

Newsletter 2023 | Issue 21

INTRODUCTION



*Professor Gesine Manuwald
Head of Department*

Welcome to another issue of the Newsletter from UCL Greek and Latin, the annual overview of what has happened in the Department over the past academic year and what is planned for the year to come. As you will see throughout this Newsletter, the past academic year was almost 'back to normal' or rather 'back to the new normal', with most interactions again happening in person on campus, while 'virtual' or 'hybrid' formats continued as an alternative option for certain contexts where such modes make sense. Again, the Department's excellent and committed staff and students adapted swiftly to this way of operating and carried on with numerous great initiatives or made good use of the circumstances to introduce new activities or expand existing ones. The examples in this newsletter demonstrate the vibrancy of the Department; they feature many activities undertaken in addition to the day-to-day business of teaching, research and administration (for details on individual members of staff see the [departmental website](#)).

The past academic year was the first that started with all teaching fully back on campus: both students and staff welcomed the opportunity for more personal interaction, which many had missed during the preceding few years; at the same time staff and students also embraced the flexibility that had developed during the pandemic, with flexible working and mixing of modes still very much an option. Again, all colleagues did a superb job in adjusting teaching and assessment to the different requirements for online, in-person or hybrid delivery (as well as the changing rules) and have become true experts in the various modes of teaching; the academics were wonderfully supported by the professional services staff team, who were always up to date in adjusting to the situation and at hand to assist staff and students. All staff again deserve a huge thank you for working tirelessly to accommodate student needs as much as possible, especially as it was hard for a good number of students to get used again to the previous way of learning, especially as regards language acquisition. Students, therefore, were grateful for the teaching, support and additional activities the Department provided and organized their own group activities where possible, especially against a background of a difficult global situation. Thus, with a lot of dedication, staff and students mastered all the challenges. In the end, students obtained their degrees or met the requirements for progression to the next stage, some with very pleasing results. Congratulations to everyone and best of luck for the next phases of their studies or careers!

With events becoming more possible again, there were once again a good number of conferences and workshops. For instance, the Housman Lecture, which continued throughout the pandemic as an online event, was again delivered in person: this year's lecture was given by Richard Armstrong in March 2023; during his visit to London Richard Armstrong was also able to participate in some events at the Freud Museum, where he and the Department's Miriam Leonard had co-curated an exhibition on '[Freud's Antiquity: Object, Idea, Desire](#)' (see report below). Another Classical Play was performed in the Bloomsbury Theatre in February 2023, only that this year it was an unusual and creative kind of play, namely a dramatic version of [Plato's Symposium](#). Some members of staff organized conferences, such as the annual roundtable discussion with the author of a recent or forthcoming scholarly book, this year featuring Professors Andrea Capra and Barbara Graziosi, as well as workshops on ancient and modern poetry (see reports below). Open Days, Taster Days and Summer Schools continued with a mixture of online and in-person offerings to make them as accessible as possible and to reach a large audience (see reports below).

Besides all these events, research and teaching continued as normal, perpetually being enhanced. The Department is looking forward to maintaining and advancing offerings in line with trends in the subject area more widely and the developing staff profile. The Department is now firmly established as a department that offers teaching and research on ancient Greek and Latin, but also on other ancient languages. With the arrival of new colleagues a few years ago, Hittite and Sanskrit have now been added to the syllabus as options. In the light of these changes and in view of discussions among staff and students on the appropriateness of a traditional Classics curriculum in the modern world, the department has adjusted its BA and MA programmes. A slightly restructured version of the MA programme is starting in autumn 2023, and an entirely [new version of the BA programme](#) is now open for applications with the first students to start in autumn 2024: in the new format all the Department's BA programmes will be united under a single umbrella degree programme, offering a number of parallel pathways and combinations with emphasis on different areas of Classics, including a new pathway in Middle Eastern Studies. Exciting times!

In terms of personnel, some academic colleagues were on leave last year and some will be on leave next year (for various reasons). While we miss these colleagues temporarily, we are delighted that this means that Dr Elizabeth McKnight and Dr Dimitra Kokkini will be able to stay with us for another year to make sure that all the teaching will be covered. There have also been major changes in the professional services staff team, as the entire team has been replaced (see feature below). We are grateful for all the work the previous team did for the Department and are now enjoying working with the new team.

In getting ready for the new academic year, everyone was as determined as ever to make maintaining a flexible environment for research, teaching, administration and events a success. Based on the experience of the past few years everyone knows what they are doing; there is a collaborative spirit and the belief that everyone, each in their own way, contributes to the greater good; this makes the Department a pleasant place to work and ensures that it remains successful and flourishing. We are delighted that so many talented and eager students at all levels (BA, MA, PhD) are keen to join us, as the study of Classics continues to have a wide appeal. We look forward to welcoming them and introducing them further to the exciting world of Classics.



At the same time the Department is continuing its outreach activities to engage an even wider range of people and offer a number of regular events again. As always, we are inviting everyone to the next [Housman Lecture in March 2024](#) and the [Classical Play in February 2024](#); in addition, there will be an [event](#) in memory of our former colleague Stephen Instone in May 2024 (see details below). Moreover, we encourage everyone to watch out and check the departmental website for announcements of further events. As ever, the Department is open for enquiries (via email or by phone) and requests for talks, grateful for any support, delighted to receive comments and welcomes everyone at public events.

PROF GESINE MANUWALD

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT, UCL GREEK AND LATIN

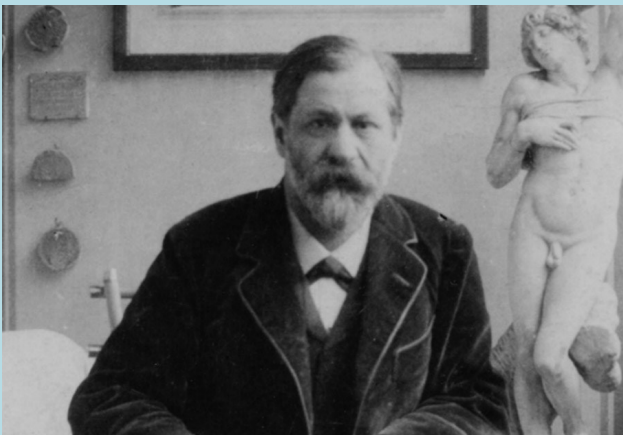


HOUSMAN LECTURE AND FREUD'S ANTIQUITY' EXHIBITION

This year we were very fortunate to have Professor Richard Armstrong from the University of Houston deliver the Department's [Housman Lecture](#) on 'Homer the Balladeer: Newman, Maginn, and the Politics of Translation' in the Department on 15th March. As well as being author of the ground-breaking monograph, *A Compulsion for Antiquity: Freud and the Ancient World* (Cornell UP, 2006), Richard Armstrong is one of the most sophisticated writers in the field of translation studies. His brilliant lecture richly illustrated this. It explored the resurgence of debates in the nineteenth century about the appropriate mode of translating Homer – this was a question that preoccupied not just dons at UCL and Oxbridge but public intellectuals like Matthew Arnold and even the prime Minister William Gladstone! The lecture compared two very different translators of Homer including one by Housman's predecessor in the chair of Latin at UCL: Francis Newman, who taught here from 1846 to 1863. Professor Armstrong gave a fascinating account of how the choices these nineteenth century figures made as translators went to the heart of aesthetic, moral and political debates of the era.



[Professor Richard Armstrong](#)



Sigmund Freud in 1911

Photo courtesy of Freud Museum London

Professor Armstrong's visit to the Department coincided with the opening of 'Freud's Antiquity: Object, Idea, Desire', [an exhibition](#) that he co-curated with myself and Professor Daniel Orrells (KCL) at the Freud Museum in London. Sigmund Freud, his family and their household possessions fled to London in 1938 as fugitives from the Nazis, who had annexed Austria to Germany earlier in that year. Freud bought a house in Hampstead, where he lived until his death. Anyone stepping into Freud's study will be immediately struck by the vast array of figurines, books and artwork on display that either originate from, or are inspired by, the ancient world.

While Freud's ideas – the Oedipus complex, repression, penis envy – are part of the everyday life of numerous languages, only a tiny fraction of the broader public is aware that the world of nineteenth-century archaeology was fundamental to Freud's own excavation of the human psyche. 'Freud's Antiquity: Object, Idea, Desire' examined this crucial link by bringing Freud's collection into dialogue with his theories. The exhibition discussed six separate aspects of Freudian theory alongside representative objects from the collection, encompassing his entire psychoanalytic career from the early paper 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' (1896) to his final completed work *Moses and Monotheism* (1939).

If you did not have a chance to visit the physical exhibition, which ran until July, you may be interested to hear about the accompanying comprehensive digital multimedia resource, containing video recordings, podcasts, new rotating photographs of rarely seen objects from the collection, and a list of suggested reading. This 'digital archive' not only helped to supplement the exhibition, but it will also exist as a lasting legacy of the exhibition (<https://stories.freud.org.uk/freuds-antiquity-object-idea-desire/>).

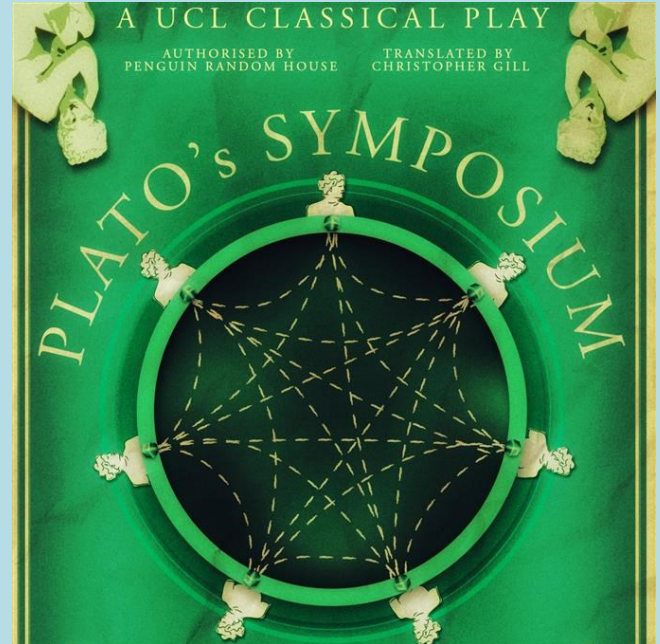
PROF MIRIAM LEONARD



CLASSICAL PLAY 2023 – PLATO'S SYMPOSIUM

This year's Classical Play was performed in its usual 'home', the Bloomsbury Theatre, but featured (very excitingly) an unusual text, Plato's *Symposium*.

Director Reyna Jani, Producer Amilia Turnbull, and Dramaturg Patrick O'Malley gave the production a humoristic and at times sarcastic tone. They also opted for the theatrically effective choice of an all-women cast to dramatise an all-men party. Envy, jealousy, love, friendship as well as the complex ideas surrounding these themes were all there in the translation they used (Christopher Gill, 2003), though presented with subtle irony, in a sort of in-and-out of character mode that, while discussing the ethics of desire, also questioned the ways in which this was done.



Poster for the 2022-23 Classical Play

[Pre-show talks](#) featured world-leading academics: [Dr Frisbee Sheffield \(Cambridge\)](#) and Emily [Professor Edith Hall \(Durham\)](#): they spoke about the main themes of the play and the dialogue's connection with theatre; workshops were led by theatre practitioners and academics, including Theatre Director Helen Eastman, Assistant Director of the British School of Athens Michael Loy, and Lecturer in Ancient Philosophy Caterina Pellò.

As usual, a rich [Study Guide](#) was provided for school students, containing short essays and videos on Plato, love and the sympotic tradition (Nicolò Benzi); the main themes of the dialogue (Elena Cagnoli Fieconi); and archaeology of Plato's *Symposium* (Michael Loy); and the importance of Diotima as a woman philosopher (Caterina Pellò).

The play was a huge success, with ca. 2200 tickets sold; attendance was high at the pre-show talks and workshops too, between school students and theatre amateurs.

We have also almost completed re-organising and cataloguing the Classical Play's archive: Zoë Morris, Lucy Ruddiman and Lowry White, under the supervision of Giovanna Di Martino, have been tidying up the rich archival material (booklets, programmes, photographs and other items) from past productions, i.e. from the very first production of a Greek play, Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, in 1987, to this year's production. A selection of the photographs, booklets and publicity material from this archive has been digitised and uploaded to the departmental website <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/classical-play/past-productions>.

DR GIOVANNA DI MARTINO



PERFORMING EARLY MODERN ARISTOPHANES WITH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

From 20 to 24 February 2023, a group of 18 students from the University of Parma and UCL as well as from a number of state-funded schools (St Olave's, the Jewish Community Secondary School, Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, and La Sainte Union, Camden) participated in a four-day theatre workshop on Aristophanes' *Wealth*, co-led by Italian playwright and director [Marco Martinelli \(Teatro delle Albe\)](#) and Giovanna Di Martino as dramaturg.

The script included the use of three early modern translations of the play: Eufrosino Bonini's 1513 *Commedia di Iustitia*; Thomas Randolph's 1651 *Hey for honesty, down with knavery*; and H. H. B. (H. H. Burnell?)'s 1659 *The World's Idol, Plutus a comedy*.

The use of early modern translations of the play was suggested by the framework within which this project had been organised: a research conference on [Memory and Performance: Classical Reception in Early Modern Festivals](#) which took place in both Parma (13-14 October 2022) and at UCL (23-24 February 2023) and that was co-organised by Francesca Bortoletti (Parma) and Giovanna Di Martino.

Indeed, Aristophanes' *Wealth* was one of the go-to texts to learn and translate ancient Greek in the early modern period; the political and social dimensions of the play also resonated with the contemporary climate in which the script was adapted. Bonini's 1513 *Commedia di Iustitia*, for example, was performed on the occasion of the Carnival in Florence, which featured the triumphal return of the powerful Medici family to Florence after 18 years of exile. The Medici heavily exploited the Carnival and its performance events to present themselves as the peacemakers and guardians of Florence's freedom. In Bonini's *Iustitia*, the god of medicine Asclepius is replaced by a group of 'Medici' (in Italian: 'doctors'), which makes it abundantly clear that the play is a (cheekily?) celebratory one – one that sees in the Medici a restoration of Justice (and culture).

Randolph's 1651 *Hey for honesty, down with knavery*, is another highly politicised remaking of Aristophanes' *Wealth*: set in Caroline London, it ridicules the various political factions at play during the civil wars and the Puritan interregnum. It is a hymn to freedom of speech and, most importantly, to freedom of satire (it was probably performed for a private audience while the theatres were closed). The chorus identifies politically with the 'Levellers' (a movement that was active during the civil wars that fought for popular sovereignty, equal rights for all, and tolerance around religious matters); Poverty is accompanied by a band of Royalists, and – unsurprisingly for the heated political climate of the time – the Pope himself makes an appearance at the end of the play, all worn-out and sad because 'indulgences are grown cheap and at no price'.

H. H. B. (Henry Burnell?)'s 1659 *The World's Idol, Plutus a comedy*, reflects, as the title suggests, the political as well as religious issues of the time. Probably composed by the Irish Catholic playwright Henry Burnell, the translation is accompanied by a short discourse that explicitly identifies the trajectory from blindness to sight of the God of Wealth, Plutus, with the hope that the same will happen to humankind. Aristophanes is used to make anti-colonial and anti-imperialist statements (both regarding British colonialism, particularly with respect to Ireland, and Spanish colonial expansion into the Indies). A chorus of farmers tirelessly working their land seemed rather appropriate to address the tragic situation of Irish landowners being deprived of their land so that it could be given to English settlers. *Wealth* is also employed to argue against the use of religion as a colonial weapon: 'idol' was indeed a religiously poignant term in the 1650s in the midst of the iconoclastic frenzy taking place in the Reformed Church in northern Europe.



PERFORMING EARLY MODERN ARISTOPHANES WITH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (cont.)

The final script, which emerged from the workshop in February and was performed on the first evening of the conference, is a mosaic of many different fragments created by Giovanna, Marco, and all the workshop's participants. It was first put together in Parma during the first four-day theatre workshop held with the same group of university students from Parma and UCL who would be present in London in February, and with school students from two secondary schools in Parma. The script was then taken to London and enriched by the new workshop participants from local schools in London.



Students performing during the workshop

When the script traveled to London, it was reshaped to adapt it to the new audience: Giovanna had initially modified and translated the lines of the scenes constructed in Parma in Italian into English, using the three early modern scripts as much as possible, but every day of the workshop she would come in with a different printed version of the script as it had absorbed and integrated Marco's and the students' inputs as well as, more generally, the group's collective experience of the scenes and plotline. While the bulk of the play was already there after Parma, the scene enacting the 'agon' ('debating competition') between Poverty and Chremylus was added in London.

Marco brought into the workshop's script his own 'bag' of (living) texts. As you can perhaps spot in the video of the demonstration performance (below), it is Aristophanes' *Wealth* with a (or, better, several) twist(s): there's, and, which Marco used with the workshop's participants as part of the warm-up and to develop the chorus.

There are multiple fragments, in various languages, interwoven together in the final script: while the bulk of it is indeed Aristophanes' play, there feature some lines in Portuguese, French, Polish, Italian and Norwegian (the languages spoken by some of the participants); a bit of Shakespeare (*Timon of Athens*); an ottava from from Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* (Book 1, Canto XVI), sung in what was a well-known and popular motif in the centre of Italy – and – why not? – children's songs in English.

For more on the research project and to watch the performance, follow this link: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/news/2023/mar/performing-aristophanes-early-modern-translations>.

DR GIOVANNA DI MARTINO



LONDON SUMMER SCHOOL IN CLASSICS 2023

The London Summer School in Classics took place from 18-27 July 2023. This year marked our return to the classroom after four years, which was welcomed enthusiastically by students and tutors alike. This year's LSSC was offered as a hybrid/online event, with some classes offered exclusively online and others taking place in person but giving the possibility for students to join remotely if they wished. The return to the classroom marked also the return to pre-pandemic student numbers, with 247 students applying and 227 completing the course. The students were distributed over 28 language classes.

In addition to Classical Greek and Latin at all levels (Beginner to Advanced reading classes), we offered classes in Beginner's Hittite, Sumerian, and Biblical Hebrew, and Intermediate classes in Sanskrit and Byzantine Greek. All classes and most afternoon lectures/workshops were recorded for the benefit of students in different time-zones and remained available to the end of August for convenience.

Afternoon lectures were given by Professor Stephen Colvin (UCL) on 'Why is English spelling so strange? The origins of the alphabet in Greece, Rome, and beyond', Dr Antony Makrinos (UCL) on 'Homer and the Metaverse: reflections on the future of Classics', Dr Fiachra Mac Góráin (UCL) on 'The death of the young in Virgil's Aeneid', Professor Maria Wyke (UCL) on 'Cleopatra and Augustus', and Dr Nicolò Benzi (UCL and Kent) on "'Tell me how you party and I will tell you what citizen you are" – Symposium and civic morality in Archaic literature and philosophy'. In addition, there were two epigraphy workshops, delivered by Dr Peter Haarer (Oxford) on 'Reading Greek Inscriptions' and Dr Abigail Graham (ICS) on 'Reading Latin Inscriptions', as well as an optional extra free lunch-time session on Living Latin, delivered by Dr Marigold Norbye on Friday 28 July.

Being back on campus marked the return of the end-of-classes party for all students and tutors, which took place on the final day of the LSSC in the Department. This was followed by the customary celebratory dinner for everyone who worked for the Summer School, to thank them for their hard work.

Feedback for the first hybrid edition of the LSSC has been very positive. The students are happy that the online option is still available, especially since this year the LSSC fell right in the middle of rail strikes and it was very easy to allow the in-person students to join online if they were affected.

As the Director of the LSSC, I would like to thank Anna Andreopoulou, who reprised her role as the LSSC Administrator and did an excellent job despite all the setbacks; our student helpers Alessandra Anderson-Scatto, Caroline Hendrickson, and India Kaur, who did all the legwork and provided invaluable help throughout the LSSC despite the difficulties; Wendy Leung and Shah Chowdhury at the Greek and Latin Office, whose help in IT and other practicalities was invaluable; and all the tutors who taught at the LSSC, took all the technical issues in their stride, and offered a fantastic learning experience to our students. The LSSC will return in July 2024.

DR DIMITRA KOKKINI

Director of the London Summer School in Classics 2023



ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY SUMMER SCHOOL 2023



Speakers of the Summer School

Throughout the week, students had the opportunity to discover ancient philosophical theories as well as to engage with the questions and challenges posed by philosophers. Students were invited to reflect on how ancient philosophical issues are still relevant to today's world and on how ancient philosophy can help us develop that critical outlook on society that is essential to becoming fully-formed citizens. In addition to classes, students further engaged with philosophical issues through a series of guest lectures: 'Is there such a thing as Stoic activism?' (Dr Kelli Rudolph, University of Kent); 'Platonic Love? Socrates as an icon in Victorian Gay communities' (Dr Dave Preston, Royal Holloway, University of London); 'Philosophy begins in wonder(works): the role of the supernatural in early Greek thought' (Dr Nicolò Benzi, UCL); 'Aristotle, egocentricity and the extended Self' (Prof. Anthony Price, Birkbeck College, University of London).

As the director of the Summer School, I wish to thank everyone who contributed to its success: first and foremost, our fantastic tutors for their passion, commitment and excellent teaching; our wonderful students, who keep amazing us for their curiosity and ever original questions, and, last but not least, the staff and colleagues of the Department of Greek and Latin for their invaluable support.

The eighth edition of the Summer School in Ancient Philosophy will run in summer 2024. We are planning to revise our module offer and further expand our afternoon activities. We aim to keep offering classes in hybrid format to ensure that ancient philosophy is accessible to the widest possible audience. We are firmly committed to providing another engaging, and challenging but rewarding, week devoted to ancient thought, which never ceases to make us wonder and look at the world around us from new perspectives and with deeper awareness of what it means to be human.

Keep searching, questioning, and thinking!

DR NICOLÒ BENZI

The seventh edition of the UCL Summer School in Ancient Philosophy took place from 10 to 14 July 2023. The Summer School offered a five-day intensive programme on the major themes and thinkers of ancient philosophy (Greek and Roman, Chinese, and Indian). Classes were taught in hybrid format in order to make our courses accessible to a wider range of students both nationally and abroad. We welcomed 92 students from all over the world, who studied the following modules: Introduction to Ancient Philosophy; A Week With Plato; A Week with Aristotle; Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle; Socrates, Sex, and Subversion: Feminist Approaches to Plato and Aristotle; A Week with Chinese Philosophy: Yin-Yang, Body, and Gender; Are We Bodies or Souls: A Journey of Self-Discovery through Philosophy; Beginner's Greek with Plato.



Lecture title slide with Dr Nicolò Benzi



SUMMER SCHOOL IN HOMER 2023

This year's Summer School in Homer was double in order to celebrate 10 years and it was hosted with hybrid teaching gathering both an onsite and an online audience from Monday 31 July to Friday 4 August 2023 in London, UK, and an onsite audience from Monday 28 August to Friday 1 September in Chios, Greece. Both events were very successful and gathered a total of 114 participants of various ages from 13 different countries.

The classes taught at this year's Summer School in London were:

Homer in Translation (hybrid), Gender and Feminist Reception of Homer (hybrid), Greek for Beginners (hybrid), Intermediate Greek (hybrid), Advanced Greek 1 (online) and 2 (onsite), Ancient Philosophy and Homer, Comparative Literature and Homer and Modern Novels and Homer. The Summer School in Chios followed a different programme. The tutors for the classes were: Antonio Cartolano (Homer in Translation), Alexandra Meghji (Gender and Feminist Reception of Homer), Madeline Crawford (Beginners), Theophano Charalambous (Intermediate), Marina Pavlidou and Naoko Yamagata (Advanced 1 and 2), Nicolò Benzi (Ancient Philosophy and Homer), Stefano Bellin (Comparative Literature and Homer) and Ellice Hetherington (Modern Novels and Homer).

Both Summer Schools also offered many online and onsite afternoon events, including in London a roundtable on "Modern Appropriations of Homer" with many graduate students participating as speakers (Alexandra Meghji, Antonia Aluko, Charlotte Gregory and Katie McHugh). There was a talk by the Director Antony Makrinos on "teaching Classics with VR and AI". There was also an interview with Flora Kirk (Flaroh



Students with their certificates at the end of the Summer School

Illustration) who talked about her amazing work in illustrating Classics and about the new logo of the Summer School. Additionally, there was another amazing talk delivered by Ronald Forero Álvarez (Universidad de La Sabana, Colombia) who talked about "A Tropical Odyssey: Tracing the Homeric Legacy in José Manuel Crespo's Ulysses a man in solitude". The events of the Summer School in Chios included two talks (by Nicolò Benzi (Kent) with the title "Between suffering and wandering: Odysseus, philosophy and the moral condition" and by Naoko Yamagata (OU) on "Thetis and the shield of Achilles – reading the Iliad with Auden", two archaeological visits to Emporeio (where participants visited the Bronze Age settlement and the Mastic Museum and to Daskalopetra (the Teacher's Rock), where students visited "Homer's Rock", and a poetry night. In this last event participants enjoyed poetry in one of the most beautiful villas of the island and had the opportunity to socialise with locals. Events took place onsite with online live links, and they were free and open to the general public.



SUMMER SCHOOL IN HOMER 2023 (cont.)



Feedback from the students of the Summer Schools in Homer has been as always very positive. Many of the participants commented that the experience in Chios was unique and that they enjoyed visiting the island and listening to the talks. They have also praised the organisers and the tutors for the high-quality hybrid classes, the organised approach and the successful afternoon events.

Students with their certificates at the end of the Summer School

Finally, as the Director of the Summer School, I wish to thank the Department of Greek and Latin, and especially Prof. Gesine Manuwald for her kind advice and support, the Secretary of the Summer School Imogen Pollard for her precious help and our events manager Wendy Leung, our speakers for the engaging talks and discussions, all our committed teachers and all those who helped and supported the Summer School in their own way.

Next year we intend to hold the SSH2024 with a hybrid system of both face-to-face and online classes. We will try to introduce new exciting classes. We are planning to hold the Summer School in Homer in the summer of 2024 in London, for which preparations have already started.

For more details about the Summer School in Homer 2024, please visit our website:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/open-days-outreach/summer-schools/summer-school-homer-2024>

or contact Dr Antony Makrinos on a.makrinos@ucl.ac.uk.



Group photo of students and staff during the Summer School

DR ANTONY MAKRINOS

Director of the Summer School in Homer



OUTREACH AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION

The Department of Greek and Latin has organized many [outreach activities](#) this academic year. Members of staff regularly travel to give school talks, and we have also welcomed a number of school groups to UCL and given school talks online. Isobel Jones (2nd year BA Classics) kept alive our voluntary tuition scheme by teaching Latin at Fortismere School in Muswell Hill, a state school. We have continued our regular programme of taster days, which are held in person at UCL and online.

This year we continued a tradition begun during the lockdown of online events for students and the general public. In May, Madeline Miller, bestselling author of *The Song of Achilles*, *Circe*, and *Galatea*, joined Alex Meghji (PhD candidate working on novelizations of Greek myth from a feminist perspective) and Miriam Leonard to discuss her work and the inspiration she derives from Classical materials. The event was attended by nearly 200 people, and there was plenty of opportunity for Q&A. Many people have been inspired to engage more deeply with the Classics by Madeline Miller, and we are very grateful to her for giving us her time for this event.

Also in May, we ran an online event on “Power and Luxury from Persia to Greece”. This was chaired by Mridula Gullapalli, a final-year BA Ancient World student. Rosie Harman, Hans van Wees, and Mateen Arghandehpour each gave a talk followed by Q&A on various aspects of the topic. About a hundred people were in attendance, and discussion was interested and vigorous.

In July 2023 Fiachra Mac Góráin (in his capacity as Tutor for Outreach and Widening Participation) organized an outreach summer school on the theme of 'Life in the Ancient World', which welcomed over a hundred participants to UCL (in person and online). Departmental colleagues and graduate students contributed to the teaching. Lunch was provided to all in-person participants, with financial support coming from UCL's Widening Participation office, and from the Department's General Donations fund, to which alumni have so generously contributed. The classes were on a range of topics with something for everyone: Sappho, Seneca, Persian kingship, ancient beauty standards, Gilgamesh, ancient alphabets, Cicero, transgenderism in antiquity, and the death of the young in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Student feedback was very positive and enthusiastic.



OUTREACH AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION (cont.)

In August 2023 Chiara D'Agostino (PhD candidate working on Greek papyri) and Fiachra Mac Góráin taught on UCL's East Summer School, which is held at the UCL East Stratford Campus, Olympic Park. Participation was open to students in state schools in the four London boroughs closest to the Olympic Park, these being Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest. Fiachra taught the morning sessions, which were on ancient Greek beliefs in the afterlife with a focus on the so-called 'Orphic' golden leaves that give instructions to the dead about what to do upon reaching the nether world. Chiara taught the afternoon sessions, which were hands-on explorations of objects lent to us by UCL's Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology from their ancient Egyptian collection. These included a couple of shabtis, a pyramid burial inscription, and a frog that is believed to have symbolized fertility. The students were especially delighted to be able to learn about ancient Egyptian burial customs by handling these grave objects.



Chiara D'Agostino teaching pupils how to make mummy labels at UCL East



A student handling a shabti while receiving enlightenment from Chiara D'Agostino at UCL East

Over the summer, the Department held an essay competition for students in their final years of school. We received a record number of entries from quite a few different countries all around the. The names of the prize-winners are published on the Department's website.

The Department welcomes suggestions from our alumni and other correspondents about possible outreach and widening participation activities. Please get in touch with one of us directly.

DR FIACHRA MAC GÓRÁIN



LIVING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

We have now completed our sixth year of holding Living Latin sessions and fourth of Classical Greek, and have further broadened the scope of our Society to Akkadian, the language spoken in Mesopotamia from the third millennium to the eighth century BC, written in the cuneiform script. Hence, our Society has been renamed the Living Classical Languages Society.

Latin

In 2021-22, as in-person teaching started again for some university classes, Elisabetha (Elisabeth Ilgner) held monthly oral conversation meetings in central London in the first two terms. Calendula (Marigold Norbye) continued hosting online reading sessions at intermediate level, with the emphasis on speaking Latin throughout. In October, the group started exploring various versions of Aesop's fables composed in Latin, from the poems of the ancient author Phaedrus to those of medieval monks and of the Renaissance humanist scholar Gabriele Faerno. In April 2022, we switched to easier prose, with retellings of the stories of Herodotus by a Victorian schoolmaster.

We made another change at the beginning of the new academic year, in October 2022, when we experimented with a Sherlock Holmes story translated into Latin: interesting to see how a 'modern' story gets conveyed in Latin. From the start, all the sessions had been preceded by general conversations in Latin and gradually, the reading part petered out and the sessions are currently fully dedicated to informal conversation.

October 2022 also saw the resumption of weekly in-person sessions at UCL, run by Luca Pellegrino, a History student, occasionally supported by Didacus, an alumnus of the Greek and Latin department. He used *Familia romana*, the excellent textbook for teaching spoken Latin from scratch, in a group including beginners in Latin as well as Latinists keen to learn to speak Latin. In the third term, when Luca had to focus on his Finals, Marcus (Mark Selby), a student of Greek and Latin, took over until the end of the academic year.

Greek

Following the success of Avitus's initiative to add Greek to our provision, with Speaking Classical Greek sessions in 2019-2020 and in 2020-2021 using textbooks, the following year it seemed a good time to let manuals rest for a while and turn directly to the classical authors. Speaking Classical Greek 'Ελληνίζωμεν 3 in 2021-2022 thus engaged with some preliminary excerpts from Plato's *Κρίτων* and then moved on to discuss almost half of Aristophanes's *Πλοῦτος*. The online mode of the pandemic had attracted a number of participants from all over the world, so we had decided to continue in this mode; but this made the sessions a bit less dynamic than anticipated.

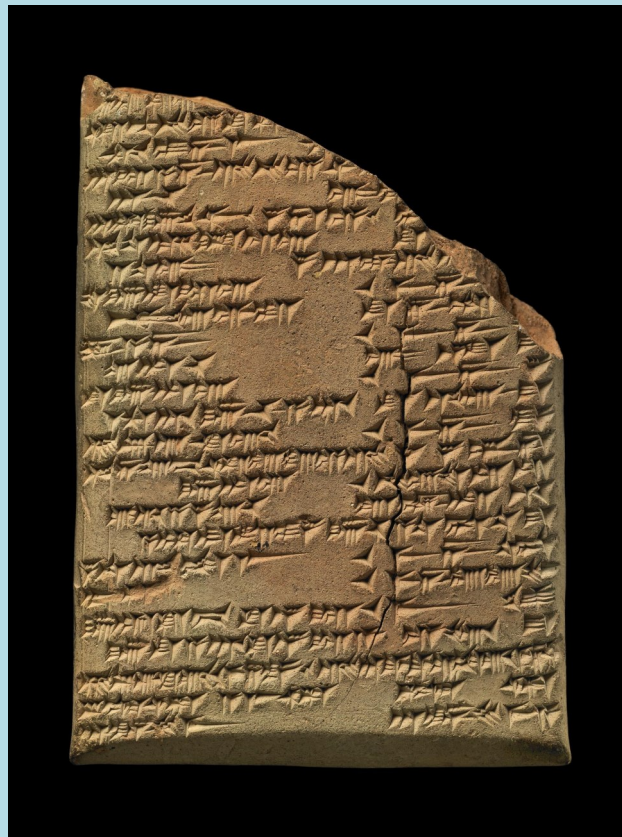
In 2022-2023 therefore we bade farewell to our international friends and returned to the more lively human immersion experience of the Department. Avitus then facilitated two separate strands: a Speaking Classical Greek I. Beginners, to allow newcomers to join our endeavours from scratch, with a textbook but always in full speaking mode, of course; and a Speaking Classical Greek II. Intermediate, with neither manuals nor authors, just meeting at a pub for some free conversation, to develop fluency in the language in a more informal relaxed context. The Beginners group met most weeks in termtime, well into Term 3 due to participants' demand, which is quite an achievement given the season. The Intermediate group met as such for thirteen sessions, before taking a life of its own as Συμπόσιον 'Ελληνικόν, which goes on as we speak and is expected to continue for years to come.



UCL LIVING CLASSICAL LANGUAGES SOCIETY

Akkadian

The year 2021-2022 saw the addition of Mesopotamian languages to the Department with the arrival of Dr. Mark Weeden. As his MA student at SOAS, our Avitus had already organised there in 2019-2020 a rather successful workshop of around nine sessions for students, academic staff, and externals, to explore teaching and learning of Akkadian with the communicative approach, in what must have been the first time the language was used again for spontaneous conversation in several millennia. The time came therefore in 2022-2023 for our Society to attempt a whole academic year of Speaking Akkadian Level 1 for complete beginners. Unlike for Latin and Classical Greek, there are no manuals, or in fact practically any material, available to teach Akkadian with a communicative approach, so Avitus put it all together from scratch. The initiative was a great success and met for sixteen sessions of nearly two hours each. Dr. Weeden positively recommended the initiative and several people became fully committed throughout.



Mesopotamian tablet from the 7th century BC, with an incantation written in Sumerian and Akkadian.

© The Trustees of the British Museum.



NEW CLASSICS BA PROGRAMME AT UCL

In 2021 ancient cuneiform languages (Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite) arrived in the Department, when Dr Mark Weeden joined us from SOAS. SOAS had made the decision to discontinue Assyriology (the study of the ancient cultures and languages of Mesopotamia, the Levant and Anatolia), and following a philanthropic donation we were able to guarantee the teaching of this subject at UCL (the Department of History has a long tradition of teaching ancient Middle Eastern history, and many of you will remember with fondness Prof. Amelie Kuhrt, 1944-2023).

We have taken the opportunity to rethink our BA programmes in the light of the extension of our subject into the ancient Middle East. We have long had two BA programmes: BA Classics for students who arrived with Greek or Latin, and who wanted to concentrate on Greek/Roman language and literature; and a BA Ancient World (formerly Ancient World Studies) for students who wanted to start Greek/Latin from scratch and take the option of a wider array of courses in ancient history and archaeology. We wanted a BA programme that would allow students to specialise in the languages and cultures of the ancient Middle East, and also to share some of the modules in ancient Graeco-Roman culture and history. We also wanted students studying the Graeco-Roman world to be able to take modules in the neighbouring civilisation of the ancient Middle East if they wanted. It is difficult to draw a line between the two anyway; many themes and stories of Homeric and Hesiodic epic have parallels in Middle Eastern texts such as Gilgamesh, and the history of the eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamia was always entwined with the Greek and Roman worlds (the Greeks of course took the alphabet over from the Phoenicians some time after 1000 BCE, and we can see important links with Minoan/Mycenaean culture in the Bronze Age).

From autumn 2024 the Department will offer a single [BA programme](#) ('BA Classics and Ancient World') with three distinct routes: 1) Classics (Language and Literature); 2) Ancient Literature, History, Archaeology; and 3) Ancient Middle Eastern Studies. Students will apply for a specific route but will be able to take a much wider array of courses with a more flexible degree structure. So, for example, a student taking track (2) Ancient Literature, History, Archaeology will be able to satisfy the ancient language requirement by taking any ancient language offered by the Department; and students taking Classics will also be able to take modules in ancient Middle Eastern language and culture on top of Greek/Latin. The three routes will share a core module in the first year, which will cover all aspects of the ancient world and the connections between them. In 2022-23 and 2023-24 we have also been able to offer Sanskrit as an option in the Department. We do not know if we shall have the funding to continue this after 2024 as part of the new BA programme, but we would certainly like to. We hope that this rich array of offerings will enable students to broaden their understanding of the cultures of the ancient world, and to trace the important connections between them.

PROF STEPHEN COLVIN



REPORT ON EDI MATTERS

Teaching ancient cultures involves confronting some historical realities that are deeply repellent today, e.g. slavery, violence and ethnic prejudice. Moreover, Classics has a history of ideological links with European colonialism, racism and imperialism. People of colour and those with disabilities remain under-represented within the field. The Department of Greek and Latin recognised the need for practical EDI strategies within existing module curricula and specific learning contexts such as language classes, and that this should involve working closely with students, eliciting their contributions.

Our new streamlined BA programme format in Classics will commence from September 2024, whose aim is to broaden out of the subject, and will contribute to diversifying the student body further. Alongside the introduction of new modules, e.g. “Race and Antiquity”, and a new core methodologies module for the new -format BA, we recognise the need for practical EDI strategies within existing modules and specific learning contexts, such as ancient language classes, and that this should involve working closely with students, eliciting their contributions. The recently formed London Classicists of Colour network has been instrumental in bringing these issues to the attention of Classics departments in London from the perspective of students studying the subject. In recognition of this, UCL Greek and Latin has engaged in several successful EDI-focused initiatives in collaboration with students. The most productive of these has been a Staff-Student Partnership, set up in late 2021, and continued into this year, which led to changes to curricula by the introduction of new modules, including Middle Eastern ancient languages (Sanskrit, Hittite), “Race and Antiquity” and “Greeks and Jews”, as well as the updating of existing modules, and a more considered approach to sensitive topics, with more diverse reading lists and improved adjustments for disabled students.

As part of this collaborative approach, a Decolonization Pedagogy Workshop took place in September 2022, co-chaired by the Departmental Tutor Dr Mairéad McAuley and a student representative, Alex Meghji. This well-attended workshop of staff and students discussed practical strategies for adapting module content and teaching. It has had a direct impact upon teaching this year. Moodle pages were updated with advance content statements and enhanced bibliography related to controversial or potential sensitive topics. Most importantly, these advance content statements are not a ‘get-out clause’ encouraging students and staff to avoid addressing difficult aspects of the ancient world; instead, they are used as springboards for in-lecture discussion and dialogue. A second workshop will take place in Term 1 of 2023-24, as an opportunity to reflect upon last year and look forward to how to embed these kinds of debates and discussions into all our module teaching in productive and inclusive ways.

In addition, a ‘Beyond the Mediterranean’ Student Speaker series took place in Term 2. In this series of talks, student presenters work with a staff mentor to develop a presentation on a topic that addresses the expansion of the boundaries of the traditional Classics curriculum. This speaker series has been a successful and popular fixture over the last two years. This year, Ancient World finalist Mridula Gullapalli did a sterling job of organising and chairing the event, which took place over two days. Students presented fascinating, well-researched talks on a wide range of topics neglected by a mainstream Classics curriculum: e.g. Dionysus in India, orientalism and Greek tragedy, and the classical world in popular culture, such as the TV comedy *Plebs*, Indian cinema and video games. The challenge is to make this event a more permanent event in the calendar, like the Classical Play, and to ensure that its insights are fed back into our curricula in meaningful ways.



REPORT ON EDI MATTERS (cont.)

These collaborative events have shown the benefit not just of student representation and voice, but of active staff-student partnership, in developing practical approaches and pedagogical innovation. They have led to a more informed, sensitive and thoughtful approach to the material in all modules, to the benefit of staff, students, and the subject. Staff reported that the Beyond the Mediterranean speaker series had given them material for serious reflection on the diversity of content they could offer. Students commented positively on how this series empowered them to engage in the future of the discipline within UCL and beyond, and provided a positive, non-threatening intellectual space in which they could have a first experience of presenting research with feedback. Some BAME students also said it enhanced their sense of intellectual belonging within our programmes.

This coming year, we have been awarded a grant from the UCL Arts & Humanities Curriculum Enhancement Fund to build and expand on these collaborations through an institutionalised staff-student partnership. This funding will pay student organisers to host a third pedagogy workshop and chair another speaker series; to set up a Moodle page with archives of previous Beyond the Mediterranean talks; and to arrange a follow-up curriculum workshop. This will ensure that the critical and reflective conversations we have already had, and continue to have, generate action-oriented outcomes and can be integrated into our new BA programme, including the core compulsory module on methodologies and approaches to Classics for all incoming students from 2024.

DR MAIRÉAD MCAULEY



MUSEUM OF DREAMS – A NEW G&L RESEARCH PROJECT

Classical antiquity provided cinema from its beginnings with a privileged site for the exploration of a past perceived to be the origins and cultural heritage of the Western world. Silent cinema (encompassing a period from the 1890s to the 1920s) played a fundamental role in the modern creation and dissemination of knowledge about that past within and across national boundaries. Cinema offered its global audiences a radically new, astonishingly creative, and swiftly iconic way of experiencing classical antiquity that was related to, but distinct from, its reconstruction in high cultural forms (such as the novel, theatre, opera, painting, dance and sculpture). The classical past was brought into the present day moving in time and space, embodied by actors, and emotionally coded by colour and musical accompaniment. Thanks to cinema, classical antiquity was rendered an immersive and democratic dreamworld while, thanks to classical antiquity, cinema laid claim to the status of an educative art - a 'museum of dreams' as in the title of this AHRC-funded research project.

I am leading the project, working with Aylin Atacan as its Research Assistant in the Department, and we will be partnered by a historian of film at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Ivo Blom) and the curator of silent films in the British National Film Archive (Bryony Dixon). We will produce an interdisciplinary study of the encounter between classical antiquity and silent cinema. Museum of Dreams will ask how that encounter shaped both the memory of classical antiquity in the modern world and the history of cinema as a global medium. It will investigate silent films concerning classical antiquity as aesthetic works, commercial forms of entertainment and instruments of mass education - an education that, in its frequent imaginative focus on women and slaves and address to audiences diverse in gender, ethnicity and class, appeared to challenge the authority of elite cultural institutions like the public school or museum.



Screenshot from a film of 1909 where Nero sees a vision of Christian martyrs in the arena



Performance of a silent film with the pianist Michele Sganga



MUSEUM OF DREAMS – A NEW G&L RESEARCH PROJECT (cont.)

The project will use as its corpus the largest collection of surviving films, those in the British Film Institute's National Archive. At least 70 catalogued prints have ancient Greece or Rome as their focus and range widely in date, genre and country of origin. We will systematically investigate these unparalleled holdings as engagements with classical antiquity and establish a better understanding of both the modern reception of classical antiquity and the transnational history and status of silent cinema. By focusing on the BFI holdings, the project will also situate the UK firmly within the global network that produced, exhibited, consumed, and curated the classical antiquity films of the early twentieth century, and establish for those films an important educational legacy in the twenty-first century.

We hope that Museum of Dreams will considerably enrich the understanding of the role of classical antiquity in British culture in the early twentieth century compared to other countries and the process whereby access to it was democratised. We will present our findings in a research website that will also provide easy access to at least 30 digitised prints, and through other publications, workshops and screenings, we will bring attention to the importance of the BFI holdings and stimulate further research into them and, more broadly, into how the distant past can be recalled through modern media. We will also engage in the project professional stakeholders (architects, teachers, museum curators, and media practitioners) to help us create educational resources - and a legacy for these films that we hope will last well beyond the lifetime of the project.

Museum of Dreams begins in October 2023 and will last for three years. Along the way, we will be offering a series of public screenings of these films and will advertise them to you in case you are interested through the department's networks and on our website: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/research/research-projects/museum-dreams>.

PROF MARIA WYKE



**Arts and
Humanities
Research Council**



CLASSICS, LOVE, REVOLUTION: THE LEGACIES OF LUIGI SETTEMBRINI



Barbara Graziosi
(Princeton)

Our roundtable discussion this year featured Professors Andrea Capra (Durham) and Barbara Graziosi (Princeton). They discussed a new edition, introduction, and English-language translation of *The Neoplatonists* (*I Neoplatonici*) by Luigi Settembrini (1813-1876). The book revisits the legacies of Settembrini and puts them in dialogue with current debates about Classics.

We had a lively and energetic discussion at UCL on the afternoon of 14 March 2023. The event was a grand success, made all the more successful by the luminous brilliance of the many scholars who joined in the conversation. The respondents were Daniel Orrells (King's College London) and Beatrice Sica (UCL).



Andrea Capra
(Durham University)

For those who do not know him, here is a description of Luigi Settembrini given us to by the authors. Settembrini was a classical scholar and revolutionary condemned to death in 1849 for his role in the 1848 revolution in Naples. His wife managed to have his sentence commuted to life imprisonment in the infamous Panopticon on the island of Santo Stefano, where inmates often killed each other and torture was common. There he managed to translate the complete works of Lucian, testing his language by reading out his work to his illiterate cellmates, who often knew no standard Italian – and reflecting on Lucian's own attempts at creating a common language, humour, and popular philosophy. He wrote on women's rights, celebrated gay love (in a fake ancient fiction he ironically entitled *The Neoplatonists*, while in fact rejecting Catholic, Neoplatonic humiliations of the body), and worked relentlessly towards an egalitarian and ethnically diverse future for the Italian nation. Together with Garibaldi he planned a daring escape from the Panopticon, which failed at the last minute; later he was forcibly sent into exile to the United States, but, during the voyage there, two black sailors helped him and other Italian political prisoners to mutiny and disembark in Ireland. He returned to Italy in 1860, in the wake of unification. Back in Naples he oversaw the publication of the Herculaneum papyri; became Rector of the University; and was later elected Senator.

PROF PHIROZE VASUNIA



STEPHEN INSTONE MEMORIAL EVENT

Thursday 9 May 2024, 5:00-7:00 pm

Many alumni will remember our former colleague Stephen Instone (1954-2009) with great affection. He was a kind and inspiring teacher, and passionately devoted to the study of the Classical world (he worked particularly on the archaic Greek world, and knew alarmingly long chunks of Greek poetry by heart). He wore his learning very lightly, and was always friendly and informal in his manner; he was especially generous with his time and expertise if students needed extra help, or were worried about their studies.

We are delighted to announce a memorial event on **Thursday 9 May 2024**, to mark what would have been his 70th birthday, and 15 years since his death in a swimming accident in Switzerland. Professor Armand D'Angour from Oxford, an alumnus of the Department who knew Stephen, will give a lecture at UCL at 5pm entitled 'Socrates in Plato's *Symposium*', and this will be followed by a reception (details of the venue will be posted on the [website](#)). All alumni are warmly invited to this event. In 2010 the Stephen Instone Travel Fund was set up in his memory by family and friends, and since then has awarded bursaries to numerous BA and MA students for travel to ancient sites in the Mediterranean. Donations to this fund are welcome and will help enrich the education of future generations of students at UCL.



Ancient Greek monument in front of a blue sky

PROF STEPHEN COLVIN



GREEK AND LATIN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STAFF TEAM

The Department of Greek and Latin is fortunate to have the dedicated support of a three-person professional services staff team, consisting of a Departmental Manager, a Senior Teaching and Learning Administrator and a Postgraduate Students, Finance and Events Administrator.

For a few years now these roles had been filled by Robbie Macaulay, Stephanie Dutton and Alex Balciunas. Inevitably, after a few years, they were keen to apply the skills they had learned in Greek and Latin to something that was more specialized in line with their interests and more challenging. Thus, over the course of the past year they have all moved to other parts of UCL: in summer 2022 Alex Balciunas became a Senior Finance Officer in the Department of Physics and Astronomy; in January 2023 Robbie Macaulay became the Faculty Learning Technology Lead in The Bartlett, UCL's Faculty of the Built Environment; and in July 2023 Stephanie Dutton became the Student Records Liaison Officer for the UCL Faculty of Population Health Sciences and the UCL Faculty of Brain Sciences. We will miss all of them (and they say that they will miss us) and are immensely grateful for all their fantastic support for the Department over the years; at the same time, we see that these moves are good for them and wish them all the best in their new roles.

In the meantime, the Department is lucky enough to have a [new team](#), consisting of Jakir Ahmed, April Jones and Wendy Leung, who have joined the Department over the last few months. Wendy had been a student at UCL not long ago and had worked in the Student Centre before coming to Greek and Latin, and thus was familiar with UCL. Jakir and April, on the other hand, had a lot of administrative experience between them, but were both new to UCL. In any case it was great that some new people joined the Department with new ideas and fresh eyes, and they all settled in quickly, so that things continue to run smoothly. All staff and students are grateful to everyone involved in a seamless transition and are enjoying working with the new professional services staff team.

PROF GESINE MANUWALD



Newsletter
2023 | Issue 21



<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/ucl-greek-latin>