**JACT Greek Summer School 2023: Directors’ report**

The 55th JACT Greek Summer School took place at Bryanston School in Dorset between July 30th and August 12th 2023. It was attended by 308 students, 196 of whom were female and 112 male; 14 were teachers, who were developing their knowledge of Greek in order to teach it in their schools, in some cases by introducing the subject to the curriculum for the first time. 95 students were attending or had attended maintained schools in the UK, and 30 were already at university; 54 had attended the Greek summer school in a previous year. These students were taught in 41 groups by tutors employed in schools and universities across the UK or retired from such posts, and were further supported by two matrons and three directors’ assistants.

There were 81 Beginners in 12 tutor groups, 83 Intermediates (i.e. pre-GCSE) in 11 groups, and 130 Advanced students (from immediately post-GCSE to university level) in 15 groups. No group had more than 11 students, and the size of Beginners’ groups was again kept small thanks to a special grant from the Cambridge Classics Faculty. Beginners all used Reading Greek. Intermediate groups used either Reading Greek or the Taylor course, depending on the students’ level and previous experience. Advanced groups all read three texts: some Homer, some prose, and some drama.

For Homer, the Odyssey was more popular this year with 9 groups reading a selection of books from it, while 6 groups read books from the Iliad. Of the prose authors, Plato and Xenophon were in highest demand; in all, 13 different prose texts were read across the 15 groups. Of the dramatists, Euripides was read by 8 groups (*Troades* by 4 of those), Aeschylus was read by 4 groups; 2 groups read Sophocles and 1 Aristophanes. In addition to the 32 hours of formal lesson time, afternoon grammar clinics were scheduled in order to provide additional 1-on-1 support and allow students to ask further questions about specific areas of language.

There were 3 additional tutor groups for the week-long teacher courses at Beginners, Intermediate, and GCSE levels. The Beginners and Intermediate teacher groups used Taylor’s Greek to GCSE since that is the textbook that the teachers are most likely to use in their schools. The GCSE-level group revised the key GCSE constructions, discussed the teaching of these and other language topics, and read the two most widely-chosen GCSE set text options (Homer and Herodotus).

The programme of evening lectures was given by a mixture of visitors and members of the home team: we were joined during the fortnight by Katherine Clarke (Greek explorers and conceptions of geography), Kathryn Stevens (Alexander in Egypt and Babylon), Sophie Bocksberger (the myth of Ajax), and Mike Edmunds (the Antikythera mechanism). Other lectures were delivered by tutors: Emma Woolerton (Homer), Jo Willmott (language change), Chris Burnand (comedy and *Clouds*), Alastair Harden (Greek Art), and – at late notice – Nick Denyer (why the Earth doesn’t fall). There was also a busy programme of afternoon seminars from other tutors, with topics including scansion, accents, comparative philology, Sanskrit, the third declension, New Testament Greek, manuscripts and textual criticism, prose composition, Greeks in the East, Petronius, Polybius, and Persia and Herodotus.

The hours of formal tuition were supplemented not only by committed further study and the programme of lectures and seminars, but by a wide range of extra-curricular activity, made possible by the wonderful facilities at Bryanston School. There were tennis and squash tournaments, and house rounders matches after the evening lectures. The series concluded with a tightly-fought meeting between the student victors and the tutors, which ended this year in a narrow win for the students. Music flourished, with a course orchestra and a course choir: these groups performed, alongside talented soloists, in the concert on the second Thursday, which was one of the finest in summer school memory. On the middle Sunday there was a production in English of Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, in an updated version in modern dress, with Socrates an e-mogul/cult leader. On the final evening we sat in the Greek theatre – the weather was kind after what had been a fairly wet fortnight – to watch a visually spectacular version of Sophocles’ *Ajax*. The play, which had been sympathetically cut, was notable for several impressive performances, and most especially for the clarity and precision with which the Greek lines were delivered. Even those of the audience who had been beginners at the start of the course were able to identify sections of the Greek.

The online questionnaire, which was circulated at the end of the course, had a response rate of 58% (178 students). Almost all (96%) felt that they had made as much (36%) or indeed more (60%) progress with their Greek than they had expected prior to arrival. It took hard work to get there: the majority of the students (over 66%) had spent at least 3-4 hours of independent study (learning new material and completing homework) every day, with half of those (33%) spending over 4 hours a day working on their Greek outside class.

The students were very appreciative of the academic pace and the teaching – they commented very positively on the atmosphere created in class which allowed them to ask questions, and they were very vocal in their praise of the depth and clarity of the explanations they received. Almost all respondents also attended many of the evening lectures (in many cases all of them) and afternoon seminars, and/or participated in the musical, dramatic or sporting activities on offer.

As in previous years, many students commented on the impact the summer school had not only in helping them make great progress in the language, but also in becoming more confident, and added how much they cherished the opportunity to spend two weeks focusing on Greek as part of such a great and supportive community.

The Summer School continues to benefit from the generosity of a number of institutional and individual benefactors, which, among other ends, enables us to offer bursaries to all students whose circumstances would otherwise prevent them from attending the summer school. 82 bursaries totalling £55,420 (which are both record figures) were provided in 2023. *Reading Greek* (both volumes) was also given to all beginners at an overall cost of £4,000 (£49.49 each). We are very grateful to the ongoing support of the Cambridge Classics Faculty, the Classical Association, the JACT Greek Project, Trinity College Cambridge, the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, the Gilbert Murray/Cromer Trust, and Classics for All, and especially to the Oxford Faculty Board of Classics, the Craven Committee (Oxford), and the Jowett Copyright Trust who all generously increased their grants this year.

Chris Burnand, Director

Maria-Elpiniki Oikonomou, Director of Studies