

FACULTY OF CLASSICS

# NEWSLETTER

UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

One of the unexpected pleasures of chairing the Faculty Board, I have discovered since taking over from Angus Bowie last September, is the view it gives of the remarkable range of one's colleagues' research activities. Here are just a few examples:

- Dr Justine McConnell's 'Performing Epic' project explores the life of classical epic in the performance arts, bringing together scholars of literature, music, and drama with theatre directors, opera singers, actors, poets, and hip hop artists.
- Dr Neil McLynn's and Dr Judith McKenzie's project 'Late Antique Egypt and the Holy Land' uses history, art, and archaeology to examine relationships between pagans, Jews, Christians, and Muslims in late antique Egypt and the Near East.
- Prof Andrew Wilson's 'History in Ice' project, in collaboration with the Desert Research Institute, Reno, Nevada, uses Arctic and Antarctic ice cores to create a 3,000-year record of anthropogenic atmospheric pollution in lead, copper, and other metals.

The Ioannou Centre provides the elegant and hi-tech home for many of our activities (if you have not yet visited us here, please do). This year

the Centre has received, on loan from the Cast Gallery, a new cast of the Townley discobolos, made from the original moulds in the British Museum. The Outreach Room welcomes growing numbers of school students to hear lectures, handle artefacts, and find out about studying at Oxford.

Supporting students who aspire to study at Oxford, at undergraduate or graduate level, is a growing challenge. This year we are launching our Power of 7 Graduate Scholarship Campaign, which asks our alumni to help us create two new fully funded graduate scholarships. You can read more about the campaign on page 14 of this newsletter.

We keep a close eye on government policy relating to our subject. Early in 2015 we joined forces with Cambridge to respond to the Department for Education's consultation on GCSEs in ancient languages, arguing that various proposed changes were unfit for purpose and would limit access to those languages in maintained schools. As a result, Ofqual went back to the DfE to reconsider the design of these courses. We hope the new government will continue to listen to our views... ■

*Teresa Morgan*  
Chair of the Faculty Board

## ALUMNI NEWS

Travel the world with Trip Scholars from the Faculty of Classics

## OUTREACH

Amo, amas, amat and all that... The Oxford Latin Teaching Scheme; Classics in Communities

## PEOPLE

Postgraduates, Martin West, Alan Bowman, Chris Pelling, Gregory Hutchinson

## POWER OF 7

The Campaign for Graduate Scholarships at Oxford



# FACULTY NEWS

## MARTIN WEST (1937–2015)

### 'A CREATURE OF LEGEND'



Martin West, who has died at the age of 77, was the most eminent scholar of ancient Greek poetry in the world at the time of his death.

He compared his work to a climbing frame – something three-dimensional to move about in, which could be indefinitely extended with all the parts joining and inter-relating. Unlike the work of his hero Wilamowitz, which embodied the ideal of an all-encompassing science of antiquity, Martin's work was a series of brilliantly creative but logical expansions around an original core.

That core was Hesiod's *Theogony*, an archaic Greek poem on the establishment of the gods' regime. It took the young editor and commentator, still in his mid-20s, on a quest for comparative material in the non-Greek cultures of the ancient Mediterranean. At the time they were still largely unfamiliar terrain for most classicists, but Martin's work made it impossible to overlook their significance for Greece. The enquiry, which he pursued over the next 30 years, culminated in the monumental *East Face of Helicon* (1997), which argued that the influence of the Semitic cultures of the ancient near East on archaic Greek literature was comparable with that of Greek itself on Latin more than 500 years later.

A sister volume, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (2007), added a 'vertical' dimension, the inheritance of Greek literature from its forebears. Meanwhile his editions of the Greek tragedian Aeschylus, the *Iliad*, the Greek iambic and elegiac poets, and other works, with accompanying studies of the texts in question, exemplified the traditional crafts of the classical scholar at the highest level. By the time of his death, when he was working on an edition of Homer's *Odyssey* to match his Teubner edition of the *Iliad*, what he had produced was not so much a climbing-frame as an intellectual palace.

He was born in Hampton, west London, but his mother came from Yorkshire, and the straight-talking no-nonsense northerner was perhaps an element in his self-image. Educated at St Paul's School and Balliol, his academic career began as a junior research fellow at St John's (1960–3) and continued

with a tutorial fellowship at University College (1963–74). Characteristically, he remembered this time not for his teaching, but for moments of subversion such as a naked sprint up part of the High Street. His tenure of a chair at Royal Holloway and Bedford New College (1974–91) ended with his election to All Souls as a senior research fellow (subsequently emeritus, then honorary fellow).

Everything he wrote was elegant. He was drawn to archaic poetry because of its unaffected, unshowy directness and lack of mannerism (not for him the 'clever-clever' Hellenistic poets, Callimachus and friends). As an editor he was bold; his ideas were adventurous and often unconventional; but the calm certitude and sureness of touch with which he expounded his ideas outlasted criticism. The word 'intertextuality' was in his vocabulary, but he utterly eschewed literary theory.

Although he had received no musical training as a child, he was interested in music, ancient and modern. The austere technicalities of ancient Greek music and metre occupied further rooms in his scholarly mansion; he also left behind some rather Brahmsian musical sketches for piano.

He was a notoriously difficult conversationalist. Speaking only when he considered he had something worth saying, he would often launch shafts of wit so perfectly formulated that it was hard to respond to them. To a colleague who had just returned from lecturing on a subject on which he was no expert: 'Fallible, but not wholly fallacious. Unlike the Pope, who is the opposite.' To an awe-struck young scholar at a conference who hailed him as a 'god': 'No, not a god. But I am a creature of legend.' While he could be devastating, he was never ungenerous, in speech or writing, and there was enormous warmth for those who discovered how to approach him in the right, unconventional, way.

The award of the Balzan Prize in 2000 recognised his work on Greece's relation to other cultures. He was appointed a member of the Order of Merit in 2014.

He is survived by his wife Stephanie, herself a Fellow of the British Academy, his son Robert, daughter Rachel, and two grandchildren. ■

*Jane Lightfoot, Professor of Greek Literature*

### PROFESSOR ALAN BOWMAN,

having retired from the Camden Chair of Ancient History in 2010, retires as Principal of Brasenose College this summer. He remains, among other things, Director of the Faculty's Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents and Vice-President (Humanities) of the British Academy.

### PROFESSOR CHRIS PELLING

retires this summer after a vibrant career which took him on an extraordinary journey from Cardiff High School to Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford.

As a graduate, his future role as Regius Professor was perhaps not obvious, since his declared specialisation then was in Roman History. Chris soon became Fellow and Praelector in Classics at University College, Oxford – and the ideal undergraduate tutor. Dedicated and brilliant, Chris leavened his learning with an irrepressible sense of fun and the ability to nudge his undergraduates gently in the right direction. Many of us will doubtless remember him saying with a wry smile, 'I think perhaps that what you meant to say was...'. Such characteristics made him an inspired choice as Regius Professor in 2003.

His publications are too numerous to mention, but as well as putting Plutarch on the map, he has transformed the landscape of scholarship on ancient biography and historiography. We will all miss Chris hugely, but we wish him well for the future.

### PROFESSOR GREGORY

HUTCHINSON, currently Fellow and Tutor in Classics at Exeter College, has been appointed by Her Majesty the Queen to succeed Prof Pelling as Regius Professor of Greek from October 2015. ■

# GREEK NAMES, GREEK HISTORY THE LEXICON OF GREEK PERSONAL NAMES

*Robert Parker, Wykeham Professor of Ancient History*

At some time in the 2nd century BCE, a city called Hanisa in Cappadocia issued a decree written in a perfect specimen of bureaucratic Greek. Who are these men of Hanisa, so adept in Greek? Do they provide evidence for an otherwise unattested military colony? The names of the officials mentioned in the document allow a decisive negative answer to be given to that question: Abbas, Papos, Anoptenos, Balasopos, Sindenos, Teires – these are Cappadocians, not Greeks, and the city is the descendant of one known from Assyrian documents of the early second millennium, Kaniš. That is just one example of why names are an essential resource for the historian. Even names given to individuals can have high historical interest: the pro-Spartan Athenian general Kimon called one of his sons Lakedaimonios, his pro-Athenian counterpart in Sparta, Perikleidas, called one of his Athenaios; our first evidence for that Athenian interest in the West that ended so disastrously in Sicily in 412 is the name Sybaris, given to one of his daughters by Themistocles. This is to say nothing of the name ἀλλὰ μὲν, 'but on the other hand', given to one of his slaves by the philosopher Diodoros Kronos to prove the conventional character of language. But it is names en masse that really allow one to engage in what the great French historian Louis Robert called 'histoire par les noms'. If, say, thirty out of fifty mercenary soldiers have names all characteristic of the same region one can scarcely doubt where they were recruited, even if the text that lists them was found a thousand miles away.

Considerations such as these led the late Peter Fraser to lay a proposal for a *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* before the British Academy in 1972. The project embraced computer technology from the start, and the migrations (sometimes difficult) between different operating systems it has undergone are an interesting chapter in themselves of what we now term digital humanities. Crucial in this and many other regards was the role of Elaine Matthews, who worked on the project almost from its inception until her death in 2011. Four of the seven volumes published to date – beautiful works of computer typesetting – bear the names Fraser and Matthews as joint-editors on the title page, and the combination has become almost as familiar and honoured as Liddell and Scott.

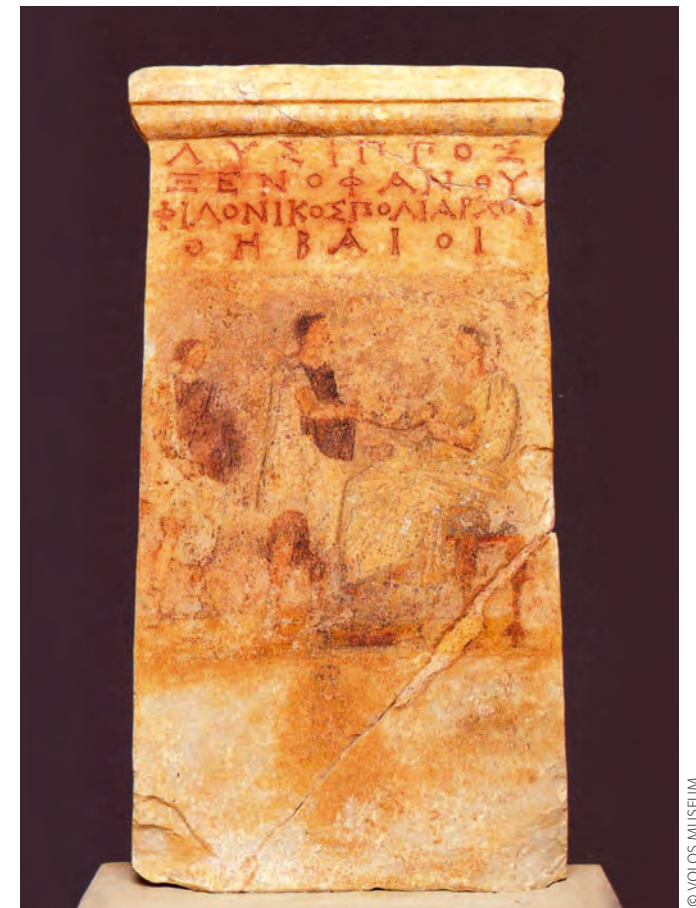
What has taken so long? The sheer scale of the task. Every source (literary, papyrological, epigraphic, numismatic) from the 8th century BCE to a cut off point c. 600 CE has had to be searched. The innumerable problems over datings, readings, and provenances have had to be expertly addressed, often with the assistance of a huge team of international advisers (volume II is in fact owed to Australian collaborators). The original aim had been to record by regions all the names borne by Greeks or attested in Greek, but quite early on it was decided to list every bearer of every name whose origin is known. That decision transformed the work into 'the telephone directory of the Greek

world', but it also condemned the team to study and record each of the 1,139 Dionysioi and 812 Demetrioι of Attica, for instance. About 400,000 individuals are currently recorded in the database, bearers of over 35,000 different names.

The present researchers, Richard Catling (a veteran of more than twenty years), Edouard Chiricat, and Jean-Sebastien Balzat, are currently working on inland Anatolia. We are not finished yet (we hope). If funding allows we will move east to Syria and beyond. But the imminent completion of Anatolia will conclude phase I of the project, much the larger phase, that covering regions where the documentation is almost exclusively in Greek and Latin. This is something to acclaim. As Director of the project I write the grant applications but do none of the real work, and so can urge you all to raise a glass (metaphorical, or, why not, literal) to honour an extraordinary product of devoted scholarly labour over more than four decades. ■

For more on the project visit [www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk](http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk)

Below: Painted tombstone from Demetrias in Thessaly, c. 225 BCE, depicting a funeral banquet. The inscription reads 'Lysippos son of Xenophanes, Philonikos son of Poliarchos, from Thebes'.





# CLASSICS OUTREACH PROGRAMME

## AMO, AMAS, AMAT AND ALL THAT... THE OXFORD LATIN TEACHING SCHEME



Mai Musiê, Classics Outreach Officer

During the past year, the Classics Outreach Programme organised a number of school visits to the Faculty. In addition we delivered subject-specific talks and workshops in schools across the UK, ran three very successful Year 12 residential summer schools (UNIQ Classics summer school, UNIQ Classical Archaeology and Ancient Modern History summer school, Wadham-East End Classics summer school), and supported a number of new and dynamic outreach initiatives with our partners The Iris Project and Classics for All.

We have started something new with our cross-discipline days (Ancient and Modern Philosophy, Classics and English, Classics and Oriental Studies, Classics and Modern Languages, Ancient and Modern History) which are on offer during the school half-term for Year 11 and Year 12 students.

There have been changes to the staffing of the Outreach Programme with the introduction of new faces to the team as we expand our outreach work. Emma Searle, a doctoral student at the Faculty, is now the coordinator of the Saturday morning Oxford Latin teaching scheme (OXLAT) and the administrative assistant on the *Classics in Communities* project (a collaborative outreach initiative between the Faculties of Classics at University of Oxford and University of Cambridge, and The Iris Project). Alex Gruar and Hannah Murray join the OXLAT team teaching thirty Year 8 and Year 9 pupils from state schools in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Berkshire. The aim is to take these thirty pupils through to GCSE in two and a half years, taking the examination in the summer of 2017. Dr Arlene Holmes-Henderson joins the *Classics in Communities* project as a postdoctoral researcher, expanding the overall Faculty Classics Outreach Programme to five members of staff. Elsewhere in the newsletter Emma Searle and Arlene Holmes-Henderson will be describing the nature and progress of both projects. ■

The Classics Outreach Programme offers activities, workshops, and talks aimed at the following groups: primary and secondary school students, sixth form students, teachers, and adult learners. If you would like to find out what the largest Faculty of Classics in the world can offer your group please visit our webpage: [www.classics.ox.ac.uk/Outreach.html](http://www.classics.ox.ac.uk/Outreach.html).

Those who venture into the Ioannou Centre on Saturday mornings might be forgiven for thinking that our undergraduates are very young these days. However, the thirty energetic teenagers filling the Common Room with a buzz, energy, and enthusiasm are from state schools in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Buckinghamshire and come to us for two hours on Saturday mornings to learn Latin.

Although there has been an increase in the provision of Latin in the state education sector in the UK, there are still many schools that cannot offer it, due to limited time and limited financial resources. With a couple of exceptions, this is unfortunately the case for Oxfordshire and its surrounding areas, so the OXLAT scheme aims to help plug this gap in Oxford's local community. And I am delighted to report that everything is going very well: I have been joined by two wonderful Latin teachers, Alex Gruar and Hannah Murray, both of whom have extensive experience of teaching students at KS3 and GCSE level and provide vibrant, stimulating, and enjoyable lessons. They have been invaluable in establishing and ensuring the success of the scheme so far.

Classes started in January and we are now approaching the end of our second term. Lessons are scheduled during Oxfordshire schools' term times so we are able to provide our students with a routine and learning structure that is similar, albeit more intensive, to what they experience at school. The nature of the scheme has been very demanding but we have been very impressed with the progress and commitment of our students: the great sense of anticipation that we perceived prior to the start of term has developed into a consistent buzz of energy and enthusiasm in our classes. We have romped through Book 1 of the *Cambridge Latin Course (CLC)* during this six-month introductory stage of the course (January to June) and have just started the new *Latin to GCSE* course book by John Taylor and Henry Cullen (who have been generous enough to provide us with advance copies) as we prepare to move into GCSE-level work.

In these classes we have also provided appropriate focus on the wider social, cultural, and historical context of the Latin language. As part of the *CLC* course our students have learnt about society and family life in Pompeii (yes, *etiamnum Caecilius est in horto!*) and, starting with an Ashmolean Museum collections

workshop (*Wandering Myths: On the trail of Hercules*, which explored representations of Hercules throughout history up to the present day) we have provided them with a corresponding programme of enrichment events and activities to develop their cultural and historical knowledge of the ancient world and make their learning Latin that little bit more rewarding.

On the 28th March Neill George, who blogs on Roman cookery at [www.passthegarum.co.uk](http://www.passthegarum.co.uk), came to the Ioannou Centre to give a talk and practical 'hands-on' workshop on Roman food and dining culture. The students were thrilled to have a go at making some traditional *moretum*: a cheese, garlic, and herb spread featured in the brilliant little poem *Moretum* (attributed to Vergil). And at the end of this term I will be giving a talk and workshop on Roman wall-painting, where our students will be able to do a bit of experimental archaeology and produce their own *pinakes* using freshly made tempera paint (with a little help from Theophrastus by way of Pliny).

Despite being an intensive weekend commitment alongside other schoolwork, we are delighted to see that the students are enjoying themselves and to hear that learning Latin with us is having an impact on our students' broader academic performance as well (particularly their modern foreign languages). Perhaps most importantly the scheme provides a space where very able young people can challenge themselves and an environment in which they feel they are able to really enjoy their learning without it being disrupted by poor behaviour or being mocked for enjoying it: as one student has said, 'I love coming here because there are no trouble-makers: everyone wants to learn. It's not like school where I get teased and called a boff. It's so nice to just be able to learn.' It is an opportunity to stretch very able students from the local area, and to put them in a small class of like-minded peers where they can relax, work hard, and have fun in a positive environment where it's cool to do challenging work. The fact that they are giving up their Saturday mornings and doing at least an hour of extra homework every week shows that they feel they are getting something out of it. It is also very encouraging that I have already had requests to do Ancient Greek and Classical Civilisation too!

**Learning Latin shouldn't be a luxury.** I am deeply passionate about making Latin more available in state schools. I went to a state sixth form where I was fortunate enough to be offered Ancient History and Archaeology at A-Level and it is largely because of this experience that I felt confident enough to apply to read CAAH here. The idea that it is a luxury to learn Latin is (I hope you'll agree) contemptible: if the subject is not something students are introduced to as a matter of course, it denies them an option for the future, an outlook on life that they might be interested in, and the opportunity to improve their overall linguistic abilities. Not to mention getting all starry-eyed and weepy over Aeneas. ■

Emma Searle (DPhil Ancient History)  
Latin Teaching Scheme Co-ordinator





# CLASSICS IN COMMUNITIES

## CLASSICAL GREEK AND LATIN IN KEY STAGE 2

The Classics in Communities project is a partnership between the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, and the Iris Project. It was set up in response to the primary curriculum reforms implemented in England from September 2014.

### BACKGROUND, PURPOSE AND AIMS

In the Key Stage 2 (KS2) Languages curriculum policy, for the first time, Classical Greek and Latin can be chosen for study by pupils aged 6–11 in place of a modern language. The project particularly targets schools which might not otherwise consider the option. It has twin aims: to equip teachers in primary schools with the skills and knowledge necessary to teach these languages; and to conduct parallel research to determine the impact of Classical language learning on children's cognitive development.

### WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED TO DATE?

#### 'Theories and Practices to develop Classics Outreach in the 21st Century'

PUBLIC MEETING AND TEACHERS' COLLOQUIUM, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, NOVEMBER 2013

This was attended by more than 100 people, including delegates from South Africa and the USA. The issue of reviving Classical languages in UK schools stimulated interest and input from policy-makers, school leaders, teachers, and students. Presentations included 'Teaching Ancient Greek at primary level' and 'Teaching Homer to 5–10 year-olds'.

#### Classical Languages Regional teacher-training workshops

LONDON, OXFORD, CAMBRIDGE, BIRMINGHAM, GLASGOW, JUNE 2014, AND BELFAST, FEBRUARY 2015

These events, hosted by universities or schools, helped to link primary teachers interested in teaching Latin and Classical Greek with experienced teachers. Training was provided and useful teaching resources shared. The participants found the workshops very helpful and are now assisting with data provision for the ongoing research arm of the project.

#### 'Access to Classics in Schools & Communities: two years on'

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 2015

The keynote speakers were Professor Tim Whitmarsh and author Tom Holland. Parallel panel presentations were given by practising primary and secondary teachers, community educators, language education experts, and representatives of Classics education abroad, including colleagues from Australia and Ireland.

More information plus numerous resources that champion access to Classics in schools is available at [classicsincommunities.org](http://classicsincommunities.org)

### Research

- Quantitative data collection in partnership with The Latin Programme (London), the Iris Project (Oxford), and Unity Trust (West Midlands).
- Qualitative data collection with school leaders, teachers, pupils, and parents through school visits.
- Questionnaire feedback sought from teacher training workshop participants.

### RESULTS

Initial analysis of the data reveals positive trends in the development of literacy skills when a Classical language is used as the medium for (or supplement to) literacy learning. For example, at a large state primary school in outer London, where 51% of students have Special Educational Needs, 82% speak English as an additional language and 69% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, the results of teaching literacy through Latin are very compelling. After one year, 60% of pupils progressed at least 2 sub-levels beyond their predicted literacy level. After two continuous years of Latin, 75% of pupils progressed at least 2 sub-levels beyond their predicted literacy level, with many progressing 4 sub-levels beyond their prediction. By the end of three years of Latin, 86% of pupils had made this giant leap in literacy attainment. Similar results can be seen in schools across London, east Oxford, and the West Midlands where baseline and interim data are currently being collected.

### WHAT NEXT?

Funding has recently been sought to launch phase 2 of the research project, which will evaluate the effect of teaching/learning classical languages on student outcomes and teachers' professional development and will assess the impact and reach of the project. Funding permitting, the data will continue to be analysed and the results will be disseminated through various channels in 2016. ■

Arlene Holmes-Henderson

Post-doctoral Researcher, Classics in Communities

#### Classics in Communities

[@ClassicsinCommunity](https://twitter.com/ClassicsinCommunity)

[www.facebook.com/ClassicsinCommunities](https://www.facebook.com/ClassicsinCommunities)

#### Classics Outreach

[@oxfordclassics](https://twitter.com/oxfordclassics)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Classicsoutreach>

# FROM PAGANISM TO ISLAM:

## ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY, AND RELIGIOUS CHANGE



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The focus of the project 'Late Antique Egypt and the Holy Land: Archaeology, History, and Religious Change', funded by a Leverhulme Trust Research Project Grant (PI Neil McLynn), is on the transformation of sacred space in Late Antiquity. During the period c. 250–750 CE the region saw conversion from paganism to Christianity, and, in turn, to Islam. The archaeological record provides depth that is missing from the picture presented in historical and religious written records, revealing that the process of conversion, evident at sacred sites, was far more varied and nuanced than those sources convey.

The project team, directed by Judith McKenzie, has made extensive site visits to examine the evidence firsthand. It became clear that distinctive features of the landscape, be they springs, caves, or mountain tops, have a cross-cultural appeal as sites with a strong link to the sacred, with the same sites used by successive religious traditions for their own particular worship. This is seen particularly at those sites associated with all three Abrahamic religions, some of which were the focus of the field trip to Jordan this March by Sarah Norodom (Manar al-Athar research assistant) and Otto Nieminen (a colleague from Helsinki), coinciding with the visit by Marlena Whiting (TORCH Knowledge Exchange Fellow), and facilitated by the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and the CBRL British Institute in Amman.

In Petra (the rock-cut rose red capital of the Nabataeans, a desert tribe at the time of Christ) the team slept in Nazzal's Camp, the setting for Agatha Christie's murder mystery *Appointment with Death*, now used as a dig house for archaeologists. Following the route taken by pilgrims for two millennia before them, they travelled by donkey to Jabal Harun (Mount Aaron), the highest mountain peak in the district. Excavations there have revealed a Byzantine monastery built over a Nabataean temple. At the very summit stands the shrine of Moses' brother Aaron, a 14th-century Islamic building erected over a Byzantine chapel, visited by Muslim and Jewish pilgrims to this day. Inside, the team found evidence of past conversion, with remains of Byzantine *opus sectile* paving in front of the *mihrab*, and signs of recent veneration in the crypt.

With Joseph Greene (Deputy Director and Curator of the Harvard Semitic Museum) they also visited the Cave of Lot on the Dead Sea, another site sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; the extra-mural Nabataean high place of Khirbet et-Tannur; and its 'mother' village of Khirbet edh-Dharih, where the Nabataean temple was refitted as a church. Photographs of these and other sites, which are often difficult to visit, are being presented in the Manar al-Athar open-access photo-archive: [www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk](http://www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk). It has expanded considerably over the past year to over 16,000 images, now including all of Judith McKenzie's black and white photographs from her Petra and Alexandria projects, labelled by Sarah Norodom and DPhil student Miranda Williams.

On the last day of their trip the team explored the 'Desert Castles' in the Eastern Desert, including the early Islamic bath house at Qusayr 'Amra, with impressive figural frescoes, and the basalt castle of Azraq, which also served as T.E. Lawrence's base during the Arab Revolt (1917–18). Being in close proximity to the Iraqi and Syrian borders was a stark reminder of the fragility of cultural heritage, and the importance of documenting it for future generations. ■

Marlena Whiting, Judith McKenzie, Sarah Norodom  
Manar Al-Athar

Photographs of these and other sites, which are often difficult to visit, are presented in the Manar al-Athar open-access photo-archive: [www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk](http://www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk)



# 'JE VIENS COMME THÉMISTOCLE' NAPOLEON AFTER WATERLOO

Tim Rood, Professor of Greek Literature

One of the attractions of the current exhibition at Windsor Castle, *Waterloo at Windsor: 1815–2015*, is the chance to see the famous letter that Napoleon sent to the Prince Regent in July 1815 as he prepared to hand himself over to the British:

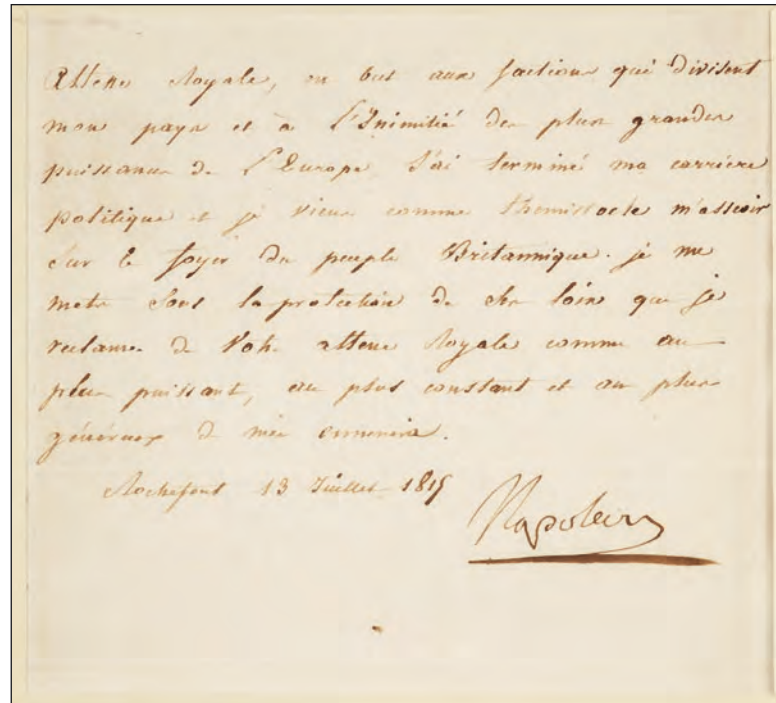
Royal Highness, Exposed to the factions which divide my country, and to the enmity of the greatest powers of Europe, I have terminated my political career, and I come, like Themistocles, to seat myself at the hearth of the British people (*je viens, comme Thémistocle, m'asseoir sur le foyer du peuple Britannique*). I place myself under the protection of their laws, which I claim of your Royal Highness as the most powerful, the most constant, and the most generous of my enemies.

Given that Napoleon was soon sent on his way to St Helena, the letter might be thought a failure. But his appeal to the ancient example of Themistocles did play an important role in fostering the idea of Napoleon as martyr.

As it happens, Napoleon's letter suits perfectly one of my main research interests over the last fifteen years – the modern reception (in the form of allusions, retellings, paintings, poems) of classical Greek history, in particular the Persian Wars and the march of the Ten Thousand. This interest led me some years ago to do some work on contemporary responses to Napoleon's letter. But it took a recent invitation from a former St Hugh's student to contribute to a volume on classics and nationalism in the 19th century to get me to write up the research – just about in time for the Waterloo bicentenary. That anniversary also offers the chance to show that the current Windsor exhibition does not tell the most interesting part of the story.

The exhibition, like all modern historians, assumes that Napoleon had in mind Themistocles' seeking refuge in Persia after he was exiled from Athens. As Plutarch, Napoleon's favourite ancient author, tells the story, Themistocles gained an audience with Artaxerxes, son of the Persian king he had defeated at Salamis, and pleaded his case: 'I come to you, King, Themistocles the Athenian, an exile, pursued by the Greeks...' He was rewarded with the gift of three cities.

A different interpretation of Napoleon's allusion is suggested by Plutarch's account of the earlier stages of Themistocles' flight. He fled first to the court of a personal enemy, the Molossian king



Above: Napoleon's letter.

Admetus, in modern-day Albania, where, 'holding the king's son, who was still a child, he fell to his knees in front of the hearth'. Here too, then, Themistocles found safety at the court of an enemy.

Both the Artaxerxes and the Admetus interpretations were offered in discussions of Napoleon's letter in the aftermath of Waterloo (the Admetus view even inspired various visual depictions of Themistocles at the king's hearth). This debate was no mere historical game. In discussions at the time, the comparison between Napoleon and Themistocles could carry very different implications depending on how the allusion was interpreted. Taking Napoleon to be alluding to Themistocles' seeking refuge in Persia easily led to comparisons of their military achievements. The day after news of the content of the letter broke, the *Courier* (a paper Napoleon read as representative of ministerial views) opined:

Like THEMISTOCLES! In the act of throwing himself upon the generosity of his enemy, he has imitated the noble Athenian. But there the comparison ends. THEMISTOCLES had not only been the greatest enemy of the Persians, but he had been victorious over them. What victories did BUONAPARTE ever gain over us. What THEMISTOCLES did to XERXES we effected against BUONAPARTE.

What made the comparison particularly offensive was not what it said about Napoleon and Themistocles but

what it implied about the nation with whom Napoleon had sought refuge. It seemed that Napoleon, by likening himself to the Athenian statesman, was casting the British in the role of the imperialist Persians.

Aligning Britain with Persia ran against two particular British modes of thought. If any modern nation was to be identified with Persian aggression, it was France. The British, by contrast, had played against Napoleon the part Greece had played against Persia. In the aftermath of Waterloo, British identification with Athens in particular became a recurrent element in narratives of visits to the battlefield of Waterloo (where Marathon was a point of comparison) and in debates on plans to commemorate the victory with monuments.

Given that little else was known about him, the Molossian king Admetus could not be integrated into a larger narrative in the way that the Persians could. But the little that was known about the Molossians did give those who sympathised with Napoleon the chance to rail against his treatment by the British. Living as they did in what was regarded as a remote region on the outskirts of the Greek world, the Molossians were naturally regarded as much more 'primitive' than the Persians. The custom Themistocles adopted of holding a child at the king's hearth was itself seen as one sign of their primitivism – a relic of Homeric manners. Napoleon's supporters, then, could

contrast the English treatment of Napoleon with the generosity shown by an ancient king himself regarded either as barbarous or as retaining a Homeric nobility.

Which side was right – and what does it matter? Napoleon's use of the word 'foyer' ('hearth') of the British people must suggest that his primary allusion was to the scene in the Molossian court. The letter reveals, then, the extent rather than the shortcomings of Napoleon's classical reading. It may still seem to show the familiar Napoleonic fixation with Plutarchan exemplarity, only with a slightly different example. But both the extent of Napoleon's learning and the skill of his rhetoric become even clearer if we attend to a fine point of verbal detail. In alluding to the Admetus scene ('Je viens comme Thémistocle'), Napoleon was himself adopting the grand, theatrical manner in which Themistocles addressed the Persian king. If 'foyer' pointed to Admetus, 'je viens' suggested the Persian court. Napoleon, then, was playing the humble suppliant at Admetus' court while saving face by hinting at the scene in the halls of the Great King.

Once the allusion to Themistocles is understood in all its multiplicity, the letter now on view in Windsor can be appreciated as a powerful document of self-fashioning. It reveals a Napoleon who is not latching onto a tired mode of classical allusion, but juggling skilfully with the rhetoric of exemplarity. ■

Below: Napoleon's trip from Elba to Paris and from Paris to St. Helena.





# DANCING ROMAN PANTOMIME

## ANCIENT DANCE IN MODERN DANCERS

**A**ncient Dance in Modern Dancers is a collaborative study carried out by the Archive of Performance of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD) in conjunction with the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology (ISCA), and funded by TORCH. The research project has now been running for three years, focusing mainly on Roman pantomime (*tragoedia saltata*). Popular between the 1st and 5th centuries CE, *tragoedia saltata* was performed by virtuoso solo artists who enacted episodes from myth using a stylised gestural vocabulary. The pantomime dancer would thus not only embody several characters in the course of a performance, but also natural elements, animals, inanimate objects – anything present in the world.

The premise of our research is deceptively simple: we ask professionally trained dancers to reconstruct performances of Roman tragic pantomime. However, these reconstructions are created in a controlled environment in order to facilitate comparison between the output of performers. We asked participants to create their own piece of pantomime based on the same story (Athamas and Ino from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), to the same music, and in the same amount of time. Each participant received an identical 'resource pack' containing most of the extant sources from which our knowledge of *tragoedia saltata* derives. This has enabled us to distinguish what aspects of this form of art appear to be constant, and what kind of effects are created by props such as the dancer's mask.

Comparing these multiple solo performances, all created in similar conditions, has given us a unique outlook on the functioning of this art form. For instance, it has enabled us to

realise that the mask changes the manner in which the dancer's body is viewed. The mask prevents us from giving priority to the facial expression of the dancer, as we instinctively tend to do when interpreting a performance, and transforms the face into simply a head. Similarly, the ample robe helps to make the body of the dancer abstract. The dancers' individualising qualities disappear under their costume, making them freer to embody anything they wish: they become like clay, able to continuously transform and morph from one incarnation to another.

By encouraging dancers to explore the form without contradicting any of the information that we have, we have been able to get a better sense of Roman tragic pantomime and its creative dimension. For more information: [www.torch.ox.ac.uk/ancientdance](http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/ancientdance). ■

Sophie Bocksberger, Lincoln College

The dancers of the Marchepied (2014–15) impersonating Tysiphone



## GREEK TRAGEDIES AT NEW COLLEGE

**D**uring the last nine years I have tried to bring alive six tragedies of Sophocles or Euripides in English in the medieval Cloisters at New College. I have directed over thirty productions of Greek tragedy, in the original or in translation, since I was an undergraduate at Christ Church in 1947. My aim has always been to present the plays as clearly and directly as possible, with full respect for the form and conventions in which they were composed.

I have always seen my productions as part of my personal teaching and like to offer my students the chance to experience and appreciate Greek tragedies as plays through taking part in a live performance. In recent years I have drawn my casts chiefly from Lit. Hum. students at New College (where I have been a Lecturer since 1998), and these have included a number of very gifted actors, though a number from other colleges have also been involved.

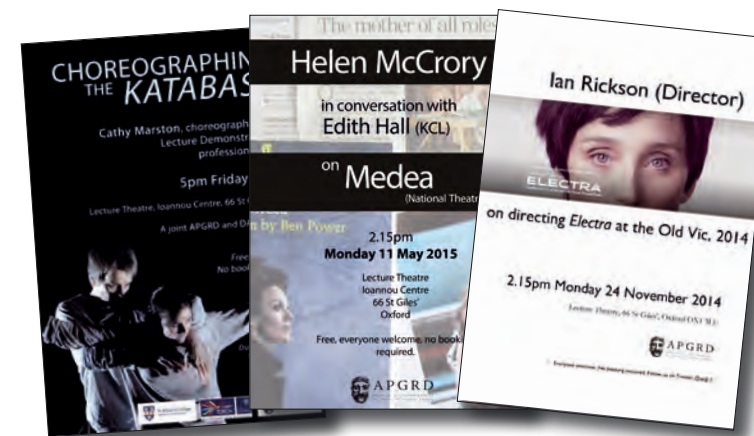
*Philoctetes* (2007) in my own translation, now published by Penguin, was followed by Gilbert Murray's famous *Hippolytus* as a centenary tribute to the scholar who became our Regius Professor in 1908 and introduced Greek tragedy to a wide public in the first half of the 20th century. Next came *Ion* (2012), using Vellacott's translation and demonstrating that Euripides can be very funny. Since then I have used specially written translations of my own, with isometric renderings of the choral odes as a distinguishing feature, in the belief that the original Greek rhythms can still have a strong emotive impact on modern ears. The last three productions have been *Bacchae* (2013), Euripides' *Electra* (2014), and most recently *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which attracted some 700 spectators over four evenings. ■

David Raeburn, Lecturer in Literae Humaniores;  
Rodewald Lector in Classical Languages

# NEWS FROM THE APGRD

## ARCHIVE OF PERFORMANCES OF GREEK & ROMAN DRAMA

For details of all APGRD events and publications, visit our website: [www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk](http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk)



**T**he APGRD has become the first research project in the University of Oxford to receive a Follow-on Funding Award from the AHRC. During the course of this calendar year we will produce two freely downloadable, interactive multimedia e-books based on the performance histories of *Medea* and *Agamemnon*. We were delighted to welcome back the Data Developer, Dr Tom Wrobel, as Curator/Developer on the project to work with Dr Claire Kenward, APGRD Archivist, who will co-edit the e-books with Fiona Macintosh. Both e-books will build on our print publications by commissioning new material and by including numerous digital objects from our collections. They will also provide different pathways for different readers so that the books can reach a variety of new audiences across the globe – in schools and universities, in the creative industries, and among the wider public.

The APGRD has organised major events during the course of the past year. Our 'Performing Epic' project, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, has continued to attract considerable attention as performance artists increasingly turn to the ancient Greek and Roman epics for inspiration. In addition to hearing Henry Power (Exeter) on 'Henry Fielding's Homer' in January, marking the first Classics and English Lecture, the APGRD (together with St Hilda's and DANSOX) was very proud to host the choreographer Cathy Marston (Artistic Director, Bern Ballet (2007–13); Clore Cultural Leadership Fellow (2013–14)) and two dancers, Aaron Vickers and Sonya Cullingford, for a week's residency to explore 'Choreographing the Katabasis' from *Odyssey* Book 11. With input from scholars from Classics, Modern Languages, and English, the week culminated in a lecture/demonstration in the Classics Centre, where Odysseus' meeting with the ghost of his mother, Anticlea, in the underworld was achingly re-enacted to the rhythmical pulse of the dactylic hexameter.

At a time when almost every London theatre seems to be staging the Greeks, we were delighted this year to hear talks from Ian Rickson (Director, *Electra*, Old Vic 2014) and Helen McCrory (*Medea* in RNT's *Medea* 2014). We were also very privileged to host lectures by the Welsh poet, Gwyneth Lewis and the Martha Graham dancer Marni Thomas Wood (a joint DANSOX event). The APGRD's unique blend of scholarship and practice in the

performance of ancient theatre also included a residency by Struan Leslie (Movement Director, Choreographer, Head of Movement RSC 2008–13), during which Struan ran workshops for the Oxford Greek play cast and also students from OUDS. Additionally, we hosted the selection for Théâtre du Soleil's École Nomade (Travelling School), which will take place for the first time this year from 14–25 September in Oxford at the Maison Française. The Polish theatre company Gardzienice provided the finale to our two-day annual Joint Postgraduate Symposium with the University of London with a discussion and performance of extracts from their *Pythian Oratorio* on 30 June in the JdP at St Hilda's.

Other events this year have included a spirited workshop given by Peter Parsons and Richard Hunter on *P.Oxy.* 5189, and a talk on 'Tragedy in the Trenches' by Maarten De Pourcq; an exhibition on The Furies to accompany the Greek play last autumn; and the culmination of two rounds of our AHRC-funded 'Communicating Ancient Greece and Rome' public engagement and collaborative skills training programme. We continue to co-organise the Faculty's popular Reception seminar series in Michaelmas term and this year's focus will be 'Reception and Scholarship' (convenors: Constanze Güttenke and Fiona Macintosh). Our annual conference, held in the Classics Centre on 17 July, was on 'Heaney and the Classics'.

We would like to express our gratitude to our academic Visitors for their help and support in various ways this year: Dr Malgorzata Budzowska (University of Lodz); Dr Victor Ferry (Free University of Brussels); Tom Sapsford (University of Southern California); Emmanuela Schinoplokaki (University of Heidelberg); Prof Elizabeth Vandiver (Whitman College). We would also very much like to thank an increasing team of volunteers, who carry out much work on our database and our collections: Lily Aaronovitch, Hannah Silverblank, Ellie Swire, Marchella Ward, and Dan Webb. ■

Fiona Macintosh, Director Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama

### CALL FOR ENTRIES: ARS LONGA 2016

THE ARS LONGA PRIZE 2015 ON THE THEME OF RICHARD STRAUSS AND THE GREEKS WAS WON BY LISSA CROFTON-SLEIGH WITH AN ESSAY (DOWNLOADABLE FROM OUR WEBSITE) ENTITLED 'HELEN WITH THE BLUE DRESS ON: STRAUSS' DIE ÄGYPTISCHE HELENA'.

NEXT YEAR'S THEME WILL BE ARTHUR MILLER AND THE GREEKS. ESSAYS OF UP TO 5,000 WORDS SHOULD BE SENT TO [APGRD@CLASSICS.OX.AC.UK](mailto:APGRD@CLASSICS.OX.AC.UK) BY 4 JANUARY 2016.



WIN  
£250!



# A LATIN REVIVAL AT THE ASHMOLEAN

FOLLOW ASHLI  
ON TWITTER  
@ASHMOLEANLATIN

After 18 months of preparation, the Ashmolean Latin Inscriptions Project (AshLI) is happy to announce that its designs for new displays in three of the Museum's galleries have been agreed and put into production.

With the help of Claire Venables, an Oxford-based designer with Giraffe Corner, the team have interwoven forty Latin-inscribed objects into the Rome, Mediterranean, and Reading & Writing Galleries. The objects range from tiny metal slingshot bullets to huge stone slabs, each marked with Latin text which tells a story about ancient Roman life.

The new catalogue of the Latin Inscriptions in the Ashmolean is being undertaken by the project's Principal Investigator, Alison Cooley of Warwick University, and converted into a fully searchable EpiDoc database by Hannah Cornwell, which will be available freely online by the end of 2016. With such a comprehensive resource becoming available to researchers, the team decided to place the emphasis of its new gallery displays squarely on the non-specialist visitor. Several of the displays were especially designed to appeal to school visitors, and are accompanied by teaching resources designed by Jane Masségla, to complement the teaching of History, Classical Civilisation, and Latin in primary and secondary schools.

The central display area of the Reading and Writing Gallery (fig. 1) will be given over to a display of Roman funerary inscriptions, including a touchable replica of a Roman tombstone, and a hands-on puzzle which allows visitors to build a Latin epitaph, both suitable for younger and visually impaired visitors. Visitors will also be able to see ten inscriptions, two elaborate ash urns, and a marble funerary altar with holes for libations, set up in a mock columbarium (a communal tomb with individual niches), arranged and painted so that visitors can imagine these extraordinary inscriptions in their original setting.

In the Mediterranean Gallery, inscriptions which tell stories about Jews and Christians have been chosen to complement the existing displays on the religions of the Late Empire. In the Rome Gallery, visitors will be able to read about Roman ideas of masculinity in a display of reliefs showing riders on horseback (fig. 2), and about the importance of food in Roman celebrations in a display of stones commemorating ritual feasts.

The new displays will be unveiled to the public in October 2015, and the AshLI team is already planning a series of events to celebrate their arrival. More information on the project, including articles and podcasts on the team's favourite objects, can be found on The Ashmolean Latin Inscriptions Project's Facebook page and on their blog *Reading, Writing, Romans* ([bit.ly/AshLI-blog](http://bit.ly/AshLI-blog)). ■

Jane Masségla, Research Fellow for the  
Ashmolean Latin Inscriptions Project



Fig. 1. Looking down the long central display table of the Reading and Writing Gallery in the Ashmolean: AshLI are installing a new information board with original inscriptions, and hands-on activities to right and left.

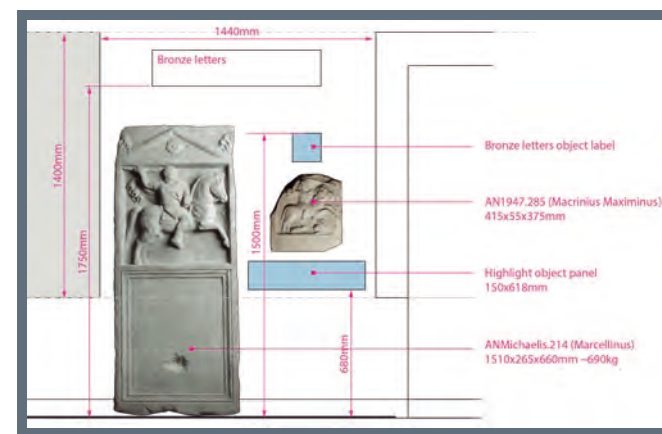


Fig. 2. Additions to the 'Rome in the East' wall of the Rome Gallery: two stones showing riders on horseback, commemorating the lives of two very different Romans.

## BEYOND THE BORDERS THE HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF NORTHERN GREECE

There was a lot more to ancient Greece than Athens and the Peloponnese. Beyond this familiar classical comfort zone lies the North (Thessaly, Epirus, and Macedonia), an area unified by language, culture, and religion, home of major Greek myths and motherland of key identity figures for Greek culture; yet it is an area that awaits serious scholarly attention. Research done in these regions has often been affected by modern geopolitical divisions – the results of the redistribution of land and exchange of populations after the Balkan Wars and World War I. Archaeology there is now moving ahead rapidly, prompted by changes in political regimes, EU-funded public/structural projects, or politically motivated agendas – and this new wealth of archaeological material needs to be studied in a collaborative, comparative, and interdisciplinary manner.

In September 2014 a new project began at Oxford that aims to investigate the material culture of the ancient regions of Northern Greece from the Archaic to the early Roman period by cutting across modern territorial borders. The project is co-directed by Milena Melfi and Maria Stamatopoulou and funded by the OUP Fell Fund. Its key features currently include the creation of an interactive map and a gazetteer of archaeological sites (combining essential geographical features with material finds), and the establishment of an international network of scholars contributing to the research through workshops, conferences, and publications. The work towards the project is in progress and still developing.

The goal will be to reconstruct the ancient territorial and cultural links within this area, starting from material culture and building on an accurate reconstruction of the ancient geographical and topographical features. The results will ultimately challenge accepted paradigms about the regions, such as their characterisation as 'backward' or as passive peripheries, showing instead how they were actively networked with the other Mediterranean communities. The research will offer a new definition of what Greek culture was and a new perspective on its extent.

We held our first workshop in January where archaeologists, epigraphists, and ancient historians from Greece, France, and



Italy discussed the research network, research questions, and methodology. An international colloquium discussing borders – whether and how natural borders ever corresponded to cultural borders in the area, and to what extent they reflected ancient as much as modern political divisions – is planned for late November 2015. The weekly classical archaeology seminar in Trinity term 2016 will also focus on these regions.

The project enjoys the support of an international network of institutions and dedicated scholars. At Oxford, Maria Kopsacheili has worked on creating an interactive map and geodatabase of sites. She has been offered a grant from the Lorne Thyssen Fund at Wolfson to pursue research at the Tzoumerka mountains in the southern Pindus. Milena Melfi and Maria Stamatopoulou presented papers at the 6th colloquium *L'Ilyrie Méridionale et l'Épire dans l'antiquité* (National Museum, Tirana) and the 5th Triennial Conference of Thessalian studies (AETHSE) in May and February. Funds from the project brought various foreign scholars to Oxford: Paschalis Paschidis, Myrina Kalaitzi, and Miltiades Hatzopoulos (National Hellenic Research Foundation); Richard Bouchon and Bruno Helly (CNRS, Hisma, Lyon); Roberto Perna (University of Macerata); Jessica Piccinini (University of Vienna). We are in close collaboration with the Department of Antiquities of Karditsa who will be participating at our future events. A welcome addition to our team will be Sofia Kravaritou, who will start as Marie Curie Fellow on a project examining the impact of the Macedonian kings on the religious landscape of Thessaly. ■

Maria Stamatopoulou, Associate Professor in Classical Art and Archaeology; Milena Melfi, Researcher in Classical Art and Archaeology

You can follow us on our website from September 2015

Above: Silver coin of Larissa (5th century BCE)  
Background: The Drino Valley at Tepelene (Albania)



# THE POWER OF 7

## THE CAMPAIGN FOR GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS AT OXFORD

What will you never forget about studying the classical world? Reading Homer in Greek for the first time? Excavating your first fragment of pottery? Arguing with your tutor about Aristotle? Creating a readable digital image of an inscription that was defaced 2,000 years ago?

The size and scope of the Faculty's research and teaching, together with the University's exceptional library and museum collections, make Oxford a natural place for high-achieving and high-aspiring undergraduates and graduate students to want to study. Every year, however, some of our best graduate applicants lose the opportunity to study at Oxford. Oxford has relatively few fully funded graduate scholarships, while universities elsewhere in the world are able to offer full funding to most or all graduate students.

We have therefore set ourselves the target of creating fifteen new graduate scholarships by 2025, more than doubling the number of graduate students we can fully support each year and giving outstanding students outstanding opportunities, regardless of their financial circumstances.

This year, we are asking for your help to establish two Alumni Graduate Scholarships through the Power of 7 Graduate Scholarship Campaign.

Number 7 carried powerful resonance in the ancient world:

- The Seven Wonders of the World represented the pinnacles of human achievement in art, architecture, and engineering.
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- The city of Rome was built on seven hills above a malarial marsh by a ford on the River Tiber. This strategic location helped Rome gradually to expand its economic and naval power to become a great empire.

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# GRADUATE PROFILES

## TRISTAN FRANKLINOS

Trinity College

My doctorate, written under the supervision of Dr S. J. Heyworth, considers the 1st-century BCE elegist Propertius as his own first reader, exploring the ways in which he engages with and recasts his own poetic material (a process which I have called 'mindful reading'), as well as that of his peers and predecessors. The elegist's participation in contemporary cultural discourses, notably the increasing interest in epigraphy and inscriptionality, is also of considerable importance to my research.

The notion of an author's (re)reading of their own earlier poems requires that his corpus is explored largely in the order written, so that the impact of earlier poems may be seen in later ones. In the light of Propertius' backward-glancing idiosyncrasy, however, earlier parts of the corpus constantly resurface and are reconsidered in later parts of the thesis, as the elegist's recasting of material from earlier poems in later ones often also allows new interpretive light to be shed on their original context.

Textual criticism and the consideration of the ordering of poems within books have played a significant part in my work, owing to the difficult transmission of Propertius' corpus, and forays into other authors' texts have led to a number of publications of proposed emendations (e.g. to Palladius and Plautus). My wider interests also embrace palaeography and codicology, on the pedagogy of which I am co-organising a colloquium in Hilary 2016 with a medievalist colleague, and late Republican and Augustan literature (especially poetry).

I have been the fortunate recipient of an Oxford-1610 scholarship (made possible by the generous support of a number of Wadham Classics alumni) which has allowed me to focus on my research and teaching without the debilitating financial anxiety that so often plagues graduate students in the Humanities, and for this I am incredibly grateful. As of September 2015 I will be taking up a year-long Stipendiary Lectureship at Trinity as cover for Dr G. C. Trimble. ■



Tristan Franklino



Calypso Nash

## CALYPSO NASH

Balliol College

Why do we still enjoy a story when we know the ending? And what could this mean for the possibility of free will and moral responsibility within a fated universe?

These were the central questions with which I started my DPhil on Virgil's *Aeneid* two years ago. I wanted to consider narrative plot as an analogy for fate, in particular the providentially planned causal determinism of Stoic philosophy. Virgil as epic poet functions within his text as a cosmic demiurge, engineering plot and action towards an end that he (or myth) has pre-determined. The poem is an *aition* (V.A.1.33 *tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem*), and accordingly the finish line is clear from the start. But why, for example, is the reader still so compelled by the tragedy of Dido, when we know that she is incompatible with the future of Rome? And how does Virgil so successfully create the illusion of options, hesitations, and questions for his characters within this fixed, overarching framework?

My exploration of these ideas is now part of a much broader research topic: 'Philosophical Readings in Virgil's *Aeneid*'. I use philosophical concepts from the 1st century BCE, for example theories of perception and psychology, to support and enrich literary interpretation of the poem. This is a fertile area of enquiry, as previous scholarship has too often been satisfied with only superficial engagement with philosophy. In fact, unpacking and disentangling Virgil's purposeful and marvellous manipulation of philosophical ideas is fascinating.

I am incredibly grateful for the AHRC graduate scholarship which supports my research. This funding has not only given me access to Oxford's unparalleled libraries, and to an enormous range of seminars, conferences, and events, but has also allowed me to benefit from the shared wisdom of this dynamic and thriving Classical community. ■

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# ALUMNI NEWS

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## ROBERTA THOMSON

*St Hilda's 2004; now in PR*



When I arrived at Oxford for my interviews I was blown away by the gorgeous surroundings and the fascinating people. During my first dinner this ordinary girl from Wolverhampton sat between two public schoolboys, one of

whom had studied Ancient Greek from age seven and the other of whom could recite the entire first book of Virgil's *Aeneid* in flawless Latin. The interview experience blew my mind, and opened up my world – I was thrilled to secure a place at St Hilda's, especially as I had no Greek or Latin language experience.

I loved every minute of the next four years – the excitement of learning Greek and Latin from scratch on course IIb, the tutorials spent admiring Greek vases in the Ashmolean Museum, and lectures on everything from philology to theology. There is no better degree than Classics for anyone who is even remotely intellectually curious, and it's perfect for someone like me who gets bored easily and craves variety. I could pretend I was a philosopher while reading Wittgenstein and Plato, start heated political debates with friends after learning about the birth of democracy, and laugh out loud watching comedies by Aristophanes. And while doing all of this I made incredible friends – including, of course, the two Classicists I sat next to at dinner my first night in Oxford.

Now I work in Silicon Valley, possibly the most exciting place to be in the world right now if you're inspired by technology, as Facebook's Director of Corporate Communications. It might seem a world away from ancient texts, but I couldn't have had a better start to my career. One of my tutors from St Hilda's put it best when I saw her several years ago and told her I was embarking on my first role in PR: 'Public relations? Aren't you glad you studied Cicero, the master of rhetoric?' ■



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## TRAVEL THE WORLD... WITH TRIP SCHOLARS FROM THE FACULTY OF CLASSICS

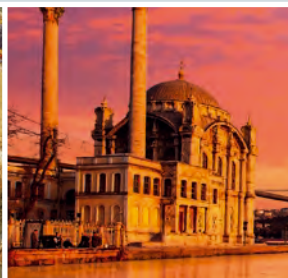
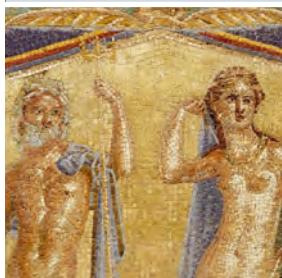
Over the 15 years that the Oxford Alumni Travellers' programme has been running, Faculty of Classics academics have led alumni groups to a wide range of captivating destinations. The University Alumni Office runs these educational, small-group trips with itineraries designed especially for alumni. Every journey is accompanied by an expert trip scholar, whose role is to share their academic knowledge relating to the theme and the destination. The trips offer a chance for alumni to revisit the intellectual life that they experienced during their time studying at Oxford and the role of the trip scholar is to feed the intellectual curiosity of travellers.

Later this month Dr Claudia Wagner, who teaches Greek and Roman Archaeology and Art, will be leading the sea journey 'Alexander's Path' along the coast of Turkey. In 2016 two members of the Faculty of Classics will be leading groups as trip scholars: Dr James Brusuelas, a Researcher in Papyrology and Digital Philology, and Dr Alfonso Moreno, a Fellow of Magdalen, who teaches Ancient History.

Alumni on Dr Moreno's most recent trip (the 'Turquoise Coast' voyage along the shores of Ancient Caria) commented 'the trip scholar, Alfonso Moreno, was brilliant. His preparation and lectures were top-notch, and his creativity – for example, teaching us how to make squeezes, i.e. damp paper impressions of carved inscriptions – was very impressive'. Dr Moreno will be leading two trips to Turkey: 'Treasures of Turkey' (3–17 September 2016) and 'Walking Istanbul: Byways of the Bosphorus' (4–10 April 2016).

In late August 2016 Dr Brusuelas will be leading 'Apulia and Amalfi: Coast to Coast Italy', with a focus on the context of his current research on the carbonised papyri and Latin wooden tablets from Herculaneum and Pompeii.

The Oxford Alumni Travellers' programme covers a wide range of destinations from northern Europe to Southern Africa, Central Asia to Latin America, with themes including historical journeys, classical music, archaeology, and natural history tours. If you are interested in joining a group, please visit [www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/travel](http://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/travel) for more information. If you are interested in the role as a trip scholar, please contact Denise Gogarty in the Alumni Relations Office: tel: +44 (0)1865 611621 or email: [denise.gogarty@alumni.ox.ac.uk](mailto:denise.gogarty@alumni.ox.ac.uk). ■



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