



University of  
St Andrews

# Classics News

Autumn/Winter 2017



*'Views from St Rule's Tower 2' by [Son of Groucho](#), used under [CC BY 2.0](#) /cropped from the original*

It is a great pleasure to share the latest news from the School of Classics. 2017 has been another busy year, with the School continuing to expand. During Spring, we appointed four new academic staff members. Christopher Smith has returned to St Andrews after eight years as Director of the British School at Rome. Our three former secretaries all retired during the summer: Irene Paulton, Margaret Goudie and Carol Wright served the School for 34 years between them and will be very much missed.

Our teaching programme continues to grow in new directions, especially at honours where we have added a wide range of new modules (including 'Leaders and leadership in the ancient world', 'The history of ancient Greek from Homer to the New Testament', 'Tools of the classicist', 'Religious spaces', 'Memory and dynasty', 'Classical bodies' and 'Gods in Greek literature'). The School was ranked first in the UK for student satisfaction for the second year in a row in the National Student Survey for 2016-17.

Our postgraduate community is thriving, with more than 30 PhD students and a newly redesigned MLitt. course, which is designed not just for students with a full Classics undergraduate degree but also for others coming from a background in English literature or History, with training in Greek and Latin. Our postgraduate population is very international, as is

our undergraduate intake and indeed our staff list (with colleagues from Australia, Brazil, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain and the USA as well as the UK). That range of different backgrounds and perspectives makes an enormous contribution to the vitality of the School's community.

In research terms, we have many exciting new projects underway, some of which are shared in these pages. Please do feel free to browse the School's website to see more about what we are doing. In particular our three Centres (the Centre for Late Antique Studies, the Centre for Landscape Studies and the Centre for the Literatures of the Roman Empire) continue to act as a focus for much of the School's collaborative activity. We ran eleven conferences in 2016-17 (including 'Leaders and leadership from Homer to Polybius', 'Law and deliberation in Athenian law and philosophy', 'Landscapes of movement: religious space and topography of the Cyclades, 8th century BCE to 8th century CE', 'Mountains in antiquity', 'Visualising war: interplay between battle narratives in the ancient world', and 'Roman citizenship from Hadrian to Severus Alexander').

Please do come and say hello if you are in St Andrews!

Jason König  
Head of School

# Our new academic staff

## Michael Carroll

I completed my PhD in 2014, at Cambridge. I'm working on turning my PhD thesis, which examines the use of metaphor in the tragedies of Aeschylus, into a book. I aim to show that recent theories of metaphor (especially 'cognitive' theories) can shed fresh light on the ways in which Aeschylus' metaphors create meaning. In my next project I'm going to turn to Pindar and tackle the controversial question of who is speaking in the odes: the poet, the chorus, or some combination of the two? A more long-term project is to explore whether cognitive science can suggest productive new ways of thinking about ancient religious belief, and it's wonderful to have joined a department where the topic of belief is one that so many people are interested in. Something else I'm very excited about is the new honours module, 'The Gods of Greek Literature', that I'll be teaching next semester. Reading a range of texts from Homer to Lucian, we'll be asking what factors influence how the gods are portrayed in literature, and how those gods relate to the gods of day-to-day religious life. I can only hope that my second semester here is as stimulating and enjoyable as the first!



## Dawn Hollis

I joined the School of Classics as a postdoctoral researcher in July 2017. I did not have to travel far, having completed my PhD in the School of History at St Andrews the previous year, so twenty metres up the Scores! My thesis focused on responses to mountains in early modern (c.1400-1750 CE) Europe: what did people think and feel about the peaks, did they climb them and if so, why? So I've been absolutely delighted to join Professor Jason König's latest project on '*Mountains in ancient literature and culture and their postclassical reception*'. This has resulted in exciting intellectual forays both forwards and backwards in time: considering how the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries drew on classical ideas of mountains, and then turning back to ancient sources for the origins of some of the reactions of my early modern mountain-climbers.

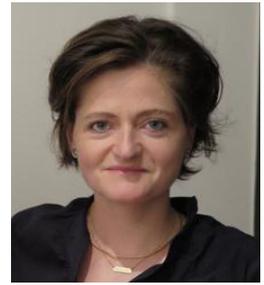
Outside of research, I am passionate about skills teaching, especially academic writing. I help run the annual 'Thesis Boot Camp' here at St Andrews, which supports final-year PhD students in writing 20,000 words over three days! I am a letterpress printer in my spare time, and run workshops at the Pathfoot Press at the University of Stirling.



## Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis

My research focuses primarily on material culture and on the Greek literature of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. I am particularly interested in non-elite voices in the areas of religion, travel and the body. My publications include seven chapters in edited volumes and a monograph '*Truly beyond wonders: Aelius Aristides and the Cult of Asklepios*', exploring healing pilgrimage in the Roman empire. This research has given rise to two current and long-term projects: one on Travels and Marvels and the other on Greek Votive Dedications. I also work on Classical Reception, particularly on the excavation and collecting of Greek vases in the C18th and C19th in the West and in the Ottoman empire.

I studied Classics at Oxford, and Byzantine and Classical Art History at The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. I have held a Leverhulme Special Research Fellowship and I have taught at a number of institutions, including Corpus Christi College Oxford and King's College London. I took a long career break to raise my three children and now I am delighted to have joined the School of Classics at St Andrews on a permanent full-time basis.



## Rebecca Usherwood

I'm an ancient historian whose research focuses on politics, culture, and memory in the earlier parts of what we now call Late Antiquity, so the Roman empire of roughly the third to fourth centuries AD. I'm currently finishing my first book, which is an examination of political disgrace, what we now call *damnatio memoriae*, during the reigns of the emperor Constantine and his sons. I'm also working on an article, inspired by the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI in 2013, which offers a re-examination of the abdications of the emperors Diocletian and Maximian in 305. More broadly, I look at political communication, particularly how people in the ancient world formed their identities in response to imperial messages, and I use a broad range of ancient evidence, especially coinage and inscriptions, to examine these practices.

I taught Greek and Roman history at Durham, Nottingham, and UCL before coming to St Andrews. I've never worked at a university with a four-year sub-honours and honours structure, so I'm particularly excited about teaching a new honours course based on my research called Memory and Dynasty.



# Roman Monarchy

*Christopher Smith returned to St Andrews in October 2017 after eight years as the director of the BSR. He has secured a Leverhulme Major Research Grant for his study of the Roman monarchy. Here he introduces us to that project.*

Royalty is hard to avoid. Royal engagements and weddings are one thing, but there are 26 monarchies in the world, a network of kings, queens, sultans, emperors and emirs who rule or reign over 43 countries in all. Monarchy has been a fairly constant feature of global history, and has contributed significantly to the way we in Europe tell a story about ourselves, whether that be the story of how sovereignty was embodied in the monarch, or in some instances how the construction of a Republic changed the relationship between state and people.

For an institution which might seem to have limited scope for redefinition, monarchy is immensely flexible and has weathered many changes and alterations. It is highly malleable, and occupies an interesting political and social space between coercion and consent. It is a fossil of autocracy, but can also be a model of popular support.

My current research project is on a monarchical system which, we are told, lasted for just 250 years, between the middle of the 8th and the end of the 6th century BC, at Rome. The seven kings were a motley crew. Romulus killed his brother, Numa consorted with a nymph, Tullus Hostilius got a spell wrong and summoned a thunderbolt onto his own head. One story says that Servius Tullius was born to a slave girl working in the royal palace, who was surprised by a phallus dancing in the hearth, and the public works projects of the Tarquins were so onerous that some Romans were said to have committed suicide rather than carry on working. The monarchy came to end when a younger relative of Tarquin the Proud raped Lucretia. She committed suicide, and her relatives expelled the king, and brought monarchy to an end. But it was impossible for Romans to understand their history without reference to the contribution made by the kings.

Tacitus, over five hundred years later, would describe the Republic as if it was merely the interval between kings, between Tarquin and Augustus. And the profound relationship that was constructed between Augustus via Julius Caesar to Romulus and back to the Trojan hero Aeneas was part of the legitimization of imperial power. Views of monarchy at Rome were mixed at best; those whom the Romans had seen in the east did not impress



*Capitoline wolf*

them, or needed to be destroyed. Mark Antony's infatuation with an Egyptian queen played badly for him back at home, so Augustus had to work hard to construct the sorts of arguments that would make him appear a polar opposite to that kind of dangerous model, even though in reality his power would become just as great.

My research project has three strands. First, I am interested in what archaeology can tell us about the period when the kings were said to have reigned at Rome was actually like. We have learnt a lot more about early Rome recently. It was a large, complex and exciting community, and even without the traditional narrative, there is much we can say about power in archaic central Italy.

Yet that traditional story, even if it is an unhelpful guide to archaic realities, is nevertheless part of the essential mental furniture of the Republican Romans, and it is a story that was told late into the empire. This was after all the foundation story, and not just of the city, but also of the mechanisms of power itself. So the second of my aims is to look at how Romans told this story, and how they used it in their own time and their own contexts.

And this narrative doesn't stop with the Romans. Anyone who looked for models of constitutional power after the middle ages looked to medieval kings, Biblical kings and Roman kings, and these three examples recur from Machiavelli on. One critical value of the Roman story was the peaceable transition from monarchy to the Republic. That was interesting because it gave rise to a very particular account of sovereignty, and how it related to the people. And that is a conversation we are still having today.

Christopher Smith

# Young Academy of Scotland

In August 2016 I was elected to the [Young Academy of Scotland](#). Established in 2011 by the [Royal Society of Edinburgh](#), the Young Academy (YAS) now has a membership of over 100 young(ish!) professionals from all over Scotland. Many are academics, but there are also lawyers, civil servants, entrepreneurs, medics, IT experts and people working in the charity sector. Membership of such a diverse organisation brings huge benefits: in working collaboratively with people from different professional backgrounds, I have learnt a great deal about other sectors of society and the challenges beyond my own particular bubble; I have also learnt to ask new questions and to approach my work from different angles and with other methodologies.

The Young Academy's mission statement is both to 'foster interdisciplinary activities among emerging leaders' and also to 'develop a coherent and influential voice through which to address the most challenging issues facing society in Scotland and beyond. In pursuit of this, small working groups within YAS come together to pursue a wide range of projects. For instance, the award-winning [Research the Headlines](#) team regularly blog about the ways in which research of all kinds gets kinds reported in the media. We also run a connected Rewrite the Headlines competition in schools, giving pupils experience in scrutinising media reports and (sometimes) fake news and in re-presenting data themselves accurately and responsibly. Other schools projects include a collaboration with the [First Lego League](#), promoting the uptake of stem subjects across Scotland, and a new Children's Voice consultation, designed to allow children themselves to discuss how they think education should evolve to meet the challenges of the new 'digital age'. The Young Academy has also set up a [Brexit Observatory](#) to assess the impact of the Brexit vote on academics.

Here in St Andrews we have a particularly lively local group of members and have organised a number of events within the University. We regularly run lunchtime discussions for mid-career and other academics on different aspects of university work. This month, for example, we are hosting a discussion on interdisciplinary research, with a public debate on 'Sustainable Education for an Unpredictable Future' planned for the spring. We recently hosted a dinner for local school head teachers to consult them on what their priorities for University outreach might be, and the report that we drafted as a result of this has gone on to inform the University's new strategic plan on outreach and public engagement.

Much of my work for YAS within St Andrews is closely related to my teaching and research; indeed, it has made a significant contribution to both. In particular, I have set up a new research collaboration with a fellow YAS member who works in the field of evolutionary



biology, looking at the stories we have long told about [behaviour during times of war](#). My research interests in the presentation and value of different kinds of knowledge have also informed some of my YAS work beyond St Andrews. I now run a YAS working group entitled Knowledge and Power, which aims to scrutinise and improve communications between expert bodies (centres of knowledge) and policy-makers (centres of power). Working closely with [Scotland's Futures Forum](#) (the parliamentary think-tank at Holyrood), we have a range of activities underway, including a conference on political participation, a schools project revolving around the creation of a responsible debate charter for Scotland, a celebration and exploration of 'active citizens', and a video project capturing people's aspirations for Scotland's future.

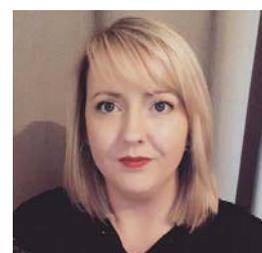
Being a member of the Young Academy of Scotland has proved a hugely enriching experience, both personally and professionally. Above all, I relish the opportunity to go beyond my academic bubble and contribute to projects which make a difference in the wider world.

Alice König

## Our new school secretaries



Sam Dixon



Jo McGinley

# Postgraduate Projects

## Nearly Experts

This semester, one of our PhD students, James Crooks, received a CAPOD GRADSkills Innovation Award for the development of a brand new podcast series – and it already has over 1000 plays online! Over the course of Season One, James interviews a number of current PhD students from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines as varied as Classics and Astrophysics.

Each episode sees a new student - each nearly an expert in their field - come into the studio and take the listeners through their research, breaking down their topic, the immediate context and the type of work which goes into their specific PhD. In the second half of the podcast, each guest then takes us through the road they took to get to their PhD, going from where they developed a love for their subject, how they went about pursuing that interest including any influential people in their life along the way, to how they ended up in their current position.

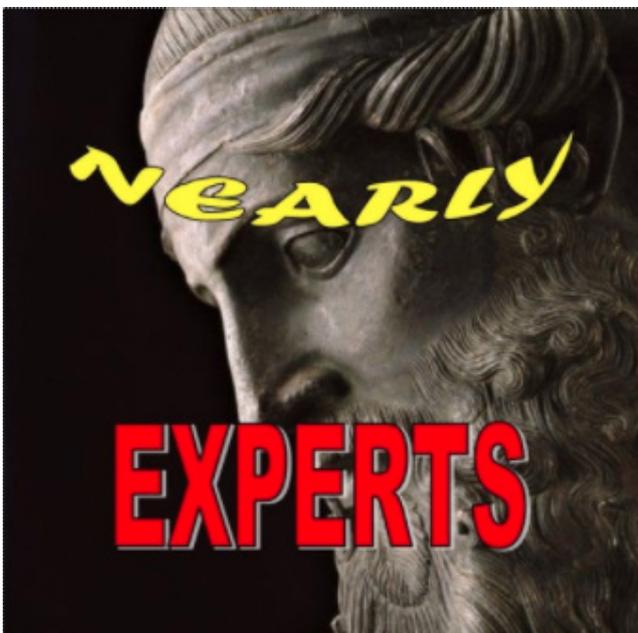
'Nearly Experts' is a continuing project, with Season Two in the works. If you are interested in keeping up to date with the research of current PhD students in Classics and around the university, are interested in the stories of these researchers, or simply want to show your support for one of our student's projects, you can find it at any one of these links:

iTunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/nearly-experts/id1283026170>

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/nearlyexperts>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NearlyExperts>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/nearlyexperts>



## Cultivating Perspectives on Landscape

16th-17th November, St Andrews

Last month we hosted an interdisciplinary training workshop on approaches to landscape studies. The workshop was funded by the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities and the School of Classics. The workshop involved six training segments delivered by invited speakers:

- In Rebecca Sweetman's (St Andrews) workshop on landscape archaeology, we got to handle Roman archaeological artefacts, and engaged in highly amusing attempts to guess the uses of various items.
- Professor Tim Ingold (Aberdeen) revisited his work on "taskscape" and addressed the ways that this term has been misappropriated.
- Dr Katharine Earnshaw (Exeter) challenged us to consider how landscape in literature can be perceived visually and conceptually.
- Professor Hayden Lorimer (Glasgow) sent us outside to follow our noses, and consider the relationship between the sense of smell and other senses, memories, and places.
- Dr Frances Fowle (Edinburgh) addressed the role of memory and the "place-myth" in landscape painting, and we discussed our interpretations of symbolist landscapes.
- Dr Jane Suzanne Carroll (Trinity College Dublin) invited us to consider landscape from a child's perspective, where the bounds of space might be smaller but proportions are larger and more mysterious. Through drawing exercises, we looked at the commonality of imagined landscapes, such as the "pleasant place".

Interspersed with the workshops were postgraduate papers, where attendees from Classics, English, Art, History, and Archaeology had the opportunity to share their own research on landscape. These resulted in productive interdisciplinary dialogues, which allowed us to consider our own work from the perspectives of our peers. The highly interactive nature of the workshop meant that everyone involved had the chance to contribute their own ideas to the discussions and exercises, and we are confident that the networks made between researchers will work towards the formation of a research community of landscape researchers in Scotland.

Chloe Bray

# Ancient Drama in the Community



In June, the Byre Youth Theatre's Adult Collaborative Performance Group put on a wonderful performance of *Hamartia*, an original short play inspired by the themes and conventions of classical Greek Tragedy. The play was performed at the Barron Theatre in St Andrews before an invited audience. A group of four young actors from the local community devised the piece themselves, under the direction of BYT's Stephen Jones. The piece was developed through discussions, talks and workshops on Greek drama and ritual led by Jon Hesk and Ralph Anderson from the School of Classics. The performance was part of a project funded by the University of St Andrews' Knowledge Exchange and Impact Fund.

Commenting on the production, Jon Hesk said: 'Huge congratulations to the performers, Alice Linton, Cameron Melville, Gillian Campbell and Mirte Timmermans – you did a superb job! It has been a pleasure working with Stephen Jones and the group and we hope to continue collaborating with the Byre Youth Theatre in the future on other projects. We have learned a lot from each other. Thanks also to Lillias Chisholm for prop, costume, make-up and set design, BYT manager Ashley Foster and Lottie Haswell-West, the student manager of the Barron Theatre.'

The Byre Youth Theatre collaboration is part of a wider 'Ancient Drama in the Community' initiative, led by Jon and Ralph among others. It includes work by our Latin colleagues Beppe Pezzini, who works on Roman comedy and Emma Buckley, who works among other things on the reception of classical literature in Renaissance drama. Members of the project are available to work with groups of many different types (including but not restricted to schools and theatre groups) on a variety of different projects, ranging from discussion with teachers about how to incorporate conclusions from recent research on ancient drama into their teaching to further work on staging and interpreting modern versions of ancient plays. Please do get in touch if you would be interested in exploring any of those possibilities.

For more information on the project, please visit: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/classics/research/impact/greek-drama/>

For more about their Theatre Arts Classes for children and young people, please see the Byre Youth theatre website: <http://www.byreyouththeatre.co.uk/>

## About Us

To find out more about the School's activities, visit our website: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/classics/>.

You are welcome to follow us on:

Twitter [https://twitter.com/StA\\_Classics](https://twitter.com/StA_Classics)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/StA.Classics/>

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## Keep in touch

We do like to hear news of what our alumni have been doing since they left St Andrews. If you happen to be in St Andrews, you can always pop into the School and see who is around.

If you have news that you want to share, you can contact us on [classics@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:classics@st-andrews.ac.uk) - or look up an old tutor on the School website and write to them.