

EDITORIAL

As a civilization study classic has always embraced an extensive range of what (at least today) are regarded as separate, if in some cases related, disciplines. History, archaeology, epigraphy, philosophy, religion, science, medicine, mathematics, logic, sociology, politics, linguistics, textual criticism, literary analysis, fine arts are all subjects (and subjects requiring frequently quite separate skills and methodologies) to which the classicist has traditionally addressed himself, even if the result has not always been what might reasonably be called knowledge or understanding. There are of course great educational advantages to be derived from the study of a civilization *in toto* particularly if special attention is given to a careful consideration of the interrelation of the various parts of the cultural spectrum. But ultimately the classicist must (and the 'must' is one of desirability as much as of constraint) shape his course of action; he must prune the wide field of his preliminary studies down to more specific and closer analyses of certain items or issues within an *individual* area with which in the general context of classical studies he has already come into contact. Specialization is in fact the most central of all intellectual imperatives; one simply has to channel one's concentrated energies into a particular context in order to perceive its nature — although energy itself is not enough. If understanding is to be achieved, energy must be accompanied by the consistently rigorous application of the appropriate methodology or methodologies, and this involves not merely grasping the methods of a particular discipline and working according to the laws of those methods, but making discriminations — discriminations between matters of more significance and matters of less, between matters deserving of full or fuller treatment and those which are peripheral or at best ancillary.

With recent exceptions, classical journals have in the main not provided a context in which the aims, methods and discriminations relevant to the study of a particular area can become clearly established. One result of the diffuse range of subject-matter handled by the traditional classical periodical has been the generation (particularly in the case of the *bête noire* of classics — literary analysis) of some uncertainty about the nature of the discriminations to be made and their proper employment. A journal ought ideally to act as a criterion for important (that is to say, intelligent, perceptive and discriminate) work in a discipline; but where, as has been traditionally the case in classical studies, a journal covers several separate disciplines, this purpose cannot be fulfilled.

Accordingly this journal confines itself to one discipline, that of Greek and Roman literature, and aims to draw into a single context work within this area which is analytical, critical and discriminate. Articles dealing primarily with questions other than literary ones or which treat of questions literary but peripheral will not be admitted. That the usefulness of the journal may not be restricted to those who have the languages, translations accompany both Greek and Latin quotations.

At this stage almost all works of importance in ancient literature are in need of extensive re-evaluation according to a more appropriate critical apparatus. Some indeed have barely been treated by the classical tradition at all and have yet to be evaluated seriously. There is much work to be done, and work which ought to be of vital concern not only to those already professionally involved in Greek and Roman literature but also to those engaged in other areas of classical studies and indeed to many outside the field of classics altogether. For the importance of the major works of classical literature is not confined to classicists. In respect of both the significance of the issues with which they deal and the complexity of the exploration of those issues of which they consist, the quality of these major works is such that the understanding of them not only brings with it the intellectual satisfaction common to achievement in all academic disciplines but, since it increases one's comprehension of issues fundamental to oneself as a thinking, sentient human person, contributes towards, and is a constituent of, the richness of one's own experience. As the 'humanity' *par excellence*, Greek and Roman literature define what it is to be human.

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