

GSAS Research Workshop 2017-2018

# Postclassicisms

Literary Secondariness  
in Antiquity and Beyond



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## Purpose of the Postclassicisms Workshop

This workshop seeks to interrogate the concept of the 'post-classical' as it is articulated in literature from antiquity to the present day, combining two fields of literary analysis that have only since recently been considered side by side.

The first of these disciplines deals with questions of intertextuality in the literature of ancient Greece and Rome. It is a commonplace of classical studies that one of the principal ways in which ancient texts generate meaning is through engagement with other works of literature. Our main purpose with this line of inquiry is to explore the diversity of modes which such engagement takes in antiquity, reconsidering the definition and applicability of terms like allusion, translation, and epitomization to specific texts. Through the consideration of select 'classical' texts such as Homer's epics, Athenian tragedy or Cicero's speeches, alongside the texts that were instrumental in asserting the status of these texts as 'classical', we aim to investigate how the process of canonization and related perceptions of originality and secondariness were formulated in different ancient contexts.

The other area of research which traditionally engages with the notion of the 'post-classical' is what is broadly termed reception studies. In literature, classical reception considers the ways in which texts from about 500 CE up to the present day 'receive', that is, react to, ancient texts. As in the first line of inquiry we here aim to consider the various forms that such intertextual relationships between ancient and modern texts have taken. We are especially interested in comparing the rhetorical strategies that modern authors employ to signal their continuation with and divergence from ancient models, on the one hand, with ancient practices of *imitatio* and *aemulatio*, on the other. Specific topics to be addressed may include: the change in the perception and valuation of originality over time; the practice and purpose of different types of translation; the continuation, or otherwise, of generic modes between antiquity and modernity.

The overall goal of our workshop is to bring together a diverse set of texts and authors, ranging from the Greek scholar-poet Callimachus in the 3rd century BCE or the Roman novelist Petronius in the 1st century CE, to Dante, Milton, and Anne Carson in the modern era, and to consider how all of them, in their respective ways, both construct an idealized classical literary past and attempt to transcend it in their own post-classical writings. Historically, the label 'post-classical' has often been used in derogatory fashion to devalue literary and other works of art that were perceived, on aesthetic or ideological grounds, as falling short of 'classical' standards. By critically surveying a broad range of texts as well as integrating a number of critical frameworks from different periods and disciplines we hope, in the domain of literature, to be able to overturn this bias and show that it is often the 'post-classical' dimension of a text that gives it its particular interest and, conversely, that most texts, however ancient or canonical, in some way always already attempt to subvert a real or perceived classical norm.

We aim to alternate SPEAKER EVENTS, where invited scholars and graduate students give papers and discuss their research, with BOOK DISCUSSIONS, where workshop participants read and critically engage with recent scholarly works. All our events are introduced and moderated by the two graduate student coordinators.

## 2016-17 Schedule of Events

September 14, 2016

BOOK DISCUSSION

Denis Feeney, *Beyond Greek: The Beginnings of Latin Literature* (2016)

September 28, 2016

BOOK DISCUSSION

Tim Whitmarsh, *Beyond the Second Sophistic: Adventures in Greek Postclassicism* (2013)

October 12, 2016

BOOK DISCUSSION

Benjamin Acosta-Hughes, *Arion's Lyre: Archaic Lyric into Hellenistic Poetry* (2010)

November 9, 2016

BOOK DISCUSSION

Edith Hall/Rosie Wyles eds. *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime* (2009)

February 15, 2017

BOOK DISCUSSION

Laura Jansen ed. *The Roman Paratext: Frame, Texts, Readers* (2014)

March 8, 2017

SPEAKER EVENT

Prof. John Hamilton (Harvard University)

"Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*: An Allegory of German Philhellenism"

March 26, 2017

SPEAKER EVENT

Dr. Tom Geue (University of St Andrews)

"Inventing Classicism: Longinus on the Sublime"

April 3, 2017

SPEAKER EVENT

Emily Hauser (PhD Candidate, Yale University)

"Homer Undone: Homeric Scholarship and the Invention of Female Epic"

April 21, 2017

SPEAKER EVENT

Prof. Brooke Holmes (Princeton University)

"Liquid Antiquity"

May 3, 2017

SPEAKER EVENT

Prof. Adam Gitner (University of Indiana, Bloomington)

"How to Avoid Greek in Latin: Purism and Classical Style in Horace"