



Alex Elvidge dressed as Apollo

BLAZING SUCCESS: Future Endeavours

2018 has seen great successes for our future and former graduates. This spring, two of our graduands, **Alex Elvidge** (Honours in Classics) and **Anna Phipps-Burton** (Honours in Religious Studies and Classics), are recipients of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) award, valued at \$17,500 for their graduate studies. Alex, who won the **Nicole Knox Memorial Prize** this year for excellence in the ancient languages, will be pursuing a Master's in Classics at Queen's University in September. Anna too will enrol at McMaster University's Master's programme in Religious Studies (in the Asian field of study); she is the first Religious Studies student to achieve her honours degree via a thesis option. Her thesis is titled "Re-Examining Devotionalism in Rāmānuja's

Gītābhāṣya: A Comparative Study of the *Gītābhāṣyas* of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja," supervised by **Dr. Christopher Austin**.

Two Dal Classics Master's graduates of 2016 are also pursuing further education this September. **Alex Edwards** (BA Hons. 2014, MA 2016) will begin a PhD at the University of Ottawa's Department of Philosophy. **Aaron Shenkman** (BA Hons. 2014, MA 2016, Governor General's Gold Medal) will also be moving to Ottawa this year; he will join Carleton University's Cultural Mediations programme as a PhD student.

We wish Anna, Aaron and the two Alex-antes all the best for their future endeavours!

We are also proud to announce that **Marielle Nicol**, graduating this May with honours in Religious Studies and Classics, will receive the 2018 **Patrick Atherton Book Prize**. The Patrick Atherton Book Prize is conferred each year to recognize the best student in our Introductory Latin class. It is not Marielle's first demonstration of linguistic brilliance; in 2017, she won the **Don Hambrick Book Prize** for outstanding results in Introductory Greek. She has also achieved an honourable mention in the **Classical**

Association of Canada's Sight Translation Award in Ancient Greek this year. Congratulations to Marielle, and we hope to see many more success stories in the years to come!



Marielle Nicol



HOT OFF THE PRESS!

Dionysius XXXV (2017) out now!

Dionysius XXXV (2017) is out now! The Department of Classics at Dalhousie University has been publishing *Dionysius* since 1977. The journal considers philosophy's relation, both negative and positive, to Christian belief in both ancient and modern times. As well as philosophical articles, *Dionysius* publishes articles on Classical and later literature and history, and on Hellenic, Christian, Jewish and Islamic religion,

especially when they have a connection to philosophical questions.

Dr. Wayne Hankey writes regarding the latest issue: "The "Wisdom Belongs to God" Colloquium and the "God Everyday and Everywhere" Conference, which united us for a week last June, complemented each other nicely. The interplay of the essays in this volume of *Dionysius* is the happy result.

Reason's self-criticism in the Hellenic tradition developed further as it increasingly understood itself through its difference from and need for the older cultures of the East and South. That internal transcendence was forwarded and augmented as Hellenism embraced Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and created its future. Reason's *Scientia* limited itself through metaphysical *Sapientia*, and both were drawn by self-negation, love, and grace into the *Epekeina*.

The life of Platonism is that *Itinerarium* where the ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὡυτή of Heraclitus, "The way up and the way down are the same," is given substance. This brings us to a theme which kept emerging throughout our splendid week, and is strong in the papers published both in this volume and in the next (*Dionysius XXXV & XXXVI*). That it emerged from a company so dispersed in time, place, work, and circumstance shows how important our community is to the advance of the Platonism of which Aristotle is an adherent.

The Principle is not an abstraction. It is not the empty extremity of reason's reach. Because the *Epekeina* is truly transcendent, it is also the sole totally immanent, existing as the unity, goodness, truth, power, and being of everything. God is Everyday and Everywhere.

The Ineffable does not stand on the side of reason and spirit against sense and body. Platonism is not Manichean dualism, but its overcoming, as Augustine laboriously discovered. Theurgy is not the decadence of Hellenism, but the union of philosophy and religion, and, as Augustine remarked, what Christians call sacraments. In Platonism corporality is found and affirmed diversely at every level.

Tim Riggs set our reflections in the direction they spontaneously took, when, in the very first paper of that week, he outlined why "what human beings can know is only what God has given them to know, directly and indirectly," and went on to show how the Good is already given in sense-perception. I might work through the other articles in this volume to show how Tim, Olivier Boulnois, Elizabeth Curry-King, Evan King, Nathan McAllister, and I bring Heraclitus, Protagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Epictetus, Cicero, St. Paul, Seneca, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Ambrose, Augustine, Pelagius, Proclus, Gregory & Marcina of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, (Ps.-?) Simplicius, Philoponus, Priscian, Damascius, Dionysius, Olympiodorus, Boethius, Eriugena, Athanasius the Librarian, Avicenna, Anselm, Abelard, John the Sarracen, Albertus Magnus,

Aquinas, Bonaventure, Olieu, Duns Scotus, Ockham, Pierre d'Ailly, ps-Roger Bacon, Eckhart, Tauler, Cusanus, Ficino, Traversari, Denys the Carthusian, Descartes, Leibniz, Pascal, Schelling, Hegel, Etienne Gilson, Michel Corbin, Martin Heidegger, Henri de Lubac, Henry Duméry, Stanislas Breton, George Grant, James Doull, Bernard Lonergan, Jean Trouillard, Pierre Hadot, Robert Crouse, Henry Chadwick, René Gauthier, and Leonard Boyle alive for us in this volume.

They are in an interchange from which neither they nor us escape without being changed.

This interplay, the linguistic, philological, and historical disciplines, which enable listening, and the philosophical and theological appropriation and judgment which are its medium, are the life of our Department. This gathering in shows that, hints at its extent and influence, and carries it forward.”

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Response to “Unum necessarium: Meister Eckhart, The Ground and the Theology in the Vernacular”

NATHAN MCALLISTER

To purchase this volume and/or previous volumes of Dionysius, please write to dionysius@dal.ca. Online access is available as well.

STUDENT PROFILES

Irene Serra recently completed a semester at Dalhousie University as a visiting **Erasmus Scholar**. Irene writes: “I am an Italian PhD student, working on the Aristotelian account of the Infinite in the Corpus Aristotelicum,



Visiting Erasmus scholar Irene Serra

especially in the physical and cosmological works. Since I was a student in High School, I have loved philosophy and human sciences in general, and for this reason I decided to study philosophy at the University of Cagliari, the main University in Sardinia (where I live). There I discovered my passion for ancient philosophy and for the mathematical aspects present in it.

I decided to come to the Department of Classics at Dalhousie for several reasons: first of all to work under the supervision of **Dr. Eli Diamond**, an Aristotelian scholar who, I knew, could guide my research project with care and dedication, giving me some precious advice. I also expected to find a good environment and kind people.

Until now, not only have I dedicated my life to the study ancient philosophy and Aristotle's thoughts, but I have also cultivated my passions such as literature, cinema, gardening, swimming and cooking. I participated in the cultural initiatives of my village, taking an active part in the organisation of events.

It is hard to find the right words to explain what my experience at the Classics Department has been like; it has been such an amazing and wonderful experience. To resume I can say “I have never felt in the opposite part of the Ocean, so far from home.” And from the point of view of my work, it has been a very productive experience, and I think I had intellectual and linguistic growth as well.”



George Saad, a native of Chicago, writes to us: “I will receive my M.A. in Classics in May after two years of study. I arrived at Dalhousie in the fall of 2016. I am an American citizen raised in the Chicagoland area. I began my study of classics in high school, taking two years of college-level Latin at Loyola Academy in Wilmette, IL. I originally matriculated at the University of Chicago and explored several majors, including philosophy and economics, but did not graduate. I resumed my studies at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, returning to Classics after several years of broader intellectual seeking.

In those Appalachian mountains, I discovered another calling in a strange and unexpected way. After a series of coincidental events, my friends and I discovered the world of competitive croquet. Beyond the backyard barbecue pastime, there is also a serious form of the game, with well-weighted mallets, milled balls, and closely manicured lawn grass.

A successful croquet player must have a deft touch, a sharp sense of tactics, and philosopher's willingness to pursue an esoteric craft. As a classicist, I took naturally to this unknown ancient discipline and ended 2017 as the 50th ranked player in North America,

winning the 2017 North American Amateur championship.

In the classroom, I became particularly interested in the Augustan poet Vergil, whom I had first encountered years earlier in high school. Inspired by interpretive problems in the *Aeneid* raised in the 1960s by scholars like Wendell Clausen and Adam Parry, I began to work on a new reading of the epic poem. While different schools have emphasized apparently pro-Roman and anti-Roman aspects of the work, my reading finds both elements unified in a single historical process, accepting both the triumph and despair in Vergil as expressions of the tragedy of becoming Roman.



George Saad with croquet equipment

Following UNCA, I taught high school Latin for two years, including one year at Bridgedale Academy in Woodridge, IL, a private hockey training academy. I have spent much of my life in search of unique experiences, and teaching Latin in a hockey rink will certainly rank among the most strange and enjoyable situations I've encountered.

When Bridgedale discontinued the high school program, I sought out another unique experience in returning to graduate school. I was interested in studying at Dalhousie because I wanted to come to a department with a broad sense of what classics should be about. In my opinion, it should be as much about philosophy and intellectual history as it is about textual analysis, and everything I read online about Dalhousie suggested that the department took this approach seriously.

This seems, to me, to be the most fruitful approach in our small yet perennially attractive discipline. Nobody takes up the study of the ancients to become a specialist or relegate themselves to an antiquarian discipline which cannot communicate with the broader intellectual community. Dalhousie Classics successfully bridges many gaps in the academic world. After finishing my MA program, I have acquired just as strong an interest in cosmology and the history of physics as I

have in Vergil. To me, there's no greater sign of a strong, meaningful program.

While in the program, I particularly enjoyed the seminar on Plato's Symposium with **Dr. Eli Diamond**, as well as **Dr. Michael Fournier's** seminar on Hellenistic philosophy. Studying the late antique historian Ammianus Marcellinus with **Dr. Peter O'Brien** was also a unique and enjoyable opportunity. In my M.A. thesis, I further developed my ideas on Vergil, writing *Eternity Visible: The Tragic Cycle of History in Vergil's Aeneid* under the supervision of **Dr. Jack Mitchell.**”

Following the graduate program, George has continued writing and thinking about Classics at The New Antique, at **thenewantique.blog**.

George also recently published a short piece summarizing the ideas about Vergil and the American experience in the online popular classics journal *Eidolon*. George's piece is entitled “Refugees by Fate, Founders by Choice,” which can be read at:

<https://eidolon.pub/refugees-by-fate-founders-by-choice-daf410d0838>



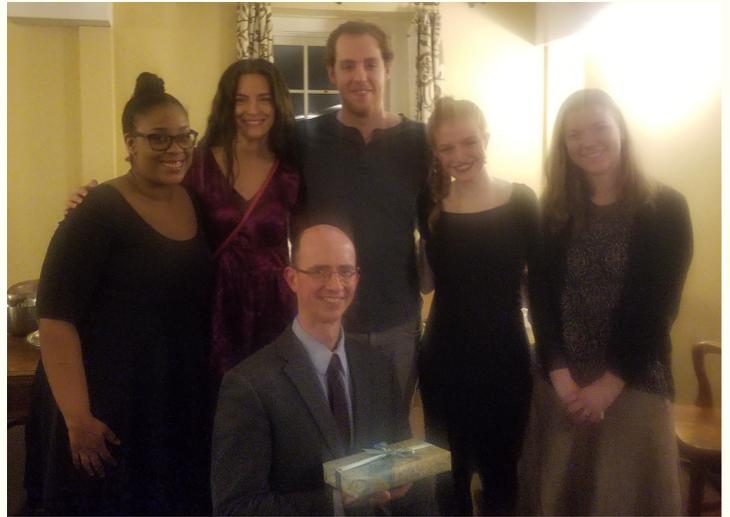


SOUND OF REVELRY BY NIGHT



Year-end Celebration & Pythian Triumph

At the spring Classics party, wine, conversation, and joyous tears flowed freely. The Teaching Assistants of CLAS 1100 Introduction to Classical Mythology presented their gallant professor **Dr. Christopher Grundke** with the “**Award for Grundkean Greatness**” in honour of all his teaching support. **Jennie Selman, Ksenia Romashova, Dwight Crowell, Lauren Vanderdeen, and Madelaine Wheeler** (all pictured on next page) extolled Dr. Grundke’s patience and thoughtfulness, gifting him a hand-crafted glass pen and inks. Dr. Grundke has been a stalwart supporter of the TAs in their various functions as teachers, markers, and students. He also acted as the Faculty Advisor for this year’s Pythian Games and played a vital role in the development and execution of the event. Thank you, Chris, for your assiduousness and equanimity!



Dr. Christopher Grundke with his TAs

This year’s Pythian Games were by far the best that were ever witnessed on this side of the Atlantic. The audience was enthralled by the creativity and artistic mettle of our performers, and at times they were themselves turned into performers, as was the case during **Cristalle Watson’s** piece. Cristalle took home the Alumni Prize with “**Petronius’ Wolf Walk**,” which left the audiences (literally) howling for more. She won a second prize that evening along with **Jen Hall** (as Athena) and **Madelaine Wheeler** (as Arachne); the trio’s superlative musical “**Anything You Can Weave (I Can Weave Better)**”

earned them the **Chair's Prize**. Sarah Stride's composition, "A Poetry to my Professors," was awarded the **Res Publica Prize**, while the biggest prize of the night (**Howard Murray Prize**) went to **Dr. Grundke's Eminently Erudite Intermediate Latin Class** for their dramatised performance of "The Death of Pliny the Elder," which produced surreal scenes of the titular character sword-fighting Mount Vesuvius. Dr. Grundke himself took a turn as performer in "**Mensa Auxilii Scriptoria (Medieval Help Desk)**," along with friend **James Fleming**; the two donned the garbs of medieval monks and troubleshot a bound book, all in Latin. They graciously donated their **Dr. Atherton Memorial Latin Prize** to Kylix and Res Publica.



"The Death of Pliny the Elder"

Glory to Apollo! ... And here's to another year of successful Games!

A dedicated photographer (**Samuel Landry**) and videographer (**Alex Elvidge**) were on hand to record the Games. As such, this is the first iteration of Dalhousie's Pythian Games that is available to watch on YouTube!

To watch the video follow the link at <https://youtu.be/UAPySq2PZ8g> or search 2018 Pythian Games on YouTube.

Watch as the Pythia and her Interpreter (played by hosts and organizers **Lauren Vanderdeen** and **Sophie Jacome**) unveil the mysteries of oracular performance!



GROWING FAMILIES



Friends both new and old reunite at a King's potluck

*Farewell from our family to yours —
stay tuned for our Summer 2018 issue!*