

A NEW JOURNAL: CONTENTS, METHODS, PERSPECTIVES

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This is the inaugural issue of *History of Classical Scholarship* (HCS), a new online Open Access journal entirely devoted to the study of the scholarship on the Greek and Roman world. New editorial projects always require some justification, albeit brief, and a positive statement of their intellectual agenda — even when readers and contributors are not charged a single penny.

The history of classical scholarship is a thriving field, which has a complex and lively background, and has gained further momentum in the last few decades. Its subject matter is technically demanding, formidably diverse, inspiring and unsettling, infuriating and humbling. As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, it appears to us to be especially topical in at least three respects: its contents, its methods, and its perspectives.

Knowing the history of the scholarly debates on a specific problem remains the most effective way of coming to grips with its intellectual potential and historiographical significance. Understanding the genesis and development of the academic disciplines related to the study of the ancient world is essential if one is to grasp the structural rules of current research and to assess its credibility and traction. As the most authoritative practitioner of the history of classical scholarship once put it, studying the likes of Gibbon, Niebuhr or Meyer without knowing how they approached the documents on which they worked is a fruitless operation.¹

In turn, a reading of those very sources that seriously engages with what earlier scholars had to say about them is likely to achieve a greater level of depth. A full understanding of ancient documents, monuments, and ideas may only be achieved by investigating the contexts and processes surrounding their discovery, publication, interpretation, intellectual and physical reuse. This methodological approach is also vital in ensuring full access to a stratified body of knowledge (corpora, editions,

¹ A. Momigliano, ‘Le regole del giuoco nello studio della storia antica’, in *Sesto Contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, I, Rome 1960, 13–22, at 13: ‘Gli studi moderni sul mondo classico vanno giudicati ed eventualmente accettati come validi solo se la loro interpretazione dei documenti antichi risulta corretta’.

collections, digital resources etc.) and in transmitting complex research tools to future generations of scholars.

Thirdly, studying our discipline as a topic of historical enquiry is a necessary step towards understanding its place in the contemporary world, and coming to terms with its implications with political practices and discourses: with legacies of privilege and oppression, to be sure, as well as with attempts to steep the prospect of human emancipation in the close reading of, and engagement with, ancient sources. Any effort to de-provincialise or decolonise the subject must build upon a factually informed and interpretatively sensitive view on its historical development.

Hence this new project: we believe that *History of Classical Scholarship* is the first periodical that is entirely focused on this research field, for which we take the widest possible thematic and chronological remit. *HCS* welcomes contributions on any aspects of the history of classical studies, in any geographical context, from the Middle Ages to the late twentieth century, and we are keen to host papers covering the whole range of the discipline: from ancient history to literary studies, from epigraphy and numismatics to iconography and archaeology, from textual criticism to religious and linguistic studies, encompassing even ‘scholastic philosophy’, as J. E. Sandys put it in the introduction to his great book, whose title is echoed in the name of this journal.²

We also think that important insights into the history of the discipline may be yielded by the publication of significant items from the *Nachlässe* of classical scholars, including letters and documents that shed light on matters of historical or historiographical interest. In our ambition to investigate and elucidate long-established intellectual traditions, we are also hoping to challenge and deepen them. In that spirit, we look forward to the participation of a broad and diverse base of scholars from all over the world, and encourage the involvement of early career researchers.

Whilst classical reception does not quite fall within our brief — and is already well served by other journals — we are open to contributions on the engagement with the Classics in modern literatures or modern political discourses, if they contribute to the elucidation and further understanding of an ancient source or historical problem: Machiavelli’s *Discorsi*, Simone Weil’s essay on the *Iliad*, or Brecht’s *Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Caesar* are valuable reminders that original insights into classical matters are certainly not just the purview of university professors. We hope to be able to represent the development of the discipline in all its complexity and variety, and do justice to the ties that bind classical scholarship with the work of other subject communities, from

² J. E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, I, Cambridge 1903, vi.

modern history to law, from gender studies to sociology, from politics to oriental studies. Our enterprise is an intrinsically interdisciplinary one. And, like most people who work in our field, we have often found ourselves wondering whether Classics is a discipline at all.³ Far from being a neatly defined canon with carefully policed boundaries, classical scholarship is a wide set of interpretative practices that elude precise definition — and is all the stronger for that.

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This is a Diamond Open Access journal, and authors will retain copyright over their own contributions. Each issue will be freely available on the web, and each paper will be paginated and downloadable in PDF format. We shall make arrangements to include the journal in the main international indexing databases, as soon as we are eligible to do so. We are grateful to our home institutions, Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Newcastle University, for their support, material and otherwise, to this project. We also warmly thank the colleagues who agreed to join our Editorial Board and those who have reviewed submissions to this first issue.

There is no binding word limit for contributions to *HCS* and we have not set strict deadlines for the submission of papers for each individual issue, unlike what is typically the case with journals that are published in hard copy. We have decided not to impose prescriptive house editorial standards. However, submissions must be highly consistent internally, both in formatting style and referencing conventions. We expect to open the second issue of the journal early in 2020 and to upload new contributions online, as soon as a final accepted version is ready for publication. In 2020, we also plan to launch an Open Access book series, *HCS Supplementary Volumes*, which will be hosted on the journal website and will include studies on aspects of the history of the discipline that require a full-scale treatment.

This opening issue conveys the aspiration to diversity that we aim to pursue all along this project. It includes papers written in four different languages, by scholars based in the US, the UK, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, and Switzerland. It covers a range of topics that goes from Conrad Peutinger's library to scholarship in the Cold War; from nineteenth-century speculation on the Etruscans to the role of epitaphs in the work of the great polymath Pirro Ligorio and the edition of previously

³ Cf. M. H. Crawford in T. P. Wiseman (ed.), *Classics in Progress: Essays on Ancient Greece and Rome*, Oxford and New York 2002, ix.

unpublished lecture notes of E. R. Dodds; from the establishment of the main bibliographical tool in the discipline to a Continental reflection on Roman studies in Britain. It includes a paper on the life and career of Grace H. Macurdy and her contribution to the teaching of Classics at Vassar College, and her ties with scholars such as Lily Ross Taylor and Elizabeth H. Haight. Other pieces concentrate on specific textual issues, such as the readings of Catiline's letter in Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*, or the intellectual and political background of the once influential, and now largely overlooked, works of John C. Stobart.

We hope to retain a comparable range of themes and material in the coming issues, and indeed aspire to be able to widen it further and fully do justice to the scope, diversity, and complexity of classical scholarship and its history.

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