

Matthew Adams. *Teaching Classics in English Schools, 1500-1840*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015. 210 p. ISBN 9781443881142. £47.99 / \$81.95 (hardcover).

The focus of this short, very readable book is on how Latin and Greek were taught in English schools, on what did the teachers concentrate, how and what did they learn in preparation, and of particular interest to SHARP readers, what books did they use or produce as support. The printing of books about Latin and Greek grammar or classical authors is not, however, the emphasis of this slim volume, but there are abundant references throughout to this important subject for book historians. Instead, Adams chooses to reflect upon teachers and readers of the classics for the crucial period in history stretching from 1500 to 1840.

The author begins his study with background discussion about education in England during the Middle Ages, focusing on education in Latin and Greek starting just before 1500, then moving on to the Renaissance period, and then underlining its evolution and shift in emphasis in the early modern period. The final chapters describe the revitalization of Classics under the influential and dynamic educator Thomas Arnold, headmaster at Rugby School from 1821 until his death in 1842. After this date, the pedagogical approach to teaching Classics as a subject changed to its current form, which stresses authors' writings – grammar playing only a secondary role. Authors generally taught in schools included Aristotle, Herodotus, Thucydides, Cicero, Tacitus, and especially Virgil.

Using the writings of prominent historians like Bede and teachers such as Lily, Colet, and Erasmus, as well as diaries and letters written by students, Adams delves into the teaching of Latin in England and Continental Europe. It is not surprising perhaps to discover that Greek was taught after the student learned Latin. In the earliest period covered through the early 1600s, Latin and Greek grammar was drummed into the heads of students with examples from classical authors' writings. Early textbooks that put emphasis on grammar were a boon for teachers of Classics. By the mid-seventeenth century, there was a noticeable shift to teaching the corpus of classical authors in both languages first and explicating grammatical constructions second. At the same time, the quadrivium (the four subjects or arts) was added to the traditional trivium (which comprised grammar, logic, and rhetoric), in schools serving students from the merchant, professional, and commercial classes.

Scholars interested in printing history must explore the extensive annotations and bibliography. Interspersed amongst the books about teaching and various influential



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headmasters are useful references to writers, publishing houses, and printing presses, most notably Cambridge and Oxford University Presses. Alas, there are no illustrations from the various textbooks used during the period, and their visual dimension is certainly a fruitful area that could be exploited in future studies on the subject.

In sum, this is a fascinating monograph on the history of schools and education, particularly teaching establishments in England between 1500 and 1840, which taught Latin and Greek to boys. The author carefully traces the evolution of teaching philosophies and pedagogical strategies for teaching Classics as a subject. It is interesting to learn how Latin was taught in schools during this period and to witness how Classical Greek became fashionable, unfashionable, and then popular again. Readers will learn about the publishing history of Latin and Greek grammars and textbooks produced by educators for their peers and students. Most importantly, readers will gain a profound understanding of why Latin and Classical Greek are taught as they are today.

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