Beyond Greece and Rome
Thursday, 11 pm (Ioannou Centre, Lecture Theatre)

Wk. 1 (Thursday 28 April): *Black Sea between the Greek World and the Steppe* (Dr Georgy Kantor)

Greek colonisation between the seventh-fifth centuries BC ostensibly turned the Black Sea into another ‘Greek pond’. Bosporan grain was traded in Athens, and immense flow of Greek ceramics went to the Black Sea. These Greek settlements, however, existed precariously on the edge of an immense and complex steppe world, and cultural and political influence went both ways. Onomastics show a unique blend of Greek-, Thracian- and Iranian-speaking groups, and the Bosporan kingdom with its centre in Crimea developed a unique political symbiosis between *polis* and non-*polis* forms of political organisation well before Alexander. The lecture attempts to look at this region both from the steppe and from the Greek perspective, and address problems in its study introduced by modern imperialism and nationalism.

Wk. 2 (Thursday 5 May): *The Iberian Peninsula and Mediterranean Gaul* (Dr Alex Mullen)

Phoenicians, Etruscans, Greeks and other Mediterranean communities made their mark on the Iberian Peninsula and Southern Gaul from as early as the tenth century BCE and an extensive period of cultural interactions between these and local communities stretched before and during the establishment of the Roman control. In this lecture we explore the possible nature of these interactions and consider how we might recover some of the local voices from the archaeological and epigraphic record. The Palaeohispanic and Gaulish languages and epigraphies are still relatively poorly known by Ancient Historians, but are crucial evidence as we question approved histories and attempt to write social histories sensitive to perspectives beyond the ‘Classical’.

Wk. 3 (Thursday 12 May): *North Africa before Rome: influences, cultural contacts, and urban development* (Dr Niccolò Mugnai)

This lecture outlines the historical and archaeological features of Eastern and Western Maghreb before Rome, highlighting some critical aspects of these North African territories throughout their early history up to the moment when they became part of the Roman Empire. Through engagement with the most recent scholarship, a critical reassessment of issues of Greek and Phoenician-Punic colonization is presented, looking at the multifaceted discourse between ‘indigenous’ and ‘external’ cultural traditions. Particular attention is paid to the archaeology, urbanism, art and architecture of Numidia, the Greek-influenced region of Cyrenaica, and the kingdom of the Garamantes in the desert of Fazzan.

Wk. 4 (Thursday 19 May): *At world’s end? Mauretania Tingitana and the Roman Empire* (Dr Niccolò Mugnai)

This lecture looks at the territory of Morocco (ancient Mauretania Tingitana) and its relationship with the rest of the Roman Empire. Traditional narratives have presented a picture of this province as a sort of ‘Far West’ of North Africa, pointing out its distance – if not isolation – from the Mediterranean world. However, thanks to recent archaeological research, a more dynamic image is starting to emerge where local idiosyncrasies and influences from Rome coexisted. By looking at the economy, urbanism, and artistic environment of Tingitana throughout the second and third centuries AD, this new narrative attempts to reconstruct a history of the region which is not tainted by prejudiced ideas or polarizing paradigms.

Wk. 5 (Thursday 26 May): *The ingredients of happiness: ancient South Arabia from the mukarribs to monsoon sailing, c. 8th century BC - 1st century AD* (Dr Justine Potts)

Known to the Hellenistic and Roman worlds as *Arabia Eudaimōn/Arabia Felix*, ancient South Arabia was more than just a fecund source of incense for insatiable imperial appetites. Several kingdoms flourished there, producing thousands of inscriptions, and monumental architecture which still stands among the sands of Yemen. Most enduring and culturally dominant was the kingdom of Saba’, which the Roman army tried, and failed spectacularly, to conquer in 26/25 BC. This lecture introduces the wider history of this land that defeated
the Romans, from the period of the early kings (*mukarribs*) to the first century AD, when the intensification of monsoon sailing and maritime trade in the Red Sea led to seismic political change. Epigraphic and archaeological evidence will allow us to examine the period through local perspectives, and to question the influence of the Mediterranean world on coinage, art and architecture.

**Wk. 6 (Thursday 2 June): Unification, resistance and religious transformation: ancient South Arabia from the rise of Ḥimyar to the eve of Islam, c. 1st century BC – 6th century AD (Dr Justine Potts)**

By the end of the third century AD, the polities of ancient South Arabia were unified by the kingdom of Ḥimyar. The Sabaean kingdom regained independence from Ḥimyar in the early second century but ultimately succumbed to their neighbour’s power once more. Originally, Ḥimyarite religion was centred on the traditional South Arabian pantheon, but in the fourth century AD monotheism came to be practised and the epigraphic habit declined; no inscription later than AD 380 is explicitly ‘pagan’. This lecture will sketch the changing political landscape of this period, with its stories of conquest, independence, reconquest and political decline, but it will focus primarily on religious history and the rise of monotheism. Particularly for those who study *Religions in the Greek and Roman World* and related papers, this lecture will offer comparative material for consideration.

**Wk. 7 (Thursday 9 June): The north-western Roman Provinces (Dr Alex Mullen)**

The north-western Roman provinces are often viewed by historians as relative back-waters, with Britannia and Germany in particular often reduced to frontier and military zones. In this lecture we put the complex nature of these provinces and their communities centre stage, exploring differential Latinization and literacy in context and reconstructing aspects of the discrepant experiences of provincial life. We consider the ‘first generation’ stylus tablets from early Londinium; explore bilingualism, translanguaging and cultural interactions through the potters’ records and the spindle whorls from Gaul; investigate expressions of religious experience through curse tablets in local languages across the area; and look at the possible impact of the military via the troops at Vindolanda and their homelands in Tungria and Batavia.

**Wk. 8 (Thursday 16 June): Trans-Danubian world in the Roman period (Dr Georgy Kantor)**

From the establishment of the Roman province of *Macedonia* in 148 BC and the Mithridatic wars of the 80s-60s BC, Rome entered into contact with the complex world of the trans-Danubian peoples, extending all the way to the steppe peoples of the Northern Black sea region. It is often viewed largely through the eyes of its Roman conquerors or would be conquerors (most notably on Trajan’s Column), and later, in the third and fourth centuries AD, as the source of menace and danger, often replacing Germany as Rome’s pre-eminent barbarian ‘Other’. A rich history of its own, in which Rome was often only peripheral, has been gradually uncovered by the archaeological study since the nineteenth century. The lecture addresses this emerging new narrative, and tensions between archaeological and textual evidence in its study.