

External Evaluation Committee Report

Academic Review of Department of Philology, University of Patras

by

Anastasia Giannakidou, Professor of Linguistics, University of Chicago (Chair)

**Stathis Gourgouris, Professor of Comparative Literature and Hellenic Studies,
Columbia University**

Georgios Xenis, Associate Professor of Ancient Greek, University of Cyprus

Athens, 16th December 2011

1 Introduction

1.1 *The External Evaluation Procedure*

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the University of Patras December 12-14, 2011 for the assessment of the Department of Philology. On the first day we met successively with (i) the Chair of the Department, Prof. M. Christopoulos, and the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee (IEC or in Greek OMEA), namely Assoc. Prof. A. Georgiadou, Asst. Prof. G. Xydopoulos (coordinator), and Assoc. Prof. A. Kostiou (member). The remaining members of IEC, namely Assoc. Prof. M. Lipka and Asst. Prof. G. Gotsi, were on sabbatical leave; (ii) the Vice-Rector of the University, Assoc. Prof. A. Roussou, who is also a member of the academic faculty of the Philology Department, and members of MODIP and other vice-rectors. Unfortunately, we were not able to meet with the Dean of the Humanities Faculty, Prof. C. Terezis -- who, although invited, could not attend the meeting.

On the second day we had detailed information sessions in the morning and early afternoon with the Chair and members of the Department, who explained the following aspects of the Department:

A. History, organization, infrastructure and administration (presentation by the Chair, Prof. M. Christopoulos);

B. Perspectives and academic quality (presentation by the IEC coordinator, Asst. Prof. G. Xydopoulos);

C. Research activities of the Department's three sections with presentations by Assoc. Profs. A. Georgiadou (Classics), A. Archakis (Linguistics), and K. Kostiou (Byzantine and Modern Greek studies, BMGS henceforth);

D. Undergraduate curriculum by Asst. Prof. A. Athini;

E. Graduate curriculum by Assoc. Prof. S. Rangos.

The material was presented in detail with powerpoint presentations. The faculty present was very helpful in supplying the information we needed, and had prepared three written copies of the powerpoint material for our perusal.

We also had the opportunity to meet with the faculty members of the three sections in the later afternoon: Giannakidou met with Linguistics, Gourgouris with BMGS, and Xenis with Classics. Overall we met with every faculty member on campus with the exception of Assoc. Prof. A. Georganta— who, while on the Philology premises, did not show intent to meet with us.

On the same day we also visited the following departmental facilities:

A. The computer laboratory with a brief presentation by Asst. Prof. D. Papazachariou (Linguistics). This laboratory is used mainly by the Linguistics and also by Classics, and serves classes as well as individual study by graduate students.

B. The Departmental Library where we had a presentation by Asst. Prof E. Karakantza.

C. The Laboratory for the Study of Myth and Religion in Greek and Roman Antiquity run by the Classics section, directed by Christopoulos, with brief presentations by Karakantza and Christopoulos. Graduate students were also present. We were informed that there are also plans for a Laboratory in Papyrology, to be run by the Classics section.

D. The Paleography Laboratory run by the BMGS; a brief presentation was made by Athini, the director of the Laboratory, at the presence of students and other faculty.

E. The Laboratory for the Study of Modern Greek Dialects run by Linguistics, directed by Prof. A. Ralli, who was not able to meet with us because she was on leave. A detailed presentation was made by Papazachariou, acting director of the Lab, and five graduate students currently engaged in various projects of the Lab. They also gave us written reports of the activities of the center, including projects, publications, and the CVs of the Linguistics faculty (please, see below).

On the third (and last) day of our on-site visit we met with the administrative staff where we had presentations by Mrs. S. Micheli, the departing Departmental Secretary, and the administrative staff Mr. P. Kaspiris, Mrs. M. Keramonte, and Mrs. G. Skanavi.

Our last meetings were with a number of the Department's students. We saw them separately in three groups: undergraduates, Master's students, and PhD candidates. All years and all sections were represented in the three groups, and the discussion was conducted in an overall pleasant and friendly atmosphere.

We then visited the Conference Centre and were pleased to attend an undergraduate class by Asst. Prof. E. Karakantza on Myth and Religion at the big amphitheatre of the Centre. We also visited the Central University Library.

Our visit concluded with a brief meeting with the Rector, Prof. G. Panayiotakis, and a farewell session and lunch with the Chair of the Department, the Chair of MODIP, and faculty members of the Department, and members of the IEC.

Apart from on-site observations, presentations and discussions as well as the Report of the IEC, our knowledge of the Department was enhanced by the additional documentation provided during our visit. Specifically, we received the following documents:

- 1) «Πρόγραμμα επιτόπιας επίσκεψης της Επιτροπής Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης» by the Department. This contains the materials of the afore-mentioned presentations, namely those that were made on the second and third day of the on-site visit.
- 2) «Εξωτερική αξιολόγηση της ειδίκευσης Γλωσσολογίας». This is material compiled by the Linguistics section, and contains information about the Linguistics curriculum (undergraduate and graduate), research, inter-University and international collaborations, and administrative service of the Linguistics faculty members to the Department and the University.
- 3) «Εξωτερική αξιολόγηση του Εργαστηρίου Νεοελληνικών Διαλέκτων». This is material compiled by the Linguistics section, and contains information about activities of the Laboratory for the study of Modern Greek Dialects (henceforth Dialects Lab), and a list of publications of the Lab (faculty and students involved).
- 4) A compilation of the CV's of the faculty of the Linguistics section.
- 5) «Πανεπιστήμιο Πατρών. Γενικά στοιχεία και αξιολόγηση», provided to us by the Vice-Rector of the University A. Roussou, who is also a faculty member of the department (Linguistics section).
- 6) A copy of Law 4009 for Higher Education provided to us by the Rector of the University.
- 7) Memo to the faculty of the Department of Philology, drafted by the graduate students regarding problems with administrative staff.

- 8) Undergraduate and Graduate Guide both in CD-ROM and hard copy.
- 9) Student evaluations for the academic year 2009-2010, provided to us upon request by Xydopoulos (Linguistics section).
- 10) A copy of the paper mentioned in the Appendix regarding institutional rankings.

1.2 The Internal Evaluation Procedure

It is our judgment that the Internal Evaluation report was thorough and comprehensive, covering all major aspects of the Department's functioning. Some of the details became clearer with elaboration of the given information during the presentations. It was also useful to provide teaching evaluation samples during the presentation, and later upon request we received actual evaluations for each faculty member for the year 2009-2010. In our institutions, an assessment of academic unit does require inspection of such evaluations, which are always available for review.

Regarding the question as to whether the objectives of the internal evaluation process have been met by the Department, we were repeatedly assured by the MODIP that the high standards imposed by ADIP were met. The EEC as a whole felt that we had an accurate and comprehensive enough picture by reading this document, and we did not observe any discrepancies between the presentations/comments made during our visit and the material of the IEC we had examined prior to our arrival.

2 Curriculum

2.1 Undergraduate Program

Goals and Objectives

There are several curricular goals and objectives in the undergraduate program: efficiently broad education of students so they can respond properly to the professional demands of secondary education; preparation for graduate study in research fields contiguous to the three domains of the department; general education and cultivation of students to prepare them for a variety of possible professions beyond secondary

education; a sense of essential connection between the three domains (Classics, BMGS, Linguistics).

These objectives were decided after careful and long term discussion among the department faculty, taking into account the difficult conditions involved, especially the disproportionate ratio between exceedingly large number of undergraduates and available faculty personnel (50 to 1) and the inadequate infrastructure. The curriculum goes far toward satisfying the department's objectives, but it was obvious to the EEC that it cannot be adequately implemented with the existing number of faculty.

Implementation and Results

No doubt, the undergraduate curriculum is functionally and thoughtfully organized. There is a built in structure for every student to participate in a domain outside his or her specific domain of study, so the cohesion of the tripartite structure of the department is well served and the students' education is broadened beyond mere specialization. Moreover, all students in their final year are required to engage in courses of practical application and training, which is essential for their subsequent employment; this is indeed an innovative feature and is especially commendable.

While the breadth and thoughtfulness of the undergraduate curriculum is beyond doubt, and the faculty employed is perfectly trained to carry it out, the department's overall capacity to implement it is hampered by insufficient faculty numbers. By account of students interviewed, the execution of the curriculum was conducted with great zeal and commitment by the part of the faculty of all sections, including adjunct faculty (employed according to state statute 407). However, many students also noted the lack of course availability in certain domains, in particular in Classics and BMGS, and the need for certain courses to be reconceptualized either toward more rigorous basic training or more comparative and cross-disciplinary learning. In order to implement its full curricular capacity in Classics and BMGS, the department often has to reach out of department (Philosophy, Theater Studies) for instructional help. This is not necessarily negative because cross-disciplinary curricular cooperation is commendable, but under

current conditions this situation results in overtaxing faculty capacity to the detriment of student learning.

Improvement

The Department is fully conscious of the improvements needed. They are seriously considering decreasing the current number of required courses (52) by at least 4, while strengthening emphasis on more quality learning and raising standards of performance. It is essential to underline that, although the department has collectively judged that it cannot serve more than 80 students per year without compromising high standards of education, it is consistently burdened with nearly 240 students per year. Whatever improvements are to be implemented need to acknowledge this endemic problem.

The Curriculum of the Linguistics section is, in the view of the EEC, quite comprehensive and covers all the core subfields of linguistic study—including theoretical linguistics (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics), computational (lexicography, corpus study), as well as experimental subfields (e.g. neurolinguistics, experimental methods, language acquisition) and historical linguistics. The faculty's expertise is quite broad, and the Linguistics curriculum compares favorably to the one found in other Greek Linguistics sections, e.g. at the Universities of Athens, Thessaloniki, and Crete. With respect to our home institutions (e.g. University of Chicago, which has a Linguistics Department), we are happy to report that the curriculum is very similar to the one in Linguistics at Patras. However, unlike Chicago and other Greek Linguistics sections, the Linguistics program at Patras offers classes on Modern Greek dialects because of the particular research focus of the faculty (see Section 3 on *Research*), which appear to attract a lot of students.

Overall, the Department articulated clearly the partiality of the curriculum in certain areas, which the EEC confirmed and thereby makes the following suggestions and recommendations:

- 1) In Classics, there is serious disproportion between Greek and Latin courses, with Latin requiring another faculty appointment in order to be properly served. Similarly, lack is found in the domains of ancient historiography and archeology, Hellenistic literature, and textual criticism. In addition, given that more and more students nowadays enter the Department without the ability to translate even simple Ancient Greek and Latin sentences, the EEC strongly urges the Department to introduce compulsory Elementary Greek and Latin courses in the first semester of the curriculum. Those students who feel that they do not need such a level of teaching should take a test examination and, if successful, be allowed to skip it. Moreover, the course «Θεματογραφία 2» should be offered *immediately* after «Θεματογραφία 1», so that no break in the teaching of the language will exist, and should also be made a compulsory course for students of all three sections. Similar arrangements should be made for Latin as soon as staffing levels permit. The need for more language courses was acknowledged by both the faculty and the students.
- 2) More than any other domain in the department, BMGS is particularly hampered by inadequate faculty numbers. The existing faculty is accomplished and energetic, but their great efforts cannot possibly account for the enormous historical range of the BMGS curriculum. Therefore, lack is evident in early Byzantine literature, the folksong tradition, Cretan Renaissance, and pre-18th century literature, as there are no faculty members with such research interests. There is also difficulty in sustaining and enhancing the existing curriculum in comparative literature (especially relation of Greek literature to other literary traditions), literary theory, and European literary history insofar as it pertains to Modern Greek, or various Balkan and Slavic traditions as related to Byzantine literature. The EEC also felt that, possibly in the near future, a faculty appointment specializing in Classical Reception could work well to serve curricular needs in both the Classics and Modern literature fields simultaneously. Finally, a gap exists in the teaching of Byzantine Greek; Byzantine Greek has its own peculiarities

and its own research tools, topics that are not addressed in the current state of the curriculum.

- 3) The Linguistics curriculum is more complete, but here too partial lack was observed in the field of formal syntax-semantics, which is an important component in Linguistics departments in the United States (but not so in Europe). A presence of another syntax-semantics faculty would definitely enhance the more theoretical aspect of the program currently represented by Roussou and Xydopoulos (who does lexical semantics).

2.2 Master's and Doctoral Programs

Goals and Objectives

The graduate program's objectives include (a) the development of research techniques in the three departmental domains according to current international standards; (b) the broadening and sharpening of theoretical, critical, and methodological knowledge so that, as young researchers, the students can take on the task of original research or performance in various professional fields after graduation; (c) the connection of research in all three fields to contemporary technologies; (d) the development of scientific communication networks with various other recognized universities and research institutes in the European Union and elsewhere.

The graduate program was developed by extensive efforts of department faculty with the intellectual ambition to train students in a variety of research topics (whether theoretical and comparative or specifically focused, and more hands-on experimental) according to the highest international standards and extensive bibliographical knowledge in foreign languages. It is statistically proven that this graduate program is ranked at the highest level of desirability among Greek student population seeking to expand their education. One student told us that she came to Patras from the University of Athens to study Greek dialects. The Linguistics section currently also has two foreign PhD students (from the University of Bosphorus, Turkey, and the University of Cyprus), and one

linguistics student is currently at the University of Leiden, the Netherlands, on the Erasmus program.

Moreover, because the graduate program is organized and conducted on the basis of internally determined statutes, that is, with greater academic autonomy, the EEC observed more efficient implementation of standards and more substantial intellectual returns than the undergraduate program, which is determined by external factors. It must also be noted that 80% of the PhD student population in Linguistics is funded through the European or other projects that the Dialects Lab has been granted. Linguistics also has post-doctoral fellows. PhD funding and postdoctoral fellowships are indications of a high functioning section based on international standards.

Much of the obligatory part of the graduate curriculum is based on extensive courses in field methodology and research methods, as is proper. This is covered substantially in all three domains. The range of elective courses varies according to field and faculty availability, with gaps existing along the lines of the undergraduate curriculum as mentioned above, for reasons again of inadequate faculty numbers in Classics and BMGS especially, and infrastructural problems. However, the list of courses in specific research areas, in all three domains, is quite impressively structured, from the most particular textual focus to the broadest theoretical range. The listed methods of evaluation, examination, and achievement (written and oral reports, term papers, seminar participation), as well as the final Masters or Doctoral thesis, fulfill the requisite standards of the field. Finally, the graduate curriculum is substantially augmented by regular academic conferences specific to field (where students also participate in the organization) and regular visitors from an impressive range of international universities, who conduct lectures and seminars. A famous linguistics professor, Paul Kiparsky from Stanford University was awarded an honorary degree from the Department, and as far as we know, such honors are rare in Greek Universities.

From interviews with graduate students (both MA and doctoral level and from all three sections), the EEC recognized the presence of a satisfied student body of high intellectual caliber, and with real potential to compete with peers in the best international institutions in comparable fields. The general atmosphere of intellectual cooperation

among peer students, as well as open-minded and engaged pedagogic relations between students and faculty testifies to the excellent academic environment of this department.

Improvement

The department is perfectly aware of what needs to be improved and was highly receptive to our suggestions at both faculty and student level. The EEC observed and suggested the following:

First, as already mentioned above, the lack of faculty in specific field areas and specializations in Classics and BMGS serves as a primary obstacle to the further development of an otherwise excellent graduate program. While lack of faculty hampers domains of general instruction at the undergraduate level, it restricts research capacity in focused domains at the graduate level.

Second, the lack of a central computerized system of registration and curriculum processing at the graduate level is a major handicap in the efficient conduct of graduate education. Additionally, the department's specific administration of graduate curricular needs dire and immediate improvement. (See details in Administration section below.)

Third, the EEC recommended that the Department institute the office of Director of Graduate Studies – to be filled by a single faculty member in proper rotation of 1 or 2 years – in order to make general logistical organization and support of the graduate program as a whole more efficient. The students of Linguistics mentioned that Linguistics already has this mechanism in place— Prof. Ralli is the PhD coordinator in the Linguistics section—but it's important that such a position is established for the department as a whole. The office of DGS, which exists in all departments of all major universities abroad, is not to be involved in specific research advising or consulting (each graduate student has a separate academic adviser for research purposes), but is rather to be endowed with the general responsibility for the smooth organizational functioning of the graduate program. It's best that the office of DGS be kept in the hands of one faculty (rotated among representatives of each section) so that the tripartite unity of the department is sustained and better served.

3 Teaching

The guiding principles of the teaching philosophy of the Department, as described to us by the Chair in his presentation, are (a) in-depth learning of the scientific field, and (b) horizontal connections with the historical and social environment. Teaching is done in traditional as well as more modern ways, such as teaching with the aid of computers in the Computer Lab for the classes of Phonology and Dialectology or multi-media presentations such as the one at which we attended on Myth and Religion in the Conference Centre. We were also happy to see that most faculty use the system of so-called *e-class*, an electronic blackboard where they post the material for the classes including presentation slides, book chapters, articles, notes and the like. Our Universities have such electronic platforms in place for a number of years now, and the system has proved extremely efficient in making the teaching material accessible to students without necessitating overuse of paper (it is therefore also “green”). The initiative to implement such electronic system is an innovative property of the program that we applaud.

Despite the suitability and variety of teaching methods, the results are hampered by the exceedingly high teaching faculty/student ratio (1:50). In our institutions, such ratio would be unthinkable. Our highest ratio ranges between 1:20 and 1:25, with a teaching assistant provided as an aid to the faculty and students. This aspect of teaching is in need of immediate addressing. In our discussion with the graduate students, we were happy to note their willingness to offer teaching assistance to faculty members as part of their training. We urge the Department to explore this possibility, for three reasons: (i) it will reduce the teaching load of faculty members; (ii) it will offer graduate students the opportunity for teaching training; (iii) graduate students will make their CVs more competitive by including their teaching experience. Moreover, the capacity of the Computer Lab facility is too small to serve audiences that range between 30 and 80.

Implementation and Results

Based on the material we reviewed and the students’ comments during our meetings with them, our opinion is that the quality of teaching methods is highly comparable to the

standards we find in our institutions. This is also supported by the teaching evaluations we saw, and which reveal high ratings for the majority of faculty members. The methods used are diverse, and the teaching material up to date and contemporary. In linguistics, e.g., the textbooks used for the foundational courses such as “Introduction to Linguistics” and “Syntax” are the ones we use or have used routinely at the University of Chicago. Linguistics faculty have rich translation and pedagogical work, such as the augmented translation of the textbook of Fromkin et al «Εισαγωγή στη Μελέτη της Γλώσσας » by Xydopoulos, and other works such as «Λεξικολογία» (also by Xydopoulos), «Μορφολογία» by Ralli, and « Εισαγωγή σε ζητήματα κοινωνιογλωσσολογίας » by Archakis. These works make accessible in Greek a large body of contemporary research in core areas in linguistics, and their usefulness is enormous. It must also be mentioned that the works appear with Patakis, a respectable Greek publisher in the area of education. Likewise, we were told that in the BMGS section, books on Modern Greek literature by Gotsi and Kostiou are used as main textbooks in other university departments in Greece and Cyprus.

Overall, there is strong commitment of the faculty to teach the learning method, and to combine research with teaching. The latter becomes more visible in the graduate program, where a large body of students are trained, e.g. in the Linguistics section, by participating in the externally funded projects of Prof. Ralli at the Modern Greek dialects lab. Likewise for the Myth and Religion Lab. At the graduate level, and in particular for the students involved actively at the Labs, we find a team spirit and attitude that helps their training and creates a collaborative peer atmosphere.

Finally, opportunity is given to the students to evaluate their instructors by filling in the teaching evaluations. We have seen samples of such evaluations and they are very comprehensive in asking questions about the quality of the teaching, organization of the class, communicative skills of the instructor, appropriateness of the course material, etc. These questionnaires are comparable to the ones we use at our departments at Columbia, Chicago, and Cyprus.

Initiatives

The department has taken initiative in teaching by introducing “practice” classes that introduce the students to more practical skills that will be useful in enhancing their career opportunities. They also implement the e-system we mentioned earlier which makes information instantly available through the electronic platform and cuts down on paperwork—a positive result. Such electronic platforms are already in place in all major research universities in the United States and Europe.

4 Research

As stated in the IEC, research policy is highly individual, and is not centrally planned by the Department. Each section (Classics, BMGS, and Linguistics) sets its own research goals based on the specific characteristics of the respective fields. Encouragingly, we noted that there is an ambition, shared by all three sections, of engaging in competitive research with international impact, and of seeking external funding. The degree of success, however, varies in the three sections (due also, in large part, to the nature of the scientific field), and different tendencies emerge at the level of separate sections.

A. Classics

The EEC was happy to see that the Classics faculty are all research-active: they have creditable CVs with an international dimension, and run a research laboratory, the Centre for the Study of Myth and Religion in Greek and Roman antiquity, which has recently launched its own electronic journal *Electra*. Moreover, they have a rich academic networking with important institutions of global impact such as the Centre for Hellenic Studies of Harvard University.

Over the period 2005-2010, the Classics faculty have also been keen to serve the Greek-speaking audience at a local and national level. This is commendable in itself, but there is a financial issue involved here: Greece’s limited resources will inevitably turn funding-seekers to international bodies, which, as is well-known, award grants competitively on the basis of research achievement of international standing (as judged by publication in top refereed journals such as *Classical Quarterly*, *Mnemosyne*,

Philologus etc., and globally acclaimed publishers such as OUP, Brill, CUP, de Gruyter, etc.). Therefore, if funding is to be secured, the section's research collaborations will have to strengthen their international aspect, even at the expense of their Greek-language publications, whether these take the form of publications in proceedings of Greek conferences, articles in Greek Classics journals, or books locally produced.

The staffing of the Classics section presents some overlap, which is not necessarily bad. Through this overlap, the Department was able to operate a number of laboratories which do require a critical mass of people working in the same area (e.g. the Myth and Religion Centre). As regards future appointments, employing a textual critic should be seen as a priority, as it will cover a serious gap in the Department's expertise, and will also enhance the use of the Palaeography Laboratory, which is now used exclusively by Byzantinists. Moreover, future appointments should redress the current imbalance between Hellenists (8) and Latinists (2).

B. Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies

Strictly speaking, the fields of Byzantine Studies and Modern Greek Studies operate in different ways in terms of both methodology and intellectual tradition. What might connect them is not so much a notion of Hellenic continuity but a broader comparative framework, where literature written in the Greek language is considered in the context of other traditions that are historically, geographically, and culturally contiguous.

The BMGS faculty of this department of Philology is generally characterized by its dynamic pedagogical spirit and shared intellectual ambition, while working admittedly under dire conditions of over-enrollment, lack of faculty personnel in key areas, antiquated infrastructure, and other kinds of problems of central administration at both the state and the institutional level. Considering conditions of seriously overworked and overextended faculty, the research achievement of the BMGS sector is commendable.

The Byzantine field is represented only by two lecturers (Dr. Kiapidou and Dr. Nousia, who is still to be officially appointed) who, though young scholars, carry the full burden of the Byzantine program in both teaching and research. Their energy is commendable in having stimulated greater student interest in Byzantine literature and also for sustaining and improving the conditions of research and training in the

department's Laboratory of Paleography. The EEC's visit to the premises of the Laboratory showed an impressive capacity, richer than is evident on the website which needs updating and improvement. The Laboratory of Paleography naturally serves as the focal point of the department's research efforts and achievements in the Byzantine field, which include: digitization and classification of manuscripts; research into the Byzantine translations of the texts of Thomas Aquinas; specialized seminars in Byzantine studies and paleography; as well as, finally, instruction and training of students in the reading of paleographic manuscripts.

The Modern Greek field is represented by 5 faculty members (2 Associates and 3 Assistant Professors). The EEC met with Profs. Kostiou, Athini, and Katsigianni. Prof. Gotsi was on research leave in the United States and Prof. Georganta was absent. This group of faculty is significantly understaffed to handle the demands of such a broad historical field. Nonetheless, the EEC was impressed by the energy, commitment, rigor, and intellectual vision that the faculty showed toward the implementation of the department's goals and ambitions.

The list of research projects and activities of the Modern Greek faculty is long and varied, ranging from bibliographical and manuscript editing projects to digitization of 19th century periodicals to classical reception (as in the Cassandra project). There is also a long list of instituted collaboration with eminent Neohellenists and Modern Greek programs within the European Union; this list can be augmented with greater collaboration with American counterparts in addition to what already exists with Harvard University.

The Modern Greek faculty has shown extensive publication activity in most of the significant Greek literary journals and the essential Modern Greek studies journals abroad. However, given that most of the Modern Greek faculty has comparative literature interests and abilities, the EEC feels that broader publication activity in Anglophone or Francophone literary journals beyond Greek specialization is essential to expanding the department's otherwise esteemed profile beyond Greek limits. Greater publication in general comparative literature or historical period journals internationally will also bolster the faculty's capacity to compete for EU research funds, thereby providing benefit to all domains of the department, including the training of students. In this vein, the EEC

suggested that, much like the Linguistics faculty (see below), BMGS faculty has much to gain from collaborative authorship of either articles or books, especially if written in English, since the trend of current scholarship in the humanities abroad is toward greater authorial collaboration. Given the evident points of intersection in expertise among BMGS faculty and the general collaborative climate among faculty in the department as a whole, such practices would not be difficult to implement.

It is important to add here, for the record and as indication of excellence of faculty research, that the department's Modern Greek faculty has just received the honor of seeing in the list of candidates for this year's National Book awards, in the category of Literary Criticism, two of its members: Stesi Athini for her book «Όψεις της νεοελληνικής αφηγηματικής πεζογραφίας, Ο διάλογος με τις ελληνικές και ξένες παραδόσεις στη θεωρία και την πράξη, 1700-1830» (E.I.E. – Ινστιτούτο Νεοελληνικών Ερευνών) and Georgia Gotsi for «"Η διεθνοποίηση της φαντασίας": Σχέσεις της ελληνικής με τις ξένες λογοτεχνίες τον 19ο αιώνα» (Gutenberg).

C. Linguistics

The quality of research at the linguistics section is excellent and of international stature, and this judgment is based on the following criteria: (a) clear and coherent research orientation, impact of the research; (b) international presence of faculty and students in competitive (peer-reviewed) journals and conferences; (c) organization of international conferences and workshops; (d) laboratories and acquisition of external funding; (e) PhD student support. Overall, one gets the impression of a well functioning, competitive, and dynamic research group, whose faculty members are engaged in innovative research with international acclaim, and whose graduate students are trained in a spirit of cooperation and healthy competition that promotes science. The Linguistics website is very well-organized and detailed, with all faculty's CVs uploaded— and we hear that it is regularly updated. There is also a separate website for the Dialects Lab directed by Prof. Ralli, also impeccably organized, with meticulous details about the research projects, results, CV's of the faculty involved in the Lab, and individual websites for the graduate students and postdoctoral researchers. As a whole, the web-presence of Linguistics is very

professional and much like the one we find in Linguistics at our home institution (University of Chicago) and in the Sciences, more generally.

More specifically: (a). *Clear and coherent research orientation, impact of the research.* In terms of type of research, the section combines theoretical as well as laboratory (experimental) linguistics. They have recently expanded (with the hire of Prof. Manouilidou) in the area of neurolinguistics, a currently very dynamic paradigm in the United States and Europe. The main focus of the research is “linguistic variation”, as stated in the IEC, and is strongly reflected in the very active study of Modern Greek dialects at the Dialect Lab. Importantly, this linguistics section is responsible for inaugurating the study of Modern Greek dialects as a paradigm—very little work had been done, and mostly descriptive, before 1997. The documentation and study of the dialects has therefore been the distinctive feature of this department, unique among Greek universities—and is a scientific contribution that goes beyond the mere linguistic aspect, as the material can be useful to historians, literature scholars and comparativists, anthropologists, social scientists, etc.

The theme of variation cuts across the various linguistic subfields represented in the faculty. The research method is interdisciplinary, and focuses on the interfaces between the sublevels of grammar (syntax-morphology, morphology-phonology, phonology-pragmatics, semantics-pragmatics). We also noted collaborations among the faculty members— especially within the various acquired projects, but also independently. This is a positive feature of the research because it enhances synergy and co-operation, and also promotes a peer atmosphere within the department. One finds such atmosphere often in Sciences departments (where Labs and external funding are common), and Linguistics, in this sense, is closer to these. Overall the representation of research fields is satisfactory—though, in our view, the research would benefit with expansion in the direction of *depth*, e.g. with addition of a morpho-syntactician or a formal semanticist to further enhance the theoretical aspects of the program.

(b). *Publications in peer reviewed journals, international presence.* Individual faculty members have publications in competitive, peer reviewed linguistics journals such as

Lingua, *Journal of Greek Linguistics*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *The Linguistic Review*, *Rivista di Linguistica*, *Morphology*, etc., and have active presence in book publishing with research books as well as textbook and augmented translations (mentioned earlier)—in Greek as well as English. The linguistics faculty also has a strong international presence in conferences in Europe, Canada and the United States, where they are invited for colloquia and spend sabbatical time (e.g. Prof. Ralli is currently at Princeton University). Faculty is also on editorial boards of some of the abovementioned international journals, and Roussou is one of the editors of the *Journal of Greek Linguistics*. These facts indicate a high international acclaim for the research and researchers of this faculty, and a considerable impact factor. Please see the Appendix, Table five, which is an excerpt from a recent paper accessing the impact factor (*h-index* and other, widely used and reliable measures) of a number of departments in Greek Universities. Philology in Patras scores number 1, largely due to the publications of the Linguistics faculty.

The presence of faculty and students in international conferences is continuous, and we heard from the PhD and MA students that they are encouraged to participate in conferences abroad, and in student exchange programs with other European universities. Faculty members also participate in such programs.

(c) *Conference organization*. The section has organized numerous important conferences with international participation such as e.g. the Mediterranean Morphology Meeting (which was launched by this section), International Conference on Modern Greek Dialects and linguistic Theory, and various others. The section also publishes the Proceedings of these conferences, as well as *Working Papers*. We were kindly given a number of sample publications of the section and the Lab (see next) in our visit. These conferences host international scholars of high stature such as Prof. Paul Kiparsky (Stanford University) and Prof. Brian Joseph (Ohio State University). The organization of conferences also gives the opportunity to PhD students to meet international scholars and exchange ideas with them. It also familiarizes them with international standards that they then have to adopt in their research, so it is an essential part of their training.

d. *The Dialects Lab*. The Dialects Lab is an essential driving force of the research in the department. It offers a large enough space with up-to-date equipment for the study of dialects and for conducting phonological experiments, and it also has a library and conferences space for discussion, class, and study. Students engaged in projects as well as faculty use the space, and team atmosphere is created, which we believe is essential for the healthy functioning of any department.

The Lab's main source of funding is external (European funds – EΠΕΑΕΚ, ESPA), Thalis, etc., as well as more local funds (Karatheodoris) and funds from private donors. Many grants are granted to Prof. Ralli, the director of the Lab, but all faculty is engaged in fund seeking, and they are all exceptionally successful in getting them. Overall, we noted that the spirit is very much like in the Sciences in seeking external grants, and this is a very successful strategy not only for expanding the research, but also for funding graduate students and postdoctoral researchers. Funding of graduate students is an essential part of a good program in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

e. *Student support*. We were told that 80% of the PhD students are funded through the various projects of the Dialects Lab, which is a remarkable achievement—in all respectable institutions of the US, Canada and Europe, the PhD program is fully funded—and, we believe, quite unique in Greece. Funding of PhD students is essential to their training, and enables them to travel and promote their research abroad thus enhancing their visibility, prospects, and career opportunities later. The section also funds international students (e.g. from Turkey and Cyprus).

Overall, our impression was that of a high functioning, modern, and energetic section of Linguistics, with clear research goals, effective strategies of how to reach them, an active research presence nationally and internationally, and a philosophy of excellence in research that seems to us exceptional, for any standards. It has built an excellent reputation nationally and internationally as a unique place to study variation and Modern Greek dialects; and it is characterized by a modern sense of doing research as a community, as a team. This section of Linguistics has the potential to become the number 1 Linguistics department in the country. Our recommendation is to continue supporting it

and allow it to expand, despite the dire financial circumstances. Currently, there is need for equipment for neuro-imaging (f-MRI and EEG) and it should be a top priority to get this equipment. The phonetics-sociolinguistics research (by Archakis and Papazaxariou) is also a promising area of expansion.

5. All other administrative issues

It is important to note that a member of the department, Anna Roussou (Linguistics section) currently serves as vice-rector. This speaks highly of the involvement of the department in University matters, and a heightened sense of community responsibility.

5.1 Administrative support: suggestions for improvement

The majority of the administration of the Department seems to work professionally—though it seemed to us that they are not always flexible in undertaking duties that go beyond the regular, such as e.g. conference organization, or staying longer hours when necessary. These are integral parts of academic life, therefore basic duties of the administrative staff, and not additional tasks.

At the same time, the secretary and administrative staff seem to be overloaded with work that, in advanced institutions in the US and Europe, belong to a central Registrar. It is the opinion of this committee that the University must implement a policy of central registry in order to more efficiently serve the students, thereby allowing the departmental staff to have more time to serve the teaching and research needs of the faculty and student of the department.

A strikingly negative point came to our attention concerning the service of graduate students. It appears that the staff in charge does not have computer skills, and is unhelpful to the students. The graduate students feel, and the faculty agrees, that the students are not supported properly owing to a lack of necessary skills and indifferent attitude of the person in question. The students filed a grievance memorandum, which was supplied to us at our request. The EEC recommends that the issue should be immediately remedied by replacing the person under discussion. It is our view that a person without computer skills cannot assume secretarial work.

Finally, we were struck by the fact that class and examination scheduling (ωρολόγιο πρόγραμμα διδασκαλίας και εξετάσεων) is the responsibility of a faculty member. We urge the Department to assign this task to administrative staff, as is the case in all reputable institutions throughout the world.

5.2 Library

We had the opportunity during our visit to see both the departmental Library and the main library of the University and to access the online catalogue. We were surprised by the small size of the holdings in Classics (partly because titles in classics may be quite expensive), and the faculty admitted that the library cannot adequately support their research activity. Although we noted that some gaps can be supplemented through interlibrary loan system, we believe that the University should be more ambitious in its aspirations.

Regarding Linguistics, the library at the Dialects Lab serves the needs of the research group. At the central level, however, many linguistic book titles are missing, including books by Greek linguists of the past 15 years. It is highly recommended that the faculty actively seek information about new titles, and to communicate this information to the librarian. In addition, more technical personnel needs to be hired in order to responsibly handle the data processing necessary to maintain the high standards of this Lab.

5.3 Premises

The Department should, as soon as possible, be provided with much better premises and space facilities. Teaching rooms are deplorable, classrooms for large classes barely available and insufficient, library resources under-representative of what is needed.

6. Strategic Planning and Overall Recommendations

From the outset, the EEC recognized the difficulty of its assignment in that whatever assessment it was to make would be compromised by the constitutive uncertainty that characterizes the situation of university education in Greece at this time. On the one hand,

the new State law that purports to radically alter (and perhaps update) the structural organization of the Greek public university, and on the other hand, the severe economic crisis plaguing every aspect of Greek society produce such a troubling situation that it is nearly impossible to imagine how and what of the EEC's assessment and recommendations will be addressed.

Having said that, the EEC was amazed to discover an extremely healthy academic environment in the Department of Philology at the University of Patras. Most striking, from the beginning, was a bona fide spirit of cooperation, collaboration, and mutual understanding among the current faculty, on all functional matters of the department (curricular, pedagogical, research, and overall strategy), even while the department is composed of three not entirely symmetrical components, largely because of different methodological, epistemological, and practical characteristics intrinsic to the fields involved. This same climate of cooperation, collaboration, and mutual understanding was extended to the student population – this latter being a real achievement on the part of the faculty, given the typical conditions of faculty-student relations in today's Greek universities. It may not be unrelated that the general policy of the department faculty in all three sections is to foster an educational climate that produces the sort of student who is flexible in professional terms and multi-skilled, thereby employable in a variety of sectors beyond merely the traditional one, teaching in secondary education.

This excellent climate has been achieved with extraordinary effort over the years on the part of the faculty, who had to account for the various asymmetries of the three sections, and their different approaches because of differences in the fields. This collective effort was evident in the way the faculty approached the EEC and the academic review process in general – without any suspicion or reluctance, but rather with open mind, transparency and accountability, willingness to respond to all questions regardless, and exceedingly thorough preparation and presentation. It is specifically this general willingness to succeed, improve, and grow that grants this department enormous potential.

This potential, however, is hampered by a series of inhibiting factors at the State level.

1) Including the current academic year (2011-2012), the overall budget of the department has been cut by a staggering 47% in the last 2 years. How the department can continue to perform its service at a high level with these cuts seems nearly impossible to this Committee.

2) The undergraduate program continues to be over-enrolled against the explicit wishes of the department. The department assesses that it can operate at high levels of performance and responsibility with no more than 80 new students per year. Yet, the current year's freshman class numbers 245. The EEC feels that if budget cuts of some sort are necessary given Greece's economic conditions, then at the very least, the number of students admitted needs to be cut accordingly.

3) We have already mentioned that the faculty personnel in this department is seriously understaffed overall and with gaps in specific domains (see Research and Curriculum above). As the category of adjunct faculty (statute 407) is supposed to be cut altogether with the new law, and as the prospect of new hires seems rather bleak, the EEC expresses its dire concern as to how the department can continue, much less improve, its performance levels. The EEC feels particularly strong-minded about this concern, since our overall assessment is that this is one of the highest-achieving departments of Philology in the country and with even greater potential, which is entirely achievable because of the willingness of the faculty present.

In addition to inhibiting factors at the State level, there are at least three major inhibiting factors at the institutional level (university-wide) that must be immediately rectified: 1) the graduate program has not been inducted into a fully computerized registration process; 2) the current infrastructure (particularly building accommodation, proper classroom availability etc.) is seriously antiquated and perhaps even dangerous in places; 3) though uneven comparatively in the three sectors (Linguistics being more advanced), the technological availability of bibliographical and general research material leaves much to be desired, especially as, with budget cuts in effect, subscription to current electronic journals is being withdrawn.

It should be noted and underlined that nowhere did we see— on the part of the faculty but also the students— a miserly, pessimistic, or generally negative attitude in relation to these dire conditions. On the contrary, the prevalent spirit was one of

willingness to respond with inventiveness, strength, and greater collaboration. Hence, the strong efforts to compete and win funding support for research from various EU sources, which we discussed in the Research section. The EEC feels that this direction needs to be continued and further enhanced across all three domains. While Linguistics is evidently more advanced in this direction, the other two sectors have both the capacity and the willingness to follow suit. Newly created initiatives, such as the Laboratory of Myth and Religion, for example, can become themselves the conduit for further funding, especially because they can demonstrate an evident technological research component. All this, of course, would have to be pursued and achieved without compromising the standards of humanistic education.

The EEC found it remarkable that a rather small unit and relatively new department (only 14 years old) is currently ranked at the top of all Philology departments in Greece (See Appendix). What is particularly striking is the contrast between Philology at Patras, which ranks first with only 22 faculty members, and Philology at the other central departments in Athens and Thessaloniki, which rank last with 60 and 74 faculty members respectively. This great achievement of Philology in Patras is due, for a great part, to the extraordinary research and scholarship performance of the Linguistics section, which the EEC felt, unanimously, that it represents the best Linguistics team in the country right now, comparable to high performing autonomous linguistics departments in the US, Europe and Canada. It is important to consider the achievements of the Linguistics section especially given that, as we are told by Prof. Ralli, Linguistics only receives 25% of the Departmental budget (in all relevant respects, e.g. in books, in supporting EEDIP stuff (linguistics has none, but the other sections each have one), with respect to new positions, books, etc.)— with Classics receiving 40%, and BMGS 35%. We believe that such imbalance is not justified, especially given the excellence and dynamics of the Linguistics section, and the fact that students' specializations are relatively balanced between the three sections. We also believe, in the context of possible reorganization of the Faculties under the new law, that Linguistics must be supported as a direction of potential expansion.

This is not to say, however, that the other two sections are underperforming. It is rather to say that the performance of one sector being more advanced raises the

expectations and standards for the entire department. Given the climate of cooperation and collaboration we have often commented upon, the EEC felt that whatever achievements by a specific sector or a specific faculty member pertain to the performance and potential of the department as a whole. And, we also noted, the students' preference of specialization (ειδίκευση) is also fairly distributed among the three sections given the data that were made available to us. This is again another unique feature of this department, atypical with respect to other Greek Philology departments.

We want to close by reminding that the faculty in all sections showed exceptional zeal and collaborative spirit in making data available during our visit at Patras, and were genuinely interested in making the evaluation process substantial. Our overall assessment is that we have here a commendable cooperation between three foundational, yet different, fields in the Humanities—which have learned to overcome difficulties in order co-exist harmoniously, and are willing to continue, even under dire circumstances, to strive for excellence (by international standards) in research and teaching. This department is a great asset to the University of Patras and to Greek academia, and we conclude, rather emphatically, that it must be supported by any means possible.

Appendix

Altanopoulou, P., Dontsidou M, and N. Tselios 2011, “Evaluation of 93 major Greek University Departments using Google Scholar”. ICT in Education Group, Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education, University of Patras, Table 5 (accepted for publication in *Quality in Higher Education*).

Table 5. Departments of Philology

University	# Faculty	Web (%)	Average Publications	Average Citations	Average h	Median h	Average year of 1st publication
Patras	22	45.45	9.77(19.26)	55.18(174.40)	1.91(3.19)	1	1992.88
Crete	24	83.33	10.33(20.76)	75.33(285.87)	1.71(3.26)	1	1992.21
Democritus of Thrace	22	86.36	3.27(7.71)	13.18(41.38)	0.77(1.59)	0	1992.55
Ioannina	38	0.00	3.79(6.41)	8.21(31.64)	0.74(1.14)	0	1991.81
Peloponnese	9	33.33	1.11(1.85)	4.56(12.19)	0.56(1.26)	0	2001.75
National Kapodestrian of Athens	60	41.67	4.27(9.21)	10.77(39.97)	0.70(1.31)	0	1993.36
Aristotle of Thessaloniki	74	27.03	5.37(11.13)	17.63(50.71)	1.10(1.83)	0	1994.26
Total	249	38.96	5.39(10.96)	22.55(76.59)	1.03(1.81)	0.00	1993.47