

AUTUMN 2024

classics

The newsletter of the University of Cambridge Faculty of Classics



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200 Years of the
Classical Tripos

From the Chair of the Faculty Board



The summer of 2024 marked the two-hundredth examination of the Classical Tripos. While this year's students were perhaps too busy with their preparations to be much concerned by the anniversary, it has provided a moment to reflect on how much has changed and how much has stayed the same over the two centuries.

Chris Stray, writing in this year's newsletter, sets the Tripos in the context of its early years. (I am happy to report that there is no appetite to revive the award of the 'Wooden Wedge'.)

The one hundredth examination of the Tripos must have taken place just before the 1924 Olympics in Paris, where the games returned this summer. The 1924 Olympics, their past and their legacy, are the subject of a major exhibition at Cambridge's Fitzwilliam Museum, co-curated by Caroline Vout who introduces the show in this newsletter. It is worth remarking that those sitting and marking the Tripos in 1924 would have been completely unaware that the Linear B script on tablets discovered first in 1900 was an early form of Greek; in 2024 we celebrated the publication of the monumental two-volume *New Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, spearheaded by John Killen.

Looking forwards, we continue to innovate and to provide new opportunities for our students. Thanks to a generous donation, a group of postgraduates were able to enjoy a guided trip to Athens. More such opportunities are planned for our students in the future.

In these pages we are happy to celebrate our continuing work on Classics in all its guises. Much of what we do would not be possible without the continuing support of our alumni and friends. As the landscape for Higher Education, particularly for postgraduate funding, becomes increasingly difficult, we are proud to share with you news of our plans and successes.

Professor James Warren,
Chair of Faculty Board, Faculty of Classics

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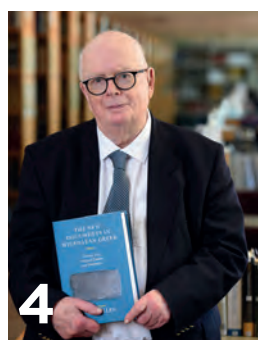
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INVESTIGATING ATHENS, PAST & PRESENT:

The Faculty's Inaugural 'Brian Leech Memorial Fund' student trip

In April 2024 a group of nine Faculty of Classics students, led by Jane Rempel, set off to Athens – funded by the 'Brian Leech Memorial Fund'. This was the first student trip since the Leech Fund was established in 2022 and it inaugurated a new tradition of staff-led student trips to Classical lands, each in connection with a particular taught undergraduate or postgraduate course in Cambridge.

This year's trip was offered to MPhil students, as part of a new 'Text and Topic' seminar focused on 'Decolonising Classical Art & Archaeology?', taught by Jane Rempel and Michael Squire. Building on our seminar discussions, the trip was themed around the intersection of the ancient city with the development of Athens as the capital of an independent Greece in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Along with visits to major museums there were themed visits and walking tours. The trip was organised in close collaboration with the British School at Athens (or BSA – a British International Research Institute supported by the British Academy). The Faculty has long-standing teaching and research ties with the School, and students were able to visit the BSA's rich archives and museum collections; part of our discussions also centred on the roles (past, present and future) of foreign research institutes in Greece,

and the ways in which private collections are curated, studied and treated under Greek law. The centrality of the Acropolis in the ancient and modern city was an ongoing topic of discussion, too: students were able to experience first-hand a variety of ways in which the Acropolis and its monuments have been curated and displayed. Visits to the Acropolis Museum and to the site itself, where we experimented with a recent augmented reality app that 'restores' the Parthenon, led to lively debates about whose Acropolis is on display, and why. In similar vein, Dimitri Pikionis's 1950s paths and carefully curated Acropolis vistas on Philopappos hill were compared and contrasted with those from the Pnyx. We also explored the role of nineteenth-century archaeological excavations in the development of the southern Ilissos area, from the restoration of the 'Kallimarmaro' and the early Olympic revivals to the impact of Classical Attic grave stelai on the funerary sculpture in the First Cemetery of Athens. Discussions were ongoing and lively, whether at archaeological sites or over cool drinks and dinner in the spring evenings. The inaugural trip was a huge success, and we are very grateful to the generosity and vision that led to the establishment of the Leech Fund in 2022: plans are already underway for the Faculty's next Leech-Fund trip in 2025...



“Thank you for ... such a fabulous time in Athens! The trip is now definitely one of my favourite memories of my time at Cambridge.”

LOTTIE CUMMINGS

Documents in Mycenaean Greek

Torsten Meißner, Professor of Classical and Comparative Philology

In 1874 Schliemann made a series of trial pits on the Acropolis of Mycenae. [...] This was the beginning of Aegean Archaeology and the first landmark in the revelation of the prehistoric civilisations of Greece. The second landmark came with the opening of Evans's excavations at Knossos in 1900, when he discovered the clay tablets inscribed in Linear Script B. [...] The third landmark came in 1952 when Michael Ventris announced that he had succeeded in deciphering the Linear B script as Greek. These are the three main stages in the unveiling of the earliest ages of Greece."

This was the verdict of Alan Wace in 1956, the former Laurence Professor of Classical Archaeology in this University. Indeed, Ventris's decipherment catapulted back our direct knowledge of the Greek language right to the end of the Aegean Bronze Age. However, even after the decipherment the road was rocky. The language of the clay tablets is written in an extremely early and archaic form of Greek, and the Linear B writing system which denotes not individual sounds but syllables ending in a vowel, renders the Greek language not particularly well. Clearly, this was no problem for the scribes of these documents but for the modern scholar this presents an immense obstacle. Only a few weeks after the decipherment, therefore, Ventris enlisted

the help of a specialist, John Chadwick who had just been appointed to a lectureship in Greek at Cambridge. Together they published *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*



Linear B tablet from Knossos (KN As 1516)



in 1956, the first milestone in Mycenaean scholarship after the original decipherment, a publication that Ventris never saw as he died tragically after the book had gone to the press. Chadwick published an updated second edition in 1973 and kept working on Mycenaean studies until his death in 1998.

Enormous progress has been made over the last half century, and scholars from all over the world have been piecing together the puzzle so much so that we now have a much better understanding of the Mycenaean world, reaching from the language itself to the intricacies of the economy. The obsolescence of *Documents* was felt ever more keenly, and in 2003 two of the leading authorities in Mycenaean studies, Chadwick's pupil John Killen, Professor of Mycenaean

Greek in this University, and Anna Morpurgo Davies, Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford, took it upon themselves to realise a completely new version of *Documents*, with individual chapters written by leading specialists in the area. Anna Morpurgo Davies sadly died in 2014 and so it fell to John Killen to see this Herculean task through to completion, supported by a dedicated team of Mycenaean scholars at Cambridge. The result of John Killen's labour, the *New Documents in Mycenaean Greek* in two volumes published by Cambridge University Press earlier this year, is a magisterial achievement, covering all aspects of Mycenaean studies, that will be the reference work for decades to come and the fitting culmination to an extraordinary scholarly career. The Faculty is deeply grateful and expresses its sincere congratulations.

The Documents 'home team': (L to R) Dr Moreed Arbabzadah, Professor John Killen, Professor Torsten Meißner, and Dr Rupert Thompson





'Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, Oct' 1800, pencil and watercolour on paper, GBR/3437/KHLR/1/5

From the archives *Leake's Cerigo Notebook*

Dr Rebecca Naylor, Faculty Archivist

Colonel William Martin Leake (1777-1860), a career soldier in the Royal Artillery during the Napoleonic Wars, was an expert topographer and an enthusiastic antiquarian. Leake first landed in the eastern Mediterranean in 1799, part of a British expeditionary force sent to Istanbul to train the Sultan's troops against their mutual French foe. Leake's commanding officer, George Koehler (1758-1800), sketched scenic vistas during this period on the shores of the Bosphorus, and later in the Holy Land (where he and his wife Anne would perish from plague in 1800). Leake continued to travel across Ottoman Greece during 1804-1810 as reconnaissance scout, spy and diplomatic liaison, accompanied by a mule train burdened with

theodolite, camp bed and reference library. Throughout, he journalled upon his encounters with contemporary customs, ancient ruins and Classical epigraphy.

Leake published these travel diaries, and an extensive Hellenic coin collection, during a long and scholarly retirement that began in 1823. His acquisitions of ancient coins, vases and gems appears to have been undertaken throughout this period, not while on active service in the Balkans. He bequeathed the right to purchase his numismatic and antiquities assemblages for £5,000, upon his wife's death, to the Fitzwilliam Museum. This proved to be an expensive and controversial undertaking when Mrs Elizabeth Leake expired in 1863. Thereby,



'Sketch of a mule baggage train, March 1800', pencil on paper, GBR/3437/KHLR/2/8



Covers of the notebook 'Cerigo, 1802, 3', parchment, GBR/3437/WMLK/4/1

the Museum achieved its first major purchase but simultaneously nearly put the lights out and scuppered building extension plans for a decade. Leake's Papers are now on permanent loan to the Museum of Classical Archaeology, while the Faculty Archives provide practical daily oversight.

So far, so well known. However, Leake's first extant notebook, entitled *Cerigo - England 1802, 3*, remains unpublished. Its modest binding, parchment cover pocked with the scars of fly-strike, speaks of the challenges of sheep rearing prior to the invention of sheep dip in 1830. Its size is perfect for stowing in the pocket of a Regency man's coat skirts. Within, fresh from victory over the French in Egypt during 1801, Leake's jottings in ink commence at Alexandria on 5th April 1802. He was on board Lord Elgin's brig, the *Mentor*, which hugged the Levantine coast travelling north-east.

Leake's notes are the abbreviated dash of the neophyte Classicist too dizzy with experiencing landscapes both novel yet oddly familiar from antiquity, to bother with recording observations in detail. He darts from Baalbek (ancient Heliopolis) to Damascus (cold and windy), to Homs (its massive Citadel as yet thirty years from demolition), Hama ('no castle' but 'giant water wheels'), Aleppo (olives, pistachios and gardens) then on to Iskenderun (plague in the plains) and rejoins the *Mentor*, to dock at Piraeus on June 25th. For a full appreciation of their itinerary one must read the memoirs of Leake's companion, Lieutenant John Squire (1780-1812). (The trio was completed by the diplomat William R. Hamilton (1777-1859), then private secretary to Lord Elgin.) Their journey overland in Greece concludes in the Argolid at Mycenae, where the Lion Gate is indicated by excitable squiggles.

Leake then parsimoniously flipped the book and started writing in pencil at the back, recording his sojourn in Cerigo (Kithyra/Κύθηρα) in September 1802. He was due to accompany the *Mentor*, carrying some of Lord Elgin's shipment of the Parthenon marbles, to Malta. Except that the brig sank just out of the port of Avlemonas, taking with it Leake's theodolite and all his papers but for this one notebook, which probably survived because it was in his pocket. Adopting a much more discursive style, he records everything that transpires around him. He observed the docking of a vessel which had been boarded by fierce Maniote pirates who had made off with 'money, clothes and of [sic] 150 barrels of Cyprus wine'. The pirates were discerning connoisseurs and left alone the larger part of the cargo which was 'ale wine' (barley wine?).

This notebook will be digitally photographed, thanks to a legacy gift from the family of Professor Joyce M. Reynolds (1918-2022), who as an intrepid epigrapher could count Leake in her professional lineage. It joins other documents on the Faculty of Classics' site within the Cambridge Digital Library. To gain maximum knowledge and enjoyment from the text, each page needs to be transcribed. The optimum way to achieve this is still via human dedication, not the fickle attentions of scanning software. If any alumni wish to volunteer to transcribe a few pages each of Leake's very legible late-eighteenth century hand, please contact the Archivist. Collectively, we can unlock this notebook's unexcavated treasures.

Cambridge Digital Library: <https://cdl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/facultyofclassics>

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Putting on a show

Caroline Vout, Professor of Classics

As I write, I am one week into the two-week installation of the Fitzwilliam Museum's summer exhibition, *Paris 1924: Sport, Art and the Body*. As the exhibition's co-curator, and author of its labels and panels, I am there all day every day, inching paintings and posters left or right, and adjusting sculptures to ensure dynamism and dialogue.

It is thrilling to watch the unpacking of crates and the realisation of over four years of hard work, and wonderful, after weeks of solitary exam-marking, to be working as part of a team. I know these objects intimately, but with every placement, additional stories reveal themselves. Putting a wooden bobsleigh into conversation with a bronze by Umberto Boccioni was always going to be spectacular, but there are more serendipitous surprises: two table-top sculptures by different artists and never before displayed together, interact with an elegance to rival Torvill and Dean.

If anyone had told me, even five years ago, that I would be curating a show on sport, ancient or modern, I would not have believed them. The original idea came from my co-curator, Head of the School of Arts and Humanities here in Cambridge, Chris Young, a scholar of Medieval German with a serious side-line in sports history; it has been my task to turn that gem into a visually exciting, challenging exhibition, and to do that, to have it speak not only of that Olympic moment but to interwar ideas of race, gender, beauty, celebrity, nationhood, and body-image. This has had me draw on my work on the body and on the history of Greek and Roman art and its reception in the modern period but also on past curating experience. Dialogue with Chris and his sports-historian colleagues has been, for me, hugely rewarding.

When Paris-born Pierre de Coubertin brought back the Olympics at the end of the nineteenth century, Classics and the classical body were at their core, and ancient Greek ideas about the moral goodness of the body-beautiful a driver of his educative vision. In 1886, Coubertin had visited the Fitzwilliam Museum, admiring both its entrance hall and the Director's horse! That Director was none other than Charles Walston who – while still the University's first Reader in Classical Archaeology – would go on to compete in the shooting in the inaugural Games in Athens. As a founder of the Museum of Classical Archaeology, Walston played a crucial role in the acquisition of the Faculty's plaster-casts; it is only right that four of them are starring in the show. There, their airbrushed forms rub up against the real athletic bodies of the official films and against



Paris 1924 Olympic Games gold-medal winner's vase, 1924. Designed by Émile Louis Bracquemond (1889–1970) and made by Octave Deni Victor Guillonnet (1872–1967) for Sèvres

The Runners, about 1924, Robert Delaunay (1885–1941). Oil on canvas. Photo: The National Museum of Serbia



radically revised visions of what the human body looked like as calls for Classicism's return to order in a war-torn world of loss and disablement competed with the works of the Futurists, Cubists and practitioners of Art-Deco, and with close-up photographs and caricatures. Nowhere was this competition more explosive than in Paris, *the modern city*. But the internationalism of the Games meant that its impact was felt worldwide. There was much that was positive, life-changing even, about these new ways of seeing, and of being in, the world in a brief period of leisure and economic prosperity, not least for women who were presented with corset-free female champions to emulate. And there was risk: eugenics, the rise of fascism.



Plaster cast of The Wrestlers, about 1800. Cast by unrecorded maker; after unrecorded Roman maker (The Uffizi, Florence, 100–1 BCE or later, marble); after unrecorded Greek maker (bronze, now lost, 300–200 BCE). Plaster, metal, paint, possibly wood. Museum of Classical Archaeology, University of Cambridge. Photo by Michael Webb, Photography and Reprographics, Yusuf Hamied Department of Chemistry, University of Cambridge



'Life on the Courts ... A Sports Star', La Vie Parisienne, vol. 59, no. 23, 4 June 1921, René Vincent (1879–1936). Colour lithography on paper, loose sheet. Private Collection

This exhibition explores all of this and more, bringing together a vast range of media (from classical antiquities and casts through football boots, swimsuits, flapper dresses and opera-cloaks to doodles by Picasso, paintings by Delaunay, Grosz and Baumeister, medals, and memorabilia) and from lenders as far afield as New Mexico and Serbia, and in six sections, 'Staging the Olympics', 'Whose Sport?', 'Faster, Higher, Stronger', 'Sport as Art' (there were medals in 1924 for painting and sculpture as well as for running and swimming), 'Sport and Sex', and 'Sport Sells'. There is a strong local story too: had Cambridge been a country, it would have come ninth in the medals table. And the show is just the start. Building on a successful Higher Education Innovation Funding grant and collaboration with the Fitzwilliam's Learning and Education team, the Museum of Classical Archaeology staff are developing Classics-specific resources to take out to new audiences in parks, sports clubs and football stadia. Art and sport need not be separate spheres. Rather, as the ancient Greeks knew very well, sport is more than exercise; it is culture.

Paris 1924: Sport, Art and the Body, curated by Caroline Vout and Chris Young, opened at the Fitzwilliam Museum on 19 July 2024 and closes 3 November. Its catalogue of the same name is out now.



Spoon and wedge (J L Roget, 1859)

200 YEARS OF THE CLASSICAL TRIPOS

Chris Stray, Department of History, Heritage and Classics, Swansea University;
Visiting Fellow Commoner, Trinity College, Cambridge, Michaelmas Term 2024

In Cambridge we take the word 'Tripos' for granted, but it needs to be explained – some have seen it as a plural, presumably because it ends in an S. The term comes from the three-legged stool on which a graduate sat while he quizzed examinees at the degree ceremony. In the 17th century he came to be called 'Mr Tripos', just as the person chairing a meeting might now be addressed as the Chair. Mr Tripos was a kind of licensed fool, who was expected to make witty comments on the state of the University, while staying on the right side of slander: this last was a hope often disappointed, as it was with the Oxford equivalent, the *Terrae Filius*. Eventually the term was used for the examination itself, the list of successful candidates, and finally the course of study leading up to the examination. The degree examination was known as the Senate House Examination after the building in which it was held was opened in 1731. When the Classical Tripos was first examined in 1824, the older examination began to be called the Mathematical Tripos. From the 1850s new Triposes were founded in natural and moral sciences, then in law, history, modern languages, and eventually, in 1917, in English. The old disputations, which in the Middle Ages had been the University's only examinations, carried out in public and in increasingly bad Latin, continued as a pre-sorting mechanism for the Mathematical Tripos, till they were stopped in 1839.

The Classical Tripos was founded in 1822 after a difficult process of negotiation between Christopher Wordsworth,

brother of the poet, who had been appointed Master of Trinity in 1820, and other college heads. The main resistance came from St John's, the leading mathematical college, which had been the largest college in Cambridge until it was overtaken in the 1780s by Trinity, whose strength lay in Classics. The tripos that emerged in 1824, which did not lead to a degree, was the product of a typical compromise: no Greek or Latin composition was demanded; entrance was voluntary, and open only to men who had gained first or second-class honours in the Mathematical Tripos. This 'mathematical bar' continued until 1857; its inverted reflection could be seen in Oxford, where until 1864 undergraduates could not proceed to other subjects without first passing an examination in Classics.

The tradition of rigorous classification in the Mathematical Tripos led to the idolising of the top scorer in the first class, the 'Senior Wrangler', but also to the facetious labelling of the lowest scorer in the honours list as the 'Wooden Spoon'. The equivalent position in the Classical Tripos was the 'Wooden Wedge', named after Hensleigh Wedgwood, who came last in the classical list in 1824, and ironically, went on to become a philologist of some distinction. The illustration shows the Spoon and the Wedge, drawn by John Louis Roget, son of the author of Roget's *Thesaurus*.

Minor changes to the Tripos were made in the 1850s, but substantial change had to wait until the death in 1866 of



Agneta Ramsay in Punch, 1887

Wordsworth's successor as Master of Trinity and a dominant figure in the University, the mathematician William Whewell. Papers in history and philosophy were introduced, but the course was overwhelmingly linguistic and literary, and composition played a large part. Not till the end of the 1870s did the Tripos take on its modern shape, when it was divided into two parts. Part I, which was in itself sufficient to gain a degree, consisted of the papers in language and literature, while Part II contained five sections: A (language and literature), B (philosophy), C (history), D (archaeology) and E (comparative philology). Significantly, until 1895 Section A was compulsory, all the others being optional – yet another compromise between reformers and conservatives. Recruitment to Part II was poor until it was made compulsory for the award of a degree in 1918.

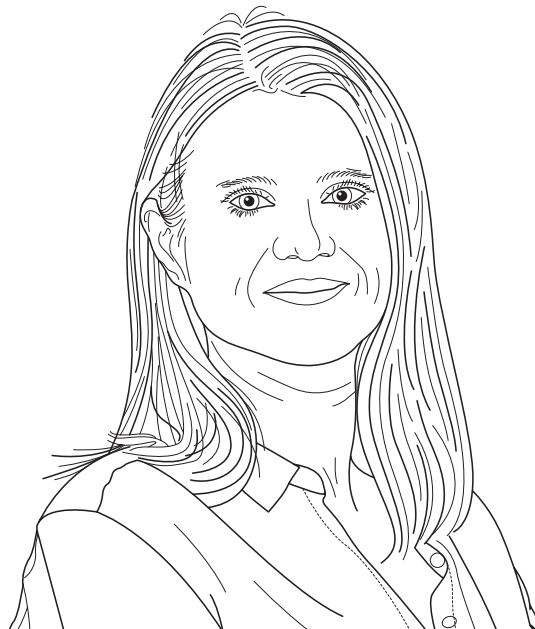
By this time women had been admitted to the examination, though members of Girton (1869) and Newnham (1871) were at first only informally examined by sympathetic liberal dons. Their results were published separately from the mens', but it was easy enough to see, for example, that in 1887 Agneta Ramsay of Girton, the only person in the first section of the first class, was 'above the Senior Classic' – an achievement celebrated by *Punch*.

In the 20th century there was little formal change in the Tripos, until reform was considered in the 1980s. The expertise in Roman law of John Crook, Professor of Ancient History 1979-84, led to the short life of Group F. Longer-lasting and more radical has been Group X (1983-), a self-consciously interdisciplinary group.



James Warren meets Gavannandra Hodge

James Warren asked Gavannandra Hodge, author and journalist, about Classics, her memories of Cambridge, and how her time in the Faculty has informed her current work.





Gavannandra studied Classics at Newnham College, 1994–7. She worked as a journalist for over two decades, at publications including the *Daily Mail*, the *Independent on Sunday*, the *Evening Standard* and *Tatler*. She published her memoir, *The Consequences of Love*, in 2020 and is developing a screen adaptation of the book as well as writing celebrity interviews, mainly for *The Times* newspaper, and pursuing a part-time PhD at the Warburg Institute in London.

JW: How did you come to study Classics at university?

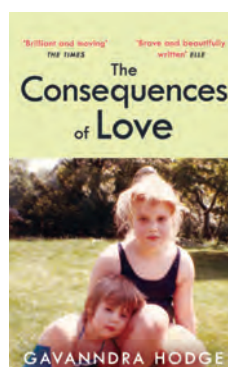
GH: Latin was my favourite subject at school, partly because I had a fantastic teacher; she was strict and – precise and made the language magical. It was this combination of precision and magic that made Latin feel like a refuge. I had a complicated and chaotic home life: my father was a drug dealer, my mother an alcoholic and my little sister died suddenly when I was 14. The only time I felt really safe, in the midst of all this mayhem, was when I was translating my GCSE set text, *Aeneid* Book II. There was nothing else I wanted to study at university.

JW: Do you think your interest in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds has informed your career after university?

GH: My education certainly informed my career. I was at Newnham and Mary Beard was my Director of Studies. In my second year I was the only member of my cohort to take history. So, once a week, I had one-on-one supervisions with brilliant Mary. I cannot imagine a more nurturing and rigorous training in thinking on your feet and defending your position (as well as Athenian democracy, the end of the Roman Republic etc). It meant that when I started in newspapers, aged 21, I did not find features meetings, or much else, daunting.

JW: As a journalist you have interviewed a wide range of people in the public eye. Who would you like to interview from the world of Classics and what would you want to ask?

GH: Anne Carson. Her work is extraordinary. I love her edition of Sappho, *If Not, Winter*; how it makes a virtue of fragmentation. She deconstructs Classical texts and thereby interweaves them into modern life, always leaving the stitching in view. Another of my favourites by Carson is *Nox*, a book about the death of her brother and translating of Catullus 101, the text presented as a fold-out paper accordion. I would ask her what she reads first thing in the morning and last thing at night. What music she listens to. What images she looks at. I want to know what she puts into her mind in order to create the things she creates. But, if we are about travelling back in time, rather than just to Michigan, one of the priestesses of the Eleusianian mysteries. I would love to know what they were up to. And then I could tell Jane Harrison on my way back.



JW: Your memoir, *The Consequences of Love*, was published in 2020 to critical praise. How does writing about yourself and your family differ from writing about other people?

GH: When I write about other people I always keep my reader in mind. My task is to imagine what readers want to know about Andrew Scott, Sienna Miller or

Juliette Binoche, for example – all of whom I have spoken to this year – and to faithfully relay what it is like to spend an hour in their company. When I wrote about myself, at first at least, I had to pretend that no-one would ever read my words. The memories of my childhood, which I had suppressed for so long, were painful to excavate and felt very private. However, the more I worked on the words, the more I was able to separate them from myself, to make meaning of them and imagine them out in the world.

JW: You've recently returned to academia to begin work for a PhD on Tudor Neo-Latin. What prompted this new project and what in your research has surprised you so far?

GH: I always had a yearning to re-engage with academia. But it was not until I left my position as acting editor at *Tatler* magazine in 2019 and went freelance that I had the space to do this. I did a part time Masters in Cultural, Intellectual and Visual History at the Warburg Institute, which takes a multi-disciplinary approach to the movement of Classical ideas through time, with particular emphasis on the Early Modern period. The whole course was fascinating, but I particularly enjoyed working on Neo-Latin texts and was surprised by how much Neo-Latin remains untranslated. Part of my PhD involves translating a treatise on emblems and symbol theory by the poet, lawyer and academic, Abraham Fraunce, who himself spent over a decade in Cambridge, at St John's. It's slow going; but reading a text like this feels like shining a light into the dark, to discover something glittering there, that has been hidden for hundreds of years. It's thrilling and challenging – although the challenge does sometimes outweigh the thrill!

Exploring Greeks **IN THE SOUTHERN AND WESTERN BLACK SEA**

Dr Jane Rempel, Assistant Professor of Classics

The Black Sea has a longstanding connection to the Greek world, both ancient and modern. From the later 7th century BCE, Greek settlements were established on every coast, many with Miletus as the metropolis.

By the Classical period, these cities were entangled with not only with the Athenians and Persians, but also with the Scythian and Odrysian Thracian kingdoms; in the Hellenistic period, the Macedonians, the Pontic kingdom and the Romans enter the picture. While in most cases the ancient cities have been covered by millennia of settlement, evidence of the prosperity of the later Classical and early Hellenistic periods is still visible in stone fortifications, monumental chamber tombs and burial mounds as well as the rich material culture in museums.

Istanbul is an excellent starting point for a journey in either direction along the Black Sea coast, by flight, coach or car. Home to ancient Greek settlements on either side of the Bosphorus, the city is rich with archaeology and history from the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman periods.



Romania

1 Histria

In the delta of the Danube, you'll find the Archaeological Preserve of Histria. First established as a Greek settlement c. 630 BCE it became a Roman and late Roman settlement, thriving until the 7th century CE. The large site is well worth a visit; the well-preserved fortifications and structures of the late Roman town dominate the acropolis, but the sacred area preserves the remains of several Archaic temples and the site museum is fantastic.

2 Constanța

This beautiful city is the Romanian regional capital where you can find Greek and Roman archaeology, Ottoman mosques and modern boulevards and squares. Originally established as Tomis by the ancient Greeks, it was also home to Ovid during his period of exile. The National Museum of History and Archaeology provides an excellent overview of the ancient (and more recent) past of the region.

Bulgaria

3 Varna

Originally established as the ancient Greek settlement of Odessos, in the city centre there is an excellent archaeological museum, with artifacts from ancient Greek and Roman settlements as well as the amazing Chalcolithic Varna cemetery, and the remains of a large Roman bath complex from the second century CE.

The 'Bulgarian Riviera' may be known for its resorts but the towns of Sozopol and Nessebar are historical gems that feel a world apart. Both have charming old towns situated on promontories, with well-preserved Ottoman architecture and cobbled streets. In the summer it is possible to take a boat directly between the two.

4 Nessebar

The entrance to the UNESCO-listed old town is marked by well-preserved Classical-Hellenistic fortifications with round towers, which guarded the ancient Greek settlement of Mesembria. Inside are

the impressive remains of Roman and Byzantine basilicas and the excellent archaeological museum contains an array of artifacts from the Classical and Hellenistic period burials from Mesembria.

5 Sozopol

The old town covers the ancient Greek settlement of Apollonia Pontika. Excavations on St Kirik island have documented the earliest Greek occupation while near the late antique fortification walls the remains of Greek and later period occupation are presented to the public. The archaeological museum and the Classical period necropolis along the Harmanite beach to the south of town are also worth a visit. Dining in one of the restaurants built into the sea cliffs is also recommended!



Turkey

6 Sinop

Home of the ancient Greek settlement of Sinope, visitors to the city are greeted by the impressive Sinop Kale, which includes the best-preserved Hellenistic fortifications in the region with Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman additions. Visit the archaeological museum, which houses an interesting collection of stelai and the remains of a Hellenistic temple in the garden, and enjoy some Black Sea fish at any of the restaurants near the harbour. By car, visit the Paphlagonian rock-cut tombs near Boyabat, in the foothills of the Pontic mountains.

7 Samsun

Samsun today is a major modern shipping port; in antiquity it was the Greek settlement of Amisos. The mounded burials on Amisos tepesi – accessible from the Amazon theme park at the coast – are worth a visit, with their Hellenistic chamber tombs and impressive views. The archaeological museum displays the so called 'Amisos treasure' as well as some unusual anthropomorphic terracotta sarcophagi. From Samsun, the coastal town of Bafra is a short drive away where you'll find the site of İkiztepe, with its reconstructed Hellenistic chamber tomb. The Paphlagonian rock-cut tombs and fortifications at Asarkale are nearby, a pretty drive up the ancient Halys (modern Kızılırmak) river valley.

8 Amasya

Well worth a drive or coach trip from Samsun into the Pontic mountains is the town of Amasya, ancient capital and origin of the Pontic kingdom as well as Strabo's birthplace. With an incredible setting along the banks of the Yeşilirmak (ancient Iris) river, the old town is characterised by traditional Ottoman wooden architecture. Among the cliffs of above, you can tour the rock-cut tombs of the Pontic rulers and the Harşena fortress, with its well-preserved Ottoman remains.

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