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Is it possible to study Scottish pupils' reception of a Latin textbook of the 1970s-1980s?

Introduction

The field of reception studies (meaning analyses of responses to texts, either texts in classical languages from the period of antiquity or such texts in the medieval and post-medieval periods) can encompass many things, and that number might seem to be expanding all the time. (Even in 2008 it was noted to be 'booming'; Porter, 2008, p 469). One obvious extension of that scope was into the attempt to understand how pupils have received and made (no?) sense of the teaching texts presented to them in classes on classical European languages and the cultural significance of those texts. A model for that kind of work exists in the study of the work known variously as *An Elementary Latin Primer* (under which it was first published in 1848), *The Public School Primary* (reissued/renamed as such in 1866), *The Public School Grammar* (from 1871), or, more colloquially, simply Kennedy's Latin primer, after its author, Benjamin Hall Kennedy [1804-1889] (Stray, 2018, see especially pp 307-325). It was substantially revised in the 1880s by his daughter, Marion Kennedy [1836-1914], a skilled classicist in her own right, and two others: G[eorge] H Hallam [1846-1932] and T[homas] E Page [1850-1936], after which it came to be referred to as *The Revised Latin Primer*. It was revised again by James Mountford [1897-1979] who also produced a shorter version of his own revision, with both those works still in reprint into the 1960s although presumably little used in schools (Kennedy, 1930/1962; 1931/1962). In brief, in whatever incarnation, Kennedy's was 'the standard Latin grammar in England [for decades]' (Stray, 2018, p 317). But it was an elite work, read and used, much as its second name suggests more in public (ie private, fee-paying) schools and in free but academically-selective grammar schools than in more 'mass market' comprehensive establishments.

Sources available for writing the history of its reception or the reception of any comparable work if less successful of the period (various of its contemporaries and rivals are described at: Stray, 2018, pp 311-316) include extensive and well-preserved publisher's records, memoirs of former pupils who later went on to distinguished political and other public roles and so forth. By contrast, by the time *ER* was appearing British secondary schools as a whole (including those of Scotland) were on the verge of largely becoming comprehensive. What does anybody know about the reception of Latin textbooks of larger and more modern, demotic audiences of pupils? This piece concerns the Latin textbooks known collectively as *Ecce Romani* [*ER*] to able to attempt any analysis of the reception of these books by pupils in Scottish¹ schools in the series' heyday in the 1970s and 1980s I have first to explore the immediate background to their emergence: the 'state of play' in classics teaching in the 1960s and early 1970s and the composition of the Scottish Classics Group [SCG] by which the *ER* books were collectively authored. I also try to correct some widespread misunderstandings by examining ideas and practices that did *not* influence *ER*'s authors. That takes me into the relationship between the work of the SCG and another, English-based, Latin teaching scheme, a scheme by which *ER* has often been overshadowed. In effect, even if only briefly, I aim to provide a history of *ER*. With that done I offer an analysis of the reception/significance of *ER* (albeit a necessarily limited analysis) for Scottish pupils.

¹ Like the mysteries of Mithras, the workings of education in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland can puzzle the uninitiated. The basic point to grasp is that there is no such thing as a United Kingdom education system. Governments based in London (known metonymically as 'Westminster') made decisions about education in England and Wales and the London-centred civil service ('Whitehall') ran schools in England and Wales from the nineteenth century until the 1990s, though that only indirectly. A devolved legislature was established in Wales in the 1990s and education became a devolved responsibility. By the time of writing Westminster and Whitehall were responsible only for England. The rudimentary education system that existed in Scotland at the time of the union of parliaments (1707) remained intact and though much changed has been separate ever since. Westminster made decisions about Scottish schools until 1998, but they were largely administered from Edinburgh even before that date. State-provided education in Ireland from the 1830s to the early 1920s (Northern Ireland alone since 1922) has a different story again. This work largely concerns Scotland but sometimes refers to Britain.

Latin in Scotland on the cusp of an era of change

In 1959 the Ministry of Education, having responsibility for England and Wales, but making pronouncements that would have been heard in Scotland, felt able to re-issue a publication of 20 years previously (Ministry of Education, 1939/1959) a time when the position of classics still seemed very much secure. And not long before the Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools had produced a report which spoke with confidence, even hubris, of 'lovers of the Classics... [being] secure in the knowledge of their good fortune', because their subject could 'supply us with a record of completed experiment... [not in] the material world alone, but with humanity itself' (Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools, 1954, pp 1-2). But in the face of far more general social upheaval and change, by the late 1960s and early 1970s (Marwick, 1998; Turner, 2013) the teaching of Latin (and of Greek) was in crisis.

The nature of the crisis or crises, for more than one than thing was at issue by the 1960s/1970s, can be explained as follows. In 1960 the University of Oxford, shortly followed by the University of Cambridge, removed the requirement to have studied Latin prior to matriculation and that date is generally taken as a 'watershed' (Forrest, 1998, p 13). The abolition of compulsory Greek had occasioned great debate in the nineteenth century (Stray, 1998, 2003, 2018) but there were those for whom this latter event was nothing short of a disaster. To some extent it had been possible to enter Scottish universities (or certain courses in them) without Latin or Greek from as early as 1892, when entrance requirements became more centrally coordinated (Scotland, 1969, pp 155-156) but the symbolic force of the change was huge throughout the United Kingdom [UK] as a whole (Forrest, 1998; Stray, 1998, 2003, 2018).

Those for whom barbarous modernity had won, Horatius having failed to defend the bridge, were in apocalyptic mood. That mood was encapsulated in a special edition of the prestigious journal *Greece & Rome* two years after the Oxford and Cambridge move, the editor of which was an arch 'traditionalist', opposed not only to the reduction in Latin's significance the 1960 decision appeared to signal but also to the novel teaching methods increasingly being touted (Melluish, 1962).

But of more practical significance to classroom teachers in this period was the drift towards comprehensive secondary education. There had long been radical traditions of Latin learning (see, for example: Hardwick, 2015) but as a school subject it had elite associations. Even if academically selective schools in Scotland have sometimes been known by other names (eg academies) the essence of the problem this posed was that Latin was literally synonymous with the grammar school tradition: twentieth-century Latinists stood in a line of descent from the Roman *grammaticus*, representing a kind of education never intended for mass consumption (Forrest, 1998, p 18). Working in comprehensive schools was not what most Latin teachers had 'signed up' for.

[From] the early 1970s... ... classics teachers, dislodged from their previous secure position as guardians of an established tradition of learning and culture, were... expected to teach/sell to pupils/consumers (Stray, 1998, p 296).

Though written from a specifically English point of view the position in Scotland was essentially as described above. Comprehensives were conceived of as schools for all. But Latin had almost always been an elite subject in schools. Its overall social and educational significance had been reducing in the modern era, as represented by the Oxford and Cambridge decisions. Did it still have a legitimate place in modern secondary schooling? It was against that background that the 11 members of the Working Party on the Curriculum in Latin and Greek [WP], a mixture of school inspectors, working teachers of classics and university academics, met. Its report (Working Party on the Curriculum in Latin and Greek, 1967), produced at the behest of the Labour Secretary of State for Scotland, William Ross [1911-1988], in the first of his two periods in that office, began by noting:

[s]ince the war and particularly in the last decade many aspects of secondary education have been subjected to critical scrutiny. Not unnaturally those concerned with the teaching of the classical languages have been questioning whether the study of Latin and Greek in the traditional way is making the contribution which the times require (Working Party on the Curriculum in Latin and Greek, 1967, p 5).

Summed up briefly, what the WP advocated was less emphasis on memorisation, grammar and translation from English into Latin and more on understanding and fluency in reading, with an additional stress on appreciating Latin language and literature in their socio-cultural and historical contexts. Most tangibly, and of most immediate relevance, the WP recommended that ‘as a matter of urgency... an *ad hoc* body consisting of teachers and others be set up to devise and collate material suitable for the initial stages of the [new Latin] course envisaged’ (Working Party on the Curriculum in Latin and Greek, 1967, p 16). That *ad hoc* body, which contained some people who had originally been in the Working Party, eventually became the SCG and the fruits of SCG’s labour were the *ER* books. In the next section I describe the SCG.

The SCG

The SCG had 16 members, six of them having previously been part of the WP. Two of the group’s members were lecturers in colleges of education. One, Richard Orr, was not working in a school by the time the books appeared, being the adviser on classics to what was then Glasgow Corporation, though he had extensive classroom experience. One had previously been in the school inspection service but was again a serving teacher by the time the books appeared. One worked in a school in England but had previous experience of working in Scotland. Otherwise, all the group’s members were, and always had been, teachers in Scottish schools. Admission to the SCG was by invitation though the selection process remains obscure (Orr, Richard to Author pers comm, e-mail, 5 November 2023).²

² By 2024/2025 all but three of the SCG authors were deceased and, despite considerable effort, two of those who remained alive proved uncontactable. The publisher’s records had apparently been lost or destroyed. I have thus relied heavily on a protracted correspondence with Orr.

Members' names appeared alphabetically in colophons of the *ER* books but Henry Philip was most prominent, a point repeatedly stressed by my principal informant, former SCG member Richard Orr. Orr's hierarchy of SCG membership made informal leaders of 'Henry [Philip], May Burns, Tad Ritchie, Barclay Miller, Iain Macaskill' and himself (Orr, Richard to Author pers comm, e-mail, 28 October 2023), with the additional qualifications that 'Bill Brown... was ever on the outer fringe' (Orr, Richard to Author pers comm, e-mail, 28 October 2023) and that 'Geoff Suggitt was a rare presence' (Orr, Richard to Author pers comm, e-mail, 30 October 2023) preferring to make his contributions by post, something that is perhaps not surprising, given he was the only group member based outside Scotland. There were 'regular working meetings... held in Edinburgh at weekends, either at St Andrews House [headquarters of the Scottish Office] or in hotels, almost always overnight' (Orr, Richard to Author pers comm, e-mail, 24 October 2023) and the SCG's deliberations seems to have been amicable in a way those of the Cambridge Schools Classics Project [CSCP] (which I discuss at greater length below) were sometimes not.

***Ecce Romani* in Detail**

Of course, there were other Latin textbooks already in use. One calculation suggests that by the 1960s the most widely used Latin text in Britain was *Latin for Today* which had first been published in the 1930s, the work of two American authors (Gray and Jenkins, 1933) but revised for use on the other side of the Atlantic (Stray, 1998, p 278, note 20). However, it seems likely that a series called *The Approach to Latin* [TATL] which had specifically Scottish provenance, being the work of two Scottish authors, was more widely used north of the border.³

³ Stray confirms the popularity of *TAL* (1998, p 278, note 20), but says nothing as to whether it was especially used in Scotland. However, Williams claimed this in the 2003 edition of a highly regarded guide to Scottish education, although he gave no indication of his sources for the claim (Williams, 2003, pp 501-502). In passing, as a measure of the demise of classical languages in Scotland it is worth noting that subsequent editions of this standard work do not contain entries on these.

TATL appeared in a series of volumes from the late 1930s to the 1950s (Paterson and Macnaughton, 1953a, 1953b, 1953c, 1953d)⁴ and in the early 1970s one of its original authors was involved, with a new co-author, in an extensive revision of the series ‘designed to meet... new trends in Latin teaching’ (Macnaughton and McDougall, 1974a, p 5) which resulted in a product that was in many ways similar to *ER*. However, it was essentially *TATL*, in its original form, to which the members of the SCG considered themselves to be reacting. As Orr put it to me ‘[it] had outlived its appeal in our view’ (Orr, Richard to Author pers comm, e-mail, 30 October 2023.) Complete by 1975, but produced primarily in 1971 and 1972, there were six books in the first edition of *ER* (Scottish Classics Group, 1975a, 1975b, 1975c, 1975d, 1975e, 1975f), the edition that I consider in most detail here. There were also two reference books, essentially lexicons for pupils to consult, and two more books of notes for teachers (Scottish Classics Group, 1975g, 1975h, 1975i, 1975j). And to complete the original edition there was a work described as a companion in verse to introduce pupils to Latin poetry (Scottish Classics Group, 1975k).

At its core *ER* was a reading course for pupils aged 12-16 not intended to promote or develop the capacity to write Latin in a pastiche style as had hitherto tended to be norm (Stray, 1998; Adams, 2015; Stray, 2018) and it included more than just linguistic material to satisfy the WP’s interest in teaching ‘important aspects of Roman history and civilisation’ (Working Party on the Curriculum in Latin and Greek, 1967, p 9). It comprised five books that largely told the story of a “typical” Roman family of the patrician or senatorial class in the principate imperial period, using stories about their domestic life to illustrate aspects of grammar and teach vocabulary. These domestic scenes were interspersed with extracts from Latin prose texts of various kinds.

⁴ To avoid overly complicated references, allowing for original dates of publication, dates of re-prints and so forth I have, as here, given the final year in which any series was added to. Thus, this series began in 1938 but volumes were added to it until 1953. I use only the latter.

Only some members of the group were involved in a later revision of the basic *ER* course and some, but not all, co-authored or edited other works for the publisher, Oliver & Boyd, that were seemingly intended for use in conjunction with *ER* (McArdle and Suggitt, 1974a, 1974b, 1974c; Burns, Philip, Ritchie and Silver, 1980; Philip, 1986). The second edition revised the content of the basic or core texts but did not alter them substantially; it also tried hard to extend the range of passages for pupils, including through the addition of some medieval Latin (Scottish Classics Group, 1988e, pp 222-252).⁵ The last works produced by the SCG were *Ecce Scriptores Romani: A Selection of Latin Prose and Verse* (Scottish Classics Group, 1993) and a collection of the writings of Rome's greatest orator (Scottish Classics Group, 2002).

The methods employed were intended to engage pupils' attention. This entailed using simplified vocabulary and grammar exercises with frequent prompts in English. There were digressions into aspects of Roman history and culture (sometimes referred as paralinguistic material). The collective title for the series, *Ecce Romani*, was an early and apparently unanimous decision (Orr, Richard to Author pers comm, e-mail, 24 October 2023) and it was equally soon decided that 'following a family would have appeal to school kids [sic]' (Orr, Richard to Author pers comm, e-mail, 30 October 2023).

⁵ For the revised edition, authored between 1984 and 1988, see: Scottish Classics Group, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c, 1988d, 1988e, 1988f, 1988g, 1988h, 1988i and for a later revision, intended for the north American market: Scottish Classics Group, La-wall, Tafe and Esler, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1990d, 1990e. (In passing, of this edition, Orr claimed that the first named of its additional authors 'produced pretty well nothing of the Latin text and we checked any off his limited efforts' [Orr, Richard to Author pers comm, e-mail, 30 August 2025]; I did contact that author at an early stage in my researches but his reply was cursory and uncommunicative.) The members of the SCG credited as being involved in the 1984-1988 revision were: Mary Burns, Andrew Kil-gour, Jessie Knox, Barclay Miller, William Ritchie, Kenneth Silver and Geoffrey Sug-gitt and the members of the group credited as being involved with the later works were: Mary Burns, Iain Macaskill, Barclay Miller, Henry Philip, Kenneth Silver and Geoffrey Suggitt.

The introduction to *Meeting the Family* quickly set the scene for what was (though one of the *ER* authors preferred the more dignified term ‘imaginative reconstructions’; Esslemont, 1972, p 178) essentially a soap opera.

The stories in this book are about a Roman family... In our family, Marcus, the son is fifteen and his sister, Cornelia, thirteen... ... the[ir] father is called Gaius Cornelius Calvus... ... [he] is responsible for the estate. As father, he [has]... legally has the power of life and death over his entire household, though he never exercises that power. [His wife] Aurelia runs the household... but, unlike the modern housewife she has a miniature army of slaves to help with the chores. They have living with them a younger boy, Sextus... Cornelius is acting as his guardian while his father is on service overseas. Also with the family from time to time, is Cornelia's friend, Flavia... Most Roman families had slaves... [Marcus's] tutor Eucleides is a slave, as is Davus, the overseer of the slaves (Scottish Classics Group, 1975a, p 1).

It is possible to see the bones of *ER* in the WP report which noted tartly that, at the time of writing, it was:

possible for pupils to study Latin for four years [aged 12-16] without having made the acquaintance of any author other than Caesar... ... the present restricted choice of authors being [underlain by]... two traditional assumptions... that whatever is read should have been written within the period when Latin literature is asserted to have been at its best... the second... [being] that prose authors should serve as models for composition or, at least, should not... diverge from a supposed ‘classical norm’ (Working Party on the Curriculum in Latin and Greek, 1967, p 9).

It contrasted this with a proposed new state of affairs in which ‘the first aim... [would] be to bring pupils as quickly as possible to the stage where they can read and enjoy [Latin writing]’ (Working Party on the Curriculum in Latin and Greek, 1967, p 9) and insisted that future teaching should:

deal with a wide range of situations... passages [for use] should be selected because they deal with important aspects of Roman history and civilisation... [while also placing] a strong emphasis on passages which deal with Roman social and daily life (Working Party on the Curriculum in Latin and Greek, 1967, p 9).

Ecce Romani and the Cambridge Latin Course

The Cambridge Latin Course [*CLC*] was the work of the CSCP, a body that emerged at a time when educational thought was greatly influenced by the Schools Council, created in England in 1964 as a state proxy for devising and implementing curricular reform. The Schools Council was involved in a range of initiatives in the teaching of history (Schools Council History Project, 1976), religious education (Schools Council, 1971) and, crucially for present purposes, classical subjects (Schools Council, 1967, 1969, 1975). Also active at the time was the Nuffield Foundation, a wealthy charity with a wide remit later to become synonymous with novel approaches to science teaching (Waring, 1979). Representatives of Nuffield, the Schools Council and various other interested groups participated in a series of conferences in 1963 and 1964. It was from these various precursors that the CSCP developed (Forrest, 1996, especially pp 23-44 and the chronology [Appendix 2] at pp 161-162). From 1970 the CSCP began to issue the works that constitute the *CLC*.⁶

Central to the *CLC*, though controversial, was the decision that its textbooks would be informed by a heavy freight of linguistic theory of a kind then fashionable. This led to radical decisions which, although partially reversed since, continue to make *CLC* unpopular with some ‘traditionalists’ still. (In 2006 one author, outraged by the *CLC* went so far as to call, in Latin, naturally, for the director of the CSCP to be dismissed ‘*Tu... non es collocandus...* you’re not fit to be employed’, Mount, 2006, p 260). However, the merits of the *CLC* as an aid to the learning of Latin are not my subject here. What concerns us is the relationship between *CLC* and *ER*, which do superficially seem similar with their move away from grammar-translation, use of the soap opera format and many illustrations.

⁶ Full details of *CLC* are available as Appendix 1 in Forrest, 1996, pp 157-160 and see: Lister, 2015.

The author of what is *de facto* the official history of the CSCP and CLC claims a degree of relationship between CLC and *Ecce Romani* which, although it admits there are key differences between the two, makes a claim of ‘influence’ by the former on the latter.

Ecce Romani... was published hard on the heels of the CLC. The twin aims of the course were to bring pupils quickly up to the point where they can read Latin with confidence and to give pupils some insight into life in the early Roman empire. The course not only became widely adopted in Scotland, but also had some appeal to Classics teachers south of the border.... [it] had in fact been influenced by the development of the CLC... Dr [M Barclay] Miller of Perth Academy and... H[enry] L Philip... visited the Project during the autumn of 1967 on a fact-finding mission... But though there were many similarities between the CLC and Ecce Romani there were also important differences. For example, no attempt was made to base the linguistic scheme on a systematic development of sentence and phrase patterns as had been attempted in CLC... [and in ER] traditional terms were used for the case names and an element of systematised grammar was introduced... The Scottish reformers of the Classics were more cautious than their counterparts south of the border (Forrest, 1996, p 112).

The influential campaigner for classics, John Sharwood Smith [1919-2007], suggested that *ER* had ‘compromised’ between the poles of traditionalism and the CLC’s radicalism (Sharwood Smith, 1977, p 41), which might also imply the members of the SCG looked at what was happening in England and were influenced by it but baulked at copying its approach in every detail. But the account I have suggests that the members of the SCG, especially Philip, had arrived at a method (described below) independently of the visit to their English counterparts and were always set on employing it, no matter what the CSCP and CLC did. In Orr’s words ‘we definitely questioned... [CLC’s] methodology... [and] preferred a less dramatic [approach]’ (Orr, Richard to Author pers comm, e-mail, 30 October 2023). Hence, it is important to understand *ER* in its own right and not to see it as a ‘watered down’ CLC. The SCG preferred the word-order technique to anything then being developed in Cambridge. That method, which it was hoped would make Latin ‘valuable [to pupils] for what it says as well as how it says it’, has been described as follows.

[D]eveloped... at a time when Gestalt theories of learning were being much discussed... [w]ord-order method places the Latin text at the centre of the work... [emphasising] the importance of reading Latin aloud... [so that the language's] structure... [is] mastered through reading the Latin rather than through analysis and description in English (Morris, 1966, pp 11-12).

The importance to the SCG of this approach was stressed by one of *ER*'s authors in a 1972 article where he reported that that SCG 'hoped that pupils would be encouraged to read not single words, but rather word-groups... work[ing] their way through the Latin, word-group by word group, in the order in which the groups come' (Esslemont, 1972, p 175).

This approach was also expected to encourage an interest not simply in the Latin language but in Roman culture and history and the 1972 article also emphasised this stressing that the SCG's authors collectively thought 'the study of the Latin languages was not possible in the fullest sense if not combined with some understanding of Roman life'; it was for this reason that, as already noted above, 'additional background information' on Roman life and culture was so prominently included (Esslemont, 1972, p 178).

Analysis

As might be expected, *ER* garnered a range of reviews when it first appeared. Some were positive, some less so. (For a sample, see: Cox, 1973; Farquharson, 1972; Holland, 1973; Scanlan, 1974; Verity, 1972). But only one is important for present purposes (Cox, 1973, p 20) which, in splendidly dusty prose, did us an unexpectedly good turn by adding some pupils' thoughts, thus allowing voices not usually heard to be recorded.

'One thing which I think is good', writes A J Moule, one of my pupils, 'is that some vocab [sic] is not given, therefore making people use an element of imagination and reasoning'... There are those to whom paralinguistic material is anathema. Mr I J Coates, another pupil, is not one of their number. 'This is good because as you learn the language, you also learn more of the people who spoke it'.

At this point we re-enter the domain of reception studies. How much more do we know regarding pupils' views of *ER*? I can answer that question very directly: not very much. But allow me a more elliptical approach, as follows.

There was much hilarity when it emerged that an episode in the long-running science fiction programme *Dr Who*, centring on a character blessed with the ability to travel in time and space, set in ill-fated Roman Pompeii in 79 Common Era [CE], would feature characters whose names were borrowed from *CLC* (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2007). In *CLC* the characters die when the volcano erupts but in the programme's episode so great was the attachment to them on the part of some of those involved in its writing and making that they were saved (Meegan, 2020). Evidently, it was expected that at least some part of the audience would be 'in' on the joke regarding names. (A character called Grumio, a slave, also appears in *CLC* and in a British television situation comedy, *Plebs*, although it is unclear if that Grumio is named after the figure in *CLC*, a similar character in the Roman play *Mostellaria*, Petruchio's servant in *The Taming of the Shrew* or none of these; Holland, 2014.) Less widely remarked was the, so to speak, starring role given to Marcus, son of paterfamilias Gaius Cornelius Calvus, in the 2010 film *Neds* (Mullen, 2010).⁷ Depicting the sometimes-violent milieu of Glasgow in the mid-1970s (MacCallum, 1994) the story told in *Neds* is of a boy (loosely based on the director and writer himself) who, despite showing academic promise when younger – he is *dux* of his primary school – drifts into criminality. In a crucial scene, asked to translate a short passage by his gowned Latin teacher, a man evidently striving to maintain certain former norms in a newly created comprehensive school, he affects to be unable to do this in a manner that leads to his being belted for insolence. He *is* able to translate the passage but declines, an act of defiance in which *ER* seems to stand for an entire package of socio-cultural and educational values he is conspicuously rejecting.

⁷ In 2025 Marcus also appeared on stage, in a play based on the *ER* stories staged by a group of American students, in Edinburgh's Festival Fringe. I am grateful to Richard Orr for bringing this to my attention.

See: <https://fringereview.co.uk/blogsandcolumns/donald-stewart/general/2025/my-top-10-youth-shows-at-the-edinburgh-fringe-2025-that-is-actual-11/>.

Because I did not try hard enough, I mastered less Latin than I should have done but I emerged from using the *ER* books with an enduring (if amateur) fascination with all things Roman. Patently, my response was not that of the *Neds* character. Given the continued decline in popular interest in Latin since the 1970s it seems that his was rather more typical. The series was designed to popularise learning Latin in Scotland but did it have the opposite effect, alienating some pupils, hastening the subject's decline? These are things we cannot know because (unlike the author trying to study the reception of a work such as Kennedy's primer; Stray, 2018) we lack the sources. I have my personal recollections/experiences. We can also infer something of the experience of the writer/director of *Neds* (although even this is somewhat tentative) and, thanks to one reviewer from the 1970s (Cox, 1979) we have two pupils' voices – but given that he was a teacher in a school in England his pupils were English and not Scottish their opinions are interesting but not relevant. Thus, without conducting research of a very different kind, perhaps an extensive programme of oral history interviews with former Scottish pupils who had experience of using *ER* in the series' 1970s' and 1980s' heyday, we simply cannot currently say more.

Conclusion

What the Romans called Caledonia only ever stood in a semi-detached relationship to the Roman empire, only partially included in it and that for a relatively short time (at most c138-211 CE; Richmond, 1955/1995; Breeze, 1996) but it became part of the Latin Christendom that survived Rome's fall and entered 'western culture' (whatever exactly that consists in) thereafter (Cairns, 2021). And yet, the Caledonia, or Scotland, of the early twenty-first century seemed to have forgotten its classical inheritance. Why Latin had become almost unknown in Scottish schools by the 2020s was unclear and it was equally unclear if efforts at revival, especially in schools that were not fee-paying (Peebles, 2023; see also: Imrie, 2019, 2023) would yield dividends. To answer my title's question again: it does not currently seem possible to write the story of *ER*'s reception.

However, one thing did appear certain: *ER* was rarely used in Scottish schools by the time of writing. In part, of course, that was a product of the fact that Latin itself was rarely taught there (Cairns, 2021; Connor, 2023; Imrie, 2019, 2023), so no text was necessary. To some extent, this was a manifestation of a more general demise yet there did also appear to have been an especially vindictive attitude towards Latin on the part of some headteachers and educational bureaucrats in Scotland. (This is what Hunt claims when he presents the demise of Latin in Scotland as a paradigm example of its neglect in the UK more generally, evidently having Scottish school heads especially in mind when he says 'head teachers and principals sometimes hold back from offering Latin... because of their hostility... [n]o worse [case]... can be found of this happening ... [than] Scotland'; Hunt, 2016, p 15). However, there was also a view that teaching methods had moved on (Imrie, Alex to Author, pers com, e-mail, 14 October 2023), rendering *ER* obsolete. That view might be right or wrong (I make no attempt to judge the series' pedagogical efficacy, considering myself quite unqualified to offer an opinion) but, in any event, Scotland seemed to have forgotten its most substantive contribution to attempting to revive and revitalise the teaching of that inheritance, *Ecce Romani*. *Ecce* is, of course, behold or regard and ultimately, despite the SCG's efforts, by 2025 the Romans were no longer regarded as once they were in Caledonia's schools.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix: The Scottish Classics Group's Members, c1970s-2000s

Name	School/Institution (Position when <i>ER</i> was first published)	Served on Working Party?	Notes
William I (Bill) Brown	Aberdeen College of Education (Classics lecturer)	No	
Mary SR (May) Burns [?-2015]	Mary Erskine School for Girls, Edinburgh* (Principal teacher, classics)	Yes	Later assistant deputy principal, Mary Erskine School for Girls, Edinburgh (Jessop, 2015)
Donald AL Esslemont	Inverurie Academy (Principal teacher, classics)	No	
John Forrester	St Augustine's Secondary School, Glasgow† (Headmaster)	No	
David D Galloway [1932-2021]	Bell Baxter High School, Cupar (Principal teacher, classics)	No	Former teacher, Bo'ness Academy; later assistant rector, Bell Baxter and rector, Madras College, St Andrews (Ferguson, 2021)
Andrew Kilgour	Jordanhill College of Education, Glasgow (Classics lecturer)	Yes	
Jessie G Knox [1912-?]	Hutchesons' Girls' Grammar School, Glasgow* (Principal teacher, classics)	Yes	Later acting principal, Hutchesons' Girls' Grammar School, Glasgow (Lockhart, 2015, 123)
Iain R Macaskill	Knox Academy, Haddington (Principal teacher, classics)	No	

Hugh M McArdle	Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh (Classics lecturer)	No	
M Barclay Miller [1921-2015]	Perth Academy (Principal teacher, classics)	Yes	Former teacher, Banff Academy (Reynolds, 2015)
Richard M Orr	Glasgow City Corporation (Adviser in classics)	No	Former classics teacher, Hyndland Secondary, Glasgow, Queens Park Secondary, Glasgow and High School of Glasgow and principal, Hillpark Secondary, Glasgow; later adviser in classics, Strathclyde Regional Council
Henry L Philip [?-2023]	Liberton Secondary School, Edinburgh (Headmaster)	No	Former inspector (Young, 2023)
James (Jim) Picken	George Watson's College, Edinburgh* (Principal teacher, classics)	No	Former teacher, High School of Glasgow
William F (Tad) Ritchie	Arbroath High School (Deputy rector)	Yes	Former teacher, Arbroath High School
Kenneth G Silver	Falkirk High School (Principal teacher, classics)	Yes	Later rector, Jedburgh Grammar School
Geoffrey Suggitt	Trowbridge High School (Headmaster)	No	Former teacher, George Watson's College; later headmaster, Stratton School, Biggleswade

*Fee-paying. † Catholic.

Note on table: I have largely relied on the details given in the colophons of the first and second editions of *ER* for details of careers, but I had information from Orr and some other sources are shown. I knew all bar three SCG members to be deceased by the time of writing. However, I have only been able to establish some dates of death and/or birth.

Note on Scottish school types: Schools in Scotland can be independent (ie fee-paying) or state/free schools. The latter can be Catholic or non-denominational. Fee-paying Catholic schools also exist, but no Scottish Classics Group member worked in a school that was both.

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