

Science, Knowledge and Reality

Leader: Professor Alexander Bird

2007–8 has been a busy and very successful year for those engaged in the *Science, Knowledge, and Reality Theme*. The Theme supports research that spans the sciences and humanities, ranging from complexity science, through the evolution of social behaviour, to medical and ecological humanities. The Theme has hosted a number of workshops and conferences on diverse subjects. These included: metaphysical issues in chemistry and biology; animal cognition; explanation, reduction, and models of psychopathology; the differing uses of hypotheses in research in biology and physics; the evolutionary influences on social co-operation, and the development of human rationality. The last of these presaged a major grant success, £540,000 for Professors Samir Okasha and Ken Binmore and their project *Evolution, Co-operation, and Rationality*. This will complement two other current Theme supported ESF/AHRC projects relating to the nature of human cognition, *Consciousness in Interaction: The Role of the Natural and Social Environment in Shaping Consciousness* (PI Dr Finn Spicer) and *Metacognition as a Precursor to*

Self-Consciousness: Evolution, Development, and Epistemology (PI Prof. Hannes Leitgeb). A fourth AHRC project operating under the Theme's auspices, *Metaphysics of Science* (PI Prof. Alexander Bird) enters its final year. Having already supported connections between researchers at Bristol, Nottingham, and Birmingham, with those in Lund and Münster, the European connections will continue with workshops in Grenoble, Granada, and Warsaw. Theme researchers are active in the doctoral programme of the Bristol Centre for Complexity Sciences, running its 'Foundations of Complexity' seminar series. Looking forward to 2008–9 and beyond, the Theme will be supporting interdisciplinary research in philosophy and mathematics, with a workshop on Mathematical Methods in Philosophy. March 2009 will see the conference 'Minds, Brains, and Beyond' in memory of Professor Susan Hurley, who died in August 2007. We will be pursuing our programme of research and research-led teaching in Medical Humanities, aiming to introduce a new MA in Medical Humanities to complement the intercalated BA for medical students while pursuing exciting avenues for co-operation with the Jenner Museum in Berkeley. The broader area of Ecological and Environmental Humanities offers untapped opportunities we are keen to explore in the coming months.

EVENTS

The following is a list of forthcoming events supported by BIRTHA

6 November 2008
BIRTHA Research Programmes Scheme: Traces of Conflict
Public Lecture by Professor Joanna Bourke

12 November 2008
BIRTHA Research Programmes Scheme: Traces of Conflict
Workshop 1: 'War within War'

4 February 2009
BIRTHA Research Programmes Scheme: Traces of Conflict
Workshop 2: 'Gendered Perpetration'

21–22 March 2009
Workshop on Critical Approaches to Ancient Philosophy
Organiser: Kurt Lampe (Classics & Ancient History)

24 March 2009
BIRTHA Research Programmes Scheme: Traces of Conflict
A one-day symposium on 24 March 2009, entitled 'Scars'.

April 2009
'Languages of Politics in Britain's Long Nineteenth Century' to be held in Durham
Co-organiser: James Thompson (Historical Studies)

29 April 2009
BIRTHA Research Programmes Scheme: Traces of Conflict
Workshop 3: 'Remnants of Conflict' followed by a screening *Cood bay Forst Zinna*, after which the director and artist Angus Boulton will give a talk about his film.

Fourth BIRTHA Debate Scheduled for Wednesday, 29 April 2009 at 2.00pm
Title and venue tbc

7–9 July 2009
BIRTHA Conference
Vekhi Centenary Conference 1909/2009
Organiser: Dr Ruth Coates (Russian)

For more details of these events and for a comprehensive listing of all faculty, school and departmental events please check the BIRTHA events page: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/birtha/events/>



A message from the Director



Four years from its launch, BIRTHA continues to have a very positive impact on the Faculty's research culture. Over the last year we have again been able to facilitate a range of activities through the research grants and the postgraduate grants schemes, as well as through the conference scheme. In 2008, four BIRTHA conferences took place (see the conference report section of this newsletter). A number of further conferences have already been planned for 2009, along with other events that we hope to link to the University's centenary celebrations. Meanwhile, the BIRTHA research programmes scheme has enabled colleagues to launch exciting longer-term projects. Ika Willis's 'Word Unbecoming Flesh', winner of the inaugural competition, is now into its second year, and the winner of this year's competition was Martin Hurcombe with 'Traces of Conflict'. Details of both projects are given in separate articles in this newsletter.

A key part of BIRTHA's remit is to respond to the needs of the postgraduate community. Over the last year we have been able to provide funding for a number of postgraduates to attend conferences, and we also offer funding for postgraduate conferences hosted and organised in Bristol. This year we have also established a postgraduate bursary following a donation by Professor Quentin Skinner. The winner of the first Quentin Skinner Prize was Richard Stone in the Department of Historical Studies. Professor Skinner has kindly offered to donate a further sum this year, and we are immensely grateful to him for his generosity. This year there will be an increase in our budget, which is very welcome news. As the Faculty moves towards the establishment of a Graduate School in 2009, the role of BIRTHA will be more important than ever. BIRTHA will of course retain its independence, but the plan is to co-locate the office alongside the Graduate School offices, and the BIRTHA Director will liaise closely with the Faculty Research Director.

The presence of BIRTHA around the Faculty and the co-ordination of its many activities are, as ever, dependent on the input of the administrator, and I should like to express thanks both to Sam Barlow (who returns from maternity leave in February) and to Debra Blackmore-Squires, who has done a terrific job during Sam's absence. We also benefit from the services of an intern one day a week through the Careers Service Internship scheme, an arrangement generously funded by the Institute for Greece, Rome and the Classical Tradition. Assistance with funding applications and management was greatly facilitated last year by the presence of Christine Bennett, seconded from the AHRC. Excellent news for the coming session is that Kerry Vernon will be working full time in the Faculty. Kerry will be joined by Katie Powell and Marion Eaves for research workshops.

Director:
Professor Tim Unwin,
Department of French
(T.A.Unwin@bristol.ac.uk)





The BIRTHA Research Programmes Scheme offers an amount of up to £5,000 to a group of researchers wishing to develop activity and initiatives around a particular theme that will be of long-term benefit to the Faculty. One research programme is funded each year.

BIRTHA Research Programmes Scheme Award 2008

Traces of Conflict

A team of colleagues from across the Faculty and from the Department of Politics led by Dr Martin Hurcombe are planning a series of lectures, workshops, and a symposium following their successful bid for the above programme. Under the title 'Traces of Conflict', and following an inaugural lecture by the internationally renowned scholar and historian Joanna Bourke (Birkbeck, University of London), these events will attempt to shift the focus of memory and conflict studies back onto the actual cultural, mental and physical traces of conflict, examining both cultural representations and material remnants, studying both artefacts of conflict and its topographical and environmental legacies. By focusing on traces of conflict rather than the forms in, and processes by, which conflicts are remembered, the team aims to create a more dynamic dialogue between the present and the past, but also between present, past and future. These events are also designed to facilitate dialogue between disciplines and scholars from a variety of UK institutions and to forge

stronger links not only between Bristol scholars working in this field, but between colleagues across the country. The project will consist of three workshops (one to be held each term, involving three speakers), a one-day symposium, a film showing, and a public lecture. Professor Bourke's lecture will take place on Thursday 6 November in LT3 at 5.15pm. It will be followed on 12 November by the first workshop, entitled 'War within War'. Two further workshops will follow: 'Gendered Perpetration' will take place on 4 February 2009 and 'Remnants of Conflict' on 29 April 2009. The latter will be followed by a screening *Cood bay Forst Zinna*, after which the director and artist Angus Boulton will give a talk about his film. A one-day symposium on 24 March 2009, entitled 'Scars', will further pursue many of the themes examined in the workshops through the participation of nine invited speakers.

For further information, please contact Dr Martin Hurcombe
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BIRTHA Research Programmes Scheme
Award 2007 on 'The Future of the Book'

Word Unbecoming Flesh: Beyond Text, Across Media

On 17 March 2008, the Word Unbecoming Flesh research programme got off to a resounding start with the visit of Professor John Mowitt from Minnesota: his lecture, 'Fleshing Out the Object of Radio Studies', was attended by over thirty scholars from across the Faculty of Arts. The lecture, which gave an erudite and theoretically challenging account not only of radio as a cultural technology, but also of the phenomenon of discipline formation and the concept of a disciplinary object, was followed by an in-depth seminar discussion the following day, led by Guido Heldt (Music) and Barry Parsons (Drama), with Dr Barbara Engh, the Director of the Centre for Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds, also contributing.

The second event in our series, organized together with the Screen Research @ Bristol, was the May visit of Dr James Bennett from the University of Newcastle, New South Wales, who spoke under the title 'The Intertexture of Film and History' on Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures* and the challenges that the medium of film poses to practices of history. Again, his lecture

was followed by a seminar discussion, this time led by Derek Duncan (Italian) and Ika Willis (Reception), and attended by a small group of scholars from all three schools in the Faculty.

Both events were intellectually stimulating: in each case the format allowed for a wider engagement with the Faculty of Arts as a whole through the public lecture and also for a more focussed session in the seminar, elaborating in detail the relationship between our visiting speaker's work and the transdisciplinary issues in which the Word Unbecoming Flesh group is interested. We look forward to the remaining four events in the academic year 2008/9, including a workshop on the representation of amplified sound in public space in film and literature (led by Angela Piccini [Drama] and Jo Carruthers [English/Theology]) in Autumn 2008), and a live art performance and dialogue with a visiting theorist of remediation (led by Simon Jones [Drama]) in Spring 2009).

Ika Willis
Lecturer in Reception

BIRTHA CONFERENCE 21- 23 JUNE 2008

The Schools and Institutes Abroad

A conference jointly supported by BIRTHA, the Bristol Institute for Advanced Studies, the University of Pisa, and the British Academy

Dr David Shankland (University of Bristol)

Professor Giovanni Salmeri (University of Pisa)

In June, a group of scholars came together in Bristol to discuss the phenomenon of the national schools and institutes that are engaged in the study of the ancient world and related topic. By this, we mean, for instance the British School at Athens, the British Institute at Ankara, the French School in Rome, or the German Archaeological Institutes. These institutions, which emerged in the nineteenth century (even if in some cases they had illustrious ancestors) continue to be founded, and flourish until today, and almost all colleagues engaged in humanities research abroad have had some contact with them. Yet, though there are erudite works concerning individual schools, often written for official purposes, the wider social and comparative context has been taken into consideration very rarely. This neglect is in spite of the enormous variety of highly relevant issues that come to mind the moment this question is considered: amongst these are the relationship between heritage, culture and nationalism; the relevance of the schools and institutes for our understanding of European cultural history; the relationship between international

scholarship and local intellectual currents; the role of respective schools as representatives of their particular country; the function of archaeological excavation in the creation of the prestige of a country, and so on.

Our meeting, jointly organised by the University of Pisa and the University of Bristol through our 'Ruins' co-operation, drew together a distinguished group of specialists from a wide range of backgrounds, so that there were represented different countries, as well as persons who had worked, or are working in the running of the schools and institutes today. Intellectually, we combined historical and comparative approaches with attention also to basic statistical questions such as the number of such institutions, their development, and the way that they are funded. By its end, we had a much clearer idea of just why this form of scholarly endeavour has been popular, and also why the number of schools and institutes is still growing. Amongst the reasons are the comparatively small size of the institutions; their great flexibility; the clear focus of their research; and the well-defined constituency. At the

same time, however, we were able to discern distinct patterns in the way that a critical mass of these schools has been achieved in particular in Athens, Rome and Jerusalem, creating a dynamic that though it remains distinctive in each case, provides extra-ordinary opportunities for research co-operation and synthesis. It is interesting that this outcome is obtained notwithstanding the differences in the way that the schools and institutes have developed and been influenced by their respective nation-states.

As there is at present no general publication on the schools and institutes, we are preparing now a volume that we hope will serve as a bench-mark for future research in the field. It remains for us to thank for their support Professor Unwin and Mrs Debra Blackmore-Squires of BIRTHA; Professor White and Mrs Susan Jim of the IAS, and especially the Dean of Arts, Professor Fowler, who kindly opened our conference and expertly chaired the first session.

David Shankland
Department of Archaeology and Anthropology



BIRTHA CONFERENCE 5 - 7 SEPTEMBER 2008

Sublimely Visual: The Art of the Text



Textiles, poetry, doodles, narrative, typography, film, painting, glassware, monuments, and masks were among the media explored at *Sublimely Visual: The Art of the Text*, a conference of the *Centre for Visual and Literary Cultures in France* which was generously supported by BIRTHA. This 12th BIRTHA Conference (5–7 September 2008) was hosted at the Burwalls Centre for Continuing Education, Leigh Woods, overlooking the Clifton Suspension Bridge and the Avon Gorge.

Around forty academics – cultural historians, art historians, and specialists in visual-textual culture and word/image relations – met to explore new approaches in visual reading applied to texts and visual/material culture. Among the questions addressed were: how does writing receive or resist the textures and figures of visual media? How do writers write colour and light? How are visual analogies translated, transfigured

or anticipated by the writer and by readers? Which new directions in critical thought can enhance our understanding of the interrelations between visual art and writing? How does the art essay resist its aesthetic object, and become a subject in and for itself? How do literary texts enrich – or obstruct – our reading of art, and vice versa?

The distinguished Plenary Speakers were Stephen Bann (University of Bristol), Anne Freadman (University of Melbourne) and Jean Duffy (University of Edinburgh).

Stephen Bann's plenary on 'Letters in liberty: How colour entered the concrete poem?', with its illuminating weaving of the correspondences and differences between European and South American visual poetry, inaugurated several defining themes of the conference that were explored by delegates: modern and contemporary poetry, and the illustration and visualization of narrative (Hugo,

Baudelaire, Verne, Zola, Cendrars, Apollinaire, Eluard, Michaux, Ponge, Noël, Dohollau, De Chirico, Modiano).

Anne Freadman's plenary contribution, 'Colette: an eye for textiles', offered a sumptuously illustrated comparative study of text and textile, was central to the discussion around material culture and journalism, the graphic arts, the decorative arts, particularly the relations between visibility and tactility (Emile Gallé, Montesquiou, Delaunay, Otto Neurath, Beckett, Bracha Ettinger, 1920s fan-magazines).

The closing plenary paper by Jean Duffy, 'Looking Back to the Future: Memorial Culture in Pierre Bergounioux and Marie Darrieussecq', explored themes of history and commemoration, ethnography and autobiography, migration and transculturalism, in a major interaesthetic reading of narrative, artefact, film and digital art that amplified some of the key preoccupations of the conference (Proust, Aragon, Nabokov, Tanguy Viel, Memmi, Bouvier, Khatari, Godard, Truffaut, Franju, Varda).

Among the institutions represented were the Courtauld Institute and the Universities of Melbourne, Princeton, UCLA, Indiana (Bloomington), Johns Hopkins (Baltimore), Kentucky, Virginia, Trinity College Dublin, Växjö, Leeds, Cardiff, Royal Holloway, Bath, Bangor, UWE, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Reading, St Andrews, Swansea, Southampton, Nottingham, Oxford, Bristol. Sincere gratitude is expressed to BIRTHA for financial support, and to Debra Blackmore-Squires, Acting BIRTHA Administrator, for impeccable conference administration.

Susan Harrow
Department of French

BIRTHA CONFERENCE
19-21 SEPTEMBER 2008 - CLIFTON HILL HOUSE

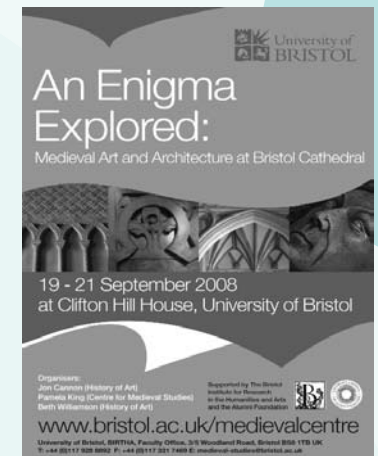
An Enigma Explored: Medieval Art and Architecture at Bristol Cathedral

Organisers: Pamela King, Beth Williamson and Jon Cannon



The conference addressed many of the outstanding questions concerning this enigmatic building: the question of what (if any) pre-Norman church stood on the site; the question of the form of the twelfth-century church and its relationship to its mother house of St-Victor in Paris; the significance of the famous thirteenth-century

letter from the abbot to the dean of Wells concerning the construction of a new lady chapel (and the form of the lady chapel that resulted); the abbey's late medieval history and that of its conversion to a cathedral at the Reformation; and a little-known and remarkable series of seventeenth-century painted pieces of plaster at the cathedral. But most



excitingly of all, we had several papers on the extraordinary fourteenth-century east end, including one (from Paul Crossley) on the question of its international influence; another (from Christopher Wilson) on its date; and a third paper on the patronage of the Berkeley family, which itself threw separate light on the question of date.

Pevsner argued in the 1950s for an early date (1298) for this building and a revolutionary significance, putting the master of the Bristol east end forward as the Le Corbusier of medieval architecture; Richard Morris has more recently argued for a date a few decades later, which makes the architecture – while iconographically and formally fascinating – rather more a regional eccentricity. Christopher Wilson has long been known to favour an earlier date; we were delighted and excited to have the opportunity to hear his argument in full. Christopher was among several specialists of international stature who spoke at the conference. Full details are on the Centre for Medieval Studies website: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/medievalcentre/conferences/bristol_cathedral.

Reports from Faculty theme leaders

www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/birtha

Medieval Cultures

Leader: Professor Pamela King

The number of medievalists in the Faculty has seen modest growth in the last year, including four postdoctoral fellows, and the Medieval Cultures Theme can report a number of successes and innovations. The established WUN research project, *Multilingualism in the Middle Ages* secured further funding in the form of a Leverhulme International Collaboration Award for £51k for 1 August 2007–31 July 2009, and hosted a major conference in July. Marcus Bull's £540k AHRC grant for research into Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade, has brought in new research staff, and the project will generate one of the Theme's three sessions at the International Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo in 2009. A new project area, *Medieval Plays in Modern Performance* has been set up with funding from WUN and the Faculty, drawing in medievalists from Toronto, Leeds, and Sydney, and working closely with Bristol University's Theatre Collection. *Looking Medieval* remains another live interdisciplinary area of interest which provided the focus for research seminars and events throughout the year.

We have been visited by a number of distinguished medievalists, including two Benjamin Meaker fellows, Donka Minkova, Professor of English at UCLA, and Alfred Acres of Georgetown University. Alexandra Johnston, early theatre historian and former Principal of Victoria College, University of Toronto, was appointed as a Visiting Professor of the University. Equally, individuals from Bristol have been highly visible externally, giving plenary lectures and participating in and hosting sessions at international conferences, notably the prestigious

Medieval Academy of America. Judith Bryce, has been appointed Vice-Chair of Society for Renaissance Studies, 2007–10, and will thereafter be Chair. In the media we remain prominently represented by Mark Horton as presenter of the BAFTA winning series, *Coast*, and Jon Cannon, medieval art historian attached to Continuing Education in History of Art, presented *How to Build a Cathedral* in the BBC's recent Medieval Season. Three of the seven promotions to Personal Chairs in the Faculty of Arts have been medievalists – Elizabeth Archibald, Marcus Bull, and Mark Horton.

The continuing health of Medieval Cultures as a cohesive research group in the Faculty is, however, most obviously signalled by the popularity of its fortnightly Medieval Seminar, attended by 30 to 40 staff and postgraduates. The seminar hosts a range of visiting speakers from home and overseas, as well as show-casing the work in progress of members of the Theme. In addition to the seminar itself, medievalists organised two half-day conferences in the last year,

and another major conference with plenary speakers of international reputation, *An Enigma Explored: Medieval Art and Architecture at Bristol Cathedral*, took place in September 2008, in collaboration Bristol Cathedral and UWE. Further on the collaborative front, an annual joint seminar with the UWE Centre for Regional Studies has now been established, and our relationship with the Cathedral libraries and archives at Hereford and Wells has been built on both as a resource for teaching postgraduate students and for the development of future research opportunities. Our postgraduate community continues with its highly successful annual conference and regular reading group.

Finally, a publications series to be called *Bristol Publications in Medieval Cultures*, has been negotiated with Boydell and Brewer. The first volume, Beth Williamson's, *The Madonna of Humility*, is at press, and the collection of essays from the Bristol Cathedral conference is under consideration. Marianne Ailes is General Editor of the series.

will be a follow-up in Bristol in 2010. Actors from the Bristol Old Vic performed parts of Christopher Logue's 'War Music' at our annual Donors' Event. One of the great theorists of our time, Professor Mieke Bal, spoke on the reception of the sculptor Louise Bourgeois to a capacity audience. We collaborated with 'The Reception of British and Irish Authors in Europe', a research project sponsored by the British Academy, on one workshop: 'Transnational Receptions', and with the Classical Studies Reception Network on another: 'Stories of the Novel: Ancient and Modern Narrative Forms'. For details of these and other events see the Annual Report on our website.

We were joined this year by Medieval Latinist Dr Stephen

Performativity / Place / Space

Leader: Professor Martin White

In general terms, the theme explores concepts of place and space – real and imagined, physical and virtual, natural and constructed, historical and contemporary – looking from different disciplinary perspectives at how these are 'performative': in other words, how they are both created and transformed by social and individual action and themselves create and transform such actions. The concept of performativity looks beyond performance to investigate the active and ongoing production and practice of space and place; indeed, what is noticeable from an international perspective is the increasing prevalence of notions of performativity in discourses around disciplines within arts and social

sciences, and beyond, and, as the Bristol Theme is demonstrating, the bridges this concept can provide between these disciplines.

The theme was launched early in 2005 and quickly attracted interest from a wide range of Bristol scholars from Arts, Social Sciences and Geographical Sciences, and forged new research relationships both nationally and internationally. Events have included Symposia (Mapping, Mobility, Movement), Workshops (AHRC e-Science Workshop scheme), an AHRC-funded Network ('Living in a Material World: Performativities of Emptiness', involving researchers from Bristol, Aberystwyth, Cardiff, Exeter, UWE, who participated in weekend

workshops at Bristol Temple Meads Station, British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, the MoD Sennybridge Training Centre on Mynydd Epynt, Wales and along the Avonmouth-Severn Beach Littoral), and regular reading and research seminar groups.

In 2008–09 the main focus for the Theme will be a site-based workshop series – GARDEN/CITY/WILD – organised by Peter Coates, Tim Cole and Chris Pearson (Historical Studies) and Clare Hickman (Archaeology & Anthropology). Informed by a strong interdisciplinary approach, these outdoor workshops and the supporting Reading Group will involve colleagues from various subject areas within the Arts Faculty: art history, archaeology and anthropology, classics & ancient history, drama, English, historical studies, medical humanities and philosophy. The programme is also designed to appeal to colleagues in geography, sociology, politics and urban studies – all those in the arts, humanities and social sciences, in fact, who are united by a common interest in matters of landscape, environment and nature.

Also in 2008–09, theme scholars are participating in the LAND2 international research network based at UWE; in Ika Willis' and Simon Jones' BIRTHA network 'Word Unbecoming Flesh' (on the ways in which technologies of sound amplification produce architectural space in film and literature); and are launching a research project into the ways in which televisual and networked media promoting the 2010 Winter Olympic Games uses archaeology in the production of civic space.

The Theme is led by Martin White (Drama), and convened by RCUK Fellows, Jo Carruthers (English and Theology and Religious Studies) and Angela Piccini (Drama).

Reception

Leader: Professor Charles Martindale

The Theme is, as always, administered by the Institute of Greece, Rome, and the Classical Tradition. 9 of the 12 Institute events organised last session related to reception. Neville Morley launched a continuing research project 'Thucydides: Reception, Reinterpretation, Influence' with three AHRC-funded workshops. Dr Knippschild was one of the organisers of the international conference 'Imagines: Antiquity in the Performing and Visual Arts' at the University of La Rioja; there

D'Evelyn, Cassamarca Fellow in Latin Language and Literature and its Reception, working on 'The Gift from Antiquity to the Renaissance'. He is already making his presence felt across the Faculty. Dr Ika Wills saw through the successful first year of the MA in Reception and Critical Theory.

For the coming session, the Centenary Year, we have an unusually ambitious programme. First there are no less than four international conferences: 'Romans and Romantics' (Norwegian School in Rome, 16–17 April), in collaboration with the Centre for Romantic Studies and the Universities of Bergen and Tromsø; a conference in preparation for volume 3 of *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in*

English Literature (10–12 July); 'The Modernity of Ancient Sculpture' (Faculty of Arts, 25–6 July); and the 5th Bristol Myth Conference 'Myth and Psychoanalysis' (Institute of Advanced Studies, University of London, 3–6 September, with a reception in the Freud Museum). Then for our annual Donors' Event we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of Milton ('Milton at 400', 12 November). The Blackwell Lectures will be given by Professor Greg Woolf of St Andrews on 'Classics and Ethnography' (May 5, 6, 12, 13). And then there are colloquia on 'Figures of Translation' (3 December) and 'Performing and Affirming Status from Antiquity to the Middle Ages' (19–20 March).