

Classics Summer School 2021

Bursary Report by Alexander Read

Course Attended: Intermediate Greek (Jeremy Antrich)

I should like to thank the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies for its generosity in awarding me this bursary and write below briefly on how this opportunity has helped me in my classics studies.

What I Gained from Attending

By attending the Classics Summer School, I gained another source of learning Ancient Greek separate from my school and GCSEs. Jeremy structured each day with roughly the same topics in a similar order: vocabulary, set text, grammar, English to Greek, translation, set text. The degree of effort and organisation Jeremy put into each lesson made a difficult workload comparatively easier. Every day, he set our class homework including revision of principal parts, sections of common vocabulary, and a translation from a Greek source. As the course was already intensive, the homework allowed me to fully focus and use the skills I had learnt during the day, and I noticed myself improving my translation throughout the course.

The set text our class was covering was selected sections from Trojan Women, a play by Euripides. I found that compared to GCSE translation, actual Greek writers wrote much more difficult Greek, which was a fun challenge. By the end of the fortnight, our class had managed to translate all the selections of Trojan Women, alongside understanding how the play functioned and the characters in it. I also learned new grammar, including the optative, perfect and pluperfect, and -μι verbs, which I didn't know existed before the Summer School. The Classics Summer School allowed me to extend my Greek knowledge beyond the classroom by looking at real Greek from real authors (Euripides, Herodotus, Xenophon) and learning about the overall Greek world, which I had not considered in context.

How Attendance Benefitted my Ancient Greek Studies

I take Ancient Greek for IGCSE at my school, and I plan on using the skills I have obtained from the Classics Summer School to improve my Greek beyond GCSE level. Whilst entering the Summer School, I wrote down that I needed help on both vocabulary and set text, and I am content to say both have been improved at a noticeable level. I found the work very challenging in a good way, and it has inspired me to read more and discover more about the Ancient World more generally, and I plan on looking into other cultures such as Roman and even Ancient Indian through the language as well.

I think the Summer School has provided me with a new outlook on Classics away from just textbooks and rote learning and instead into more creative and historical outlooks. For example, we considered two different translations of a section of Trojan Women and discussed the differences between them in relation to the Greek. I thought that both translations did separate things well whilst still staying faithfully to the Greek. I would not have the opportunity to discuss this in my school Greek class, and I have noticed the differences in translating a play compared to a letter. Overall, the Summer School has prepared me for GCSE and given me a first look at Greek Culture through the language.

(520 words)