



## The Australasian Society for Classical Studies

### MINUTES

The Executive Committee Meeting of **The Australasian Society for Classical Studies** was held via Zoom on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2021, commencing at 17:00 Australian Eastern Daylight Time.

**Present:** Tom Stevenson (presiding), Daniel Osland (Hon. Secretary), Lea Beness (Vice-President), Kathryn Welch (Vice-President), Sarah Lawrence, Trevor Evans, Janette McWilliams, Alison Griffith, Kit Morrell, Amelia Brown, Bob Cowan, Tristan Taylor, K.O. Chong-Gossard, Han Baltussen, Andrew Connor, Gillian Shepherd, Phoebe Garrett, James Kierstead, Ryleigh Kjorsvik

#### 1. Apologies

Jonathan Wallis, Arlene Allan

#### 2. Minutes of the Meeting of 29 January 2020

The draft Minutes of the meeting in Dunedin have been circulated.

HB requested an adjustment to the wording around SCIMAGO journal rankings, which was accepted. TS moved that the minutes as amended be accepted, LB seconded. Minutes accepted.

#### 3. Business arising from the Minutes

- a. Conference finances and website production and managing; reassessing subsidies for 2021 ASCS and beyond

The conference finances and website production/management still has to be managed on a case-by-case basis, as ASCS does not yet have the infrastructure to take over the conference management process annually. Some institutions are more likely to return any conference surplus to ASCS than others, so this is something that will have to be re-assessed each year.

#### 4. Correspondence and Business arising from the Correspondence

Submissions have been made in response to:

- a. North Sydney Boys High School Latin review
- b. New Zealand (NCEA) Latin and Classics review
- c. NESA professional development changes
- d. Cuts/changes to Classics and Ancient History at Auckland
- e. Changes in Classics at Roehampton
- f. Discussion

#### 5. President's comments

President's comments. TS indicated he has felt dispirited in a way that he hasn't in previous years. Emails and phone calls feel like you're just being snowed. Like the whole consultation process is just form rather than real consultation. The agendas are a move away from traditional humanities, so they were being polite in talking with us about the possible changes. 2020 and early 2021 have been especially disheartening, in that it does not feel as if we're being heard. Covid has been used as an excuse to mask attitudes to traditional classics and Greek and Latin, at Uni and schools. We may have to rethink our advocacy and how we can come up with new approaches. Without voluntary services we can't really function, and TS doesn't feel we've been making a significant impact in what we've been trying to do.

This was followed by some constructive discussion around how we can work with CHASS, the Australian Academy of the Humanities, etc. Recent Australian funding model adjustments pose an even greater threat to the breadth and diversity of the Tertiary curriculum there.

## 6. Secretary's Report 2020

### a. Discussion (reserved for the AGM)

## 7. Financial Matters

### a. Treasurer's Report for 2020

Honorary Treasurer Tristan Taylor highlighted the challenges faced by a small organization like ASCS in a difficult year, pointing out that the current budget structure is unsustainable in the long run. While the budget actually ran a surplus in 2020, this was due to an unanticipated surplus from the ASCS 41 conference at Otago, and projections for 2021 indicate a significant deficit for the current year (see below). Interest returns on our savings accounts are extremely low given very very low interest rates globally, and other options such as certificates of deposit are similarly unimpressive. Several items in the budget might justify revision in order to try to offset some of the deficit, such as the second early career award, executive reimbursement for ASCS, and the annual audit (which Tristan thinks is a good idea even if not strictly necessary). Given how much of the society's income is generated by *Antichthon* subscriptions, there may be room for re-negotiation of our arrangements with CUP, which currently retains something like 90% of the income generated.

### b. Membership Structure for 2021 and beyond

Membership Secretary Phoebe Garrett outlined how ASCS has tried to make concessions to retain members struggling financially in 2020 by extending the unfinancial membership category for an extra year and introducing a new lower cost student membership level. This change will be brought to the full ASCS membership at the AGM to consider establishing a permanent new membership level for students. Noted that the Masters 3-year rate should be \$120 to reflect the discount, instead of \$150. PG has also introduced a set of rules and regulations around membership (which already apply) so that these can be included on our ASCS website to clarify how things work to new members, in order to reduce the amount of difficulty faced by the Membership Secretary. PG, KM, and DO to liaise about putting together a set of regulations that we can put up onto the website in a FAQ section on membership.

### c. Budget for 2021

TT shared the budget projections for 2021 indicating an anticipated deficit of just over \$7,000 for the year, suggesting that as a one-off due to COVID-19 this may not be much of a concern, but also pointing out that, barring a massive increase in our financial membership, we do not have any realistic means of increasing our revenues.

### d. Auditor and Honorarium

The auditor is currently conducting the annual review of our finances and TT expects that the report will be completed quite soon.

### e. Discussion

KW indicated that the ASCS 42 conference looks likely to generate a significant surplus to be spent on postgraduate support for our next ASCS conference. Certain conference costs aren't usually spent in a given year, but there may still be ways to reduce our expenditure on conferences. Most of those conference costs are meant to be paid back by a given conference anyway, though certain institutions make this more difficult. TT pointed out that if we can run the conferences as a surplus-generating activity this will help us maintain the positive investments that we make in our membership. TS suggests perhaps we could look into a membership drive. TT indicates we're down over \$15,000 p/a from our 2018 income from memberships, so there does seem to be room to restore membership.

## 8. *Antichthon*

### a. Summary report

Han Baltussen reports that the full editors' report is in the works, having just received the CUP 25-page report themselves there is a bit of work left to be done. The *Antichthon* 2020 issue came out on time thanks to some extra work from Bob Cowan. HB indicates that he has been working through the SCIMAGO rankings with a postgrad who has an advanced degree in maths to assess the methods of ranking used. The general sense is that the maths make sense in theory, but that the idea of assessing the rank of humanities journals across only three years isn't especially robust. We may be able to look into some of the weak spots in the system (to be introduced in the full report) put together a committee to look into these issues a bit further, thinking about the misuse of this sort of ranking exercise to direct scholarship to "high-ranking" publications. One of our major weaknesses is that we're more 'specialised' than other journals, which lowers our ranking (which is still pretty good). Our metrics are up on social media, with more mentions compared to other years, and our most-downloaded articles are extremely well-read. We have a range of overseas reviewers which helps boost our ranking and our presence online while also maintaining the high quality of the journal. The editorial board has been renewed (Susanna Braund, Richard Hunt, etc.) to again increase our prominence on the international market. This year's issue is a special issue on Catullus which has already been to the reviewers in its initial stages.

BC points out that (as agreed by the membership and board) *Antichthon* will now accept articles on reception (officially stated on the info page now), and this year's issue is pretty much in the bag, and we've already had 7 submissions for the next issue.

TS has extended further thanks to HB for his extensive work on the journal over a long time.

- b *Antichthon* Board
- c Discussion

## **9. Conference Planning Review**

The Team of 4 (Kathryn Welch, Bob Cowan, David Rafferty, and Elizabeth Minchin) is assembling a document that explains how this process worked, and the matchmaker system may be put forward as an alternative to the traditional vetting process that we've been using historically. The online format has some significant advantages despite the apparent disadvantages. There is \$\$\$ coming in, which will be helpful for postgrads coming along to future conferences. Programme is mostly finished (minor changes in the works), and the Slack site is nearly up and running. KW has been updating the ASCS 42 Facebook page with a featured panel every day or so, which has been fun for her and everyone else.

## **10. FIEC report (tabled)**

- a. ASCS candidate for FIEC Executive for the 2022 meeting

BC suggests we might want to have someone on their board, so if we watch the election space and get someone to come along sometime, that could be worthwhile. HB suggests that funding is very low, but that we could still think about having someone there if they happen to be around. Ideally, we'd want to pick versions when someone's already planning to be there and then save a bit of money that way. TT indicates we have some money in the budget to help with costs. AB asked for a reminder of the dates, which are 1-5 August 2022.

- b. Discussion

## **11. Thesaurus Linguae Latinae (TLL) report (tabled)**

Sven Günther has submitted his TLL report. TS indicates that the TLL continues to encourage a postgrad from our part of the world to come along. It is worth encouraging our postgrads to consider this and see if we can oblige sometime.

- a. Discussion

## **12. Early Career Award Rules and Procedures Update (Alison Griffith)**

AG on the changes to the Awards rules. We had limited applicants this year, and we've adjusted the rules to allow for unusual requests (such as a new laptop this year). There is a general concern about people's tardiness in applying for membership during the year, but it's never clear why this is the case

a. Discussion

**13. Greek and Latin Translation Competition** (Sarah Lawrence/Trevor Evans)

Sarah Lawrence indicates that a committee has been formed out of a conversation with campus representatives (consisting of Sarah Lawrence, Maxine Lewis, Estelle Strazdins, Jonathan Wallis, and Trevor Evans) in order to advance a new Greek and Latin translation competition format. This proposal is likely to be brought before the membership at the AGM. Trevor Evans expressed his gratitude to the rest of the team for all their work, and especially to Sarah. TS congratulated the team on their excellent work.

a. Discussion

**14. Matters for discussion**

a. Procedure for refereeing conference abstracts (Kathryn Welch)

KW indicates that the procedure used for ASCS 2021 has been extremely beneficial to everyone, and the use of the Matchmaker process has dramatically improved how the whole thing works. This allowed experts to be more proactive in collecting papers in a collegial fashion. JM and KC generally agree, having participated in the process. KM and DO suggest we need to maintain wording that emphasizes the peer-review/quality control/vetting aspect of the refereeing process, especially for postgrad and early career members. KW and DO to liaise around a formal proposal for the preferred wording to be circulated to the membership at a later date.

b. Online election procedures

The Executive Committee have been working through an online election process. DO has solicited statements from each of the candidates (for which there are two or more candidates) to be circulated to the membership in advance of voting. Anastasia Bakogianni will set up a google docs poll (as Returning Officer). The online voting procedures are designed to align with the current form of the Constitution, including running the officer elections during the AGM, but through an online google forms portal. DO to liaise with Anastasia, Kathryn (who is not running), Phoebe, Kit, and Tom (who is not running) to make sure the logistics get worked out.

Note of congrats to John Melville-Jones on his Australia Day Honours.

Meeting adjourned at 19:03

Daniel Osland  
ASCS Honorary Secretary