

Report by the Director on the JSST Classical Civilisation and Ancient History Summer School 2016

Held at Repton School from the 9th to the 14th July

At the end of my first year as director, I am delighted to report on another enjoyable and successful Classical Civilisation and Ancient History Summer School.

This year we were pleased to welcome 72 students. Of these, 56 had just finished Year 12, with 12 students from Year 11 and 4 students from Year 13. There were also returning students who had also come to the summer school last year. Despite maintaining similar numbers this year to last year, we still had a waiting list and unfortunately a good number of applicants were not able to join us at Repton. In the interests of widening participation, we decided to increase our numbers over the usually accepted threshold of 70, but in order to keep our class sizes small and continue to create the positive and friendly atmosphere that we have always enjoyed at Repton we cannot increase this number further.

As always seems to be the case, the majority of our students (67%) were female but this is a significant step towards a more even ratio (last year's course had 84% female students). We do not have comprehensive data on our students' backgrounds but 26 of our students came from independent schools, 8 from state comprehensives, 6 from state grammar schools and 12 from 6th form colleges within the UK. We had fairly large contingents of students from Runshaw College and, as was the case last year, the St Paul's Way Trust School, with most other schools represented by just one or two students. Of the students that attended 27 had just finished studying Classical Civilisation at AS-level, with 16 students studying Latin, 2 doing Ancient History and 2 doing Greek. There were also 3 students who had just finished studying Classical Civilisation at A2-level and one who had just finished Ancient History A2.

This year we had 10 full-time tutors as well as a very versatile and obliging Director's assistant who was happy to turn his skills to teaching alongside his administrative duties. A wide range of topics were taught, under broad subject areas: History (Minoans and Myceneans, Athens and Sparta, Roman Republic, Life and times of Cicero, Alexander the Great), Literature and Culture (Art and Architecture, Historiography, Tragedy, Comedy, Greek and Latin Lyric poetry), Epic (Iliad and Aeneid), Philosophy (Ancient and Modern Philosophical problems, Life and times of Socrates), Language (Greek and Latin) and Mythology. Students are expected to take five out of the six courses on offer, but in fact some took six. We are very excited about tweaking the programme and courses on offer next year, based on the students' feedback, the tutors' suggestions, the new GCSE and A-Level specifications from OCR (written by one of our own team of tutors) and a study of which classes were over- or under-subscribed.

During free time in the afternoons all students were able to take advantage of the excellent swimming and tennis facilities at Repton, as well as the opportunity to buy Classics-related books, following the one day visit of the Hellenic Book Service on the 12th-13th. Evenings were spent preparing our drama productions for the final evening; all students were involved in some capacity - acting, singing, dancing, directing, costumes and props allowing our students to utilise and develop a wide variety of skills. We also offered a

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number of additional talks, the so-called 'Knowledge at Nine' sessions, including a discussion on Augustus and a talk on the influence of ancient epics on modern day movies. We look forward to continuing to offer such optional talks next year.

On the final night of the summer school, we were fortunate to be joined by Dr Emma Cole from the University of Bristol, who sat in the audience during our performances of Euripides' *Andromache* (directed by Stephe Harrop) and Aristophanes' *Peace* (directed by Rob Taylor), took photos, live-tweeted and then provided a superb lecture and feedback session to our students on the next morning. Once again, our students really did shine in our productions. It was clear from the quality of the performances that everybody involved had worked with dedication and commitment and remarkable to see how much talent we had in our midst. In particular the props team should be commended for creating, from scratch in the space of just two days, a dung beetle for the comedy that could be mounted and driven around the stage.

As per usual, the feedback responses from our students were very positive and contained some useful comments. A few complained about our early start, which we will be changing for next year, most commented on how much they had enjoyed the individual teaching sessions as well as taking part in the preparation of our performances. Many students remarked on how they found the summer school the perfect place to meet people with similar interests and further their love of classics. The vast majority of our students (76%) said that the Summer School had influenced them towards studying classical subjects at university or confirmed their decision to do so.

Of course many students would be denied this experience were it not for the generosity of a number of bodies. In total, 21 students received some form of financial assistance from the Summer School, including 5 students receiving a full bursary. We gratefully acknowledge support from the Cambridge School Classics Project, Trinity College Cambridge, the Gilbert Murray Trust, the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, the University of Cambridge Faculty of Classics, the Friends of Classics, Classical Association and the Craven Committee. We would also like to thank the Lytham St Anne's Classical Association (LSA), Barking School and the St Paul's Way Trust School for raising funds to partially pay for their students.

The Summer School is, as always, very grateful to Elaine Shaw at Repton Enterprises, who always works so hard to accommodate us and to all of the other staff at Repton School who ensure that we have a safe and comfortable stay. My sincerest thanks go to Kate Baylis who has worked very hard in the role of Summer School Secretary and has proven herself time and again as a very organised administrator, with boundless energy and a great talent for balancing the many duties she had.

Written by Daniel Paul

Course Director

July 2016

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