

RESEARCH IN GREEK AND LATIN STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1985-1994*

W J Henderson (Rand Afrikaans University)

1 *Introduction*

In 1984 an international conference was held in Rome to survey the work done in the field of Classical philology during the twentieth century. Scholars from various parts of the world presented papers on the contributions of their own countries.¹ It was my privilege to offer the 'panorama' and 'bilancio' (the metaphors used by the conference organisers) in the case of South Africa. This was the first systematic and comprehensive account of published work in the field of classical studies presented to the international community (Henderson 1989; cf. Matier 1986). According to the parameters set for the conference, only books were included in the survey. Subsequently I compiled a bibliography of all publications, books and articles, by classical scholars in South Africa until 1984 (Henderson 1986). Since then, I have completed another bibliography for the years 1985-1994 (Henderson 1995). This paper is an analysis of and commentary on that compilation.

2 *Some statistics*

The contents of the bibliography are based on submissions from Classical scholars in South Africa, supplemented by my own searches. Also, items may have appeared too late for inclusion in the final manuscript. The bibliography therefore cannot be considered exhaustive. Furthermore, any count of the items in the bibliography is bound to be subjective when it comes to the inclusion or exclusion of an item in any particular category. The following tables are therefore offered only to illustrate certain tendencies. The numbers represent items on topics related to the particular category, both those published locally (N = 'national') and those published abroad (I = 'international'). Since items can occur in more than one category, no absolute totals are given.

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¹ The papers were eventually published in Arrighetti et al. 1989.

| | T i l l | | 1945- | | 1955- | | 1965- | | 1975- | | 1985- | |
|-----------|---------|---|-------|---|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|
| | 1944 | | 1954 | | 1964 | | 1974 | | 1984 | | 1994 | |
| | N | I | N | I | N | I | N | I | N | I | N | I |
| Archaeol | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 17 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 30 | 2 |
| Art | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 14 | 8 | 56 | 0 |
| ClassCult | 33 | 7 | 21 | 2 | 28 | 2 | 20 | 3 | 29 | 7 | 98 | 17 |
| ClassStud | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 25 | 1 | 29 | 1 | 68 | 11 |
| Epigraphy | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 7 |
| HistGen | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 20 | 0 |
| HistGrk | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 16 | 24 | 21 | 13 | 55 | 22 |
| HistRom | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 15 | 9 | 17 | 12 | 20 | 27 | 70 | 57 |
| LangGen | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 17 | 11 |
| LangGr | 0 | 0 | 17 | 1 | 10 | 8 | 20 | 10 | 21 | 6 | 38 | 10 |
| LangLat | 10 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 11 | 1 | 23 | 9 |
| LitGen | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 19 | 2 | 25 | 7 | 33 | 11 | 95 | 15 |
| GrPoetCl | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 13 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 35 | 1 | 70 | 22 |
| GrPoetPat | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 34 | 12 |
| GrPoetBy | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 14 | 5 |
| GrProseCl | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 23 | 12 |
| GrPrPat | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 18 | 1 | 92 | 13 |
| GrPrByz | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| LatPoetCl | 5 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 7 | 43 | 25 | 87 | 41 | 71 | 46 |
| LatPoetPa | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 23 | 2 |
| LPoetRen | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| LProseCl | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 17 | 11 | 17 | 16 | 28 | 15 | 42 | 16 |
| LProsePa | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 20 | 5 |
| LProseMe | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Mythol | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 15 | 0 | 11 | 3 | 23 | 7 |
| Numism | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| PapPalTC | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 18 | 18 |
| Philos | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 1 | 10 | 32 | 13 | 15 | 17 | 11 |
| RelGr/R | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 20 | 5 |
| RelChrist | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 12 | 1 | 132 | 10 |
| Teach | 16 | 0 | 12 | 1 | 28 | 1 | 63 | 1 | 51 | 1 | 84 | 8 |
| Transl | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 17 | 1 | 13 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 42 | 7 |
| TrGr | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 7 | 2 |
| TrLat | 10 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 11 | 1 |
| Theol | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | - | - | 7 | 0 | 235 | 6 |

3 *Comments*

3.1 *Archaeology*

Considering that South Africa is far removed from the ancient sites of Greek and Roman civilization, and that it has no significant museum collections of Classical antiquities, it is surprising to find publications in this field. The figures indicate an increased number of publications in this field. Before 1984 some 37 items were

published, while in the last decade 30 have already appeared. The subject-matter of the latter items is archaeological excavations, Troy and Mycenae, Linear B, Greek pottery, sculpture and coins. Altogether ten articles have been published abroad.

3.2 *Art*

In this field, where the same situation prevails as in the case of archaeology, 42 items appeared in the decades before 1984, a total that has already been exceeded in the last decade (with 56 items). The items often overlap with the archaeological items (pottery, sculpture), but also treat architecture, mosaics and Christian art. More than half the items (38) deal with the latter topic, and indicate a marked shift in the late 70s and early 80s from Classical to Christian material. This tendency is reflected in other fields as well.

3.3 *Classical Culture*

This category, devoted as it is to the broader and more general aspects of Greco-Roman civilization, has always figured prominently in the Classics curricula at South African universities. This prominence is also reflected in the profile of publications. In the last decade 98 items have been published, compared with 131 for the previous years. The international items before 1985 number 21, those since then number 17.

3.4 *Classical Studies*

This category covers the history of Classical scholarship, national and international societies and conferences, the position of Classical studies at universities, information about the various local Classics departments, and tributes to South African Classicists. A total of 78 items were published until 1984, and 68 between 1985 and 1994. The international publications rose from 2 in the years before 1985 to 11 in the last decade.

3.5 *Epigraphy*

The total absence of epigraphical material has restricted research in this category. Only 3 items appeared before 1985, and 7 since then. All the research has been done and most of it published abroad (15 items in all).

3.6 *Historiography and Ancient History*

In the last decade 20 items have been published in this field, compared with 18 in the decades before 1985. Of these 18, 15 were published abroad, whereas no items have been published abroad in the last decade. This indicates a focus on the local situation regarding the teaching of and research on ancient history.

3.7. *Greek History*

Published research in the last decade already surpasses that in the previous years: 55 compared with 45 items respectively. There is a strong international profile, with 46 items before 1985 and 23 since then. The items cover Classical and Hellenistic Greece, but also, since the late 70s, Byzantine and Modern Greece.

3.8. *Roman History*

Publications on Roman history have always shown a strong presence, with contributions on both the national and international scene. The totals for the years before 1985 (55 national and 50 international) have already been surpassed in the last decade (70 national and 57 international). The items mostly cover the Roman Republic and Empire, with some attention to the later periods.

3.9. *Language and Linguistics*

Until 1984 only 12 items appeared locally and 2 abroad. In the last decade 17 and 11 have already been published locally and abroad respectively. Most of the items deal with semantics, lexicography, socio-linguistics and discourse analysis applied to the New Testament.

3.10. *Greek Language*

A great deal was published on the Greek language prior to 1984: 68 items nationally and 26 internationally. For the period since 1984 the totals are 38 and 10. Again the main text examined is the New Testament. Although it is too early to tell, there seems to be a tendency for less scholarly attention to be devoted to this field of research. In undergraduate Greek courses Classical Greek is giving way to 'Hellenistic' or *koine* Greek. In effect, the language and course contents are based on the New Testament. If this process spreads into the post-graduate courses, future scholarship on the Classical and Hellenistic 'pagan' texts will cease.

3.11. *Latin Language*

Before 1984 there were 33 publications (32 local and 1 abroad). The last ten years have produced another 23 local and 9 overseas publications. Because of the demand in the past for suitable Latin courses for law students, who were required to study Latin for one or two years, there has always been a steady production of textbooks for Classical Latin. In earlier years British and American textbooks could be prescribed without much need for adaptation. To these were added textbooks for Afrikaans-speaking students. However, as the pressure on Latin courses to be relevant to the legal studies of the majority of students became stronger and more

insistent, local textbooks and course material became necessary. Some courses were based on the language and contents of Roman legal writers. The Latin-requirement for the legal profession has now been removed. The future of Latin studies is quite uncertain, but it is to be hoped that courses in the Latin language will gradually become available for students whose mother-tongue is neither English nor Afrikaans, but Xhosa or Zulu or another one of the eleven official languages of South Africa.

3.12 *General Literature and Literary Theory*

South African Classical scholars have always been interested in literary theory, ancient and modern. This is evident from the numbers of publications in this field. Before 1984 there were 85 national and 24 international publications, and since 1984 the totals are already 95 and 15 respectively. The topics include ancient literary theory (e.g. rhetoric, genres), as well as modern theories (semiotics, narratology, discourse analysis, theory of communication).

3.13 *Greek Poetry*

In this category one should distinguish between (a) Classical and Hellenistic poetry, (b) Patristic poetry and (c) Byzantine and Modern Greek poetry.

(a) *Classical and Hellenistic poetry*. In the period before 1985, 63 items were published in South Africa and 7 abroad. Since then there has been a significant increase, especially in the number of international publications: 70 national and 22 international items. The authors studied have been Homer, Archilochus, Alcman, Solon, Tyrtaeus, Pindar, Theognis, Bacchylides, Aeschylus, Euripides, Aristophanes, Apollonius Rhodius and Callimachus. There have been genre-studies on elegiac, iambic and lyric poetry, and on tragedy, as well as on oral literature. Little or no research has been published on Hesiod, Aristophanes and Theocritus. It also seems unlikely that the earlier periods of Greek poetry will continue to attract their due share of scholarly attention.

(b) *Patristic poetry*. Here there has been a marked increase. Whereas only 1 item appeared before 1985, a total of 46 items have appeared since then, 34 nationally and 12 internationally. This shift to later Greek texts corresponds with that noticed elsewhere (cf. above 3.2, 3.7, 3.9, 3.10).

(c) *Byzantine and Modern Greek poetry*. This is a relatively new field in Greek studies in South Africa. The previous survey recorded only 3 items published abroad. Since then 14 publications have appeared in South Africa and 5 abroad.

3.14 *Greek Prose*

Work published in this field likewise falls into three categories: (a) prose from the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods, (b) New Testament and Patristic prose and (c) Byzantine and Modern Greek prose.

(a) *Prose from the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods.* Greek prose authors have always received their share of critical attention from South African scholars, and, in fact, there is an observable increase in publications in this field, and a reasonable international profile. Prior to 1985 17 items appeared locally and 26 internationally; since 1985 the figures are 23 and 12 respectively. However, this research has concentrated mainly on the historians (Thucydides, Plutarch, Arrian, Appian, Cassius Dio and Polybius), philosophers (Pythagoras, Aristotle, Epicurus) and literary theorists (Aristotle, Demetrius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Ps.-Longinus). These texts were studied by scholars whose interests lay primarily in Greek (and Roman) history or Greek philosophy, rather than in Greek prose literature. The only 'literary' texts studied were Demosthenes, Thucydides and Longus. No work has been published on Herodotus, Plato, and the orators.

(b) *New Testament and Patristic prose.* This field has shown an enormous increase in published material. In the period before 1985, only 37 items have been recorded, 4 of which appeared outside South Africa. In the last ten years alone 105 publications have appeared, of which 13 were published abroad. The majority of the locally published items (60 out of 92) have to do with the New Testament. One observes again the swing to not only late Greek texts, but more specifically to Christian Greek texts, and chiefly the New Testament. The demands for relevancy from theology-students in the teaching-programme, combined with the need of Greek departments to survive in a shrinking market have increasingly forced Greek scholars to teach and publish on Christian texts, and then particularly on the New Testament as 'most relevant'. The tendency is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Greek departments and scholars who have tried to maintain the Classical component of Greek prose literature, have had to face 'rationalisation', a euphemism for redundancy and expendability.

(c) *Byzantine and Modern Greek prose.* Research in this field is still limited to the output of a few individuals: 1 item before 1985, 8 since then.

3.15 *Latin Poetry*

Research in the field of Latin poetry does not yet show the move to later, Christian texts to the same extent as in the case of Greek poetry. Still, it is revealing to subdivide the publications into three areas: (a) Classical poetry, (b) Patristic poetry and (c) Mediaeval and Renaissance poetry.

(a) *Classical poetry.* The published research in this category has been consistent, both nationally and internationally. Up to 1984 there were 148 and 82 items published locally and abroad respectively. From 1985 to 1994 these totals are already 71 and 46. This 'healthy' situation is further enhanced by the fact that the authors dealt with are the standard 'classics': Livius Andronicus, Ennius, Terence,

Lucretius, Catullus, Vergil, Gallus, Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid, Silius Italicus, Persius, Martial, Statius, Juvenal, Seneca and Valerius Flaccus.

(b) *Patristic prose*. Only 3 items (2 local, 1 overseas) appeared in this field before 1984. Since 1985 this output has increased to 25 (23 local, 2 overseas). Although this is a similar shift to that observed in the case of work done on Greek literature, it has not resulted from external pressures. The main clients in the Latin courses have been law students, with no particular preference for Patristic poetry. The move to Patristic poetry is rather to be seen as a personal preference on the part of the researchers themselves, who wished to extend the traditional boundaries set for 'Classical' Latin literature. It is also significant that those who publish on the Patristic poets, have come via the Classical poets, and, in fact, continue to publish work on the latter. The main Patristic poets treated are Claudian, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose, Prudentius and Paulinus of Nola.

(c) *Mediaeval and Renaissance poetry*. Only 1 item is recorded for the period since 1985.

3.16 Latin Prose

What has been said of the research on Latin poetry, applies to Latin prose as well. Again, the division into three areas is useful.

(a) *Classical prose*. A steady productivity is indicated by the figures: 65 national and 38 international items for the years leading up to 1984; 42 national and 16 items for the last decade. The Latin authors studied are Cato, Nepos, Cicero, Livy, Tacitus, Pliny the Elder, Curtius Rufus, Quintilian, Seneca, Petronius, Suetonius, Eutropius and Ammianus Marcellinus. Nothing has been published on writers such as Caesar, Sallust and Pliny the Younger.

The main clients in the Latin courses, law students, are catered for by components of Roman legal texts. Although there is a reasonable output on Roman legal texts (mostly introductions to and comments on translations of Roman-Dutch sources), this work has been done by only a few Latin scholars.²

(b) *Patristic prose*. Research on the Church Fathers has increased considerably. Before 1985 only 11 publications appeared (8 in South Africa, 3 overseas). Between 1985 and 1994 the total is 25 (20 in South Africa, 5 overseas). In this case, also, the increased productivity in this area seems to be the result of personal choice, perhaps under the influence of Greek scholarship.

(c) *Renaissance prose*. Work in this field is limited to 4 items (3 national, 1 international) prior to 1985, and 3 items (2 national, 1 international) since then.

² The figures for this category are: publications until 1984 (including the work of Latinists and non-Latinists): 57 (N) and 5 (I); publications from 1985 to 1994 (including work on Roman law by Latinists only): 24 (N) and 4 (I).

3.17 *Mythology*

South African scholars have been reasonably active in this area. A total of 38 publications (33 national, 5 international) appeared before 1985. In the last decade 30 have already been recorded (23 national, 7 international). An interesting development is the comparative study of Graeco-Roman and African myths and legends. In the new situation in South Africa this promises to produce significant research.

3.18 *Numismatics*

The limited number of Greek and Roman coin collections has restricted work in this field to a few publications: 5 local and 3 overseas items before 1985, and 4 and 1 between 1985 and 1994.

3.19 *Papyrology, Palaeography, Textual Criticism*

This is also a category in which the amount of published research has been hampered by the lack of manuscript and papyrological collections in South Africa. Despite this obstacle, a surprising number of publications have appeared: 7 national and 14 international items prior to 1985, and 18 and 18 respectively since then. The research for these publications was mostly undertaken abroad.

3.20 *Philosophy*

South African scholars contributed a relatively large number of publications in this field before 1985: 37 national and 52 international items were published. The last ten years have produced 17 national and 11 international publications. This indicates a decline in the international publications. Given the fact that Greek and Roman philosophy are hardly taught any longer, it is reasonable to predict that the amount of research in this area will decline still further.

3.21 *Greek and Roman Religion*

Here the number of publications has increased: 21 national and 8 international items appeared before 1985, and 20 national and 5 international items have already been published in the decade since then.

3.22 *Early Christianity*

This category has burgeoned, clearly in sympathy with the shift of the focus of much Greek research to the Patristic texts. Whereas 31 items were counted for the years

before 1985, of which 4 were published abroad, the last ten years have seen the appearance of 142 items, 10 of them published internationally.

3.23 *The Teaching of Classics*

The teaching of Greek and Latin, both at school (in the case of Latin) and university, has always been a major concern of Classical scholars in South Africa. The years before 1985 produced 171 national and 4 international publications; the years since 1985 have produced 84 national and 8 international contributions. The large discrepancy between national and international figures is, of course, due to the very localised concerns, problems and solutions dealt with in the publications.

3.24 *Translation Theory*

The theory and practice of translation has attracted the attention of especially, though by no means exclusively, Greek scholars working on the Afrikaans translation of the New Testament. The number of publications in this field is 47 national and 1 international before 1985, and 42 and 7 respectively until 1994. The relatively small number of international contributions is indicative of the specific focus on the translation of the Greek New Testament into Afrikaans.

3.25 *Translation from Greek*

A comparison of the number of translations of Greek texts into English or Afrikaans for the years before 1985 and since 1985 shows a marked decrease. A total of 33 (29 national, 4 international) items for the period until 1984 has declined to 9 (7 local, 2 overseas) in the period from 1985 to 1994. This is one of the most negative tendencies noted. For, after all, the works of Greek literature must be made accessible to a broader reading public in order to ensure its relevance and survival. The English-speaker is well served by American and British translations. However, there is very little for the Afrikaans-speaking reader, and nothing at all for the reader whose language is Xhosa or Zulu or one of the seven other official languages of South Africa. A great deal of work needs to be done here.

3.26 *Translation from Latin*

The same applies to Latin literature. Whereas 40 (37 local, 3 overseas) items appeared before 1985, only 12 (11 local, 1 overseas) items have been produced since 1985. Furthermore, most of the translated work has been Roman-Dutch legal sources. The great works of Latin literature need to be translated into the languages of South Africa.

3.27 *Theology*

In the 1985 survey this was a minor, peripheral field for Classical scholars. Only 13 publications were recorded (7 local, 6 international). In the last decade, however, it has exploded into a major growth industry. A total of 235 items have been published, all of them locally. This is the largest number of items in any category covered in this survey. It clearly forces the research in Classics out of balance. The full impact of the pressure from students and university authorities for 'relevancy', is seen at its clearest here. Greek scholars in particular have been forced into research fields not strictly or traditionally their domain. In all fairness, however, it must be pointed out that the majority of the contributions are very brief and aimed at a non-Classical, even non-academic audience. As such they perform a different function from that of academic publications, namely to propagate Greek (and to a lesser extent Latin) studies among a wider, non-specialist public. Fortunately, at this stage at least, it has not been to the great detriment of work on the 'Classical' material and periods. If, however, the pressure and tendency continue, it is only a matter of time before the stream of this research dries up or disappears into the flood of theological research. Relevant or important as it is in itself, the latter should not and cannot replace the former, in reality its real source.

4 *Conclusions*

Since particular conclusions have been drawn in each category, I shall limit my comments to some general observations.

1) *Ancillary sciences*

It is to be expected that in a country far removed, and for many years politically isolated from the physical remains, the *realia*, of its field of research and study, those areas requiring direct contact with such material would suffer neglect in study, teaching and research. Such is, in fact, the case with archaeology, art, epigraphy, numismatics, papyrology, palaeography and textual criticism. Where publications have been forthcoming, it has been to a great extent the result of research done at and contact with universities in Europe or the United States of America. These connections should be maintained to ensure interest in, study of and research in these essential components of Classical studies.

2) *Language*

Work on the Greek and Latin languages has tended to be aimed at the practicalities of teaching and the study of the Greek New Testament and Latin legal texts. Significant contributions have already been made, and will, I am sure, continue to be made.

3) *Literature*

Without the original manuscripts in South Africa, and limited (and expensive) access to European libraries and museums, Classical scholars in South Africa

have contributed very little to textual editions of classical authors. Instead, they have focused their attention on the interpretation of those authors and the various literary theories, ancient and modern, for approaching ancient texts. There have, however, been attempts to provide annotated texts for local needs.

4) *History*

Historical research in South Africa has a good record. The publications cover a wide range: from Bronze Age Greece to modern Greece, from Rome's foundation to the Crusades. A great deal is published abroad. It is, then, surprising to note that Greek and Roman history are taught at most universities as part of the language and literature courses; Ancient History is a separate course at only two universities.

5) *Culture*

Classical Civilisation or Classical Culture is offered as a separate course in Classics Departments, for students with or without Greek or Latin. At some universities these courses are also offered at post-graduate level. Research done in this field is mostly aimed at these courses, although publication abroad indicates an international interest and quality. One of the most important areas in which a contribution can be made, is in comparative cultural studies, in which African and European can complement and enrich each other.

In general one may conclude that Greek and Latin scholars in South Africa have, in just more than a century, produced their share of published research. Much of it has been for local conditions, needs and consumption, but a significant amount has reached the international scene and contributed to the larger scholarly debate. Periods of study and research at universities abroad and contact with overseas colleagues have been of vital importance. With the 'New' South Africa admitted back into the international community, also the community of scholars, the visits to universities abroad, and personal contacts with fellow-Classicists promise to stimulate research still further.

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