

## **Constructing the 'Public Intellectual' in the Premodern World**

*A two-day conference co-hosted by the Genealogies of Knowledge project, the Division of Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology, and the Centre for Translation and Intercultural Studies, University of Manchester, UK*

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### **Abstracts**

**Nilza Angmo (Ambedkar University, Delhi)**

#### **The Reciter and the Translator: Transmission of religious texts in Tibetan Buddhism**

An investigation of the term 'Lochen' in Tibetan Buddhism conventionally used to denote a translator as well as a reciter of religious texts makes for an interesting study, particularly when the translator (Lotsawa or Lochen) is a representative of the sophisticated writing system of the religion and the reciter hailing from the more humble oral tradition of storytelling aided by mobile shrines or scroll paintings called thangkas. Such reciters are variously called Manipa, Buchen or Lochen and were well known for their significant number of women performers in the past. Texts of such reciters are expressed through the visual in the form of narrative paintings, oral texts, and manuscripts which involves a continuous process of creative structuring and restructuring of the said texts and spontaneous translation depending upon their audience. Such creative efforts have somehow not been considered to be at par with the activity carried out by translators who belong to the socially accepted circle of intellectuals. Such a notion might be based on the understanding that the Manipa/Buchen are more a part of the performative world and do not possess the traditional training undertaken by scholars in a monastery. The Manipa/Buchen are mostly lay practitioners trained either by their fathers or by other performers belonging to the tradition who conduct religious ceremonies which include sword-dancing, recitation of Buddhist tales from paintings (thangka) and enacting plays that center around the lives of personalities well known throughout the Tibetan Buddhist world. Through their enactment, narration and simultaneous translation of Buddhist tales the Manipa/Buchen bridge the gap between the lay community and the monastic world. This paper seeks to explore the hierarchical and authoritative implications of the above mentioned systems of knowledge transmission by studying the historical, cultural, and, social conditions that contributed to the construction of the concept of an intellectual in Tibetan Buddhism that sought to privilege the writing system over other forms of knowledge production and dissemination.

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Academic biography

Nilza Angmo is currently pursuing PhD in Comparative Literature and Translation Studies from the School of Letters, (SOL), Ambedkar University Delhi. The title of her PhD thesis is 'The Text(s) of the Buchen'. Her research interest lies in studying the Buchen, who are religious performers belonging to the Pin Valley, in Spiti, Himachal Pradesh. She is also a faculty member at the Department of English, Shyama Prasad Mukherji College for Women, University of Delhi, since 2015.

**Radha Chakravarty (Ambedkar University, Delhi)**

**The River of Knowledge: Rabindranath Tagore and Premodern Thinkers**

This paper examines Rabindranath Tagore's writings on pre-modern figures such as the Buddha, and Kabir, to argue that he represents them as inspirational models for his own self-fashioning as a public intellectual with an inclusive, transformative vision for his times. Through his interpretations of the role played by these spiritual leaders in the radical reimagining of social and epistemological structures, Tagore seeks to project a broad, civilizational perspective that transcends the what he perceives as the limits of colonial and nationalist discourses, religious orthodoxy and oppressive societal norms. His literary reconstructions of the legacy of these predecessors help to locate his own practice in an imagined trajectory of emancipatory discourse through the ages, legitimizing his own vision of a more inclusive, egalitarian and heterogeneous world. In this vision, the relationship between knowledge, language and power occupies a central place. Although Tagore withdrew from overt participation in politics after he became disenchanted with the Swadeshi movement, he continued to express his views on contemporary world affairs more indirectly, through his literary writings, letters and personal interactions. His invocation of public personalities from the past can be read as part of this process of masked socio-political commentary, which we can also re-read as tropes for our own times.

Preliminary bibliography:

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Wakankar, M., (2010), *Subalternity and Religion: The prehistory of Dalit empowerment in South Asia*, London and New York.

Academic biography:

Radha Chakravarty is a writer, critic and translator. She has co-edited *The Essential Tagore* (Harvard and Visva Bharati), nominated Book of the Year 2011 by Martha Nussbaum, and edited *Shades of Difference: Selected Writings of Rabindranath Tagore* (Social Science Press, 2015; World edition: Routledge, 2017). *Our Santiniketan*, her English translation of Mahasweta Devi's memoirs, is forthcoming from Seagull. She is the author of *Feminism and Contemporary Women Writers* (Routledge, 2008) and *Novelist Tagore: Gender and Modernity in Selected Texts* (Routledge, 2013). Her translations of Tagore include *Gora*, *Chokher Bali*, *Boyhood Days*, *Farewell Song: Shesher Kabita* and *The Land of Cards: Stories, Poems and Plays for Children*. Other works in translation are Bankimchandra Chatterjee's *Kapalkundala*, *In the Name of the Mother* by Mahasweta Devi, *Vermillion Clouds: Stories by Bengali Women*, and *Crossings: Stories from Bangladesh and India*. She has edited *Bodyscapes: Stories by South Asian Women* and co-edited *Writing Feminism: South Asian Voices* and *Writing Freedom: South Asian Voices*. Her poems have appeared in *Journal of the Poetry Society of India*, *The Fib Review*, *The Skinny Poetry Journal* and *Indian Poetry through the Passage of Time*. She was nominated for the Crossword Translation Award, 2004. She is Professor of Comparative Literature & Translation Studies and Dean, School of Letters, at Ambedkar University Delhi.

**Tim Cornell (University of Manchester)**

### **Ancient and Modern Ideas of History and Historical Writing**

This paper will concentrate on two of the most important differences between ancient and modern historiography, namely their radically different approach to historical research and what it entailed, and their distinctive ideas of the purpose of History. Historical writing has always been thought to have a didactic function, but in different ways. In antiquity and until early modern times history was expected to teach political and moral lessons. It provided educated readers with examples of virtue to be followed, and of vice to be avoided, while statesmen and generals could learn from the experiences of their predecessors in their efforts to succeed in politics and war.

In this very general sense History served as a guide to life (*magistra uitae*, as Cicero called it), and an aid to public policy. On the other hand, historical study had no place in formal education at any level. Historians were men (almost invariably men) of independent means and usually of high social standing; often they had direct experience of war and politics and knew at first hand what they were writing about. Readers were educated adults, whose judgement was the sole criterion of the standing of the historian, and of his claim to the status of public intellectual.

Nowadays, by contrast, History is part of the school curriculum and an established subject in University degree programmes. Historians are tied to the Academy, and earn their living by teaching and research. Their status as academics depends on the merits of their published research in the professional judgement of their peers, and is independent of any reputation they may have as public

intellectuals. This novel conception of the historian and his or her work is a very recent development, going back little more than a couple of centuries. The introduction of History as an academic subject coincided with a radical change in historical method, most famously associated with the German Universities in the early nineteenth century under the guidance of figures such as Niebuhr and Ranke.

What characterised this change was the emphasis on research, the study of original sources, and the use of evidence to support the validity of historical arguments. In antiquity these processes were only subliminally present: historians always presented themselves as truthful and authoritative, and based their claims on their social standing, experience and knowledge of the world. But they felt under no obligation to justify their accounts of historical events by indicating their sources or supporting their statements with evidence.

The modern purpose of historical study, and its didactic function, is no longer a matter of teaching political and moral lessons, but is linked to research methodology and the acquisition of skills. Its value, not to be underestimated in today's world, is that it provides a method of distinguishing between fact and fiction, between a genuine report and 'fake news'.

Preliminary bibliography:

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Momigliano, A. (1990), *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*. Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Academic biography:

Tim Cornell studied at University College London, completing his PhD in 1972 under the supervision of Arnaldo Momigliano. He held the W. H. D. Rouse Research Fellowship at Christ's College, Cambridge, until 1975, when he became Assistant Director of the British School at Rome. After three years in Rome he returned to London as Lecturer in History at University College. In 1995 he was appointed to the Chair of Ancient History at the University of Manchester. After a brief interlude (2004-2006) as Director of the Institute of Classical Studies (University of London), he returned to

Manchester as Professorial Research Fellow until his retirement in 2011. His principal research interests are ancient historiography and the history and archaeology of Rome and Italy until the end of the Republic. Major publications include *The Beginnings of Rome* (London 1995) and *The Fragments of the Roman Historians*, 3 vols. (Oxford 2013).

### **Edoardo Crisafulli (Independent researcher)**

#### **The construction of Dante as a modern intellectual ahead of his time**

This paper will focus on one of the most authoritative pre-modern public intellectuals in Western culture, Dante (1265-1321), who remained a constant source of inspiration for centuries thereby undergoing subtle ideological transformations. Besides being a canonical author, Dante perfectly fits the role of the uncompromising and outspoken poet/philosopher who does not shy away from political engagement in perilous times, when antagonizing the powers that be carried the risk of imprisonment or exile. Dante joined the fray by making a distinctive contribution to one of the most controversial debates of the Middle Ages: the fraught relationship between secular authority (the Holy Roman Empire) and religious power (the Catholic Church). He vehemently argued against theocracy on the grounds that both Institutions derive their legitimacy directly from God, which implies that the Pope has no direct jurisdiction over temporal matters. This view he expounded in the Latin treatise *De Monarchia* (1312-1313) and in *The Comedy* (1308-1320), which he wrote in the vernacular. Nineteenth-century British and Italian intellectuals popularized the myth of Dante “the prophet of liberty”, whom they portrayed as a quasi-modern political philosopher advocating freedom of conscience. Dante, the champion of orthodox Christianity and absolute monarchy, has become the precursor of the secular state. In turning to Dante, the British Protestants reinforced their identity as upholders of religious and civil liberties. In a similar vein, the Italian patriots fighting for national unity and independence sought to enlist a powerful voice to their cause. The (re)construction of Dante as a public intellectual who articulated timeless ideas and concerns gave him a new lease of life. This daring hermeneutic transformation blurs the boundaries between interpretation and over-interpretation (in Umberto Eco’s sense). Dante provided the British romantics with a philosophical vision that went some way towards addressing their quest for a noble compromise between the growing liberalism/secularism of the time and the concomitant strong religious revival. Hence, caution should be exercised when employing loaded concepts such as “conservative”, “progressive” and “secular”, which do not adequately represent both the complexity of Dante’s political-theological system and its appropriation in the Romantic age.

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Academic biography

Edoardo Crisafulli (Ph.D., National University of Ireland) is currently a cultural attaché at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation. Before entering the Foreign service, he lectured at the Universities of Dublin, Manchester and Jeddah. He was the director of the Italian Cultural Institutes in Haifa, in Damascus and in Beirut, and deputy director of the Italian Institute in Tokyo. He has published extensively on Italian politics and Translation Studies. Among his publications, *The Vision of Dante*. H.F. Cary's *Rewriting of the Divine Comedy into English*, and a biography on the late Italian socialist leader Bettino Craxi. He is currently working on hermeneutics issues relating to interfaith dialogue, in particular the relationship between Islam and Christianity, on which he has recently published *La fede nel dialogo (Faith in Dialogue)*, an essay eulogizing Father Paolo Dall'Oglio, the Italian Jesuit living in Syria who has dedicated his life to the "rapprochement" between Christianity and Islam.

**Chiara Fontana (Sapienza University of Rome – Italian Institute of Oriental Studies)**

**A Farewell to the Beauty: Political, Aesthetical and Social Aspects of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's (861 – 908) Legacy as a Pre-modern Public Intellectual. An In-Depth Inquiry in His Neglected Work *Fuṣūl at-Tamāthīl fī Tabāshīr as-Surūr (Examples and Similes on the Pleasure of Sharing Joy)***

Although Arabic literary and historical sources from both ancient and modern times have affirmed Ibn al-Mu'tazz's inestimable legacy as a scholar in poetics and rhetoric during the height of the Abbasid caliphate (VIII – X C.), less scholarly attention has been paid to his political and social attitudes.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz, the great grandson of caliph Harūn ar-Rashīd and hence the legitimate heir, lived between the constant threat of conspiracy and forced exile. While he went down in history as a well-mannered and erudite prince devoted to belle lettres, he was also, importantly, the last strong beacon of Abbasid dynastic authority in the wake of the dynasty's imminent decline under military threats.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's longstanding literary fame, together with distorted readings of his stormy biography, have led to a decontextualization of the "fair doomed prince", neglecting to observe his keen political thought in its historical context. To date, few attempts have been made to pursue an interdisciplinary reading of al-Mu'tazz's works so as to paint a comprehensive picture of this unconventional political and intellectual figure. Al-Mu'tazz is all the more compelling in light of his comprehensive knowledge of languages of learning (e.g. Greek, Persian) and expertise outside of literature and rhetoric (e.g. medical learning). Over the course of his life, he developed new categories for conceptualizing Arabic literary aesthetics, as well as explored the relationship between power, knowledge and ethics, exploring the 'power of language' and its political use across different cultural and temporal frames.

Using a holistic methodology which draws on Arabic rhetorical analytical tools as well as the sociology of literature, the proposed contribution aims to provide the first in-depth and critical inquiry into caliph Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Fuṣūl at-tamāthīl fī tabāshīr as-surūr* (Examples and Similes on the Pleasure of Sharing Joy), a small treatise on wine and courtly amusement. Building on a preliminary reading of modern editions of *Fuṣūl at-tamāthīl*, this paper aims to investigate al-Mu'tazz's decision to use the introduction of his charming, brief treatise as the staging ground for his political manifesto. In this light, I argue that *Fuṣūl at-tamāthīl* acts as a 'literary artefact' – offering insight into 9th century Abbasid society, culture and politics – as well as a 'mirror for princes' through which Ibn al-Mu'tazz combines poetry and wine to frame his nostalgic reflections upon the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate and its transformations from a social, moral and aesthetic point of view.

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Ouyang, W., (1997), *Literary Criticism in Medieval Arabic-Islamic Culture. The Making of a Tradition*. Edinburgh.

#### Academic biography

Chiara Fontana has a PhD in Arabic Literature and Linguistics at The Sapienza University of Rome. Her thesis was entitled *A Linguistic, Rhetorical and Metric Analysis of Nağib Surūr's Experimental Works* (February 2018). Since 2014 she has taught and continued her research at institutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Jordan. In 2017 she was awarded a scholarship from the Italian Ministry of Research in order to carry out a pilot study on Rhetorical/Poetic Forms in Southern Tunisian and Western Libyan Dialects. She is also a member of the research board for the ERC project *GlobalLit: Caucasus Literatures Compared* at the University of Birmingham. Her research is centered around Arabic rhetoric, prosody and linguistics as applied to cross-temporal literature. Among her latest publications are "Rhetorical Features of Cursing/Foul-Mouthed Speech in Contemporary Masters of Muğūn" (*Romano-Arabica*, 2019) and "Exploring a New Methodological Approach to the Rhetorical and Metrical Analysis of Contemporary Arabic poetry" (*Post-Eurocentric Poetics*, ed. R. Gould, H. Rashwan, Oxford University Press (in print)).

#### **Matthias Haake (University of Münster)**

##### **All over the Ancient Mediterranean world? The social figure of the intellectual in the Greek and Roman worlds from the Archaic period to Late Antiquity – a comparative approach**

In the field of Classical Studies, the term 'intellectual' is widely, but – due to a general lack of respective conceptual considerations – often rather hazily used. Thus, a thorough debate about the figure of the intellectual in the Ancient Mediterranean world is a true desideratum. The conference "Constructing the 'public intellectual' in the premodern world" gives the highly welcome opportunity to discuss this important topic in an interdisciplinary context.

Said's concept of the 'public intellectual', though important and inspiring, has nevertheless not generally been adopted by classicists (especially outside the Anglophone world). However, I would like to put another definition of the figure of the intellectual up for discussion, which is more general than Said's suggestion, but frames its implicit background. According to this definition, 'the

intellectual' plays a particular social role in societies, for which the antithesis of power and intellect is fundamental. After outlining this concept and its theoretical frame in detail, the aim of my paper is to discuss the political and social preconditions for the existence of intellectuals in the Mediterranean world in a 'classical' meaning, namely in the Greek and Roman worlds. I shall argue that whereas the intellectual as social figure can be found not only in Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic Greece but also in the Roman imperial period, nevertheless such a figure did not exist in the Roman Republic. My paper shall end with a short outlook for the intellectual under Christian auspices in the changing world of Late Antiquity.

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#### Academic biography:

Matthias Haake teaches Ancient History at the University of Münster. He studied Ancient History, Classical Archaeology, and Philosophy at the Universities of Freiburg and Perugia and obtained his PhD from the University of Münster. His main research focuses on the cultural and social history of philosophy in the Mediterranean world from the Archaic period until late Antiquity as well as the history and political culture of Mediterranean monarchies, especially Hellenistic kingship and Roman emperorship. His major publications include a monograph (*Der Philosoph in der Stadt. Untersuchungen zur öffentlichen Rede über Philosophen und Philosophie in den hellenistischen Poleis*, Munich 2007) and a number of co-edited volumes, among them *Rollenbilder in der athenischen Demokratie: Medien, Gruppen, Räume im politischen und sozialen System* (Wiesbaden 2009), *Rechtliche Verfahren und religiöse Sanktionierung in der griechisch-römischen Antike*

(Stuttgart 2016), and *Politische Kultur und soziale Struktur der römischen Republik. Bilanzen und Perspektiven* (Stuttgart 2017).

**Joanna Komorowska**

### **Knowing the Future: the public face of an astrologer**

In the eyes of his fourth-century contemporaries, Iulius Firmicus Maternus was a member of privileged class: a senator, a politician, a statesman as he would be defined by Roman tradition. a true statesman in the traditional mould. Hence, a person of considerable authority. At the same time, as manifested as his literary legacy, he harboured profound interest in astrology. For a Roman senator, such an interest, though not entirely unusual, could still be considered suspect and possibly dangerous: first, there was the matter of the questionable status of astrology as such, the lore being often rebuked for fallibility and the venal character of its practitioners (a sentiment manifested by Tacitus and Apuleius alike). Then, there were political dimensions: in practicing astrology, one risked accusations of inciting unrest and a potentially capital accusation of *maiestas* or treason (on this, cf. Cramer 1954). It is hardly surprising that there are no indications that Firmicus ever employed astrological knowledge to further his political career. Still, his exhaustive exposition of planetary prognostication, the *Matheseos libri* ('books of learning', i.e. of astrology), and particularly chapter II 30, provides – among other, more lore-oriented data – an interesting glimpse of an attempt to reconcile the practice of astrology with the realities of the increasingly Christianized cultural milieu. That the lore ran contrary to many tenets of the Christian faith was only one of the issues that had to be addressed – more importantly, its practice could also lead to charges of *katamanteia* (aggressive magic) and outlawed (and possibly incendiary) investigations into length of life. At the same moment, at least for Firmicus, astrology is a lore that completes human knowledge by extending cognition into the future, and hence allowing for better understanding of the rules of the universe (as made manifest by the death of the philosopher Plotinus). Thus, a proficient and true astrologer (much in a manner of Galen's ideal medicus) is a man who truly realizes his intellectual potential (hence, a true intellectual).

My interest lies with the strategies Firmicus employs to legitimize astrology as a public practice as well as to safeguard the art of prognostication in the often hostile circumstances of the post-Constantine era. As both the main proem of the *Mathesis* and chapter II 20 contain a number of indications concerning the status of astrology, its place in human life and society, and, finally, some guidelines concerning the actual practice of the art of prognostication within the public milieu, it seems reasonable to consider their content and meaning as applied to the image of the astrologer as advertised by Firmicus.

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Komorowska, J. (1999), "The Empire and the Astrologer: a Study into Firmicus Maternus' *Mathesis*", *Classica Cracoviensia*, 4: 151-172.

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Academic Biography:

Dr hab. Joanna Komorowska is a Professor of Greek Literature at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. Her research focuses on ancient philosophy, astrology and medicine. She is an author of *Vettius Valens – an intellectual monography* (Kraków 2004) and several articles on Ptolemy, Hephaestio, Manilius, Firmicus, and Galen. She has also authored translations into Polish with commentary on the following: Plutarch's *De animae generatione* ('On the generation of the soul'), Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De fato* ('On fate') and *De anima* ('On the soul'), as well as the commentaries of Ps. Simplicios and of Philoponos on Aristotle's *De anima* ('On the soul'), II 1-5.

**Taro Mimura (Hiroshima University, Japan)**

**Arabic Translation Contests in the Abbasid Courts – The Process of Publicizing Greek Scientific Knowledge in the Abbasid Period**

In early Abbasid period, Islamic scholars became very interested in Greek science and philosophy. To support their research quite a few scholars were engaged with translating Greek scientific and philosophical works into Arabic. Consequently a huge amount of Greek works on mathematical sciences, Galenic medicine and Aristotelian philosophy were translated during this period. Hunayn ibn Ishaq, who was one of the central figures of this Arabic translation movement, wrote an epistle on Galen's works, where he described how he translated each of the Galenic works into Arabic and Syriac, showing that he translated almost the entire Galenic corpus into Arabic and Syriac, a monumental and unprecedented achievement of industry and erudition.

What is remarkable about this translation movement is that the intensive translation work by these translators produced several Arabic versions of important Greek works. For example, we know that there were at least four Arabic versions of Ptolemy's *Almagest*. This prompts the question: Why did Arabic translators struggle to make better translations?

A key to answer this question is found in the above mentioned epistle written by Hunayn. In this epistle he records the names of patrons who asked him translate each of Galen's works into Arabic or Syriac. This information shows that his hard work was based on quite a few patrons' requests. In fact, Banu Musa (Muhammad, Ahmad and Hasan), who were high officials in the court of the seventh Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun, patronized several Arabic translators including Hunayn in order to gather together a vast knowledge of Greek science, thanks to which they became authorities of Greek mathematics and astronomy.

Should we imagine, then, that these patrons wanted to monopolise the Arabic translations and restrict their circulation among their peers? Or should we think that the intellectual environment in the early Abbasid period was such that unrestricted circulation of knowledge was an inevitable result of scientific translation?

In this paper I shall focus on Banu Musa's engagement in Arabic translation of Greek mathematical works. I shall elucidate how, in order to create a high social position, they competed with contemporary scholars such as al-Kindi to address question from a number of scientific topics in the court. In order to answer these question they had recourse to an exclusive body of Greek scientific knowledge. Yet I will describe the processes by which these high-profile scientific contests in the court led to greater circulation and wider distribution of Greek scientific knowledge.

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Academic biography

Taro Mimura is an associate professor of history of science at Hiroshima University. He obtained his PhD in History of Science from the University of Tokyo in 2008. From 2009 to 2012, he was a research assistant at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, Canada, where he worked as an editor on the 'Scientific Traditions in Islamic Societies' project, a subsection of the 'Rational Science in Islam' project. Then from 2012 to 2016, he was a research associate on the 'Arabic Commentaries on the Hippocratic Aphorisms' project at the University of Manchester, and was mainly engaged in critically editing Hunayn ibn Ishaq's Arabic translation of Galen's commentaries on the Hippocratic Aphorisms, as well as in comparing the Arabic with the Greek original for making clear how Hunayn translated this work. He is currently working on an edition of the Arabic original of pseudo-Masha'allah's *Liber de orbe*.

**Seán Morris (University of Exeter)**

**In Latin and French: a bilingual mathematician writing for two audiences**

In their capacity as public intellectuals, prominent early 17th century French mathematicians were keen to spread knowledge about their subject to a growing audience of amateurs, but did not want to lose their traditional pan-European specialist audience. Faced with the dilemma of presenting mathematics to a local audience who found Latin too remote and offputting, while still maintaining intellectual links with the Latin-speaking specialists across the continent, a small number of mathematicians in the Paris Academy set up by Marin Mersenne chose to write their works in both Latin and French.

One such self-translating mathematician was Pierre Hérigone, an active member of early modern Paris's mathematical and scientific circles, and a member of Richelieu's committee to judge the problem of calculating longitude at sea. Hérigone is best known as the creator of the *Cursus mathematicus*, or *Cours mathématique*, a six-volume compendium of all the mathematics known by the 1630s and designed for teaching mathematics to a range of audiences.

Latin had been the traditional language of science until the seventeenth century but, faced with the increasing use of vernacular languages, was in retreat in the early 17th century: when Descartes wrote his ground-breaking *Geometry* in 1637, for example, he chose to write it in French, though it did not have a wide impact until it was translated into Latin in the 1650s. For the public intellectual of this period, use of both Latin and the vernacular language would still have been standard practice, however: Hérigone did not even mention the bilingual nature of his work in the prefaces to his volumes, suggesting that he did not even consider it worthy of mention. Clues to his attitudes to the two languages and to his different audiences are nevertheless apparent in the self-translated *Cursus mathematicus/ Cours mathématique* and cast light on his view of the role of the public intellectual as educator of the public.

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#### Academic Biography:

Sean Morris graduated with both a BA (Hons) (1983) and MA (1985) from the University of Birmingham, before gaining a BSc (Hons) in Mathematical Sciences from the Open University in 2001. After a thirty-year career teaching mathematics and leading schools, Sean gained an MA in Translation Studies from the University of Exeter in 2017. He is currently conducting research into 17th-century French mathematical texts. He is focusing on Pierre Hérigone's six-volume *Cursus mathematicus/Cours mathématique* (1634-42), Marin Mersenne's *Harmonicorum libri/Harmonie universelle* (1636) and Blaise Pascal's *Triangulus mathematicus/Traité du triangle mathématique* (1654), all three of which were written in both Latin and French versions by their authors.

**Zrinko Novosel**

## **Writing on the Topic of Law in the Periphery. The Case of Imbrih Domin and Konstantin Farkaš**

This paper will focus on issues of knowledge fluctuation and mechanisms of intellectual transfer between centre and periphery in the early nineteenth-century Habsburg Empire. Examining the emergence of public intellectuals not only as academics in their own right, but also as influential holders of ideological and political position, will enable evaluation not only of these processes but also of the public character of their intellectual activity.

Croatia's highest educational institution of the period was the Royal Academy of Science in Zagreb (*Regia Scientiarum Academia*), incorporating the Faculty of Law. Its professors conducted teachings on various aspects of legal science, such as Roman law, Hungarian and domestic law and customary law, supporting their lectures with theoretical approaches to jurisprudence, thus intervening in legal education, with consequent impact on educated society as a whole. However, in the wider context of the Habsburg Empire and the Hungarian Kingdom, to which the Croatian lands belonged, the Academy in Zagreb was of lower academic status compared to that of the Universities of Vienna or Budapest. Being in this sense a peripheral centre, Zagreb nevertheless hosted a milieu of highly educated professors, who received their legal training and jurisprudential education at the highest instances in the Habsburg Monarchy.

This paper will closely examine the activities of two professors, Imbrih Domin Petruševčki (1776-1848) and Konstantin Farkaš (1775-1822), both active in the first decades of the 19th century. The research itself will focus on their published works on contemporary legal science and contextualize them in terms of public intellectual dialogue and language policies. Interestingly, the authors chose to write these works in different languages – Domin writes his textbook *Introduction to Hungarian Private Law* (Zagreb, 1818) in Croatian, whereas Farkaš opts for the more common Latin in his *The Principles of Public Law of the Kingdom of Hungary* (Zagreb, 1818), indicating various layers of identity-shaping and selective policies through the choice of language. The attempt to codify a body of legal texts in the Croatian language in the early 19th century presents us with a phenomenon which should not be viewed as a part of unilateral nation-building process, especially since the use of Latin language typically asserted the Croatian political rights within the Monarchy, but as an author's individual expression of socio-political identity. Apart from providing an examination of intertextual connections between these legal texts, this paper aims to present Domin and Farkaš as authoritative figures of the Zagreb Academy, whose choice of language was an active way of displaying certain political agendas and ideological standings, influencing generations of future academic citizens, and making the two professors public intellectuals in this sense.

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Scott, H., & B. Simms (2007), eds., *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge.

Academic biography:

Zrinko Novosel is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. His research interests lie in the field of intellectual history of the 'long' 19th century. He obtained a bachelor's degree in history in 2011 at the Centre for Croatian Studies of the University of Zagreb, and graduated in 2014 at the same department. In 2015 he obtained an MA in History at the Central European University. From April 2016 to March 2017 he was employed as an assistant at the project "From Protomodernization to Modernization of Croatia's School System." As of November 2018 he is engaged at the project "European Origins of Modern Croatia: Transfer of Ideas on Political and Cultural Field in 18th and 19th Centuries", led by Vlasta Švoger, PhD, and funded by the Croatian Science Foundation. Since February 2019 he is employed as an assistant at the Croatian Institute of History.

**Hammoed Obaid (University of Manchester)**

**Ğābir Bin Ḥayyān and The Earl of Northumberland: Elizabethan conceptions of science, magic and their role in society**

This paper investigates the construction of the scholar in Early Modern England by looking at a real person and a fictional character and the interplay between the two. Elizabethan aristocrat and polymath Henry Percy (1564–1632), the Ninth Earl of Northumberland, was nicknamed 'The Wizard Earl' during his life, a sobriquet not devoid of derision. His brother, the obscure dramatist William Percy (1574–1648) portrayed the Muslim scientist Ğābir Bin Ḥayyān in his play *Mahomet and His Heaven* (1601) in what can be seen as an attempt to redeem the Earl's reputation as a public

intellectual whose science can save society from disasters. This was no easy task as the play had to struggle against a plethora of common misconceptions and prejudices against science which included branding any form of new knowledge as a form of magic. William Percy's construction of Ġābir Bin Ḥayyān (whom he calls Geber) transmutes and translates topical issues and concerns into an imagined Arabia, distant both temporally and geographically, where subversive messages can be passed more safely. In discussing the conflict between the negative public image of the scholar and the positive portrayal of the scientist in Percy's play, the paper sheds light on the socio-cultural context within which science and new learning spread in Early Modern England, and asks questions as to where and how an English playwright came to use a Muslim scholar as a metaphor for his brother.

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#### Academic biography

Dr Hammood Obaid received his PhD in English Literature from Newcastle University in 2012. His thesis focused on topical influences on the representations of Islam in Early Modern English drama. Since then, he has published a book on the subject and presented his research in a number of conferences. He also works in the field of Medieval Islamic Medicine. In 2016, he joined The University of Manchester as part of the team working on an ERC-funded project entitled *Arabic Commentaries on the Hippocratic Aphorisms*. Currently, he is an independent researcher and

academic and he teaches classes on Arabic translation at the University of Manchester. His interests combine the intercultural exchanges between Islam and the west as well as the role played by translation in this field.

**Matthew Payne (Leiden University)**

### **Cicero and Aulus Gellius: the public intellectual as translator and mediator in the Roman world**

As the Roman Empire established its military dominance over the Mediterranean world, Rome's elite faced a challenge: while Rome was politically dominant, Greece was its perceived cultural superior, with far longer histories of literature, art and philosophy. The Roman elite's increasing contact with the Greek world created among its members a public eager to increase its cultural knowledge as a marker of status, education and taste. Besides Greek experts who came to Rome to teach, some of the Roman elite were themselves involved in communicating and explaining Greek intellectual traditions to their fellow Romans. Unlike Greek professionals, these Roman writers typically did not treat intellectual activities as their occupation, but as an important diversion from careers in politics and business. This Roman public intellectual needed to negotiate the Greek intellectual tradition, to assert his own authority to participate in it, and to persuade his public of the value of Greek learning and Greek intellectual values. Marcus Tullius Cicero and Aulus Gellius represent two such Roman public intellectuals.

In a work dedicated to discussing the different Greek philosophical schools, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* ("On the ends of good and evil"), Cicero presents himself as a translator of Greek philosophy and rhetoric into not only the Latin language but also into Roman customs and values, in order to create something comprehensible to his Roman public. But Cicero's philosophical work also aims to provide an exhaustive guide, which would seem to render his public's direct engagement with the Greek texts and thinkers superfluous. Cicero emphasizes that his drive and intellect make him uniquely qualified for this role: Cicero presents himself as a public intellectual who encourages a wider public to trust and depend on him to mediate their contact with the intellectual traditions of Greece.

Writing two hundred years later, when Greco-Roman culture was far more intertwined, Aulus Gellius sets out his project differently. Gellius encourages his public not towards dependence on him but to pursue their own engagement with intellectual traditions. Yet simultaneously Gellius demonstrates, with his stories of students embarrassed and teachers humbled, the difficulty of participating in this competitive sphere of culture, and asserts his own authority by demonstrating his mastery of it.

I will argue that Cicero and Gellius represent themselves as two different kinds of premodern public intellectual. Cicero presents his work as a public intellectual as making cultural knowledge

comprehensible to his public; Gellius marks out the role of the public intellectual as teaching to the wider public the skill and importance of identifying from a mass of knowledge what is really worth knowing.

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Academic biography:

Matthew Payne graduated in 2012 from the University of Cambridge with a degree in Classics, then came back to Cambridge to complete an MPhil in Classics in 2014. He then moved to the University of St Andrews in Scotland for a PhD. He completed his thesis, on aberration and criminality in Senecan tragedy, in 2018.

Since September 2018 Matthew has been a post-doctoral researcher at Leiden University in the Netherlands. His project concerns the surviving fragments of Roman tragedy. The various plays to which these fragments once belonged are lost, save for a few lines quoted by later authors. In particular, his work considers how the fragments have been treated in the history of scholarship, and how knowledge of Greek tragedy has coloured their reception. An important aspect of this is investigating how later Roman intellectuals such as Cicero and Aulus Gellius present the Roman tragic fragments.

**Dino Piovan (University of Verona)**

**Reading Thucydides in Early 20th-Century Italy**

The most important debate about Athenian liberty and democracy in 20th-century Italy took place during the Fascist ventennio (1922-1943), when the cult of ancient Rome was an essential part of the official ideology, whereas the cultural legacy of ancient Greece was often underestimated. Nonetheless, many outstanding scholars took part in this dispute: they were not only specialists in

the ancient world but also among the most prestigious anti-fascist intellectuals, like Benedetto Croce. Among the classicists, the names of Gaetano De Sanctis and of some of his most talented pupils (Aldo Ferrabino, Arnaldo Momigliano, Piero Treves) stand out. In their works, Greek history became the field of a lively and public confrontation about the key values of political freedom and liberty of thought, in which many different historical, ethical and ideological conceptions met and collided: Liberalism, Fascism, different kinds of Historicism, and Catholic and Jewish traditions. Within this framework, the interpretation of Thucydides – and hence the utilisation of the premodern tradition of public intellectual that he represents – played a crucial role, especially with respect of some recurring themes, such as meditation on the nature of power, the relation between force and justice, ethics and politics, and also public rhetoric and its manipulations. The paper aims at analysing the different ways in which Thucydides had been interpreted in early 20th-century Italy, focusing on three different scholars: Gaetano De Sanctis, Aldo Ferrabino and Arnaldo Momigliano. De Sanctis, one of the very few university professors that refused to take the oath of loyalty to Fascism, read Thucydides as a radical critic of ancient imperialism fully in accord with his own strong condemnation of all kinds of imperialistic rule. By contrast, Ferrabino interpreted Thucydides's work as an apology of Athenian imperialism in the same years in which he himself was questioning Liberalism. Finally, Momigliano adopted a more nuanced stance: on the one hand, he stressed, like Ferrabino, Thucydides's discover of force as the engine driving history; on the other one, he was deeply influenced by Croce's philosophy and tended to attribute to Thucydides a determinist point of view, presented as a limitation of ancient historian's thought.

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Piovan, D. (2018), *Tucidide in Europa. Storici e storiografia greca nell'età dello storicismo*. Milan.

Academic biography:

Dino Piovan graduated from the University of Padua with honours in Classics. He was postgraduate fellow at the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici (Naples) and visiting researcher at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (Munich) and at University College London. He received his PhD in Classical Philology at the University of Pisa. In 2013 he obtained the National Scientific Qualification as associate professor in Greek Language and Literature and he is currently working as adjunct professor of Greek Studies at the University of Verona. His main research areas are Attic Oratory (especially Lysias), Athenian political history, Athenian democracy and its modern reception, Greek historiography and its reception during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His publications include several commentaries for schools – on Plato (2005), Lysias (2006), Xenophon (2010) – and a scholarly commentary on Lysias's speech 25: Defence Against a Charge of Subverting the Democracy (Padua-Rome 2009). He is also author of two monographs: *Memoria e oblio della guerra civile* (Pisa, 2011); *Tucidide in Europa* (Milan, 2018). He is currently co-editing the Brill's Companion to the Reception of Athenian Democracy and co-writing a History of Ancient Greek Literature (with texts) in three volumes.

**Koen Scholten (Utrecht University)**

**Scholarly Identity in Early Modern Europe: A Quantitative Approach to Early Modern Collective Vitae of Learned Men and Women**

The values and virtues ascribed to learned men and women changed significantly throughout the early modern period. A close study of collective scholarly life-writing, most notably compendia of so-called vitae ("lives"), can provide us with contemporary views of scholars. What is more, it allows us to see which life stories, and more specifically, which aspects of a scholarly life, were chosen to represent a certain past, identity, ideal, and certain virtues. The vitae in collected volumes published throughout the early modern period helped to form an image of an exemplary scholar, or, what one could call a public intellectual. Public in the sense that litterati in these lives were put on a pedestal to serve as exempla virtutis ("examples of virtue") to inspire virtuous behaviour in other scholars. For some volumes a transnational and transconfessional scholarly public is imagined, while other volumes explicitly want to inspire and honour scholars from a specific city or state.

This paper will address the spatial and linguistic aspects of collective scholarly life-writing by looking at a diverse corpus consisting of volumes published throughout early modern Europe. The corpus includes well-known compendia such as Paolo Giovio's *Elogia Virorum litteris illustrium* ("Eulogies of men illustrious for learning", 1577) or Melchior Adam's *Vitae Germanorum Philosophorum et al.* ("Lives of German philosophers", 5 vols., 1615–1620), as well as less renowned volumes such as Giacomo Filippo Tomasini's *Elogia Virorum Literis & Sapientia Illustrium* ("Eulogies of men illustrious for learning and wisdom", 1644) and Gottlieb Spitzel's *Templum Honoris Reseratum* ("The unlocked

temple of honour", 1673). From a perspective of memory studies it will answer two questions: Who remembered whom where and which virtues were assigned to learned men and women?

Both questions highlight spatiality as an important factor given the regional confessionalization of culture and education in the wake of the Reformation. After text-mining and quantitatively assessing the vitae an image emerges of the local remembrance of scholars. Reviewing the corpus shows that the compendia of vitae are predominantly guided by confessionalism or patriotic motivations. The virtues they ascribe to learned men and women, however, become more coherent and universal throughout the early modern period, indicating a transnational ideal of a scholar in terms of virtues. The volumes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries aim to address a regional and confessional public. At the end of the seventeenth century, the ideals of a transnational Republic of Letters are reflected in the content and language in Latin vitae of learned men.

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#### Academic Biography

Koen Scholten is a Ph.D. candidate in the ERC-funded Skillnet project at Utrecht University. He obtained a B.Sc. in Applied Physics from Delft University of Technology and a M.Sc. in History and Philosophy of Science from Utrecht University. His research interests include the cultural aspects of early modern science, in particular scholarly identity, sociability, and credibility. His doctoral research focuses on how scientific and scholarly identities were collectively (re)defined, and which ideals of knowledge they stood for in the early modern learned world—the so-called Republic of Letters. Text-mining scholarly correspondence and life-writing, and studying funerary monuments and epitaphs will point out if certain memories and virtues were shared in particular groups, places, disciplines, or confessions. This aims to show the reach and local disparities of the transconfessional and transnational ideals of knowledge professed in the Republic of Letters.

**Emily Selove (University of Exeter)**

### **The Sorcerer Scholar: al-Sakkākī (d. 1229) as grammarian and court magician**

In modern scholarship Sirāj al-Dīn al-Sakkākī (d. 1229 CE) is known for his influential study of grammar and rhetoric, *Key to the Sciences* (Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm). Few modern scholars, however, mention his book of magic, *Book of the Complete and Sea of the Perfect* (Kitāb al-Shāmil wa-baḥr al-kāmil). Consequently the full picture of his interest in language and natural science has been obscured. Biographers writing before 1900 CE, by contrast, tend to mention his grammatical writings in passing while focusing on his role as a court magician and astrologer. Sakkākī's handbook of magic includes instructions for creating talismans, contacting both jinn and devils, causing sickness, curing such magically-caused afflictions, and calling upon the power of each of the planets. The power of God and phrases from the Qur'an are frequently invoked, but Sakkākī claims that the texts in his collection originate from famous Greek thinkers like Ptolemy and Hippocrates.

The erasure of Sakkākī's reputation as a magician by modern scholars speaks of the embarrassment surrounding the subject of magic as scholars today construct themselves as "rational" and "modern" thinkers by excluding modes of thinking labelled superstitious. In order to bypass modern prejudices this paper will approach his magic handbook from a literary perspective. Medical/magical texts like Sakkākī's are typically studied in isolation from "literary" texts—a constraint imposed on them by modern disciplinary divisions that may not take into account the intellectual environment of the medieval world, in which a learned person could be simultaneously a doctor, a poet, a grammarian, a theologian, a rhetorician, and a magician.

Literary analysis of these texts reveals how Sakkākī and his contemporaries fostered reputations for having esoteric knowledge both of the language of the Qur'an and of the wisdom of the ancients (e.g. the Greeks), which earned them prestige in the royal court. Treating these texts as literature enables us to observe how Sakkākī constructs his authority in the turbulent world that coalesced in the wake of the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century. By depicting himself as a master of the



Arabic language (necessary to understand the word of God) and as a master of dangerous and powerful occult sciences, these bodies of knowledge are constructed as the exclusive domain of a talented and privileged few. By re-examining the full corpus of the writings of pre-modern intellectuals such as Sakkākī without excising those portions that do not gel with modern “Western” notions of what a rational, secular scholar ought to look like, I hope to improve how we understand our own intellectual ancestry.

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#### Academic biography

Emily Selove (PhD UCLA 2012) is a senior lecturer at the University of Exeter. Her work has focused on the figure of the uninvited guest (or “party-crasher”) in medieval Arabic literature, and especially on Ḥikāyat Abī l-Qāsim. She published a monograph comparing this work to classical Greek and Roman sympotic texts: *Ḥikāyat Abī l-Qāsim: A Literary Banquet* (Edinburgh University Press, 2016). She is also co-editing and translating this text with Professor Geert Jan van Gelder.

Emily was a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Manchester from 2012-2014, working on the ERC funded “Arabic Commentaries on the Hippocratic Aphorisms project.” She recently edited a co-authored textbook about medieval Baghdad for use in schools. She is now the Principal Investigator of a Leverhulme Trust-funded project, “The Sorcerer’s Handbook,” which aims to produce an edition, translation, and volume of essays about Sirāj al-Dīn al-Sakkkākī’s (d. 1229) magic handbook, *Kitāb al-Shāmil wa-baḥr al-kāmil*.

**Youcef Soufi (University of British Columbia)**

## **Some Precursors of the Modern Public Intellectual; Disputation and Critique Among Islamic Jurists in the 10th-13th Centuries**

Conceptions of the public intellectual have been closely associated with the role of the critic who embarks on the enterprise of critique. For Foucault, contemporary modes of critique hail from a genealogy of the Greek notion of *parhēsia* – ‘truthful speech’ – that have morphed into the now commonplace character of critique as a deconstructive enterprise against regulating forces of social and political authority (2001).

There are, however, considerable limitations to this notion of the critique-cum-rupture if transferred uncritically to premodern Islam. I argue that critique in the premodern Islamic context of classical legal disputation (*munāẓara*) engaged in by jurists with fellow elites in public settings like mosques, even if aimed toward religious authority (that is, other jurists’ religious proofs), is levelled to ensure that law is conducted not ‘less’, but better. Given that premodern Islamic legal categories do not perfectly map on to contemporary Western jurisprudential conceptions of a public-private divide, notions of ‘religion’ in the pre-modern context are neither juxtaposed against the public sphere, nor does critique offer an emancipatory function from religion’s overreach. I contend that the object of critique inherent to *munāẓara* is something other than an attempt to free jurists or the laity they serve from false ideology. Its aim is to better substantiate legal answers, and thereby implement a more thorough and founded Islamic legal tradition. This ongoing implementation of tradition shows a departure from Enlightenment notions of critique-as-rupture; through *munāẓara* critique operated precisely to build the continuity of Islamic tradition.

Using transcripts from 11th century Iraqi and Persian jurists engaged in public debate on topics spanning marriage, oaths, minority rights, and prayer (Al-Rāzī 1986; Al-Subkī 1964; Al-Sukūnī 1976), my paper shows how law is thought to be conducted better when measures are put in place that facilitate jurists’ abilities to come up with more substantiated answers, and prevent them from becoming complacent about their proofs. *Munāẓara* acts as one principal measure, and it is through its processes that dogmatism is dislodged, leaving behind the sincerity of pursuing truth. By tracing the ways jurists as religio-ethical-political authorities, through their engagement in a distinct critical mode of *munāẓara* as Islamic tradition-building, I show how Muslim jurists shaped the Muslim public they sought to serve in ways that can be considered particular historical iterations of, and even precursors to, modern public intellectuals.

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Al-Rāzī, (1986), *Manāqib al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī*. Cairo.

#### Academic biography

Youcef Soufi has held the positions of Lecturer and Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia from 2016-2019 in the Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies Department where he was responsible for the Islamic Studies Program. He completed his PhD from the University of Toronto’s Religious Studies Department in 2017 specializing in Classical Islamic Law and, particularly, the historical emergence and decline of legal disputations from the 10-13 centuries CE. Youcef’s dissertation is currently being transformed into a book manuscript examining the nature and impact of critique in classical Islam for Oxford University Press’s Islamic Legal Studies Series. He has recently published an essay within the new Oxford Handbook of Islamic Law. Youcef has held numerous research affiliations, including a fellowship with the Jackman Humanities Institute at the University of Toronto, and currently, the Comparative Centre for Muslim Studies at Simon Fraser University.

#### **John Taylor (University of Manchester)**

##### **English historians of ancient Greece from Mitford to Grote**

Short ‘Grecian Histories’ by Temple Stanyan and Oliver Goldsmith preceded the first full-scale history of Greece by William Mitford (published 1784-1818). Directed to the subject by Edward Gibbon, with whom he served in the Hampshire militia, Mitford spent his life as a Member of Parliament and country landowner. Minor works on architecture, English prosody and church history attest a range of interests seen also in the comparative evidence used in his first volume, on early Greece. The focus thereafter is more narrowly political, reflecting the ancient sources but also providing a platform for hostile reflection on contemporary upheavals in France, for which democratic Athens was seen as an alarming precedent.

The early decades of the nineteenth century saw a vigorous reaction against his work for its bias and perceived inadequacy. Whilst we might more naturally describe Mitford himself as a gentleman scholar rather than a public intellectual, the latter term admirably describes his critics and successors – and between him and them there is significant continuity as well as change. Discussion (much of it in famous quarterly journals aimed at a broad educated readership) embraced social and political reform movements, theories of classical education, and philhellenic aspirations for modern Greece. Essays by Brougham, Macaulay and especially the young George Grote called for a new history of Greece of more liberal outlook, wider range and a higher standard of scholarship.

Grote in due course wrote a work of lasting value (published 1846-56), though he was anticipated by Edward Bulwer-Lytton in defending Athenian democracy, and by his school-fellow Connop Thirlwall in producing a multi-volume history which took account of German scholarship. Originally a banker, and without a university education, Grote was one of the 'Philosophical Radicals' in parliament influenced by the ideas of Jeremy Bentham, and was a friend of James and John Stuart Mill. The elder Mill's History of British India provided an important model for Grote's own Utilitarian history. In it he presented classical Athens as an implicit model for modern Britain, rehabilitating (from ancient and early modern hostility) both the radical democratic politicians it produced and the great Sophists who were drawn to the city from other parts of the Greek world. These thinkers invented higher education and might themselves be called the first public intellectuals.

Preliminary bibliography:

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Roberts, J. T. (1994), *Athens on Trial*. Princeton.

Turner, F.M. (1981), *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain*. New Haven.

Academic biography:

John Taylor was educated at Balderstone School, Rochdale, and Exeter College, Oxford (MA DPhil; thesis on 'William Mitford and Greek History' 1984). He was for many years Head of Classics at Tonbridge School, and is now Lecturer in Classics, University of Manchester. He is the author of

several Greek and Latin textbooks. He also a former A-level examiner in Ancient History, consultant for new A-level specifications in Greek and Latin, and chief examiner in GCSE Greek (2012-17). He has been an extra-mural tutor University of Cambridge since 1993 and tutor at Bryanston Greek summer school since 1986 (Director of Studies 1993-2004, Co-Director since 2007), and was Chair of Runciman Prize judges in 2012.

**Laura Viidebaum (New York University)**

### **Past Perfect: Isocrates and the Emergence of Public Intellectuals**

Public intellectual is an ambitious and ambiguous concept: it makes a promise of not only being a leading figure in one's specific academic field, but also to engage the public – in an informed way – on current issues. And not only to engage, but also to be sought after as somebody with an ability to articulate a broader vision of society and stand as moral touchstone. It is a fiercely present-driven role and indeed most of the debates around 'public intellectuals' revolve around their function in modern and postmodern era (Posner 2001, Said 2002, Judt 2011). The question whether or not the concept of public intellectual could be meaningfully located in a more distant past has not been much discussed. Copeland 2002, in an excellent article about intellectual lives in premodern world, went as far back in time as Philostratus from the third century CE to explore a tradition of intellectual biography writing, but this paper aims to go further – and further back in time.

This paper argues that in order to better understand the role and potential of public intellectuals we would do well to look at fourth century BCE Athens, when philosophical schools and institutionalized higher education was first established. These were schools, which paved the way for Hellenistic philosophical schools and came to be regarded as paradigms for higher education subsequently. It seems clear now that the emergence of this institutionalized higher education was at least partly a response to sophists and their overall success at attracting young Athenian men to their public displays of knowledge. Whatever skill or knowledge the sophists promised (and perhaps delivered) for their students, they were publicly visible, drew big crowds and as such they were a new and divisive phenomenon. Unlike Plato's Academy, which under the leadership of Plato's successors developed philosophy into a predominantly theoretical discipline, Isocrates turned much of his attention to contemporary Athenians and weighed in on important issues about Athenian politics – whether or not Athenians ought to go to war, how to deal with foreign rulers and how to promote Athens as the hub of intellectual life in the Greek world. This paper will take a closer look at Isocrates' construction of his own persona as a 'man of letters' in Athens and explores the way he communicates with his audience and appeals to a sense of authority that his credentials ought to win him among fellow citizens. Authors from antiquity rarely talk about themselves in their work, but Isocrates is a clear outlier: not only are his writings replete with references to his career, previous thoughts and commitments, but he also gives snippets about his background and even physical abilities. We get a sense of a person as much as of his personal views on contemporary matters. Most importantly, however, Isocrates demands to be listened to. And perhaps not surprisingly, the

issues Isocrates highlights compare uncannily well with our present time and with the skepticism towards, and consequent dearth of, public intellectuals.

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#### Academic biography:

Laura Viidebaum completed her Ph.D. studies in Classics at Cambridge University in 2015 and wrote her thesis on rhetorical theory with a title 'Creating the rhetorical tradition: the reception of Lysias

and Isokrates from Plato to Dionysios of Halikarnassos'. She then moved to New York to take up an Assistant Professorship in Greek at NYU.

Laura's main research interests center around rhetoric, performance, and literary criticism, but she is also very interested in the philosophical aspects of rhetorical thought, the sophists, the cultural changes of the first century BCE Rome and Greece, and their relevance to contemporary world. She is currently working on turning her thesis into a book, and on other articles that focus, among others, on expertise in Plato's Laches, Cicero's philosophical dialogue and the concept of philosophy in Dio of Chrysostom. Laura has also long-standing interests in ancient drama, its modern receptions, and Classics outreach.

**Hans Wietzke (University of Massachusetts, Amherst)**

**Wit to Power: Rethinking the Royal Addressee in Archimedes' Sand-Reckoner**

To what extent can Archimedes be defined as a court scientist? Such a question leads us to consider the Sand-Reckoner, a treatise that curiously proposes a novel method for naming the number of grains of sand that would fill the cosmos. More curious still, Archimedes addresses the work not to another specialist, but to King Gelon of Syracuse. Recent studies (Berrey 2017, Strootman 2017) have leveraged the dynamics of court patronage to explain the production and form of the Sand-Reckoner, and have thus argued that this is an instance of an ancient intellectual engaging a wider, court-oriented public, speaking truth to power as royal advisor, benefactor, and even entertainer. In this paper I qualify such explanations, first proposing that the significance of the court for Hellenistic science has been overestimated. I then argue that by addressing King Gelon in the Sand-Reckoner, Archimedes targets an audience defined more by a shared literary culture than by the court: Archimedes does not speak truth so much as wit to power, playing a literary game in which the royal addressee is an essential token.

Beyond his one dedication to Gelon, Archimedes' extant writings offer no positive evidence that would resolve the question of whether he can be defined as a court scientist. Rather, his image as such largely depends on post-Hellenistic evidence. To broadly assess the quality of this evidence, I develop a proxy argument based on a survey of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae database of ancient Greek literary texts that analyzed all instances of a common term for "address/dedicate" (προσφώνέω/prosphōneō and cognates). This yielded 78 reports of textual dedication before the fourth century CE, of which 23 (=29%) involve a royal dedicatee, an evident overrepresentation. However, we can explain this overrepresentation by considering these reports of high-profile dedication as anecdotes, i.e. brief narratives with a tendency toward celebrity and sensationalism (Goldhill 2009). I submit that the survey indicates a problematic bias in the wider evidence for the social context of Hellenistic science. While the survey analysis does not wholly negate the historicity

of scientific patronage (nor should we go that far), it motivates other interpretations of a royal addressee.

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#### Academic biography:

Johannes Wietzke completed his PhD in Classics at Stanford University in 2015 and is currently Lecturer at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is interested broadly in the textual practices that make up Greek and Roman knowledge traditions. Recent publications include several pieces that analyze the scientific rhetoric and aesthetics of Claudius Ptolemy and Strabo. He is now working on projects that investigate how the authorial persona shaped the organization of knowledge in antiquity, as well as the importance of style in traditions of ancient geography.