M.Phil. in Eighteenth Century and Romantic Studies

Greece and Rome

Convenors: Dr Fred Parker and Dr Corinna Russell

Required reading is listed under each seminar. Items in bold will be circulated on camtools in advance. The selective list of secondary reading at the end is not required to be read in advance, but may be helpful in stimulating thought. It is roughly divided by seminar, although some items apply to more than one.

Seminar 1:
‘A Very Pretty Poem, Mr Pope, but you must not call it Homer’: Pope’s Homer’s Iliad

The main text is The Iliad of Homer, translated by Alexander Pope, Penguin edition, ed. Steven Shankman. Passages on which particularly to focus are:
Preface;
Book I: The Contention of Achilles and Agamemnon;
Book II: The Trial of the Army and Catalogue of the Forces; Observations on the Catalogue;
Book VIII: esp. lines 687-end [the ‘Night-Piece’];
Book XVIII: The grief of Achilles, and new armour made him by Vulcan; Observations on the Shield of Achilles

Critical responses:

- **Samuel Johnson**, Life of Pope (1781), in The Lives of the Poets.
- **William Cowper**, Preface to his translation of The Iliad (1791).
- **Samuel Taylor Coleridge**, Biographia Literaria (1817)[passage criticising P’s translation of Book 8 ‘Night-Piece’]

And see also translations for possible comparison in the reading-list at the end.

Seminar 2:
Irony, grandeur, and being Augustan: decline and fall?
‘It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the
Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind.’

Main texts

- Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapters 2, 3, the ‘General Observations’ in 38, and 71.
- Virgil, *Aeneid*
  Book 5 lines 303-361 in Loeb, 399-475 in Dryden (Nisus and Euryalus racing)
  Book 6 lines 679-853 in Loeb, 921-1177 in Dryden (Anchises in the underworld)

See also:

- Alexander Pope *The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated*, or Epistle to Fortescue, with Horace, Satire II.1
- Alexander Pope, *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated*, or Epistle to Augustus, lines 1-30

Seminar 3:
**Reproducing Greece and Rome: Romantic Ekphrasis and the Museum**

**Main Texts**

- John Keats, ‘On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer’, ‘On Seeing the Elgin Marbles’, *Lamia, Isabella, the Eve of St. Agnes and other poems* [the 1820 volume of poetry, but especially the Odes].

Seminar 4:
**Idealism, myth and history**

‘I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness.’

**Main texts**
• Percy Bysshe Shelley,
  *Prometheus Unbound*
  ‘Discourse on the manners of the Ancient Greeks relative to the subject of love’
  *notes on the Laocoon and the Niobe sculptures*

• Plato,
  *The Symposium*, translated by Shelley as ‘The Banquet’, reprinted e.g. in *Shelley on Love* ed. Richard Holmes
  *The Republic*, 514-518 in any translation (beginning of Book 7, parable of the cave)

• Aeschylus,
  *Prometheus Bound*, preferably in translation by David Grene

• John Keats,
  *Hyperion A Fragment*, first version, published in the 1820 volume

• Byron,
  *The Giaour*, lines 1-167, on Greece
  *Don Juan*, canto 3 stanzas 12-87, including ‘The Isles of Greece’

• A. W. Schlegel,
  *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, 1, 5 and end of 6 (on *Prometheus*)

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**Secondary reading**


• H. A. Mason, *To Homer through Pope* (1972)

• Steven Shankman, *Pope’s Iliad: Homer in the Age of Passion* (1983)

• Robin Sowerby, ‘The Decorum of Pope’s *Iliad*’, *Translation and Literature*, 13 (2004), 49-79


• Paul Hammond and David Hopkins, vol. 5 (Longman, 2005)

• *The Iliad of Homer*, translated by Richard Lattimore (Chicago, 1961).


• Christopher Logue, *War Music* (Faber, 2002).

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• Simon Jarvis, ‘Mock as screen and optic’, Critical Quarterly 46(3): 1-19
• W. B. Carnochan, Gibbon’s Solitude (1987), ch.5
• David Womersley, The Transformation of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1988), ch. 4, 5, 18.

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• Jeffrey Cox, Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School (1999).

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• Jennifer Wallace, Shelley and Greece (1996), ch.4 and 5
• Timothy Webb, Shelley: a Voice not Included (1977), ch.7
• Joseph Barrell, Shelley and the Thought of his Time (1967), ch.6
• Angela Leighton, Shelley and the Sublime (1984), ch.4
• Michael Neill, The Human Mind’s Imaginings (1989), ch.5
• Martin Aske, Keats and Hellenism (1985) ch.4 ‘The fall of Hyperion’
• Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton, ed., Platonism and the English Imagination (1994)