

Climax of 40 years' work on classical myths



Greek vase illustrating the death of the Greek hero Aias (Ajax). Copyright: The Antikenmuseum, Basel

A project to record and analyse all known images of mythology from the Greek, Roman and Etruscan civilisations has reached its climax, with the launch of the last two volumes of the 20-volume series.

Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC) began in the 1970s. The new volumes picture many new and previously unpublished representations of myths, and bring up to date the entire 40-year project, which has been described as the boldest venture in classical scholarship in the past 70 years.

Richard Buxton, Professor of Greek Language and Literature at Bristol, is head of the non-profit-making LIMC Foundation, whose major ongoing

projects include digitising the whole LIMC archive, making it available online – and free to the user.

‘This can’t be done overnight,’ explains Professor Buxton, ‘because before putting the images on the web we need to gain the explicit permission of the hundreds of museums and private collections which house the objects illustrated.’

In spite of this, and in spite of the increasingly challenging task of raising funds, Professor Buxton estimates that the digitisation will be completed within three years – proof, if proof were needed, that classical myths are alive and well, and as meaningful and vibrant now as at any time in their rich and complex history.

Welcome

Welcome to Sphinx 2010, taking in a year of activity on all classical fronts from Bronze Age archaeology to medieval Latin poetry.

As always, Bristol Classics travelled the world, presenting papers in Japan and Australia, Europe and North America, with Dr Pantelis Michelakis taking the ‘Ancient World in Silent Film’ project to Hollywood. The future is in good hands with three postdoctoral research fellows. At home, the Alumni Foundation helped our research postgraduates to hold a national conference. Our undergraduates organised a lecture series, published a magazine, and are holding their own conference. Dr Genevieve Liveley won a University Teaching Award. Dr Bella Sandwell and Dr Shelley Hales are organising a drama competition for local schools.

Finally, if anyone tells you that Rome fell in AD 410, they are mistaken. The barbarians left after three days, and Greek and Roman culture and civilisation are still classic: Latin *classicus*, ‘first class’.

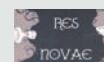
Professor Gillian Clark

Head of Subject, Classics and Ancient History

Inside



Virtual Pompeii



Student society news

Blackwell Lectures 2010

Professor Erika Fischer-Lichte from the Free University of Berlin will give the fourth series of Blackwell Lectures in May 2010, on the theme 'Dionysus Resurrected: Performances of Euripides' Bacchae in a Globalizing World'. She asks how a tragic play which, until the 1960s, had almost no performance history has since spread all over the globe with remarkable resonance. Lectures are on 11, 12, 18 and 19 May 2010 and all alumni are welcome. Find out more at www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/birtha/events.

£500,000 research grant awarded

Professor Neville Morley has been awarded a grant of £500,000 from the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a four-year project on 'Thucydides: Reception, Reinterpretation and Influence'.

Together with a postdoctoral research assistant, Dr Christine Lee, who studied political theory and international relations at Duke University, he will be investigating the way that readings of Thucydides have influenced the development of historical and political theory since the 17th century, from Thomas Hobbes to the American neocons. The project will produce a *Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides* and a series of other publications, including a book by Professor Morley on *Thucydides and the Idea of History*. It will also involve research workshops and a conference in 2013, with a public lecture and debate on 'Thucydides Today' (at which all alumni will be very welcome; watch for information in future newsletters).



Virtual Pompeian court now open for visitors

Dr Shelley Hales writes: 'Sphinx 2009 reported on a project to build a virtual model of the Pompeian Court, a replica Pompeian house built in the Crystal Palace in 1854. The finished model was launched last December in the online 3D virtual world Second Life. It has been decorated using 19th-century drawings of Pompeian wall paintings and archive photographs of the Crystal Palace and is inhabited by Victorian and Pompeian avatars.

'Since its launch, the site has attracted hundreds of visitors and is shortly to star on Second Life TV. We will be using the model in class to explore the experience of accessing antiquity through reconstructions, using our special learning activities to teach school children about Pompeii and showcasing the model at events in South London. Come and visit – all you need is a free Second Life account – my avatar Gwendoline would be very pleased to see you!'

The model was created by Dr Hales and Dr Nic Earle in the University's Education Support Unit. To find out more about the project, please visit: <http://sydenhamcrystalpalace.wordpress.com>.

Classics on the couch

Dr Ellen O'Gorman reports: 'Since the start of the 20th century, it has been impossible to think of Oedipus without thinking of Freud, the father of psychoanalysis; indeed, the inter-relations of psychoanalysis and classical myth go much deeper than this. This was the inspiration for the Fifth Bristol Colloquium on Classical Myth, held in September 2009. Among the speakers were academics and health practitioners, who from very different perspectives discussed a wide range of myths, from Narcissus and Pandora to Diogenes the Cynic and the characters of Roman satire. The conference reception was held in Freud's last house, where delegates could view Freud's collection of antiquities and visit his consultation room.'

A year in the life of a classicist

In 2009, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Eric Thomas (Hon LLD 2004), and his family donated £100,000 to the University's Centenary Campaign to fund a Centenary Fellow of the Institute of Greece, Rome and the Classical Tradition. Fellow Emily Pillinger reports on her year so far.



I was delighted when I found out that, with the help of the Vice-Chancellor's Centenary Fellowship, I would be able to spend 2009/10 working at the Institute of Greece, Rome and the Classical Tradition at Bristol. After several years of teaching and studying in the United States (two years teaching in Vermont, then five years studying for my PhD in Princeton) I was eager to return to the UK to rejoin the academic community here. Being given the opportunity to do this at Bristol was particularly exciting, because my work has been inspired by much of the scholarship that has taken place at Bristol over the past 20 years.

There are only a few postdoctoral positions available to academics

in the humanities, but they offer invaluable help at an early stage in an academic's career. I am taking advantage of this year by working on several different projects. First, I am polishing my PhD dissertation so that it can be published as a book: the project is called 'Great Expectations: The Poetry and Poetics of Inspired Prophecy', and it discusses the role played in classical literature by prophets such as Cassandra, the Pythia at Delphi and the Roman Sibyl at Cumae. I have also just completed an article on Berlioz's opera *Les Troyens* and how it responds to Virgil's *Aeneid*. I am now beginning work on my next research topic, which is a more historical project that looks at the way readers and writers interacted through letters and inscribed monuments in imperial Rome.

I have already developed a keen appreciation for the vibrant Classics community currently at Bristol. The research seminars, conferences and events such as Stephen D'Evelyn's evening on Hildegard of Bingen have made for a warm and endless learning experience.

Meanwhile, I very much enjoyed teaching Latin A1. The class had a rich mixture of students: first- to third-year undergraduates from Classics and from Theology and Religious Studies, MA and PhD students and an Erasmus exchange student from Germany. This made for a wonderful group that I'll miss as I move into the completely research-focused second half of my fellowship.

In brief

THANKS TO ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

The Bristol Institute of Greece, Rome and the Classical Tradition continues to thrive thanks to the support of alumni and friends.

An illustrious donor, who recently pledged a gift of £250,000, will help achieve the goal to raise £2 million for the Institute, as part of the University's Centenary Campaign. Philanthropic gifts are essential to the Institute's work, ensuring that Bristol appoints the finest fellows, whose work will increase our understanding of the classical world and allow us to learn more about the relationship between past and present.

Since the Institute was founded in 2000, it has become recognised for the study of antiquity, with distinguished scholars visiting Bristol to share ideas with colleagues and students.

EVENING OF POETRY AND SONG

The Institute of Greece, Rome and the Classical Tradition held its fourth annual Donors' Event in November 2009: 'Hildegard of Bingen: Music, Poetry and Medieval Monastic Tradition'.

Hildegard of Bingen was one of the most significant figures of the 12th-century Renaissance. The event celebrated her work through talks designed for a general audience followed by a performance of some of Hildegard's songs by the University's Schola Cantorum, accompanied by images from her manuscripts. It was also an opportunity for the Institute to showcase its work to a wider public, in particular to those individuals who support its work.

100% recycled

This document is printed on 100% recycled paper

High society

Georgia Lord (Ancient History 2009-) reports on a busy year for Agora, the classics and ancient history student society.

The autumn term of 2009 saw the election of Charles Scherer (Classics 2009-) as the new President of Agora, and myself as Vice-President. Continuing last year's success, the society has gained many new members over recent months as well as organising socials and lectures and creating a new magazine, *Res Novae*. The first issue contains articles written by current Classics and Ancient History students on classical news and the importance of studying Classics, as well as interviews with members of the Department's academic staff.

The highly popular lecture series included talks on a number of topics such as 'An introduction to indo-European linguistics' by Jonathan Katz from Westminster School on how Celtic, Gothic and Old Persian originated from the Sanskrit language. The lecture 'Pagans, Christians and lions' was given by the department's own Head of Subject, Professor Gillian



Clark, and addressed an issue with striking contemporary relevance: should those who want to be martyrs be classified as such?

While traditions such as the May Ball will continue this year, other events are also planned, including a trip to see the new film *Clash of the Titans* and the setting up of a new Classical Book Club. In association with the University's Fine Film Society, screenings of *Gladiator*, *Helen of Troy* and *Jason and the Argonauts* took place in the spring. Also on the cards is a much-anticipated trip to Rome in the summer of 2011 to see the Colosseum, Roman Forum and other sites of historic interest.

21st-century classics

The Bristol Gallery is planning an exhibition, *Age of Bronze*, based on the graphic novel series by Eisner Award-winning cartoonist Eric Shanower, which presents the complete story of the war at Troy, freshly retold for the 21st century. The exhibition is part of the 'Imagines II: Seduction and Power' conference, which will be held in Bristol from 22-25 September 2010. For details, please visit www.imagines-project.org.

