failed of late to attract adequate numbers. But if closure is inevitable, it is his express hope that Classics remain as a subsection within a major department (English? Philosophy?) rather than suffer total dismemberment with different courses parcelled out to different departments, which can only mean a loss of identity. However, the final decision (already delayed by some weeks) will not be reached until sometime in the new year, for the administrators now have another, much more urgent problem on their hands. On 11 December 2001, a student protest on campus (prompted mainly by the death in police custody of Rastafarian singer Evison Matafale) ended in the shooting of a student by police. The student later died in hospital. Five days after the shooting, while Heads and Deans were in emergency session, Muluzi ordered the Vice Chancellor, David Rubadiri, to close the college early (for the Christmas-New Year break) to avoid further unrest.

CLASSICS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

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The Democratic Republic of Congo (capital Kinshasa) is situated in Central Africa with a population of 56 000 000, and is approximately one-quarter the size of the United States. In the west of the country, 500 kilometres from Kinshasa, is Kikwit, a free town with around 600 000 inhabitants. It is the home of the University of Kikwit, a Catholic institution. When the Democratic Republic of Congo’s first university was established in Kinshasa in 1954, it offered courses in classical philology (Latin and Greek language) and Catholic theology.

The study of classical philology has been a central part of Congolese education since the country’s time as a colony of Belgium. The majority of prominent Congolese political figures have learned the classics, but today the study of the classics is in decline. This mainly due to the country’s constant political and social upheaval and the ‘foreign’ nature of the study of Latin; the Mediterranean is separated from the Congo

32 The few Classical language students at Chancellor in recent years have come from Kamuzu Academy. ‘The Ministry of Education is quietly abandoning the teaching of Latin in schools’ (Kishindo [1] 261 n. 25), and Ministry directives indicate that Latin will soon be dropped from the Junior Certificate syllabus. At the privately financed Kamuzu Academy, however, the Classics ‘are still firmly in place’ (Chimombo [2] 69).
33 S. Nyamilandu, e-mail 27.11.01.
34 Daily Times (Blantyre) 12 Dec. 2001; S. Nyamilandu, e-mail 19.12.01.
1 Dudu Musway is Chef de Section Lettres et Sciences humaines at the University of Kikwit and is the founder of the graduate school for doctoral research in Classics in Kikwit.
in terms of time, distance, and culture. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, classical philology now consists only of Latin philology, although classical civilisation, classical art and Greek and Latin literature are also taught. There is no archaeology taught; Greek is only taught in senior seminars and faculties of theology, and it is more oriented towards the Byzantine period. The place of Greek in the curriculum has been superseded by Old French in accordance with the Francophone policy of the colonial power. In 1975 Old French was incorporated into Classics because Belgium and France wanted to promote French language and culture.

Ninety percent of the professors of classical philology in the Democratic Republic of Congo are foreigners, mainly Belgian priests of advanced age. There are Congolese professors with doctorates in other Classical fields such as archaeology, ancient history, mythology, classical civilisation and art history, but in Latin philology there are only two Congolese professors with doctorates: Yves Mudimbe and myself. The majority of other classicists are senior lecturers without doctorates, and Yves Mudimbe now lives in exile in the United States. Therefore, according to the most recent statistics, I am now the only professor of Latin philology in the Democratic Republic of Congo. For a country of 56 000 000 people, this is remarkable.

Latin is taught in almost all the universities and colleges of higher education in the Democratic Republic of Congo, through the faculties or departments of arts and humanities. Two major universities teach Latin philology, these are the University of Kikwit and the University of Lubumbashi. The University of Kikwit, however, has only twenty-seven students of Latin philology from the first-year undergraduate level to second-year graduate level (de la graduat en 2e licence). Very few of these are likely to go on to take up university positions in the teaching of the classics; the majority of Latin philologists become teachers of Latin at secondary school level. While this means that there is a focus on Latin at secondary school level, it does not bode well for the future of Latin in the universities. Another factor influencing the future of Latin in Congolese universities is the availability of publications in Classics. It is difficult for philologists to keep up to date with advances in the field due to the lack of recent books and articles in the country, and this difficulty is compounded by the fact that we have little contact with our colleagues around the world. I take every opportunity to obtain books or journals when I travel abroad, particularly to Germany.

In our universities Latin is an indispensable branch of the curriculum for students in the faculties of arts, law, medicine, literature and humanities. Yet despite Latin’s great importance, it is always at risk of being cast aside in order to make room for more modern subjects such as information technology.

Congolese classical philologists invariably encounter problems of methodology resulting from the use of old Belgian editions of classical texts. The use of such texts means that translation goes only from Latin to French and not from Latin to indigenous languages, which would make the subject more accessible to students. Textbooks specifically designed for the teaching of Latin in secondary schools are rare, and those which are available are inadequate because they take no account of the
student’s language, or cultural and social environment. Instead, they are vehicles of a culture which is strange and unknown to Congolese learners.

The textbooks that are used consist of excerpts of classical Latin authors but do not include information or exercises on grammatical structure. Moreover, these passages reflect a culture which is foreign to the Congo’s young African pupils. The texts expect a prior knowledge of European culture which the students do not possess. Students therefore lack motivation to learn. In order for the study of classical philology in the Democratic Republic of Congo to survive, an effort must be made to find ways to make the teaching of Latin interesting for and relevant to our secondary school students.

With this aim in mind, I have compiled an anthology of Latin passages selected from those discussed in my doctoral thesis (Das Bild Schwarzfrikas in der lateineschen gelehrtten Literatur) for the use of students in their first two years of Latin study. The criterion for selection of passages was that they must cover topics which are accessible for Congolese Latin students. The excerpts focus on the discussion of black Africa in the ancient world, as well as more general themes on Rome, Greece, and Europe. While the portions of text in the anthology are not all from the classical era (for example, it includes some mediaeval Latin texts), the non-classical usages are noted as such so as not to encourage mediaeval style in composition. The excerpts are accompanied by an introduction to provide a background to the text and to facilitate discussion and by commentary and grammar notes to aid translation. It is hoped that the provision of a better textbook will not only encourage students to learn but also to allow for a change in teaching practices. While the text is still designed for translation from Latin to French, it encourages the Latin to be read aloud so that correct pronunciation and intonation may aid translation and comprehension. This in turn is intended to encourage participation by the students so that they translate more of the Latin themselves rather than the more common current practice of the teacher doing the majority of the translation. The use of this anthology hopefully will encourage teachers to alter their use of time in Latin class by reducing the amount of time spent on translating passages and learning vocabulary in favour of spending more time on grammatical exercises and cultural studies based on the passages. The anthology has been in use at the University of Kikwit for an experimental period and, judging by the fact that student numbers have increased markedly, the initial results are encouraging.

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2 The standard texts used by the majority of Latin teachers are Vita Nova, which contains excerpts of De Bello Gallico and is used in the first year of Latin learning; Sallust’s De Bello Jugurthino, which is used in the second year of Latin learning; Cicero’s In Catilinam and Livy’s Ab Urbe Condita, used in the third year; and Cicero’s Pro Archia and Tacitus’ Agricola of Tacitus, which is used in the fourth year of teaching.