by the Abe administration to strengthen moral education and love of the country may in time come to be seen as just as significant as the three key stages Gibson mentions, thus becoming a fourth significant turning point in Japanese education.¹⁵

The curriculum is revised roughly every ten years, currently by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), which was formed in 2001, combining different offices. As Nakayasu Chie explains:

[I]n terms of curriculum, relevant regulations regarding Japanese national curriculum, the Enforcement Regulations for the School Education Law and the Course of Study have been established and improved. The Enforcement Regulations for the School Education Law is an ordinance of the MEXT, which regulates Japanese school education including basic issues of school curriculum: subjects which should be taught in schools, the number of hours spent on each subject etc. [...] Though Japanese schools' education systems have been decentralised in recent years [...] the Course of Study is still a minimum standard of Japanese school curriculum to ensure equal opportunity in education and to maintain a uniform level of school education throughout Japan.¹⁶

This uniform level is further reinforced by the existence of entrance examinations, particularly for university, and not least by the common standard test the majority of applicants for university are required to take, the National Center Test for University Admissions. Japanese education has therefore often been criticized for being overly standardized and lacking in creativity.¹⁷

Peter Gainey and Curtis Andressen claim that despite considerable criticism of its education system,

Japan continues to boast a high literacy rate, due in no small part to the rote learning of languages¹⁸ in the school system [...] and the inordinately

¹⁵ See also Anzai Shinobu, "Re-Examining Patriotism in Japanese Education: Analysis of Japanese Elementary School Moral Readers", *Educational Review* 67 (2015), 437–438, and Sven Saaler, "Nationalism and History in Contemporary Japan", *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 14.20 (2016), 1–17.

¹⁶ Nakayasu, "School Curriculum in Japan", 135–136.

¹⁷ Many sources discuss this issue; for a broad historical survey of this and other issues in Japanese education, see Byron Marshall, *Learning to Be Modern: Japanese Political Discourse on Education*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994.

¹⁸ This presumably alludes to the various writing systems employed in Japanese, as this would contribute to the general literacy in the Japanese language. It certainly does not allude to proficiency in English as the authors note on p. 162 in their article that the Japanese educational system is "deficient in providing these skills [in English]".

large volumes of information Japanese consume on a daily basis, in the form of magazines, newspapers and books.¹⁹

This claim is supported by statistics showing a literacy rate in Japan for persons over fifteen years of age in 2015 of 99%²⁰ and the fact that the Japanese sample performed the highest in OECD's Survey of Adult Skills (2012) in numeracy as well as literacy, but dropped to number 10 when it came to problem-solving in technology-rich environments.²¹

In the next section we shall discuss examples of how the teaching of Japanese mythology was incorporated into the education system before and after World War Two, and how through this use of mythology we can detect the different social tensions facing the Japanese nation and society.

2. Japanese Mythology in Education

"Japanese mythology" is quite a vague term and one that requires some explanation. The various Japanese myths, many of which were probably influenced by Chinese and Korean lore, were gathered and collected in writing in the eighth century CE.²² As John S. Brownlee explains:

[T]he myths arose in primitive times and were recorded in Japan's first histories, *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters, 712) and *Nihon Shoki* (also known as *Nihongi*; Chronicles of Japan, 720). They tell of the creation of Japan by deities, of the activities of the deities during the Age of the Gods, of the founding of the imperial line by the Sun Goddess, and of the reign of the first emperor, Jinmu, a direct descendant of the Sun Goddess, beginning in 660 BC according to *Nihon Shoki*.²³

¹⁹ Peter Gainey and Curtis Andressen, "The Japanese Education System: Globalisation and International Education", *Japanese Studies* 22 (2002), 161. The various problems of the Japanese "escalator" system are elaborated in the article.

²⁰ "Japan Literacy", IndexMundi, <https://www.indexmundi.com/japan/literacy.html> (accessed 11 March 2018).

²¹ "Survey of Adult Skills: First Results. Japan", OECD, <http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Country%20note%20-%20Japan.pdf> (accessed 11 March 2018).

²² We choose to focus on Shintō because it is native to Japan, and is the subject matter of the collections later mentioned. This does not mean that tales related to Buddhism and Buddhist deities are not to be found in Japanese education, but we have decided to focus on the mythology native to Japan.

²³ John S. Brownlee, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600–1945: The Age of the Gods and Emperor Jinmu*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1997 (reprinted in Tokyo by

Regarding the texts themselves, Isomae Jun'ichi and Sarah E. Thal note that

as far as can be ascertained from historical documents, there was never a time when the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* myths constituted a single, unified text: a multitude of variants, as well as the interpretations connected with each of them, coexisted side by side.²⁴

They explain the importance of the myths:

For the ancient Japanese [...] the purpose of mythic history was to explain the establishment of the realm and the determination of its rulers. Those common themes that appear in different versions in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* [...] were regarded as tales of the process by which the rulers of the realm were established.²⁵

We can perceive a significant difference between this view and the attitude found in the current curriculum guidelines, where it is said that the same texts can be used to understand how life was perceived in ancient times. Isomae and Thal continue by explaining the connection between the people and the ruling class in the myths:

In ancient times, there existed a solemn distinction between the subject that narrated the myths and the object that was related in the myths. The kingship myths of antiquity were creations of the governing body called the court; they were not the product of the folk [...]. Because of their political functions, the myths were possessed exclusively by the court.²⁶

the University of Tokyo Press in 1999), 3. On specific narratives in these works, see also Torquil Duthie, "The Jinshin Rebellion and the Politics of Historical Narrative in Early Japan", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 133 (2013), 295–320.

²⁴ Isomae Jun'ichi and Sarah E. Thal, "Reappropriating the Japanese Myths: Motoori Norinaga and the Creation Myths of the 'Kojiki' and 'Nihon shoki'", *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27 (2000), 25. David Lurie notes that both the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* contain "a mix of myth, legend, and history, interspersed with poetry – and for the very different styles in which they were written" ("Myth and History in the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and Related Works", in Shirane Haruo and Suzuki Tomi, eds., *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, 22). The definition of history in this context is naturally debatable as with many ancient literary works, yet we may concur that at least some quasi-historical events were recorded in these works.

²⁵ Isomae and Thal, "Reappropriating the Japanese Myths", 26.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 27.

The Japanese myths can thus be seen as the language by which the elite justified and legitimized its position. This language would in early times of course have been mostly used for communication within the elite, as most of the population at the time was illiterate.

With the weakening of the power of the Imperial Family, the myths also gradually lost their political connections and limitations, and, in addition, increased literacy, as it occurred during the Tokugawa period in particular, meant that the Japanese myths could now be accessed and enjoyed by the mass population. The myths, which narrate the creation of the Japanese land and the imperial line, then proved to be useful for establishing a national identity as "Japanese" after the Meiji Restoration, which brought Japan together as one nation rather than a conglomerate of domains more or less loyal to the Shōgun rulers.²⁷ The Imperial Rescript on Education and an emphasis on veneration for the emperor, and conceptualization of the state as one family with the emperor at its head ("familism"), became part of the moral and ethical construct which enabled the mobilization of the Japanese people for war: the Sino-Japanese war in 1894–1895, the Russo-Japanese war in 1904–1905, and finally the war with China in the 1930s which culminated with the defeat in World War Two. As Anzai Shinobu puts it:

In the years leading up to and during World War II, moral education underscored the national need for one sovereign for all subjects (*ikkun banmin*) and strove to educate citizens who would be loyal to the emperor and would support the nation's endeavors.²⁸

2.1. Japanese Mythology in Education Prior to and During World War Two

As noted above, the identification of the divine with the Imperial House existed for centuries in Japanese myths and historiography, and even Confucian scholars preserved this connection, although it contradicted their rationalistic doctrine.²⁹ In this section we shall offer a brief overview of Japanese

²⁷ See Helen Hardarce, *Shintō and the State: 1868–1988*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991 (ed. pr. 1989).

²⁸ Anzai, "Re-Examining Patriotism", 436.

²⁹ A detailed account of Japanese historiography from 1600 to the end of World War Two can be found in Brownlee, *Japanese Historians*.

historiography relating to mythology from the nineteenth century to World War Two. A central concern the Japanese scholars faced in their attempts to reconstruct a modern history of Japan was how to represent the Age of the Gods and the existence of the first emperor, Jinmu. These topics caused considerable dissension, as any questioning of the Imperial House was considered a serious taboo and offence.

Our main source (in English) is Brownlee's 1997 book, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600–1945: The Age of the Gods and Emperor Jinmu*.³⁰ More recent references to this theme are also found in Sven Saaler's works, as he examines the current situation in Japan regarding the use of mythology in education as a political tool.³¹ Similarly to the Japanese historiographers of the nineteenth century and their difficulties in grappling with issues surrounding the Imperial House, Brownlee's book has also attracted controversy and criticism.³² As Delmer Brown remarks on the Japanese myths:

[T]hose of us influenced by what sociologists and anthropologists have to say about myth and ritual will surely conclude that the national myths of Japan – however absurd they may be to an outsider – cannot be brushed off as old stories that a rational historian could not possibly swallow. They are rather more like explosive fields of energy that emerge [...] whenever a state comes into existence. And such ideologies, as history shows, can and do become quite virulent whenever a state's rulers feel threatened by enemies [...] and move to use the state's religious, education [...] systems

³⁰ A more recent review on the matter is offered by Saaler, "Nationalism and History".

³¹ See his review on "Postwar History Education in Japan and the Germanys: Guilty Lessons' by Julian Dierkes", *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 37 (2011), 448–453.

³² While scholars object to some of Brownlee's assumptions, they still merit the book and its discussion. See, e.g., the following reviews: Clark Chilson, "Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600–1945: The Age of the Gods and Emperor Jinmu by John S. Brownlee", *Asian Folklore Studies* 58 (1999), 442–443; Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, "Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600–1945 by John S. Brownlee", *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58 (1999), 512–513; Stefan Tanaka, "Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600–1945: The Age of the Gods and Emperor Jinmu by John S. Brownlee; *History and the State in Nineteenth-Century Japan* by Margaret Mehl", *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 25 (1999), 406–412; Delmer Brown, "Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600–1945: The Age of the Gods and Emperor Jinmu by John S. Brownlee", *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27 (2000), 134–137. On Japanese historiography, see also Alistair Swale, "Historiography in the Age of the Imperial Rescript on Education", in Sven Saaler and Wolfgang Schwentke, eds., *The Power of Memory in Modern Japan*, Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2008, 360–373.

to step up the power of nationalism, insisting always that this is required for unifying the people in a do-or-die defence of the nation.³³

As Brown notes, it is important not to cast aside myths due to their improbability, since myths are not meant to be scientifically accurate; they offer a way for us to understand how people of past eras interpreted their world. Each culture contains its own unique myths, which rarely correlate with modern knowledge, which is precisely why we call them "myths".

However, in terms of education, it is also crucial to teach and remind children of the difference between myths, history, and science; to show them the differences and discrepancies between what is known, what is surmised based on evidence, and what is based on belief. While myths are certainly used to unify the nation and define its national identity, they should not be employed as an uncontested history of a nation, and, consequently, they should not be used as a reason for attacking other nations. As regards the view of history promoted by Brownlee, Stefan Tanaka offers his own view on the treatment of history and its uses:

If we recognize that all history bears utility – this need not be political, nor does it necessarily suggest wilful inaccuracy – then we might better see the ways that our current modes of historical understanding, by creating juxtapositions as rational versus mythical or pure versus applied, too often lead us to overlook the ways those categories can also obscure our vision of the past.³⁴

It is necessary to find the golden mean and to remember that history is never pure or objective, and can be similar to mythology; they are both created by and for people. As Saaler argues:

History always has stood at the core of national/ist modes of thinking and of the idea of the nation and nationalism itself [...] since the nineteenth century, historians in many countries have been busy constructing historical narratives that locate the roots of a particular nation in antiquity in an attempt to strengthen the nation's claim to legitimacy.³⁵

The Japanese practice was not unique in this respect.

³³ Brown, "Japanese Historians", 135.

³⁴ Tanaka, "Japanese Historians", 409.

³⁵ Saaler, "Nationalism and History", 1.

The Meiji scholars were confronted by a tough reality; as Brownlee notes, "The Meiji scholars were civil servants in a modern state with a Constitution that affirmed the myths".³⁶ In the constitution of 1889 the sovereignty of the emperor was unquestionably based on his descent from the first emperor, Jinmu. While the Sun Goddess and the Gods were not mentioned in the constitution, this divine lineage was nevertheless accepted, as it was not contended. Brownlee continues by explaining that

[a]s matters developed after 1889, critical remarks about the imperial institution and its entire history became unacceptable because they insulted the imperial dignity. Criticism of the historical emperors could, by association, be considered criticism of the reigning emperor and therefore treasonable.³⁷

Yet not all scholars agreed to bow their heads to these governmental edicts. In 1891, Kume Kunitake, a history professor at Tokyo Imperial University, published what was considered a defining article about Shintoism, titled 「神道は祭天の古俗 [Shinto wa saiten no kozoku; Shintō Is an Ancient Custom of Heaven Worship].³⁸ This article caused great offence to political Shintoists and nationalists, and this together with other minor factors led to Kume's dismissal from his post.³⁹

Throughout the Meiji era, and especially after the establishment of the 史料編纂掛 (Shiryō hensan gakari; the Historiographical Section at Tokyo Imperial University) in 1895, Japanese historians continued to research and publish on Japan's history. However, in light of the Kume incident and others like it, they mostly confined themselves, at first at least, to the re-establishment of imperial chronology, that is, the lists of emperors who reigned in Japan from ancient times until the present. As Brownlee argues, "The Age of the Gods was timeless, and no one proposed to deal with that, but it aided historical understanding to locate the early emperors in known periods".⁴⁰

³⁶ Brownlee, *Japanese Historians*, 93.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, 95.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 96.

³⁹ Another serious incident regarding the historical writing of Japan occurred in 1911 and was known as the Southern and Northern Courts Controversy; on this see Brownlee, *Japanese Historians*, 118–130. This incident was a further indication that historians should keep silent regarding the Imperial House and not cause any further political offence. On the Kume incident, see also Swale, "Historiography in the Age of the Imperial Rescript", 370–371.

⁴⁰ Brownlee, *Japanese Historians*, 111.

This task was also relatively risk-free and did not cause any serious offence. Therefore, Emperor Jinmu's existence became acceptable for most mainstream scholars.

The Meiji era was followed by the Taishō era (1912–1926), when the so-called Taishō democracy brought some liberalism. During this time, Minobe Tatsukichi, a professor emeritus of law at Tokyo Imperial University, offered his own interpretation of the Meiji constitution. He referred to the emperor "as an organ of the state" (天皇機関説; *tennō kikansetsu*),⁴¹ yet his theory was attacked in 1935 by the rising nationalists, since it viewed the emperor as subordinate to the constitution and not above it.

During the 1930s the political situation was unstable, characterized by acts of violence and intensifying government censorship. By the time of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the government's control over published scholarship had tightened and, at the same time, there was an effort to strengthen Japanese nationality centred on the emperor:

Throughout the twentieth century, the Ministry of Education had taught the children of Japan about the divine origins of Japan, the special qualities of its emperor and its people, and the need for each person to contribute sincerely and voluntarily to the greater glory of Japan.⁴²

Prosecution of professors and censorship of liberal views were enforced.⁴³ The professors themselves were terrified; many did not come to the help of those being prosecuted. The result was that in 1940 Japan celebrated its 2600th anniversary (counting from the alleged date of Emperor Jinmu's reign in 660 BCE) although the professional historians no longer believed in this date.

In the next part we will describe the drastic change in Japanese education after World War Two and the Japanese defeat.

⁴¹ Ibidem, 134. We thank the anonymous reviewer for the comment regarding Minobe.

⁴² Ibidem.

⁴³ Not only university professors faced repercussions for failing to conform. This also happened to school teachers, one of the more famous examples being the so-called Nagano incident from 1933, where 600 teachers were investigated by the police, of whom 208 were arrested and found guilty of bad influence (悪影響; *aku eikyō*) and dismissed; see Tanaka Maria, 日本の道徳教育の変成 [Nihon no dōtoku kyōiku no hensei; The Formation of Japan's Moral Education], in Yoshida Takeo, Tanaka Maria, and Hosodo Kazuyoshi, eds., 道徳教育の変成と課題 – 心からつながりへ [Dōtoku kyōiku no hensei to kadai – "kokoro" kara "tsunagari" e; Formation and Issues of Moral Education: From "Heart" to "Relation"], Tōkyō: Gakumonsha, 2010, 25.

2.2. Japanese Mythology in Education after World War Two

After World War Two it was commonly accepted by the Occupation Authorities that the version of what has been called "State Shintō", prominent up to and during World War Two, had indeed played a role in twisting Japanese thinking, a view that was, in no small way, encouraged by the Occupation Authorities themselves. The aim was to re-educate the Japanese population to encourage them to subscribe to democratic ideals and abandon militarism and emperor veneration. This turn to new values, however, did not happen without apprehension in certain segments of the population. In some quarters of the Japanese government and bureaucracy there was concern that rejecting core moral texts, for example, the Imperial Rescript on Education, and giving up national polity (国体; *kokutai*) could mean the death of Japanese political and cultural concepts.⁴⁴ In the end, the Imperial Rescript on Education was repealed in the Diet, and veneration of the emperor was removed from legal documents and so was not found in the Fundamental Law on Education issued in 1947.

This of course had consequences for the teaching of myths. The division between state and religion as stipulated in the constitution (Article 20)⁴⁵ meant that no trace of anything religious was to be found in public schools in Japan. Since the creationary myths of Japan involved the gods/deities, there was little space left for teaching these myths in the post-war education system in Japan. This continued to be an issue for some Japanese. In the late 1960s, Yamaguchi Kōsuke, then responsible for formulating curriculum guidelines for history at the Ministry of Education, made a case for including Japanese creationary myths as the starting point of Japanese history. T.C. Rhee, in a contemporary analysis of security issues and militarism in Japan in 1971, quoted Yamaguchi as saying that "the post-war education in history has been too dependent on a scientific and positive approach", and that "it can hardly disclose the way of thinking of the ancient people".⁴⁶ The same Yamaguchi had published a book in Japanese about his thoughts

⁴⁴ Wray, "The Fall of Moral Education", 16; Kaizuka, *Dōtoku kyōiku no kyōkasho*, 42–50.

⁴⁵ Promulgated 1946. See "The Constitution of Japan", Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html (accessed 14 March 2018).

⁴⁶ T.C. Rhee, "Japan: 'Security' and 'Militarism'", *The World Today* 2 (1971), 390–400.

on how social studies, of which history is a part, should be taught and he made a case for starting with Japanese mythology.⁴⁷

Yamaguchi's suggestion was met with huge protests, not least in the universities training new teachers. Yamaguchi went on to teach at one such university, and a researcher, who at the time was a student at the same university, recalls how the students there would demonstrate against his ideas, which they saw as revisionist and in denial of the damage done by earlier emphasis on emperor veneration and the mythological origins of Japan. They were worried about his suitability to train future teachers.⁴⁸

Today, references to Japanese myths and the stories that involve the Shintō deities in the curriculum guidelines are few and far between. A search of the curriculum guidelines for elementary school (小学校; *shōgakkō*) found only two occurrences of the word "myth/mythology" (神話; *shinwa*). One in *kokugo* (国語; Japanese language) for Grades 1 and 2, and one in *shakai* (社会; social studies, which includes history) for Grade 6.⁴⁹ In the section describing teaching in Grades 1 and 2 of Japanese language under the heading 伝統的な言語文化と国語の特質に関する事項 (Items concerning traditional language culture and the special nature of our language), in the section about developing reading skills, it is stated that they can be developed 昔話や神話、伝承などの本や文書の読み聞かせを聞いたり、発表したりすること (through reading and being read aloud to from books and texts about old tales/folk tales, mythology, and legends and presenting them).⁵⁰

In the accompanying volume with directions and explanations for teachers (解説; *kaisetsu*) it is specified that the myths and folk tales should be used to draw attention to different usages of language. It is specifically stated that myths have existed since the dawn of times and have been handed down orally as well as in writing. Some myths, it is stated, are related to specific places, people, or nature, and are traditional narratives. Such narratives are

⁴⁷ Yamaguchi Kōsuke, 神話伝承をどう教えるか – 社会科におけるその扱い方 [Shinwa denshō o dō oshieru ka – shakaika ni okeru sono atsukaikata; How to Teach Mythology and Legends: The Way to Handle It in the Subject Social Studies], Tōkyō: Meiji Toshō, 1968.

⁴⁸ Morimo Takeo, personal communication, 5 and 28 March 2018.

⁴⁹ 小学校学習指導要領 [Shōgakkō gakushū shidōyōryō; Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary School], Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan, http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/youryou/syo/index.htm (accessed 12 March 2018). All translations from Japanese are by Marie H. Roesgaard.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

well suited to teaching the younger pupils, while the older ones can handle more complicated texts, such as Chinese Classics and poetry.⁵¹

In the Grade 6 social studies curriculum in section 2(1), which is about the importance of learning about people and events that are representative of Japanese history and cultural heritage, the term “myth” (神話; *shinwa*) occurs again in section 2(1)A, where it is said that understanding of these issues can be obtained by, for example:

狩猟採集や農耕の生活、古墳について調べ、大和朝廷による国土の統一の様子がわかること。その際、神話、伝承を調べ、国の形成に関する考え方などに関心をもつこと。

finding out about life as hunter-gatherers and peasants and the tomb period [circa 250–552 CE] and understanding the situation when the Yamato court [late fifth century CE, maybe a little later] unified Japan. To obtain this understanding, one can find out about the myths and legends and thereby get an impression of the way of thinking at the time of the creation of our country.⁵²

This is a clear echo of the ideas Yamaguchi aired in the late 1960s. However, despite the fears of both the young teachers at the time and of Rhee about the effect such ideas might have on the way Japanese history would be taught, it does not appear that mythology and legend serve at present as a basis for the teaching of history in Japan. The study of a selection of history textbooks available in various bookstores reveals texts that refer to Japanese or world history beginning at the Big Bang, the dinosaurs, or the Stone Age, but none that date the beginning of history in mythical origins, not even as part of an explanation of belief systems in ancient times.⁵³ It appears, therefore, that in spite of the possibility of including Japanese myths

⁵¹ 小学校学習指導要領解説 国語編 [Shōgakkō gakushū shidōyōryō kaisetsu kokugohen; Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary School: Explanatory Volume for the Subject Japanese], Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan, June 2008, 10, 52, http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2010/12/28/1231931_02.pdf (accessed 14 March 2018).

⁵² “Shōgakkō gakushū shidōyōryō”, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan.

⁵³ Examples of textbook series (reference made here to the teachers’ explanatory volume): Katō Yoshikazu, 社会科の授業小学校6 [Shakaika no jugyō shōgakkō 6; Social Studies in Elementary School Grade 6], Tōkyō: Minshūsha, 2015; Usui Tadao, 社会科定番授業 [Shakaika teiban jugyō; Basics for Teaching Social Studies], Tōkyō: Gakuji, 2015 (ed. pr. 2010).

and legends, this does not in reality happen to a great extent. It must be remembered, however, that given such provisions in the curriculum guidelines, it is possible to include such material, should one have the personal inclination and the support of the local school board to do so.

It is further specified in a later section in the curriculum guidelines how this knowledge about early Japanese state-making can be obtained by sixth-graders. In section 3(1)U it is stated that material from 古事記 [Kojiki; Record of Ancient Matters] and 日本書紀 [Nihon shoki; Chronicles of Japan] can be used, as well as 風土記 [Fūdoki], which are a kind of local gazetteers, which were presented to reigning monarchs. They contained agricultural, geographical, and historical records as well as mythology and folklore from the local area.⁵⁴

In middle school curricula mythology is also referred to under the subject headline of social studies, in the chapter about the teaching of history (chapter 3). In section 3(3)E of the curriculum guidelines, which concerns the handling of this content, it is written that the pupils should learn about archaeology, mythology, and legends in order to understand how the people thought in ancient times.⁵⁵

In high school, myths are not mentioned in the curriculum guidelines, but they are included in the explanatory volume accompanying the guidelines, where, in the section about ancient Japan and early state formation, it is recommended that *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and *Fūdoki*, and the myths and legends these materials contain, be used to help students grasp what ancient people thought and how they lived.⁵⁶ The choice of words in these official documents is very nearly the same as what Yamaguchi was quoted as saying in 1971; if nothing else, we can certainly appreciate the continuity in the choice of words regarding the handling of mythology and legend.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ "Shōgakkō gakushū shidōyōryō", Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan.

⁵⁵ 学習指導要領「生きる力 [Gakushū shidōyōryō (ikiru chikara); Curriculum Guidelines (the Zest to Live)], Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan, http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/youryou/chu/sya.htm (accessed 14 March 2018).

⁵⁶ Ibidem, sect. 2(1)I, http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/10/01/1282000_3.pdf (accessed 14 March 2018).

⁵⁷ New curriculum guidelines have been approved and will be in effect from 2020 for elementary school, 2021 for middle school, and 2022 for high school (see 平成29・30年改訂 学習指導要領、解説等 [Heisei 29–30 nen kaitei gakushū shidōyōryō kaisetsu nado; Heisei 29–30 Revisions, Curriculum Guidelines, Commentaries, etc.], Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan, http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/1384661.htm [accessed 19 March 2018]). Guidelines for high schools had not been released yet at the time of writing this

3. Western History and Mythology in Japanese Education

Brownlee narrates the beginning of Japan's encounter with Western studies:

The European Enlightenment and its nineteenth-century heritage were brought to Japan through swift translation of works during the 1870s and 1880s and by the study of Japanese abroad. For the first time, through study and experience, the Japanese encountered forms of civilization outside the ancient East Asian world, which had been dominated by Chinese culture.⁵⁸

Classical knowledge was also introduced to Japan by foreign teachers, for example Ludwig Riess (1861–1928), a German historian of Jewish descent, who arrived in Japan in 1877 on a three-year government contract. He taught scientific historical method at Tokyo Imperial University (1887–1902), and in his curriculum we can find Tacitus' *Germania* in translation.⁵⁹ Today, students who wish to learn the classical languages can do so at several universities, for example in the classical studies department at Nagoya University, Graduate School of Letters. Knowledge of Greek and Latin is also required by students of Classics at the Graduate School of Letters at Kyoto University.

In the current course of study, Japanese children at middle school level start learning Japanese history as well as world history as a part of the social studies class. The focus is on Japan and its relations with foreign countries. The students learn about ancient civilizations: the Chinese, Indian, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian. As part of ancient civilization studies, sometimes children learn about Ancient Greece and Rome.

At the high school level, in the framework of obligatory and elective classes, students can choose between World History A (more advanced

article. The elementary school guidelines are almost word by word the same formulations regarding the use of mythology, legends, and the old collections of material for teaching Japanese. For middle school, the word "mythology" occurs in much the same contexts as in elementary school, that is, in connection with references to old chronicles, traditions, and folk tales; see 中学校学習指導要領(平成29年告示) [Chūgakkō gakushūshidōyōryō (heisei 29 nen kokuji)]; The Middle School Curriculum Guidelines (Announced Heisei 29)], Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan, https://www.mext.go.jp/content/1413522_002.pdf (accessed 30 June 2020).

⁵⁸ Brownlee, *Japanese Historians*, 71.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, 73–77. See also Matsudaira Chiaki, "Classical Studies in Japan", The Classical Society of Japan, <https://clsoc.jp/aboutcsj/historia/Matsudaira01.html> (accessed 19 April 2020), on Raphael von Koeber.

than B) and World History B, and Geography A and B, which are a part of the geographical history department. Ironically, Japanese history is not obligatory, leading to a situation in which many Japanese students finish high school without studying Japanese history. The main emphasis in high school is on modern history. As Akita Shigeru explains:

[I]n Japan, world history studies and research are closely connected and related to the teaching of history at senior high schools. Since the end of World War II, Japanese scholars started to write world history, which became the new (and later in the 1980s compulsory) teaching subject at senior high school levels in April 1949 through the initiative of the ministry of education. The original aim of "world history" was very vague, only to teach the history of foreign countries, different from an exaggerated Japanese history before and during World War II. The education ministry did not set up any clear standard for the contents of "world history".⁶⁰

However, there are children's books and television shows in Japanese which cater to young children and offer themes from all over the world, including the Graeco-Roman world. School libraries offer such books, and there are even reference manga on Graeco-Roman history and Greek mythology, hence those who are interested in these subjects usually pursue the interest independently, and not as part of the official curriculum.

A striking example is the influence that noted author Bernard Eyslin's translation into Japanese of Greek mythological stories had on the acclaimed auteur and director Miyazaki Hayao. Miyazaki based the image of his beloved character Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind on the Phaeacian princess Nausicaa from Homer's *Odyssey*, as well as on a Japanese folk character, "the princess who loved insects".⁶¹ The "God of Manga" himself, Tezuka Osamu, also engaged with Greek and Roman themes throughout his prolific writing. For example, in Tezuka's grand life work, the *Phoenix* series, he devoted an entire volume to the Graeco-Roman and Egyptian worlds, including an interesting retelling of the Trojan War. He later experimented with new techniques in his provocative *クレオパトラ* [Kureopatora; Cleopatra] movie from 1970. Another reference to the Graeco-Roman world

⁶⁰ Akita Shigeru, "World History and the Emergence of Global History in Japan", *Chinese Studies in History* 43 (2010), 84.

⁶¹ Fujiwara Kanesuke, *The Lady who Loved Insects*, trans. Arthur D. Waley, London: Blackmore Press, 1929 (ed. pr. in Japanese, twelfth century).

also appears in his アポロの歌 [Aporo no uta; Apollo's Song].⁶² Further reference to the Graeco-Roman world is found in the work of one of the major figures of Japanese literature, Dazai Osamu, who wrote 走れメロス [Hashire Merosu!; Run, Melos!], published in 1940. It is a short story based on the Greek legend of Damon and Pythias, a story of a friendship that overcomes great challenges. This book has been widely read in Japanese schools and has been turned into a film as well as animations, and references to this story can be found in many popular products, for example songs,⁶³ further testifying to the popular reach of this narrative.

There are several educational manga on the Graeco-Roman world, including 世界の歴史 (2) アレクサンドロス大王とカエサル：古代ギリシャとローマ帝国 [Sekai no rekishi (2). Arekusandorosu daiō to Kaesaru: Kodai Girisha to Rōma teikoku; History of the World 2: Alexander the Great and Caesar. Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire], a Shueisha manga version from 2002, which covers the stories of Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great. The popular, award-winning manga テルマエ・ロマエ [Terumae Romae; Thermae Romae] by Yamazaki Mari, although not an educational manga but more of a comical and romantic story, also offered a lot of information about Hadrian's rule. The manga has been turned into an anime aired on Fuji Television in Japan in 2012, and a film version with the popular actor Abe Hiroshi in the leading role was released also in 2012, spreading further the knowledge of this story. The Korean-Japanese animated series アレクサンダー戦記 [Arekusandā senki; The Alexander War Chronicles] from 2000 (known in the United States as *Reign: The Conqueror*) also offered a visual interpretation of Alexander the Great's life and exploits in a somewhat futuristic environment.

Apart from popular representations of Japanese and Western mythological stories, there is also a wealth of material on ancient Japan, ancient civilizations, and ancient myths available in Japanese bookstores. One of many examples is a volume in the series Discover Japan_CULTURE, 古事記と日本書紀 – マンガでわかる日本創生の物語 [Kojiki to Nihon shoki – manga

⁶² On this title, see Nicholas A. Theisen, "Declassicizing the Classical in Japanese Comics: Osamu Tezuka's 'Apollo's Song'", in George Kovacs and C.W. Marshall, eds., *Classics and Comics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 59–71.

⁶³ For example, the AKB48 song メロスの道 [Merosu no michi; Melos's Road; 2007] references the storyline in its lyrics ("メロスの道 | Melos no michi | Melos' Road", STAGE48, <http://stage48.net/studio48/melosnomichi.html> [accessed 19 March 2018]) and in the Utada Hikaru song 忘却 [Bōkyaku; Oblivion; 2016] (feat. KOHH) the line "Hashire Merosu" appears in KOHH's last verse ("忘却 (Boukyaku)", Genius, <https://genius.com/Utada-hikaru-boukyaku-lyrics> [accessed 19 March 2018]).

de wakarū nihon no sōsei no monogatari; *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*: The Story of the Making of Japan Told in Manga], where in over 170 pages one can read about the two old collections of materials, including pictures of relevant locations, genealogies of deities, and the Imperial Family, as well as manga illustrating the stories. The two collections contain many of the same stories, and it is explained in this volume that this is because the *Kojiki* was meant for a Japanese audience and the *Nihon shoki* for a foreign, in this case Chinese-reading, audience.⁶⁴

4. Conclusion

Mythology in Japanese education has a long history and has served as the language of the elite, the language by which the creation of the land was linked to the imperial line, thereby giving the imperial line legitimacy as rulers of Japan. As we have quoted from Brown, “[S]uch ideologies [...] can and do become quite virulent whenever a state’s rulers feel threatened by enemies”⁶⁵ and use religious institutions as well as education to boost nationalism in order to unify the people. This was what happened before World War Two – but did it stop?

After World War Two, heated debate abounded as regards the timeliness of including mythological stories about the origin of Japan and its imperial system, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. However, looking at the present situation, there is no indication in the curriculum that teaching Japanese history starts with myths, nor that they play an important role in other subjects, even in Japanese language classes in elementary school, where in fact myth and legends are mentioned in the curriculum guidelines. Here they may appear as examples of particular uses of language, but no more. The curriculum guidelines for all levels of schooling in Japan do not contain many references pertaining to mythology, Japanese or foreign.

However, this does not mean that Japanese children and youth do not come into contact with mythical narratives. Mythical stories often form the basis of children’s stories and folk tales, and more or less accurate representations of mythological figures and storylines abound in popular culture

⁶⁴ Sumi Kenji, ed., 古事記と日本書紀 – マンガでわかる日本創生の物語 [Kojiki to Nihon shoki – manga de wakarū nihon sōsei no monogatari; *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*: The Story of the Making of Japan Told in Manga], Discover Japan_CULTURE, Tōkyō: EI publishing, 2018.

⁶⁵ Brown, “*Japanese Historians*”, 135.

from games to manga, anime, film, and music. In addition, there is no shortage of material of varied quality on the Internet as well as in bookstores in Japan.

Mythology, previously such a strong source of legitimacy and national identity, has become less embedded in official discourse in Japan, and now, when related to education, is primarily presented in the media and publicly regarded as slightly extreme.⁶⁶ Mythology in Japan today for most Japanese is a rich store of stories and fantasies about ancient times and to some extent a quaint story about the imperial line. At the moment, Japanese myths are not harnessed as a tool of the elite or as the great unifier; rather, they function in culture, folk as well as popular, and form a common basic repository of narratives and images.

We can trace similarities between Japanese and Greek myths. While the Greek myths were also used as origin myths for different poleis (each claiming to be founded by a mythical hero), the Japanese used the myth to trace the origin not only of Japan but also of the Imperial Family. Thus we see that the function of myths is similar in different parts of the world, as the myths were used to understand the environment and to give a sense of unity, yet also exceptionalism, to different peoples. Interestingly, the only known family in Graeco-Roman history which publicized its mythical ancestry was the *gens Iulia*, which claimed to be descended from Aeneas (and Venus). This gens would later become the origin of the Roman principate, the emperors. Therefore, we see an interesting similarity here as well between two very remote cultures and families who employed the same calculated use of myth to augment and solidify their position.

⁶⁶ The example of the school operator Moritomo Gakuen, which openly subscribed to a nationalist interpretation of the curriculum, is a case in point. It has caused great political scandal regarding practical and administrative processes relating to land purchase and political connections. As to their outlook on education, they have been treated as rather extreme (see, e.g., "Moritomo Scandal Spotlights Use of Nationalistic 1890 Rescript in Schools", *The Mainichi*, 21 May 2017, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20170521/p2a/00m/0na/003000c> [accessed 11 March 2019]). However, behind-the-scenes right-wing organizations, such as Nihon kaigi, of whom the current Prime Minister, Abe Shinzō, is perhaps the most prominent member, are also a factor, which may in time alter the current balance; see Sachie Mizohata, "Nippon Kaigi: Empire, Contradiction, and Japan's Future", *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 14.21 (2016), <https://apjff.org/-Sachie-Mizohata/4975/article.pdf> (accessed 11 March 2019).

CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY AND THE ISRAELI EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Distrust of Greek culture, when coupled with the fact that the Jewish people had their own legends and stories in the form of the Bible and of other traditional tales, meant that the ancient world was always marginal in Israel.¹ Religious Jews, who felt no need to include the classical tradition in their education systems, emphasized only the Bible, and even secular Zionists, who rejected Rabbinic Judaism, nevertheless regarded the Bible, upon which their ideology was based, as paramount, again to the exclusion of the classical roots of Western civilization.² There is none of the common-heritage identification that is found in the United Kingdom, for example, despite the fact that Ancient Rome – and Greece in the form of the Hellenistic kingdoms – played perhaps an even more pivotal role in this geographic region than it did in Britain.³

¹ There is a vast bibliography on the relationship between Graeco-Roman and Jewish culture, a subject far too great to tackle within the scope of this chapter. Some of the seminal works in this field include Martin Goodman, *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998; Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996; Louis H. Feldman, *Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered*, Leiden: Brill, 2006; Saul Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine: Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, New York, NY: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1994; Lee I. Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?*, Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1998; Erich Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998; Erich Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009; Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak, eds., *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013.

² See Yair Zakovitch, "Scripture and Israeli Secular Culture", in Benjamin D. Sommer, ed., *Jewish Concepts of Scripture: A Comparative Introduction*, New York, NY: New York University Press, 2012, 299–316.

³ A version of the beginning of this chapter, including section 1 ("Classics and the Israeli Educational System: Priorities and Developments") was published in Lisa Maurice, "The Reception of Classical Mythology in Israeli Children's Fiction", in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Our Mythical*

I. Classics and the Israeli Educational System: Priorities and Developments

As a result of this lack of identification with Greece and Rome, classical studies plays only a marginal role in the Israeli education system. This is despite the dreams of some of the early founders of what would become modern Israel, who established the education system with the ideology that the new state should become a "civilized", educated place, on a par with Europe, where most of them had grown up and been educated. Thus, for instance, when the first Hebrew-language high school was founded in Tel Aviv in 1905, it was modelled on the European system, and given the title of "gymnasia". Latin was on the curriculum as a matter of course, since the stated aim of the gymnasia was to provide an education which was the same as at "every high school in Europe and America – Bible and Talmud; past language and its literature; languages: French, German, English, and Latin; geometry and algebra, [...] physics and chemistry, zoology and botany, main geology and mineralogy; history, drawing, etc."⁴ Similarly, when the first university, the Hebrew University, was founded in 1925, Greek and Latin were among the first subjects taught at that institution.⁵

It is interesting to note, however, that the classical languages were included in the Jewish studies faculty of the university (the Faculty of Humanities was only opened in 1928), and the justification for teaching Classics, and especially Greek, was that these languages were necessary for the understanding of, and participation in, Bible studies. In a letter dated 15 May 1927, Max (Moshe) Schwabe outlined the state of Classics in Israel at the time, and stressed the unique nature of the subject in this place because of its position as an adjunct to Jewish studies. Latin and Greek were taught at this time to provide a basic understanding of the languages in order to read texts of interest to scholars of Judaism:

Dabei wurde im Anfang darauf hingewiesen, daß die griech. und lat. Kurse nur zum (mehr oder weniger oberflächlichen) Verständnis der Septuaginta,

Childhood... The Classics and Literature for Children and Young Adults, Metaforms: Studies in the Reception of Classical Antiquity 8, Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2016, 311–313.

⁴ Originally quoted from http://www.schooly2.co.il/gymnasia/page.asp?page_parent=70202 (accessed 1 January 2013), but the website is no longer active.

⁵ See Joseph Geiger and Ra'anana Meridor, "The Beginning of Classics in Israel: Two Documents", *Scripta Classica Israelica* 18 (1999), 159–173.

Vulgata und einiger für jüdische Wissenschaft notwendiger Texte zu führen hätten.⁶

It was pointed out at the beginning that the Greek and Latin courses could only lead to a (more or less superficial) understanding of the Septuagint, Vulgate, and some texts necessary for Jewish studies.

Yet only a year later the Faculty of Humanities was established, and other classical works began to be taught (Euripides' *Medea*, Plato's *Theaetetus*, a range of texts within the framework of courses on the history of Greek literature, and so on). Victor (Avigdor) Tcherikover was appointed to the position of Instructor in Greek and Roman History in that year and Hans (Yohanan) Lewy to that of Instructor in Latin Language and History in 1933.⁷ Schwabe, Tcherikover, and Lewy were the founding fathers of classical studies in Israel, and all were products of the high-level German scholarship of the beginning of the twentieth century, and students of the great names of that scholarship – Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Eduard Norden, and others. The influence and approach of these three coloured classical studies in Israel during its inception and development, as classical philology was the focus of Israeli scholarship.

From these beginnings, classical studies in Israel expanded as these scholars were joined by others, and the founding of more universities in the 1950s and 1960s (Bar-Ilan University in 1955, Tel Aviv University in 1956, Haifa University in 1963, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in 1969, The Open University in 1974) provided more scope for the teaching of Classics.⁸ The Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies (ISPCS) was founded in 1971 in order “to promote the study of classics in Israel and to foster relations between Israeli classicists and colleagues from abroad”.⁹ Three years later, the journal *Scripta Classica Israelica* appeared for the first time.

Despite these developments, Classics remained – and remains – marginal in Israeli society, and indeed in the school curriculum. Classical mythology specifically is no less peripheral, despite the fact that there were early writers of Hebrew who regarded the classical sources as central. Shaul

⁶ Quoted in *ibidem*, 166. Translations of all citations in this chapter are my own.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 160.

⁸ Although only the three oldest universities have Classics departments, ancient history, philosophy, and archaeology are taught at all six.

⁹ The Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies, <http://www.israel-classics.org/> (accessed 7 April 2020).

Tchernichovsky (1875–1943), for example, attempted to link the world views of the Greeks and the Jews. Aharon Shabtai (b. 1939) and Harold Schimmel (b. 1935) are two more poets heavily influenced by classical texts, sprinkling their works with translations of lines from Ancient Greek poetry.¹⁰

Nevertheless, within the school system classical mythology is almost non-existent, which makes the somewhat rare appearances all the more striking and interesting. In the remainder of this paper, I discuss these usages of mythology, the rationale behind their inclusion, and what this can tell us about the role of classical mythology within Israeli society more widely.

2. The Modern Israeli Education System

Compulsory education in Israel takes place from kindergarten through to Grade 12, and is divided into three tiers: elementary education (Grades 1–6, approximately ages six to twelve), middle school (Grades 7–8, approximately ages twelve to fourteen), and high school (Grades 9–12, approximately ages fifteen to eighteen). The system is complicated by the fact that it is separated into Jewish and Arab streams, with the former further divided between religious and secular schools; additionally there are a large number of ultra-orthodox independent religious schools. The Arab stream is separated into two more subgroups: Arab and Beduin schools, and Druze and Carcassian schools. Christian children study in different streams based upon the majority population of their area. There are also a small number of private schools, which reflect the philosophies of specific groups of parents (for example, democratic schools), or are based on the curriculum of a foreign country (for example, the American International School in Israel).

The majority of Israeli children, however, attend state schools, and take the matriculation examination in the final years of high school. This examination, called בגרות (*bagrut*) in Hebrew, consists of compulsory core subjects (Bible [either Jewish, Christian, or Muslim]; Hebrew or Arabic; English; mathematics; citizenship; history and literature; physical education), as well as at least one elective. Most exams are available in different levels of difficulty, expressed in “units of study”. In most subjects, students may choose the number of units in which they are tested. In order to receive

¹⁰ See Glenda Abramson, “Hellenism Revisited: The Uses of Greek Myth in Modern Hebrew Literature”, *Prooftexts* 10.2 (May 1990), 237–255.

a “full” matriculation certificate, the student must take and pass at least one subject matter exam at the five-unit level of difficulty and earn a total of at least twenty-one combined study units in all *bagrut* exams taken. Correspondingly, students’ classes during their high school years are matched to the exams they are expected to take, so that, for example, students who are planning to take the five-unit mathematics exam will take mathematics courses specifically designed for a five-unit level of difficulty throughout all their high school career.

3. Greek Mythology within the Educational Curriculum

3.1. History

At pre-high school level, there are two units within the history syllabi for Grades 6–9 that deal with the classical world. The first, העולם היווני-רומי והיהודים [HaOlam haYavani-Romi v’haYehudim; The Graeco-Roman World and the Jews], covers classical and Hellenistic Greece and the Hellenistic encounter with Judaism, and the second, העולם הרומי והיהודים [HaOlam HaRomi v’haYehudim; The Roman World and the Jews], focuses on Rome, Judea, and the rise of Christianity. Neither of these units utilize mythology at all. There are, however, a few independently created lessons and projects by teachers using ICT (information and communication technologies), a trend that has been pushed very strongly over the past few years within the Israeli classroom. In one of these, for example, designed for the Grade 6 history unit on Greece and Rome, two teachers from the state elementary school “Nitzanim” in Carmiel produced a lesson plan for an electronic unit entitled “history ל storyמ” [Mi story l’history; From Story to History].¹¹ In this unit, which utilizes a PowerPoint presentation, discussion, an interactive online game, creative writing, art and more, students trace two myths, namely those of Achilles and Sisyphus, that have given rise to common tropes of language, enabling students to “move from the story to the history”, and thus examine the relationship between Ancient Greek culture and the modern Hebrew language.

¹¹ Available for download from: הקטלוג החינוכי של משרד החינוך [HaKatalog ha Chinuchi shel Misrad haChinuch; Ministry of Education Educational Catalogue], <http://ecat.education.gov.il/Attachment/DownloadFile?downloadId=1907> (accessed 7 August 2019).

The rationale the teachers give for this approach runs:¹²

לימוד תקופת יוון העתיקה הוא פתיחת צוהר לראשית התרבות המערבית. סיפורי המיתולוגיה עשויים לגרות את התלמידים לחקור את תרבות יוון שיצרה אותם, ולהבינה. לפיכך, יחידה זו מציעה להטרים את לימוד יוון בסיפורי המיתולוגיה (בשונה מן המהלך המוצע בספר הלימוד), וכך לעורר בתלמידים את סקרנותם באשר למקור יצירתם [...].

סיפורי המיתולוגיה היוונית הם יסוד חשוב בתולדות יוון, שהשפיע על כלל התרבות המערבית. הסיפורים חושפים אפוא לעיני התלמידים אבני בניין מוכרות בתרבות המערבית, ומאפיינים לתרבות יוון שיצרה אותם. יחידת הלימוד מציעה להטרים את לימוד תקופת יוון העתיקה – בסיפורה המרתקים.

ביחידה להלן נתחקה אחר שני מיתוסים שהפכו למושגים שכיחים בשפה המודרנית. כך, התלמידים ישאפו לעבור בלימודם מן storyn לעבר הhistory, ויבחינו בזיקת ההשפעה בין תרבות יוון העתיקה לשפה העברית המודרנית.

The study of the Ancient Greek period opens a window to the beginning of Western civilization. Mythological stories may stimulate students to explore and understand the culture of Greece that created the stories. Therefore, this unit suggests enriching the study of Greece through mythological stories (as opposed to the approach taken in the textbook), thus arousing curiosity about the source of the works [...].

The stories of Greek mythology are an important element in the history of Greece, which influenced Western culture in general. The stories expose students to familiar building blocks in Western culture and the characteristics of the Greek culture that created them. The study unit offers to enrich the study of the Ancient Greek period – through its fascinating stories.

In the unit below we will trace two myths that have become common concepts in modern language. Thus, the students will aspire to move from the story to the history, and will examine the relationship between Ancient Greek culture and the modern Hebrew language.

Such thoughtful and considered activities demonstrate the allure of classical myth for some educators, and indeed the creativity of the teachers who independently devise and implement the work. This is especially notable since they do so despite receiving no support, with regard to content or implementation, from either the education ministry or other networks.

¹² Ibidem.

3.2. Literature and Theatre Studies

Examples such as these are few and far between, however, even within the history units that deal with the ancient classical world, which barely relate to mythology at all. Where mythology is found in some form is within the literature and theatre studies syllabi. At the matriculation exam level, students who are not specializing in literature take two units of the subject, covering four different genres: poetry, short stories, novels, and drama.¹³ The focus is mainly on literature connected with Jewish heritage, particularly in the poetry section, which covers both medieval Jewish poetry and modern Hebrew poetry, with the emphasis on Shai Agnon and Chaim Nahman Bialik. World literature does have a place, however, and mythology appears in a small way within this.

In the Grade 9 syllabus, mythology features as an option in the form of four stories from classical myth: Echo and Narcissus, Orpheus and Eurydice, Daedalus and Icarus, and Midas' Golden Touch. This is only one option out of a whole range of categories and texts that constitute each category, so the number of students who study this is probably limited,¹⁴ but two of the stories, Daedalus and Icarus and Orpheus and Eurydice, are also included as part of the selection of world literature for the *bagrut* syllabus. The choice of tales selected is interesting. Firstly, it is notable and striking that none of the four feature the Greek gods centrally; although this is a syllabus for both religious and secular schools, the conservative nature of the wider Israeli society perhaps makes the use of explicitly pagan deities uncomfortable enough that such tales are not a natural choice. Secondly, the stories chosen seem to stress moral lessons in some way, with a didacticism that seems far from random. Again, the uneasiness with mythology in general and paganism in particular may well have led to an, albeit subconscious, choice of myths whose usage could be justified by such elements.

In addition to the short stories, a selection from the *Odyssey* has been chosen as an option on occasion. In the summer of 2014, for example, the fourth unit of the literature course, for those choosing literature as a specialization (Grades 11 and 12), included this. Perhaps surprisingly, the text

¹³ According to the Ministry of Education syllabus: פירוט היצירות לכיתות ז-ט [Peirut ha Yetzirot l'kitot 7-9; Details of the Works for Grades 7-9], http://meyda.education.gov.il/files/Tochniyot_Limudim/Safirut/toch79C.pdf (accessed 15 October 2017).

¹⁴ Since students are not examined on a national level in literature in Grade 9, there is no way of discovering how many have studied which texts.

selected, in prose translation by Ahuvia Kahana from 1996, was not that of Odysseus' adventures on his wanderings – the Cyclops, the Lotus Eaters, the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, but rather Book 23, in which the reunion of Penelope and Odysseus, and the hero's subsequent departure for Laertes' orchard, are recounted. Again, the emphasis is upon the human rather than the divine, with the interaction between husband and wife as the main focus of the teaching of this unit, resulting in comments by students such as:¹⁵

בסופו של דבר הוא מגיע לביתו, ומה שמתרחש עד לפגישה הנרגשת בין הבעל לאשתו הוא פרק ספרותי מאלף ומרתק. שיר 23 מתאר את הפגישה. זוהי שיאה של האודיסאה.

In the end, he arrives at his home, and what happens before the emotional meeting between the husband and wife is an instructive and fascinating literary chapter. Book 23 describes the meeting. This is the climax of the *Odyssey*.

Within the drama section of the course, students study two plays, one of which is a modern play, and the other a tragedy, either by Shakespeare or Sophocles. A very limited amount of time is therefore devoted to the plays, only one option of which is of classical content. The situation has also been exacerbated by the new programme introduced in 2015, which mandated the removal of the listing of specific material on which students would be tested in each matriculation examination, thus leading to more open questions to allow for the wider variation in texts now studied. The reform also reduced the content of the syllabus by 30%. Despite these alterations, the presence of the Greek play was maintained, since, according to Shlomo Hertzog, who has central responsibility for literature teaching at the Ministry of Education, Greek tragedy was felt to be an essential core element in the study of literature.¹⁶ Each of the two dramas (one either classical or Shakespearean, one modern) is then examined either internally by the teacher, through course work, or externally via written exam, but the choice as to which is examined in each way is left to the teacher.

In the theatre studies elective, the role of classical drama is even more notable than in the literature elective. Of the three units that comprise the course, the first is centred on dramatic theory (שפת התיאטרון) [Safat ha

¹⁵ Motti Shelgi, "ואודיסאוס ופנלופה שבעו אהבה...", Ahava menatzachat: V'Odus-seus v' Penelope savu ahava...; Conquering Love: Penelope and Odysseus Satisfied Their Love...], <http://www.ohel-shem.com/subjects/sifrut/homeros.htm> (accessed 7 August 2019).

¹⁶ Telephone interview, 18 August 2017.

Teatron; The Language of the Theatre]), and the third on twentieth- and twenty-first-century Western and Israeli drama.¹⁷ The second, however, is an examination of either classical drama or Shakespeare, with students being examined on either a Shakespearian or a Greek tragedy, and new comedy by Plautus or one of Shakespeare's. Thus, it is possible to spend one-sixth of the entire course on classical, myth-based drama, as well as a further sixth examining classical, albeit not necessarily myth-centred, comedy. Reliable information, however, about how many students have chosen these options is not available.

Those choosing to teach a Greek tragedy may choose either Sophocles' *Antigone* or *Oedipus Rex*, both of which are, of course, taught in Hebrew translation. *Antigone* is available in six different translations in Hebrew: one by Shlomo Dykman, originally from 1966 but reprinted in 1971 and 1980, one by Carmi Charny (from English translations rather than from the original Greek) from 1970, one by Aharon Shabtai from 1990, another by Shimon Buzaglo from 2007, and the most recent by Devorah Gilulah from 2014. *Oedipus Rex* was also translated by Dykman (1964), Shabtai (1981), Buzaglo (2012), and Gilulah (2015), as well as by Tchernichovsky (1929). Only those translations by Dykman, Carmi, and Shabtai are listed in the *bagrut* syllabus, however, rather than the more recent versions, in itself a reflection of the fact that the texts included in the syllabus have remained more or less unchanged for the past decade.

Despite the teacher's ability to choose between *Antigone* and *Oedipus*, an analysis of answers to examination questions over the past ten years reveals that *Antigone* is by far the more popular of the two.¹⁸ This is particularly the case within the religious educational stream. Not only does *Antigone* win out over *Oedipus*, but also over other, modern playwrights, such as Henrik Ibsen and Bertolt Brecht. The reason for this popularity, especially among the religious education stream, according to Tali Yaniv, the Chief Supervisor for Literature in the religious stream, is that the students connect more with *Antigone*. This is because of the conflict inherent in the play between the compulsions of religion (in the form of the laws of the gods) and

¹⁷ תוכנית הלימודים בספרות לכיתות י"ב לבית הספר העל-יסודי הממלכתי [Tochnit halimudim b'safrut l'kitot yud-yud bet l'beit hasefer ha-al yesodi hamamlachti; Literature Curriculum for Grades 9–12 of Government High School], http://meyda.education.gov.il/files/Curriculum/literature_10_12.pdf (accessed 7 August 2019).

¹⁸ This information was provided by Tali Yaniv, Chief Supervisor for Literature (religious stream) at the Ministry of Education in telephone conversation, 16 August 2016.

those of the state (in the form of the king). As religious pupils living in the wider secular world, they identify strongly with these issues and find them very relevant, far more so than in the non-religious sector.



Figure 1: *Antigone* diorama display, Bat Yam, June 2017. Photograph by Orna Baruch; used with permission.

A measure of the attractiveness of the play to this sector of society is that some students have even put on performances. Two of these performances have been in areas with very low socio-economic status populations, one of which consisted mostly of pupils from Ethiopian background, in which there is no tradition of glorification of the Graeco-Roman world, and in which classical literature might have been expected to be regarded as irrelevant and remote. In another case, students were so fired with excitement at studying the play that out of their own money they purchased materials with which they created dioramas to highlight central moments of the different scenes, displaying their work in the school for all to see (Figs. 1–3).¹⁹

¹⁹ This was related in conversation in October 2017 by Orna Baruch, who teaches at the Bayit V'Gan Darca High School for Girls, Bat Yam.



Figure 2: Diorama scene from *Antigone*, Bat Yam, June 2017. Photograph by Orna Baruch; used with permission.

Another indication of both the popularity of *Antigone* and the identification with the play for religious students is reflected by a set of lesson plans for teachers, produced by the Lev Lada'at organization, founded by the Department of Religious Education in cooperation with Herzog College. This supports "Educational Subject Supervisors in the National Religious stream, promoting learning in different fields of knowledge, [and] acting as partners in the development of teaching and learning materials".²⁰ Among these materials is an extensive page on the teaching of *Antigone*, specifically targeting this audience. On this page, in addition to traditional materials analysing the play, the themes of the play are compared to classical Jewish texts. Moses Maimonides' Aristotelian-influenced principle of the golden mean is compared to Antigone and Creon's excesses and hubris, and Creon's arrogance to the humility of Moses. Finally, a modern Hebrew song

²⁰ "Lev Lada'at", http://www.levladaat.org/data/upl/UFCK/10955_Lev_ladaat_A4.pdf (accessed 8 August 2019).

is shown, through a YouTube clip and the written lyrics, and students are invited to make comparisons between the messages of the classical drama and the modern product of popular culture.²¹



Figure 3: Diorama scene from *Antigone*, Bat Yam, June 2017. Photograph by Orna Baruch; used with permission.

The popularity of *Antigone* is not confined to the religious sector, as is demonstrated by the wide range of Hebrew-language resources created for those studying the play. Multiple online lesson plans and audiovisual aids are available, and many of these are highly imaginative and well produced. Some are the product of professional educational websites supported by the Ministry of Education, such as the Lev Lada'at site mentioned above. Others are devised or collected by individual teachers or schools, or by subject coordinators.²² Yet more are found on websites aimed at children, such as that on the Yo-Yoo Games and Recreation Website, which describes itself as:

²¹ Rivka Lebowitz, ההיבריס – אנטיגונה/סופוקלס [Antigone/Sophocles – haHybris; *Antigone/Sophocles: The Hubris*], <http://www.levladaat.org/lesson/4535> (accessed 8 August 2019).

²² See, e.g., as a random sample: Orna Weinman Chai, דפי עבודה אנטיגונה/סופוקלס [Dapei Avodah, *Antigone/Sophocles; Worksheets, Antigone/Sophocles*], <https://atidedu.org.il/wp-content/uploads/files/>

אתר ילדים ונוער המכיל משחקים, בדיחות, חידות חדשות, סרטונים, דברים מצחיקים, דברים לפייסבוק, יצירה אייקונים, רקעים, תמונות ועוד הרבה תכנים מגניבים ויפים.

A kids and teens site that contains games, jokes, new puzzles, videos, funny items, Facebook things, creation of icons, wallpapers, photos and lots of cool and beautiful content.²³

Despite this recreation-centred emphasis, the site also includes a section of educational aids for students, divided by subject, and including summaries of texts and topics, and worksheets. All of the websites cover a range of subjects: introduction to Greek drama, and to tragedy, including elements such as the structure of a play and the role of the chorus, the plot of *Antigone*, characterization, and main themes. Items are submitted by individuals who contribute them unsolicited and with no supervision or regulation. Nevertheless, the standard is generally high, and all aim to provide the basic information necessary to understand and appreciate the play for an audience for whom this tragedy, and Graeco-Roman drama in general, is entirely unknown. In a clear bid to ease the difficulties, and appeal to students through audiovisual resources, all the pages link to YouTube, which contains parts of the play in the only video version that contains Hebrew subtitles.²⁴ This is, however, the rather dated 1986 BBC production of *The Theban Plays* directed by Don Taylor. Despite the age of the film, it seems still to be in demand, judging by the dozen or so comments attached by those wanting clips of more of the play, although this may be as much from

sites/204/2017/04/%D7%93%D7%A4%D7%99-%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%95%D7%93%D7%94-%D7%A2%D7%9C-%D7%90%D7%A0%D7%98%D7%99%D7%92%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%94.pdf; Tami Eidelman, דף עבודה אנטיגונה [Daf Avodah Antigone; *Antigone* Worksheet], Quizlet, <https://quizlet.com/139816797/%D7%93%D7%A3-%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%95%D7%93%D7%94-%D7%90%D7%A0%D7%98%D7%99%D7%92%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%94-flash-cards/>; נפר ורדים, בית ספר אמירם, [Beit Sefer Amirim, Kfar Vradum; Amirim School, Kfar Vradim], collected materials on *Antigone*, <https://sites.google.com/a/vradeem.tzafonet.org.il/safrut/home/sprwt-bhtybh-lywnh/1-1/1>; Lilach Reuveni and Smadar Yisraeli, "אנטיגונה" קשרים ודילמות במחזה [K'sharim v'dilemot b'machazeh "Antigone"; Connections and Dilemmas in the Play *Antigone*], <https://sites.google.com/mtet.tzafonet.org.il/antigona/%D7%93%D7%A3-%D7%94%D7%91%D7%99%D7%AA>; ספרות [Safrut], Harel High School, collected materials for literature matriculation examination, <https://tichon.org.il/category/%d7%a1%d7%a4%d7%a8%d7%95%d7%aa/>; Tel Aviv High School, Netanya Branch, collected materials for literature matriculation examination, <http://www.ttlv-high.co.il/copy%20of%20%D7%93%D7%A37.html> (all accessed 8 August 2019).

²³ יו-יוו אתר משחקים ופנאי [Yo-yoo Atar Mischakim v'Pnai; Yo-Yoo Games and Recreation Website], <http://www.yo-yoo.co.il/> (accessed 8 August 2019).

²⁴ 1 חלק אנטיגונה [Antigone chelek echad; *Antigone* Part 1], YouTube, 29 December 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5CmcKwH_f4&t=3s (accessed 8 August 2019).

an inability to understand it purely from a written text as from appreciation of the production itself.

4. Programmes for Gifted Children

One more area in which classical mythology is found, albeit slightly outside the Israeli formal education system, is in the programmes for gifted children, where mythology takes a more central role than in the regular curriculum.²⁵ Ever since the establishment of this initiative, which includes both enrichment centres and special classes within school, mythology has been a consciously selected part of the curriculum. There is, however, no official or organized syllabus for the subject, with everything being left up to the individual teachers. Thus Menahem Nadler, Director of the Division for Gifted and Excellent Students, explained that in the enrichment centres for gifted and outstanding students, as well as in the classes for gifted students in schools, there are courses dealing with various mythologies, including Greek myth. Such courses usually take place twice a week for one semester, with the curriculum being written and taught by individual teachers. Mythology is also used widely in connection with other subjects within these programmes (mythology and theatre, mythology and science, comparative study of mythological stories in different nations). Again, this varies from year to year and according to the teachers involved in the programme, but there is now a conscious effort for the first time at the Ministry of Education to organize the materials, so that each director of the centre will receive a plan of work – a core curriculum covering science, arts, and humanities.

Despite the lack of centralization or conscious planning to date, it does seem to be evident that Classics in any shape or form has been deemed, albeit perhaps subconsciously, a subject for gifted children. While this point, with its tinge of elitism, may sit uncomfortably with twenty-first-century classicists, the positive side should also be acknowledged, namely that, in a society in which the class-laden baggage of the classical world is minimized, being connected with excellence may be a good thing, and an attractive selling point that may draw both children, and their parents, to the subject.

²⁵ For the various programmes for gifted children in Israel, see Hava Vidergor and Shunit Reiter, "Satisfaction with School among Gifted Israeli Students Studying in Various Frameworks", *Gifted and Talented International* 23.1 (2008), 39–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332276.2008.11673511>.

5. Programmes for Autistic Children

Classics is not confined, however, to the academically gifted; a new initiative, presently being piloted in two schools in Israel, is a project utilizing Greek mythology within the autistic classroom.²⁶ This builds on the work started by Susan Deacy of Roehampton University, as part of the *Our Mythical Childhood* project, under the auspices of which she is developing resources on classical myth for use with autistic children. Explaining her ideas in a blog post concerning how Disney movies were one child's "gateway to the world, and the world's gateway to [his] inner world", she writes:

I want to think about how the characters of myth – and the difficult moments they need to negotiate – can serve as just such a gateway. [...] whereas I started out thinking about how one might "reach" autistic people, I am increasingly gaining a stronger sense of the distinctive world view of each autistic person. It won't be solely that myth can aid autistic people to develop social and other skills to enable them to interact with the world – in addition, others can be enabled to gain a deeper understanding of the world of an autistic person.²⁷

Following these ideas, a programme has been developed, which is now being piloted with a class of autistic youths in a school in Tel Aviv. This programme is different in content to that being developed in the United Kingdom. Whereas the Roehampton work so far has focused on Hercules, and in particular the Choice of Hercules, through the use of a drawing based upon a chimneypiece panel in Grove House, an eighteenth-century villa in Roehampton, the Israeli project is rather more wide-ranging. In an interview, when the autistic child mentioned above was asked what it means to be autistic, he replied, "It means that you have special skills and talents inside you".²⁸ The Israeli programme works with this idea, in order to focus

²⁶ On the phrase and concept of the autistic classroom, see Susan Deacy, "What's an Autistic Classroom?", *Autism and Classical Myth*, 22 February 2017, <http://myth-autism.blogspot.com/2017/02/is-there-autistic-classroom.html> (accessed 8 August 2019).

²⁷ Susan Deacy, "Disney, Sidekicks, Autism and Classical Myth", *Autism and Classical Myth*, 23 January 2017, <http://myth-autism.blogspot.com/2017/01/disney-sidekicks-autism-and-classical.html> (accessed 8 August 2019).

²⁸ Amy Goodman, "Life, Animated: A Remarkable Story of How a Family Reached Their Autistic Son through Disney Movies", *Democracy Now!*, 27 January 2016, https://www.democracynow.org/2016/1/27/life_animated_a_remarkable_story_of (accessed 8 August 2019).

on helping the autistic child develop self-worth and deal with complex emotions, which is one of the most difficult challenges for those on the autism spectrum.²⁹



Figure 4: Materials used in the Israeli autism project, designed by Ayelet Peer and Tali Almador, Tel Aviv, December 2019. Photograph by Ayelet Peer; used with permission.

By utilizing the heroes and stories of Greek mythology, the programme aims to develop and improve skills related to complex emotions. By performing the tasks, students will learn to identify and manage complex states of emotions. Designed as a game, the programme is centred around an interactive story in which the children must progress step by step until the final goal is reached at the end of the game. At the start of the activity, the children received an invitation to participate in a heroic quest. Each participant chose a heroic character as their persona on the quest.

²⁹ See Shimrit Fridenson-Hayo, Steve Berggren, Amandine Lassalle, Shahar Tal, Delia Pigat, Sven Bölte, Simon Baron-Cohen, and Ofer Golan, "Basic and Complex Emotion Recognition in Children with Autism: Cross-Cultural Findings", *Molecular Autism* 7.1 (2016), 52, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-016-0113-9>.

Table 1: Exploring emotions through mythology, autism programme, Israel 2019/20.

Story used in the activity	Emotion addressed
Arachne	Pride
Narcissus and Echo	Conceit
The Apple of Discord	Jealousy
Medusa	Envy
King Midas and the Golden Touch	Greed
Theseus and the Minotaur	Fear
Theseus' Return to Athens	Guilt
Daedalus and Icarus	Conceit
Achilles	Anger
The Choice of Hercules	Uncertainty

As they progressed through the quest, the children learned the mythological stories related to each of the characters they met, and carried out activities that related to specific emotions, as they delved into the emotional and human dilemmas raised by the stories. These activities used attractive materials developed by Ayelet Peer and Tali Almagor (see Fig. 4), and were heavily experiential, combining imagination, play, movement, creativity, and discussion, and placed emphasis on group work, with each student contributing his or her special "heroic" abilities to the group.

The mythological rationale behind the project is an adaptation of the story of Pandora's Box, whereby the opening of the box released not evils, but different emotions, the power of which caused Pandora to panic and throw the box from the top of Mount Olympus. The mission of the heroes was, therefore, to find the emotions and return them to the box. Each emotion was examined and "captured" through a mythological tale and activities based upon that story and highlighting the emotion in question (see Table 1).

At the end of the game, having captured all the emotions, the participants returned to Pandora's house, where the open box was shown to be glowing with one last emotion, hope. The students considered how to incorporate this new emotion and released it into the world symbolically through the release of balloons, before celebrating their successful accomplishment of the quest at a special party of celebration.

This programme is, as of the time of writing, in the spring of 2020, only in the initial stages, with two schools having been approached, one of which has completed the activity and another that will implement it in the coming months. Nevertheless, the excitement with which it has been greeted

by the relevant teachers at these schools demonstrates the potential they believe the work holds for their charges. This enthusiasm is matched by the students themselves; at the conclusion of the project, they were unwilling for it to end, and demanded more, as a result of which an extended programme is now being developed. The students' keenness also reflects the passion that may occasionally be found for classical mythology in Israel, both on the part of teachers and of students, despite the lack of prominence within the local and cultural traditions of the country.³⁰

6. The Way Ahead: The Future of Greek Mythology in Israel

It is clear that, despite the opposition to the ancient enemies, Greece and Rome, and the difficulty in dealing with many aspects of Greek myths, they can be, and have been, easily adapted to fit in with societal requirements. The interest in man's relationship with the divine is something that, in the Holy Land, can profitably be exploited, while, if desired, the gods can be avoided, in favour of myths with moral lessons to be learned. This latter point, however, is perhaps exercising unnecessary caution – or more likely reflecting discomfort on the part of the Israeli teacher. For, in spite of the lack of Classics or mythology within the Israeli education system, Israeli children actually often display great interest in the world of Greece and Rome.³¹ Technology is a huge part of Israeli society and the youth are very computer-literate, an element encouraged by the education system that promotes technological know-how.³² As a result, youngsters in Israel are very connected to the global culture in which classical myth has, in the last decade, played a more prominent role. The recent films based on Greek mythology were popular in Israel, while the *Percy Jackson* series was even more so – there is even an active group of young Israeli fanfiction writers who produce work based on *Percy Jackson*.³³

³⁰ See Maurice, "The Reception of Classical Mythology".

³¹ Ibidem.

³² For details of the Israeli curriculum and the emphasis on technology, see Yehoshua Mathias and Naama Sabar, "Curriculum Planning from the National to the Glocal: The Israeli Case", in William F. Pinar, ed., *International Handbook of Curriculum Research*, 2nd ed., New York, NY and London: Routledge, 2014 (ed. pr. 2003), 253–267, esp. 259–261.

³³ See Lisa Maurice, "Percy Jackson and Israeli Fan Fiction: A Case Study", in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Our Mythical Hope: The Ancient Myths as Medicine for the Hardships of Life in Children's and Young Adults' Culture*, Warsaw: Warsaw University Press, forthcoming.

That being the case, it seems that the time is ripe to develop the classical presence within the formal education system, and that mythology is an ideal vehicle with which to do that, whether within the school subjects such as history and literature, in which they have traditionally been found, or within special programmes, such as those for gifted or autistic children. Both in order to gather the information we have used in this research and with this aim in mind, therefore, my colleague Ayelet Peer and I have consulted with the Ministry of Education. To date we have succeeded in making contact with the official supervisors of history and literature for both Jewish streams, and the supervisor for literature for the Arab and the Druze sectors, all of whom are interested to varying degrees in introducing more into the curriculum. In particular, the Arab sector, which has to date no classical content whatsoever, has been keen to introduce some, and I am now an official member of the committee responsible for the Druze and Circassian literature syllabus. It is too early to say how much, if anything, will come of these contacts; but such developments are heartening both for the promotion of classical studies and for the confirmation that classical myth has the potential to be as enduring, exciting, and vibrant in the modern state of Israel, despite its shallow roots in the country, as it is in places where its teaching is entrenched deeply in the very fabric of society.

AFTERWORD: SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As was stated in the introduction, this volume encompasses a wide range of regions, periods, approaches, and even scholars. Although this was perhaps inevitable, it does mean that it is not always easy to see the wood for the trees. Yet a consideration of the work as a whole, which is in the end greater than the sum of its parts, does allow for some overall trends to be teased out and conclusions to be drawn. I briefly highlight here some observations, which, although far from exhaustive, may hopefully prove a useful launch pad for further research.

1. Myth Is Everywhere

First of all, what stands out clearly is the sheer universality of myth, not only in society, but also in formal education. Graeco-Roman myth is the focus in most of the cases considered in this volume, but other local mythical traditions – Aboriginal, Māori, Japanese, African, and so on – are also found, speaking to the centrality of myth in every society. There is something truly universal about storytelling, and, aware of this, and of the power that mythology has to inspire, educators, as they have done throughout history, continue to turn to myth.

2. Classical Myth: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

The narratives of Graeco-Roman mythology are some of the most satisfying of all mythic traditions, and the tales have enduring appeal and attraction, especially for youth. Beyond this, the fact that the ancient world conveys powerful connotations has caused its narratives to be employed more widely than any other, even in places where the tradition is not strong.

Nevertheless, these usages are not uncomplicated; classical studies has long carried connotations of elitism,¹ which spill over into anything connected with the Graeco-Roman world, especially when aimed at children.² For much of history, the idea of enabling access to the elite through education was long considered a good thing. To this day, classical studies is seen in some places as conveying cachet, as, for example, in Israel, where classical myth is regarded as something suited for gifted students. Such an attitude is in part a result of the belief that Latin and Greek are challenging subjects, meant only for the brightest of students. This perception leads to a sense of privilege surrounding the study of Classics, particularly the classical languages. Indeed, the very difficulty of attaining fluency in Latin and Greek has been seen at times as a positive element; thus, as Hanna Paulouskaya points out, in the Soviet Union Classics was valued for the disciplinary benefits the struggle awarded. Even, as so often in the twenty-first century, when the languages are not the subjects being taught, the association appears to linger, in a hangover from the periods in which a knowledge of the Classics marked one out as a member of the elite. Such attitudes, whereby knowledge of the classical culture is deemed to be something people “ought” to have, underlie the vast numbers of myth courses in the United States.

Nevertheless, such approval is far from universal; despite the example from the Soviet Union just mentioned, it was the case that under much of communist rule in Eastern Europe, Classics was regarded negatively. Similarly, in Western Europe in the twentieth century support for elitism was overturned by the rise of populism, and more recently neopopulism,³

¹ There is a large bibliography on the subject of Classics and elitism, but for some examples see Phyllis Culham and Lowell Edmunds, eds., *Classics: A Discipline and Profession in Crisis?*, Lanham, MD and London: University Press of America, 1989; Lorna Hardwick and Stephen Harrison, eds., *Classics in the Modern World: A Democratic Turn?*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; Kenneth J. Kitchell, “‘Solitary Perfection?’ The Past, Present, and Future of Elitism in Latin Education”, in Elizabeth P. Archibald, William Brockliss, and Jonathan Gnoza, eds., *Learning Latin and Greek from Antiquity to the Present*, Yale Classical Studies 37, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 166–183; Eric Adler, *Classics, the Culture Wars, and Beyond*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016; Ursula Lanvers, “Elitism in Language Learning in the UK”, in Damian J. Rivers and Karin Zotzmann, eds., *Isms in Language Education: Oppression, Intersectionality and Emancipation*, Boston, MA and Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017, 50–73.

² See my article “Manipulating Myth in a Changing World: A Half-Century of Hercules in Children’s Literature”, *Journal of Historical Fictions* 2.2 (December 2019), 81–101, for more on this, with regard to Hercules in particular.

³ See Barbara Read, “Truth, Masculinity and the Anti-Elitist Backlash against the University in the Age of Trump”, *Teaching in Higher Education: Critical Perspectives* 23.5 (2018), 593–605.

and the seemingly esoteric and snobbish study of the ancient world was derided.⁴ In recent years, issues of colonialism and imperialism have also led to a backlash against Western culture, which is seen to centre itself on the Graeco-Roman classical past, privileging this civilization at the expense of others, such as African and Asian traditions. This has led to a new openness in examining postcolonial receptions of classical material and the cultural hegemony of traditional sources, with a plethora of journals, blogs, and conference panels⁵ considering the so-called democratization of Classics, all of which reflect the unease felt at coming to terms with the classical heritage traditionally assumed to be the root of Western civilization. The recent associations between such attitudes and the extreme-right wing have only deepened the concerns still further.⁶

Similarly, the very content of classical myth, with its gender stereotyping and violence reflecting the attitudes of a different era, may be regarded as problematic in the modern world. Awareness of these issues has led to the phenomenon noted by Emily Gunter and Dan Curley of issuing trigger warnings in some myth classes in the United States. In many cases, the problematic nature of the stories is actually exploited, and used as a tool, with myths being employed in gender studies, especially at the higher levels

⁴ I am aware that this statement is both superficial and a generalization, and, indeed, that Classics was actually far less elitist than is commonly believed. See Edith Hall and Henry Stead, *A People's History of Classics: Class and Greco-Roman Antiquity in Britain and Ireland 1689 to 1939*, Oxford and New York, NY: Routledge, 2020, where they demonstrate that the influence of the Classics among the working classes of Britain was actually far greater than has generally been recognized. Nevertheless, the ideas regarding elitism and classical studies are so pervasive and have so consistently coloured popular attitudes that I mention the issue as an example of how changing attitudes in society have affected the attitude towards classical mythology.

⁵ There was, e.g., a panel at the Celtic Classics Conference in 2017, organized by Jenny Messenger and Rossana Zetti, on this topic.

⁶ See Donna Zuckerberg, *Not All Dead White Men: Classics and Misogyny in the Digital Age*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018; and, e.g., Sean Illing and Donna Zuckerberg, "Why the Alt-Right Loves Ancient Rome: And Greece, Too", *Vox*, 6 November 2019, <https://www.vox.com/2019/11/6/20919221/alt-right-history-greece-rome-donna-zuckerberg>; Donna Zuckerberg, "Guess Who's Championing Homer? Radical Online Conservatives", *The Washington Post*, 2 November 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/guess-whos-championing-homer-radical-online-conservatives/2018/11/02/af3a49f6-dd40-11e8-85df-7a6b4d25cfbb_story.html; Heidi Morse, "Classics and the Alt-Right: Historicizing Visual Rhetorics of White Supremacy", *LearnSpeakAct*, 15 February 2018, <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/learn-speak-act/2018/02/15/classics-and-the-alt-right/> (all accessed 12 April 2020).

of education, but at younger ages the material is often treated with wariness, and there may be a move to censor myths for this audience.⁷

Nevertheless, despite the anxieties, which are perhaps felt more by academics than by the wider public, classical culture in general, and classical mythology in particular, continues to appear in the education systems of every continent of the world, even in places where the classical tradition is usually imagined to be weak or even non-existent. This is a testament not only to the historical importance of its role, but also to the attraction and potency of the tales themselves that continue to attract youth, as borne out by the popularity of recent products of popular culture, including movies and books, such as the *Percy Jackson* series. Such elements have been used to sweeten what is sometimes regarded as the bitter pill of reading Latin and Greek in the original; as Markus Janka and Michael Stierstorfer's chapter, and indeed the case studies from Poland and Russia, indicate, translating a delightful tale makes the task of making sense of difficult rules of ancient grammar more palatable. When elements of popular culture are added to the mix, building on students' existing knowledge and enthusiasm, the work becomes even more agreeable.

3. Classical Myth as Ideological Tool

Precisely because of their popularity and appeal, classical narratives are seen as useful vehicles with which to teach other skills or ideas. Thus, myth has been exploited in the educational setting to create national identity, as is clear from multiple examples. In the case of Greece, myth has been merged with history, with events such as the Trojan War seen as an incident at the root of Greek history, and the stories as prime foundations of Greek identity. Similarly, myth was interpreted as history in the Soviet Union, where Homer's epics were seen as historical sources for the social and economic history of Ancient Greece, and the Greek heroes presented for the

⁷ On censorship, see Amy McClure, "Censorship", *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 8.1 (2014), 22–25; Herbert N. Foerstel, *Banned in the U.S.A.: A Reference Guide to Book Censorship in Schools and Public Libraries*, Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2002; David Booth, "Censorship", in Philip Nel and Lissa Paul, eds., *Keywords for Children's Literature*, New York, NY: New York University Press, 2011, 26–30; Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 2nd ed., New York, NY: Routledge, 2013 (ed. pr. 2006), 118–120.

courageous deeds they carried out and their noble values deemed of worth to the communist state.

Myth has been employed ideologically across the political spectrum, through all the "isms" of the twentieth century. In Brazil, the left-wing, communist-leaning educators manipulated the tales of Ancient Greece in order to further their particular ideology, using specific myths to transmit values such as the benefits of agricultural work, submission to the state, and even the reason for, and benefits of, industry. Such interpretations are typical of the uses of classical myth by such regimes; the examples of myth found in the communist books of Soviet Russia show similar attitudes. At the opposite end of the political spectrum, the adoption of, and emphasis on, Roman myth in Fascist Italy, as demonstrated in the schoolbooks, reflects the ruling power's belief in Italy's role as the reborn Roman empire. Franco's Spain provides another example, with the classical world being seen as a means of reclaiming the true essence of Spanish identity. In both Italy and Spain, Latin and Greek were given a prominent place in education, with the two countries instituting an eight-year and seven-year programme of classical studies respectively.

Ideological employment of myth is not restricted to programmes on a national level; it can also be found in individual cases. One such is that of Rej High School in Warsaw, which, with its motto of *Macte animo!*, consciously intended to inspire its students to bravery and to become, in the words of Katarzyna Marciniak and Barbara Strycharczyk, "heroes of a mythical story who need constant encouragement to overcome obstacles every day".

4. Classical Myth and Religion

The possibility of exploiting myth occurred in locations in which there was a strong classical tradition, and this was most commonly found through the presence of the Catholic Church, whose language of ritual was Latin. Religion has played an important role in how classical myth has been utilized in education even beyond the confines of Catholicism, however. In Israel, for example, there is a conscious effort to avoid using myths involving the Greek gods, so as not to offend the religious Jewish population, while in Soviet Russia the Greek gods were portrayed negatively; through this lens myth therefore became a tool for antireligious propaganda. Poland, on the other hand, was under Soviet influence for the decades after World War Two, and experienced similar treatment of myth to the Russian-speaking territories,

but its relationship with classical myth is different from that of Russia. Due to the influence of the Catholic Church, with which the Latin language and the classical past was inextricably bound up in the popular mindset, the legacy of the Graeco-Roman heritage was seen as undeniably connecting Poland with Christian identity and with the culture of the West. Although the communist state attempted to sweep away all the traditions of pre-war Poland and to distance the new state from Western civilization, the classical past was hard to eradicate.

Catholicism similarly played an important role in other areas, but in each case the role of and attitude towards the Church affected how, or if, classical mythology was taught. In Spain, Catholicism's disapproval of mythology, seen as lightweight and trivial, caused it to be disregarded, whereas in French Canada the opposite occurred. Since the Church dominated education for more than 300 years in this region, and saw itself as the natural heir to the brilliance of classical civilization, classical studies, including Graeco-Roman myth, remained at the heart of Catholic education here. The domination of education by the Jesuit settlers in Brazil in the seventeenth century originally created a similarly strong classical foundation in that country, but over the twentieth century the power of the Church waxed and waned in keeping with the varying ideologies in power, and the role of Classics and mythology in education followed suit.

5. Myth as Pedagogic Tool

Myth has not only been used ideologically and in order to indoctrinate politically or religiously. It is also employed as a pedagogic tool in order to teach other skills, particularly literacy. This may be on the level of native speakers, as in the two cases Arlene Holmes-Henderson outlines, or in the ESL classroom, where classical myths in translation expand the English skills, as in the two cases from Africa, considered by Divine Che Neba and Daniel A. Nkemleke, and Claudia C.J. Fratini.

In these instances the myths are also employed because they are felt to provide a platform for cultural dialogue, with the comparison with local myths allowing the students to better understand their own environment and society. Despite the disquiet mentioned above regarding the role of classical culture in colonialism, there is an effort to use classical myths within the decolonization and Africanization of the curricula that is now deemed

necessary, allowing students to tap into its intrinsic value, in a multicultural, multilingual environment.

Other such instances of mythic usage abound in these pages. In the autism programme in Israel, as outlined in my own chapter, the tales of mythology are used in order to help the students understand and cope with complex emotions, while in some of the programmes in the United States they are a tool through which controversial subjects, such as violence and gender, can be explored. The programmes in Australia and New Zealand, meanwhile, see Classics as a starting point for the examination of different traditions, and as a means to negotiate the intersections between local and ancient cultures.

6. Classical Myth: A Relevant Tool

Such explorations result from the understanding that classical civilization is an interdisciplinary subject, and myth is seen as a bridge between seemingly disparate civilizations, a platform for cultural dialogism, as is reflected in its use in Africa, and its brief appearances in Japanese education. In a similar vein, the programmes in Australia and New Zealand, seeing Classics as the study of how the people, places, and events of the ancient world influence the modern, emphasize the relevance of myth in the contemporary world.

Such attitudes are in sharp contrast to traditional ideas about the futility of classical studies, which are often seen as an inconsequential waste of time, having no practical use; this was the case in Spain, for example, at a period when the need for modernization had led to a sharp reduction in classical teaching, and to its replacement by mathematical and scientific education. In general the divide between what is seen as “practical science” and “impractical” or even “useless” humanities, of which study of the ancient world provides the ultimate example, is one that has permeated modern society and is well known to classicists. Such arguments usually centre on the teaching of Latin and Greek, which, as dead languages, are perceived as without value in modern education. It is striking, therefore, against this background, that classical mythology is not only not tarred with the same brush but, unlike the ancient languages, it is seen as still having significance in the contemporary world, and activities and lesson plans mine it for this aspect. Its very marginality in curricula, with few national targets or constrictions, perhaps allows it to be exploited freely and innovatively.

7. The Vibrancy of Classical Myth in Education

Such projects typify the way in which Graeco-Roman myth actually provides the inspiration for some of the most vibrant and inventive projects in contemporary education. So many of the papers in this volume outline activities that demonstrate an awe-inspiring level of creativity and innovation. Examples include the Legonium project, the *Eureka!* textbook, the various Classics camps, the work of the Gymnasium Classicum Petropolitanum and of the Rej school, the autism programme, and those supported by British outreach organizations, such as Classics for All. What shines through strongly, apart from the creativity in these activities, is the enthusiasm on the part of teachers. As Elizabeth Hale and Anna Foka put it, with regard to New South Wales in Australia, “[C]lassical educators feel they are participating in a venerable culture, and support it through an energetic Classics association scene”; there seems in many cases an almost missionizing fervour for the classical past on the part of teachers all over the world.

* * *

When considering the range of observations noted above, one thing becomes clear. Despite the dissimilarities, classical myths are utilized educationally in the modern world as they have always been used, namely to teach lessons deemed valuable and to unite people through these shared values. While the values themselves may change – mythology may permit entry into an elite society, inculcate a particular ideology, or create a cohesive group centred around a common tradition, language, or culture – the process remains the same, and is rooted in the enthusiasm for these abiding tales. This fervour and knowledge creates social bonds, and thus the analyses presented in this volume demonstrate how mythology can create bridges between different peoples and societies that might on the surface seem to be very different from each other, but which in fact face similar and overlapping issues within their education systems. As this study demonstrates, Graeco-Roman myth, with its almost universal appeal, continues to be as powerful a pedagogic tool now as it has been for more than two millennia.

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