

## Professor Ken Dowden M.A. (Oxon.)

Professor of Classics  
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**[Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology \(/schools/historycultures/departments/caha/index.aspx\)](/schools/historycultures/departments/caha/index.aspx)**

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### About

Religion, mythology and the ancient novel are my main interests – whether in research or in teaching. I enjoy the history of ideas, ancient and modern, and the study of texts and lost texts.

### Feedback and office hours

I keep an electronic 'door notice'. Ask me for its URL if you don't already have it.

### Biography

I come originally from Newcastle-on-Tyne (a product of its Royal Grammar School). I took my undergraduate degree at Worcester College, Oxford and then precipitously became Lecturer at University College Cardiff (as it then was) in 1974, where I was for a while Chair of the non-professorial staff. In 1988 I moved to Birmingham and became the Senior Tutor for the Faculty of Arts General Honours programme, soon Senior Lecturer, and later Professor of Classics. From 2000 to 2003 I was Head of the School of Humanities, and from 2005 to 2012 I was Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity. In 2012 I became Head of the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion.

### Teaching

I have taught most classical subjects in my time. Recently I have focussed on Greek mythology, Homer, Herodotus (as ethnographer, scribe of cultural memory) and sometimes more fragmentary historians. A particularly interesting venture is my course on the *Iliad* and the *Mahābhārata* exploring the resonances between Greek and Indian epic tradition. And I supervise undergraduate dissertations on quite a range of religious, cultural and literary subjects – from folktale to Dr Who.

### Postgraduate supervision

I supervise postgraduate dissertations, at all levels, on religion and mythology, on cultural memory, and on the ancient novel. The section on my research gives a sense of what is possible.

### Research

I tend to write essays and articles on the ancient novel, commentaries on fragmentary historians (several of them arguably bogus), and everything from dictionary entries to monographs on mythology and religion – though there are some publications on different topics altogether and I remain pleased with 'Homer's Sense of Text' in *JHS* 116 (1996).

I regularly attend conferences on ancient novel and narrative at Tours (thanks to Bernard Pouderon) and Rethymno (thanks to Michael Paschalis) and the result is a diverse stream of pieces – in French and English respectively. Cumulatively they represent a maturing, if at times risky, vision of the meaning and possibilities of the novel. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11 is finally responding to treatment if you put together a Tours contribution with one in Wytse Keulen's (and Ulrike Egelhaaf-Gaiser's) *Aspects of the Golden Ass* III.

I think it is important to write for those beyond the immediate circle of experts and that it is possible to do so without limiting quality. I have written for the *Cambridge Companion to Homer* on the epic tradition, and the Blackwell *Companions to Greek Religion* (on the pantheon) and to Greek Rhetoric (on prayer and procession as rhetoric). Niall Livingstone and I completed the Blackwell *Companion to Greek Mythology* in 2011, which is much more than a copious set of chapters – it constitutes a vision of a still young subject and a spur to exploration. My *Zeus* book for Routledge (2006) tried to provide a coherent and comprehensive vision of an ancient god. And of course *Uses of Greek Mythology* (1992) has shown, over a very long period by now, how necessary and useful a clear mapping of mythology is.

Others will judge, but I think my hardest-hitting work lately has been for the ***Brill New Jacoby*** (<http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-jacoby>) (*BNJ*, masterminded by Ian Worthington). Diktys of Crete (49) and Aristaeus of Prokonessos (35) are major exercises in reconstruction and in envisaging, in their different ways, the world-view and rules of the game for these authors of around 90 AD and 590 BC respectively. Diktys links in to the whole question of mythology games in the 1st century BC and AD, on which I have written a number of pieces – many for the *BNJ* but others in an ancient narrative context. And then there's Poseidonios' *History* - *BNJ* (87).

I am interested in other traditions. I have written on lamblichos the novelist and Persian tradition, am supervising currently a PhD dissertation on 'cultural translation', and have published on night-attacks in Greek mythology and the *Mahābhārata*. But the most important work in this regard is my compendious *European Paganism* (Routledge, 2000). It is now **available in paperback** (<http://www.amazon.co.uk/European-Paganism-Ken-Dowden/dp/0415474639/>) at a price people can afford.

Mythography is next.

### Other activities

Personal website:

I am also on academia.edu, though I don't update it as often as I should.

## Publications

### Books

- K. Dowden & N.R. Livingstone, *Companion to Greek Mythology*, Wiley-Blackwell: Oxford and Malden, MA, 2011.
- *Zeus*, Routledge: London & New York, 2006.
- T. Wiedemann & K. Dowden (eds.), *Sleep* (Nottingham Classical Literature Studies vol.8), Levante editori: Bari, 2003. pp. xviii + 178. ISBN 88-7949-298-5.
- *European Paganism: the realities of cult from antiquity to the middle ages*, Routledge: London and New York, 2000. Also in Italian.
- *The Uses of Greek Mythology*, Routledge: London and New York, 1992. Also in Portuguese (Brazil).
- *Religion and the Romans*, Bristol Classical Press: London, 1992.
- *Death and the Maiden: Girls' Initiation Rites in Greek Mythology*, Routledge: London and New York, 1989. Also in Italian.

### Articles and contributions

- Poseidonios (087) in *Brill's New Jacoby*, I. Worthington (ed.), Leiden, Brill (2013).
- '“But there is a difference in the ends ...” : brigands and teleology in the ancient novel', in M. Paschalis, S. Panayotakis (eds), *The Construction of the Real and the Ideal in the Ancient Novel* (Groningen 2013), 41-60.
- 'Apulée et le culte', in B. Pouderon & Cécile Bost-Pouderon (eds), *Les hommes et les dieux dans l'Ancien Roman*, Maison de l'orient et de la Méditerranée: Lyon, 2012, 213-24.
- 'Geography and direction in *Metamorphoses* 11', in W. Keulen, U. Egelhaaf-Gaiser (eds), *Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass* III, Brill: Leiden, 2012, 156-167.
- 'Memory Shift: Reinventing the mythology, 100 BC – AD 100', in M. Bommas, J. Harrison, P. Roy (eds), *Memory and Urban Religion in the Ancient World*, Bloomsbury: London, 2012, 129-47.
- 'Van Gennep et l'initiation dans la mythologie grecque: mort prématurée d'un paradigme?', *Gaia* 14 (2011), 171-9.
- Skythen-Anhang (845) and Ktesippos (844) in *Brill's New Jacoby*, I. Worthington (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2011.
- 'Fact and fiction in the New Mythology: 100 BC - AD 100', in J.R. Morgan and I.D. Repath (eds), *Lies and Metafiction [Ancient Narrative, Suppl.]*, Groningen, (forthcoming 2013).
- 'The plot of Iamblichos' *Babyloniaka*: sources and influence', for the Bryan Reardon Festschrift, ed. J.R. Morgan (forthcoming 2014).
- Chapters in K. Dowden & N.R. Livingstone (eds), *A Companion to Greek Mythology*, Blackwell, Malden MA & Oxford, 2011. pp. xxvii + 643. ISBN 978-1-4051-1178-2
  - (with N.R. Livingstone) 'Thinking through Myth, Thinking Myth Through', pp. 3-24
  - 'Telling the Mythology : from Hesiod to the fifth century', pp. 47-72.
  - 'The myth that saves : mysteries and mysteriosophies', pp. 283-300'
  - Initiation, the key to myth?', pp. 487-506.
- 'The Gods in the Greek Novel', in J.N. Bremmer, A. Erskine (eds), *The Gods of Ancient Greece : Identities and transformations*, Edinburgh, 2010, 362-374. ISBN 978 0 7486 3798 0
- Agathon of Samos (843) in *Brill's New Jacoby*, I. Worthington (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2010. (Available at: [http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj\\_a843](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj_a843) ([http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj\\_a843](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj_a843))).
- 'Trojan Night', in M. Christopoulos, E.D. Karakantzou, O. Levaniouk (eds), *Light and Darkness in Ancient Greek Myth and Religion*, Rowman & Littlefield, London & Boulder Colorado, 2010, 110-120. ISBN 978 0 7391 3898 4
- 'Reading Diktys : the discrete charm of bogosity', in M. Paschalis, S. Panayotakis & G. Schmeling (eds), *Readers and Writers in the Ancient Novel [Ancient Narrative, Suppl. 12]*, Groningen, 2009, 155-68. ISBN: 97890-77922-545
- Aristeas (035) in *Brill's New Jacoby*, I. Worthington (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2009. (Available at: [http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj\\_a35](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj_a35) ([http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj\\_a35](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj_a35))).
- 'L'Affirmation de soi chez les romanciers', in B. Pouderon & C. Bost-Pouderon (eds), *Passions, vertus et vices dans l'ancien roman* (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée, 2009), 85-96. ISBN : 978-2-35668-008-2
- 'Rationales for the Adoption of Christianity', in J. Dijkstra, J. Kroesen & Yme Kuiper (eds), *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer*, Leiden, 2010, 409-424. ISBN 978 90 04 18089 5
- 'Dances with Nymphs', in E. Azoulay (ed.), *100,000 Years of Beauty*, vol. 1 'Antiquity/Civilisations' (Paris, Gallimard 2009) 82-3. ISBN 978 2 07012 531 9
- Diktys of Crete (049), Dositheos (054) and (290), in *Brill's New Jacoby*, I. Worthington (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2008. (Available at: [http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj\\_a49](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj_a49) ([http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj\\_a49](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj_a49))).
- Abaris (34), Abas (46), Antipater (56), Aristonikos of Alexandria (53), Botryas of Myndos (58), Chersiphron and Metagenes (420), Demetrios of Ilion (59), Nikias (60), Simonides of Karystos or Eretria (66C), Tellis (61), Theodoros (62), Writers of Troika (hoi syntetachotes ta troika) (48A), Xenophon of Ephesos (419), in *Brill's New Jacoby*, I. Worthington (ed.), Leiden, Brill, 2007. (Available at: [http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj\\_a34](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj_a34) ([http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj\\_a34](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?bnj_a34))).
- 'Novel Ways of Being Philosophical, or: A Tale of Two Dogs and a Phoenix', in JR Morgan, M Jones (Editors), *Philosophical Presences in the Ancient Novel [Ancient Narrative, Supplementum 10]*, 2007, 137-149. ISBN: 9789077922378
- 'Rhetoric and Religion', in I. Worthington (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, Oxford, 2007, 320-35. ISBN 1-4051-2551-9
- 'Olympian Gods, Olympian Pantheon', in D. Ogden (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Religion*, Oxford, 2007, 41-55. ISBN 978-1-4051-205408
- 'A lengthy sentence: judging the prolixity of novels', in M. Paschalis, S. Frangoulidis, S. Harrison, M. Zimmerman (eds), *The Greek and the Roman Novel: Parallel Readings*, Barkhuis & Groningen University Library, Groningen, 2007, 133-50. ISBN 978-90-77922-279
- 'Pouvoir divin, discours humain chez Héliodore', in B. Pouderon & J. Peigney (eds.), *Discours et débats dans l'ancien roman*, Maison de L'Orient et de la Méditerranée, Lyon, 2006, 249-61. ISBN 2-903264-69-4
- 'Greek novel and the ritual of life: an exercise in taxonomy', in S.J. Harrison & M. Paschalis (edd.), *Ancient Narrative*, Supplementum 4, Groningen, 2005, 23-35. ISSN 1568 3540 ISBN 90 77922 03 2
- 'Héliodore: une esthétique sans couleur', in B. Pouderon (ed.), *Lieux, décors et paysages de l'ancien roman des origines à Byzance*, Maison de L'Orient et de la Méditerranée, Lyon, 2005, 247-56. ISBN 2-903264-27-9
- 'A Tale of Two Texts: Apuleius' sermo Milesius and Plato's Symposium', in W.H. Keulen, R.R. Nauta & S. Panayotakis (eds), *Lectiones Scrupulosae: Essays on*

- 'Getting the Measure of Apuleius' Metamorphoses', in M. Zimmerman & R. van der Paardt (edd.), *Metamorphic Reflections; Essays presented to Ben Hijmans at his 75th birthday*, Leuven, 2004, 279-95. ISBN 90 429 1504 8.
- 'The epic tradition in Greece', in R. Fowler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*, Cambridge, 2004, 188-205. ISBN 0521 81302 6 (hb), 0521 01246 5 (pb).
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- 'The Passage Rite in Myth, Ritual and the Greek Novel', in M. Padilla (ed.), *Rites of Passage in Ancient Greece: Literature, Religion, Society* [Bucknell Review 43.1], Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1999, pp. 221-243.
- 'Cupid and Psyche: a question of the vision of Apuleius', in M. Zimmermann (ed.), *Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass II*, Groningen 1998, 1-22. ISBN 90 6980 121 3
- 'The Amazons: Development and Functions', *Rheinisches Museum n.f.*140 (1997) 97-128.
- 'Homer's Sense of Text', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 116 (1996) 47-61. ISSN 0075-4269
- 'Heliodoros: Serious Intentions', *Classical Quarterly* 46 (1996) 267-85. ISSN 0009-8388
- 'Approaching Women through Myth - Vital Tool or Self-delusion?', in B. Levick & R. Hawley (eds), *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments*, Routledge, 1995, pp.44-57. ISBN 0415 11368 7.
- Entries on: Aeneas, Daphne, Dioskouroi, Jason, Macedon, Menelaos, Patroklos, Perseus, Quirinus, Skythes, Thessalos, in P. van der Horst (ed.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Leiden, 1995.
- 'Paganeseimi europeï', in J. Guilaine & S. Settis (edd.), *Storia d'Europa*, Vol. ii, Einaudi, Torino, 1994, 1095-1144.
- 'Apuleius' Roman Audience', in J.A. Tatum (ed.), *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, Johns Hopkins, 1994, pp. 419-34.
- 'The Unity of Apuleius' Eighth Book and the Danger of Beasts', in H. Hofmann (ed.), *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel*, Vol. 5, 1993, 91-109.
- 'The value of sleep: Homer, Plinies, Posidonius and Proclus', in T. Wiedemann & K. Dowden (eds), *Sleep*, Levante editori: Bari, 2003, 141-63.
- Pseudo-Callisthenes, The Alexander Romance, translated with introduction and notes, in B.P. Reardon (ed.), *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, University of California Press, 1989, 650-735.
- 'Apuleius and the Art of Narration', *Classical Quarterly* 32 (1982) 419-35.
- 'Psyche on the Rock', *Latomus* 41 (1982) 336-52.
- 'Grades in the Eleusinian Mysteries', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 197 (1980) 409-27

