

Call for Papers

Classics and Class: Teaching Latin and Greek behind the Iron Curtain

A Conference to be Held at the University of Ljubljana, September 26-28, 2013

*Organised by the Department of Classical Philology, University of Ljubljana,
and the Faculty of "Artes Liberales," University of Warsaw*

Classical tradition in the former people's democracies has clearly become a research theme *whose time has come* (Collegium Budapest *Gnôthi seauton* 2010; Warsaw conference on *Our Mythical Childhood... Classics and Children's Literature between East and West* 2013; Brill *Companion to Classical Reception in Eastern and Central Europe*, in preparation).

The conference will probe the field that remains a *terra incognita* — the fate of classical languages, those who taught them, those who studied them, those who championed them, and those who tried to suppress them, in what Churchill once called "the ancient states" behind the Iron Curtain that stretched "from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic," defining a significant part of Europe dramatically changed after WW2.

This new Europe was not homogenous: the situation of classics evolved in a variety of ways depending on each country's cultural and historical affinity to Classical Antiquity — and on the harshness of the local regime in exercising control over education and intellectual life. Regional differences run parallel to the evolution of the local communist regimes and their own high and low periods. Official attitudes towards classics ranged from fostering ideologically promising fields of research and publication, while practically banning others, to prescribing detailed school curricula, specific selections of authors and texts and grammar exercises toeing party-lines, to treating classics with benign neglect, as quaint, out-dated, and doomed to oblivion.

We are calling for papers that will address issues such as (but not limited to):

- communist party and ministerial policies regarding teaching of Latin and Greek;
- classical associations, their activities and influence;
- academic and personal biographies of prominent teachers from the period;
- obvious and devious ideological discourse in studies, translations, and textbooks;
- the attitude of society at large towards classical tradition.

The sources for such research must clearly be diverse, ranging from official proclamations and other documents in state archives to textbooks, scholarly journals, newspapers and personal testimonies.

The conference will use the institutional advantages of Ljubljana, a dynamic regional research hub whose position on the very rim of the Iron Curtain provides unique opportunities for anthropological comparison of academic life on both sides of the socialist *limes*; and the scholarly network of the Warsaw Faculty of "Artes liberales," twice the winner of the Hanna Arendt Prize for innovative programs and interdisciplinary study in the humanities, whose projects have connected over 1.000 scholars during the last two decades — to create the first evidence-based overview of how teaching of Latin and Greek proceeded in different countries in Central and Eastern Europe under Communism.

Those interested in participating should send a short description of the proposed paper (300 words) and a CV to Dr Elzbieta Olechowska, Faculty of "Artes Liberales," University of Warsaw, elzbieta (dot) olechowska (at) gmail (dot) com, or to Dr David Movrin, University of Ljubljana, david (dot) movrin (at) ff (dot) uni (minus) lj (dot) si. Some funds will be available. The closing deadline for applications is January 15, 2013.