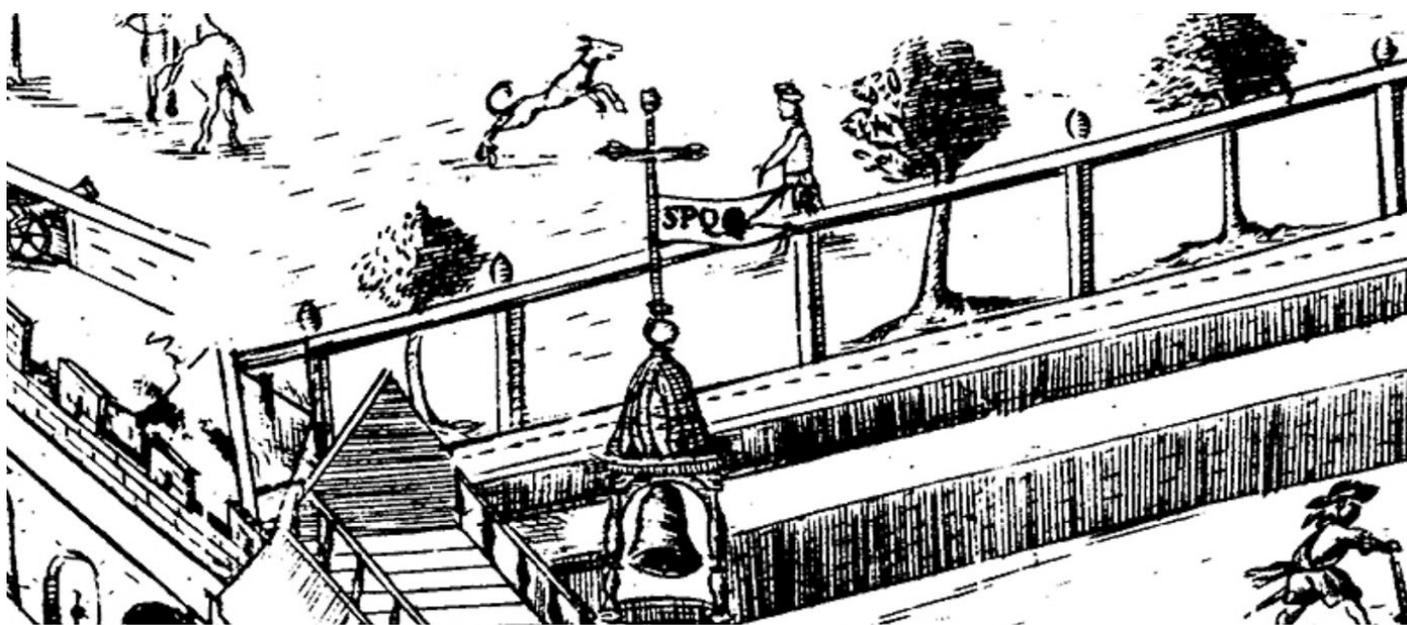


# WESTERN CLASSICS

Newsletter from staff and students in Classics at the  
National University of Ireland, Galway



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Cover image: Detail from the seventeenth-century pictorial map of Galway (courtesy of the James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway).

## *Senatus Populusque Galviensis*

*The eternal City of the Tribes: an essay by Charles Doyle*

**T**HROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES, images of *Romanitas* have been conjured by monarchs, noble families and states as signs of prestige and political power. In the eighteenth century, the nascent United States sought to depict itself as an agrarian republic, aspiring to the halcyon days of early Rome. Napoleon made use of Roman titles—first as consul, then as emperor—to lend political authority to his reign. Indeed, many European powers with expansionist or colonising ambitions looked to Rome as a model, and even depicted themselves as successors to the Roman Empire, as is evident from Roman-sounding royal titles (like Czar, Kaiser, and Emperor) to the adoption of eagles on flags from Imperial Russia to the Habsburgs. Everyone, it seems, wanted to be Roman, and at times our own city of Galway was no exception.

I'd like to highlight three examples of Galwegian use of Roman imagery found in the magnificent seventeenth-century pictorial map of Galway, which can be viewed in Special Collections in the James Hardiman Library. The map is thought to date to

shortly after the restoration of the British monarchy under Charles II.

The high-resolution version on the Hardiman Library website is well worth a leisurely browse. Aside from the lively depictions of the city and its environs, filled with scenes of hunting and jousting, two small features within the city walls caught my eye. Atop two large buildings—one, a gatehouse on what is now Williamsgate street (see front cover image) and, another, a tower on Abbygate Street Upper (opposite Lynch’s Castle)—there are two small banners, featuring what appears to be the letters SPQ, although the final letter is somewhat indistinct.

It seems reasonable to speculate that these flags might bear the letters SPQG, for *Senatus Populusque Galviensis* ‘The Senate and Galwegian People’, a play on the famous Roman slogan. The map, if indeed it was created after the Restoration, represents an imagined depiction of the city before the Cromwellian siege of the city in 1651–2, playing up the glory of the city before the Roundheads set foot in Ireland. Considering that the Hiberno-Norman nobility largely supported Charles I in the English civil war, the map was plausibly an appeal by Galway’s Tribes to Charles’s son to restore the land and property they had lost in support of the royalist cause.

These flags are not the only place where the map draws connections between the two cities. At the bottom of the map, a poem accompanies the arms of the fourteen Tribes. The extract below is taken from James Hardiman’s description in his 1820 *History of Galway*, and parts of it may be seen in the cartouche on the map:

*Septem ornant montes Romam, septem ostia Nilum,  
Tot rutilis stellis splendet in axe Polus.  
Galvia, Polo Niloque bis aequas, Roma Conachtae,  
Bis septem illustres, has colit illa tribus.  
Bis urbis septem defendunt moenia turres.*

‘Seven hills adorn Rome, seven mouths the Nile,  
the heavens shine on their axis with as many gleaming  
planets.  
Galway, Connacht’s Rome, nurtures twice seven distin-  
guished tribes,  
twice the equal of the heavens and the Nile.  
Twice seven towers defend the city’s walls.’

There is one final example of the Galway–Rome connection on this map, although it is less obvious. The connection did not occur to me until I saw a depiction of the old ‘fifths’ of Ireland in San Isidoro’s College in Rome.



There are three striking things about this coat of arms. First, the absence of the Red Hand of Ulster, the modern symbol for the province, here represented by a Lion, as on the pictorial map of Galway. Second, the king seated on a throne in the centre, representing the ‘fifth fifth’ of Ireland, Midhe, which was assimilated into the province

of Leinster. Third, the Connacht Eagle has not one but two heads.

The two-headed eagle was adopted in Late Antiquity as a symbol for the Roman Empire, one head looking to the Latin West, other to the Greek East. The symbol of the eagle, whether one or two-headed has been adopted by many seeking to emulate or claim *Romanitas*, including the Romanovs, Habsburgs, and the Holy Roman Emperors (not especially holy, Roman, or imperial). It is through them, and their sponsorship of the Regensburg Schottenklöster in Bavaria (the Irish monastery connected with the O’Briens), that the arms found their way well beyond Roman frontiers.

In contrast to the crowned heads of Europe with their imperial aspirations, Galway’s *Romanitas* in this map is less menacing, recalling a city before it suffered through war, siege, and plague. The depiction of Galway as Connacht’s Rome invokes a Galway before the English Civil War spilled across the Irish sea, before the city was ravished by hunger and disease. One comes away from this map feeling nostalgia for a bustling medieval city, rich from trade with Spain and France, and pathos for its downfall. Like the Rome that the map harks back to, perhaps the Galway of this map existed only in the nostalgia of an imagined past.

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# Ireland and Carolingian Brittany: Texts and Transmission

Jacopo Bisagni, Sarah Corrigan, Paula Harrison

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September 2018 saw the beginning of a new four-year research project led by Dr Jacopo Bisagni and funded by the Laureate Awards scheme of the Irish Research Council. The project is the first systematic attempt to assess the impact of the literary and scholarly heritage of Early Christian Ireland on the shaping of cultural identity among the intellectual élites of medieval Brittany—a country situated both geographically and culturally on the frontier between the Atlantic world and the European mainland.

The research focusses on a series of newly discovered texts on computus (the medieval science of time-reckoning) and biblical exegesis, all preserved in a group of manuscripts written in Brittany or copied from lost Breton exemplars. The texts contained share a number of distinctive diagnostic features, pointing consistently to a Hiberno-Latin scholarly milieu: the best example is the curious phrase *tithis turgescantis dodrantem* ('the flood-tide of the swelling Ocean'), possibly cited from a lost work of Columbanus and written according to the erudite and artificial Insular Latin style commonly called 'Hisperic'. These texts, discovered by Jacopo and his long-standing collaborator Immo Warntjes (TCD) between 2013 and 2017, provide substantial new evidence for Breton education and scholarship in the Carolingian age, demonstrating the formative contribution of medieval Irish learning in the earliest documented phases of Brittany's written culture. The work is gradually revealing the intellectual networks that linked the Irish, Breton and Frankish monasteries: in particular, monasteries of the Loire Valley such as the

Benedictine abbey of Fleury-sur-Loire appear to have played a pivotal role in the chain of textual transmission between the Insular world, Brittany, Francia and other areas heavily influenced by Carolingian culture, such as Cataluña.

At the moment, **Jacopo Bisagni** is following three distinct lines of investigation:

(1) First of all, since it will be essential to understand the position of the newly discovered texts in the more general context of cultural production in early medieval Brittany, he is preparing a comprehensive and up-to-date handlist of Breton manuscripts written between the late eighth and the mid-eleventh centuries.

(2) Moreover, Jacopo is currently analysing in detail the contents of the manuscript where he first discovered the Hisperic phrase *tithis turgescantis dodrantem* back in 2013: Paris, BNF, Latin 6400B. This is a computistical-astronomical compilation copied in Fleury around the middle of the tenth century from a lost Breton exemplar: its importance is due most of all to the fact that it preserves the only extant copy of an Irish computistical tract datable precisely to AD 754.

(3) Finally, since most Breton computistical manuscripts contain abundant Irish or Irish-influenced materials concerning the so-called 'divisions of time' (atoms, moments, minutes, and so on), Jacopo has undertaken an exploration of the Irish textual tradition pertaining to this specific aspect of computus. This work has already led not only to the identification of no less than 81 relevant manuscript witnesses, but also to the discovery of a new gloss in Old Breton in the manuscript Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 9605 (written in a southern French scriptorium, possibly Avignon, in AD 1026). At fol. 69ra, a passage concerning the etymology of the term *kalendae* ('calends') preserves an attempt to elucidate the Latin term *astrologus* ('astrologer') by means of the interlinear gloss *sterdigkiniat* (see figure 1 overleaf): while this word was previously unattested, it can nonetheless be explained as an Old Breton compound *ster-digkiniat*, meaning approximately 'star-soothsayer', *digkiniat* being a close cognate of Old Irish terms such as *do-inchain* 'to chant spells', or *tinchtlaid* 'incantator' (an article offering a full discussion of this gloss and its context is forthcoming).

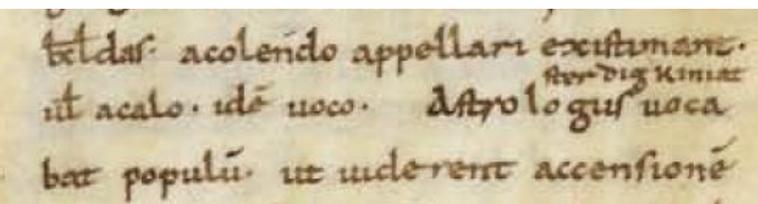


Fig. 1. The Old Breton gloss *sterdiginiat* in Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS 9605, fol. 69ra

**Sarah Corrigan** is working on biblical exegesis in early medieval Brittany, focussing on two principle aspects:

(1) A critical edition of a compilation of biblical glosses and commentary found in Orléans, Médiathèque (olim Bibliothèque municipale), 182. Both the Breton and international connections of this compilation are evident from the nine Old Breton and Old English glosses found therein, eight of which were recently discovered by Jacopo (see ‘Les gloses inédites en vieux-breton et vieil-anglais dans Orléans 182’, *Études celtiques* 44 (2018), pp. 133–54).

(2) A broader study exploring the transmission and study of exegesis in Brittany, including an investigation of the discernible Irish, British, Continental, and indeed Breton influences on exegesis in manuscripts with links to Breton scribes and scriptoria.

Sarah is currently occupied with the transcription and initial analysis of the compilation in Orléans 182, dated to the tenth century and copied from a Breton exemplar, paying particular attention to the palaeographical evidence it contains for the use and transmission of the text. One intriguing example is the use of a rare abbreviation for *nos*: *n* with a suprascript *o* (see figure 2).

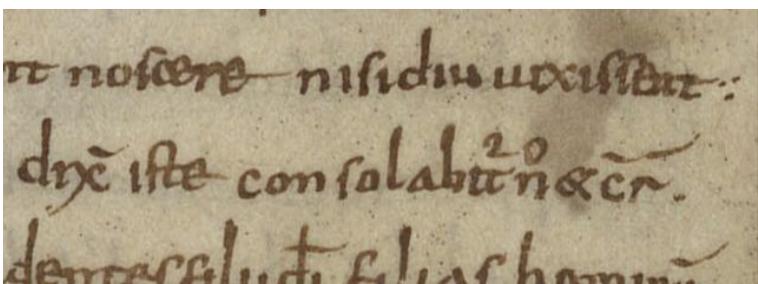


Fig. 2. The *n* suprascript *o* abbreviation for *nos* in Orléans, Médiathèque (olim Bibliothèque municipale), 182, p. 245 (‘dixit iste consolabitur nos et cetera’)

The precise meaning of the abbreviation is revealed by its use in a biblical citation, *iste consolabitur nos* (Gen. 5:29). Lindsay’s *Notae latinae* (1915, p. 146) records only a

single manuscript as using this abbreviation in the sense of *nos*: Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque municipale, 58 (63–64) (see figure 3).

This eighth-century copy of St Augustine’s *Epistulae* was written in insular minuscule script and transcribed in St Bertin, a Frankish centre with strong Anglo-Saxon and Irish connections. Although the precise significance of this particular abbreviation is not yet clear, it is another key element of the textual and palaeographical evidence that helps to trace the networks of transmission and compilation that produced this text.

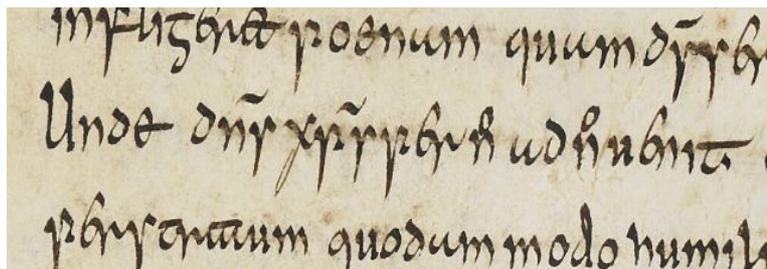


Fig. 3. The *n* suprascript *o* abbreviation for *nos* in Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque municipale, 58 (63–64), fol. 17r (‘Unde dominus Christus per nos ad nos uenit’)

PhD candidate **Paula Harrison** is investigating the astronomical and computistical compilation contained in the early ninth-century manuscript Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, 422 and entitled *De Astronomia* by the compiler or the scribe (see figure 4). This text is a collection of scientific excerpts from various authorities, among them Bede and Isidore, and is frequently elaborated upon with grammatical and exegetical materials. The presence of three Old Irish words in this work is notable and the compilation displays numerous textual affinities with other Irish computistical texts, particularly those ones that have a Breton manuscript transmission.

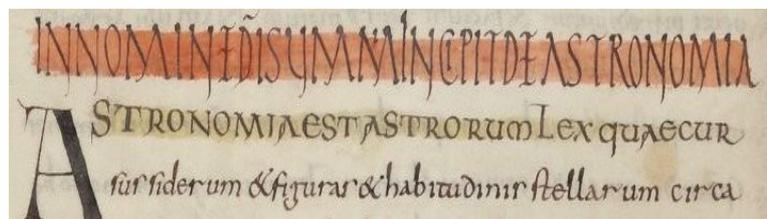


Fig. 4. The incipit of the compilation *De Astronomia* in Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, 422, fol. 22v

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## Res gestae

Reports from staff on recent work

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**JACOPO BISAGNI** During the past year I have been applying the finishing touches to my forthcoming monograph, a critical edition of the Old Irish poem *Amrae Coluimb Chille*: the book is due for publication in May 2019. Meanwhile, the IRC-funded project IrCaBritT (of which I am the Principal Investigator) has got underway—for a description of this project, see the article earlier in this issue of *Western Classics*. As a result, I have spent much of the past few months browsing through scientific manuscripts from the Carolingian age. I have also been researching the question of the divisions of time—a much-neglected aspect of early medieval computistical scholarship, which owes much to the extraordinary Irish development of computus in the seventh and eighth centuries. So far, this work has allowed me to identify a striking number of unpublished early medieval texts (contained in more than 80 manuscripts!) explaining exactly how time can be divided into countable units, from the smallest and indivisible quantity (called *atomus*) to the infinity of the Cosmos (*mundus*), a dimension where time and space meet and overlap. The divisions of time will be the focus of the Kathleen Hughes Memorial Lecture 2019, which I will deliver at Cambridge on the 29th of April.

**MICHAEL CLARKE** I was a grateful man five months ago when Pádraic Moran took on the role of Head of Discipline and enabled me to move back into a less cluttered way of working. Or so at least it seemed: I have found, with some disappointment, that the habit of daily stress and stimulus can be hard to leave behind. But maybe next year I will find that mellow centre again.

In the meantime, thanks to my colleagues' support and my family's patience, I have managed to finish my book *Achilles Beside Gilgamesh*. Only on clearing it off the desk did I realise how important this book has been to me, in creative as well as strictly professional ways. Inside my own head it represents a way to do something I have been struggling with for thirty years: to put a finger on the essential seriousness of ancient epic poetry without ever falling back on those old essentialist claims about the perfect uniqueness of Homeric poetry. Now I wish I had the time and the space to learn Babylonian really

well and participate in the amazing debates and discoveries of the specialists: but life is short, and it is time to get back to the Insular Middle Ages where I really belong. The first challenge is a conference paper on poetic obscurity in Middle Irish, at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies in May. This was supposed to feel like something completely different, but it turns out that much of my talk will be about a medieval Greek manuscript that loomed over one of the chapters of the Gilgamesh book for completely different reasons: I just hope this very different audience will see the connections.

**EDWARD HERRING** Since the last issue of *Western Classics*, my sabbatical came to an end. For the first time since 2007, I have been carrying a full teaching load and I decided to renew my entire teaching portfolio. This, together with the fact that the discipline has entirely renewed itself over the past few years, has meant that coming back has almost been like starting a whole new job, albeit in very familiar surroundings. It has been an invigorating experience. My new modules are much more focused on my research interests and the students have been a pleasure to teach. Best of all is the intellectually stimulating atmosphere up on Third Floor of Tower 2. The discipline is flourishing and it has been great to be able to slot back into the teaching team so seamlessly.

My sabbatical has begun to bear fruit and I was delighted to launch two books in October of 2018; further publications will arise out of the sabbatical over the next couple of years. The launch was a splendid occasion and I was delighted to share my achievement with family, friends, and colleagues. Professor Michael Edwards of Royal Holloway College, London performed the formal launching of the volumes. The two books were my third monograph, *Patterns in the Production of Apulian Red-Figure Pottery* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle) and latest edited collection, *Papers in Italian Archaeology VII. The Archaeology of Death. Proceedings of the Seventh Conference of Italian Archaeology held at the National University of Ireland Galway, 16-18 April, 2016* (Archaeopress Archaeology, Oxford) (co-edited with Eóin O'Donoghue, King's College London).

**PÁDRAIC MORAN** This year I finished a project that I have been working on, in fits and starts, since I first started out as a PhD student 16 years ago. I finally completed my edition of *De origine scoticae linguae* ‘On the origin of the Irish language’, an Irish text dating from the late seventh or early eighth century that offers explanations for the origins of nearly 900 Irish words, very often deriving them from Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and occasionally even Old Norse and Old Welsh. The text is steeped in the Latin learned tradition, and reflects how exposure to the Graeco-Roman intellectual tradition provided a stimulus for Irish scholars to re-examine their own culture in the light of Mediterranean learning. It contains many interesting Latin sources, and provides very good evidence for the extent of Irish knowledge of Greek and Hebrew in this period. I hope that my (first ever) translation and commentary will bring it now to wider attention. The edition has been published in the *Lexica Latina Medii Aevi* sub-series of *Corpus Christianorum*.

I have also been busy with other research. I gave a paper in Oxford in January 2019 on bilingual Greek–Latin manuscripts written in Irish circles, and I spoke in Rome in March 2019 about the reception of Ovid in early medieval Ireland. Our Network for the Study of Glossing goes from strength to strength, and I will participate in its next meeting, in Marburg in June.

**JASON O’RORKE** This year it has been an absolute pleasure to begin my academic career in Classics in Galway. I was hired to replace Dr Jacopo Bisagni, who is currently on research leave. As for research, I am currently working on the reception of the Late Antique grammatical tradition in the early medieval period. One of my most recent discoveries is an Old Irish gloss embedded in the *Ars Ambrosiana*, a commentary on Donatus’ *Artes* that comes down to us in a single ninth-century manuscript (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, L 22 sup.). The gloss sheds new light on the date and attribution of the treatise. I will be speaking on this topic at the upcoming International Medieval Congress at Leeds, and I intend to publish the research thereafter. I am also studying a large, unpublished grammatical compilation that survives in a single ninth-century manuscript: Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. 112.

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## Current PhD research

*Current PhD topics, with some reports on work in progress*

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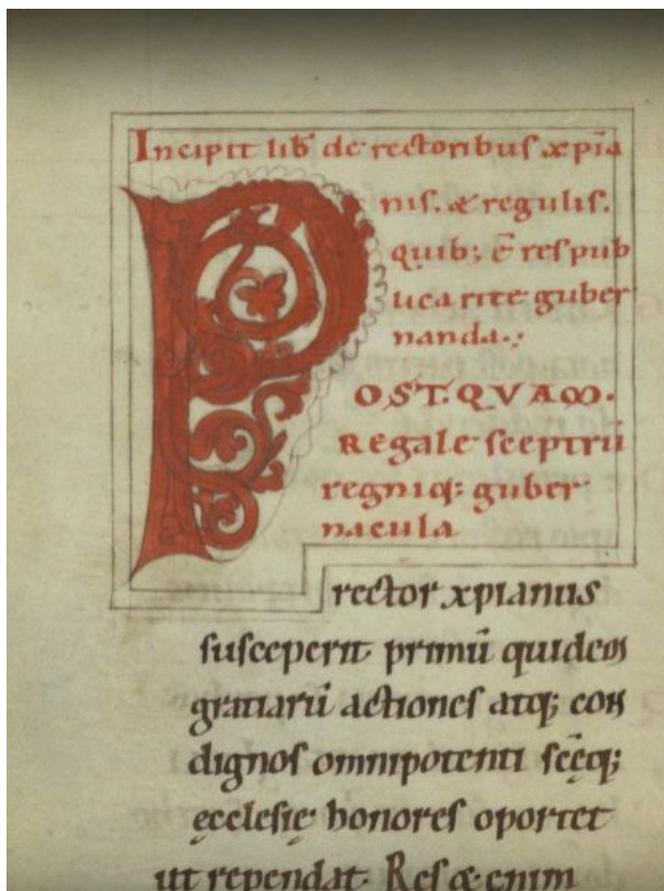
**GRACE ATTWOOD** ‘Obscurity has another tale to tell.’ I am currently developing a methodology that will allow me to re-assess ‘obscurity’ in Hiberno-Latin texts, particularly testing whether or not those features that have been identified as ‘obscure’ were in fact perceived that way by medieval Irish literati.

**MICHAEL DOHERTY** ‘The use and representation of Classics themes and imagery in Victorian art as part of a colonial discourse on Empire.’

**IOANNIS DOUKAS** ‘A Trojan Cycle for Late Antiquity: Towards a digital intertextual commentary.’ I have recently completed the digital component of my project and I am currently entering the final few months of writing up and editing my dissertation, with a view to completing it within this year.

**CHARLES DOYLE** ‘The transmission and reception of Pre-Socratic thought in medieval Irish scholarship.’ My thesis explores the reception of early Greek materialism in early Christian contexts, looking at how patristic authors viewed the place of the first philosophers within a Christianised view of history and the roles which their physical systems played in exegesis and polemic. Following my *viva voce* in December 2018, I am working on corrections ahead of final submission. I will be contributing to the forthcoming volume *Atomism in Philosophy: A History from Antiquity to the Present* from Bloomsbury Academic.

**NOÉMI FARKAS** ‘Intertextuality and ideology in Sedulius Scottus, *De rectoribus Christianis*.’ This mid-ninth-century political treatise is a formative example of the ‘mirror for princes’ literary tradition, instructing a ruler, possibly Charles the Bald, on morals and the art of governance. This year I gave a paper on Sedulius Scottus’ use of the Bible in *De rectoribus Christianis* at CAMPS (Centre for Antique, Medieval and Pre-modern Studies), focusing on the constitutive roles the Bible played in developing a new, Carolingian model of kingship. Currently I am writing a commentary on the treatise to accompany my thesis, identifying the central arguments and the analytical structure of *De rectoribus Christianis*.



Detail of MS Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Helmst. 454 (488): Beginning of *De Rectoribus Christianis*.

**MICHEÁL GEOGHEGAN** 'Generational tensions in Classical Athens: a problem for the citizen self-image, and an aspect of female suppression within the patriarchy.' At the moment I am studying representations of human-horse interactions in Homeric, archaic and classical Greek texts. My work views such representations as a part of the ideology of elite male hegemony, and considers their changing significance during periods of political upheaval and class struggle.

**PAULA HARRISON** I am examining the astronomical and computistical compilation designated as *De Astronomia* in the manuscript Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 422. This is part of Jacopo Bisagni's IRC project 'Ireland and Carolingian Brittany: Texts and Transmission'.

**ANN HURLEY** 'The Anonymous *Excidium Troiae*: Its importance as a didactic question-and-answer text and its reception and intertextuality in later vernacular literature.'

**MARIA CHIARA MARZOLLA** 'Music in the Early Irish Church'. I am currently carrying out a systematic analysis of all available Hiberno-Latin sources (c. AD 600–900), with the aim of creating a catalogue of all musical or music-related terms known to, and used by, Irish literati. This will be an important stepping stone towards the definition of musical knowledge and practice in early medieval Ireland, with particular reference to the ecclesiastical context. My research aims at obtaining a better understanding of the formal study of music in early medieval Ireland: was music considered just as a minor subject to be listed among the idealised 'liberal arts' of the quadrivium, or was it instead a 'real' discipline, actually studied according to the multiple facets of its theory, such as harmony and proportions?

**ÉRIN MCKINNEY** 'Linguistic code-switching in *Bethu Brigte*, the Old Irish Life of St Brigit.'

**ELENA NORDIO** 'Regionalism and diversification in seventh-century Visigothic latinity: a sociolinguistic approach.'

**MARY SWEENEY** 'Jewish identity in second-century BCE Alexandria: The texts and transmission of fragmentary Hellenistic Jewish literature.' My research investigates how Alexandrian Jews of the second century BCE use sophisticated literary composition written in Greek to express their Jewish religious identity. At present I am examining the image of the Jews in Greek literature during the Hellenistic Period.

**HARRY TANNER** My research concerns the charting of semantic change. The *Lexicon* of Liddell-Scott-Jones covers nearly a millennium of Greek word usage, yet its layout reflects that of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The lexicon does very little to document changes in words at different points in time. In my thesis I am building on recent work in cognitive linguistics and neuroscience. In 1991, fMRI was invented as a technology for scanning levels of activity in the brain. Recording of specific neuron cells is now possible on a newly fine-grained level. Consequently, the 'synchronic' picture—how the brain processes language in any given moment—has evolved considerably since 1997. There is a real need for an update on ideas about semantic change, and neurology-based theories need to be tested with models from a large literary corpus. Ancient Greek offers the ideal opportunity for case studies.

# Taking manuscripts to school

Sarah Corrigan reports on a Classics outreach activity

Galway's Educate Together National School in Newcastle encourages parents to come in and share any specific areas of interest with their child's class. In response to this, my eight-year old and I decided to put together a joint presentation on medieval manuscripts. While I am by no means a palaeographer, in the last year and a half I have worked more closely with manuscripts than ever before and with an increasing sense of enthusiasm and fascination. More importantly, my eight-year old deemed the topic sufficiently interesting to share with her peers.

For our presentation we put together a series of PowerPoint slides, titled it 'Manuscripts in Medieval Ireland,' and set out to talk about three questions:

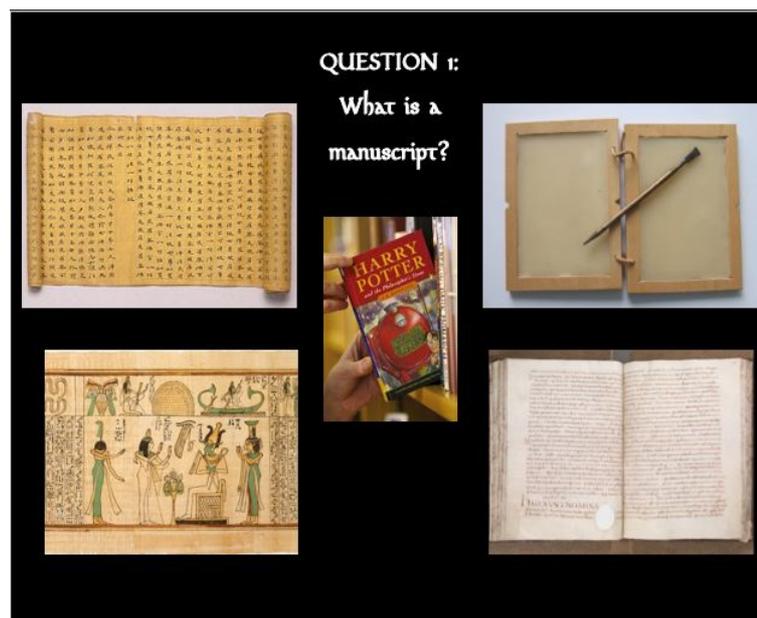
1. What is a manuscript?
2. Who wrote manuscripts?
3. How did they make manuscripts?

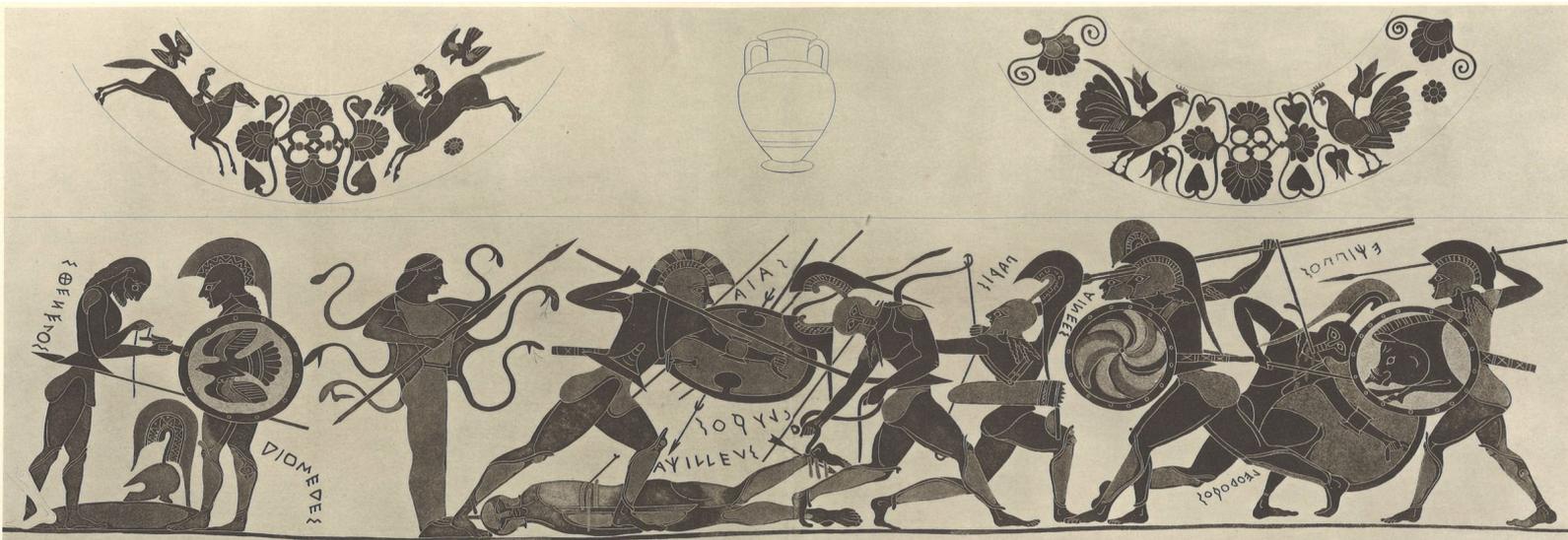
As well as covering the main points of information for each topic, we tried to make the slides as engaging as possible, including several pop-culture references: to the animated film *The Secret of Kells* (2009), the ubiquitous Harry Potter, and CBC's *Horrible Histories* (which has a sketch about medieval monks). Surprisingly, while these were momentarily engaging, I was struck by how much more the students were drawn in by the realities of the subject: vellum made from animal hide, ink wells made from cow horn, and ink made from wasp galls. Ink-making in particular was fascinating for the colours it created, the chemistry it involved, and the very real dangers in using poisons. There was also a strong response to colophons in which scribes complain about the conditions in which they work: students (and teachers) were delighted by this insight into the imperfect world behind the finished product—and some clearly related to the hard labour of writing.

The students also contributed more than I had expected to the discussion: stories about museum visits, Egyptian pharaohs, and all kinds of mythology; one had experience of bookbinding and another described their family's *Qur'an*. A topic that might be considered obscure had immediate relevance, and students shared a wealth of cultural, creative, and personal resonances with the material.

The parallels between this and the science activities that the same students participate in struck me. The key seems to be finding the elements of a specialised and complex field that are intrinsically interesting and sharing those—like the effects of electricity or magnetism—in science workshops. Rather than presenting a simplified or generalised version of the topic, this allows the students to explore exciting aspects of academic research more fully and in a hands-on way.

My own interest in Medieval Studies started with my first encounter with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and what hooked me was the linguistic and textual puzzles that medieval texts present and the importance of understanding manuscript culture in order to resolve those puzzles. I think there is much to be gained from exploring ways to share both puzzles such as these and approaches to solving them with primary and secondary school students, by finding ways to workshop concepts like philology, intertextuality, and historical linguistics.





## Losing a Greek vase

Michael Clarke

Everyone knows that Achilles died because he was shot in the heel with an arrow, the one place that remained dry when his mother, gripping him by the foot in infancy, dipped him in the river Styx to make him invulnerable. Strange to say, though, this most famous of heroic myths is elusive in the ancient sources: it certainly is nowhere in Homer, and the earliest clear reference is in the words of the Roman poet Statius in the first century AD. Is it genuinely ancient? Does it look back to some ancient lore about sorcery and taboo, the kind of thing that comparative mythologists used to love so much?

As so often, the earliest tangible bit of evidence comes from a painted vase, with a scene of the battle over Achilles' body in which you can clearly see the arrow piercing the hero's ankle. The scene is richly detailed and labelled, and seems to be an illustration of the myth as narrated in the lost epic *Aethiopis*. But what is this vase, and why do the handbooks always illustrate it with the drawing rather than a photograph?

The vase is from Italy, as usual, and is said to be from Etruscan Vulci. The drawing unmistakably shows a scene in the so-called 'Chalcidian' style of about 560 BC, precisely resembling that of the artist known as the Inscription Painter. The books always list it as 'lost', and that is the real mystery here. The drawing survives

because it was published in a German monograph of 1927, Rumpf's *Chalcidische Vasen*, whose listing shows that it was once in the collection assembled by Thomas Hope (1769-1831) at the house known as the Deepdene, near Dorking in Surrey, England. Hope is best known for his book *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* of 1807, a fine representation of the Greek revival at its most trivially fashionable.

The engravings in this book are in the same style as the outline image of the vase that we see above our drawing of the Achilles scene, so we can be fairly certain that Hope was the draughtsman responsible for preserving it.

But then we hit a wall. The Deepdene, and its private gallery of antiquities, had an unhappy history: by 1893 the family, fallen on hard times, had to lease it out to the Duchess of Marlborough, and in 1917 everything was dispersed in a bankruptcy sale. The catalogue for that

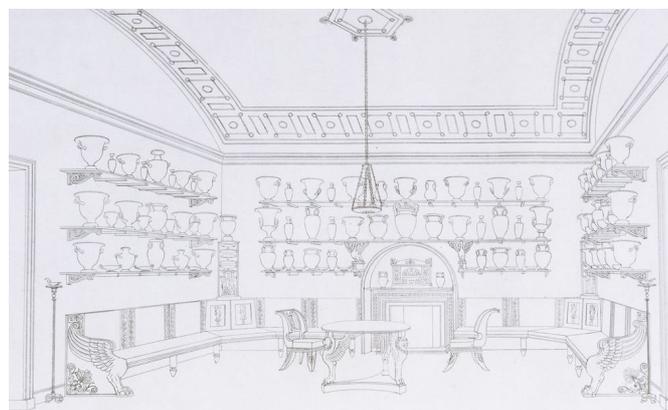


Illustration from Hope's *Household Furniture*

auction survives, but it includes only a few second-rate-looking ancient vases: Achilles is not there.

So what happened? Was our vase simply broken by accident and thrown away, long before that sale? So common sense might suggest: but there is another, intriguing possibility. In an article in the house journal of the Penn Museum (*Expedition Magazine* vol. 38.3 (1996), available online at the museum website), Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway reports some fine research on the provenance of a sculpture in that collection known as the Hope Head. Ridgway tells us that ‘after the initial sale... additional antiquities were discovered, on information provided by one of the gardeners, within the so-called sand caves that riddled the hill behind the Deepdene’; the head in the Penn collection was acquired from among this group, and became part of the collection at the University of Pennsylvania.

Ridgway suggests that the artefacts were put in those caves simply because the Duchess of Marlborough disliked Classical art: but I wonder whether there might be a more shady explanation. Everyone knows that the beneficiaries of a bankruptcy sale are the creditors, not the vendors: and we have all heard stories of family heirlooms spirited away at such a time to prevent them being lost forever. If our vase still existed in the Hope collection in those declining years, it must have looked spectacular among their other vases. Is there not a chance that someone hid it too, perhaps in those same caves? The house became a hotel, then railway offices, and was eventually demolished in 1967, but the grounds are still there. I like to think that this extraordinary vase is still somewhere in Dorking—waiting in the caves, perhaps, or gleaming on the mantelpiece of someone who found it on a Sunday walk in the park.

## Events

### Book launch for Edward Herring

Edward Herring launched two new books on 8 October 2018: a monograph *Patterns in the Production of Apulian Red-Figure Pottery* and an edited volume (co-edited with Eóin O’Donoghue) *Papers in Italian Archaeology VII. The Archaeology of Death. Proceedings of the Seventh Conference of Italian Archaeology held at the National University of Ireland Galway, 16–18 April, 2016* (Archaeopress Archaeology, Oxford). Special guest at the event was Prof. Mike Edwards (Roehampton), former Director of the Institute of Classical Studies in London.



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## Notes from another West Coast

Peter Kelly (PhD 2017) reports on adventures in the New World

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Writing not too far from a wave-battered shoreline, it would be easy to dwell on the similarities between the Oregon and Irish coasts. There is, however, still wilderness here. Vast swathes of Douglas fir, Sitka spruce, and western hemlock can still swallow the trail of the over eager hiker or biker. The snow-capped volcanic peaks of the cascades that periodically materialize on the horizon do justice to their mythic heritage. The sea is too cold to swim in, its cerulean facade hiding 'sneaker waves', undercurrents and debris. I am in the final weeks of teaching a course on 'fragmented' ancient texts to a bunch of STEM majors—the students, although thoroughly engaged, often seem struck by the uncanniness of the discourse, where the old continually takes on the guise of something new. In the last class they were piecing together the Strasbourg fragments of Empedocles, but one student drew us back to the image of the mayfly from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (X 312–15):



'Ever the river has risen and brought us the flood,  
the mayfly floating on the water.

On the face of the sun its countenance gazes,  
then all of a sudden nothing is there!'

The tension between transience and permanence, or destruction and cyclical recurrence found expression in an image that not only touched the different material we were analysing but also seemed to reflect the student's own experience of an alien discipline. Looking back across the many rocky promontories that dot the Oregon coastline, Cape Perpetua could also be seen to capture this idea in being a monument to its own erosion. In the months that follow I will be preparing to return to the other western shore. The unlimited possibilities of this land have all but retreated to the remnants of its wild nature.

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## In memoriam

Remembering Gavin Jones

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Gavin Jones, a native of Strandhill, Co. Sligo, came to NUI Galway in the autumn of 2012 to undertake a Masters in Classics. He was a capable, engaged and reflective student, who had a wide range of interests. In the end, he settled on the topic of Roman foundation myths for his dissertation, which won high marks and significant praise from our external examiner. He stood out particularly for his personal qualities, however. Warm and affable, he also had a steadiness of character that made him effectively a mentor among his peers.

Gavin died suddenly in Hanoi, Vietnam, in August 2018. The staff and students of Classics at NUIG extend our heartfelt sympathies to his family and loved ones.



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## Events

### Margaret Heavey Memorial Lecture 2019: Prof. Hans van Wees

This year's Margaret Heavey Memorial Lecture will be given by Hans van Wees, Grote Professor of Ancient History at University College London. His books include *Ships and Silver, Taxes and Tribute: A Fiscal History of Archaic Athens* (2013), *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities* (2004), and *War and Violence in Ancient Greece* (2000).

Margaret Heavey (1908–1980) was appointed to a lectureship in Classics in 1931 and served as Professor between 1958 and her retirement in 1977. In her will, she bequeathed a legacy to the University to establish the Athenry Prizes for high-performing students in Classics.

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## Away from Ogygia

Reflections from Ioannis Doukas on leaving Galway

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Very recently I relocated back to my home town of Athens, after spending four years and four months in the West of Ireland. As I work towards the completion of my PhD, I find myself, perhaps prematurely, nostalgic for Galway, the place I called my home away from home. Obviously, it is not just the place itself, the familiar landmarks, the compulsive repetitions or, to quote Hugh MacDiarmid, the loose ends I'm gathering unto myself.

One of the passages I have been working on is the journey of Paris from Troy to Sparta, as included in Colluthus's Late Antique epyllion on the *Abduction of Helen* (lines 192–246). To approach it, and the PhD as a whole, I have pondered over the notions of shifts and transitions, transmissions and movements, passages, travels, drifts and transformations; and also, home-comings, *nostoi*, although the idea of home itself is not as stable and secure as in the past.

Ruaidhrí Ó Flaithbheartaigh, the last Lord of West Connaught, who lost most of his estates during the Cromwellian confiscations, titled his history of Ireland *Ogygia*, using the island of Calypso in the *Odyssey* as an allegory. Will I resist the obvious temptation? Although Odysseus did set sail from Ogygia to return to Ithaka, is this analogy even accurate in my case? Do I want to play the part?

Or is my Ithaka none other than this PhD at NUI Galway, the one that has already given me 'the marvelous journey', as Cavafy writes in his famous poem, addressed to Odysseus (or any of us)? In Edmund Keeley's

translation: 'As you set out for Ithaka / hope your road is a long one, / full of adventure, full of discovery', he writes, 'don't hurry the journey at all. / Better if it lasts for years, / so you're old by the time you reach the island, / wealthy with all you've gained on the way.'

Of course, journeys are not always easy or peaceful: I'm recalling a few lines from another late epic text, the *Orphic Argonautica*, which rather unexpectedly has Jason and the Argonauts pass by Ireland on their own way home. They reach the Atlantic sea (πέλαγος Ἀτλαντικόν, 1169), and when they find the island of Iernis, a gloomy quivering thunderstorm comes violently down on them:

Πὰρ δ' ἄρα νῆσον ἄμειβεν Ἴερνίδα  
Ἴκτο καταίγδην δνοφερὴ τρομέουσα θύελλα (1181–2)

Ironically, it's raining outside at the moment, as Athens has seen a rather harsh and windy winter, which cannot but remind me of Ireland—reassuringly, in a sense. I go back to work, and the journey never ends.



Graffiti art in Athens, 2019

## Keep in touch

You can keep in touch in several ways:

- (1) To keep an eye on recent activities, see our website: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/classics>
- (2) If you would like to receive occasional e-mails about news and upcoming events, send a blank e-mail to: [nuig-classics+subscribe@groups.google.com](mailto:nuig-classics+subscribe@groups.google.com)
- (3) Social media junkies can also follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ClassicsNUIGalway>