



FACULTY OF ARTS AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

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STAY CONNECTED

Department of Classics (Arabic and Religious Studies)

Marion McCain Arts and
Social Sciences Building, 1st Floor
6135 University Avenue
PO Box 15000, Halifax NS B3H 4R2

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

By Dr. Eli Diamond

AS I WRITE YOU THIS NOTE, we are just wrapping up a strange academic year in which we rediscovered the joys of being back in the classroom together without quite experiencing a return to normalcy. Despite the masks, the heavy restrictions on our usual social events, and the periodic transitions back to the online classroom, it has been another wonderful year in Dalhousie Classics. Once the heavier restrictions were lifted in March, we had one of the busiest months I can remember as we tried to make up for time lost to social distancing – guest speakers resumed in-person (including an incredibly successful presentation on Leo Strauss by Classics alumnus Dr. Neil Robertson), the Pythian Games were held to great fanfare, we hosted a book launch of intergalactic proportions for Dr. Jack Mitchell's new Star Wars epic poem, an ancient sculpture painting workshop taught us about the true original colours of those world-famous famous busts, and we had our first Classics party in two years at the end of the term. Later this summer, we shall cap off this year of events through our Second Dalhousie Classics Alumni Text Seminar. This year we are studying Sophocles' and Euripides' *Electra* plays – please see the item in the newsletter for more information and let me know if you are interested in participating – there are still a small number of spots open, but they are disappearing quickly.

Our resident expert in Eastern Religions, Dr. Christopher Austin, was the recipient of the 2021-22 Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Award for Service Excellence, recognizing his exceptional service not only to Religious Studies and Classics but to the wider Faculty and University. Dr. Austin is one of our Faculty's most



fierce and persistent advocates for the internationalization and diversification of the FASS curriculum – to make sure that our students encounter the religion, thought, literature, and history of non-Western cultures. Just two highlights of this distinguished service - Dr. Austin introduced the teaching of Sanskrit language to Dalhousie, and in order for Sanskrit to be taught at the introductory, intermediate and advanced levels for students wanting to go on to graduate study in his field, Dr. Austin has this year initiated a Sanskrit language teaching consortium with Memorial University, so that there will be Sanskrit offerings for our students virtually every year. Dr. Austin was also instrumental in securing the Ainslie Embrie Collection for the Dalhousie Library – nearly 1500 volumes on South Asian history, religion, politics, and society. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition, Dr. Austin!

I am also thrilled to announce the re-appointment of Dr. Rodica Firanescu

to the Arabic Studies program within Classics. Dr. Firanescu has been running the Arabic program as a one-woman show at Dalhousie since 2005, teaching introductory, intermediate, and advanced Arabic as well as classes in Arabic culture and poetry. The Department and her students are extremely lucky that this passionate teacher and scholar will be continuing in Dalhousie Classics as an Assistant Professor of Arabic Language.

Before putting this year behind us and jumping enthusiastically into the 22-23 academic year, I wanted to mention some awards and distinctions from this year.

Cameron Barrett and Angus Wilson have received CGS MA awards from SSHRC which they will be taking up in Dalhousie Classics MA program. The incoming MA class looks like an eclectic mix of our own undergraduates returning to the Department along with students new to Dal Classics, working on topics as varied as Patristics, Aristotelian political philosophy, Latin poetry and ancient medical thought.

Our undergraduate students have also distinguished themselves again this year. Three Outstanding Student Awards from the Society of Classical Studies were awarded to three of our Dal Classics students: Nerissa Zhang, Ori Navoiy, and Emily MacPherson. Dalhousie's Classical Association of Canada Exceptional Student Award was awarded to Cameron Barrett. The Patrick Atherton Book prize for top student in Introductory Latin was awarded to Sophie Miliner, and the Donald Hambrick Book prize for top student in Introductory Greek was awarded to Eleanor Friddell.

On a personal note, with my colleague Dr. Michael Fournier on sabbatical after several terms as the Associate Dean Academic of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, I have decided to teach classes outside of my usual wheelhouse. On top of my usual seminar on Plato (devoted to a close reading of his dialogue *Phaedrus*), I have the honour of teaching two of the most memorable seminars I ever took as a student in the Department – one on Augustine's *De Trinitate*, and another on the history of Greek Neoplatonism from Plotinus to Proclus.

More generally, our course offerings for next year look spectacular. In terms of languages, we are offering classes not only in Latin and Ancient Greek at

NEW ADVENTURES!

It was inevitable, someday I would retire, and that day will be July 31, 2022 (my last day in the office will be sometime near the beginning of June). It has been a difficult decision because I have enjoyed coming to work in the Department of Classics (sometimes virtually) every day for the last 17 years. The faculty and students have always made me feel that I was an important part of the workings of the Department, and this has made for a satisfying work experience.

I came to Dalhousie University in 1978 at the age of 18. I had just completed a secretarial arts program at the Nova Scotia Community College and was offered a position in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology. I worked in SOSA for 20 years, then I joined the Dean's Office, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, on a secondment, which turned into a permanent position and stayed for 7 years. In 2005 Lynn Lantz, the previous administrator in Classics, convinced me to apply, for what was her position, as she was retiring. I did so, and here I have been for 17 years. I am grateful for Lynn and her perseverance. She always said that Classics was the best department in FASS and I agree.

all levels, but also Hebrew, Sanskrit, Koine Greek, and Arabic. I am also thrilled to report that for the first time in decades, we are offering a seminar on Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The last time this class was taught for us was by Dr. Robert Crouse; this time the class will be taught by our adjunct faculty member and former Crouse student Dr. Tom Curran, who will be finishing his last year in the Foundation Year Program before his well-deserved retirement. Students will benefit from his decades of reflection on the poem in the Wednesday evening seminar in Winter term.

Speaking of well-deserved retirements, this summer, the incomparable Classics administrator



The work has always been interesting and gratifying, but the real honour and reward has been to be able to work with such inspiring faculty members and students. I will never forget their kindness, honesty, integrity, and intelligence.

I have not made any definitive plans for retirement. I do hope that Nick and I will continue to travel and explore the world and that I will have more time to spend with family and friends. There are many home and personal projects which have been neglected through procrastination which I hope to deal with in the next year or so. We will see!

Thank you for making my final years, the best years.

In admiration,
Donna

Donna Edwards will be retiring. Donna has worked continuously at Dalhousie University since she was 18 years old and has worked with us in Classics for 17 years. There are not many people on the campus who have served this institution so competently and diligently as she has, her institutional knowledge and memory are staggering, and the care and passion she has poured into looking after faculty and students in Classics, Religious Studies and Arabic Studies is far beyond the call of duty, and really deserves our unending gratitude. We are very happy about what this means for Donna and her husband Nick, and we are completely terrified about what it means for us.

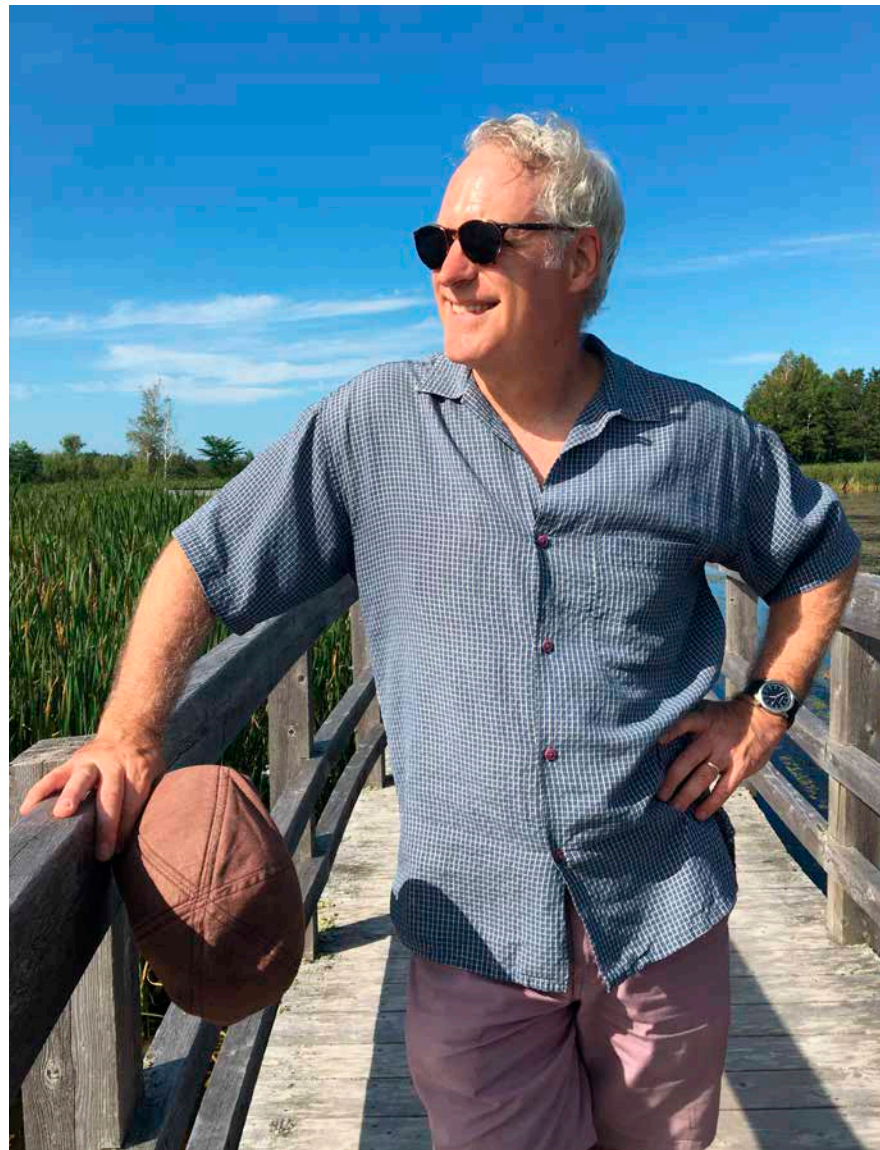
A NOSTOS

By Dr. Peter O'Brien

MY CLASSES IN SEPTEMBER WILL

be the first I've taught in the fall since 2016, the year before I began a four-year term as Vice-President at the University of King's College on the other side of campus. After a year of leave, which I'm using to refresh my research and to plan courses, I'm excited to be returning to the classroom. I'm also aware that things will likely be a little different (at least for me) since the last time around! In the undergraduate cycle, five years equals a whole generation of students, and after more than twenty years at Dal, I've come to see that each generation has its own collective character, as well as its individual personalities. I will be returning to Intermediate Latin in the fall, a favourite class that I've taught several times since my very first year in the Department (2000!), as well as a brand-new one called "Fate, the Hero, and Eternal Empire: Roman Epic in English Translation." In the Winter, I'll have the new-to-me "Roman Literature in Translation" and another old chestnut, "From Constantine to Theodosius," on fourth-century Roman history, as well as the second half of the Latin.

With the high sense of anticipation and even the touch of healthful anxiety that comes with facing down a new term, I'm comforted by the fact that my term at King's never took me completely away from my departmental home. Like many colleagues in the past, my professorial appointment at Dalhousie is a joint one with King's, meaning that my teaching and research for the most part takes place at Dal, while I am also an employee and faculty member of the College. The Vice-President at King's is always chosen from King's Faculty, so when I "went" there, I wasn't really going to some place new, either! That's not to say that life was not very different as an administrator. Though I continued to teach one class a year in the Department, to supervise and read MA theses and honours papers, and even to serve on the odd departmental committee, my main day-to-day roles at King's were to work with the President and senior administrative group on the one hand, and with faculty colleagues



Sackville, New Brunswick, 2021

on the other, to collectively define and advance College priorities and initiatives. As VP, most of the projects I worked on were academic in nature, but there were others as well, and students and their roles and positions in College life (both in the classroom and out of it) were a consistent focus, as well as very often partners in discussion and work. Among the things I worked hardest on with students during my term was King's stand-alone Sexualized Violence Policy, and in my last year I oversaw the implementation of a new experiential learning employment program, the Public Humanities Fellowships. With faculty colleagues I worked on things like developing new hiring policies to renew and diversify King's faculty, as well as the launching of new programs, such as the Masters of Fine Arts fiction stream. Since King's

is so deeply affiliated with Dalhousie, much of this work involved liaising with faculty and administrative colleagues at Dal as well—in fact, I've probably met and developed working relationships with more Dalhousians in the past five years than in any other period of my career, especially during the pandemic, when coordinated planning and communication with students and the public has been so crucial.

Self-comparisons with Odysseus are not recommended. You risk the Scylla of grandiosity and the Charybdis of claiming a dubious polytropism. So I won't say that the past five years have been an Odyssey for me, but I do look on my departmental return as a *nostos* in the best Greek sense: a return to the home that I've never left in heart and mind!

RES PUBLICA



Last Year's Res Publica

WE THE INCOMING EXECUTIVE FOR *Res Publica* want to thank everyone for making all our events this past year so excellent. We may organize, but it is the students, staff, and friends of the department attending the events that make them what they are. For that, we cannot thank you enough.

For the coming year we have many things in the works, both new possibilities and returning favourites. We'll let you know about them as they approach, and we can't wait to see you all there.

We'd also like to congratulate Angus Wilson and Emma Oliver, both lodestars of our society over the past year, and both graduating. Their work has been tireless and invaluable.

Consequently, we are looking for new members to join our executive. If you are interested, please reach out over our social media, which we have listed below. As several of us will also be graduating this coming year, we are especially hoping to get first- and second-year students involved, so that the society will have a strong core going

forward into the future.

Congratulations to all on finishing this year and have a fantastic summer!

Warmly,
Kyle Hardy, Brendan Kay, and
Anaïs Grant Church

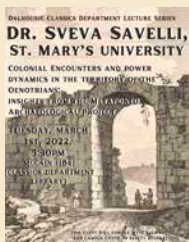
📷 [@respublicadal](https://www.instagram.com/respublicadal)

✉ respublicadal@gmail.com

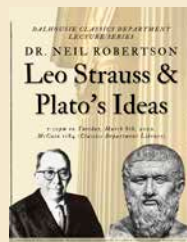
📘 [DalhousieResPublica](https://www.facebook.com/DalhousieResPublica)

DEPARTMENTAL LECTURE SERIES

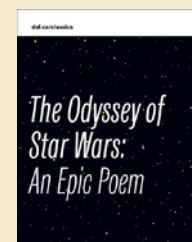
THIS PAST SPRING, WE HAD A SERIES OF WONDERFUL GUEST LECTURERS:



Dr. Sveva Savelli
"Colonial Encounters and power dynamics in the territory of the Oenotrians: Insights from the Metaponto Archaeological Project"



Dr. Neil Robertson
"Leo Strauss and Plato's Ideas"



Dr. Jack Mitchell
Book launch for
The Odyssey of Star Wars: An Epic Poem

A TRIUMPHANT RETURN FOR THE PYTHIAN GAMES

ON MARCH 11TH, 2022, the department held its eleventh Pythian Games since reviving the festival in 2011. This year was our return to an in-person games after holding the event digitally last year, and our return to the Scotiabank Auditorium after two years away. We had unprecedented attendance, and featured acts ranging from poetic recitations to dramatic performances, from music to demonstrations of historical fashion. The evening concluded with a special performance by Dr. Eli Diamond and Dr. Michael Fournier to honour the retirement of Donna Edwards. Truly, the event was an astounding success.

Many of the acts were awarded bounteous prizes by our King, Dr. Eli Diamond, and Queen, Donna Edwards. We would like to thank all our participants for their herculean investment of time and energy, and all the attendees for being such a wonderful audience. We could not have made it happen without all involved, and we hope to see everyone again next year!

*From top to bottom:
Rockstar Diamond; Sacrifice to the Gods!; Queen Donna; Hasan Alfarhan, graduating with a Minor in Arabic Studies along with a Bachelor of Science (Major in Biology and Minor in Ocean Sciences), won the Alumni Prize*



OUR PRIZE WINNERS

- **Atherton Prize:** Dr. Mitchell's Advanced Latin Class (Nigel Burns, Brendan Kay, Sam MacDonald, Matthew Nolan, Emma Oliver and Nerissa Zhang) - An Abridged Life of Claudius
- **Alumni Prize:** Hasan Alfarhan Imru' al-Qays - The Wandering King of Pre-Islamic Arabia declaims his Golden Ode on Love
- **Chair's Prize:** Joanna Daley and Elsy Rytter - Demonstration of the Costume of a Roman Bride
- **Howard Murray Prize:** Em Arruda - Hymn to the Sun and Muses
- **King and Queen's Prize:** Angus Wilson - A Reading from the Old English Aeneid



THE ODYSSEY OF STAR WARS: AN EPIC POEM



AS REGULAR ATTENDERS OF THE Classics departmental seminar know, book launches occasionally happen there. Whenever a member of the department or a scholarly friend thereof publishes a scholarly work, there is often an invitation to deliver a paper about the new research on the subject; there ensues a presentation, scholarly questions, and discussion. Once in a while, however, an unusual book requires an unusual book launch. A different approach entirely was for Dr. Jack Mitchell's *The Odyssey of Star Wars: An Epic Poem*, recently published by Abrams with the full approval of the relevant copyright holder, the Disney Corporation.

Motivated in part by his young sons' enthusiasm for the movies and a desire to bring a contemporary science-fiction epic into contact with a traditional poetic medium for epic, Dr. Mitchell wrote 8,000 odd lines retelling the stories of the original trilogy of Star

Wars movies *A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *The Return of the Jedi* (first released in 1977, 1980, 1983), occasionally employing elements from later parts of the Star Wars universe, although the poem focuses primarily on Anakin, Luke, and Leia. He employed not the traditional dactylic hexameter of Greek and Latin epic, but blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter), the traditional English meter for epic topics, also known most appropriately by the name heroic verse. The meter was the poetical choice of John Milton for *Paradise Lost* and of Robert Browning for his sprawling *The Ring and the Book*. It is sometimes employed for English translations of Greek or Latin epic, such as Emily Wilson's recent translation of Homer's *Odyssey*. There are many good precedents for heroic verse for heroic subjects in English, whether old or new, and therefore a heroic verse is the perfect choice for a tale of intergalactic conflict with heroes struggling against a

totalitarian and destructive empire.

The crowd that gathered in the Ondaatje Auditorium was treated to a most enjoyable evening. Dr Mitchell was interviewed by Dr Luke Togni, an alumnus of the department and expert in medieval philosophy who somehow also finds time to be a Star Wars superfan with exhaustive knowledge of all aspects of field, on the composition of the poem, various engaging aspects of the plot, and links between this modern epic and ancient epic. A question-and-answer dialogue with the author demonstrated the enthusiastic engagement of the audience with the epic poem and the composition process that lay behind it. Dr Togni also presided over an engaging trivia contest that tested the audience's knowledge of the details of the Star Wars universe; a field of seven contestants was whittled down to a single winner by increasingly challenging questions, the last few of

which only true experts could either ask or answer. The winner received a copy of the book, as did a randomly drawn recipient of the door prize, and the wearer of the best costume. Speaking of costumes, truly professional costumes (not eligible for prizes) and an authentic Star Wars sparkle was added to the evening by the presence of several members of the [Atlantic Garrison of the 501st Legion](#), a regional group of Star Wars cosplay enthusiasts who looked as if they might have walked directly off a film set, so authentic were their costumes. The highlight of the evening, though, was the dramatic recitation of two excerpts from the epic by Dr. Mitchell. His riveting performance was a delight to all and certainly an incentive to purchase a copy of the book at the book table, hosted by Paul MacKinnon of the [King's Co-op Bookstore](#). Sales were brisk, and the evening concluded with book signings by Dr Mitchell.



*From top
to bottom:
Star Wars Trivia;
Standing Guard;
Dr. Mitchell*



SPRING GRADUATES

Congratulations to all our Classics, Arabic and Religious Studies students graduating this Spring! This has been an especially challenging year and we are incredibly proud of our students for their diligence and hard work.

DALHOUSIE:

Robby Duersch, BA, Double Major in Sociology and Social Anthropology and Classics

Jowana El-Ahmar, BA, Major Classics

Jay Frizzell, BA, Double Major, English and Creative Writing and Minor Classics

Zachary Lake, BA, Double Major, History and Classics

Ruth Robert, BA, Major Classics

India Jackson, BM, Minor Classics

Abdullah Alanzi, BSc, Major in Biology, Minor in Arabic Studies

Hasan Alfarhan, BSc, Major in Biology, Minors in Ocean Sciences and Arabic Studies

Jamie Ukrainetz, BA, Double Major in International Development Studies and Religious Studies

Ben Albecht, BA, Major in Religious Studies, Minor in Middle East and South Asian Studies

Lailah Reynolds, BA, Major in Religious Studies, Minor in French

Jasmine Andrich, BA, Double Major in Religious Studies and English, Minor in Mathematics

KINGS:

Cameron Barrett, BA Honours, Classics

Savannah Charbonneau, BA Honours Double Major, Contemporary Studies and Classics

Joanna Daley, BA Honours, Classics, Honours Major French

Nathan Ferguson, BA Honours, Double Major, Contemporary Studies and Classics

Isaac Grainger, BA Honours, Classics, Minor in Religious Studies

Julia Horn, BA, Classics, Minor in Early Modern Studies

Jenny Lapp, BA Honours, Classics, Honours Major Contemporary Studies

Kate Maguire, BA, Classics, Minor in Esoteric and Occult Traditions

Skylar McEachern, BA, History, Minor in Classics

Madeleine Merskey, BA Honours, Classics

Emma Oliver, BA Honours, Classics and Early Modern Studies

Malcolm Sepulchre, BA Honours, Classics and Contemporary Studies

Angus Wilson, BA Honours, Classics

William Foggoa, BSc Major, Biology and Classics

Max Tal, BA Honours in Religious Studies and Philosophy

Ry Pembroke, BA in Religious Studies

MYTH OF WHITENESS: REDISCOVERING THE COLOURS OF ANCIENT STATUES

ON MARCH 23RD, MR. ORI NAVOIY, one of our undergraduate Classics students, along with Dr. Emily Varto, presented a workshop on rediscovering the original colours of ancient statues. The workshop introduced the topic of how we colour (or fail to colour) classical antiquity, and how it often is a result of our own cultural assumptions and aesthetics. Ori introduced recent studies on how some modern ideas and misappropriations of classical antiquity stem from a prolonged misconception about ancient sculpture. Dr. Varto presented a lecture with images examining and appreciating the original (and fascinating) use of colour in ancient art and architecture.

Beyond promoting a true representation of classical works, one of the goals of this event is to raise social awareness of how the contemporary alt-right have sometimes exploited the misrepresented popular imagery of antiquity and used it to promote a white supremacist agenda. Letting participants paint the sculptures with their colours again is a way of denying racist projections onto the art of classical antiquity.

Originally planned for 20 (due to the limited number of sculptures we had to paint), we received 49 RSVPs within a week of publishing the event. Extra seats were added, but some had to work in pairs due to limited supply. It is hoped that this event will be offered again next year – stay tuned.

***From top to bottom:
Miniatures painted creatively by
participants; Some student participants
with their colourful creations; Dr. Varto
talking about colour in ancient art;
More colourful recreations***



ALUMNI SUMMER SEMINAR



Alumni Seminar

IN THE SUMMER OF 2019, WE inaugurated a new tradition - a group of about 35 Dal Classics alumni assembled over Natal Day weekend to read and discuss Plato's dialogue *Cratylus* in the first iteration of what we have called the **Dalhousie Classics Alumni Text Seminar**. At the end of our two-day session, we agreed we would do it again the following year, this time treating a **Greek Tragedy**. After two years of pandemic delays, it seems like the time is ripe to hold our second text seminar.

For those of you who were not able to come for the first seminar, this event is meant to be a stimulating and enjoyable way to reunite with some old and new friends from Dal Classics engaging in the same kind of activity you engaged in as students here. We build in time to discuss the text and time to talk and socialize more informally. A few keen current students also attend, making a nice mix of current Dal Classicists with several generations of alumni spanning several decades. In terms of tone, it lies somewhere in between a class or formal seminar and a high-powered book club meeting. We do morning and afternoon sessions on Saturday, and then a concluding afternoon session on Sunday.

Following an excellent suggestion from Patrick Anderson, a participant in the first seminar, we shall meet again to discuss **Sophocles' and Euripides' *Elektra*** plays on the long weekend (**Saturday July 30 and Sunday July 31**). This will give us the chance to get inside each play and then contrast the poetic vision of Sophocles and Euripides.

We shall kick off the event the **evening of Friday, July 29**, with a viewing of **Richard Strauss's *Elektra* opera**. Dal Classics alumna **Dr. Maria Euchner**, currently a Faculty Fellow in the Foundation Year Program at King's, has kindly agreed to give us a brief introductory talk on Strauss' opera. Afterwards we could have a fun social gathering to prepare for the intellectual work of the weekend.

Of course not everyone will be able to come to the seminar, so I realize many participants from the first year will not be able to make it this year, but I hope we will get some new participants who were not able to come the first year.

Looking forward to seeing some of you again this summer.

If you have not already signed up (and thank you to the 25 people who have!), please let us know as soon as possible that you would like to participate – there are still about five spots open.

VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.DAL.CA/FACULTY/ARTS/CLASSICS/ALUMNI-FRIENDS.HTML](https://www.dal.ca/faculty/arts/classics/alumni-friends.html) OR EMAIL CLASSICS@DAL.CA TO LEARN MORE!

DIGGING IN PISTICCI

IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS ON THE TERRITORY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PISTICCI

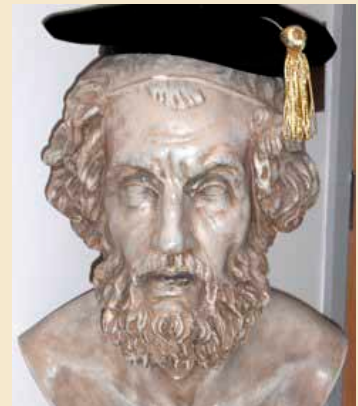


Back Row: 1st on left, Madeleine Merskey; back row, fifth from right, Dr. Sveva Savelli

WHEN GREEK HISTORIAN AND archaeologist Dr. Sveva Savelli was recently hired at Saint Mary's University just a few minutes walk away from Dalhousie Classics, we invited her to give a talk in our Department. Dr. Savelli presented deeply fascinating insights about Greek-Indigenous relations that emerged from her Metaponto Archaeological Project, which investigates colonial dynamics between Indigenous Populations and Greek settlers along the Ionian coast in Southern Italy. She also told us about the Metaponto Archaeological Field School she runs in the summers as part of this project, an archaeological excavation at Incononata "greca". This site was frequented between 9th and 7th c. BCE by Indigenous Populations (the Oenotrians) and Greek settlers. This hilltop was again occupied around 550 BCE, this time as a Greek sanctuary dependent upon Metaponto. From an Indigenous stronghold in the late Archaic period, Incononata "greca" appears to have been completely integrated in the sphere of the Greek city.

When the field school received a Covid-delayed approval to operate this summer, Dr. Savelli wrote to us to see if any of the keen Dalhousie students she met at her talk would be interested in joining her team. Madeleine Merskey, one of our graduating honours students who wrote her honours essay, "Ancient Greek Constructions of the Pontic Other" with Dr. Emily Varto, scrambled to get together an application and a few days later she was in Italy working long days on excavation, cataloguing, and sorting. Once she finishes with the field school and collects her hot-off-the-press parchment at King's Encaenia, Madeleine will be starting her MA in Archaeology at Queens University in the Fall.

This photo is courtesy of a local Italian newspaper who took interest in the field school when it was visited by the mayor of Pisticci. As you can see from Madeleine's excellent sun hat, early May in Metaponto is somewhat different than May in Nova Scotia. We hope that Madeleine might be the first of many young Dalhousie Classicists to spend the summer collaborating with Dr. Savelli on this important project.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S AWARD WINNERS!

- **Atherton Prize in Latin**
Sophie Miliner
- **Hambrick Prize in Greek**
Eleanor Friddell
- **Nicole Knox Memorial Prize**
Joanna Daley
- **Classical Association of Canada Exceptional Student Award**
Cameron Barrett
- **Society of Classical Studies Outstanding Student Award**
Nerissa Zhang
Ori Navoiy
Emily MacPherson
- **University Medal in Classics**
Angus Wilson

A CLASSICS WEDDING



AT THE DALHOUSIE CLASSICS

Department, Dwight and Ksenia both studied ancient philosophy. Dwight focused on comparing Thomas Aquinas' theology with Aristotle's metaphysics, and Ksenia wrote her thesis on Aristotle's doctrine of mathematical subtraction. But it was not their mutual interest in Aristotle that brought Dwight and Ksenia together. It was their mutual need to complete their Latin requirement. Dwight and Ksenia first met in Dr. Fournier's 8am Latin Class, where they sat next to each other. Indeed, it was Latin assignments (and later, Greek assignments) that gave them an excuse to begin talking to each other. They began dating in the beginning of their second year at the Classics Department (September 2017), and by the end of their time at Dalhousie in (July 2019), Dwight proposed to Ksenia. That fall, they moved to Toronto together, where Dwight began his PhD in Philosophy at the University of Toronto; Ksenia was accepted into the PhD in Classics (specialization in ancient philosophy) at the University of Toronto the following



Front Row Far Left: Andrew Griffin; Front Row Centre: Michael Fournier and Eli Diamond;
Back Row Centre: Alexander Treiger, Ksenia and Dwight

February. In the summer of 2021, after delaying their wedding in 2020 due to the pandemic, Dwight and Ksenia were married in the St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Purcell's Cove, Halifax. Their wedding was, in a real sense, a Classics wedding: Dr. Treiger officiated, Dr. Diamond was the master of ceremonies, and other professors and friends they made during their time at the Classics Department were present. Dwight and Ksenia will remain in Toronto for the next few years while they finish their degrees (Dwight

is currently in his third year of his program, and Ksenia is in her second year). However, Dwight and Ksenia remain very fond of the professors, staff, and alumni of the Classics Department. They both attended the departmental lecture series (via Skype) when they could over the last few years, and they were excited to tune into the much-anticipated Pythian games last year. When they visit Halifax for the summer, they look forward to connecting with Classics Alumni during the Alumni text seminar.

ALUMNI PROFILE — DR. DANIEL WATSON

MA Classics, 2016

MY MASTER'S RESEARCH IN THE

Dalhousie Classics Department was on Proclus' interpretation of Homer. Upon the completion of my thesis, I somehow got the crazy idea that what I had learned about Proclus might help me to understand questions I had long held about the gods of early medieval Irish sagas. This could not, of course, be a question of influence. But a similar structure seemed to be at work. Thus I found myself a PhD candidate in the Department of Early Irish (Sean-Gheailge) at Maynooth University, in Ireland, under the supervision of Elizabeth Boyle. I was happy to find that Emily Parker (MA 2010), who I knew from Dalhousie Classics, was still finishing her PhD on Philo of Alexandria at Trinity College, Dublin. She was an important support to me during my first year in Ireland. In any event, my initial question transformed over the course of my PhD into the larger question of what early medieval Irish vernacular authors thought philosophy was, and how they took it to operate. It was probably far too ambitious. But I seemed to get away with it in the end, in spite of myself, as my PhD thesis received the Johann-Kaspar-Zeuß-Prize for the best PhD in Celtic Studies in 2020.

In my postdoctoral work, I have continued the work of tracing the mediation of philosophical ideas through the early Church Fathers to early medieval Ireland, and then accounting for what happens to them, especially as they appear in vernacular narrative. In some ways, you might say this is comparable, structurally, to the work of assessing the influence of philosophical ideas on ancient Greek tragedies and comedies. I started as an O'Donovan scholar in the School of Celtic Studies, at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS), where I continued until taking up my current post in the ERC-funded research project, Classical Influences and Irish Culture (CLIC), at Aarhus Universitet, in Denmark. It bears mentioning, though, that towards the end of my time in Ireland, another unexpected source of support emerged. It was



my good fortune that Elizabeth Curry (MA 2013) and Evan King (MA 2012), who were also friends from Dalhousie Classics, moved to Dublin to join the research project, Neoplatonism and Abrahamic Traditions, at UCD. But as regards the Danish present, the main focus of my current research is the preparation of a monograph on medieval Irish vernacular philosophy, based on parts of my PhD work. However, I am also in the midst of organizing a conference on Irish Platonisms, which will survey the various forms that Platonism has taken in Ireland's history, from the seventh century to the present. This will be a joint venture of CLIC and DIAS, and will be held in DIAS from April 28th-30th. Aside from this, I have been also doing some work on the theme of reembodiment in early Irish literature (where the question of Ovid's influence in the late Middle Irish period has arisen), and also on early Irish receptions of Orosius' historiography. Thus far, no old friends from Dalhousie Classics have moved here to Aarhus to join me, but we live in hope!

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Classics@dal.ca

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Editors in Chief

Dr. Eli Diamond, Chair
Ms. Donna Edwards,
Administrative Assistant
Mr. Kyle Hardy, Office Assistant

Graphic design

Christin Roper
Dalhousie Creative Services
design.services@dal.ca



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