

**The Cluster**  
**The Past for the Present**  
**International Research and Educational Programme**  
and  
**Our Mythical Childhood Programme**

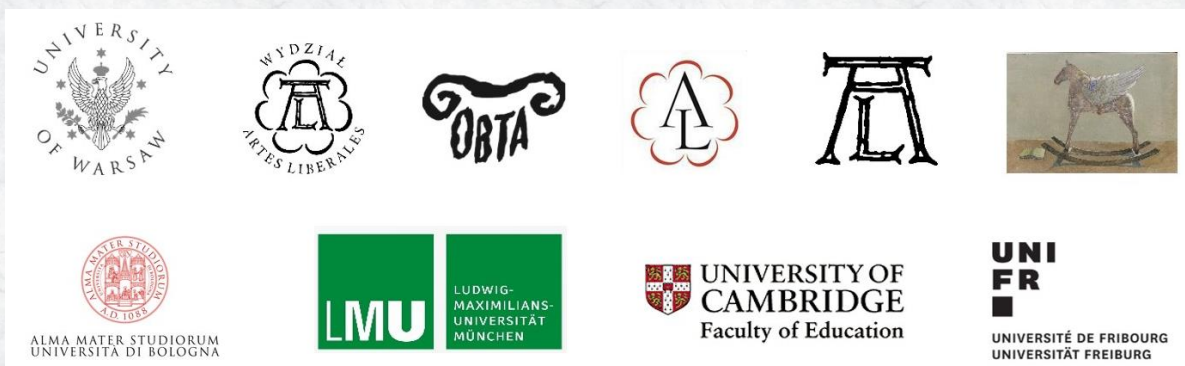
Conference Booklet

**Antiquity Today II:**  
**Inspiring, Inclusive, Universal**

The International Students' and PhD Students' Conference  
Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw  
October 16, 2023, online



Street signs bearing the names of Hera and Artemis in the neighbourhood of the Zeus Housing Estate in Warsaw, phot. Maria Makarewicz.



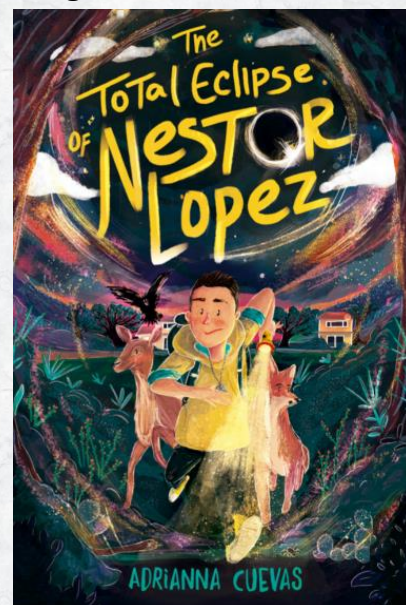


## ALVANITA

English Department, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta  
alvanita31@ugm.ac.id

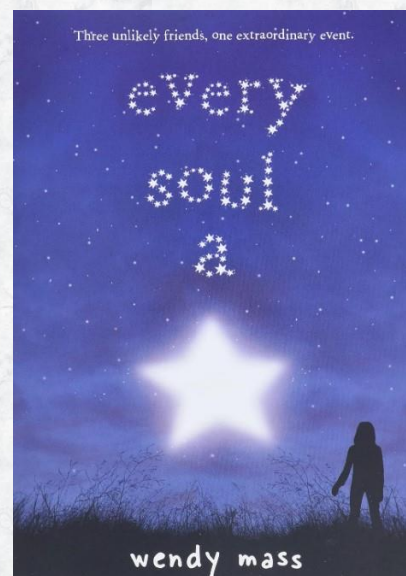
### Myth of Solar Eclipse in Two Selected Novels

Children's literature often serves as a conduit for conveying complex phenomena, and one such phenomenon is the solar eclipse. While lunar eclipses have been a recurring theme in children's literature, solar eclipses have received less attention in this context. Nevertheless, in the wake of the remarkable total solar eclipse that happened in the United States in 2017, certain children's literary works have been popular because of using the solar eclipse as a central theme. Noteworthy examples include *Total Solar Eclipse of Nestor Lopez* (2020) by Andrea Cuevas and *Every Soul A Star* (2008) by Wendy Mass, both of which narrate tales set against the backdrop of a solar eclipse. This study examines the role played by the solar eclipse in character development and the incorporation of mythical elements within these selected novels by employing David Leeming's theory of myth. This study illuminates how the solar eclipse symbolizes character growth, fostering enhanced self-confidence and self-acceptance, thereby reflecting the mythological notion that solar eclipses possess transformative potential. Furthermore, these novels encompass myths such as the act of "biting" during a solar eclipse and the tradition of Muslim prayers during this celestial phenomenon. However, this study also reveals instances of misinterpretation of these myths, thereby highlighting potential issues of cultural appropriation.



Book cover of Andrea Cuevas' *The Total Eclipse of Nestor Lopez* / [source](#)

ALVANITA (b. 1993) currently holds the position of a novice lecturer at the English Department of Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia. She has earned a Master's degree in Education, specializing in Children's Literature and Literacies, from the University of Glasgow. Her academic journey began at Universitas Gadjah Mada, where she obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in English. Alvanita's areas of expertise encompass children's literature, folklore, mythology, and picture books. She teaches Children's Literature, Introduction to Multiculturalism through Folklore and Mythology, Listening Skills, Academic Writing, and Children's Literature. Her present research interests revolve around children's literature in mythology, the intersection of children's literature and mental health, and the analysis of picture books. Her research includes exploring mental health through children's literature, creating imagination as coping mechanism in *Skellig* by David Almond (1998) and *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson (1977), and depiction of depression in four selected picture books.



Book cover of Wendy Mass' *Every Soul A Star* / [source](#)

\*\*

## ANNA BARANEK

Cultural Studies – Mediterranean Civilization, Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw  
a.baranek3@student.uw.edu.pl

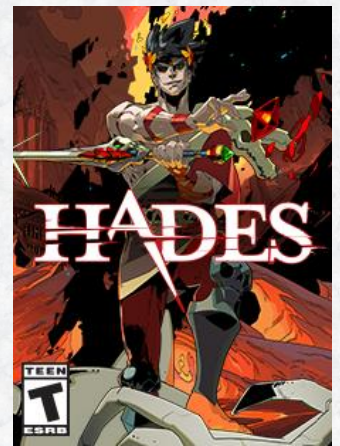
### Classical Antiquity in Digital Games: Different Examples of Reception

Digital games occupy a significant space in popular culture and possess qualities that film and literature do not, such as interactivity, deep immersion, and the ability to experiment on various levels: the story itself, the graphic design, but also the mechanics. As such, games create an opportunity to re-interpret and re-adapt well-known themes in fresh, experimental ways, the analysis of which can prove to be fascinating material for academic research. By looking at digital



games as multi-dimensional cultural texts and combining intertextual close-reading with an analysis of all aspects of game design mentioned above, this presentation will showcase and briefly analyse a few chosen examples of motifs inspired by Classical Antiquity (history and mythology) in digital games and will discuss the creative and educational possibilities stemming from them.

ANNA BARANEK is a second-year Master's degree student in the Cultural Studies – Mediterranean Civilization programme at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” of the University of Warsaw. Their academic interests centre around digital games (treated as cultural texts) and the way those can interact with various aspects of broadly understood culture, including Classical Antiquity.



Cover of the digital game *Hades* /source

\*\*

### ALESSIA BORRIELLO

Philology, Literature, and Classical Tradition, Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna /  
Tor Vergata University of Rome  
alessia.borriello@students.uniroma2.eu

### Tradition and Reception of Greek Homoerotic Epigrams

My PhD project aims to investigate the reception of ancient Greek homoerotic epigrams. The first part of my research will provide a philological account of the manuscript tradition of Greek homoerotic epigrams in the most relevant witnesses that have passed down to us the *Anthologia Graeca* (i.e., the collection of Greek epigrams that have come down to us from the ancient world). The second part will focus on the strategies of appropriation of homoerotic epigrams from Late Antiquity onwards. The dominant Christian culture led writers to a process I suggest calling “de-homoerotization” of the genre. This process involved the extrapolation of phrases into newly different Christian contexts, possibly leading to the manumission of homoerotic texts due to Christian censorship.

Recognizing the homoerotic nature of texts handed down to the present day under different labels can help us better understand the roots of motifs that have now become part of pop culture.



Painter of Briseis, *Ἐραστής (Lover) and ἐρώμενος (Beloved) Kissing*, tondo of an Attic red-figured cup, ca. 480 BC, Athens, inv. no. MN62/N3423/G278, The Louvre, Paris /source

ALESSIA BORRIELLO will begin her PhD programme at the Tor Vergata University of Rome in November 2023 (“Antichità Classiche e Loro Fortuna: Archeologia, Filologia, Storia”). She completed her Master's degree in Filologia, Letteratura e Tradizione Classica at Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna in March 2023. Her thesis in Greek Philology, titled *Riano, “Epigrammi”: edizione, traduzione, comment*, was conducted under the supervision of Prof. Lucia Floridi (Unibo) and Prof. Markus Janka (LMU). Her Bachelor thesis in Latin Grammar was titled *Abi in malem cursem: il latino magico di “The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina” (Netflix)* (Unibo, 2020).

Alessia Borriello has been collaborating with the Cluster: The Past for the Present – International Research and Educational Programme since 2019. She participated in an Erasmus+ study and internship programme with “Our Mythical Childhood” at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” of the University of Warsaw (UW) under the supervision of Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak. Additionally, she completed a one-year exchange programme at the Department of Greek and Latin Philology and the Didactics of Ancient Languages at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU), under the guidance of Prof. Markus Janka.



As part of her work with “Our Mythical Childhood”, she co-developed a didactic game for children based on classical mythology in collaboration with Ludovica Lusvardi. This game is named *Olympus Ready-to-Wear*. For the Cluster: The Past for the Present, she has been collaborating since 2019 in the public reading of the Classics, with supervision of Prof. Valentina Garulli of the University of Bologna, within the international event at the initiative of the Festival Européen Latin Grec de Lyon.

\*\*

### SUSAN DEACY

Classics and Ancient History, University of Bristol  
susan.deacy@bristol.ac.uk

#### **“At every crossroads”: Hercules and Medusa through a Neurodivergent Prism**

This paper will offer a new perspective on the borderlines of “antiquity” and “now” by outlining the potential of experiential applications of myths of Hercules and Medusa by autistic people.

\*\*

### IRENE DI GIOIA

Department of Philosophy (Classical Philology), Georg-August-University of Göttingen /  
Department of Classical Philology and Italian Studies, Alma Mater Studiorum – University of  
Bologna  
irene.digioia@stud.uni-goettingen.de

#### **Digital Game-Based Learning for Ancient Greek: A Tool to Promote the Intercultural Competence**

Survey has been conducted online since 10th May 2023 at 1 p.m. until 1st June 2023 at 1 p.m. via different social networks through a Google Forms questionnaire.

The total number of respondents to the questionnaire was 345 which come from different parts of the world: 2 from the Middle East (i.e., Egypt, Syria), 6 from South America (i.e., Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica), 8 from the USA, 4 from Australia, 30 from Europe without counting Italy (i.e., Belgium, Croatia, Czech rep., Germany, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine), 37 from the UK, and 244 from Italy.

As for the age of the respondents, the questionnaire differentiates into 13 age groups (13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20–30, 30–40, 40–50, 50–60, 60–70, 70+).

The questionnaire has been open to learners and non-learners, as it seemed sensible to the researcher to understand which overall and shared perceptions, thoughts and feelings are connected to ancient Greek around the world. This decision is justified by the desire to understand if there are indeed some shared negative feelings towards ancient Greek (e.g., demotivation, anxiety, fear, discouragement, etc.), to try to find solutions to such hypothetical negative feelings and to better direct the didactical intervention.

From the questionnaire’s collected data, it has been found that the potential role of ancient Greek as intercultural means to better understand one’s own but mostly other cultures is perceived by more mature learners and non-learners, but not by young learners (aged 13–15).

Such data is of great importance as it suggests a didactical intervention towards a more intercultural framework which could, e.g., present the ancient Greek culture not on its own but mostly in comparison with other ancient and modern cultures in order to promote an intercultural reasoning and a critical point of view



Image of computer by R-region (2022), Pixabay /[source](#)



of human cultures.

To the question “The main reason I learn ancient Greek is” most respondents have selected “cultural enrichment” and secondly “personal interest/curiosity”. The fact that learners and non-learners identify the reason why they are or would be learning ancient Greek with “cultural enrichment” consolidates the idea that ancient Greek can indeed represent a strong tool to develop and reinforce intercultural competence. By intercultural competence, it is considered that ability that allows one to: observe, decentralize, and estrange oneself in order to get to know a new culture and its aspects without preconceptions or emotional filters; learn to suspend judgement and ask for explicative feedback on not understood aspects of other cultures; learn to relativize and to actively listen; and learn to emotionally understand others both empathetically, i.e., participating on an emotional level and in an “ex-optic” (i.e., external) way, i.e., recognizing their own differences and others as natural and obvious (Paolo E. Balboni, “Didattica delle lingue in prospettiva interculturale”, in Matteo La Grassa and Donatella Troncarelli, eds., *Orientarsi in rete. Didattica delle lingue e tecnologie digitali*, Siena: Becarelli, 2016, pp. 24–41). Within the development of the PhD’s research, the researcher is going to develop a video game to teach ancient Greek language and culture. A fundamental role will be given to cultural bonuses designed to encourage reasoning and reflection and to target development of civil society and cultural awareness combined with an ability of expression (i.e., intercultural competence). Therefore, the goal of such bonuses will be to teach ancient Greek cultural aspects but at the same time, when appropriate, to interconnect these aspects to some of other cultures in a global citizenship key of reading, such as proposed by Vanessa de Andreotti (“Soft versus Critical Global Citizenship Education”, in Stephen McCloskey, *Development Education in Policy and Practice*, London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014, pp. 21–31). This decision is justified by the desire to develop aforementioned intercultural competence (cf. supra) and to teach learners to consider other cultures’ point of view critically and actively in order to promote interculturality, multiculturalism, ethnic diversity acceptance, reflexivity, dialogue, contingency, and an ethical relation to difference (i.e., radical alterity) (de Andreotti, 2014) and to discourage racism, discrimination, and cultural bias and prejudices.

IRENE DI GIOIA has concluded her Bachelor degree in Classical Studies at the Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna in March 2020 with an Erasmus period of 6 months at the Leipzig University in Germany where she has been language tutor for the Italian language. In October 2022 she has obtained her Master’s degree at the University for Foreigners of Siena in Didactics of Italian as a foreign language with a thesis on the use of digital resources to teach ancient Greek online. Since November 2022 she has been doing her PhD in Didactics of Classical Languages (with focus on ancient Greek) at the University of Göttingen in Germany in co-tutelle with Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna in Italy, under the supervision of Prof. Peter Kuhlmann (University of Göttingen) and Prof. Giovanna Alvoni (Unibo).

She has been working for the Italian company Sirius Game as Head of Didactics, Research and Development. Since October 2023 she has been teaching Italian at the University Language Centre of the University of Göttingen.

\*\*

## **RAIMUND FICHTEL**

Classical Philology, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich  
raimund.fichtel@klassphil.uni-muenchen.de

### **The Art of Killing – or: How to Depict Emperor Caligula?**

Hardly any other emperor of Antiquity is associated with cruelty, violence and sadism as much as Emperor Caligula. It is not for nothing that Erich Fromm calls him a prime example of a sadist in his work *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973) and therefore devotes a separate analysis to him and his character. But how to depict Caligula’s cruelty? And what are the differences in the depiction of his violence between antiquity and modernity? By comparing an ancient and a modern example, an approach will be attempted and a look will also be taken at the role mythology plays in the depiction of violence.

\*\*



## KATHARINA GERHOLD

Classics, Medieval and Neolatin Studies, University of Vienna  
katharina.gerhold@univie.ac.at

and

## ERIC KUNZ

Latin, Biology and Education, Ancient History, University of Vienna / Centre for Teaching and Learning / Department of Ancient History, Epigraphy and Papyrology, University of Vienna  
eric.andreas.kunz@univie.ac.at

### **Staius' *Thebais* on Stage – A Workshop Report from the University of Vienna**

This presentation will offer an insight into a recent staging of Staius' *Thebais* (A Song of Thebes) at the University of Vienna, directed by Prof. Andreas Heil, performed by students and employees of the Department of Classics, Medieval and Neolatin Studies. First, we will briefly discuss which episodes of the *Thebais* were chosen and how the original epic text was adapted for a theatre performance. Subsequently, we will present pictures and video scenes showing how set and props were arranged and what was used to introduce different time levels. Finally, we will explain our interpretation of the *Thebais'* ending with regard to the omnipresent topic of violence and war.

KATHARINA GERHOLD studied Latin, Italian and Education at the University of Vienna. After attaining her Master's degree (2022) she started her doctoral studies at the Department of Classics, Medieval and Neolatin Studies at the University of Vienna. In her dissertation, supervised by Prof. Hartmut Wulfram, she deals with pagan gods and their representation in the works of Leon Battista Alberti (*Intercenales, Momus, Apologi centum*), an Italian humanist of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, focusing on his reception of classical models.

ERIC KUNZ studies Latin, Biology and Education, as well as Ancient History at the University of Vienna. Besides his studies he works at the Centre for Teaching and Learning and is working closely with the Department of Ancient History, Epigraphy and Papyrology at the University of Vienna.

\*\*

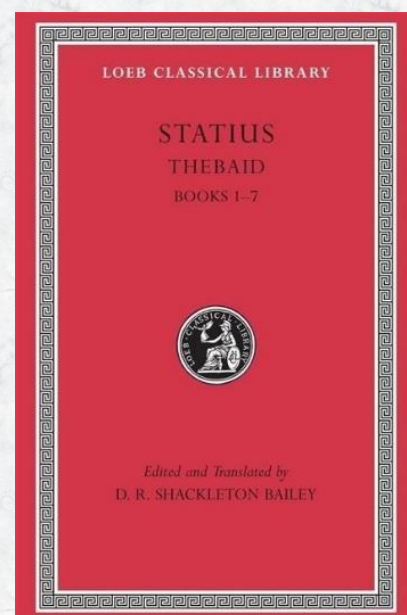
## DAVIDE IENGO

Classical Philology, University of Pisa / Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa  
davide.iengo@sns.it

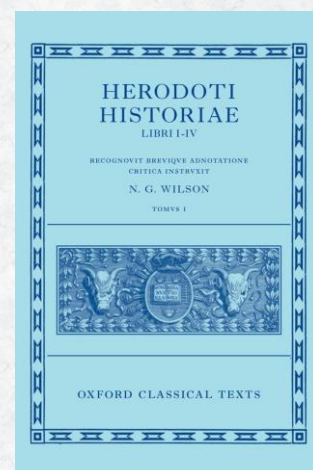
### **“I understand the deaf-mute and hear the words of the dumb”: Framing the Depiction of Disabilities in Herodotus' *Histories***

“So that no great deed, done by the Greeks or the barbarians alike, will ever fade away into oblivion” – Herodotus' very first methodological claim in the beginning of his monumental historical work casts a light onto a conception of humanity as an organic, complex entity, capable of conceiving and creating awe-inspiring actions, works and ideas. One specific aspect of “inclusiveness” will be taken into account in this contribution: Herodotus' depiction of disability, within the broader context of the classical period of Greek literature. After an attempt to trace a broader notion of “inclusiveness” in Herodotus' very own historiographical method, based on the so-called principle of “cultural relativism”, a few examples will be provided to analyse more closely how, why, and for which purpose disability is present (and presented) in the *Histories*.

DAVIDE IENGO (b. 2001) is a student of Classical Philology at the University of Pisa and at the Scuola Normale Superiore. He graduated *cum*



Book cover of Staius' *Thebaid* /[source](#)



Book cover of Herodotus' *Histories* /[source](#)



*laude* with a Bachelor thesis about Aristophanes' "comedies of women"; his research interests revolve mainly around ancient and classical lyrical poetry, theatre and oratory, alongside with a strong passion towards languages and the processes, forms and aims of translation. In 2022/23 he participated in an Erasmus+ study and internship programme at the Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

\*\*

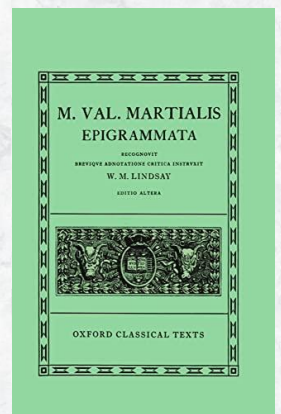
## PATRICK KÖNIG

Classical Philology / Didactics of Ancient Languages, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich  
patrick.koenig@klassphil.uni-muenchen.de

### ***Martialis, quid ad te? Factual and Fictional Critique in the Epigrammata***

To a significant extent, Martial reflects on his own poetry in the *Epigrammata*. These reflections concern many different things, such as the obscene choice of words, the scope of his books or the length of his poems, the ideal recipient as well as malicious readers and, last but not least, his own world fame. The paper presents this complex of themes using the example of a single epigram (7.10): Here, Martial criticises a man named Olus for a behaviour that in many respects reminds us of the poet himself. In a metapoetic way, Martial speaks about himself and his literary approach.

PATRICK KÖNIG studied Latin, Ancient Greek, and Philosophy at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich for the teacher training certificate for Bavarian grammar schools. Since 2022, he has been working as a research assistant at the Department of Classical Philology / Didactics of Ancient Languages headed by Prof. Markus Janka at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. In his doctoral thesis, he deals with the poetological and genre-theoretical aspects in the *Epigrams* of Martial.



Book cover of  
Martialis'  
*Epigrammata*  
/source

\*\*

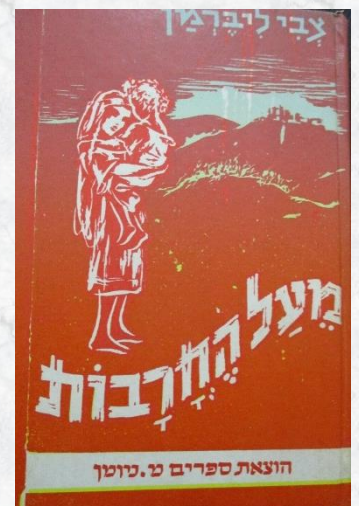
## GIACOMO LOI

Hebrew and Comparative Literature, University of Haifa  
drgiacomo.loi@gmail.com

### **From the Other Side of the Fence: Classical Antiquity and Modern Jewish Identity in Zvi Livne's *Over the Ruins* (1938)**

In my paper I discuss the reception of the Roman-Jewish Wars in the Modern Hebrew children's novel *Over the Ruins* by Zvi Livne/Lieberman (*Me'al ha-ḥurvot*, publ. 1938) as a means to build a new modern Jewish identity in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Jewish settlement in Palestine.

First, I present the plot of the novel and of its cinematic adaptation, directed by Nathan Axelrod in 1938, as well as its reception among young readers. Second, I show how the artworks equate the Roman threat with the Nazi persecution. Third, I look at the allegorical construction of the novel: built on the Zionist historical periodization and geo-ethnographical division of Jewish history (Land of Israel as freedom versus Diaspora as oppression), Livne dramatizes, on one hand, the destruction of ancient Jewish freedom in the Roman-Jewish Wars; on the other, the author allegorizes the creation of Jewish settlements in Palestine as communes (*kibbutz*) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The connection between the two periods is granted by the "parents-children" genealogical metaphor applied to the relationship between the Jewish inhabitants of ancient Palestine and modern-day Mandatory Palestine – a straightforward message for the young readers, seen as future re-enactors of novel's



Book cover of Zvi Livne's  
*Over the Ruins* /source



symbolic storyline.

In conclusion, I argue that Livne presents a case in point in the reception of Classical Antiquity – seen from the eyes of the “enemies” of that Antiquity – as part of a pedagogical and ideological project targeted at the Jewish children in British Mandatory Palestine.

GIACOMO LOI is an Azrieli International Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at the University of Haifa. He earned his BA and MA in Classics from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, and completed his PhD at Johns Hopkins University, where he wrote the dissertation *Our Quarrel Is of Old: Classical Reception in Modern Hebrew Literature*. He is the winner of the Columbia University New Perspectives in Jewish Studies Award. His interests lie at the intersection of different cultures in Modern Hebrew and Jewish literature, with a particular focus on the reception of Graeco-Roman and European culture.

\*\*

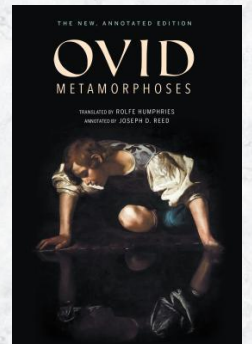
### CLARE MAHON

Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge  
cm2003@cam.ac.uk

#### **Disability in Myth: Ovid’s *Echo and Narcissus***

*Echo and Narcissus* is perhaps one of the most popular stories to come out of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, with a multitude of iterations and references, each of which create a new nuance to the story. The aim of my research is to explore the facets of some of these, and to examine what effects language and narrative choice have. This presentation will explore how Ovid’s use of Latin can be used to construct a narrative of disability and what a disabled reading of this text might look like.

CLARE MAHON is a third year part-time doctoral candidate at the University of Cambridge. She studies disability in myth, focusing especially on hidden disability and neurodiversity in Ovid’s *Echo and Narcissus*. As an autistic researcher, she is especially passionate about how the worlds of Crip Theory, education, and Classics can combine. She also teaches Latin and Classics part time at a secondary school in Cambridge.



Book cover of  
Ovid’s  
*Metamorphoses*  
[/source](#)

\*\*

### MARIA PIA NAPOLITANO DE MAJO

Language Education, Faculty of Languages and Literatures, Ludwig Maximilian University,  
Munich  
mpia.demajo@gmail.com

#### **Another “Reunion”: The Homeric scene in Louise Glück’s *Meadowlands***

Following second-wave feminism and the emergence of new communication technologies, American women’s poetry diversified and proliferated during the 1990s. Interestingly, female authors found that being in dialogue with the canonical classical literature would validate their authorial voice despite their womanhood. Of course, the relationship with the classical tradition did not come through without questioning it, creating a whole new wave of literature called feminist revisionist mythology. Many authors indulged in this sort of critical attitude such as Carl Ann Duffy, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, Louise Glück, Adrienne Rich, Margaret Atwood. This paper analyses one poem from Louise Glück’s lyrical book *Meadowlands* (1996), “Reunion”.

The narratological analysis of the poem brings forward a new perspective on the eventfulness of the reunion scene between the Homeric characters Odysseus and Penelope. Therefore, it



allows a more in-depth comparative analysis of the Odyssean narration with its contemporary rewriting. This kind of critical approach shows that Classics have a decisive role in our society as a common language that activates discourses that are relevant to the present and that can be a fuel for change in the future.

MARIA PIA NAPOLITANO DE MAJO (b. 1996) began working on Homer for her Bachelor thesis on the linguistic aspects of translations, focusing on the rendering of epithets. Starting her academic journey at the University of Naples, Federico II, she then continued her studies at the Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna. Her Master's thesis focused on the innovations in the methodologies and technologies for the inclusive study of ancient Greek's grammar. She then presented a research project on the reception of Penelope in contemporary female American writings and won a PhD scholarship at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. Maria Pia is currently working on her thesis under the supervision of Prof. Markus Janka and Prof. Giovanna Alvonì.

\*\*

### MARTA PSZCZOLIŃSKA

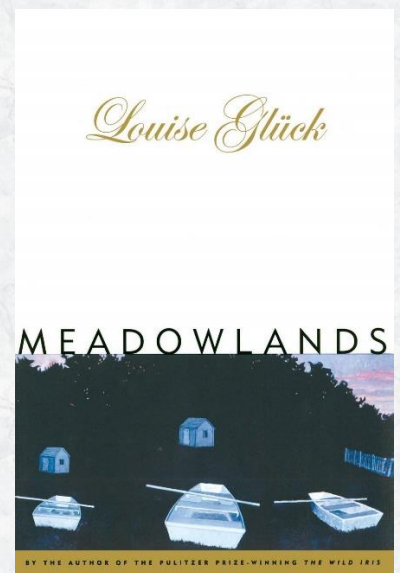
Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw  
m.pszczolinska@al.uw.edu.pl

#### Calliope, a Goddess Abused in *The Sandman* Netflix Series

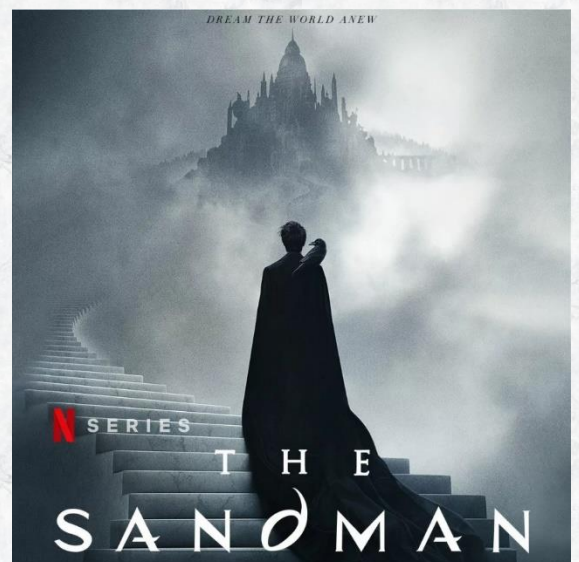
Calliope, the final episode of Season One of *The Sandman* (2022), is a self-contained story, loosely related to the main plot. It is based on Neil Gaiman's graphic novel, originally published in 1990 within the DC Comics series. Apart from Morpheus (aka Oneiros), who is the leading character of the series, the episode presents the Muse Calliope as the protagonist. Captured by mortals, the goddess is abused for years and forced to provide them with inspiration. The presentation analyses how the episode uses the Muse's fate to raise the issue of physical and mental domestic violence happening to women all over the world. The abuse is presented as a situation which could occur to any woman, regardless of her status, fame, power, or even immortality. The means of artistic expression used within the adaptation aim to make the story more emotional and impactful for the viewer than in the graphic novel. By showing the oppressors treating the Muse as property, humiliating and defiling her, the narrative highlights the victims' perspective in the difficult theme of violence. Calliope's example shows the universal dimension of myths, raising questions about the limits of humaneness and decency, or even inspiration and intellectual property.

MARTA PSZCZOLIŃSKA is an alumna of Cultural Studies – Mediterranean Civilization at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” at the University of Warsaw where she also worked within the project “Our Mythical Childhood” supported by the European Research Council Consolidator Grant. She works mainly on the reception of Greek and Roman Antiquity in Polish children's and teenagers' literature, animation, and educational materials of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the period of communist Poland (1945–1989). She is currently working on her project “Classical Antiquity in Periodicals for Children and Young Adults in Polish People's Republic (PRL) – Classical Education, Promotion of Political Ideology, or Expression of Resistance? Change in the Reception of Classics in the PRL from 1945 to 1989”. For this project she obtained the National Science Centre (NCN) Preludium 21 Grant.

\*\*



Book cover of Louise Glück's *Meadowlands* /source



Poster of the *The Sandman* film Series /source



## EMILY RUSHTON

Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge  
ekr24@cam.ac.uk

### **The Musical – The Drama behind Undertaking Performance Research**

This conference paper explores the innovative integration of performance methods inspired by ancient drama and narrative techniques. Combining music and drama, the piece unveils the complexities and challenges inherent in employing alternative methodologies in academic research. Central to the presentation is the utilisation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, entwining narratives and mini-episodes, as a case study. Join us as we journey through the creative and scholarly intersections, revealing the transformative power of performance in the realm of academia.

EMILY RUSHTON is a teacher, performer and PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge. She is developing a therapeutic intervention for schools to use to support wellbeing for students with socio-emotional mental health conditions using the creative exploration of mythology. She uses participatory and performance research, the findings of which will be presented through new musical writing. Alongside her doctoral work, Emily is an Assistant Headteacher and special educational needs and disabilities consultant for the Girl's Day School Trust. She has recently worked with the Faculty of Education to develop their climate education framework.

\*\*

## BERKAN SARIAYDIN

Latin, German, and Philosophy, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich  
berkan.sariaydin@klassphil.uni-muenchen.de

### **The “Shield” of Pallas – Ovid’s Vergilian “Ekphrasis”**

It is not only the present day that has discovered the ancient texts for itself. That they were inspiring, inclusive and universal was already known in Antiquity. The Arachne episode in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* can be seen as a prime example of an inner-antique reception that can also be instructive for the study of today's Antiquity. My lecture, however, will follow a different path than usual: instead of starting from Arachne's fabric and placing it in relation to the poetology of the *Metamorphoses* as a whole, I am primarily interested in examining the fabric of the goddess Pallas. Indeed, an analysis of form and content will reveal that this is a transformation of the shield, ekphrasis' in the eighth book of the *Aeneid*. Through a skilful intertextual play, Ovid in fact takes the Vergilian myth ad absurdum and thus once again poses the great question of power and morality, to which Vergil had given a cautious answer.



Tintoretto, *Athena and Arachne* (1575–85),  
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence /[source](#)

BERKAN SARIAYDIN studied Latin, German, and Philosophy at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU). Since 2018 he has been working on his doctoral thesis that deals with artworks in the epics of Vergil and Ovid under the supervision of Prof. Markus Janka (funded by Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes) and since 2022 he is also working as a teacher. He is a member in the Class of Language Education of the Graduate School of Language & Literature of LMU Munich and worked as a research assistant in the Excellence Cluster “HistorMythos” (directed by Prof. Markus Janka). In 2023 the book *Mythen multimedial* (co-edited with Prof. Markus Janka and Raimund Fichtel) is finally going to be published by the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt.

\*\*



## SONJA SCHREINER

Classical Philology, Medieval and Neolatin Studies, University of Vienna  
sonja.schreiner@univie.ac.at / sonja.schreiner@vetmeduni.ac.at

### Deep in the Water & High in the Sky: Inspiring, Inclusive, and Universal Aspects of Antiquity Today in Christoph Ransmayr and Jessie Sima

Seven people terribly afraid of water are the protagonists in Christoph Ransmayr's *Damen & Herren unter Wasser* (2007). Their transformation into aquatic animals becomes an effective remedy for their anxiety. Highly poetic language (typical for the Austrian author) describes, beautiful photographs (taken by Manfred Wakolbinger) illustrate, and memorable music (artfully realized on the trumpet by Franz Hautzinger) accompany each metamorphosis. Becoming part of the silent underwater world through a mythical process of change means therapy, brings a new quality of life, and secures a better existence. Jessie Sima's picture books *Not Quite Narwhal* (2017), *Perfectly Pegasus* (2022), and *Weather Together* (2023), forming what the American author and illustrator calls "Not Quite Narwhal and Friends", show the positive and invincible force of friendship, tolerance, and harmonious co-existence: The male unicorn Kelp and the female winged horse Nimbus experience adventures and live interspecies friendship. Kelp, who has grown up with narwhals, learns that he can and will have two families – although he is different and belongs to another species. Solitary Nimbus generally likes the sky as her natural habitat, but more and more frequently feels terribly alone. Following a fallen star, she by chance gets to know Kelp and his friends and families and later realizes that also cloudy days are worth living. Ransmayr's texts for adult readers and Sima's stories for the little ones incorporate many genres (literature, art, and music) and vividly present modern adaptations and transformed versions of ancient myths, in other words: inspiring, inclusive, and universal aspects of Antiquity today, thereby giving hope (and joy) to all of us.

A little browsing:

[www.jessiesima.com](http://www.jessiesima.com)

[www.christoph-ransmayr.de](http://www.christoph-ransmayr.de)

A little listening:

[www.mandelbaum.at/buecher/christoph-ransmayr-franz-hautzinger/damen-und-herren-unter-wasser/media](http://www.mandelbaum.at/buecher/christoph-ransmayr-franz-hautzinger/damen-und-herren-unter-wasser/media)

A little reading:

Sonja Schreiner, „Sagenumwoben. Märchenhaftes Habitat phantastischer Unterwasserwesen“, *JuLit* 49/2 (2023) = *Bitte Meer Bücher! Das große Blau als literarisches Motiv*, 32–40.

A little watching:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=88hn62gD2c8%20](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88hn62gD2c8%20)

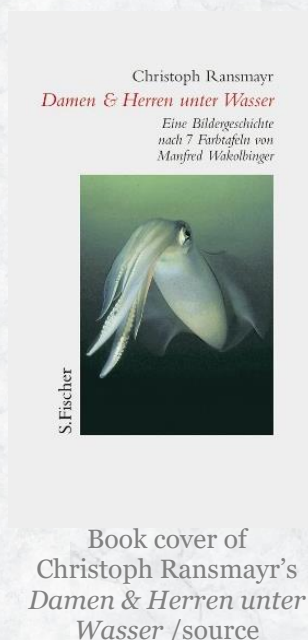
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wXJ8faXS78](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wXJ8faXS78)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzxH39ELk8M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzxH39ELk8M)

DR SONJA SCHREINER is a Neolatinist and comparatist, a researcher in the Department of Classical Philology, Medieval and Neolatin Studies at the University of Vienna and a lecturer in Latin at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna, as well as an Associate Member of the Cluster: The Past for the Present – International Research and Educational Programme. Together with her colleagues, Prof. Gabriela Kompatscher and Dr Svenja Springer, Dr Schreiner has written two innovative handbooks focusing on Human-Animal relationships. Both books are available in Open Access:



Covers of the books co-written by Dr Sonja Schreiner /sources: 1, 2



Book cover of Christoph Ransmayr's *Damen & Herren unter Wasser* /source



Gabriela Kompatscher & Sonja Schreiner, *(Un)gleiches Miteinander. Konzepte, Methoden und Ideen zu Mensch-Tier-Beziehungen in einem tierethisch begleiteten Lateinunterricht*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2022.

Gabriela Kompatscher & Sonja Schreiner, mit einem Beitrag von Svenja Springer, *(Artger)echtes Leben lehren. Human-Animal Studies im Literaturunterricht und in anderen Fächern*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2022.

\*\*

### **PIOTR WOJTYRA**

Cultural Studies – Mediterranean Civilization, Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw

p.wojtyra@student.uw.edu.pl, piotr.wojtyra@gazeta.pl

#### **Something’s Fishy... Siren-Mermaids in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt***

In the world of the CRPG game *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* (CD Projekt Red, 2015) appear sirens. These monsters have features of aquatic animals, but are able to fly, which suggests that their origin may be traced to both Graeco-Roman and North European mythologies. In Romance languages, as well as in Polish, there is only one word denoting both sirens and mermaids. This is a testimony to the blending of two different mythical creatures into one across the centuries – examples of this process can also be found in medieval bestiaries. The sirens in *The Witcher* are probably mediated through these texts rather than inspired directly by ancient mythology. At the same time the authors of the game are very conscious about the dual origin of these monsters – taking into account that nowadays sirens and mermaids are again perceived as completely different creatures.



Cover of the CRPG game *The Witcher* /[source](#)

PIOTR WOJTYRA graduated in Cultural Studies – Mediterranean Civilization at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” at the University of Warsaw. He specializes in studying reinterpretations of European culture in fictional worlds of the fantasy genre.

\*\*

### **FATIMA ZAHRA**

General and Comparative Literature, Dr Moulay Tahar University of Saida



