



Perspectives on Classics

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1. Introduction

Cressida Ryan, co-editor, CUCD Bulletin

Over the last year or so, there have been many opinion pieces discussing attitudes towards the relationship between Classics and the modern world, and the future direction of the academic field. These have given individual perspectives, but have necessarily not been able to represent the diversity of opinions and approaches within Classics, or demonstrate both the contrasting views and interlinking of different priorities within these views. Last year, the CUCD Bulletin carried a three-part article on Latin teaching, provoked in the immediate instance by discussions in both the US and the UK about the place of languages in Classics education, but also aiming to engage in a process of demonstrating the need to listen to multiple



perspectives in our discipline.¹ Having a mutual enthusiasm for the ancient world does not need to require agreement over how to engage with it.

This special 'edition' of the CUCD Bulletin takes that process further. It does not claim to be comprehensive in covering all key angles of Classics; it could not be.² What it does do is bring together a range of contributors, including students and teachers at various stages of their careers in both schools and universities, alongside museums. Each contribution takes a particular angle, including Classics and class, gender, and race. The place of languages in Classics continues to matter; it is a constant theme throughout contributions, from the student voices to Greg Woolf, former director of the Institute of Classical Studies. The University of Lincoln has, over the past few years, introduced a new Classics degree. Graham Barrett explains how this came about, and the potential for Classics to flourish outside of traditional / Russell Group institutions. Michael Wuk, Lincoln's Senior Classical Languages Tutor, discusses language pedagogy in the light of various demographical variations, including class; these issues are picked up by Will Gray, who highlights how the preoccupation with language learning in Classics comes across as unnecessary intellectual gatekeeping. The London Classicists of Colour focus on decolonisation, a theme also picked up by Hannah Parker and Chloë Choong, two recent Classics graduates. Working Class Classicists focus, naturally, on class; this cannot but include considering the place of Classics in current educational politics, and Arlene Holmes-Henderson gives a brief survey of the political landscape.³ Class and politics consistently intertwine to precipitate pedagogical innovation. Nomenclature matters, as Greg Woolf makes abundantly clear in his 'Letter from

¹ <https://cucd.blogs.sas.ac.uk/files/2021/08/The-Place-of-Languages-in-Classical-Study-and-Research.pdf>

² Perhaps the most obvious missing focus is disability. This is not deliberate. The Bulletin has carried several recent articles on disability and Classics, and will continue to do so, working in collaboration with the EDI committee and blog as appropriate. I have not siloed off disability, but for various operational reasons was unable to include a distinct piece on it in this collection.

³ A much more extensive discussion of this by Steve Hunt will be coming out in the Bulletin shortly.



America', a topic again picked up by Hannah and Chloë. When both senior figures in the discipline and those in whose hands the future of the discipline lies agree on the issues (even while giving different perspectives), we have a powerful steer, as a community, on what we could be working on, together, to help the subject area to which we are all committed flourish. Writing on behalf of *Trans in Classics*, Ky Merkley takes this proactive and future-orientated approach further, with a thoughtful essay that is both reflective and practical, giving a powerful guide to why and how this angle should and could be factored in to Classical teaching and research. Helen McVeigh discusses how the pandemic has increased opportunities for engaging with Classics in making online teaching more mainstream and accessible. Accessibility is taken up further by Victoria Donnellan and Anna Reeve's piece on the Classical Collections Network.⁴ Situating this in the context of the REF, we again return to the relationship between education and politics.

Some contributions make well-rehearsed arguments to which individual readers may feel they have well-rehearsed answers. What is important, however, is that these topics still matter to people, and new generations are tackling them from new perspectives, sometimes arriving at similar conclusions, but sometimes bringing new vitality and imaginative responses. There is room for debate and disunity within Classics as well as a common commitment to its future. This series of essays demonstrates the ongoing appetite for studying Classics, balancing the excitement of being dedicated to subject material we find stimulating with an awareness that there is always room for change. A more comprehensive map charting the points of correspondence and disagreement between contributions would be gloriously messy; we bring our diverse selves to our academic study, and Classics need never be homogenous.

⁴ <https://connectingclassicalcollections.wordpress.com/>



The contributions are all short; I specifically requested this, in order to balance as many voices as I could. Each, however, also points towards practical discussions on what we should study and research, how pedagogy might develop, what recruitment might need to look like, how public engagement might need to change. I look forward to the discussions I hope will ensue as a consequence, and am open to anyone who wants to take these up in the Bulletin.

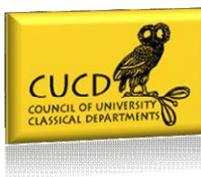
At the start of 2022, TAPA opened the latest edition with a series of essays reflecting on the nature and future of Classics as a discipline.⁵ The contributions cover very similar topics. In this time of great global change, it seems hardly coincidental that I was already planning this edition of the CUCD Bulletin when the TAPA edition came out. How do we ensure that our education system is fit for purpose, and what is the role of Classics in this? With limited jobs and the problems of precarity, what role does education in Classics play in people's working lifecycle? How have the constraints and changes in practice precipitated by the pandemic affected Classics, and how might these be positively harnessed? These are important questions, and I hope the essays both there and here encourage people to address them.

2. Classical Studies at the University of Lincoln

Graham Barrett, Senior Lecturer in Late Antiquity, Joint Programme Leader for Classical Studies

Classical Studies at the University of Lincoln began in 2018, when Jamie Wood, Lacey Wallace, and I designed a new undergraduate degree programme to sit within the School of History and Heritage (now the School of Humanities and Heritage) in the College of Arts. At a time when the discipline of Classics faces closures of and cuts to even long-established departments, we believed that there was an opening in

⁵ <https://muse.jhu.edu/issue/47711>



the sector for a new course for two reasons. Outside of the Russell Group universities, and particularly amongst the post-1992 institutions, Classics or Classical Studies and Ancient History have a limited presence, yet there are many students from non-traditional university backgrounds with a real interest in Antiquity who would pursue it in a context which they felt was accessible to them. Lincoln (Lindum) is also a natural home for Roman history, since its foundation as a legionary fortress in the mid-first century AD and subsequent development are reflected in surviving remains, including the north gate (Newport Arch) and nearby reservoir, the forum and adjacent basilica wall, one of the postern gates, and substantial sections of the wall circuits for both the upper and lower *colonia*. The county museum (The Collection) is built over a late Roman townhouse, and the Brayford Pool, where the University of Lincoln has been based since 1996, served as the Roman port. A walk from the train station to the campus passes the eleventh-century church of Saint Mary-le-Wigford, where a unique Anglo-Saxon reuse of a Roman tombstone as a dedication stone is mounted on the west tower (*RIB* 262). We admitted our first cohort of eight students in 2018, and we are expecting thirty students to join us in 2022; this growth has enabled us to retain a specialist subject librarian, Hope Williard, to take on two permanent members of staff, Giustina Monti and Michael Wuk, as well as to make two fixed-term appointments, of Cosetta Cadau and Thea Lawrence, all of whom share credit for the success of our programme.

From the beginning, Classical Studies at Lincoln was intended as a standalone degree, offering a full complement of modules in the history, art, archaeology, literature, and languages of the Greek and Roman worlds over three years of study. At the same time, acknowledging staffing limitations, it was also designed to fit within a larger and more diverse department, turning a weakness into a strength by incorporating modules on the reception and transformation of the Classics in the medieval, early modern, and modern periods delivered by colleagues in History, Art



History, English, Philosophy, and Conservation. By requiring that students take a minimum of three-quarters of their credits per year in core Classical Studies modules, the coherence and integrity of the programme are preserved while allowing for a wide range of pathways through it, and in effect gaining additional staffing from other subject areas. The demographic profile of our students is such that, while they share a keen interest in Antiquity, the majority have not had the opportunity to take Classical Civilisation at A-Level, or to study Greek or Latin language at school. We therefore pitch the first year as not a 'foundation year' but a common year of core introductory modules, surveys of Greek and Roman history, Classical art, archaeology, and literature, and ancient mythology which provide a solid basis, shared across each cohort, for more specialised studies at upper years. When creating the degree, we also felt strongly that languages should be tackled head-on and embedded in the first year: every student takes one semester of Latin *ab initio*, with the choice of opting out thereafter or of continuing on and adding Greek from second year. There is no question that this presents the major staffing challenge of the programme, and is the subject of frequent enquiries by anxious prospective students, but even one semester of Latin study can be an invaluable primer for understanding the patterns of thought and expression of the inhabitants of the ancient world, or unlock an inner love of language.

The greatest asset of Classical Studies at Lincoln has been its youth, which has given us a free hand to make changes in consultation with our small but growing community of students and in dialogue with our external examiners. One innovation has been to maximise the opportunity for taking language options by decoupling them from the normal year progression: students can continue with or pick up elementary, intermediate, or advanced Latin or Greek at any point in their studies, depending on when their interest (or self-confidence) develops. Another important dynamic has been to lean into directions of positive engagement: we created a first-year Ancient Mythology survey and a third-year Greek and Roman drama seminar



specifically in response to students expressing that these topics were what first drew them to Antiquity, while we have doubled down on our 'Classics in Context' modules delivered in the style of Oxbridge tutorials because students have indicated a desire for more of this mode of learning. Being ecumenical about what can constitute a Classical Studies module has been a necessity of circumstance, but also a real source of enrichment, as students have gained perspective from Queering the Past, a team-taught module run by colleagues in History and Film and Media, or transferable experience from Curatorial Practice, an introduction to exhibition design offered by colleagues in Art History and Heritage. As our students come to us from different backgrounds, and often do not arrive with definite plans for their careers, it is essential that they be able to chart their own course through the programme and make it their degree, and to this end we have also developed a range of 'directed study' modules at second and third year which serve as a platform for independent or work study. For a marker of the success of our collective efforts since 2018, I would point not to NSS or REF scores or league tables but to the Classics Society created and run entirely by our students on their own initiative; and as a sign of our future trajectory, I would cite the launch this autumn of a Lincoln branch of the Classical Association, to provide a forum for consolidating the presence of Classics in Lincolnshire.

3. Teaching Latin *ab initio* at Lincoln: Reflections from a Post-1992 University

Michael Wuk, Senior Classical Languages Tutor

Le latin est mort, vive le latin!

For so long the bedrock of Classical education in the United Kingdom, the teaching of Latin has undergone a change over the past decades. The language is no longer predominantly the domain of privately-educated gentlemen, who as children were

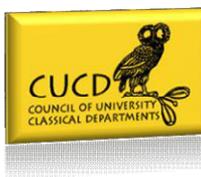


made to recite aloud declensions and stifle groans in response to Churchill's (ironically not Mensa-worthy) 'witticism' about the need to address tables directly. To be sure, private schools remain the main institutions in the United Kingdom with the scope and resources to offer pre-university education in ancient languages consistently. However, new initiatives such as Classics for All and the Latin Excellence Programme are seeking to change this state of affairs by introducing Latin classes into a broader range of schools. These initiatives are only enhanced by scholarly reflections on aspects of the teaching and learning process,⁶ and also university-led outreach programmes, many of which make excellent use of the ever-popular, ever-adorable *Minimus* course. Although there is still a way to go, these initiatives have borne fruit. I myself—a second-generation immigrant whose state school education offered no formal training in ancient languages—have been teaching Classics, including Latin and Ancient Greek, at universities since 2017.

An important means of expanding cultural and socioeconomic inclusion in Classics is the offering of Latin *ab initio* to undergraduate students. The launch in 2018 of a new Classical Studies programme at the University of Lincoln—a post-1992 university—provided the perfect opportunity to implement such a course, which at Lincoln begins with a mandatory introductory module before progressing onto intermediate- and advanced-level options.⁷ The expectation of no prior knowledge and the welcoming environment which are hallmarks of good beginners' courses are irreplaceable assets, especially for Latin, which is at its best when brought to life by the contextual knowledge and passion imparted by enthusiastic teachers in response to student inquisitiveness. Having experienced this dynamic from a student's

⁶ For instance: A. Buglass, R. Easterbrook, and C. Ryan, 'The Place of Languages in Classical Study and Research: Discussion', and S. Hunt and A. Holmes-Henderson, 'A Level Classics Poverty', both in *CUCD Bulletin*, 50 (2021).

⁷ On the establishment of the Classical Studies programme at Lincoln, see Graham Barrett in this issue.



perspective, as an instructor it has been heartening to see how positively participants have engaged with Lincoln's *ab initio* Latin course.

Students typically come to us with little to no experience of learning any foreign language, let alone an ancient one. While some have been challenged by Latin's intricacies, and there are always those who simply do not enjoy the learning process, many individuals were surprised at how stimulating they found classes to be. For instance, one student started Elementary Latin with the prognosis that Latin was merely 'long-dead guys talking about themselves'. To some extent, the student may be excused as we had just discussed Cicero's *Pro Archia*. Nevertheless, the same individual continued on to the intermediate course and is now considering teaching the language themselves in the future. Following a tangential conversation about the term *manus* and a character of the same name in the *Dark Souls* video-game series, another student was inspired to undertake an independent research project about the impact of Latin on popular culture. Like many other arts subjects, the study of ancient languages has been unfairly accused of modern irrelevance. And yet, our Latin classes have pushed our students, many of whom were state-educated and had no chance to study any aspect of Classics before coming to Lincoln, to grow in imagination, confidence, and intellectual independence. Some individuals have even come to appreciate the learning process for the sake of knowledge and enjoyment, rather than a necessary means to a desired end, whether high marks, employment, or simply bragging rights.

Of course, offering Latin to students with minimal exposure to formal language instruction comes with its own challenges, but these have inspired significant developments in our practice. In particular, our classes are no longer reliant on the rote learning which characterises so much of traditional Latin education, nor on the major textbooks which inherently cannot be 'one-size-fits-all'

and so routinely move at an overly swift pace.⁸ Instead, most sessions are structured around worksheets, which can be rearranged as required, can function as revision supplements, and also prioritise grammatical and syntactical aspects to which textbooks often devote too little space (*e.g.* euphonic elision and contraction). Thus far, the strategy has been successful, with students reporting their preference for worksheets over the more standard ‘book-and-board’ style of teaching.

There is also the perennial issue of retaining interest, as noted in a paper by Stephen Kershner, who encourages teachers to set pupils Taylor Swift lyrics for translation and analysis.⁹ Despite the enthusiastic support offered in academic publications and even the *Guardian*,¹⁰ I cannot endorse her music specifically for this purpose (on the off-chance you are reading, Taylor: sorry!). However, our students do relish the chance to translate song and film titles from Latin into English, and the general strategy certainly has become popular amongst language tutors in recent years. A further means of enhancing engagement is through decolonisation of the curriculum, calls for which have rightly become much more numerous over the past decades. Decolonisation is vitally important in all fields, but perhaps none more so than Latin and Classics, where, as highlighted by the student comment mentioned earlier, there is a tendency to focus on the works of those whom several international colleagues have described as ‘male, stale, and pale’ authors. Our efforts to broaden representation in Latin teaching materials have been widely appreciated by class participants, who, owing to Lincoln’s typical recruitment pool, range in background and self-identification. For this reason, future modules will be structured around

⁸ As noted in M. E. Lloyd and J. Robson, ‘A Survey of Beginner’s Language Teaching in UK Classics Departments: Latin’, *CUCD Bulletin*, 47 (2018).

⁹ S. Kershner, ‘What Can Taylor Swift Do for Your Latin Prose Composition Students? Using Popular Music to Teach Latin Poetry Analysis Skills’, *Teaching Classical Languages*, 10.2 (2019), 48-70.

¹⁰ S. Hunt, *Teaching Latin: Contexts, Theories, Practices* (2022), esp. 149; <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/apr/07/teachers-encouraged-to-use-taylor-swift-lyrics-to-make-latin-accessible>.



alternative sources such as the female-authored *Passion of Perpetua* (third-century AD) to a much greater extent.¹¹

Naturally, the pandemic made the development of new teaching techniques necessary. Besides the use of the usual digital suites, and perhaps some less well-known tools (e.g. Talis Elevate),¹² we have trialled competitive learning in several lessons. Recent pedagogical scholarship has demonstrated how game-based activities can increase student engagement and comprehension.¹³ Often maligned as a teaching strategy, competitive learning is well-suited to Latin instruction, whereby students are encouraged to complete tasks and offer answers in return for ‘points’, accrued over the semester’s duration. Coming out of two lockdowns, our students were keen to interact but nervous about doing so, and more prone to mental exhaustion from long periods of in-person education. Our trial of this strategy exceeded expectations: student engagement and peer-to-peer interaction rose dramatically, and anonymous feedback suggested that class participants want further competitive elements in future sessions.¹⁴

The point of this reflection has not been to pat ourselves on the back for the successes of Latin at Lincoln, so much as highlight that these successes are instructive for the future of Classics education. What has astounded us is the popularity of the course, which attracts many students from other programmes, such as History and Politics. Moreover, in the current academic year, 100% of our first-year Classics students continued past the mandatory first stage onto subsequent optional Latin modules, rather than choosing other subjects to study. There is clearly

¹¹ An excellent student-friendly version of the *Passion* has recently been published following an innovative collaboration between staff and students at Stanford Online High School: <https://pixeliapublishing.org/the-passion-of-perpetua/>.

¹² <https://talis.com/talis-elevate/>.

¹³ Most recently: M. Pavlou, ‘Game-Informed Assessment for Playful Learning and Student Experience’, *Journal of Classics Teaching*, 21.41 (2020), 42-51; ‘Game-Informed Assessment for Playful Learning and Student Experience (Part II)’, *Journal of Classics Teaching*, 21.42 (2020), 19-30.

¹⁴ I am currently preparing an article on the use of competitive learning for ancient language instruction.



significant interest out there for Latin, despite the routine claims that Classics is in decline. Widening access is often correctly conceived in terms of righting this wrong and exposing more individuals to the wonders of Antiquity. However, we can also permit ourselves to be a little selfish in this aim. The future of Classics is in groups who have historically have been unable to study the ancient world and its languages. Helping students to engage with Latin from an elementary level inherently encourages a broader range of individuals to bring their diverse thoughts and intense enthusiasm to the field, and gives them the skills to offer their own contributions. The provision of Latin *ab initio* is sometimes dismissed as an onerous, if necessary, part of teaching. As reflected by our experiences at Lincoln, it should instead be recognised as a valuable and essential means of rejuvenating interest in Classics.

4. Ground-Up Change: A More Colorful Classics

London Classicists of Colour

<https://ldnclassicistsofcolour.weebly.com/>, @London_CoC

It is very rare for someone to begin their studies in Classics with the intent to decolonize. It might be the mythology or the philosophy that is appealing, or the renowned art and architecture, but it is hardly ever the intention to reconfigure the field. Decolonisation isn't radical, but it is a conclusion each individual comes to reach in their own natural way. It is almost an act of self-identification – we are now looking back into history and asking very important questions: *where do I fit into all of this and where are the people that look like me?*

Students tend to ask themselves this question at different points in their academic careers, but it is a massive wake-up call. When we realize that the education we're receiving is only representative of a fragment of the ancient world, it can be immensely disheartening, especially when there is nobody to turn to.



It is for this reason that student support networks are crucial to the decolonisation agenda. There is an incredible wealth of research being done now into the ways that Classics intersects with different marginalized communities, but it can be daunting for students at the beginning of their journeys to navigate. Our society, London Classicists of Colour, was founded out of this need for support and a common platform. We are still students, still ourselves learning, but the key difference is that we are learning faster together.

Decolonisation is especially novel for some of us at an undergraduate level, because we are still developing our text base and we interact with reception only minimally. Thus, almost all knowledge on decolonisation is self-sought and self-taught. It is wonderful to be surrounded by academics constantly sharing resources, but there are students that might never organically touch upon critical studies of topics such as race in Classics, which is one of our biggest issues – how can we get students at the beginning of their academic careers to engage with decolonisation?

Oftentimes, we find that although we have immensely thought-provoking and incredible conversations surrounding decolonisation, it is often into an echo chamber. That is not to say that everyone agrees on how decolonisation should be carried out – in fact, it is rather the opposite. However, it does mean that the people who need to be listening to these conversations are not present, because decolonisation is still fundamentally voluntary. We are choosing to exert our time and energy in this important way.

As stated before, decolonisation is not radical. For centuries, the field of Classics has conjured up glistening-white images of aquiline busts and dramatically muscled figurines. Now, if you asked any Classicist to define what exactly Classics encompasses, the chances of a general consensus are slim to none. Some argue that there is no ‘Classics.’ Some believe it expands beyond Greece and Rome. Some state that it centres around the Mediterranean, or needs to be renamed.



Fundamentally, it does not matter if we all agree to a definition of ‘Classics.’ The current conversation causes us to reflect critically on what was once taken as fact – what we are facing now is an overhaul. Marginalized communities that were once overlooked are now being studied with the passion, effort and curiosity that they deserve.

What can be done to help students understand the importance of decolonisation? There is no one answer, but a key factor is integration. Diversity needs to be something already embedded within the curriculum, not something students have to learn as ‘extra.’ It needs to stop being an afterthought or a point to tick off on a checklist. This means approaching content as critically as possible and considering why someone is telling a certain story. It also means making sure scholars from marginalized groups are represented in reading lists and other aspects of the curriculum. Older secondary texts should also be studied with increased scrutiny, considering Classics’ ties to imperialism, classism, racism and much more.

While some argue that incorporating new approaches is somehow ‘corrupting’ the field, we think that progressing toward a more diverse, inclusive field adds some colour to the ancient world, pushing us toward a more holistic understanding of antiquity. Classics still resonates with us because it is a reflection of our own joys, fears, and heartbreaks. By amplifying the voices of marginalized groups now, we in turn amplify our depth of knowledge, bringing life to a history that we collectively adore.

5. Why must Classics diversify?

Chloë Choong & Hannah Parker

Diversity in Classics is a huge topic and is an up-and-coming area within our field, gaining rightful momentum in recent years. There are several aspects within the area, one of the most prominent being the importance of encouraging and



supporting a diverse range of people to enter the field. This is, of course, an invaluable contribution to the field of Classics and can only enrich the community for generations to come. However, in this article, we are going to tackle another essential avenue for diversity within Classics: the study and research of diverse ancient cultures. Traditionally, Classics has been centred around the Ancient Greeks and Romans. After all, the definition churned out by Google reads that it is “a subject at school or university which involves the study of ancient Greek and Latin literature, philosophy, and history”. But we, like many others, share the feeling that this is unsatisfactory and misaligned with the Classics of the twenty-first century. Today, Classics has been expanded to include new approaches and subject matters. Broadening the scope of Classics is, in our opinion, an inevitable path for the field, and has been done with the inclusion of classical reception in media and regarding other areas. If this is the case, then why does the word ‘Classics’ only bring up connotations of the Graeco-Roman world? The wider ancient world has huge diversity and interconnectedness that should be appreciated and conserved for the future.

It is perhaps time to introduce ourselves. We have both recently graduated from the University of Nottingham with first-class degrees and are pursuing Masters in the coming academic year. Neither of us are following traditional pathways, and both of us are from atypical backgrounds. For Chloë, her research encompasses the study of gender identity and female homoeroticism, whilst for Hannah, hers covers the rich visual culture of the Roman Near East in the context of religious spaces.

The prominence of the study of Ancient Greece and Rome is a complex discussion in itself and so will not be explained in this article. We are often told that through their expansions across the African, Asian and European continents, the Greeks and Romans brought sophistication and civilisation to the peoples they encountered. Such a Eurocentric view regarding global cultural development is no longer satisfactory in today’s world. Both Greece and Rome were interconnected

with other ancient peoples. We have known for decades that this was not a one-way street, and that between these cultures was a bilateral flow that facilitated the sharing of art, culture, religion, and much more. One artery of this exchange was the Silk Road which connected the East with the West along a series of trade routes both on land and by sea. The settlements that developed along these trade routes are of particular interest when considering the cultural exchange taking place in antiquity. One such city is Palmyra, in modern-day Syria, whose Tomb of the Three Brothers shares iconographical similarities with the wall-paintings of the Dun Huang cave shrines in Northern China. For more on the connections between Graeco-Roman and Asian art, see Boardman, J. (1994), *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity*, 152.

Within the expansion of Graeco-Roman cross-continental influence, indigenous cultures still retained some aspects, some of which have likely been lost, such as religious rites that have been misinterpreted to mirror their Graeco-Roman counterparts. Of course, it could be asked: if Classics isn't solely about Ancient Greece and Rome, then why does *everything* revolve around their cultures? The answer to this is layered and has many possible reasons; one is the misinterpretation of language. It is no secret that languages do not always explicitly map onto one another; a word in one language may have several meanings in another, or alternatively, it may have none. Inevitably, these linguistic difficulties lead to misunderstandings of the true meanings of words, and so often it is left to the interpretation of the translator. This is where our issue arises. Previous scholars have interpreted the materials with biases that place Ancient Greece and Rome at the centre of the Classical world. This initiates a vicious cycle in which future scholars are predisposed to interpret language and culture, in ways that conform to the pre-existing narrative. There is a great example of this in Ball's book regarding the word *boule*, where he addresses how scholars have taken the usage of the word *boule* to justify absolute Graeco-Roman influence. This clearly exemplifies how *boule* has been used almost figuratively to describe an alien concept in a way that can best be



comprehended by the reader; yet it has been interpreted *literally* as a Graeco-Roman concept, which consequently conforms to this aforementioned narrative. But the word *boule* was not necessarily the local word used in the Roman Near East. For more on this, read Ball, W. (2016), *Rome in the East: The transformation of an Empire*, 496-497.

Today, the field of Classics encompasses a huge array of approaches and topics. As we are seeing with the celebration of modern diversity, this should be applied to the ancient world. Civilisations beyond Greece and Rome (and Egypt) were rich in culture and are worthy of being not only studied, but having their story told and preserved. It is by no means a mistake to appreciate the works of those classicists who came before us, even though their ideas and viewpoints may be flawed or products of the societies that they were written in. These should be recognised for what they can offer, but also utilised as a springboard for you to analyse critically and wonder *where* the rest of the story may be. There is only value to the expansion of our field. The inclusion of a wider range of ancient cultures will encourage more diverse cohorts of classicists which will in turn benefit us tremendously.

6. Rethinking Gender in Antiquity: Why Transgender Studies matters for the Classics

Ky Merkley (they/she), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Writing for Trans in Classics

<https://www.wccclassics.org/transinclassics>, @TransInClassics

Classics is long overdue for a revolution in how we talk about and work with gender. While recent years have seen a number of important works in Classics

dedicated to the study of gender and transgender identities, the way Classics, as a discipline, discusses and works with gender is significantly behind other premodern disciplines.

The growing field of Transgender Studies provides one avenue for critiquing and nuancing our discussions of gender in Antiquity and, in the past five years, two edited volumes with a significant focus on transgender identities in the Classical world have been published: *TransAntiquity* and *Exploring Gender Diversity in the Ancient World*. While both volumes engage with transgender identities and history in very different ways, a central question of both volumes is the search (or possibility of one) for transgender identities in Antiquity.

TransAntiquity: Cross-Dressing and Transgender Dynamics in the Ancient World sets out the terms for its engagement with transgender identities, as follows:

“Starting from the premise that new vocabulary has the power to generate the object it defines, it is clear that a transgender identity has existed only since the last decade of the twentieth century ... Nevertheless, in Classical Antiquity, it is possible to identify forms of behavior and action which might fall into our modern category of transgender.” (3)

In this volume being transgender is defined as a modern “performative gender (self)reassignment” (4) a definition which relies on the importance of surgery, hormones, and modern conceptions of a ‘gender change’ to define transgender, a choice which effectively precludes transgender identities in Antiquity.

Allison Surtees and Jennifer Dyer’s (eds.) *Exploring Gender Diversity in the Ancient World* (2020) takes a very different approach than *TransAntiquity*. The introduction declares:

“The essays in this volume show that classical Greek and Roman history is the history of all genders... a history that includes identities that are gender-fluid or gender blending (varyingly masculine and feminine), intersex (born with



sex characteristics that do not correspond with norms assigned to male or female) and transgender (identifying with a gender that does not correspond to the sex assigned at birth).” (3)

The chapters in this volume show various ways that more gender categories existed in Greco-Roman Antiquity than “the cisheteronormative gender binary that dominates today” (2) would have us believe.

Both volumes take as a starting question the search for transgender identities in Antiquity. While this question remains politically important in the fight for transgender recognition and rights in the modern world, it is perhaps the least interesting question we could ask—relying as it does upon narrowly or expansively defining what transgender means. Works that focus on the search for transgender identities (and there can be no doubt that gender nonconforming people have existed in every society) leave a far more interesting nexus of questions nearly untouched: within the vast temporality of the multicultural world we define as Classics, how do conceptions of masculinity, femininity, and other gendered categories shift and change? What is the relationship between outward dress and action and internal identity and how are these relationships contested and changed throughout our period? What theories existed in Classical Antiquity about bodies and their mutability and movement between sexed and gendered categories? Whose body is allowed to change and move between categories and whose body is made monstrous? Such questions naturally lead into an examination of gender itself: if gender is a system used to define a body’s place in society, what various systems exist within Antiquity? What does gender mean in the worlds we examine? What relationship exists between modern conceptions of gender and the histories we write?



This movement beyond the search for trans identities already has produced some excellent work outside of Classics and enriched the study of gender in various historical periods and cultures. I'd point readers to three works that serve as solid examples: *TransHistorical: Gender Plurality Before the Modern* (2021), The *TransHistoricities* issue of *TSQ* (2017) particularly the intro "Trans, Time, and Space," and special editions from various fields such as *Early Modern Trans Studies* (2019).

Transgender histories and the methodology of Transgender Studies have the capacity to revolutionize how we think about gender, categories, and sexed bodies in Antiquity, while allowing us to question thoughtfully and systematically what it means when we translate terms like *vir*, *puer*, *femina*, and *puella* simplistically as man, boy, woman, and girl. Such translations may be essential but the gap these translations leaves us with needs to be examined with the same intensity we examine whether or not transgender people existed in Antiquity.

7. Classics and educational policy – an update

Arlene Holmes-Henderson, University of Oxford @drarlenehh

In primary schools, at Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11), the study of the Greeks and Romans is a compulsory component of the History National Curriculum. Since 2014, ancient languages have been listed as options alongside modern languages in the Languages National Curriculum:

'Teaching may be of any modern or ancient foreign language and should focus on enabling pupils to make substantial progress in one language. The teaching should provide an appropriate balance of spoken and written language and should lay the foundations for further foreign language teaching at key stage 3.' (Department for Education 2013)



At Key Stage 3 (ages 11-14), classical subjects do not appear in the statutory curriculum. This lack of continuity between primary and secondary education acts as a barrier to the growth of classics in schools and means that many students are not able to continue their progression in classical studies beyond primary school. Many schools, such as academies, retain more flexibility in their approach to building a broad curriculum (they are not obliged to teach the national curriculum) and some consequently teach Latin and Classical Civilisation at KS3 but most non-selective state maintained schools do not.

The Department for Education has sought to tackle these barriers by investing £4 million in a Latin Excellence Programme (LEP) to support Latin, and the study of the classical world more broadly, at Key Stages 3 and 4 (ages 14-16). The LEP, announced in 2021, aims to foster collaboration between schools which provide the best Latin teaching in the UK, and those which do not currently offer classical languages (Department for Education 2021). By coordinating the development of teacher training, lesson materials and visits to heritage sites, the LEP will support pupil progress over three years (2022-2025) and encourage schools in disadvantaged areas with 'classics poverty' (Hunt and Holmes-Henderson 2021) to increase the number of entries in Key Stage 4 Latin examinations.

Operating in the policy background is the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), a performance measure which compares the proportion of children in a secondary school who achieve a Grade C (or higher) in core academic subjects; English, Maths, a Science, History or Geography and a Language. In England, at KS4, there are six Classical subjects which lead to GCSE qualifications: Ancient Greek, Ancient History, Biblical Hebrew, Classical Civilisation, Latin and Sanskrit. All of these, except Classical Civilisation, are recognised as EBacc subjects. The government's ambition that 75% of Year 10 pupils will study the EBacc subject combination at GCSE by 2022 (for examination in 2024), and 90% by 2025 (for examination in 2027) has influenced the growth in Ancient History GCSE numbers and provided



protection to other classical subjects at GCSE (except Classical Civilisation which has been unfairly marginalised, in my opinion).

Those training to teach Latin with Classics are eligible for a tax-free bursary of £15,000 (Department for Education 2022) which does not need to be repaid. They are also eligible for a student loan during their training year. By means of comparison, there is no bursary currently available for trainee teachers of History or English. At present, policy support is strong for classics in schools; advocates must continue to build on this momentum.

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8. Classics in Scottish State Schools

George Connor, teacher of Classical Studies, Monifieth, Scotland, and co-founder of <http://www.workingclassicists.com/>

Over the last forty-odd years, Classics have been withering in Scottish state schools. The reasons for this are complicated, political, economical and societal.

There exists a vicious circle which exacerbates this situation: fewer pupils receiving, for example, Latin, means that fewer pupils go on to become teachers of Latin, which means schools simply can't recruit the qualified staff to offer Latin, so fewer pupils receive Latin, which means even fewer teachers are trained... On and on.

The number of pupils sitting Higher¹⁵ Latin in the whole of Scottish state schools have hung around 100 for many years now – last year it was 97. When we factor in the remarkable work of one teacher - Jennifer Shearer – in one state school – Kirkcaldy High - those numbers drop to fewer than 50. (Jennifer had the Midas touch in bringing pupils to Classics – uptake for her classes was always very high).

The problem is that at a governmental level, there is a belief in curricular natural selection/ the forces of the market: if nobody chooses these subjects, then maybe it deserves to die. That's what happened to Classical Greek, a subject that was withdrawn by the SQA¹⁶ in 2014.

In 2022, no pupils in a state school in Scotland can study the language of Socrates, Sophocles and Sappho.

Some argue that this is evidence that the subjects are no longer relevant. Maybe we should just let it go.

¹⁵ Higher is the certificate most pupils sit aged 17 in Scotland, and is the certificate required for application to university. Most pupils will sit five Highers.

¹⁶ The Scottish Qualifications Authority – the single body which administers Scottish school examinations and certification.



Well, if you want to talk relevance, then glance at the shelves in your local book-store, look at the continual stream of Classically-themed video games, skim Netflix for series about Spartacus and Julius Caesar and Livia Drusilla, peruse Spotify for the thousands of Classically-themed songs being written. I don't think there has ever been a time in the last forty years when the Classical world – especially the world of Greek mythology – has been so present, so influential and so in-demand.

The argument then shifts to one of utility. What's the *point* of learning Latin, or Classical Studies when it doesn't lead to further education or a job. Again, there's a sort of logic in this thinking but ask yourself: did you go on to become a musician after those classes in music at school? But you love music. Did you become a physicist? But you watch science documentaries. Last time I checked, I wasn't an elite athlete, but I love sport. You get my point.

It is true, we must concede, that job opportunities for young people are scarcer than they were in the past. Good jobs are rare, and good salaries rarer. So, you can understand people wanting to maximise the employment potential of young people (which I believe a Classical education absolutely does). But [this thread](#) demonstrates that Classical qualifications can take a person in all manner of career directions. Project managers, journalists, coders, comic book writers, events coordinators... You could make the case that few subjects offer such a broad range of possible post-education destinations.

Someone wiser than me once said that every child has a talent, and it is a school's job to help them find it and pursue it. I believe in this. But I also believe every child has enthusiasms, hobbies, and we have a duty to encourage these. After all, the pursuit of our enthusiasms is what leads to cheerfulness. If your hobby is your job, then lucky you – but for many it is not.



Education is not a factory to produce workers. It is a place to allow children to discover their talents and enthusiasms. By extension, then, we should be offering subjects which allow this pursuit. Every child has that right.

There are some green shoots. You have to search for them, but they are there.

State schools in Scotland are beginning to realise that Classical Studies can be taught by non-specialists, so more are offering classes to pupils, as a sort of professional-development option for staff. If these take root, we could see growth.

St Andrews and Monifieth High (my school in Angus) are road-testing a new Latin programme for pupils starting this August, which we hope will lead to Latin being offered as a certificate course in subsequent years.

Covid has shown that some learning can be done online, so perhaps Classical subjects can take advantage of local authority funding in order to offer online courses to schools and pupils, which is a cheap way to get the courses up and running. This must be balanced with staff retirements and closing departments, so for the foreseeable future it may have to be a case of running twice as fast to stay in the same place.

Outside of schools, the Classical Association of Scotland and Classics for All are working to increase opportunities by providing funding for staff and courses; social media is bringing Classicists together to share experiences and advice; there is a *feeling* that change is coming.

It is difficult trying to turn the direction of the last forty years around, but like the proverbial oil-tanker, it can be turned with a bit of determination and patience. It's difficult, but not Sisyphean. A lot of energy will be needed to resuscitate Classics in Scotland; cooperation between stakeholders at community, school, college and university levels has never been more needed. The rewards for such cooperation, though, will be far-reaching and transformative.



9. The future of Classics

Will Gray

I first learned what Classics entailed when I was 22 and trying to decide what course I would do at university, I had originally wanted to study history as that is where my interests lay, particularly in Ancient Greece and their mythology. I had, of course, heard the term a few times growing mostly from posh students that went to expensive universities on University Challenge and I and my family just assumed it was something to do with literary Classics as they always said they were 'reading Classics' without any elaboration.

Throughout my time at school, I had maybe a month, if not less time learning about what could be classed as Classics, these consisted of a very basic look at Ancient Egypt and a look at the story of Theseus and the Minotaur, but not the context of the story just that it was Greek; this led to us having a 'Greek' day which consisted of a normal school but with a Greek feast instead of normal dinner time and us dressed in 'togas' (in my case it was an old bedsheet,) which I paired with a wreath made from branches collected from a nature walk. In year 7 we got a choice of a free book from a small selection. I chose Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief, and this is where my passion for the Greek myths originated. When I left school at the beginning of year 9 and began homeschooling, my Mam's focus was just trying to help my mental health so we learned more about the myths together, and I made a Trident decorated in aspects of Poseidon. And that was it for Classics and me until I started my degree in Classical Studies.

After joining Twitter and following Classicists of all types, it became clear to me that the discipline is currently undergoing a state of metamorphosis with three big areas being race, sexuality, and class. I feel unqualified to comment on the first two, but class is something I feel quite strongly about. I grew up in a working-class family in a working-class former mining town in County Durham; university was



never a thought for any of my family until my generation came around and even now it is a costly experience so would be well beyond my reach without Student Finance and the Open University helping to pay the costs and having cheaper costs overall respectively. Going into STEM was always a focus for my generation and the next ones coming in, with all sorts of help for studying them, this means the Humanities are in a precarious state where unfortunately only the already well off will be able to study them which means the discipline is more than likely going to go back to square one, without some kind of intervention that will maintain and strengthen the strides that have already been made in getting people of all walks into the discipline.

It's my belief that continuing to focus on the three aforementioned areas, will be what makes Classics sustainable in the future; we are already seeing great work in the sector from various organisations set up to help with these very issues. Some of these include getting Classics into state schools so people with similar backgrounds to me are at least aware of the discipline, and able to pursue it if they so wish.

There have also been discussions in the last year about whether you can be a 'proper' classicist without knowing at least either Ancient Greek or one of the forms of Latin, it's my belief that of course you can; there are translations out there, so you don't have to know the original language. Of course, knowing one of the languages would be beneficial but unfortunately, people don't even get the choice nowadays to even choose which Modern Foreign Language to learn. When my sister started year 8, she could choose between learning two of the following French, German or Spanish, when I started year 8 just four years later, at the exact same school, I had French with no other options. In my eyes demanding that Classicists know at least one of the languages is the easiest and most acceptable form of gatekeeping the discipline, as some posher schools have them as standard, or at least the ability to



point people in the right direction to learn them, whilst poorer state schools and areas have neither the resources nor the ability to help with this.

The future of Classics is all this and more. The future of Classics should be everyone. The future of Classics IS everyone if we can just overcome these hurdles to make it a more welcoming place for the disadvantaged.

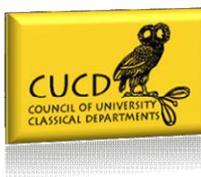
10. Classics and online tutoring

Helen McVeigh, H.M. Classics Academy (www.helenmcveigh.co.uk)

Before the Covid pandemic, I was teaching ancient Greek at evening classes for Queen's University Belfast, and to individual students on a 1:1 and group basis. Lockdowns in early 2020 caused my students to move online and now I found that, instead of being restricted geographically, a global audience had opened itself up to classes. The Belfast Summer School had begun in 2016 with 11 students of classical Greek in a church hall. Despite some initial misgivings, I decided to proceed with an online Summer School. Through the power of the internet, email lists, and social media, the 2020 Belfast Summer School provided intensive courses in Latin and Greek to over 100 students, with participants from north and south America, and the middle east, as well as closer to home.

Since then, my map of student locations has extended to all continents with students attending classes from South Africa, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, and Hong Kong, all co-ordinated from my office in Belfast, Northern Ireland. My group of tutors comprises classicists and ancient historians in the UK, Ireland, Spain and the USA.

Even though fewer schools and universities are offering ancient languages and classical subjects, there is clearly a desire among students from all walks of life and of all ages to learn about ancient Greece and Rome. This has become obvious as



H.M. Classics Academy grows. A quick poll of incoming autumn enrolments reveals such diverse occupations as a postal delivery worker, an HR professional, a University administrator, a Marketing Manager, a Consultant Obstetrician, a pharmacist, a computer programmer, solicitors, teachers, and Museum curators. We help PhD candidates who need the languages for their research, and high-school students whose schools do not offer Greek or Latin. Many of our students are retired.

An argument counter to online teaching is often that the student experience is somehow lesser than the experience of a classroom setting. And yes, I agree that much learning can take place within the camaraderie of a classroom and chatting with students and other tutors over a coffee. Nevertheless, technology continues to advance at an ever-increasing pace, and opposition to online learning is, I believe, losing traction. For example, teaching from my office, I have easy access to dictionaries and reference works, and I don't spend wasted hours in travel around Belfast adding to my carbon footprint.

Moreover, online tuition allows education to be accessible to everyone, regardless of location. Students have the choice to appear in the class by turning their camera on, or remaining in the background. My students have told me they welcome that participation is not a requirement and they can choose when and if they do so.

On the whole, teaching online has had very successful results for me and my students. My first two GCSE Greek students gained grade 9, and I am awaiting GCSE results for another five this year. I will be preparing a number of GCSE and A level students for their examinations in 2023 and 2024, and all students are being taught online.

Students across the globe have been seeking accessible and affordable means of learning about the ancient world. Through various channels on the internet and

the age-old method of word-of-mouth and personal recommendations, I have been able to spread the word and in 2021 had over 200 students in H.M. Classics Academy classes. I feel humbled to be able to help so many people around the world on their journey with ancient Greek and Latin.

11. Classics in UK Museums: the Classical Collections Network

Victoria Donnellan and Anna Reeve, British Museum.

Museums represent an extremely important public face for Classics as a discipline: it may well be in a museum that many people first encounter the classical world. When exhibitions such as *Troy: myth and reality* at the British Museum or *Last Supper in Pompeii* at the Ashmolean Museum, both in 2019-2020, attracted over 190,000 and 87,280 visitors respectively (British Museum 2020, 82; Ashmolean Museum 2020,4), it is clear that there is a strong public appetite for classical content in museums. This popularity is further evidenced by a steady stream of smaller-scale exhibitions beyond the blockbusters, staged by museums throughout the country.

There are classical collections in a large number of museums across the UK. Even without counting objects from Roman Britain, at least 70 museums are known to hold classical material (Donnellan 2015, 281). As well as exhibitions, these museums engage people with their collections in many different ways, from school visits to support the KS2 curriculum, to online activities or lifelong learning.

A glance through the impact case studies for the Classics sub-panel in REF2021 shows a great diversity of ways in which universities have worked with museum partners to benefit the public. As the sub-panel report commented, one of the strengths of Classics as a discipline, with regard to impact, lies in its “collaborations and partnerships with non-academic institutions (such as museums, heritage sites, art galleries, theatres, and schools) and its enthusiastic promotion by public-facing organisations”, which are both long-established (REF2021, 121).



Despite the strengths of UK classical collections, there are challenges for their curation. As well as those known to have classical collections (see above), there are likely to be many more local authority and independent museums whose collections include some classical material, though it may be poorly recorded. Across the museum sector as a whole, there are concerns about declining numbers of specialist curators (Mendoza 2017, 59-60). Most museums cannot afford to employ experts for every area of their wide-ranging collections, and as a result classical collections – often legacies of historic collecting and deprioritized within contemporary collecting policies – are often curated by non-specialists. Donnellan’s survey of classical collections, conducted in 2010, found that just over half of the 63 respondents counted themselves as having specialist staff to work with the classical material, and this included many members of staff with general archaeology degrees (Donnellan 2015, 297). Expertise on classical collections is evidently unevenly distributed and overstretched.

While there are no easy solutions to this situation, which is paralleled for many other types of museum collection, one route of advice and support is through Subject Specialist Networks (SSNs). These were identified by the Mendoza review (2017, 44) as an important means of supporting museums, in the context of a challenging environment. The Classical Collections Network, a new SSN, was founded in 2018 with the aim of promoting and supporting the study and use of classical collections in UK museums, for public benefit. Membership is free and open to anyone working with classical collections in UK museums, whether as a paid staff member, volunteer or researcher. This new SSN offers one way of sharing expertise relating to classical objects – whether based in universities or museums - in order to improve access to these objects for everyone. As well as running workshops and events for its members, the CCN is currently beginning a project to expand our knowledge of the range of publicly accessible UK classical collections, and make that data publicly available online.



Expertise relating to classical collections comes in many different forms: from the identification of objects, artists and makers, to the understanding of archaeological context; from how to interpret objects effectively for museum audiences, to research which reveals and seeks to correct historic biases in their research and interpretation. The Classical Collections Network aims to be an inclusive space which enables the sharing of many different perspectives and promotes collaboration, to further unlock the rich potential of classical collections in UK museums.

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12. Letter from America

Greg Woolf, Professor of Ancient History, UCLA.

It is almost exactly a year since I stepped down as Director of the Institute of Classical Studies in London and moved to take up a post as Professor of Ancient History at UCLA in Los Angeles. I am grateful to Cressida for giving me this chance to reflect from this perspective on where the study and teaching of the ancient world, its languages, literatures, art, archaeology and philosophy are heading. Oddly enough, although the context (and climate!) is new, much feels very familiar from the six years I spent at the ICS and the nearly twenty in St Andrews before that.

Perhaps this should not surprise given how close Anglophone Classics has become in the last decade or so. It is not a new relationship of course, but we have been growing closer together in recent years. Travel across the Atlantic, despite its short and recent interruption, has become more and more common for academic staff (faculty, as am now learning to call them) at all career stages. Much more important I think has been the growing effects of social media, not in connecting everyone, but in providing the dominant medium of connection beyond national boundaries. One result is that I hear the same debates here as we had in the UK. Is the name 'Classics' an asset (because well understood and commanding widespread affection, especially among our most influential alumni) or a handicap (because of its associations with elitist, Eurocentric and exclusionary cultures and educational systems)? How important should the knowledge of ancient languages be, in the way we teach and in deciding who we welcome into our degrees/ programs and departments? What is the future of traditional classics, as opposed to the teaching of ancient subjects within history s, within comparative literature and so on? How do those who want to reform the discipline in prestigious places like the Ivy League here or the Russell Group in the UK, do so without undermining the subject in small colleges and high/secondary schools? For some these issues present themselves as a concern about throwing out the baby with the bathwater, of undermining long-term



values and the viability of the subject in pursuit of current virtues. For others, the state of the discipline is so desperate they issue calls to “burn it down”. The middle ground in some unhappy departments is becoming depopulated.

These are common Anglophone preoccupations. They are also ones that we DO NOT share to the same extent with colleagues working in other European countries. Nor (for different reasons) does the situation look quite the same to colleagues working in the Global South whose voices – thank goodness – are now being heard more loudly, again thanks to cheaper air travel and social media.

I have no magic bullet. But a couple of observations recur. To begin with, despite our increasingly international connections, these problems often seem more easily solved at a local level. I am based in a history department here, but in my first week the classicists swept me up and took me up to the Getty Villa to watch a performance of [Lizastrata](#), a fabulous blend of Aristophanes and Liza Minelli, staged by the Troubadour Theater Company (with some help from my colleague Amy Richlin). The performance was a free one provided for students from all over southern California, public and private universities, big schools and small ones. It was a great occasion, for us and all our students as well. Sitting in the sun, all still in masks (not just the actors, for once!) none of the controversies in the current “discourse” bothered us. There have been other similar occasions since. On campus students from widely different backgrounds and taking very different courses, work together and enjoy our subjects quite oblivious to the concerns of their elders. This too, is nothing new for me, because something similar happened across the federal University of London (and in the much wider family of London classics which welcomed colleagues from the museums and Roehampton and a mass of research units and other departments). Students at St Andrews, in the first two subhonours years of the wonderfully broad traditional Scottish degree, took courses all over the university untroubled by and mostly unaware of disciplinary boundaries and identities.



This is not to say the current controversies don't matter. They certainly do. And I suspect that there are no quick fixes. Swapping "Classical" for "Greek-and-Roman" or "Mediterranean" on our digital letterheads, won't even provide a sticking-plaster (nor a Band-aid). But we are, on the whole, stronger together than when we feud. And sometimes, those of us in our vast global Anglophone bubble, should remember what this looks like from Rome, Paris or Berlin, or indeed from São Paulo or Accra.

Greg Woolf, Los Angeles, June 2022