

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS

One cannot properly discuss the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and at the same time, in geographical terms, confine oneself to Greece, or, in chronological terms, to the period since the Second World War. The School obviously has American roots, and they deserve attention and admiration quite as much as does that focal portion whose center is in Athens under Lykabetos. The School has a history which is now a venerable eighty-five years long, since it was founded by the sixtieth year of the independence of Greece. It is not all that the School's recent activity in Greek lands within the last twenty-five years is overshadowed by its ancient glories, nor by a monumental structure over here. On the contrary, much of that recent and important activity is apparent to every visitor to Athens or to Corinth; much more is appreciated by classical scholars throughout the world, and by those of Byzantine interests, and as for the neo-Hellenists who preponderate in this audience I venture to guess that if they are unaware of the work of the School they are missing something. So if I fail to write at length on what is recently done in Athens and Greece I have two good reasons: I cannot pretend to speak with sufficient authority and up-to-date knowledge when I speak of my own experience of the School and, there is more to the School than meets the eye. Yet I trust that I will speak with something of the enthusiasm and benevolence that I feel toward the School.

Of the history of the School I want to pick out only a few episodes,¹ or less than episodes, which may serve to reflect the School's present structure, and I want to give a few figures which are rather dull indexes of the School's growth. It has grown, and continues to grow; otherwise, I'd not be here

1. The source of the historical data, and of several quotations, in this paper is Louis E. Lord, *A History of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1882-1942: An Intercollegiate Project*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1947. Other information is taken from the Annual Reports of the School. I must thank particularly Professor Henry S. Robinson, the Director, for providing several slides shown with the oral presentation of this paper.

talking about it. In its first year of operation it was one Director, William Watson Goodwin, paid his salary by Harvard University while on leave from Harvard, seven and a half students, one of them an undergraduate, one already equipped with a doctorate from Munich. As far as books went, it was a well-chosen thousand dollar's worth, bought in England by Goodwin on his way to Athens. As far as buildings went, it was the rented second floor of a good-sized building near the Arch of Hadrian, arranged as a large library with shelves, books, table and chairs, with living quarters for the Director and his family. As far as income went, it was \$ 3000 contributed in equal shares by twelve Colleges. As far as endowment went, it consisted in the promise of those twelve to continue for ten years their annual \$ 250. As far as curriculum went, either the founders forgot to discuss that matter, or else the Director wisely ignored whatever directions he might have received, because the program turned out to be made up as it went along.

There is now a complex of buildings in Athens to house the School, its Director, its students, and its libraries. There are now endowment funds of considerably more than three million dollars, and annual income and expenditures may be counted on to be considerably more than one hundred thousand dollars. The staff includes roughly one Director, five other Professors, and seventeen others, including field directors of excavations, librarians, and secretaries. The student members of the School include about fifteen regular fellows, nine or fewer working a second year at the School, perhaps ten associate members. This number is replaced in the summer by a summer session of about twenty, and all year long supplemented by research fellows, there for a year or longer, and by a constant stream of visitors, mostly alumni, back in Athens for a few days or weeks, passing through, or with a short job to be done. The best index of the numbers involved in Athens nowadays is this. An American Thanksgiving, believe it if you will, is imported each November, and is the nearest approach to a general convocation the School can manage. Professor Robinson, the Director, was obliged last year to find room to seat ninety people for Thanksgiving dinner. To gather from scratch an endowment of three millions, to go from rented rooms to buildings and grounds, to grow from nine to ninety persons in not quite ninety years, is progress which can surely be matched by many institutions. But these advances may not be the best indications of the growing prosperity of the School.

Before I turn to the School at Athens, however, I must describe the School over here, and essential to its description is a brief account of its founding. This is because the lines of its structure were fixed by the founder, and by

the circumstances of its founding years. The structure has grown, and is not unchanged, but it retains very much of its original character.

The whole purpose of the School in its founding, and in its present constitution, is of course entirely to benefit America and Americans. Perhaps even once it was to some extent to rival France and Germany, which had established their Athenian Schools in 1846 and 1874, and to get ahead of Great Britain. That it has had any beneficial effect on Greece, if it has, is to be counted as a happy but unprogrammed consequence. The purpose is summed up in the words of the founder, founder at once of the Archaeological Institute of America and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. His aim was "that, by the establishment of such a society [the Archaeological Institute of America], the interests of classical scholarship in America might be advanced, and especially that it might lead to the foundation of a school of classical studies in Athens where young scholars might carry on the study of Greek thought and life to the best advantage, and where those who were proposing to become teachers of Greek might gain such acquaintance with the land and such knowledge of its ancient monuments as should give a quality to their teaching unattainable without this experience." These are the words of Charles Eliot Norton. And it is surely both a noble and a reasonable purpose, which remains, selfish as it is, the central idea of the School.

Shortly after the Archaeological Institute had successfully been founded (that was 1879), a committee was set up to produce a practical plan for a School in Athens. It wasn't necessarily the most practical plan which was adopted, however, when the prospectuses went out in December, 1881. Because the absolute necessity for a practical plan is a source of money. There were two possible sources of money considered. One was the gathering of an endowment from whose income the expenses of the School could be met. At that time \$ 100,000 seemed quite enough. This, of course, had to be done eventually, but a more immediate plan was hoped for, since \$ 100,000 would take some time to gather. The enthusiasm of the founder perhaps could hardly wait for that, or he may simply have preferred to sell with samples rather than with prospectuses. This practical plan called for the commitment of a group of cooperating Colleges and Universities to an annual contribution (of rather modest proportions), on which limited income an immediate start could be made. A prospectus of this plan was sent around, subscribed to by a sufficient few Colleges, and thereupon the first Director and students began their work in Athens in the fall of 1882. The Managing Committee began with a purse filled with \$ 250 from each of twelve Colleges, and the future was sure for no more than the ten years for which those contributions were pledged.

The pattern was thereby established which remains one of the most admirable parts of the American School. It is very much a cooperative venture. Many American Colleges and Universities, now including Canadian as well, have contributed and continue to contribute annually. Their representatives who have long since become too unwieldy a number and too far scattered for a democratic assembly, constitute the Managing Committee, who are responsible for the conduct of the School. The graduates and students of these cooperating Colleges and Universities may enjoy the benefits of the School in Athens. The history of this collegiate participation is on the one side entirely normal and inconspicuous. As time has passed the number of institutions cooperating has grown, as the advantages of membership have become more and more evident, and as alumni of the School have been insistent that the Colleges which they have come to serve are brought into the fold. And of course as times have been good or bad, warlike or peaceable there has been a natural fluctuation. In the first and fourth years the minimum of twelve Colleges was seen. By the time of the Depression there were more than fifty, but the bad times cut the numbers to the forties. Since the War there has been a remarkable growth. All but two of those discouraged by the First World War and by the Depression have eagerly rejoined the group — so that one imagines it must have been a greater disaster than war or depression which struck those two and the other five who can be called *ex-contributors*. And others have joined, so that the cooperating institutions now number over a hundred.

Now it is not a remarkable thing that revenues have grown as contributors have been added. But it is most remarkable that the standard contribution has remained unchanged at \$ 250 per year for so long. Some contributing Colleges do provide more, and obviously all ought to. But there has been a great reluctance to do more than suggest it very politely. Still, the widespread participation of a hundred schools in the support of one school is a good thing, and perhaps worth an archaic price tag.

The School could survive very little time without more money than such contributions bring in, and the annual expenditures, from the very beginnings, have always been more than this sum. The rest had to come from endowment, and endowment is built, in an unproductive enterprise, from philanthropy. The size of the endowment which has been established is naturally very impressive, and its pattern of growth very irregular. The amounts which have been given for immediate expenditure on the needs and ventures of the School are equally imposing. But rather than mention sums of money, whose value

changes with the market, let me mention some donors whose good will had been made perpetual.

There were proceeds from benefit performances: Students of the University of Pennsylvania acted the *Acharnians*, and the Harvard "Glee Club, the Pierian Sodality and the Banjo Club gave a joint concert presenting 'with excellent effect' a great variety." There were simple gifts from individuals, sometimes unsolicited, but often made in response to an urgent appeal. There were many legacies: one, whose income goes to general purposes, was bequeathed by Thomas Dwight Goodell, now amounting to more than \$ 13,000, and special funds were established for special purposes, e. g. the excavation fund which is the bequest of Richard B. Seager, whose income alone is \$ 19,000. Here I may mention the gift which ensures the University of Wisconsin's participation in the School — not made to the School itself, but it was given to this University. It is the Jane Oakley Fund, a sum of \$ 5,000 given as a memorial by her children, George Walter Oakley, Mary Oakley Hawley, and Horace S. Oakley, with the whole income to go to the American School. Last year the income was \$ 335, this year it may well be less. It wouldn't hurt the School or Wisconsin to establish another similar fund. It would be improper to pass over the fact that a fair number of other Colleges have such funds within the endowment of the School.

Gifts made under diverse conditions and for many different purposes have come from Foundations, as well as from persons. Perhaps the first was from the Carnegie Corporation — on one of those typical matching-fund arrangements — amounting to \$ 100,000. Perhaps the most recent is one of October, 1965 from the Ford Foundation for new excavations in the Athenian Agora, \$ 1,000,000. I mentioned benefit performances first, because those early concerts and plays produced small, but extremely benevolent results. I end catalogue with other relatively small contributions. The students of the School naturally become alumni, in a very short time. There has been an Alumni Association since 1940, whose dues are an annual dollar. And the chief function of the dues is to provide an annual gift to meet some moderate but pressing need of the current generation of students. But there has also been since 1916 an Auxiliary Fund Association, among whose contributors are regularly to be found alumni and members of the Managing Committee. Their contributions, larger and smaller, are directed chiefly toward the increase of the endowment. But not all contributors are alumni, and in fact I invite each of you today to contribute, and can assure you of the School's gratitude.

It may be seen that the School is, over here, a remarkably cooperative

enterprise. Its growth in all ways has been vigorous. The number of cooperating institutions has grown by nine times at least, and the contributions from these schools by a bit more. Its endowment has grown to three and a third million dollars (or almost six, if one trusts market value). But the most recent financial report showed annual expenditures of \$ 120,000, so you can see that the financial aims of the Trustees and of the Managing Committee are really to stay solvent while providing a constantly increasing purse for the School's operation.

I'm not yet ready to speak of the activity of the School in Greece. And in sticking still to America, I deliberately recall that the aim of the founders, and of those who have contributed to the School's growth, and of those who run the School, the Managing Committee, were and are entirely selfish. It is not simple philanthropy to seek to produce for our American Colleges and Universities a better qualified breed of teacher for our Classical students, one "with such acquaintance with the land and such knowledge of its ancient monuments as should give a quality to their teaching unattainable without this experience." The products of this training, the alumni of the School, may now be found in most of the country, and mostly, as is proper, in the teaching professions. It would be folly to pretend they've all become the very best teachers there are, and all, solely because they've had the advantages of the School. And yet I've no doubt that the aims of the School are more often than not reached in its students.

At the time of the Second World War there were perhaps 400 living alumni; there are now perhaps a thousand. They've all lived in, and not just toured, Greece; most have learned a fair amount of the modern language to go with what of the ancient they already knew, most have travelled in parts of Greece which the tourist finds no attraction in, and by roads or vehicles the tourist stays away from. Most have seen something of what the tourist sees, but with different eyes. In the museums he is likely to look at the rough backs of sculpture, to distinguish the individual pot from a collection of awfully uniform pots, to see the workmanship and not the glitter of gold, and to be confused rather than simply bored by jumbled layers of architectural ruins. And at those remains of an ancient or Byzantine house or palace or temple or church, if he hasn't himself help direct its uncovering, he may very well have built it again on paper or in his mind. In the evening at the kapheneion or the ouzeria, he has not only rested his feet, just like the tourist, but has understood why the Greeks have such places. And finally, though he may have read few (or perhaps the wrong) Greek newspapers, and come away with no clear understanding of Greek politics, and though few become Ortho-

dox, almost all come away with a sympathetic understanding of the principal problems of modern Greek life, and a lively interest in the prospects and good government of Greece.

All these things, and more beside, have entered into the experience of an alumnus of the School. And some of these inevitably go into and improve his teaching, and maybe even his political and social conduct. Or into his diet, if he is one fortunate enough to have brought back, one way or another, something of Greek cooking. And through the alumni, their studies, their teaching, and by their example, there's some slight modification of their schools and their cities in all parts of the United States.

Before I leave the United States and get to the School as it runs in Greece, I ought to mention the publications of the School, which may often start in Greece, but come out in America. There is now the quarterly periodical *Hesperia*, begun just before the War, and reporting activities of the School, edited by Lucy Shoe Meritt in Princeton. But even this periodical is not enough to report on all the activities and research of the School. There are also monographic supplements to *Hesperia*, and a good number of other books, conspicuous among them the definitive publications of the excavations made by the School in Corinth and in the Athenian Agora. There are also guidebooks to those excavations, for visitors to the sites, and also a series of Picture Books, each of which deals with some type of ancient artefact or monument found in the Athenian Agora, or visible in the Agora Museum. There is also the publication of sets of slides from these and other sites, the Agora, Corinth, Lerna in the Argolid, Pylos in Messenia, and Troy. Finally there are the mimeographed reports sent to the members of the Managing Committee, or, in more permanent form, the Annual Reports of the School, and equally mimeographed and eagerly looked for annual newsletters sent to the Alumni.

(At this point slides were shown, with views of the main building of the School, of Loring Hall, and of the Gennadeion, exterior and interior. These were described with comments *ex tempore*).

I may now turn to the regular activities of the School in Greece, in its regular and its summer sessions. In the fall of the year there come to Athens the fifteen to twenty regular students, most of them holding fellowships either from the School or from their own Universities, who have generally had a year or two of Graduate study, some of them even having travelled in Europe the summer before. There is the provision of a certain amount of course and seminar work in the fall and winter. Some of this is more or less uniform year to year, some of it varies with the interests of the two Visiting Professors who are there each year. A regular feature is the course in the topography and

monuments of Attica, which is illustrated by a series of Friday trips to various sites in Attica. More extended School trips are also taken in the fall, or occasionally in the spring, though then it is likely to be at the initiative of the students, and the itinerary exotic. In the fall there are several places to go, of course. Central Greece, the Peloponnese, the Corinthia and Argolid, Crete, or Northwest Greece. The general pattern of these trips, unless they have changed since, was the assignments of monuments at one or more of the sites to be visited to each member. He read it up in the library, and prepared a report on it. Then came the trip itself, with preparations for many days' absence from Athens. An early start, a long bus ride, stops at spots with fine topographical views, stops for picnic lunches, and stops at minor as well as at the major sites themselves. There, whatever the weather, the reporters would quickly look around, recognize their monuments and landmarks, and, in reporting, act as guides for the whole group. In the evening, sometimes late, there was arrival at a hotel, wandering off in small groups for pre-dinner refreshment, and a common dinner. In the morning there was an early breakfast, sometimes a rather strange one conforming neither to the Greek nor to the American pattern and off again. In my year, in which, though I was not a student, I went along on most of the School trips, there was a regular investigation, competitive and really scientific, an exhaustive comparison of the pastry shops in each town we stayed the night in, to find which made the best *loukoumadhes*. It was quite possible for those trips to be full of adventure and misadventure. Trips taken in late October and November can easily meet rain, and busses can barely make it out of the mud. Some students can climb too high a cliff, and require rescuing, or some cannot show up on time. Illness can strike most inconveniently. A guide may lose his way toward his monument, or the whole site may even seem to disappear from the countryside in brambles, or in mist or in mud. Hikes to summits and remote sites can be almost too long. They are memorable trips, and well worth any difficulty they have in them. The satisfaction of seeing and touching things heard and read about is always there, along with the pleasure of finding new things.

As the weather comes toward winter, the excursions are shorter, and turn to Museums in Athens, and the monuments of the city, and serious work in the School's library is predominant. In the spring, the program loses its rigidity, and the students are likely to work on their own projects, whether they brought them with them to Athens, or found them there. They may travel on their own pilgrimages, or join in the work of one of the excavations then in progress. The result is sometimes a School paper, or the basis for a doctoral thesis.

The summer school is not entirely dissimilar. It must take its trips in the heat of the summer. It has no sufficient time for individual work, and is more nearly adapted to the needs of those who have not yet begun Graduate work, or those who are already teaching in School or College, and can spare only a summer for this opportunity. Nevertheless the pattern of student reports at the sites visited, of lectures by members of the School and visitors, is followed, and the results for the students are excellent.

A second part of the work of the School in Athens could be pointed out, the Gennadius Library. This is the gift of Joannes Gennadius to the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, made in 1922. Dr. Gennadius had in a long and distinguished career assembled an excellent collection of books, especially rich in materials for the study of Byzantine and Modern Greek periods. To tell how this library came to the American School, one can do no better than to quote. "It had long been the wish of Dr. Gennadius that his Library and Collections should ultimately go to Athens, there to be used by scholars of all nations; but owing to their great value, the physical requirements of their proper care, and the scholarly requirements of their use, he had as yet found no means of carrying out his purpose, and the troubled condition of Europe and especially of Greece seemed to make his dream of a great establishment in Athens, worthy of the Library and adequate to its scholarly employment, difficult if not impossible of immediate realization. He spoke of this problem to Professor Mitchell Carroll, Secretary and Director of the Archaeological Society of Washington, and Professor Carroll suggested the possibility that the American School at Athens might be able to provide the building and the custody of the Library . . . Dr. Gennadius showed himself most sympathetic toward the School, then in the midst of an arduous endowment campaign and possessing no general resources which could be used for a building or even the adequate custody of the Library, and readily adapted the conditions of his gift to what seemed at the time to be within the reasonable expectations of the School."

The conditions of the gift were both very generous and reasonable, and the quotation here comes from Dr. Gennadius himself. "In accordance with the preliminary conversations which I have already had with you I now beg to place before you, in a more detailed and precise form, the proposal I made, with the full approval and concurrence of my wife, Madame Gennadius, for the presentation of my Library and the collections supplementary to it, as hereinafter summarily described, to the American School at Athens, on the following conditions:

(1) That the said Library and Collections be kept permanently and entirely separate and distinct from all other books or collections, in a special building, or suitable building, to be provided for this purpose.

(2) That the Library, etc., be known as the *Gennadeion* in remembrance of my Father, George Gennadius, whose memory is held by my countrymen in great veneration and gratitude.

(3) That as soon as practicable a subject catalogue of the whole Library and of the collections be completed and published on the same principle of classification as the Sections already catalogued by me.

(4) That no book or pamphlet, or any items of the Collections, be lent, or allowed to leave the Library; but that rules be drawn up for the proper and safe use of the books, etc. ...

(5) That a competent and specially trained bibliognost be employed as Librarian and Custodian. ...

(7) That the Professors of the University of Athens, the Council of the Greek Archaeological Society, and the members of the British, French, and German Schools at Athens be admitted to the benefits of the use of the library and of Collections on special terms and conditions to be determined by the Directorate. ...

My wife and I make this presentation in token of our admiration and respect for your great country—the first country from which a voice of sympathy and encouragement reached our fathers when they rose in their then apparently hopeless struggle for independence; and we do so in the confident hope that the American School in Athens may thus become a world center for the study of Greek history, literature and art, both ancient, Byzantine and modern, and for the better understanding of the history and constitution of the Greek Church, that Mother Church of Christianity, in which the Greek Fathers, imbued with the philosophy of Plato, first determined and expounded the dogmas of our common faith.”

The Gennadeion was built and occupied by 1926, and has been well used ever since. The present Librarian, Francis R. Walton, has even successfully rejoined to the Gennadius collection some remarkable volumes Gennadius had to give up when times were particularly bad, and he is proceeding with energy in the preparation and completion of the catalogue, which is promised soon for publication. The Library itself has been added to constantly, and now cries for more room. It is used regularly by all those for whom Gennadius wished its privileges, and by others from Greece and from all the world.

(For the third, perhaps best known, part of the work of the School, a

few slides were shown and discussed. Particular attention was paid to the excavations of the School itself, and among them to those of the Athenian Agora and of Corinth. And there emphasis was given to the Museums established to make evident what had been done in the excavations. The possibilities of discussing excavations conducted by others under the auspices of the School, particularly important though they might be, and of the most recent discoveries in School excavations, were neglected, in the confident expectation that they may be examined in more detail and with better illustration in other publications).

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