



Department of Classics, Ancient History, and Egyptology Summer Newsletter , Volume 1, Issue 1

2017-2018 has been another exciting academic year for the Department of Classics, Ancient History and Egyptology. In this short digest, you'll be able to read a round up of our latest news and get an insight into what we've been up to. Our dynamic research and teaching engages with specialists and non-specialist audiences, creating a lively and innovative environment for our students. This enables students to develop not only their subject knowledge and research skills, but also their interpersonal skills and prepares them for life beyond university. This newsletter also contains a special feature in which you can hear from two students from Siena University who have just completed a year of study with us as they reflect upon their time here at Swansea. Don't forget that you can also read about these in more detail by visiting our Facebook and Twitter pages as well as engaging with our departmental blog *Heroes, Hieroglyphs and Heretics!*

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Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

TEACHING 2017-2018

We are proud to be able to offer a diverse range of modules which are student focused and are designed to develop research skills, subject knowledge, and interpersonal skills. All of our modules are research-led, which means that lecturers bring new ideas from their research straight into the classroom. Students are at the cutting edge of the subject – not only do they hear fresh theories first, but they help staff to refine their ideas before publication. Furthermore, assessment is varied and offers our students ways in which they can develop in traditional and innovative ways. For instance, assessment might include writing essays, sitting exams, designing webpages for the wider public to engage with, creating research posters, or working together on group presentations (in the classroom, in museums or at archaeological sites!) Our curriculum is constantly evolving and new modules on offer this year have included Ancient Macedonia, Being Greek, and Ancient Cyprus. More than ever prospective students (and their parents!) are anxious about how their degrees will prepare them for the world of work. The most common question we get asked at open days is, ‘what can you do with a degree in Classics, Ancient History, or Egyptology?’ The answer is...anything (bar a profession which requires you to operate on someone)! The beauty of embarking upon a degree which engages with the ancient world (be it focused on literature, ancient society, or heritage) is that it equips you with transferable skills that you can go on to apply within a range of workplaces. Typically, our students go on to further study, train as teachers, complete law conversion courses, become journalists and nurses, run their own businesses, or work in heritage. This is something that we as a department take seriously and is reflected in our commitment to employability.

OUR RESEARCH

Our two research groups meet regularly to explore some weird and wonderful ancient texts in translation, host talks from our own student body and international speakers, and to share ideas about intriguing topics. This year reading group for Kyknos (our Ancient Narrative research centre), open to both students and staff, has been reading Seneca’s *Apocolocyntosis* (a satire on the deification of the emperor Claudius, in which it is implied that he turned into a pumpkin!) and Secundus the silent philosopher. With the Egypt Centre, the research group InEPWW (Interpreting Egypt’s Past in Wales and the World) have hosted a range of public lectures. Recently these have included talks on the Papyrus Turin 55001 (given by Cynthia May Sheikholeslami from The American University in Cairo on 2.5.18) and the religious connotations of ancient Egyptian headrests (given by Dr. Katharina Zinn from the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David on 13.3.18). In March, Dr Ken Griffin (pictured below) was interviewed by BBC Radio Wales about his remarkable discovery of a previously unstudied plaque in the Egypt Centre’s storage (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-43503731>). This rare representation of the Egyptian princess Neferure, daughter of the Pharaoh Hatshepsut, was presented to students in a handling session and is being prepared for publication by Ken. You can read about our most recent publications on our department webpage by clicking on our staff profiles.



Dr Ken Griffin with the rediscovered fragment depicting Neferure in the Egypt Centre

OUR RESEARCH IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

All of us in the department are committed to widening participation and outreach—this means engaging with the wider community with our research. Examples of research projects that we run include:

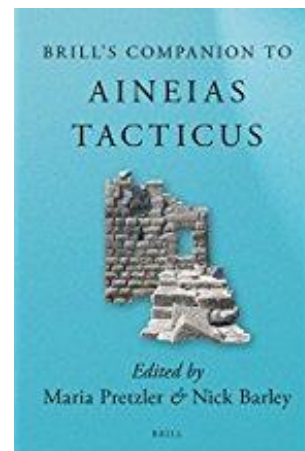
- Dr Nigel Pollard's work as a board member of the UK National Committee of the Blue Shield, engaging with governments, NGOs and military personnel to promote the protection of cultural sites in conflicts and natural disasters. The website Endangered Syria Heritage contains a catalogue of images of archaeological sites before and after destruction is a valuable visual record of the region: <https://endangeredsyriaheritage.wordpress.com/about/>
- Dr Kasia Szpakowska's Ancient Demonology Project explores the world of demons in 2nd millennium BC Ancient Egypt (2000-1000 BC). Its associated blog (<http://www.demonthings.com/blog/>) hosts a database on supernatural entities from other times and cultures as well as information about demon-focused talks, events and bibliography!
- Dr Ersin Hussein's work with visual artist Yorgos Petrou to explore ideas about belonging and identity in relation to Cypriots living on the island today and the Cypriot diaspora. In November 2017 their most recent work (the exhibition *33° 3' 45" East*) was presented at the Cyprus High Commission in London: <http://www.culturalchc.co.uk/single-post/2017/12/13/33%C2%B0-3-45-East>



(L to R): Snapshots of the websites Endangered Syria Heritage and the Ancient Demonology Project. Ersin speaking at the Cyprus High Commission and a photographic fragment of the Skouriotissa mines in Cyprus created by Yorgos Petrou on display.

SPOTLIGHT ON AINEIAS TACTICUS

Maria Pretzler and Nick Barley (a former PhD student in Ancient History) edited the *Brill Companion to Aineias Tacticus* (2017). Aineias Tacticus is a Greek author of the fourth century BC who wrote a handbook on how to defend a city under siege. The book is a collection of chapters by experts in various fields of Classics and Ancient History. Also note Maria Pretzler's website on Aineias Tacticus: www.aeneastacticus.net



ADVOCATING CLASSICS EDUCATION: IT WAS ACE!

Helping the lecturers on the ACE day was a very informative and fun experience, which I enjoyed immensely. A thoroughly enjoyable experience and I would certainly participate in the future. - Charlotte Sloan, second year Ancient History student.

The ACE (Advocating Classics Education) Classics Project, led by Professor Edith Hall and Dr Arlene Holmes-Henderson (King's College London), promotes the teaching of Classical subjects in schools nationwide. The department at Swansea is one of sixteen project partners, and the only one in Wales!, that support this initiative by inviting schools to attend workshops and talks. On 11th May 2018, students from (Howell's School Llandaff, Dylan Thomas Community School, and Cefn Hegoed) attended three workshops on foundation myths, women and heroes in Greek mythology, and power and authority run by Drs Ersin Hussein, Catherine Rozier, and Stephen Harrison respectively. With Ersin, the students debated which city was better, Athens or Rome, based on their foundation myths, with Catherine they flexed their creative writing skills by composing stories about heroes from the perspective of women, and with Stephen they worked in groups to discuss ideas about visual representations of power in Assyria. At the end of the day, the pupils were treated to a plenary lecture by Professor Christopher Pelling (Oxford University). Our students are vital to ensure that events like these run as smoothly as possible and many volunteered to run these lively and interactive sessions. Finally, thanks go to Maria Oikonomou and Catherine Rozier for organising the ACE study day this year!



Drs Stephen Harrison and Catherine Rozier in action! (L to R). Prof. Christopher Pelling, Dr Arlene Holmes-Henderson, Prof. Edith Hall, Maria Oikonomou, and Dr Catherine Rozier.

SARA AND CHIARA'S YEAR ABROAD IN SWANSEA



Sara Palitti and Chiara Della Giovampaola enjoying the Welsh countryside!

Having heard from a friend about their study year abroad in Swansea we were prompted to do our own research about the university. Before long we knew that the Department of Classics, Ancient History and Egyptology was the place for us because of its research and teaching focus ... we cannot deny that the beaches played an important role too - after all we are Mediterranean! We arrived in September 2017, leaving our University in Siena, to start the first year of our MA degree abroad. Through the MA programme here, we were able to develop our research skills and interests. For instance, we studied ancient Greek and enrolled the specialism MA module *Magic in the Ancient World*. For Italian students like us the university system in the UK is a complete revolution. Written assessments, such as essays, were entirely new because we were used to oral exams back home. We adjusted to this change very well as we received support from our lecturers and classmates and attended additional modules run for non-English speaking students. During our time here we made many friends through the student societies (another thing that does not exist in Italy!) and we enjoyed social and cultural events at the Taliesin theatre such as films, live shows, and broadcasts from London. We can say with great confidence and enthusiasm that all of our expectations for our year abroad were completely met and we highly recommend it!

STUDY TRIPS

A popular module that can be taken by second year students (but all year groups are welcome on the study trip component!) is the Ancient and Historical Study Places module. This year, in April, Nigel Pollard and Jo Berry took students to the Bay of Naples. There the students delivered on site presentations on sites of their choice as part of their assessments and visited a range of ancient sites and museums, including Pompeii, Herculaneum, Paestum and Cumae.

On May 4th a number of students studying Greek and Roman art and architecture, Egyptology and Ancient Cyprus went to the British Museum. Students were treated to a range of gallery and basement tours of the British Museum by curators and our staff to complement the material they have been engaging with this term.

STUDENT JOURNAL

On 5th June we launched the fourth volume of our online student research journal *Clasuron*. This year *Clasuron* has been coordinated by a team of student editors Skye Stewart, Olivia Davies, and Dr Stephen Harrison. This year's theme is identity and the edition features first-class assignments from our Department.

To read a copy online follow the link: https://projects.swan.ac.uk/ancient-world/?page_id=8



Skye Stewart and Olivia Davies reading *Clasuron*. Students and staff reading *Clasuron* at the launch party

PHOTO GALLERY!



Dr Nigel Pollard commanding the troops at the British Museum



Drs Catherine Rozier and Ken Griffin teaching students at the British Museum



Cheers for Eugenia for organising another successful staff student quiz night...the staff got whipped!



The staff-student laserquest social...staff got whipped...again!



The students taking the lead delivering on-site presentations in Pompeii!



Dr Jo Berry and the crew.