AENEAS IN THE ANTIPODES

The teaching of Virgil in New South Wales schools from 1900 to the start of the 21st century

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts

University of Sydney

2005

Emily Helene Matters
Preface and Acknowledgements

This work was stimulated by sharing the delights and difficulties of Virgil’s poetry with school students in New South Wales over a period of thirty years. It was further encouraged by the late Kevin Lee, Professor of Classics in the University of Sydney (1992-2001), who gave his time so generously to foster a love of Latin literature among teachers and students in our secondary schools.

My dedicated colleagues in the Classical Languages Teachers Association Inc. have always responded readily to my appeals for archival material, old textbooks and personal reminiscences. They filled in my questionnaires and allowed me to observe their lessons. I am very grateful for all this essential help, and hope that my research may prove in some way useful in their work.

My thanks are also owed to the staff of Fisher Library (Rare Books and University of Sydney Archives), the State Library of NSW and the State Records Centre at Kingswood, and especially to Denise Lamond, Librarian at the Office of the Board of Studies, who gave me frequent access to old documents and records.

Members of the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Sydney have been a great source of information and encouragement. I owe an enormous debt in particular to Frances Muecke for her vigilant and supportive supervision and her vast knowledge of all aspects of Virgil.

Special thanks to my old friend and colleague, Dorothy Healey, who applied her incredible eye for detail to proofreading the manuscript. Any residual errors are mine, not hers.

The surveys of current teachers and the classroom observations were carried out by permission of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Sydney (Ref. No. 09-2004/1/7672) and, in the case of government schools, by permission of the Department of Education and Training (SERAP Number 04.180). Visits to non-government schools were carried out with the approval of the Principal of each school. Their cooperation is acknowledged and much appreciated.

Some sections of the first chapter of this thesis were published in 2004 as part of an essay entitled “Classical Languages – an Endangered Species” in Education and the Ideal, a collection of writings on education edited by Naomi Smith and published by New Frontier Press, Sydney.
My daughters, Elizabeth and Susanna, have put up with my research for about a third of their lives. Their help, encouragement and cups of herbal tea made all the difference.

Emily Matters
September,

2005.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PREFACE and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**INTRODUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter One</th>
<th>Background – Latin in NSW schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900 to the 1950s</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950s: transition to the comprehensive high school</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline and renaissance - an eye-witness account</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The survival of the keenest</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifying Classics in the secondary school</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter Two**

The Influence of Public Examinations

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin examinations in the 20th century (and beyond)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination structure in New South Wales</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Latin candidate numbers</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgil as prescribed text: choice and length</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Virgil prescriptions in the 20th century</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of prescription</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions on Virgil</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Translations of extracts</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Short-answer questions on extracts</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Questions on scansion and metre</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Questions on grammar</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Essay questions</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended commentaries and reference books</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Before World War I</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. commentaries</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. background reading</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Between the Wars to the 1950s</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. The 1960s and beyond
   i. literary criticism 143
   ii. prescribed commentaries 187

CHAPTER THREE  The Contribution of Professional Organizations

   Establishment of conferences and study days 208
   Study days and the teaching of Virgil 211
   The contribution of Classicum 214
   Professional development and resources 216

CHAPTER FOUR  Virgil Before the Final Examination Year

   The need for transitional texts 220
   Introducing Virgil in traditional style 222
   The de-throning of translation and the growth of literary criticism 228
   The new style of transitional texts 232
   Introducing Virgil through recitation 251

CHAPTER FIVE  Teaching Virgil in English

   Preamble 256
CHAPTER SIX  Into the 21st Century

The revision of the Higher School Certificate 269
The new recommended reading list 276
Non-print resources 282
The changed role of public examinations 284
Virgil in the 21st century classroom 290
   a. Classroom observations 290
   b. Survey of teachers on the teaching of Virgil 297

CONCLUSIONS 308

BIBLIOGRAPHY

General Bibliography 314
Classified Bibliography 324

Official documents 334
Archival material 336

Summary of changes in public examinations 337

APPENDICES

1. Questionnaire on the teaching of Virgil 339
2. Results of teacher survey 350
3. Extract from the “Knibbs-Turner Report” of 1904 352
4. Allocation of teaching time in 1911 353
5. Advertisement for “cribs” in 1940 354
7. “Map of the Underworld”: classical studies in 1978 356
8. Study guide to Virgil issued in 1996 357
9. Example of assistance from a website in 2005 358
10. Advertisement for Virgil-related software in 2005 359