

OUR MYTHICAL EDUCATION

“OUR MYTHICAL CHILDHOOD” Series

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OUR MYTHICAL EDUCATION

The Reception
of Classical Myth
Worldwide in Formal
Education, 1900–2020

Edited by Lisa Maurice



Our Mythical Education: The Reception of Classical Myth Worldwide in Formal Education, 1900–2020,
edited by Lisa Maurice (Bar-Ilan University, Israel)
in the series "Our Mythical Childhood", edited by Katarzyna Marciniak (University of Warsaw, Poland)

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Typesetting

ALINEA

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This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202 (2016–2021), *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant led by Katarzyna Marciniak.



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

This volume was also supported by the University of Warsaw (Internal Grant System of the "Excellence Initiative – Research University").

Project's Website: www.omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl

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ISBN (hardcopy) 978-83-235-4616-0 ISBN (pdf online) 978-83-235-4624-5

ISBN (e-pub) 978-83-235-4632-0 ISBN (mobi) 978-83-235-4640-5

Warsaw University Press

00-838 Warszawa, Prosta 69

E-mail: wuw@uw.edu.pl

Publisher's website: www.wuw.pl

Printed and bound by Totem.com.pl

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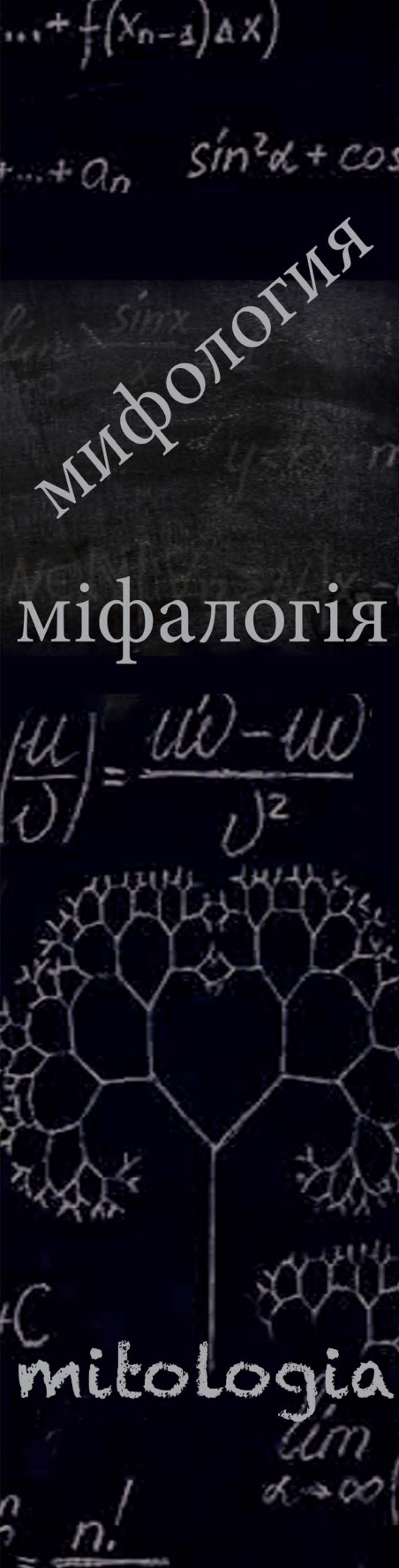
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Part II

OUR MYTHICAL EDUCATION
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN
EUROPE

CLASSICAL LANGUAGES, CULTURE, AND MYTHOLOGY AT THE CLASSICAL GYMNASIUM OF SAINT PETERSBURG

This chapter examines a specific Russian school, the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg, School No. 610 (see Fig. 1). Here the description and analysis are provided from the point of view of both a teacher, Elena Ermolaeva, and a student, Lev Pushel. Each provides a personal perspective on how Classics in general, and classical myth in particular, form an important part of both the principles and daily practice within the curriculum of the school.



Figure 1: Gymnasium Classicum Petropolitanum (Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg, School No. 610), Saint Petersburg, Russia. Photograph from the archive of Sofia Egorova; used with permission.

Elena Ermolaeva

I. The Perspective of a Scholar and a Teacher

How could a scholar and a university lecturer enjoy simultaneously being a school teacher at a gymnasium? I would like to share a short anecdote from my work at the gymnasium, which, I hope, will shed some light on how rewarding an experience I have found it to be.

While recently preparing a course on Ancient Greek literature for my students, I remembered having sat in on a lesson a colleague of mine taught to fifth-graders on *Oedipus Rex*. She asked her young students, "After Oedipus learns from the oracle that he is fated to kill his father, what should he do?" There were a lot of different answers given by the students, but one, offered by a young girl, particularly drew my attention. She said, "Just in case, Oedipus should not kill anybody, not even the tiniest little insect". The comment reinforced in me the belief that teaching works both ways, and especially young students are likely to think outside the box.

I.1. A Brief General Overview of the History of Classical Education in Russia¹

In 1685–1687, the first higher education establishment, called Славяно-греко-латинская академия (Slavyano-greko-latinskaya academia; the Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy), was set up in Moscow, where Greek and Latin composition and the *septem artes liberales* were taught under the direction of the Leichoudes brothers, Ioannikios (1633–1717) and Sophronios

¹ My thanks go to Leonid Zhmud and Valery Dymshits for the useful corrections and suggestions. The overview is a shorter version of my section "Russia", in Filippomaria Pontani and Stefan Weise, eds., *The Hellenizing Muse: A European Anthology of Poetry in Ancient Greek from the Renaissance to the Present*, forthcoming. See also Aleksandr Gavrilov, "Russland", in Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, eds., *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 15, Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2002, 1014–1030 (English translation in Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, and Manfred Landfester, eds., *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopedia of the Ancient World. Classical Tradition*, vol. 5, Leiden: Brill, 2010, 1–18, s.v. "Russia"); Aleksandr Gavrilov, "Античное наследие в России (IX–XX вв.)" [Antichnoe nasledie v Rossii (IX–XX vv.)]; Ancient Heritage in Russia (Ninth–Twentieth Centuries)], in Olga Budaragina, Aleksandr Verlinsky, and Denis Keyer, eds., *О филологах и филологии* [O filologakh i filologii; On Philologists and Philology], Sankt-Peterburg: Izdat. Dom Sankt-Peterburgskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2010, 12–32.

(1653–1730).² At the beginning of the eighteenth century, after the reforms of Peter the Great (1672–1725), the importance of Latin increased, since the entry of Russia into the family of European countries, initiated by Peter, required acquaintance with the basic values of European culture, for which Latin was the perfect tool.³ The beginning of the eighteenth century saw the founding of two institutions in Saint Petersburg: Академия наук (Akademia nauk; the Academy of Sciences) and a European-style gymnasium in which both of the ancient languages were taught.⁴ At the same time, the Greek language remained obligatory in religious schools, where future Orthodox priests were educated. In the nineteenth century, the Russian gymnasium was modelled on the German classical gymnasium; at this time, the extensive net of classical education extended to almost every big Russian city, since access to universities was open only to graduates of classical gymnasia.⁵ Knowledge of ancient culture, including mythology, became a key attribute of the educated Russian man. After 1917, during the Soviet era, however, classical education in schools was discontinued, and the classical courses offered at universities were limited for many years.⁶ Nevertheless, generations of Soviet pupils knew Greek myths from books, mostly from *Легенды и мифы Древней Греции* [Legendy i mify Drevnei Gretsii; Legends and Myths of Ancient Greece] by Moscow professor Nicholas Kuhn (1877–1940).⁷

² Nikolaos A. Chrissidis, *An Academy at the Court of the Tsars: Greek Scholars and Jesuit Education in Early Modern Russia*, DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2016.

³ Marinus A. Wes, *Classics in Russia 1700–1855: Between Two Bronze Horsemen*, Leiden, New York, NY, and Köln: Brill, 1992.

⁴ A fundamental work on the Russian school in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is Aleksei Lyubzhin, *История русской школы* [Istoria russkoi shkoly; The History of the Russian School], 3 vols., Moskva: Nikea, 2014–2015.

⁵ Georg Karl Schmid, *История средних учебных заведений в России* [Istoriia srednikh uchebnykh zavedenii v Rossii; The History of High Schools in Russia], trans. A. Neilsov, Sankt-Peterburg: Tipografiia V. S. Balasheva, 1878 (in German 1882).

⁶ Aleksandr Gavrilov, "Классическая филология в СССР (1992)" [Klassicheskaia filologiia v SSSR (1992); Classical Philology in the USSR (1992)], in Olga Budaragina, Aleksandr Verlinsky, and Denis Keyer, eds., *О филологах и филологии* [O filologakh i filologii; On Philologists and Philology], Sankt-Peterburg: Izdat. Dom Sankt-Peterburgskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2010, 277–292 (the article was based on the English version published by Gavrilov as "Russian Classical Scholarship in the 20th Century", in Gregory Nagy and Victor Bers, eds., *The Classics in East Europe: Essays on the Survival of a Humanistic Tradition*, Worcester, MA: American Philological Association, 1995, 61–81).

⁷ Elena Ermolaeva, "Classical Antiquity in Children's Literature in the Soviet Union", in Katarzyna Marciniak, ed., *Our Mythical Childhood... The Classics and Literature for Children and Young Adults*, Metaforms: Studies in the Reception of Classical Antiquity 8, Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2016, 243: "This compilation had its origins in a course Kuhn created in 1914 for grammar school

1.2. The Rebirth of Classical Education in Schools since 1989

The rebirth of classical education began during the *perestroika* in the late 1980s.⁸ In 1989, the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg (CGSP, or, in Latin, Gymnasium Classicum Petropolitanum)⁹ was founded under the auspices of the city authorities by a group of enthusiastic teachers, including classicists, with the assistance of Prof. Iakob M. Borovsky (1896–1994) and Prof. Alexander I. Zaicev (1926–2000).¹⁰ In 1990, the Russian Orthodox

pupils. In the Soviet Union this book was translated into different national languages and was reprinted many times in large runs, albeit with passages removed by Soviet censors, and with quotations from Engels, Marx, and Lenin added to the preface. The book is still popular today, edited with rich illustrations and without any ideological prefaces". See also above, in Hanna Paulouskaya's chapter, "Learning Myths in the Soviet School", 155–187.

⁸ Kerstin Hohn, "Homer und Cicero statt Marx und Lenin. Experiment und Wandel an den russischen Schulen und Hochschulen", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 January 1992, available online at Санкт-Петербургская классическая гимназия №610 [Sankt-Peterburgskaia klassicheskaia gimnaziia №610; Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg No. 610], <http://610.ru/school/press/archive/frankfurter.html> (accessed 9 July 2020); Marie A. Westbrook, Lev Lurie, and Mikhail Ivanov, "The Independent Schools of St. Petersburg: Diversification of Schooling in Postcommunist Russia", in Anthony Jones, ed., *Education and Society in the New Russia*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994, 110–112; Leonid Zhmud, "Санкт-Петербургской классической гимназии – семь лет" [Sankt-Peterburgskoi klassicheskoi gimnazii – sem' let; The Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg Is Seven Years Old], *Древний мир и мы* [Drevnii mir i my; The Ancient World and We] 1 (1997), 274–281; Lev Lurie, "Из истории Санкт-Петербургской классической гимназии" [Iz istorii Sankt-Peterburgskoi klassicheskoi gimnazii; From the History of the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg], *Абарис* [Abaris] 1 (2000), 2–3; Sergei Buryachko, "Классическая гимназия и грядущая реформа" [Klassicheskaiia gimnaziia i griadushchaia reforma; The Classical Gymnasium and the Upcoming Reform], *Абарис* [Abaris] 1 (2001), 2–3. For classical education in the communist era, see Hanna Paulouskaya's chapter, "Learning Myths in the Soviet School", 155–187.

⁹ Further on the CGSP, see the school's website: Санкт-Петербургская классическая гимназия №610 [Sankt-Peterburgskaia klassicheskaia gimnaziia №610; Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg No. 610], <http://610.ru/> (accessed 5 May 2020); and its Wikipedia page: "St Petersburg Classical Gymnasium", Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Petersburg_Classical_Gymnasium?fbclid=IwAR1IajBLJrAB9X7zRTNLix73sZOvh9mpOp1t3P6Wv7CAr2ALi1L-jPNPuVNw (accessed 5 May 2020). Also, Headmaster Sergei Buryachko and Boris Startsev have written about the CGSP and the problems of modern education in Russia. See Boris Startsev, "В классической гимназии учат древние языки..." [V klassicheskoi gimnazii uchat drevnie iazyki...; Ancient Languages Are Studied at the Classical Gymnasium...], Higher School of Economics, <https://www.hse.ru/school-for-life/spb610/> (accessed 5 May 2020).

¹⁰ Leonid Zhmud, "А. И. Зайцев и классическая гимназия" [A. I. Zaicev i klassicheskaiia gimnaziia; A. I. Zaicev and the Classical Gymnasium], *Абарис* [Abaris] 1 (2000), 12–15; Olga Budaragina, "Alexander Zaicev: A Non-Conformist from Ancient Greece", in David Movrin and Elżbieta Olechowska, eds., *Classics and Class: Greek and Latin Classics and Communism at School*, Warsaw and Ljubljana: Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw; Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts; and Wydawnictwo DiG, 2016, 55–65.

Church opened the first private classical school, the Gymnasium Radonezh, in Moscow, and, in 1993, the Classical School was founded under the auspices of Museum Graeco-Latinum in the same city by the classicist Yuriy Shichalin.¹¹ Currently, besides these schools, only a few others can be accurately called classical (humanist) gymnasia, where both Latin and Ancient Greek are taught. However, all over Russia, there are a few dozen schools and classes in which Latin is taught. They can be divided into those with a strong Latin study programme (three hours per week for three to seven years) and those offering Latin as part of a cultural programme that introduces students to ancient civilization, mythology, and literature for one to two hours per week over one or two years. Concerning Ancient Greek, the situation is different. There are the Orthodox Church schools, supported by the Russian Orthodox Church and the Patriarchate, in which the main goal of the curriculum is studying the language of the New Testament and the Church Fathers, Orthodox liturgy, and Byzantine Greek. Most of these schools are private and quite small. On average, Ancient Greek is taught there once or twice a week for one or two years. In secular schools that offer a thorough Ancient Greek programme, pupils study the language for one to three hours per week for one to five years.

1.3. Mythology, Ancient Greek, and Latin at the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg

The CGSP remains the only state school in Russia where the study of both ancient languages is obligatory; it presently has a student body of around 700.¹² The school was founded with the aim of recreating the educational programme and tradition of the classical gymnasia in pre-revolutionary Russia and to connect these with modern European pedagogical strategies:

¹¹ The publishing house of Yuriy Shichalin's Museum Graeco-Latinum issues classical texts, translations, and studies. In 1991, its first book was a reprint of Aleksandr Weismann, *Древнегреческо-русский словарь* [Drevnegrechesko-russky slovar'; The Greek-Russian Dictionary], 5th ed., Sankt-Peterburg, 1899. See Yuriy Shichalin's Museum Graeco-Latinum, <http://www.mgl.ru/en> (accessed 25 July 2020).

¹² See Vsevolod Zelchenko, "Gymnasium Classicum Petropolitanum", *Hyperboreus* 19.1–2 (2013), 289–296. This article by a classical scholar and Vice-Principal of the CGSP presents an overview of the school's history. The author discusses the aims and principles of the school and analyses its programme of Greek and Latin in comparison to the classical schools of modern Europe and pre-revolutionary Russia.

The core of the academic programme is the compulsory study of the classical languages (Latin and Ancient Greek), two contemporary languages (English and German) as well as mathematics. To ensure that every student receives a classical education we offer a single set curriculum for all students. The founding principle of the institution is “teaching the skills of learning” meaning every student develops critical thinking skills and receives support in the search for knowledge.¹³

Pupils, who are selected through entrance examinations, which determine their general development and their aptitude for analytical thinking, start studying at the CGSP in Grade 5 (ten to eleven years old) and study for seven years up to Grade 11 (seventeen to eighteen years old). From Grade 5, pupils are given lessons in ancient civilization, mythology, and Greek and Roman history.¹⁴ The ancient mythology course not only narrates and discusses the myths but also involves quizzes, workshops, role-playing games, the school theatre, and more. The most popular activity is art, as part of which the students draw ancient gods and heroes, and illustrate mythological plots; exhibitions of these pictures decorate the school walls.

Likewise, Latin begins in Grade 5 and continues until the final year, with four to five academic hours per week in Grades 5–7 (covering Latin grammar and syntax), three hours in Grades 8–11 (reading ancient authors: Caesar, Cicero, Ovid, Horace, Livy, Virgil, Tacitus, and Petronius). Ancient Greek starts in Grade 7 (twelve to thirteen years old) and continues throughout with three hours per week. The curriculum aims to teach Ancient Greek grammar and syntax for three years, after which students begin reading texts in the original: Attic prose (the *Anabasis* and *Memorabilia* or *Cyropaedia* by Xenophon, and the works of Plato, Lysias, and Lucian), followed by Homer in Grade 10, and, in the final year, Herodotus and a tragedy of Euripides or Sophocles, or a comedy of Aristophanes. Testing is carried out via continuous assessment (different kinds of texts, grammar tests, translations from Russian into Latin and Greek) and a final oral examination after almost every level. This examination involves translation of an unseen text (with a dictionary), a grammar test, and translation of a text that has been read during the year (without a dictionary). After Grade 10, there is a written test on Homer, including translation, grammar tasks, and converting Homeric

¹³ The Classical Gymnasium of St Petersburg, School #610, <http://610.ru/en/> (accessed 5 May 2020).

¹⁴ See the programme appended to this chapter.

dialect into the Attic one. There is also an obligatory year-long course on the history of Ancient Greek and Latin literature.

Extracurricular activities are also an important source of classical education at the school. There is a club, *Classica*, where students, with the assistance of their teachers, work on topics of their interest and give presentations, the best of which have been published in the school annual magazine, *Абарис* [Abaris], which, between 2000 and 2008, was edited by teachers Vsevolod Zelchenko and Olga Budaragina with the help of students and other teachers from the school (see Figs. 2–7). It is important to note that the CGSP is in close contact with the Bibliotheca Classica Petropolitana (BiCL), a Classics reference library and a research centre,¹⁵ which shares a building with the gymnasium; some BiCL staff are even simultaneously teachers of Classics at the school. Thus, students have the opportunity to do research and prepare their presentations at the BiCL with the assistance of scholars. Some of these talks were devoted to mythological subjects, to motifs and patterns in myths, for example: Julia Khokhlova, “Χαῖρε, ὦ Χάρων: Charon in Ancient Greek and Latin Literature” (teacher: Elena L. Ermolaeva, 1999); Svetlana Kleiner, “The Unicorn in Ancient Greece” (teacher: Tatiana M. Andronnenko, see in: *Abaris* 3 [2002], 4); Ksenia Shnol, “Gello who Loved Children to Death, Sappho fr. 178 Lobel-Page” (teacher: Alexandra J. Enbekova, see in: *Abaris* 3 [2002], 33–37).

Additionally, since 2005 the CGSP has been taking part in a Greek competition in Italy, *Certamen della Tuscia*, organized by the Lyceum Mario Burrati and the university in Viterbo – on two occasions the school’s students have won the first prize.¹⁶ In 2006–2009, the Gymnasium Classicum Petropolitanum also participated in the Annual European Student Competition in Ancient Greek Language and Culture organized by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs of Greece. During the summer holidays, students regularly took part in archaeological excavations at the sites of former Ancient Greek colonies: Chersonesus, Nymphaion, Odessa, and Pontic Olbia, as well as in Deultum (Bulgaria). Classicists from the gymnasium presently

¹⁵ Bibliotheca Classica Petropolitana, <http://www.bibliotheca-classica.org/en/frontpage> (accessed 25 July 2020).

¹⁶ Arseni Vetushko in 2007 and Kristina Vashpanova in 2019. See “Certamen Viterbiense 2019: un’edizione che parla di equità”, TusciaUp, 7 April 2019, <https://www.tusciaup.com/certamen-viterbiense-2019-unedizione-che-parla-di-equita/132581?fbclid=IwAR0TjSzw-Qk6nZFflbr0XSol4UIUJh-qxV05uUCUvr-GZ5VWwJruJ8s8XdbQ> (accessed 8 September 2019).

organize original programmes of cultural tourism in Greece and Italy for the CGSP students and teachers.

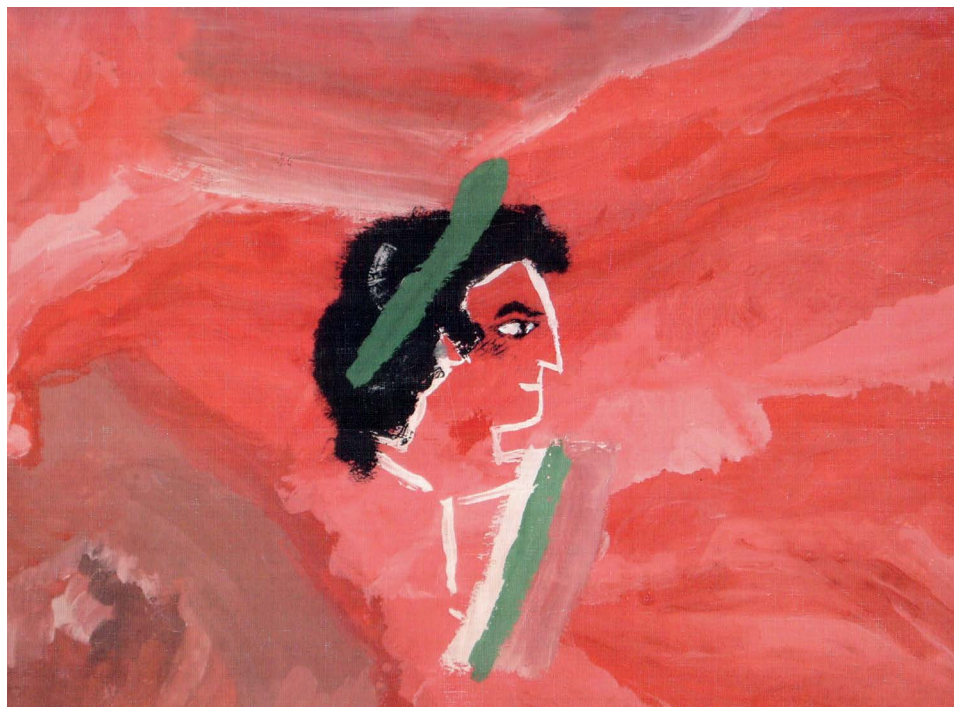


Figure 2: “Одиссей” [Odisei; Odysseus] by Konstantin Antonov, Grade 5, *Абарис* [Abaris] 7 (2006), back cover. Reproduced with permission from *Abaris*.

It is also worth mentioning the publishing activities of the CGSP, which is engaged in translating Greek and Latin textbooks and manuals from German and in publishing them.¹⁷

¹⁷ Kurt Person, *Propulaia: Griechisches Unterrichtswerk (Griechisches Lese- und Übungsbuch)*, Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1967, as Kurt Person, *Propulaia: Хрестоматия по древнегреческому языку* [Propulaia: Khrestomatiia po drevnegrecheskomu iazyku; Propulaia: Ancient Greek Textbook], trans. Vanda P. Kazanskene, Sankt-Peterburg: Sankt-Peterburgskaia klassicheskaiia gimnaziia, 1993 (2nd ed. 2013); Matthias Stehle, *Griechische Sprachlehre*, Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1950, as Matthias Stehle, *Грамматика древнегреческого языка* [Grammatika drevnegrecheskogo iazyka; Ancient Greek Grammar], trans. Vanda P. Kazanskene, Sankt-Peterburg: Sankt-Peterburgskaia klassicheskaiia gimnaziia, 1993; Horst Holtermann and Hans Baumgarten, *Ianua nova*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986, as Horst Holtermann and Hans Baumgarten, *Ianua nova*, trans. Aleksandr Chernoglazov, Sankt-Peterburg: Sankt-Peterburgskaia klassicheskaiia gimnaziia, 1993 (2nd ed. 2016).

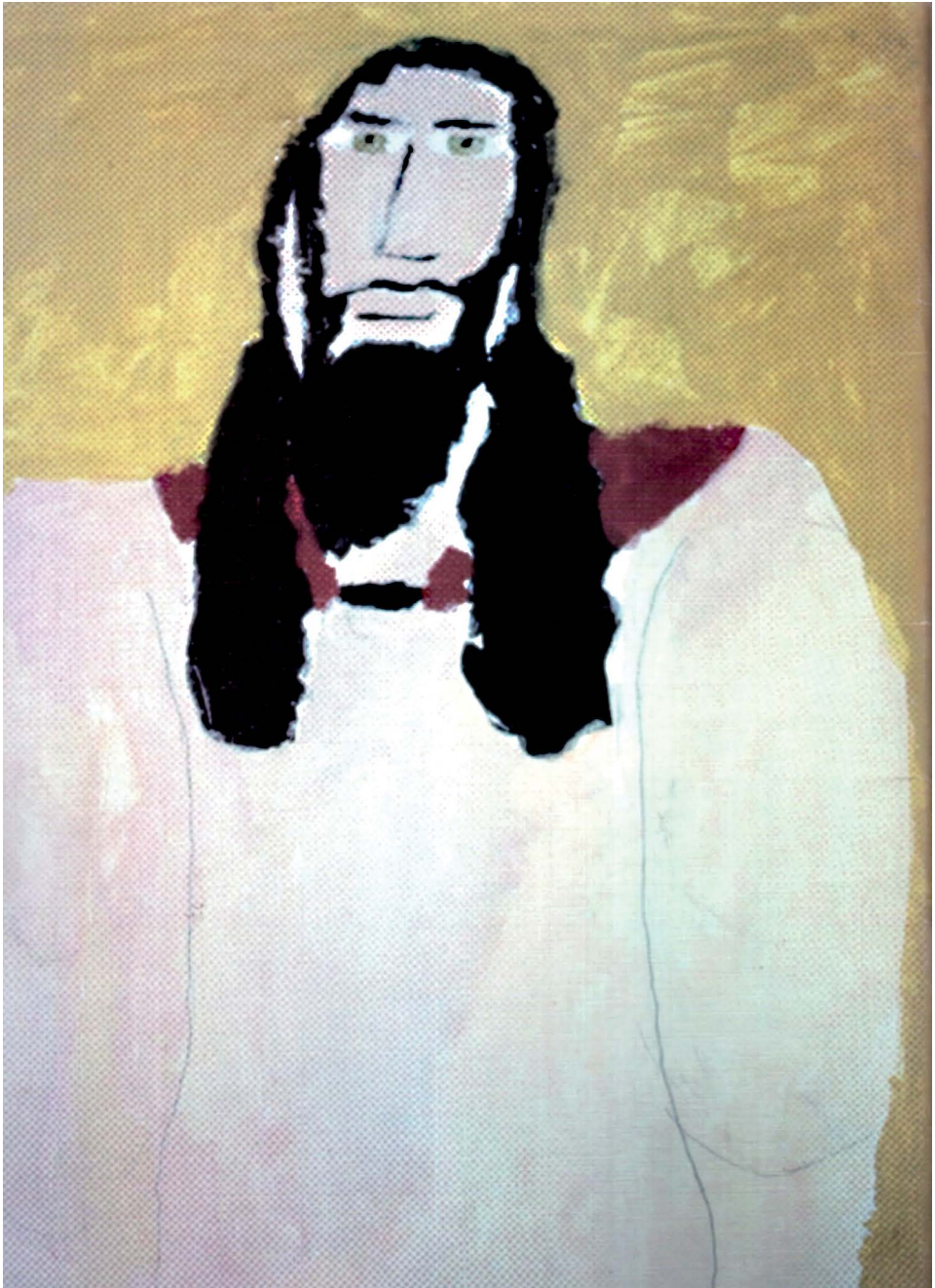


Figure 3: “Одиссей – хитрый, сильный, умный” [Odisei – khitryi, silnyi, umnyi; Odysseus the Cunning, Strong, and Wise] by Sasha Knyaginina, Grade 5, *Абарис* [Abaris] 9 (2008), back cover. Reproduced with permission from *Abaris*.



Figure 4: “Ясон и Медея” [Jason i Medeia; Jason and Medea] by Sasha Khodot, Grade 5, *Абарис* [Abaris] 6 (2005), back cover. Reproduced with permission from *Abaris*.

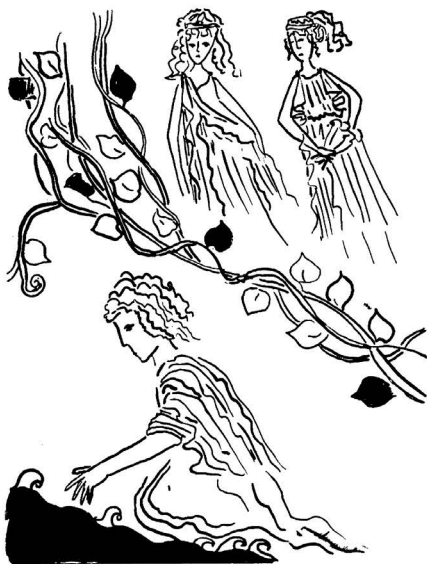
The school has also published *Древнегреческий язык: Задания и тесты* [Drevnegrecheskii iazyk: Zadaniia i testy; Ancient Greek: Tasks and Tests] by Vsevolod Zelchenko (2011), a witty collection of grammar, linguistic, lexical, and translation assignments, among which mythological topics can also be found.

On a wider scale, there functions an association of school teachers of classical languages, *Societas Russica Magistrorum Linguarum Classicarum*,¹⁸ which aims to preserve and improve the status and quality of classical language and mythology teaching in secondary schools and to promote classical education. The association is part of Euroclassica, a European association of teachers of classical languages and civilizations.¹⁹

¹⁸ Либрариус [Librarius], <http://librarius.narod.ru> (accessed 30 March 2020); Российская ассоциация преподавателей древних языков/Societas Russica Magistrorum Linguarum Classicarum [Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia prepodavatelei drevnikh iazykov; Russian Association of Teachers of Ancient Languages], <https://librarius.narod.ru/pro/srmlc.php> (accessed 5 July 2020).

¹⁹ Euroclassica, <https://www.edugroup.at/praxis/portale/euroclassica> (accessed 30 March 2020); Anton van Hooff, “Saint Petersburg, the Gate to Euroclassica”, *Абарис* [Abaris] 2 (2001), 50–53.

“МЕТАМОРФОЗЫ” В ИЛЛЮСТРАЦИЯХ ГИМНАЗИСТОВ



НАРЦИСС (III, 417–419)

Spem sine corpore amat, corpus putat esse, quod umbra est;
adstupet ipse sibi vultuque inmotus eodem
haeret, ut e Pario formatum marmore signum.

Любит без плоти мечту и призрак за плоть принимает.
Сам он собой поражен, над водою застыл неподвижен,
Юным похожий лицом на изваянный мрамор паросский.

(здесь и ниже переводы С. В. Шервинского)

Рисунок Саши Филипповой, 5 класс

ПИГМАЛИОН (X, 252–255)

...Miratur et haurit
pectore Pygmalion simulati corporis ignes.
Saepe manus operi temptantes admovet, an sit
corpus an illud ebur...

Диву дивится творец и пылает к подобию тела.
Часто протягивал он к изваянию руки, пытая,
Тело пред ним иль слоновая кость...

Рисунок Юли Поляковой, 6 класс



Figure 5: “Метаморфозы: Нарцисс” [Metamorfozy: Nartsiss; Metamorphoses: Narcissus] by Sasha Filippova, Grade 5; “Пигмалион” [Pigmalion; Pygmalion] by Julia Polyakova, Grade 6, Абарис [Abaris] 4 (2003), 5. Reproduced with permission from Abaris.



ПРЕВРАЩЕНИЕ ФИЛЕМОНА И БАВКИДЫ (VIII, 717–720)

Mutua, dum licuit, reddebant dicta “vale” que
 “o coniunx” dixere simul, simul abdita textit
 ora frutex: ostendit adhuc Thyneius illic
 incola de gemino vicinos corpore truncos.

Тихо успели они обменяться приветом: “Прощай же,
 Муж мой!” — “Прощай, о жена!” — так вместе сказали,
 и сразу
 Рот им покрыла листва. И теперь обитатель вифинский
 Два вам покажет ствола, от единого корня возросших.

Рисунок Саши Лиминой, 10 класс

ЕВРОПА И ЮПИТЕР В ОБРАЗЕ БЫКА (II, 858–861)

Pacem vultus habet. Miratur Agenore nata...
 Sed quamvis mitem metuit contingere primo,
 mox adit et flores ad candida porrigit ora.

Мирным выглядит бык: Агенорова дочь в изумленье...
 Но хоть и кроток он был, прикоснуться сначала боялась —
 Вскоре к нему подошла и к морде цветы протянула.



Рисунок Бори Лебедева, 6 класс

Figure 6: “Метаморфозы: Филемон и Бавкида” [Metamorfozy: Filemon i Bavkida; Metamorphoses: Philemon and Baucis] by Sasha Limina, Grade 10; “Европа и Юпитер” [Evropa i Jupiter; Europa and Jupiter] by Boris Lebedev, Grade 6, *Абарис* [Abaris] 4 (2003), 6. Reproduced with permission from *Abaris*.



Ио, ПРЕВРАЩЕННАЯ В Телку (I, 610–612)

Coniugis adventum praesenserat inque nitentem
Inachidos vultus mutaverat ille iuvencam;
bos quoque formosa est.

Бог же супруги приход предчувствовал и незамедля
Инаха юную дочь превратил в белоснежную телку;
Но и телицей она хороша...

Рисунок Миши Гурая, 5 класс

Афина и Арахна (VI, 43–47)

Tum dea "venit!" ait formamque removit anilem
Palladaque exhibuit... Sola est non territa virgo,
sed tamen erubuit, subitusque invita notavit
ora rubor rursusque evanuit...

Тут ей Афина: "Я здесь!" говорит и, образ старухи
Сбросив, явила себя... Не трепещет пред нею Арахна.
Все же вскочила; на миг невольным покрылось румянцем
Девы лицо и опять побледнело...

Рисунок Лизы Малининой, 5 класс



Figure 7: "Метаморфозы: Ио" [*Metamorfozy: Io; Metamorphoses: Io*] by Misha Gurai, Grade 5; "Афина и Арахна" [*Afina i Arakhna; Athena and Arachne*] by Liza Malinina, Grade 5, *Абарис* [*Abaris*] 4 (2003), 7. Reproduced with permission from *Abaris*.

The CGSP itself takes part in the annual Euroclassica Greek and Latin examinations,²⁰ while the Euroclassica congress that took place in Saint Petersburg in September 2007 contributed to the popularity of classical education and brought new members into the Russian association.²¹

²⁰ Henriette van Gelder and Elena Ermolaeva, "When Russian and Dutch Pupils Meet for EGEX and ELEX...", *Euroclassica Newsletter* 23 (January 2015), 39, https://www.edugroup.at/fileadmin/DAM/Gegenstandsportale/Latein/Dateien/Euroclassica_documents/Newsletter/Newsletter_2015.pdf (accessed 7 May 2020).

²¹ Elena Ermolaeva, "Annual Conference in Saint-Petersburg", *Euroclassica Newsletter* 15 (January 2007), 12–16.

1.4. The Summer School in Classics (*Academia Classica Aestiva*)

One of the projects of the *Societas Russica* was to organize in Russia a summer school for pupils in order to popularize ancient languages, civilization, and mythology. The Summer School in Classics (*Academia Classica Aestiva*) has been held from 2009 annually on 1–10 August in the school buildings of the small village Rozhdestvo (the name “Rozhdestvo” means “Nativity”), which is situated halfway between Saint Petersburg and Moscow.²² The main aim of the Summer School, organized with the assistance of Русский фонд содействия образованию и науке (Russky fond sodeistviia obrazovaniu i nauke; The Russian Foundation for Support of Education and Science), is the enjoyment of Latin and Ancient Greek, history, and mythology.

About forty students, aged from thirteen to seventeen, and hailing from both large and small Russian cities and towns, take part in the summer school each year. These participants are either winners of the competition Ежегодная общероссийская олимпиада по латинскому языку (*Ezhegodnaia obshcherossiiskaia olimpiada po latinskому iazyku*; The Annual National Competition in Latin)²³ or are particularly successful in studying Latin and Ancient Greek. During the programme, they attend lectures and participate in seminars and workshops on different fields of Classics, such as ancient literature, history, science, theatre, mythology, cartography, vase painting, papyrology, everyday life; all of these talks are given by professors, lecturers, and PhD students from the universities of Saint Petersburg and Moscow. Extracurricular activities include staging a Latin play in the original, cooking a Roman feast, making clay tablets and writing in Linear B, playing ancient games, reading Pompeian inscriptions, and writing and deciphering the students’ own “Latin Pompeian” inscriptions. The obligatory hour-long seminar “Viva Latina” is run by teachers who have learnt spoken Latin at the *Accademia Vivarium Novum* in Italy.²⁴

²² “Летние школы по изучению античности” [*Letnie shkoly po izucheniiu antichnosti*; Antiquity Summer Schools], Либрариус [Librarius], <http://librarius-narod.ru/pro/lsha.php> (accessed 8 September 2019).

²³ “Олимпиады по латинскому языку” [*Olimpiady po latinskому iazyku*; The Annual National Competitions in Latin], Либрариус [Librarius], <https://librarius-narod.ru/pro/olympiads.php> (accessed 21 July 2020).

²⁴ *Accademia Vivarium Novum*, <https://www.vivariumnovum.net/en/academy> (accessed 8 September 2019).



Figure 8: Logo of the Classical Gymnasium of Saint Petersburg. Reproduced with permission from the School.

Lev Pushel

2. A View from the Other Side of the Desk: Latin at Our School

From the foundation of the classical gymnasium, the study of Latin has been a fundamental element of the education provided here. The in-depth learning of, and engagement with, this language starts in the third term of Grade 5. From then on, every year, except for Grades 8 and 10, ends with an exam that tests the student's knowledge of the grammar and lexis covered during the year, and, from the point of view of a person who has passed all five of them, I can definitively state that, if you did not work consistently over the school year, or are ill-prepared, passing the tests is extremely challenging.

2.1. Mythology at the Gymnasium from the Point of View of Pupils

When we study the so-called dead languages, our main aspiration is to become able to read the texts written in these languages. But if students do not understand the content of the passage, if they cannot appreciate the development of the story, it is an extremely complicated task to make them even slightly interested in what they are trying to translate in the classroom and at home. That is one of the most necessary things in contemporary

pedagogy – to connect student experience with the content covered in the classroom.

The main topics of the reading passages used at school are those taken from mythology. In fact, it is hard to think of an ancient text that contains no myths at all, for so much of ancient Mediterranean literature consists almost entirely of myths and legends. Therefore, studying mythology is one of the most significant stages in preparing to read these famous texts in their original language.

To this end, our gymnasium teachers often begin the high school year with an introduction to the plot of the relevant text. For example, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is the work traditionally read in our Grade 9. In order to make it easier and more interesting to read, teachers spend hours retelling the myths of transformation that are the subject of this text. In my case, we read the section describing the Four Ages. The teacher's explanation given before launching the process of immersion in the text helped greatly and allowed us to enjoy the text in a way that would have been impossible without this account; the story would have been so obscure that, combined with the difficulty of interpreting the foreign language, comprehension would have been very difficult indeed. The same approach was taken with all the myths selected from Ovid's poem, both those that were famous and some that were less so. The teachers choose the stories from the *Metamorphoses* according to individual preference. We, for example, studied the tales of the Great Flood and of Apollo and Daphne.

Another example is that of Horace's poetry, generally studied in Grade 10. Though consisting, primarily, of the author's thoughts, trials, and sufferings, his work is also peppered with Roman mythology, including references to characters such as Ilia, Proteus, Pyrrha, and many more. Here, the task faced by the teacher is to provide students with information (or to give them homework) about these stories in order to enable them to understand what they are reading.

Our school is not only renowned for studying Latin. Ancient Greek texts are also full of myths. In Grade 10, pupils encounter real mythological stories. These are, of course, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

2.2. The Festival of Great Dionysia at the Gymnasium Classicum Petropolitanum

Another ancient tradition that has successfully been renewed at the Gymnasium is the festival of Great Dionysia of Athens. This project was the brain-child of Natalia Kuznetsova, a teacher of ancient languages. Even though drama had previously been studied at the school, the Gymnasium Festival of Great Dionysia (see Fig. 9), which has already been held for twelve years, gave new inspiration to young actors. It takes place over three days in one of the months of the third term, and the contest is judged by a team of six jurors, three of whom are permanent appointments: the headmaster, Sergei Buryachko, the head of the school theatre, Elena Venzel, and one of the most renowned teachers working at the Gymnasium, Elena Gracheva. The other three members vary from year to year, and can include alumni, teachers, and friends of the Gymnasium. The decision of the committee is usually announced ten days after the contest.



Figure 9: Festival of Great Dionysia: Zeus, Saint Petersburg, 2015. Photograph by Vladimir Ivanov; used with permission.

Performances start at 4 p.m. every day, and each should take no more than twenty minutes, although this rule is not always adhered to strictly. Each troupe is led by a director (primarily teachers working at the Gymnasium or alumni of the school), described in the Ancient Greek tradition as the *choregos*, who selects members of the troupe several months in advance, in the autumn, when the theme of new Dionysia is announced. The *choregos* decides what play they want to produce. The theme is, of course, a modern addition, since the ancient Dionysia had no such concept, but the introduction of a unifying topic in the school context makes the contest easier to judge. During the twelve years of its existence, the themes of the Dionysia have covered (in chronological order of the festivals) Faust, Shakespeare, non-fiction literature, memoirs, twentieth-century drama, Pushkin, scenes from Romeo and Juliet, poets and poetry, playwrights, genres of literature, and Herodotus. What is most impressive is the fact that twice the Dionysia productions have been staged in Ancient Greek on mythological topics.

Like in ancient Athens, the performances of the young actors and their adult directors and the contest between the troupes are the key element of the Dionysia. Nevertheless, in contrast to the original Dionysia, the competition is held in the comfortable surroundings of the school theatre, which also possesses an excellent sound and lighting system, items not found in a stone amphitheatre. Another difference between the Saint Petersburg contest and the Athenian one is the number of awards. In contrast to the three contestants of Athens, twenty-four troupes fight for more than fifteen shared awards and a number of special awards from the judges. Although each troupe receives a reward of some kind, there is still the main prize, the Grand Prix, won by the production that boasts the best costumes, music, directing, and acting. There is also a prize for the best actor; several past winners have gone on to make theatre a part of their lives thereafter. The mix of ancient practice with modern innovation, as embodied by the Dionysia, is typical of the Gymnasium, which inspires its students through ancient customs that have been slightly modified to create a new and fresh tradition.

3. The Importance of Studying the Classical World: A Personal Assessment

Antiquity surrounds us. In Saint Petersburg, the ancient world is everywhere. We cannot cross a street in the centre of the city without seeing

it; no palace is without it. Look at architecture. Our city is replete with examples of the imitation of ancient architecture, even including simple replicas of ancient buildings, such as the Bourse by Jean-François Thomas de Thomon (1805–1810), inspired by the Temple of Hera in Paestum. The ancient system of orders is the backbone of the most frequently appearing style, namely classicism. Ancient gods abound; Poseidon on the front of the Bourse, Apollo on the roof of the Alexandrinsky Theatre, Athena on the Academy of Arts, and many others. Mythological personages peer at us from the roofs, balconies, and pediments of the buildings, as if they were asking if we know them. The atlantes, caryatids, sphinxes, and gryphons are believed to be the guards of our city. Similarly with paintings. In the State Hermitage Museum you can study antiquity just by wandering through the halls. Therefore, in our school there are mandatory excursions to this museum, where we especially examine examples of usage of mythological stories in paintings and sculpture.

Even in the confines of our homes we cannot avoid meeting mythology in the context of popular literature, where so many motifs come from the ancient writers. *Pan Tadeusz* [Sir Thaddeus, 1834] by Adam Mickiewicz, for example, one of the most famous Eastern European books, features many allusions to the *Iliad*. The renowned Russian writer Nicolay Gogol was inspired by poems of Homer, and Leo Tolstoy even tried to learn Ancient Greek, although he was already of mature age, in order to read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in the language of their origin.

The sheer abundance of the classical world that surrounds us is for me the prime reason why studying antiquity and ancient languages is a necessity, not just for philologists and historians, but for all people, in order to understand the world we live in.

Appendix

The Gymnasium's Ancient Civilization and Mythology Programme for Grade 5

First term (September and October) – 9 weeks, 27 hours:

1. Introduction – 1 hour
2. Continental Greece: geography, population, peoples, mountains, rivers; Hesiod, *Theogony* – 3 hours

3. Islands and navigation – 2 hours; Crete – 2 hours
4. The Trojan War; Schliemann – 2 hours
5. The Peloponnese: Argolis (without Epidaurus), Sparta, Messenia – 3 hours
6. Heracles – 1 hour
7. Elis; the Olympics – 1 hour
8. The Peloponnese: test – 1 hour
9. Epidaurus – 1 hour
10. Corinth: Sisyphus, Bellerophon, Perseus, Arion – 2 hours
11. Attica: overview – 1 hour
12. The founding of Athens: Cecrops and Erechtheus – 1 hour
13. Theseus – 1 hour
14. Ceramics and pottery – 2 hours
15. Review and test – 2 hours
16. Summary – 1 hour

Second term (November and December) – 7 weeks, 21 hours:

1. The Acropolis and ancient architecture – 3 hours
2. The agora, topography, painting – 2 hours
3. Private houses and daily life – 3 hours
4. Athenian festivals: the Panathenaea, the Dionysia, the Eleusinian mysteries – 2 hours
5. Beotia, Thebes – 3 hours
6. Delphi – 3 hours
7. Review – 2 hours
8. Test – 1 hour
9. Northern Greece: Epirus, Calydon – 2 hours

Third term (January) – 6 hours in the beginning:

1. Thessaly; Argonauts – 4 hours
2. Aeneas – 2 hours