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Greek in the Public School, with Suggestions for a New Greek Reader

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denunciation or unreasoning championship of things either old or new.

In pursuance of these aims, our readers now have before them, besides articles and reviews of the same general type as before, a paper by Freiherr von Wilamowitz-Möller on the study of Greek in schools. This

has been translated and abridged, under the author's supervision, from a memorial lately drawn up by him and presented to the German Board of Education. It will be understood that this paper is given as the author's opinion, not necessarily to be accepted by our readers, and we invite their criticism of it.

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

GREEK IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR A NEW GREEK READER.

THE more our knowledge is widened, the more clear becomes the importance of Greece and the Greek language. Not only Europe, but the East shows their influence: even Palestine and Syria, Armenia, Arabia, India. Every branch of human thought owes its first inspiration to Greece. Theologians are at last learning that Christianity can only be understood in the light of contemporary Hellenism; as in philosophy, as in astronomy, mathematics, and geography, so in medicine and natural science, the modern spirit finds itself closely linked with the ancient.

Now the curriculum of our schools has been devised not as an introduction to Greek literature, but only to some small part of it. The choice of books depends on their aesthetic or humanistic interest, poetry standing in the front, and philosophy in the background. Everything 'unclassical,' except the New Testament, is excluded, and the work from the very beginning is done minutely as a philological exercise. Even the New Testament is read without being brought into connexion with the literature of its own time. Grammar and school books deal only with the classical speech, as on the assumption that a few certain books will be read and never another line. In Germany, the schoolboy's vision is practically confined to Homer and Sophocles: many of those men who are the essence of Greek greatness are not known so much as by name.

The fact is, our Greek studies have lost touch with the spirit of the times, and have not even kept up with the advances of scholarship. The world has lost its respect for antiquity as an ideal: but it has learnt to recognise a vital growth of culture through some fifteen hundred years, which is not only the source of our own, but in a sense its parallel; and this is all Greek, for Rome is only a province of it. True, the latest phase of this growth, and Christianity its latest offspring, came to the West through the Latin language: but as the reform of Christianity was brought about by a return to the Greek Bible, as science in all its branches has been gradually brought to independence by research in its Greek sources, so our culture can only live by intercourse with its source. Gospel Christianity cannot stand, if the knowledge of the Greek Testament be confined to professors of theology, since to understand the Greek Testament it is necessary to understand the world to which it was given. There is good reason for the hostility of positivism and materialism to the spirit of Greece. To Greek study is due the intellectual leadership of France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England in the eighteenth, and Germany in the nineteenth. But each century has sought that which suited its own needs: our schools now give the fragments of that which was suited to the needs of a hundred years ago. We can only remain true to the past,

if we discard its form and keep to its spirit.

Our present aims are conditioned by the time which can be spared in the school work. We are not devising an ideal course for the schoolboy, but one which may best use the brief time left us by the pressure of circumstances. I assume here that only the last four years of school life, with nine lessons a week, are at our disposal. And Greek cannot be considered apart from the general curriculum; for the main principle of these last and best years of school life must be to gather up all the scattered threads of school teaching into one whole. Greek is already connected with religion, with literature, and with history; we must therefore point out how it is bound up with mathematics and natural science. All this will then only be possible, if the language be learnt rapidly and as a means to understanding the literature. The trouble of learning the grammar will no longer seem too great, when Greek shall be, not one of the elegancies of life, but a guide to the continuity of history, a study of simple forms of life which will make clear the more complex. The intelligence must be brought to bear on substance and form. Moreover, we do not want learned men, but an intellectual *élite*, leaders of the people, in any station of life to which they may be called. For this the first thing necessary is that the language must not be studied for its own sake. To be versed in pure Attic, in the classical as it used to be understood, may be necessary for the scholar, but has nothing to do with the schoolboy. For us, the Gospels are classic, full as they are of blunders for the classicist. The old world-wide culture had for its medium this world-wide language: and those who spoke it must have found the same difficulties in Thucydides and Sophocles as an Englishman finds in Chaucer. Attic is not to be neglected, but it is to be treated as a part of the whole. The language of Homer has more claim to universality than Attic; Homer is indeed at the root of Greek culture, and we will study him therefore, but at the beginning, nor must we give him a preponderating importance. The chief place in the V. form is his, but he

should be no longer read in the VI. The school grammar needs to be re-written, the natural course being Homer first and Attic afterwards. This will enable the learner from the first to grasp the fact that Greek syntax is psychological, not logical, like Latin. In Greek, we have the true language of nature. And since Herodotus is so Homeric, there is a satisfactory prose author to read with him. In the second year then, the pupils must learn scientifically the changes of sound which produce the later Greek; thus they learn what neither Latin nor French can give, and German not easily, the growth of language: which in its form at first expresses natural feeling, but is afterwards modified by the intelligence. The importance of a complete mastery of this subject and its principles makes it necessary to have a lesson each week given specially to grammar: not that the explanation of the authors should have a knowledge of grammar as its aim, but its principles have a value for all. Language is, after all, the most wonderful creation of human genius; in Greek, the pupil may learn to grasp its natural structure. Much that we admire in the Greeks is due to the perfection of their language; and this may teach our boys to respect their own. No one has ever spoilt his style by the study of Greek; whilst in France now, as in the sixteenth century, the highest perfection of style is due to Greek studies. A tragedy, not necessarily of Sophocles, is to be read in the last year, with such of Plato's dialogues as may serve for an introduction to his philosophy. For want of this many a young man is led astray by the dangerous fallacies of modern Sophists, such as Nietzsche. The *Apology* and *Crito* are not enough: something is wanted to touch the heart and awaken thought, such as the *Phaedo*, the *Gorgias*, the first book of the *Republic*. These pieces with their religious fire are suited to awaken the enthusiasm in the young mind, and to lead the way to St. Paul.

We have the year in the Lower VI. left to deal with, and a little time besides. For this a special Reader should be devised, to introduce the learner to those points of Greek thought which he may have missed. One might in one half give special attention

to the historical and geographical side, in another to the philosophic and scientific. The scheme appended hereto will show better than words how the pupil may be led to see that all roads lead to Greece.

Two criticisms may be made on the choice of matter. In the first place, there is no oratory. Certainly Demosthenes as an orator is far above Cicero, and there is much in Isocrates of importance for the history of prose style: but formal oratory is to be found both in Latin and in French, even in the poetry of those languages, and there seems to be no room left in the four years of Greek. At the end, a few short speeches perhaps may be read. Secondly, there is no poetry. Perhaps a few epigrams and elegies ought to be added. But these are trifles; and we must beware of the lyrical fragments which lead to further studies in dialect.

To attain our end there must be a lightening of the elementary grammar. This is effected partly because we deal with mature intelligence, so that the grammar is assimilated more in the way that serves the university man to learn a new language: general laws must be brought home to the learner, and most of the exceptions must disappear. A great help to this end is to begin with Homer; but such a thing is unfortunately difficult now for want of beginners' books. We may expect, however, that scholars will soon meet the want. Another great relief to the learner would be to omit the accents in his own compositions, and to pay no attention to their rules.

It must not be denied that this reform is a heavy call on the teacher. The modern teacher who is to take the upper classes in hand must have a wide and special knowledge of his subject, and must not think that a better knowledge (say) of Latin can make up for an inferior knowledge of Greek. He must have an important place on the staff, and must not be overburdened with work.

An objection is made to the scheme here proposed, that whilst the time for beginning Greek is postponed, the work to be got through is increased. True, the time is short, that cannot be denied: rather than try to diminish it still further, let the whole thing be given up. But the work contemplated is not

more, only different. And if the material of the Reader seems too full, there is no compulsion to read it all. On the contrary: where the teacher has special gifts in one direction, one or other part may be preferred. Only the highest work, tragedy, Plato, Paul, must never be omitted. If there be two such qualified men on a staff, the individuality of each may have play: in any case they will give the lads what can be given only by this method, the historical sense which conceives human life as an organic whole, and culture as something not made but a natural growth; and the comprehension of those simple elements which underlie the world of nature and of intellect, despite all apparent complexity or difference. Learned men and *dilettanti* we shall not produce, but philosophers in Plato's sense: who with the love of the eternal in their breasts, will learn how to take part in the life of their time, in the world, yet not overcome by it, masters of their fate.

SCHEME FOR A GREEK READER.

I. — *Tales*.

1. Aesop's Life, chaps. 10, 12, 15, 22. Prototype of Owlglass, the Fables, and the Jest-books.
2. Lucian, *True History*, i. 30—ii. 2. Adventure in the Whale's Belly. Prototype of Gulliver.
3. Dio. 7. The Euboean Hunter: scenes of peasant life.
4. Longus, iii. 3—11. Scenes of shepherd life. Easy and amusing pieces, which are yet important as the beginnings of several literary kinds.

II. — *History*.

1. Solon. Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 2, 3, 5—12. Solon's poems to be given as appendix.
2. Themistocles. Thuc. i. 128—138. Aeschylus, *Persæ* 290—470: battle of Salamis (moderately easy).
3. Pericles. Thuc. ii. 65. Plutarch, *Pericles* 36—39, with omissions.
4. Alexander. Speech to the Veterans and Death, Arrian vii. 8—11, 24—30. Besides a clear portrait of the great king, we have here a firsthand authority in the extracts from the Court Journal.
5. Scipio the Younger. Polyb. xxxii. 8—10. A striking portrait.
6. Caesar's last schemes and death. Plutarch, *Caesar* 582—67. Important also for its use by Shakespeare.
7. Attila's Court: easy to disengage from the account of Priscus. Truth to the life, and exact report of a keen observer, shewing the Greek

historical genius living a thousand years after Herodotus, and the Greek language (not at its best, it is true) used to describe the barbarian king.

These are inimitable pictures of great men: the remaining three sections give some insight into the social conditions of the Roman revolution, and thus help historically to comprehend Cicero, Caesar and Augustus, who stand in the centre of the Latin course.

8. The revolution of Tiberius Gracchus. Appian i. 7-17. The Agrarian Laws.
9. The First Slave War. Diodorus 34 (extracts). This makes clear the importance of the slave population.
10. Slave Wars in Chios. Athenæus vi. 265. A charming tale with a romantic colour, which helps us to understand ancient slavery.

III.—Political Science.

1. Pericles's funeral Oration. Thuc. ii. 35-46. Really the ideal of the Athenian Democracy. Its main lines have been seen in Solon.
2. Political Principles. Aristotle, *Pol.* i. 2, 3; iii. 1-11.
3. The Cycle of Development. Polyb. vi. 3-9. To be compared with Plato, and the way thus leads to Machiavelli, Montesquieu, and others.

IV.—Natural Science and Natural History.

1. The structure of the world and its principles. Aristotle (*i.e.* Poseidonius) *περὶ κόσμου*, extracts. The conception of the universe before Copernicus must be made clear.
2. Shape of the earth, zones, mapping. Strabo ii. 110ff. A specimen of really scientific physical geography.
3. Climate and the Races of Mankind. Hippocrates, *περὶ ἀέρων ὁδῶν τόπων*, last chapters.
4. Biological observations from animals. Extracts from Aristotle, *Hist. of Animals*, 9.
5. Gaul, Britain, the Alps. Strabo iv., omitting the narratives. Specially valuable: the picture of Caesar is profound, Thule is no mere name, the Greek culture on the Rhone is shown, and the effect of the Alps on southern peoples.
6. The position of Rome, and the capital of the world. Strabo v. 3, 4, 5, 8. He who reads this in his youth, will see Rome with other eyes in his manhood.

V.—Mathematics, Physics, Mechanics.

1. Euclid. Beginning of the elements, and a few pieces which must be chosen by experts. Some extracts must also be added from Archimedes and Apollonius.
2. Heron. Doctrine of the vacuum, with application to one or other of his pneumatic constructions.
3. The gigantic ship of Hiero. Athenæus v., 40-44.

VI.—Hygiene.

1. Hippocrates *περὶ ἱερᾶς νόσου* 1-7, 14-21. This is enough to show the physiological-scientific principles. Quite easy and very interesting.

2. Diocles (Oribasius, ii. no. 22). Daily Life of a Greek in the fourth century, B.C.
3. Athenæus (Oribasius, ii. 23). Life in the first century after Christ. The changes since Diocles show a great stride in the history of culture.

VII.—Philosophy.

1. Plato, *Memo.* 13-21. Recognition, Recollection, Socratic method. Valuable as including a mathematical problem, so as to show the logical value of mathematics; charmingly treated.
2. Aristotle, *Ethics* x. 6-10. Goal and Ideal of Life, *vita activa et contemplativa*.
3. Value of Life and Wealth. Extracts from Theophrastus and Epictetus. Krantor in Sextus, *contra math.* xi. 52. Teles: Stobaeus, *Flor.* v. 67.
4. Chance and Foresight: Plutarch *de Fortuna*.
5. The Stoic pantheism in its relation to Ethics. Marcus Aurelius: Selection. Frederic the Great's favourite book may interest many a lad who cares not for Plato.
6. Maximus, Or. 8. Defence of the worship of images. Actually held up to the early Christians as folly.

VIII.—Christian Antiquities.

1. The liturgical pieces from the Didache.
2. Clement, *Protrept.* 11, 12. *Strom.* vi. 157-168. Both show the attempt to attract the educated classes to Christianity.
3. A genuine Martyrium, say that of Pionius.

IX.—Aesthetics and Criticism.

1. Plato, *Phaedrus* 268-279. Value of writing, nature of prose. Indispensable, since the piece cannot be read as a whole.
2. Aristotle, *Poetics*: Definition of Tragedy and the chief passages. Not suited for reading, but may be translated by the teacher.
3. Rules and Genius: Longinus, *De Sublim.* 33-36. Of the greatest importance in literary history. Too hard for reading, but the teacher may translate it.

X.—Miscellaneous.

1. Greco-Latin school conversation (Haupt. *Opusc.* ii. p. 510), exactly answering to our specimens of foreign conversation, instructive and amusing.
2. The Seven against Thebes. Apollodorus. *Bibl.* iii. 57-73. This also is an ancient schoolbook.
3. Dionysius Thrax, Grammar: chief passages. Since all grammars and their terminology go back to this pamphlet, and the names of cases, moods, and parts of speech come from it and have a meaning only in Greek, it is worth while to call attention to it.
4. A selection of original letters; important particularly for the study of Paul, and interesting in themselves. Darius Hystaspes' son, Alexander, Epicurus Augustus, a speech of Nero, private people.

U. VON WILAMOWITZ-MÖLLENDORFF.