

FACULTY OF CLASSICS

# NEWSLETTER

FACULTY OF  
CLASSICS



UNIVERSITY OF  
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2022



# APHRODISIAS: ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

BEAZLEY FOR  
THE 21ST  
CENTURY

A TALE OF  
TWO CITIES

ITHACA: USING ARTIFICIAL  
INTELLIGENCE TO RESTORE AND  
ATTRIBUTE GREEK INSCRIPTIONS

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# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

There has been an orchestral quality to the Ioannou soundscape as it has developed from early September to mid-October, the critical gestation period of this newsletter. At the outset the footsteps of the few late-summer stalwarts echoed tremulously across the space, the hiss and grumble of the coffee machine marking the quests that punctuated their days; in counterpoint, Saturdays delivered eruptions of clamorous excitement as the new OxLat contingents swarmed into their opening encounters with declensions and conjugations. And then, in mid-September, a new note was sounded with the Open Day, when the Ioannou doors were flung open and a small phalanx of student and faculty volunteers, expertly marshalled by our outreach officer Edith Johnson, calmly offered their crisp nuggets of information and advice to tumultuous crowds of eagerly questioning aspirants. From this point, the faculty began to flex its academic muscles in earnest once more, and the lecture theatre rumbled with erudition and learned exposition as our brief autumn conference season ran its course. The two events which marked this year's cycle together sum up much of our mission statement: the Classical Art Research Centre (CARC) hosted its workshop on 'Beazley for the 21st Century', a deferred celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Beazley Archive in 2020, and a wide-ranging exploration of how this unparalleled resource might best be applied over the next half-century (further discussed on the following page); two days later a formidable team from across the world was assembled by Constanze Güttenke, Josephine Quinn, Tim Rood and Jaś Elsner for 'Oxford's Antiquity: A Critical Reappraisal of the Study of Classics in Oxford'. Ours is a subject that feeds more urgently than most upon its own ghosts; and there was much salutary munching in the Ioannou that week. And then the trumpet sounded anew, signalling the arrival of our incoming students, first the graduates and then the massed ranks of the undergraduates, and the murmur of induction week finally broke out into the mighty chorus of term, an ode to joy as a new generation, drunk with fire, entered the sanctuary.

What soul could not be stirred by such a symphony? It is one of the privileges of serving as chair that I am able to see, more directly than could ever be possible from the trenches of workaday academe, our workings as a collective, as a faculty, as a whole; and one of

the most rewarding experiences of my term so far has been to discover how much more than the sum of our individual parts we manage to be. It is my earnest hope that the glimpses that we offer you in this newsletter of selected parts of our operation will help suggest to you the larger forces that sustain us; and that you will be able to sense through these pages, as I am enabled to do through the committees and working groups on which I sit, the sinuous threads that connect such diverse aspects of our business as the Lexicon of Greek Personal Names and the OxLat teaching programme, the exploits of which are covered in the pages that follow. Not the least surge of connective energy that we experienced during the past year was at the Alumni Day on March 26th, through the relentless curiosity which those of you able to attend showed in all aspects of the material that was presented to you. So impressive was the level of engagement, and so lively and happy the atmosphere of the day, that we have decided on an experimental basis to accelerate the cycle and hold another such session next spring too, on Saturday March 25th. I hope to see as many of you there as possible, and to explore with you further possible ways in which we can maintain and develop our connections.

This year saw the publication, in May, of the government's latest scrutiny of the activities of university departments, the Research Excellence Framework, which examined our research activity between 2014 and 2021. The Oxford Classics Faculty emerged as by far the UK's largest producer of internationally excellent and world-leading research in the subject, with 79.3% of our 227 submitted outputs (books, articles, or chapters) achieving these criteria; our nearest competitor entered 145 items, and the other fifteen Classics departments far fewer. This reflects in part our remarkable growth in recent years: whereas in the last such exercise in 2014 we entered 68.65 full-time staff, this time we entered 90.65, an increase of 32%. Although the increase partly reflects changing rules about submission, it is largely due to our success in generating externally funded research projects that give early career researchers opportunities to develop their skills and launch their debut publications. Not the least part of our mission in the next seven years is to help ensure that these colleagues, working under the intense pressures that the contemporary academic

profession imposes, are able to produce work that consistently meets the highest criteria. It was encouraging, in relation to this, that the official verdict on the faculty's research environment statement declared the vitality of the research culture to be 'in terms of opportunities for and support of postgraduate and early career researchers ... among the strongest aspects of its environment.'

On Impact too, to resume a theme I sounded in last year's newsletter, we were commended especially for 'the exemplary evidence of impact on Classics in schools and the community', the sectors with which we are most urgently seeking to engage. The question of how our own Classical community of alumni can best help us enhance this impact over the next seven years is likely to be a recurrent theme of subsequent newsletters, and Alumni Day conversations. Our outreach work in schools has meanwhile been boosted spectacularly by a £1.34 million donation from the Stonehouse Foundation, which makes possible a strategic approach to the OxLat GCSE Latin programme for the next decade, as well as funding graduate scholarships.

The year has seen the usual round of sad farewells and hearty welcomes. Teresa Morgan, whose distinctive voice many readers will recall from earlier editions of this newsletter, has moved on to become the McDonald Agape Professor in New Testament and Early Christianity at Yale, and Bert Smith lays down his trowel after a remarkable twenty-seven years as Lincoln Professor of Classical Archaeology: the article in the pages below offers a sample of his enormous contribution to our subject. Laura Swift and Aneurin Ellis-Evans arrive to reinforce us in Greek literature and history respectively. My letter last year lamented the departure of Audrey Cahill, and commemorated her enormous achievement as Head of Administration and Finance in bringing stability to our operations; it is my great pleasure this year to celebrate the arrival of her successor Hayley Merchant, who has already done much, through robust common sense and deft diplomacy, to keep us on the road.

Dr Neil McLynn  
Chair, Faculty Board of Classics



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# CLASSICS WELCOME A NEW HEAD OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

This year I celebrate 20 years since starting my undergraduate degree in Archaeology, specialising in the Roman world. At no point during those three years could I have imagined I would ever be so fortunate as to be at the helm, alongside the Faculty Board Chair, of the largest Classics faculty in the world.

As I was always better with spreadsheets than a trowel, my journey to the faculty saw me spend over 8 years in multiple business roles at English Heritage, followed by 7 years in museums, mainly in project management, and finally collections management.

In February 2022 I joined the Faculty of Classics as the new Head of Administration and Finance (HAF), filling the large shoes of my predecessor Dr Audrey Cahill, who had crossed the Atlantic to take up a similar position in Baltimore.

Each Faculty and Department within the university has a HAF, whose main role is to support the Faculty Board Chair in the running of the faculty. The Faculty Board Chair is responsible for ensuring the faculty meets its academic and teaching requirements, and I ensure the administration side of the faculty runs efficiently and successfully. As HAF I hold overall responsibility for the running of all areas of administration within the faculty, from finance to human resources, IT to outreach. Such responsibility does not however mean that I am the boots on the ground in all of these areas. As with any role, I do not work in isolation; the success of the faculty is down entirely to our small but effective team of individuals, all with their areas of expertise.

The role of HAF never sees the same day twice: one day I'm planning the annual Faculty budget, and the next interviewing for a Departmental Lecturer. My background

in archaeology and ancient history makes the role more interesting by the conversations I have with my colleagues about the discovery of finds unseen for thousands of years, or the topic of their most recent monograph.

With teaching at the heart of the faculty, I endeavour to attend seminars on topics and themes of interest; I particularly enjoyed the Trinity Term 2022 seminar series dedicated to the Pro Cluentio.

Working at the University of Oxford is a privilege that not everyone gets to experience. That said, I wouldn't want to do my role in any other faculty within the university, as the majority of the weight of this particular privilege is entirely related to the Classics Faculty, the work it carries out and, most importantly, the team that I get to work with.

**Hayley Merchant**

Classics Head of Administration and Finance

## NOT FAR FROM BRIDESHEAD



There was a moment in 1931 when the behaviour of Oxford students almost got out of hand. Youngsters had taken to having sex in their cars, and the Warden

of New College, H. A. L. Fisher, didn't know what to do. He tried to persuade Congregation to ban undergraduates from owning the vehicles altogether, only to receive a stout response. If people wished 'to commit fornication,' one don said, they could 'do so just as well by train.'

I laughed when I read a version of this anecdote in the 1966 *Memories* of Maurice Bowra, Warden of Wadham, tutor in Classics and celebrated *bon viveur*. I'd come across a few of Bowra's other books whilst a student of Classics at St Hilda's College in the 2000s, including his *Greek Lyric Poetry*, but it was 2018 before I discovered his colourful memoirs. Everyone from Virginia Woolf to Winston Churchill makes an appearance. It occurred to me then that I knew startlingly little about the

classicists whose books had lined my shelves for so many years.

"That's a different direction for you," a few people said to me last spring when I released my latest book, *Not Far from Brideshead: Oxford between the Wars*. I have previously written literary biographies of Catullus and the two Plinys, a short guide to Homer, and edited an anthology of ancient stories in translation. But the new book is not quite the swerve into the unknown that it seems. Beneath the Waughian allusion it is a work of intellectual history which has antiquity right at the heart of it. My protagonists are Oxford classicists – including Bowra – and the narrative explores the place of ancient Greece and Rome in the world they knew.

The most senior classicist in this period at Oxford was Gilbert Murray, Regius Professor of Greek from 1908 to 1936, and founding member of the League of Nations Union. Maurice Bowra hoped to succeed Murray in his senior Oxford role but failed spectacularly to do so. He lost out to the Irish philosopher and amateur occultist, E. R. Dodds, who went on to write the seminal *The Greeks and the Irrational*.

I never fell prey to the myth that Classics is arcane and removed from the modern world. Ever since I was a student, I've found much to empathise with in the soliloquies of the Greek plays, the verse of the Latin love poets and Roman

political satires. My tutorials and daily language lessons in Greek armed me with ample material to apply to daily life in the early twenty-first century.

My discovery of just how poignantly Classics entered the national conversation in the interwar years nevertheless took me by surprise. Gilbert Murray wrote persuasively of the parallels between the Great War and the Peloponnesian War. Many of the students who came up to read Greats after surviving the horrors of the trenches sought solace in ancient poetry. In the 1930s, prominent classical texts, including Plato's *Republic*, were mined and distorted and employed opportunistically as Nazi propaganda. Classicists were confronted with the new challenge of rescuing their subject from wilful subversion.

Antiquity was everywhere. Its preservation was crucial. Months spent doing that most unclassical thing of examining handwritten letters in Oxford's archives brought home to me how passionately people of that time felt about ancient literature, history and the teachings of the past. Researching and writing this book absolutely confirmed for me that Classics has never not mattered.

*Not Far from Brideshead: Oxford between the Wars* is published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

**Daisy Dunn**

(Classics, St Hilda's, 2005–2009)

# VOCABULOUS

LEARN THE ROOT. CONQUER THE WORD.



**Dr Arlene Holmes-Henderson**, Senior Research Fellow in Classics Education, is conducting a pilot research study into the impact of learning Latin via technology.

**Lucy Huelin** (née Fielding, St Anne's College, 2011), a Classics teacher in York turned EdTech entrepreneur, has created Vocabulous, a new website which aims to improve students' English vocabulary by teaching Latin and Greek root word-patterns in Year 6 and Year 7 English lessons.

Lucy is passionate about bringing the benefits of learning Latin and Greek to a wide pool of students.

She says: 'When trying to work out the meaning of an unfamiliar word, few students will become detectives and look at the word's constituent parts to puzzle out its meaning.'

'This is a skill that Classics students gain in abundance, as almost every word in Latin and Ancient Greek can be broken down into

parts from which you can glean things like tense, case or person.

'Vocabulous is designed to ensure that students are developing these critical skills as part of their English lessons, so that by the end of the course, they are equipped to decode unfamiliar words in English. For example, students first learn the root "port", which comes from Latin and means "carry". When they click on the root "port", they are invited to complete a learning module which presents the root and eight of its derivatives in a series of explanatory videos and interactive questions. For example, the video teaches the word "portable" and encourages students to spot that this word comprises simply the root "port", meaning "carry", with the suffix "able" meaning "able to", so it means "able to be carried". Once they've learned the morphology, they are given a series of scenario questions with multiple choice answers which require the student to apply their understanding of this definition. They may, for example, have to select the most "portable" item from a list including a grand piano, a sofa, a laptop and a tree.

'After completing the learning module, students work through six quizzes which focus on different elements of vocabulary acquisition to win stars. As well as being tested on their vocabulary knowledge, students learn to apply word decoding skills. For example, they have to guess the meaning of lesser known words from the root "port" such as comportment, portage, asportation and deportation, by looking for definitions that relate to "carrying". Roots are split into ten different levels, which are named after the Olympian Gods. Each level contains two or three Latin and Greek roots and, at the end of a level, students answer questions

which consolidate all their previously-learned roots to win a digital badge. There is a class leaderboard which they can view on their profile page, and they can compete with their friends to win stars and become Vocabulous!'

Dr Arlene Holmes-Henderson is leading a team which will evaluate the impact that use of the Vocabulous website has on students' understanding and retention of English vocabulary.

1,500 students and 50 teachers in primary and secondary schools in the north of England will use the website for the whole academic year and will complete pre- and post-trial assessments to analyse the change in pupils' progress.

The research team will also visit participating schools to talk to students and staff about their experience of using the site. During the research trial, students will learn 30 root word-patterns, which will open up the basic meaning of over 1,000 English derivatives.

Vocabulous is currently undergoing a two-year trial before its public launch. It has received funding from The SHINE Trust for website development and from Christ Church for evaluation.

Schools are still being recruited to participate in the trial, both in the north of England and further afield. To find out more about being part of the trial or to support the work that the team is doing, please email:

[arlene.holmes-henderson@classics.ox.ac.uk](mailto:arlene.holmes-henderson@classics.ox.ac.uk)

To keep up to date with this work, follow [@drarleneh](https://twitter.com/drarleneh) and [@vocabulousuk](https://twitter.com/vocabulousuk) on twitter

# A TALE OF TWO CITIES



In March 2018, I was staying in a big house on the south coast of Cornwall with a group of undergraduate students on our annual Wadham Reading Party (an agreeable event: [www.wadham.ox.ac.uk/news/cornwall-reading-party-2022](http://www.wadham.ox.ac.uk/news/cornwall-reading-party-2022)). Early one morning, when I was out walking on Vault Beach below the house, my phone went ‘ping’. It turned out to be a cheerful email from my old chum Mustafa Adak from Antalya (Figure 1), asking if I was interested in collaborating with him on a big new inscription which had just been discovered by the excavator of the Ionian city of Teos (Figure 2). It took about three tantalising minutes for the picture in the attachment to download (reception around the Dodman is rubbish), but when the thing finally popped up onscreen... mashallah! It very quickly became clear – as I started the magical process of puzzling the thing out, back in front of the fire at the house – that this was, quite simply, one of the two or three longest and most important Greek inscriptions to have been discovered this century.

The new text records, in exquisite and moving detail (120 lengthy lines of complex and rhetorically elaborate Greek), the assistance provided by the city of Teos in Ionia to their ancient daughter-city, Abdera in Thrace, after its sack by the Romans in 170 BC during the Third Macedonian War (described by Livy). The new inscription includes our only detailed account of the reconstruction and rebuilding of a Greek city after a sack: the return of the population from enslavement abroad; the rebuilding of the city’s walls and urban fabric; the purchase of oxen to bring the city’s large rural territory back under cultivation; the tortuous diplomatic negotiations to recover stretches of land which had been opportunistically seized in the wake of the sack by King Kotys of Thrace and the neighbouring city of Maroneia. In all of this,

the Teians provided heroic support to the Abderites, in the form of gifts and loans of cash, specialised legal help, calling in private favours at Rome and Miletos, and very much more.

One of the most remarkable parts of the new text is a long description of the honours voted by Abdera to the Teian people in gratitude for their help. Among other things, the Abderites voted to set up “a colossal bronze statue of the Dēmos of the Teians, on the agora (of Abdera) in the most prominent spot, pouring a libation with a kantharos with the right hand, and with the left arm leaning on the stēlē on which this decree shall be inscribed; and let there be a small column standing by on the left-hand side, on which let there be placed a Nike crowning the Dēmos of the Teians with an ivy-wreath”. This extraordinary statue-group was clearly modelled on the cult-statue of the god Dionysos at Teos (Figure 3), in which the god was depicted in precisely this pose; every year, the Abderites held a torch-race in honour of the personified Dēmos (“people”) of Teos, and performed sacrifice on an altar facing the



statue. The Abderites’ gratitude towards the Teians was – bizarre though it may seem to us – expressed through the deification and worship of the personified “People of Teos”, much as Greek cities in this same period were starting to experiment with the worship of the personification of the city of Rome (the goddess Roma).

The new decree is vivid testimony to the networks of friendship and mutual support which linked far-flung Greek cities in the Hellenistic world. It therefore felt particularly appropriate that its publication grew out of a friendship between scholars across national borders. I think both Mustafa and I enjoyed the sheer oddness of solving knotty epigraphic problems by firing emails back and forth between the café in the British Library and the garden of the dig house at Teos (a wonderfully efficient way of writing a book). We hope that our monograph, *Teos and Abdera: Two Cities in Peace and War*, retains some of the flavour of the pleasure and excitement which our long-distance collaboration gave us.

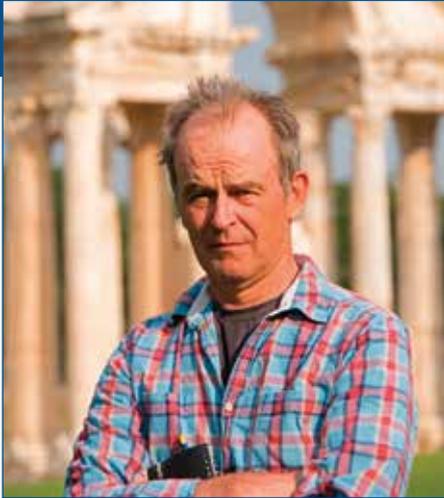
**Peter Thonemann** Professor of Ancient History, Forrest-Derow Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History at Wadham College. His book with **Mustafa Adak**, *Teos and Abdera: Two Cities in Peace and War*, was published in spring 2022 by Oxford University Press.

**Figure 1:** Mustafa Adak, with the new Abderite decree honouring the Teian Dēmos.

**Figure 2:** The lower part of the new decree. Photo: Teos excavations archive.

**Figure 3:** The cult-statue of Dionysos at Teos, as depicted on a second-century BC Teian silver tetradrachm. Photo: Roma Numismatics Ltd.

# APHRODISIAS IN CARIA: ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY



*RRR Smith*

Aphrodisias is one of the most striking classical sites in Turkey. It is both an attractive archaeological park for the modern visitor and a place of great importance for the study of the energetic culture of cities in the eastern Roman empire. The characteristic displays of inscribed public writing, honorific marble statues, and grand public structures are preserved here better than at any other site. Many of its buildings and statues are cornerstones of classical archaeology and Roman art history.

Continuous excavation began in 1961 under Kenan Erim of New York University (NYU), and since 1995 the project has been a close collaboration between NYU and our Faculty of Classics under the present writer's direction. The site was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2017.

Aphrodisias was a late-comer to developed Hellenistic-style urbanism, and its visible remains are essentially those of the Roman period, first to sixth centuries AD, when the city enjoyed imperial favour, first as a free city within the province of Asia, and from c. AD 300 as the capital of the new province of Caria. The city produced important philosophers and writers, including the first-century novelist Chariton, and was well known in antiquity for its cult of Aphrodite and its marble sculptors, who were in demand around the empire.

The city was laid out with a modern-style grid plan in the Late Hellenistic period and built up over the first two centuries AD with the usual buildings that constituted a city of note under the empire: baths, council house, stadium, temples, and theatre, all

exceptionally well preserved.

Aphrodisias also has unique urban structures, with which it made a claim to regional prominence. For example, an extravagant temple complex, the Sebasteion, was built to honour the early Roman emperors and was decorated with 200 marble reliefs, of which some eighty survive, now displayed in the Aphrodisias Museum.

Another highly unusual complex also belongs to the early imperial period, a colonnaded Urban Park with a 170m-long pool surrounded by palm trees, modelled on the newly fashionable porticus gardens of Augustan Rome. Both the Sebasteion and the Urban Park, which in antiquity was referred to as the 'Place of Palms', have been a focus of recent work.

The site has vital evidence for studying three major historical phenomena and transitions in the eastern Mediterranean: the differential impact of Rome in the first century BC and AD; the distinctive culture of late antiquity and the archaeology of the slow Christian ascendancy in the period AD 300-600; and the catastrophic end of monumental city



*Philosopher Alexandros*



*Sebasteion*



Street excavation

life in the seventh century and its gradual overlay by a reduced medieval or middle-Byzantine existence. All three phenomena are subjects of intense research at the site.

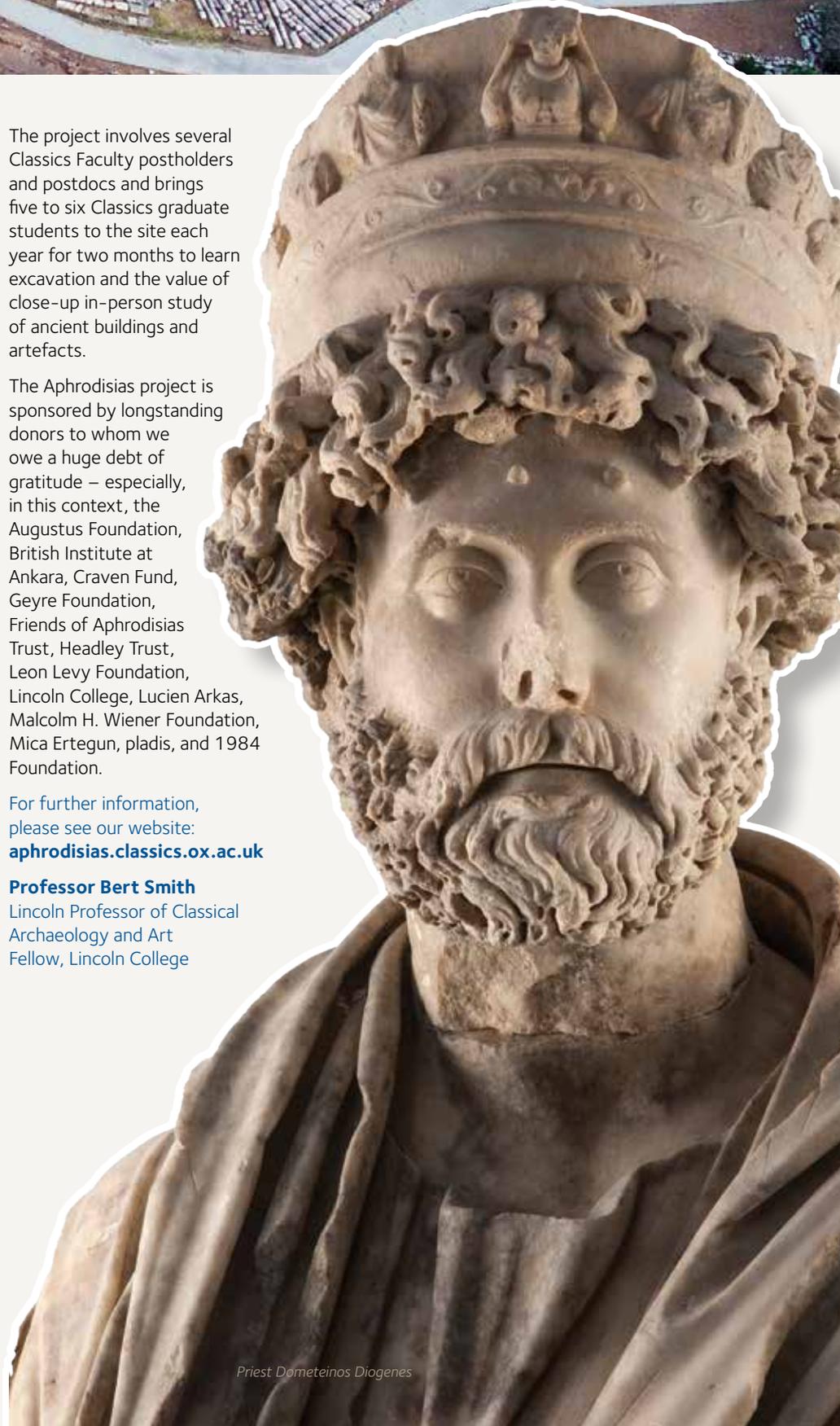
Current field projects are focused on the following: a major city avenue, the Tetraylon Street, and its long life from c. AD 500 to the Ottoman period; the Civil Basilica and the version of Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices inscribed on its façade; and the House of Kybele, a rich late antique town mansion with spectacular finds in bronze and marble. These projects combine excavation, conservation, and publication. Twelve Aphrodisias Monographs have been published, and more are on the way. Publication remains a key priority.

The project involves several Classics Faculty postholders and postdocs and brings five to six Classics graduate students to the site each year for two months to learn excavation and the value of close-up in-person study of ancient buildings and artefacts.

The Aphrodisias project is sponsored by longstanding donors to whom we owe a huge debt of gratitude – especially, in this context, the Augustus Foundation, British Institute at Ankara, Craven Fund, Geyre Foundation, Friends of Aphrodisias Trust, Headley Trust, Leon Levy Foundation, Lincoln College, Lucien Arkas, Malcolm H. Wiener Foundation, Mica Ertegun, pladis, and 1984 Foundation.

For further information, please see our website: [aphrodisias.classics.ox.ac.uk](http://aphrodisias.classics.ox.ac.uk)

**Professor Bert Smith**  
Lincoln Professor of Classical Archaeology and Art Fellow, Lincoln College



Priest Dometeios Diogenes



1

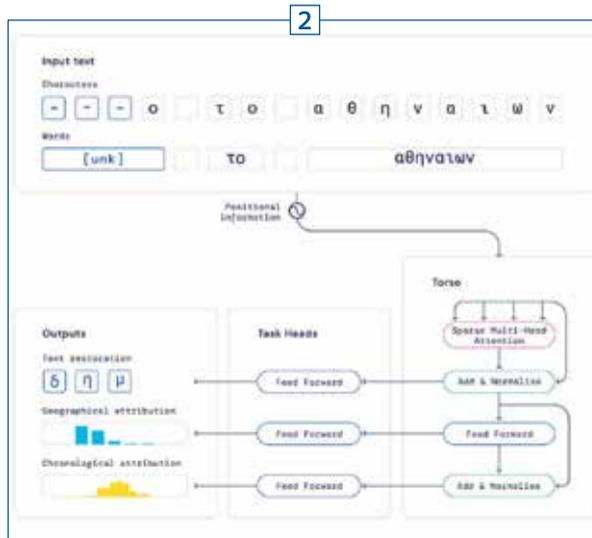
# ITHACA: USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO RESTORE AND ATTRIBUTE GREEK INSCRIPTIONS

## INTRODUCTION

*As you set out for Ithaca  
hope your road is a long one,  
full of adventure, full of discovery.*

Half an hour before the publication and launch of the Ithaca project, on 9th March 2022, the Ithaca team joined one final video call to read together Cavafy's renowned poem on the journey to Odysseus' mythical homeland. It was an emotional moment: the road to this project's completion had indeed been a long one, full of discovery, and hard work. Ithaca is the first deep neural network for the textual restoration, geographical attribution and chronological attribution of ancient Greek inscriptions. The research was published in Nature and featured on the journal's cover. But Ithaca is much more than an AI, a project, a publication, an online interface, an assistive tool.

The team that created Ithaca is quintessentially interdisciplinary, bridging the gap between ancient history and machine learning. It is also cross-sectoral, bringing together universities and industry: Google's DeepMind, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, the Classics Faculty of the University of Oxford, the Athens University of Economics and Business, Google Cloud and Google Arts & Culture. The project co-leads, Yannis Assael and Thea Sommerschild, were doing their DPhils at Oxford in 2017 (Yannis in Computer Science and Thea in Ancient



2

History) when they first began talking about applying machine learning to tackle some of the crucial challenges in epigraphy. Jonathan Prag has been pioneering the digital publication of inscriptions and their accessibility for a number of years. In 2019 the three published Pythia, an earlier AI for Greek textual restoration, which Ithaca now expands and builds upon.

Ithaca is designed as an assistive tool which can expand the historian's workflow. The collaborative nature of the project is perfectly encapsulated by Ithaca's results on the three tasks: Ithaca achieves 62% accuracy in restoring damaged texts, 71% accuracy in identifying their original location, and can date texts to within 30 years of their ground-truth date ranges.

Above all, Ithaca has been a journey, and in this piece we want to introduce its workings and significance.

## IN THE BEGINNING: DATA

Ithaca is a machine learning model, a type of artificial intelligence which can 'learn' to recognise patterns from the data it is 'trained' on. Today's state-of-the-art AI models are trained on enormous quantities of data (e.g. the entire Wikipedia, millions of YouTube videos): the models can then generalise the learnt patterns to new, unseen data in order to carry out a task.

In our setting, the data comprises inscriptions written in ancient Greek.

Ithaca is trained on the largest digital dataset of Greek inscriptions: PHI Searchable Greek Inscriptions. The texts and metadata (concerning date and place of writing) had to be processed and transformed into a machine-actionable format suitable for training the model: we called the final clean dataset 'I.PHI'.

## TRAINING THE MODEL

Once the data was ready, the next challenge was to enable the model to detect textual patterns across all Greek inscriptions: it had to learn how to handle contextual information meaningfully.

In machine learning, contextual information is often captured by processing words, since words (and the relationships between words) carry more meaning than single characters. For example, in the phrase (τοῦ) ΔΗΜΟΥ ΤΟΥ Ἀθηναίων the words ΔΗΜΟΥ, ΤΟΥ and Ἀθηναίων and their order in the sentence convey more meaning than single characters (Δ, Η, Μ, Ο, Υ, etc.). However, many inscriptions are damaged and parts of the words are missing: to ensure that Ithaca still works in such scenarios, the model was trained using both words and characters as joint inputs, enabling it both to capture context and to deal efficiently with damaged words.

The input is passed through Ithaca's 'torso' and then to 3 different task heads, each a separate neural network, to predict the missing characters, the text's date and its original location.

### PRODUCING (INTERPRETABLE) OUTPUTS

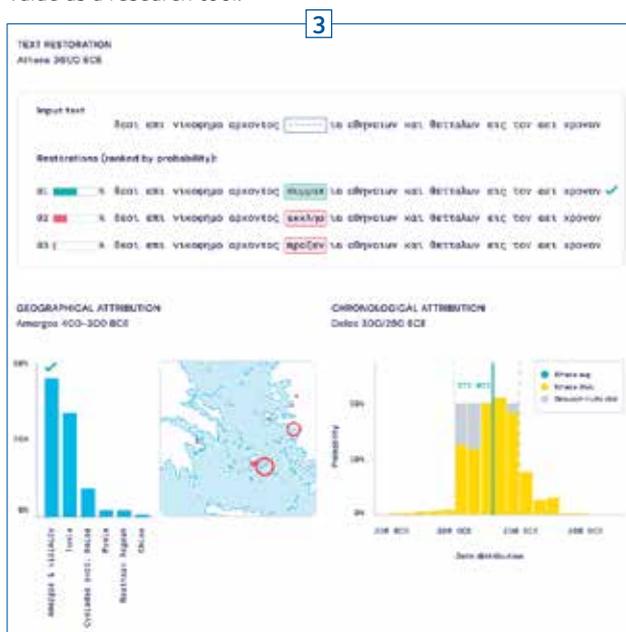
One of our team's top priorities was to render Ithaca's predictions interpretable to historians. For this reason, we implemented several visual aids, to visualise the certainty of Ithaca's hypotheses, and maximise Ithaca's value as a research tool.

**1** For the restoration task, instead of providing historians with a single, inscrutable restoration prediction, Ithaca generates up to 20 prediction hypotheses, ranked by probability, for historians to evaluate.

**2** Similarly, for the geographical attribution task, Ithaca offers historians a number of geographical predictions across 84 regions of the ancient world and visualises these results on a map.

**3** When Ithaca dates an inscription, it does so by predicting a distribution of dates across all decades between 800 BCE and 800 CE. This visualisation allows historians to track the model's increased confidence for certain date ranges, and therefore infer possible historical insights from the date distribution.

**4** Finally, for all three tasks we use saliency maps to show which parts of the input text contributed most to Ithaca's predictions. We visualise this by highlighting in different colour intensity the words which led to Ithaca's restoration, placing and dating hypotheses.



### HUMAN - AI SYNERGY

Our experimental evaluation shows how Ithaca's design decisions and visualisation aids indeed do enable researchers to interpret results effectively, thereby enhancing the potential for human-machine cooperation. The historians we evaluated in an experimental setting achieved 25% accuracy when working alone to restore ancient texts. But once we provided the historians with Ithaca's restoration predictions to evaluate, their performance increased to 72% accuracy, thus surpassing both their own and Ithaca's unaided performances - this effectively demonstrates Ithaca's synergistic potential.

### FUTURE RESEARCH

To make our research widely available to researchers, educators, museum staff and others, we partnered with Google Cloud and Google Arts & Culture to launch a free interactive version of

Ithaca, and open sourced our code.

We hope that models like Ithaca can transformationally impact the way we study and write about ancient written cultures and ancient history. We are already working on Ithaca for Latin and look forward to tackling new research questions in the field of ancient history using machine learning: we hope the road is a long one.

**Thea Sommerschild** DPhil student in Ancient History and **Professor Jonathan Prag** Professor of Ancient History Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History

### Acknowledgements:

The Ithaca project was co-led by Yannis Assael and Thea Sommerschild. Jonathan Prag supervised the project.

Ithaca research team: Yannis Assael, Thea Sommerschild, Brendan Shillingford, Mahyar Bordbar, John Pavlopoulos, Marita Chatzipanagiotou, Ion Androutsopoulos, Jonathan Prag, Nando de Freitas

The Ithaca web interface was developed by Justin Grayston, Benjamin Maynard, and Ricardo Cardenas (Google Cloud).

**Figure 1:** This restored inscription (IG I<sup>3</sup> 4B) records a decree concerning the Acropolis of Athens and dates 485/4 BCE. (CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia). Image from Assael & Sommerschild et al. 2022

**Figure 2:** Ithaca's architecture. Damaged parts of a text are represented with a dash "-". Here, we artificially corrupted the characters "[]μ." Provided with these inputs, Ithaca restores the text, and identifies the time and place in which the text was written. Figure from DeepMind: [www.deepmind.com/blog/predicting-the-past-with-ithaca](http://www.deepmind.com/blog/predicting-the-past-with-ithaca)

**Figure 3:** Ithaca's outputs. (a) Restoration predictions for 6 missing characters (dashes) in an Athenian inscription (IG II<sup>2</sup> 116). The top restoration, in green, is correct (ΣΥΜΜΑΧΙΑ, "alliance"). Note how the following hypotheses (ἘΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ, "assembly" and ΠΡΟΞΕΝΙΑ, "treaty between State and foreigner"), highlighted in red, typically occur in Athenian political decrees, revealing Ithaca's receptivity to context. (b) Geographical attribution of an inscription from Amorgos (IG XII 7.2). Ithaca's top prediction is correct, and the closest predictions are neighbouring regions. (c) Date distribution for an inscription from Delos (IG XI 4 579). The ground-truth date interval 300-250 BCE is in grey; Ithaca's predicted distribution is in yellow and has a mean at 273 BCE (in green). Figure from DeepMind: [www.deepmind.com/blog/predicting-the-past-with-ithaca](http://www.deepmind.com/blog/predicting-the-past-with-ithaca)

# CRAVEN AWARDS

The fund allowed me to travel to New York where I visited the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library—the world’s largest dance archive and library. While in New York I stayed with two friends—Ettie Pin and Levi Hord. While at the Jerome Robbins Dance Division I found a wealth of material related to my research, including: images and records about the work of the postmodern dance pioneer Anna Halperin; correspondences between members of the Judson Dance Church (a hub of postmodern dance in Downtown New York); and videos of live performances given by Halperin, and her contemporaries, Carolee Scheeman, Fred Herko, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, and Lucinda Childs. Works like Rainer’s *Trio A* and *Child’s Carnations* showed me that the tragic experience could still arrive through a performance of mundane or surrealist actions and tasks, even if that performance is set up to refuse or resist ideas of narrative, mythic representation, or meaning.



While in the Jerome Robbins Dance Division library, I also consulted material about/ by Trajal Harrell, a dancer who interrogates the reception of the Judson Dance Church. I consulted his correspondences, around a series of shows developed in the wake of 9/11. I was also able to watch the video recordings of these productions, including the recording of *Notes on Less Than Zero*. This material helped me understand that the aesthetics of coolness, deadpan, and dissociation can be performance responses to a lived tragedy, responses which don’t seek to make sense of and/or process

the emotional wake of a catastrophe but instead contend that the very systems of making sense are themselves insufficient for comprehending a large-scale catastrophe.

Additionally, while in the archive I did work on Trisha Brown’s dance company. After watching their *Set and Reset* which begins with an under-discussed reflection on mass deaths and the HIV/AIDS crisis, I consulted the archive’s materials on Brown and Milton Ernest ‘Robert’ Rauschenberg. Here I observed how a piece which is usually figured as being meaningless or devoid of politics actually contained a sensitive and heart-rending investigation of community movement through a public health crisis. While in New York I also attended class with the Trisha Brown Dance Company to investigate their techniques and ideas practically. The company class was facilitated by ‘Movement Research’, a dance collective and research network who also operate out of and within the Judson Dance Church to this day. So I was additionally able to speak to members of this research network and attend an event at the Church. This was a way of (re)discovering how Judson Dance (which is frequently said to be in operation only during the early 1960s) still functions as a space for and an ecology of postmodern, experimental, and queer dance practices.

Without the funding from the committee I would not have been able to make these discoveries nor would I have been able to watch and consult material that has been so integral to the ideas in my thesis, but which have until recently seemed set at an impossible distance.



**Marcus Bell**  
DPhil in Classical Languages and Literature, St Hilda’s College

The sixth biennial taught course in Roman Epigraphy took place this summer at the British School at Rome. Thanks to the generous funding of the Craven Committee, I was able to join the 2022 cohort of international graduates on this year’s course under the expert guidance and indefatigable enthusiasm of the course co-ordinator, Abigail Graham. The course was intense



and offered a packed schedule of lectures, seminars, and a daily *ambulatio* taking in Rome’s top epigraphic hits, including a tour of the epigraphic collection of the Museo Nazionale Romano at the Baths of Diocletian by curator Carlotta Caruso, special access to the Galleria Lapidaria in the Vatican, and an incredible glimpse behind the scenes of the *CIL* (volume 6) archives at La Sapienza University with Professor Silvia Orlandi herself.

We were able to take in some epigraphy in context with special access to such places as the Tomb of Pomponius Hylas and the Tomb of the Scipios. We were also given the opportunity to get up close and personal with a few inscriptions a couple of times with a crash course on how to take rubbings using the collections in the shady portico of the American School and, on another occasion in the *cortile* of the BSR, we were taught how to make squeezes and treated to some fine Italian wines at Abigail’s ‘Wine, Cheese, & Squeeze’.

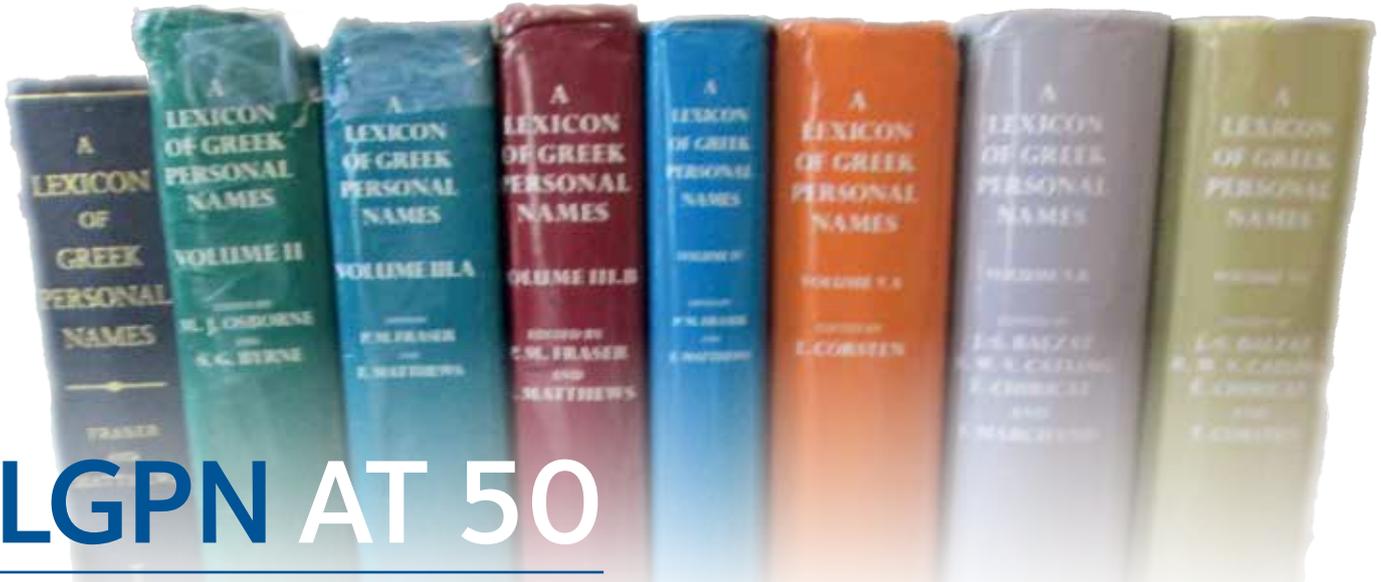
The experience was a steep learning curve for me and will form a solid basis for going forward with the epigraphic elements of my thesis, which concerns the world of Roman thunderbolts. A personal highlight of the course was tracking down the House of the Thunderbolt, the *Domus Fulminata*, in Ostia and finding the bidental there with the plaque still legible and still warning that it marks the spot where lightning had once been ritually buried.

The course was immensely useful both in learning some much needed practical skills and in opening my horizons up to ways of approaching Roman inscriptions and the wealth of information they have to offer. It was intense, educational, and immensely enjoyable. I’m very grateful to have been



given the opportunity to participate.

**Vanda Strachan**  
DPhil in Ancient History, Merton College



# LGPN AT 50

Those interested in Greek names used to have to consult the *Wörterbuch der griechischen Eigennamen* of W. Pape (1842), revised by G. E. Benseler (1863–1870). The vast increase in evidence brought by epigraphy over the following decades turned Pape-Benseler into what Louis Robert memorably described as a ‘ruine dangereuse’. Peter Fraser’s proposal to replace it with a new *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* was first made in a paper to the British Academy in January 1972. The proposal was accepted, and work started in the autumn of that year. It is with some embarrassment that I record, in this fiftieth year of the project’s life, that the original proposal envisaged ‘hardly less than ten years’ as the time required. (Compare, however, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, which recently celebrated its two hundredth birthday!) That estimate may always have been optimistic, but in 1977 a decision was taken that rendered it completely impossible to meet. The original plan had been for summary entries of the form:

‘Apollonius; theophoric (Apollo); general. Athens: IG, ii2, passim; SEG, indexes; Hesperia, indexes; Argolid: IG, iv, 1 and iv, 12, indexes; Thessaly: IG, ix, 2, indexes.’

This was soon modified to something rather fuller and more informative. But in 1977 it was decided instead to include every attested bearer of every name in every region. So, for Apollonius, not the two lines here quoted, but a gradual corraling of all the Apollonii anywhere (4,028 so far, and still rising). Though a more or less complete set of minutes for meetings of the managing committee of that period survives, there are none for the particular meeting at which that fateful decision was taken, so the arguments used are unknown: those with a taste for conspiracy theories can speculate about the vanished minutes. Half a million or so individuals are now registered in the database, after scrutiny of every one of them by the project’s true heroes, the

researchers (chief among them Richard Catling, involved with the project from very early days).

As a result of the policy change, the *Lexicon* was transformed from a largely philological project, about the kinds of name used in Greece, to a historical one, about the social history of naming. We can now identify, for instance, the widespread tendency in newly hellenised parts of the Greek world for men to assume Greek names while their wives and daughters retain indigenous names; we can trace the spread of new cults through the spread of ‘theophoric’ names (those based on a divine name, though never identical with it, such as Dionysios or Apollodoros); where a new settlement becomes known through epigraphy with no evidence for its history, we can make an informed guess about where the first settlers came from on the basis of their names; we can track political changes, influxes of settlers for instance, through changes in the name stock of a town or region.

Almost from the start Peter Fraser had the indispensable assistance, at the crucial level of computer technology above all, of Elaine Matthews; in this last role she was aided by a technological wizard, Sebastian Rahtz. (There are tributes to all three on the website: [www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk](http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk)). Maintaining a database long term in a world of constant technological change is no joke! Those who have contributed to the *Lexicon*, whether as researchers employed by the project or ‘area experts’ giving advice (and sometimes unpublished material) are far too numerous to name; but the acknowledgements in the published volumes are a testimony to international collaboration on a large scale. Such collaboration has intensified of late, as the *Lexicon* has entered regions outside the comfort zone of most of us: the Syria phase (leading to a volume about to go to press) has been co-directed by Jean-Baptiste Yon of Lyon, the Egyptian phase now being

worked on would have been unthinkable without the cooperation of those in charge of the great Egyptological database Trismegistos in Leuven: Mark Depauw, co-directing the Lower Egypt phase, and Yanne Broux, soon to take over as co-director for Upper Egypt. Another successful collaboration is that with Sophie Minon of Paris, inventor and director of LGPN-Ling, a partner project that provides a full semantic and philological analysis of Greek names (something included among the original aims of the *Lexicon*, but endlessly postponed until Sophie’s most welcome initiative).

The riches of the *Lexicon* are there for others to exploit in writing what Louis Robert called ‘l’histoire par les noms’. Gratifyingly, many colleagues are doing just that; the footnotes of the best journals are being colonised by citations of LGPN. We have tried to give a lead by organising a series of international conferences: the latest of four already published is *Changing Names: Tradition and Innovation in Ancient Greek Onomastics* (Oxford, 2019), and volumes on Syria and Egypt are in preparation.

When Egypt is finished, the whole Greek world will finally have been covered (except that two insignificant regions, France and Britain, were somehow overlooked!). But will that be the end? Let us hope not. Since our first published volume appeared in 1987, innumerable inscriptions have been published with new names in; compiling an LGPN is like the proverbial task of painting the Forth Bridge. It would be tragic for such a resource gradually to become a ‘ruine dangereuse’ in its turn. The challenge now is to find ways and means for a continual updating operation, one requiring much less manpower than the original composition, to carry it through 2072.

**Robert Parker** recently handed over the Directorship of the LGPN project to **Nino Luraghi**, his successor as Wykeham Professor of Ancient History.

# FOURTEEN BLACK CLASSICISTS: A PHOTOGRAPHIC INSTALLATION



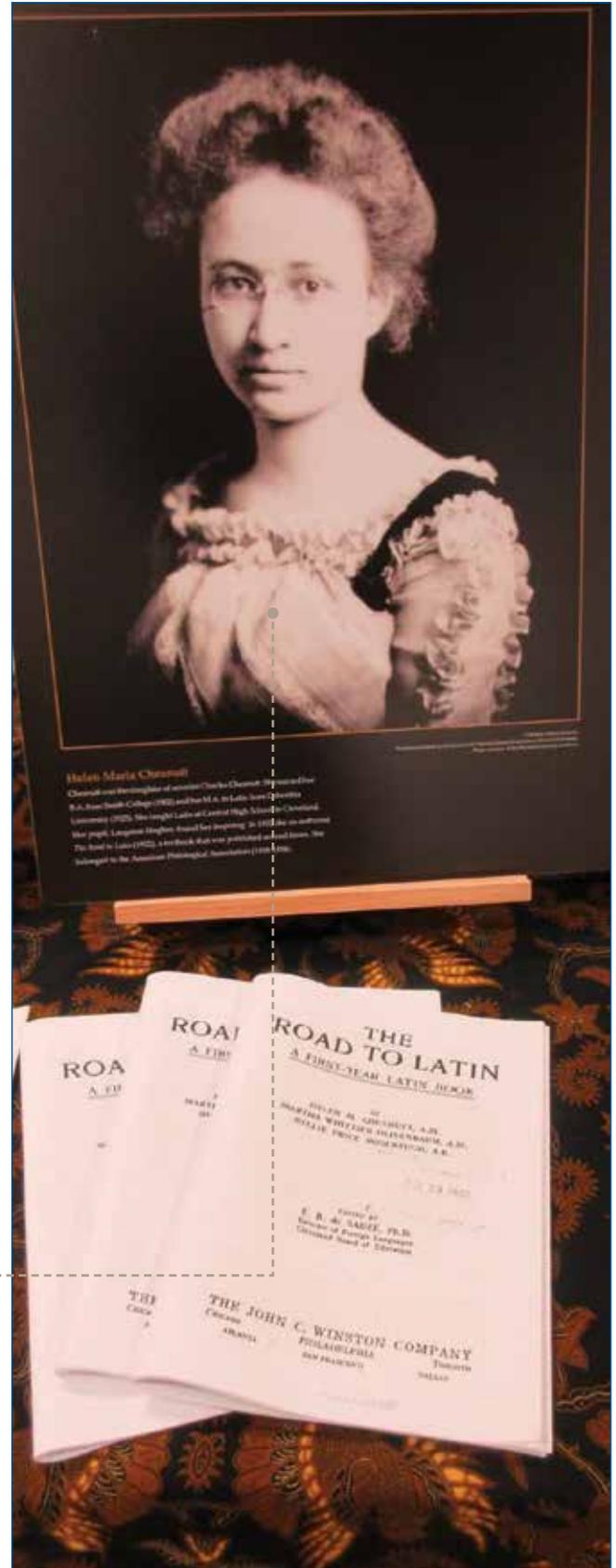
In Michaelmas Term 2021, I took up the role of inaugural EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) Officer for the Classics Faculty, alongside my Tutorial Fellowship. I have been given a broad remit, but at the heart of the post lies the work of improving people's lives and making the Classics Faculty the most open and inclusive place possible for all members of our community. Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to work with a fantastic, dedicated EDI committee, including some amazing student representatives and an external adviser, Mai Musié. I have also been working with parallel EDI Officers across other Humanities Faculties and in other Universities.

It has been a privilege to take on this role, which has brought me into many different areas, from neurodiversity to the Vice Chancellor's Diversity Awards recognizing EDI projects across the University. Perhaps the most exciting highlight of the role for me personally has been organizing the Black Classicists exhibition, which was hosted at the Classics Faculty for a week in April.

This fascinating photographic installation originated in the USA and reflects the intellectual and social context of that country. However, the life-stories of the subjects are inspiring and transcend national borders. In essence, the exhibition celebrates the contributions of black classicists in America to the field of Classics over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It shines a spotlight on both the academic accomplishments of its portrait subjects and the structural barriers which they overcame in the course of their careers. It also includes biographies which stand alongside the photographs, copies of publications, and personal quotes from the subjects, which reflect on their individual experiences and life-stories.

For example, meet Helen Maria Chestnutt.

Helen Maria Chestnutt (1880-1969), daughter of the novelist Charles Chestnutt, was awarded her BA from Smith College (1902), where she was one of only two black students enrolled at the time, and she earned her MA in Latin from Columbia University (1925). For many years, she taught Latin at Central



High School in Cleveland, Ohio. There, for Virgil's 2,000th birthday she produced a play involving the whole school and published a report of the production in the *Classical Journal*. She commented that:

"Roman costumes were gay in colour, a fact which seemed to surprise the pupils, who were accustomed to think of them as made of white marble. The dresses and scarfs and tunics had to be dyed, and so the laundry classes spent some days in dyeing and tinting the garments. Their great achievement was a royal toga for Augustus to wear, dyed a perfect Roman purple and stenciled in gold".

Together with Martha Whittier Olivenbaum and Nellie Price Rosebaugh, she co-authored an important text book, *The Road to Latin* (1932), including some perceptive and engaging words about the value of learning Latin, which still resonate today:

"Then, as you continue the study of Latin, you will realize that you are gaining certain powers that will make living easier for you as you grow up. You will find that you have learned to concentrate, to judge, to decide quickly, and to persevere, to keep going until you have reached your goal, whatever that may be. These powers are very important to our complex civilization. You need every one of them when you face the ordinary situations of your daily life."

She was an inspirational teacher and in 1920 she was elected to the executive committee of the *American Philological Association* (founded in 1869, but renamed in 2013 as *The Society for Classical Studies*), where she remained an active member until 1934.

Or meet William Sanders Scarborough (1852-1926), who was born into slavery in Macon, Georgia, and is generally thought of as the first African-American scholar.

After studying at Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University), William Sanders Scarborough earned his BA and MA from Oberlin College, Ohio. His Greek textbook, *First Lessons in Greek* (1881), drew national attention. He was a member of the *American Philological Association* for forty-four years. During that time he presented many papers, although on one occasion in 1909, shortly after he had become President of Wilberforce University (1908-20), he was banned from attending the meeting and his paper had to be read by a third party because of racial tensions. He was the first black member of the Modern Languages Association (1884), which now has a book-prize in his honour, and he was President of Wilberforce University (1908-1920). In his second book, *The Birds of Aristophanes: A Theory of Interpretation* (1886), he wrote:

"Aristophanes, as far as we have any historical knowledge of his life and public



career, was a man of independent spirit. He boldly attacked and fearlessly assailed the political vices and corruptions of his times."

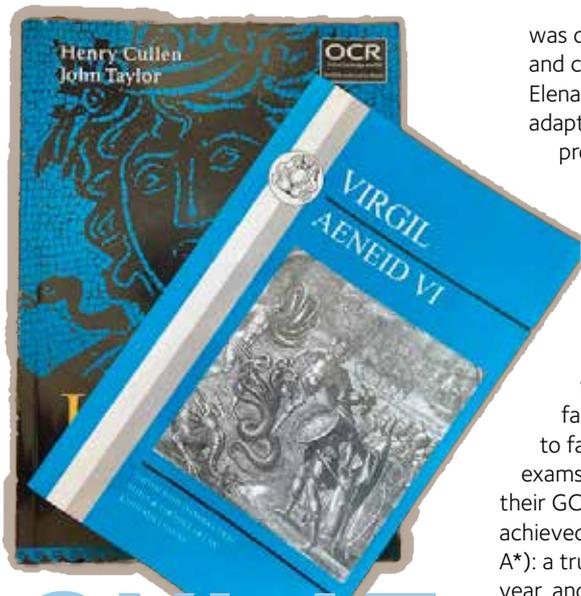
These words could easily be applied to Scarborough himself. The example of his extraordinary life was instrumental in breaking down barriers and challenging prevailing views in his own society. These are just two of the memorable people brought to life by the exhibition. You can find out more here: <https://chs.harvard.edu/permanent-collection/black-classicists>.

Last but not least, how did this vibrant exhibition make the long trip from the USA to Oxford? The chance to bring it here came via the Classics teacher Marc Ives and his students at St Gabriel's School, Newbury, who contacted the first curator, Michele Valerie Ronnick, and brought the exhibits over from the USA. These accomplished and enterprising students also came and spoke at the launch of the exhibition in Oxford in Trinity Term. I am extremely grateful to them and to Marc Ives for allowing us to host the exhibition, to the Reverend Dr Melanie Marshall for first putting me in touch with Marc Ives, and finally, to Michele Valerie Ronnick for her inspirational curating of the original exhibition.

As I was helping to dismantle the exhibition at the end of the week and loading the portraits into a van to take them on to their next destination, I felt sad to see them go on their way, but their fascinating and thought-provoking life-stories will stay with me for the remainder of my time as EDI Officer – and long beyond that.

**Professor Rhiannon Ash** Professor of Roman Histiography, Fellow and Tutor, Merton College





# OxLAT

## LATIN TEACHING PROGRAMME

### 2022

A lot has happened since the last full OxLAT update, but I am delighted to confirm that the programme is going strong despite the difficult events of the last couple of years. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 we changed from face-to-face teaching in the Ioannou Centre to remote learning. Fortunately, our pupils enthusiastically embraced online instruction and adapted quickly to the new arrangements: they persevered with their work, despite the coronavirus-related anxieties and restrictions which disrupted their learning experience only 6 months into their GCSE, and made excellent progress. This successful transition to remote learning

was due to the expertise, dedication, and commitment of my colleagues, Elena Vacca and Charlotte Causer, who adapted entire schemes of work and produced new materials at the drop of a hat and led the way with the adoption of different digital tools and applications to ensure that we were able to provide our pupils with as 'normal' a learning experience as possible. Despite the prolonged disruption and the fact that we were unable to return to face-to-face teaching prior to their exams, the previous cohort completed their GCSEs in June 2021 and 95% of pupils achieved a Grade 7–9 (equivalent to A or A\*): a truly tremendous achievement in any year, and particularly so during a pandemic! Most of this cohort have joined the OxLAT Extension Programme provided by Trinity College, which enables our OxLAT alumni, now in years 12 and 13, to encounter the full diversity of Classical studies, including literature, ancient history, archaeology, philosophy, and reception studies, alongside an intensive introduction to Ancient Greek and the opportunity to consolidate and expand their knowledge of Latin ([www.trinity.ox.ac.uk/news/summer-school-success-classics-and-ancient-world](http://www.trinity.ox.ac.uk/news/summer-school-success-classics-and-ancient-world)).

When we advertised for the new 2021–2023 cohort in spring of last year I was initially anxious that the on-going pandemic would result in few applications, but we received a record number: over 150 for the 30 places available on the programme! I thoroughly overestimated the impact a pandemic could have on teenagers' enthusiasm! The sheer number of eager, passionate pupils, however, made the selection process incredibly difficult, but we were spared the grim task of disappointing too many applicants, thanks to the support and efforts of Dr Neil McLynn (Faculty

Chair) and Audrey Cahill (previous Head of Administration and Finance), and the generosity of the Stonehouse Foundation. Their funding allowed us to expand our teaching provision and offer it to two cohorts of 40 pupils, one of which started in September 2021 and the second of which will be starting this September. Despite not being able to start face-to-face lessons until February of this year, the current cohort are making excellent progress and are already working their way through Book 6 of Vergil's Aeneid with all the joys (and tribulations) that underworldly experience brings!

Charlotte Causer, who was instrumental in the successful continuation of OxLAT during the pandemic, has returned to teaching full-time in schools, and so we have been joined by the brilliant Dr Sarah Burges-Watson, whose expertise in Orphic literature has been particularly useful in our pupils' Saturday-morning katabaseis. A veritable polyglot, Elena Vacca is now writing a DPhil on Classical reception in Russian literature alongside her excellent OxLAT teaching work.

Many pupils from previous OxLAT cohorts have continued to pursue Classics (and other related subjects) at university level. Eirlys Waters, who sat her Latin GCSE in 2017 as a member of the first cohort of the relaunched programme, has this summer graduated from Downing College, Cambridge with a 1st in Linguistics. And last Autumn, several pupils from the 2017–2019 cohort started degrees here at Oxford, in Lit. Hum., Ancient and Modern History, and Modern Languages (Hannah Bailey, Anna-Maria Foka, Isabella Hind, Maisie King, Anna Payman), while over in Cambridge, William Brawn is doing Ancient and Modern History.

**Emma Searle** Latin Teaching Scheme (OxLAT) Coordinator

# TEACHERS DAY 2022

One of the great delights of the past few years has been getting to know many of the enthusiastic and motivated teachers of classical subjects in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire schools with whom I have had the pleasure and privilege of working closely to organise events for pupils under the auspices of the local Classical Association branch. This collaboration has made it increasingly clear to me that an integrated approach

that brings together colleagues working to inspire the next generation with an interest in the ancient world at varied levels and in different institutions is vital to the continued thriving of classical subjects at schools and at universities. The occasions provided by such gatherings can allow us to support one another with knowledge and resources, as well as through an exchange of ideas about approaches to understanding

better the place of our discipline within our respective institutions and society more broadly. Prompted by a recognition that the Faculty of Classics can always do more to engage with, and to support, teachers of classical subjects at school level, this year a first step was taken to bring together school teachers for a study day offered by members of the faculty.

As a complement to the faculty's programme of outreach to school pupils,

we hosted the first Teachers' Day in March 2022. It was attended by about 35 school teachers from the local area and from among our alumni. The faculty hopes that this will become an annual event (another date for 2023 is already in the diary), and that the number of teachers able to attend grows as momentum picks up.

Alongside lectures on literary materials that focused on set texts while also taking into account a broader perspective on recent developments in research, there were talks on archaeological subjects and resources, as well as a chance to reflect on the ways in which the (place of the) study of the classical world has always changed and will continue to do so. The day started with Prof. Matthew Leigh of St Anne's delivering an incisive account of the place of sacrifice and associated imagery in the twelfth book of Vergil's Aeneid, which is currently one of the A-level set texts. After this detailed close reading, Dr Christopher Metcalf of the Queen's College gave an overview of some recent developments in our understanding of the place of the Homeric poems in relation to Near Eastern cultures and literatures. In a closing lecture, Prof. Llewelyn Morgan of Brasenose spoke on the theme of 'Interrogating the Classics', in which he reflected on historical aspects of the study of the ancient world and its

relevance to the present day.

The sessions on archaeological subjects consisted of introductions to two of the archives housed by the faculty in Oxford: the Beazley Archive and the Manar al-Athar Archive. Both are online and publicly accessible; between them, they contain hundreds of thousands of images along with commentary on these, making them stunning resources for teaching and for allowing pupils to explore aspects of the ancient world in their own time. I commend both of them to you as fascinating collections well worth a look. Dr Thomas Mannack introduced the world's largest database of ancient painted pottery, the Beazley Archive Pottery Database ([carc.ox.ac.uk/carc/pottery](http://carc.ox.ac.uk/carc/pottery)), which contains images of Greek vases and has a detailed search function as well as extensive data on each piece. The Manar al-Athar Archive, presented by Dr Miranda Williams, is a stunning collection of images of archaeological sites, buildings and art from across the territories of the Roman Empire that eventually came under Islamic rule; the archive focuses particularly on late antique materials, providing a vibrant resource for those who wish to stretch their pupils' understanding of ancient civilisation beyond the bounds of what one might think of as the classical ([manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk](http://manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk)).

As the university has returned to something more nearly resembling the patterns of its existence prior to the pandemic, it has been lovely to see the faculty building opened up again, and it was a particular delight to be able to welcome this first group of teachers – among them many alumni – to a study day. To have so many people passionate about enthusing others in their explorations of the ancient world in one place was positively energising and it is to be hoped that future instantiations will continue to foster collaborative and fruitful relationships and exchanges between the faculty, our alumni, and schools. The next teachers' day will take place on Thursday, 16 March 2023; details to follow on the faculty website.



**Dr Tristan Franklino**  
Lector in Greek & Latin; Supernumerary Fellow, Wolfson College and Lecturer, Oriel College

## BEAZLEY FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Everybody loves a cute dog, but that is only one reason why the Faculty's Classical Art Research Centre used the pot below as the poster-image for this year's international workshop, *Beazley for the 21st Century*. This cup was made in Athens around 500



fragment of an Athenian red-figure wine-cup attributed to the Euergides Painter, c. 500 BC (copyright the Ashmolean Museum)

BC. We do not have the artist's name, but in a certain sense we know him through the research of the artefact's previous owner, Sir John Beazley, the most influential figure in the study of ancient Greek vase-painting, who served as Lincoln Professor of Archaeology and Art from 1925 to 1956. He christened the anonymous craftsman the 'Euergides Painter'. He was one of around 1,200 painters or groups of artists identified by Beazley in the course of six decades – identified not principally through written records but by isolating the signature traits of their personal styles. In this way Beazley believed he could reconstruct loose networks and genealogies of artists spanning over two centuries of Attic manufacturing. His attributions still underpin most research on ancient Greek ceramics today.

Paradoxically, the Beazley method tells us little about the artist as an individual. It is the aggregation and comparison of information that forms the bigger picture of Greek art and society. For instance, we know the size and shape and distribution of the Euergides Painter's large extant oeuvre. We know his production preferences (wine cups) and

the imagery that catered for his clientele (imagery dominated by youths and athletes, and including an identical itchy hound, now in Boston).

The legacy of Beazley's approach is something virtually unique in the study of all ancient art: the opportunity to look at a huge and incomparably informative tradition of artistic imagery at an extraordinarily granular level. The implications of this extend far beyond the narrow study of pottery to many different aspects of ancient history and archaeology.

Originally planned for the 50th anniversary of our Beazley Archive in 2020, *Beazley for the 21st Century* was the Classical Art Research Centre's first large conference in fully hybrid form and contributed to the agenda for our next half-century. For more information and recordings of the contributions by the international panel of speakers visit [www.carc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.carc.ox.ac.uk)

**Professor Peter Stewart** Professor of Ancient Art, Director of the Classical Art Research Centre, Fellow of Wolfson College

# DEVELOPING A TWENTY- FIRST CENTURY ARCHIVE



Remote working during lockdown brought numerous challenges to researchers, but also provided new opportunities that allowed collections to increase and diversify access to their resources. It was during this difficult period that the APGRD first established a Digital Resources section on the website [www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/digital-resources](http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/digital-resources), which brings together our multimedia/interactive ebooks, event recordings, podcast, and blog. During last academic year, we continued to increase our digital outputs and our commitment to accessibility and inclusion by developing new, engaging digital outputs.

By adapting our events to deliver them online, we have now vastly increased and diversified our audiences (including for seminars and public lectures, but also for conferences and synchronised poetry recitals). Hybrid events have enabled participation from speakers who would not normally be able to come to Oxford. Making sure that all of these are publicly available on our YouTube channel now means that they have become valuable sources for general and pedagogical reference. But it is, of course, not just our events that have traditionally brought researchers to the APGRD. Our interactive/multimedia ebooks on *Medea* and *Agamemnon* were the first step towards making objects within our physical collection available beyond Oxford, and we are exploring further ways to develop remote interaction with the archive.

## APGRD/INSTITUT FÜR THEATERWISSENSCHAFT FU BERLIN PARTNERSHIP

We were delighted to be awarded funds, under the Oxford-Berlin Research Partnership scheme (OXiBER), to explore a project entitled 'Shaping antiquity through the archive: construction, reconstruction, composition' with colleagues at the Institut für Theaterwissenschaft at Freie Universität Berlin. Two two-day workshops, in Oxford and Berlin respectively, enabled a group of

twelve scholars (ranging from doctoral to professorial level) to think seriously about the ways in which different media shape the writing of theatre history. What does a history of theatre and performance look like when it attends to the specificities (in terms of production, distribution, and curation) of different media? Since much consideration has gone into thinking about how much or how little a publicity/rehearsal photograph can tell the viewer about any given theatre production, the workshops focused instead on the sizeable lantern slide collections both at the APGRD and at the Berlin Institut. How does the slide differ materially as both object and signifier from a personal photograph from the same period? What can the lantern slide of an ancient theatre dating from the first part of the twentieth century tell us about contemporary attitudes to antiquity? And what if that lantern slide was originally intended for pedagogical use?

The focus of the Oxford workshop was the APGRD's Leyhausen-Spiess collection, which dates from 1921 to 1971 and includes a range of lantern slides of early twentieth-century productions of ancient plays being performed at ancient sites. Wilhelm Leyhausen (1887–1953) was a Professor of Rhetoric at the Cologne Hochschule für Musik and founder of the Delphic Institute and the Collegium Delphicum after the Second World War, which brought students of primarily (but not exclusively) European universities, schools and amateur dramatic societies to stage plays in venues around Europe. These groups were brought together to participate in the annual/biannual 'Delphiad' festivals from 1950 to 1966 in the post-war spirit of European co-operation.

In addition to the Delphiad productions, the collection includes material that documents the wider European avant-garde developments in 'total' theatre during the 1920s and 1930s, for which ancient drama was a major site for exploration and experimentation. Leyhausen's development of *Sprechchor* (chorus of voices) needs to be examined in relation both to Rudolf Laban's *Bewegungschor* (movement chorus) and to the wider political context of the Hitler youth and the Nazi mass rallies of the 1930s. Leyhausen remained in post throughout the war years and his reverence for ancient drama clearly demands close scrutiny that includes reference both to the spurious racial theories that underpinned German classical scholarship at the time and to his own theatre practice. Leyhausen's collection (consisting of 26 boxes including audio reels) is therefore both a product, and a producer, of a particular mode of constructing antiquity that extended well into the post-war period, and in certain circles persists to the present. We are currently developing a 'Digital Leyhausen' project which will enable some of this vast collection to be made available alongside

audio, video and written commentary, to guarantee that the complicated context that produced the newly digitised objects is not lost.

## SINGING PENELOPE

The APGRD has continued its commitment to working with the wide community of creatives who fuel our research. We were fortunate to receive funding from TORCH's Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund to bring together creative artists and Oxford researchers to develop a new 90-minute opera, *The Alternative Queen's Speech*, based on Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* (2005; stage version, RSC 2007), by composer Cheryl Frances-Hoad (Merton's Visiting Fellow in the Creative Arts, 2020–21), and opera director/librettist Jeanne Pansard-Besson, with two singers, Samantha Oxborough and Karima El Demerdasch. We began with an initial workshop in November at Merton College, where a group of APGRD researchers joined colleagues in Music to explore the preliminary research questions and the first aria, a new commission from the National Opera Studio ([www.nationaloperastudio.org.uk/1242-asphodel](http://www.nationaloperastudio.org.uk/1242-asphodel)). This was followed by a three-day residency in June in the Jacqueline du Pré Music Building culminating in a performance with participation from members of the Cheney School in Oxford. A film of the performance, directed by Rocio Chacon, is now available.

*The Alternative Queen's Speech*, like Atwood's novella, turns the canonical narrative of Homer's *Odyssey* upside-down: Odysseus' wife, Penelope, traditionally the model of marital fidelity and patient endurance, is given the chance to offer her side of the story from the underworld. The residency explored the pressures exerted by the patriarchy on all the women of the household, and the tensions between Penelope and the twelve enslaved women, in whose execution at her son's hands she too is implicated. It also asked how this new opera might move beyond Atwood's second-wave feminist reworking by employing intersectional and postcolonial lenses. The multiple registers of Atwood's polyphonic novella – blending choral song/first-person narrative, traditional ballad/elevated rhetoric – are being translated by Francis-Hoad into contemporary musical equivalents. The residency was the first step in a long process of development, and the APGRD will be very much involved in the next stage, in collaboration with colleagues at KCL, Princeton and NYU, as well as with English National Opera, with a second residency in Oxford planned for September 2023.

For further information about our future events, contact [apgrd@classics.ox.ac.uk](mailto:apgrd@classics.ox.ac.uk)

**Fiona Macintosh**, Professor of Classical Reception, Fellow of St Hilda's, Director APGRD

# OUTREACH NEWS

## COMPETITIONS

Competitions are one of the key ways we engage teachers and students with the ancient world. We ran two competitions this year which received 350 entries between them. We think you will love the winning entries!

### THE ANCIENT DRAMA COMPETITION

In partnership with the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD), young people aged 11 – 18 from across the UK performed an ancient composition.

A panel of academics and performing arts professionals were tasked with choosing 3 winners in each category from 100 high quality short films.



**Watch the winning entries here:**

[clasoutreach.web.ox.ac.uk/drama-competition-2021](https://clasoutreach.web.ox.ac.uk/drama-competition-2021)

**You can listen to the prize winners discussing their pieces in a special podcast! Tune in here:**

[podcasts.ox.ac.uk/classics-faculty-ancient-drama-prize-2022](https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/classics-faculty-ancient-drama-prize-2022)

**or on Apple Podcasts here:**

[podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/381700722](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/381700722)



### THE CREATIVE WRITING PRIZE

In partnership with the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research, the Manar Al-Athar Photo Archive and Bloomsbury Publishing, this competition aimed to inspire a creative response to images from the Manar al-Athar Photo Archive. The judges extend their congratulations to all those who entered for the high standard from a mixture of genres.

**Extract from “Isis Pharia” A poem by Eden Farber, First prize, Years 10/11 category.** *Inspired by an image of Leptis Magna - Port - East Lighthouse by Jane Chick*

“Khonsu, strengthen the tide  
Depths of regret and pride—  
Some ships floundered in the shoal  
Strayed from a path  
Never told,”

**Read the poem  
in full and other  
winning entries here:**

[clasoutreach.web.ox.ac.  
uk/creative-writing-  
competition-2022-0](https://clasoutreach.web.ox.ac.uk/creative-writing-competition-2022-0)

# A RETURN TO IN PERSON OPEN DAYS

It has been a DELIGHT to return to meeting people in person after two years online! We were thrilled to offer an online option for those who cannot travel to Oxford.

## THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE OPEN DAY

On the 21st March the Faculties of Classics at Cambridge and Oxford held a joint open day aiming to give prospective students more information about studying our degree courses.

Visitors enjoyed meeting and chatting to students and tutors, tours of the Museum of Classical Archaeology and a range of talks including:

- Applying to study Classics at Oxford and Cambridge – Andrew Sillett
- Odysseus on the couch – Emma Greensmith
- Drinking with the gods: a view from Parthian Turkmenistan – Rachel Wood
- Foreign policy as a spectacle in imperial Rome – Georgy Kantor

A big thank you to everyone who helped out at the day!

### Some comments from our guests:

*"I had a fantastic day and learnt so much more than I expected ... which has solidified what I want to apply for at university."*

*"I found it to be an extremely fun and informative day. The talks about the applications and courses were very useful... I enjoyed it a lot!"*

*"We thought we might feel a little intimidated and out of place but actually the students and staff from both universities were superb, very helpful, friendly and enthusiastic. The event really cleared up a few things for my daughter and myself. ... my daughter now has a very clear idea of what she will be applying for and to which university."*

*"The lectures and visiting the library + museum confirmed for me that I definitely want to take Classics at uni."*

*"I thought it was super resourceful and made me feel a lot more confident about applying to Oxbridge."*



## OXFORD UNIVERSITY OPEN DAYS

Coinciding with the University of Oxford Open Days, we welcomed over 350 guests into the faculty for a series of events including:

- Classics at Oxford Admissions Talk with Gail Trimble, School Liaison Officer
- Q&A stands with current students and tutors
- Taster Lectures:
  - » Katherine Clarke - 'The Lively Landscape of Herodotus' Histories'
  - » Barnaby Taylor - 'Virgil and the aesthetics of scale'
  - » Ed Bispham - 'Greeks on the Edge of the World: Wine, Death and Epic at the Dawn of Greek History'

### Some comments from our guests:

*'It was highly informative, engaging and interesting.'*

*'Excellent! Super friendly students.'*

*'Everyone very helpful and lovely.'*

*'Students were incredibly welcoming and the department was really helpful.'*



# PHOTO EXHIBITION AND PODCAST

In Summer 2021, we interviewed Oxford Classicists, past and present for the Regional Classics podcast. We sought to capture the experiences and perspectives of those from regional areas that have traditionally been underrepresented within the Faculty or areas which lack access to Classics. We wanted to show that if you want to study the ancient world you don't need to have a 'certain type' of background.

Oxford offers a range of courses which do not require prior study of the ancient world or ancient languages!

**Head over to our podcast page to hear their stories and experiences:**

[clasoutreach.web.ox.ac.uk/regional-classics-podcast](https://clasoutreach.web.ox.ac.uk/regional-classics-podcast)

You can view a permanent exhibition of portraits which showcases the staff and students who participated in the podcast at the faculty!



# UNIQ

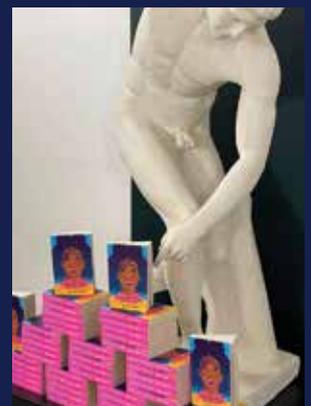
Our summer school for Year 12 was also back to in person! As usual, the faculty offered three courses over three weeks to inspire students from state schools. Our UNIQ Greece course welcomed 20 students who explored the theme of identities, ancient and modern, through literature

seminars, language classes and object handling. This was organised by Marchella Ward. Gregory Kantor and Rachel Wood headed the Classical Archaeology and Ancient History UNIQ where students enjoyed frescoes and epigraphy – many wanting to stay for just one more coin! Finally, the Rome UNIQ Summer School was led by Matthew Leigh as 10 students focused on Seneca and Nero's Rome.



## EXPLORE COLLABORATION – EXPLORE! BOOK CLUB

We were delighted to collaborate with Oxplore! Book Club for a Classics themed event for World Book Day. 10 schools each won 5 copies of *Oh My Gods!* by Alexandra Sheppard. School students participated in a host of fun activities created by a researcher based here in the Faculty of Classics, submitted book reviews and took part in a virtual Q&A with author, Alexandra Sheppard.



# EXPLORING CLASSICS

Exploring Classics is a film series created by students here at Oxford.

The aim is to highlight the breadth of Classics and all of the joint honours courses, modules, lecture series, resources and materials available in Oxford.

Watch the films here:

[clasoutreach.web.ox.ac.uk/film-series](http://clasoutreach.web.ox.ac.uk/film-series)



## CLASSICAL CONVERSATIONS AND SCHOOL TALKS

In these, an Oxford academic meets teachers and students to discuss an aspect of the ancient world, conversing about questions on a pre-agreed topic. Classical Conversations are delivered online but can now also be delivered face-to-face.

Through Classical Conversations, we have met students from Aberdeen to Jersey and everywhere in between!

The talks are whetting the appetite for classical subjects with student comments letting us know:

***"The topics such as cannibalism are subjects never talked about in school, so it is very interesting."***

***"Opened doors that I never knew existed. Made me think about the moral and ethical meaning behind life. And whether we are able to draw that blurred line between robots/technology and humanity!"***

***"I found it interesting to learn new topics that I have never had the chance to study yet, intriguing me into possibly researching into these topics."***

***"A taster session for learning ancient Greek looking at Greek and Roman myths."***

***"Learning Latin and Greek and talking about classic literature"***

***"More online talks about different classics topics."***

Event organisers Alice and Harry were equally enthralled:

***"Thanks for 2 superb talks last night that worked really well together and were thought-provoking and engaging for everyone... It is always tough to reach out to potential Classics students when very few schools teach it here, but I do think we have found a great formula here to encourage some of our city's brightest and keenest students to just look a little bit more broadly and enquire a little bit deeper, so thank you to all at Oxford Classics for the support."***

- Alice Case, Classics for All, Liverpool Hub

***"I just wanted to say a massive thank you for this evening... What an interesting topic! I was really pleased to see the level of engagement in the chat so thank you for bringing that out of them. We really do appreciate your support!"*** - Harry Doyle, Aspire Liverpool



## WHO'S WHO IN CLASSICS OUTREACH? 2021-22

Outreach Committee: Develops and implements the outreach programme: Neil Mclynn, Gail Trimble, Arlene Holmes-Henderson, Maria Stamatopoulou, Katherine Clarke, Tristan Franklino, Hayley Merchant, Paul Tappin, Edith Johnson and student members Jemima Sinclair and Matilda Trueblood.

School Liaison Officer Gail Trimble manages the planning, coordination and delivery of the Faculty's outreach and access initiatives for schools, colleges and prospective applicants.

Senior Research Fellow Arlene Holmes-Henderson provides strategic advice on outreach, access and admissions. Arlene is an OPEN Leader for Oxford University, working with policymakers to raise the profile of Classics in the curriculum.

Outreach Officer Edith Johnson provides administrative support for the team, rallies student volunteers for events, organises open days and runs our social media. If you want to get involved, please email [outreach@classics.ox.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@classics.ox.ac.uk).

