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## **Equal Opportunities for Latin!**

Allow translation into Latin at GCSE and include Latin in national curriculum, teachers urge Michael Gove in new Politeia study

Latin in the new curriculum and GCSE is in danger of being the Cinderella of foreign languages. So far the official remit threatens two penalties. Secondary schools may not offer Latin as an option for the languages National Curriculum of 11-14 year olds (although primaries can). And, so far, the proposals for GCSE Latin do not include any specification to allow translation from English into Latin as an examinable option.

To the authors of Politeia's new study, *Latin for Language Lovers: Ancient Languages, the New Curriculum and GCSE*, these omissions should be rectified when it comes to the final framework.

David Butterfield, a distinguished Cambridge Classicist, explains why. The influence of the Roman world on this country and its heritage, including the Latin language, continue to matter. As Dr Butterfield says, few languages are more rewarding to study: 'Language lies at the heart of education, and the Latin language at the heart of the new Latin GCSE'.

His co-authors, three experienced teachers, Stephen Anderson, Katharine Radice and Dominic Sullivan show how this can be done. Welcoming the fact that many schools, despite the shortage of time set aside for Latin, have enthusiastically embraced the subject, they show how the new GCSE can cater for such a variety of needs. The umbrella of a single examination will give teachers the option to decide the emphases they judge best, including the option of translating from English into Latin.

Instead of 'wholesale changes to the present system' for Latin, they propose some fine tuning to what already is there. In particular they suggest that:

- Some grammar questions are included on one of the language papers
- The opportunity to translate into Latin is restored for those who want it
- The possibility of reading more widely, rather than doing a second set book is opened out

They provide an outline for GCSE Latin which fulfils these aims and does so for all ability ranges. They also include a set of specimen questions for four of the five proposed papers, based closely on recent actual papers set by the OCR.

**The authors therefore**

- **(i) propose a clear option for translation from English into Latin in the final specification for the GCSE bringing it into line with other languages. This would be optional for those teachers who find such work valuable and rewarding, not mandatory for all.**
- **(ii) propose that for Key Stage 3 (Ages 11-14), Latin remains within the National Curriculum as a permissible choice of language, for which the existing programme of study for foreign languages could be adapted with minor changes.**

**In an open letter to the Secretary of State, a group of Classicists, writers, broadcasters and teachers, endorses the authors' calls. They ask Mr Gove to allow the new GCSE to include such an option and give Latin the same official blessing as other foreign languages for 11-14 year olds.**

*Latin for Language Lovers: Ancient Languages, the New Curriculum and the GCSE* is published by Politeia, 33 Catherine Place, London, SW1E 6DY. Hard Copies are available on request.

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