



## Evaluation Report JEDI 2023

# Classics: Changing the Conversation

## Events and Deliverables

In 2023 we set up the project “Classics: Changing the Conversation” (henceforth: CCC), a joint initiative of study association Sophia Aeterna and the study programmes BA Griekse en Latijnse Taal en Cultuur, (Res)MA Classics and Ancient Civilizations and the MA Ancient History, with support from the JEDI-fund. CCC addressed 3 main questions:

- (1) **Who is currently included**, and who, by implication, excluded, from the study of Classical Antiquity?
- (2) **What do we include as an object of study**, and what, by implication, exclude in our discipline? *Whose antiquity* are we attuned to?
- (3) **How have the Classics been instrumental in including and excluding groups**, both historically and in contemporary discourse?

CCC has addressed these questions with a **dual format**:

- I. 3 on campus meetings of our discussion platform “**What Our Classics Evoke**” (henceforth: **W.O.C.E.**) with talks by invited experts (both international and national), panel discussions and interactive deep conversations, targeting current cohorts of students (both BA and MA), alumni and staff.
  - 9/5/2023: “**Gender and Sexuality in the World of Classics**” (addressing **Question 2**). Expert guests: Dr. Martine Cuypers (Trinity College Dublin), Dr. Bram Demulder (Universiteit Leiden). Host and moderator: Thirza Vis (CCC-team, BA GLTC). Approximately 50 attendants.
  - 24/10/2023: “**Appropriation of the Classics**” (**Question 3**). Keynote speaker: Dr. Nicolò Bett ragazzi (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen); Panel: Indira

Huliselan (PhD-candidate Ancient History UL), Zoé Bazalgette Courrèges-Lacoste (alumna Classics and Ancient Civilizations UL), Mona Palmeira (MA-student CAC Leiden and dean at Sint-Maartenscollege Voorburg). Host and moderator: Ada Migliazza (CCC-team, ResMA CAC). Approximately 25 attendants.

- 27/11/2023: “**Het Gymnasium**” (**Question 1**). Expert speakers and panel: Kurano Bigiman (founder of the first Gymnasium in Amsterdam Zuidoost, Ir. Lely Lyceum; also Classics teacher at Vossius Gymnasium, Diederik Burgersdijk (University College Utrecht, Cartesius Lyceum Amsterdam), Fenna Visser (ResMA-student CAC VU Amsterdam, Meesterschap Klassieke Talen). Host and moderator: Timo Hoogstraate (ResMA CAC). 35 attendants.

## II. 5 podcast episodes (**CCC-podcast**):<sup>1</sup>

- 10/5/2023: recording of episodes 1-3 (1. The Living Core of Classics; 2. Classics as a Conversation Maker; 3. A Future for Classics?). Hosts: Zoé Bazalgette Courrèges-Lacoste (MA CAC UL), Evelien Nijveld (MA CAC UL); Guests: Dr. Martine Cuypers (Trinity College Dublin), Dr. Bram Demulder (UL).
- 25/10/2023: recording of episode 4 (Appropriation of the Classics). Hosts: Thirza Vis (ResMA CAC), Jessy Rensink (MA CAC); Guests: Dr. Nicolò Bett ragazzi (RUG); Panel: Indira Huliselan (UL).
- 27/11/2023: recording of episode 5 (Het Gymnasium). Hosts: Lisanne Ledegang (ResMA CAC), Robin Bakker (BA GLTC). Guests: Kurano Bigiman (Ir. Lely Lyceum, Vossius Lyceum), Fenna Visser (ResMA CAC VUA)

The meetings featured both international speakers and guests from different parts and institutions in the Netherlands—in different career stages and affiliations. The meetings were well-attended by students from all cohorts (both BA and MA) and staff and with high audience participation in the discussion—by students, alumni and staff members. Post-event conversations with students have confirmed that the W.O.C.E.-sessions have contributed to community forming in our departments, and to an increased awareness of the urgency and complexity of several D&I-topics related to Classics as a discipline and the importance of making and holding space for personal experiences (see **testimonials** below).

<sup>1</sup> In our original schedule, we planned a podcast episode on “Diversifying the Reading List”. Due to delays in the editing process, we have decided to postpone production of this episode to 2024 (February). The production will be budget neutral. The JEDI-fund will of course be credited and mentioned in this episode too.

As to the production of the podcast: we are very grateful for the *pro bono* **support from Thomas Vorisek (École)**, who provided the facilities and prepared the rough files of our recordings (for the raw audio files, click [this link](#)).<sup>2</sup> Due to an unforeseeable adversity (the student who initially committed to cutting and producing the episodes had to pull back from the project), the production of the podcast has incurred some delay. Tazuko van Berkel has made additional funds available from her BSF to hire **Connor McMullen** (story engineer and podcast producer at Policy Mythology), who is currently **producing** the 5 episodes in collaboration with Evelien Nijveld and Ada Migliazza, and, in addition, **training** Robin Bakker and Tazuko van Berkel in production and editing techniques (see under **Team building and training** below) and **co-writing a podcast production manual** (with Tazuko van Berkel) for future teams and installments of the project (see under **Future of the project** below). Launch of the podcast episodes is now scheduled for **February 15**, at the Forum Antiquum event where the entire department will be present. The episodes will be used in the BA GLTC-programme (episode 5 in BA1 Mentoraat) and in the (Res)MA CAC (episodes 1-4 in Classics Now).

## Team building and training

To the CCC-team, not only the output and the results matter. The process of organizing and executing the project was a very valuable, fun, and collaborative learning experience for the student-members and the staff-members of the team. Some highlights:

- Throughout the year: **bi-weekly meetings** where we co-designed our sessions, divided tasks, updated each other, and co-authored a **living-document event organization script** (“draaiboek”) to be used for future installments.
- 24/4/2023: a **training session on designing interview questions**, offered *pro bono* by Helen Kuyper (storytelling expert at Bring on the Zoo, Storytelling XL).
- May: **design of the logo** by Jessy Rensink (CCC-team member). Team member Christoph Pieper has made available additional funding from his BSF to this end.
- September-November: 3 online **podcast design training meetings** with Connor McMullen, who has helped us craft three 25-minutes-episodes from the material recorded on 10/5/2023, by teaching us storytelling and podcast designing techniques.

<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/1eb5e3qcrxv4r7ljo4op/h?rlkey=tn1jv5pcfssnx45n98q4yzu7a&dl=0>

- December-January (in progress): **podcast editing training** of Robin Bakker and Tazuko van Berkel (CCC-team members) by Connor McMullen and writing a **podcast manual** (Connor & Tazuko) to safeguard continuity of the project. As a team, we will make sure that we keep on updating the manual and recruit new team members who are interested in learning podcast editing techniques. This will make the project **more robust and shock proof** and less vulnerable for changes in the team.

## Future of the project

The CCC-team is committed to continuation of the project beyond the funding period. With the **technical training** of student members, the **podcast manual** and the living-document **event organization script** (see above under **Team building and training**) we have invested in a logistical and didactic infrastructure to keep on organizing W.O.C.E.-events and recording podcasts while being less vulnerable for sudden changes in the team constitution.

## Contribution to wider change

**Sharing the Conversation:** The podcast episodes will be hosted by Leiden University (preferably via the JEDI-website) and distributed via Spotify, Apple Music, Stitcher and Google Podcast. We will **launch** all 5 2023-episodes on February 15 at the department **Forum Antiquum meeting**; in addition, we will present the podcast at a LUCAS lunch meeting. To give **national discussions on D&I in Classics** a fresh impetus, we have contacted OIKOS, Vereniging Classici Nederland and Klassieken.nu—organizations that will help us create buzz among classicists for the podcasts. We are also interested in **sharing our experiences** in organizing and executing our project, both in speaking engagement in the Faculty of Humanities and in a short essay that can be shared on the JEDI-website. Please let us know if you think this could be of added value.

**Scaling the Conversation:** we are interested in scaling the project to a national level. During our preparations for the third installment (Het Gymnasium), Fenna Visser (VU) told us that our Amsterdam colleagues would be very interested in (occasional/one-off) collaboration. D&I-topics are much discussed among Classics students in the Netherlands, but the kind of platform as we have created with our W.O.C.E.-sessions is unique nationally. We are currently exploring possibilities for doing so.

We are very grateful for the JEDI-fund for making this incredibly valuable community platform and collaborative learning experience possible and we are committed to carrying on this project in 2024 and beyond.

## Appendix

### Testimonials

The CCC/WOCE project has been a great opportunity for me, as an international student, to feel included in creating something innovative. The fact that such socially relevant themes are explored in relation to the classics is definitely a plus for Leiden University compared to other institutions!

[Ada Migliazza \(ResMA student CAC\)](#)

Het is van groot belang om kritisch te reflecteren op je eigen vakgebied en na te denken over de toekomst van het klassieke, en dat kan allemaal tijdens de CCC sessies in een informele setting, samen met docenten. Hierdoor leer je jezelf beter verhouden tegenover de problematische kanten van het GLTC-vakgebied.

[Eric Boot \(MA student CAC\)](#)

The CCC lectures provide a safe and solid platform to discuss pressing topics in our field. The lively nature of the discussions reveals how invested both students and teachers are in exchanging thoughts about these topics with each other. The ccc series is worthwhile for every student or scholar who seeks to broaden and deepen their understanding of the impact of classical studies on our society and of the impact of society on the classical studies.

[Hylke de Boer \(former MA student CAC\)](#)

“Het was een genoegen om onze studenten met professionals en met elkaar te horen discussiëren over de toekomst van de Klassieke Talen in het VO. Wat is eigenlijk de waarde van onderwijs in Grieks en Latijn in de 21ste eeuw? Hoe inclusief zijn gymnasiale opleidingen? Wat verwachten zij van de lopende vakvernieuwing? Een inspirerende avond, waarbij onze studenten ook betrokken burgers bleken, vol goede en vaak genuanceerde ideeën!”

[Jörn Soerink \(University Lecturer Latin\)](#)

Een heel belangrijk aspect van de WOCE-sessies is in mijn ogen dat ze jonge en senior classici bij elkaar brengen, maar niet enkel als vakgenoten die maatschappelijke issues in hun vak bespreken; we zitten daar ook juist als mensen die zulke issues doorleven.

[Glyn Mijtjens \(PhD-candidate Greek\)](#)

De WOCE-sessies zijn met name leerzaam, omdat ze de studie klassieken in verband brengen met de actualiteit binnen en buiten het vakgebied, waardoor je wordt aangemoedigd na te denken over wat de rol van de klassieken in de hedendaagse samenleving zou moeten zijn. Zeker voor (Res)MA studenten is het daarnaast een goede kennismaking met het bijwonen en/of moderaten van panel-discussies in een academische setting.

[Timo Hoogstrate \(ResMA student CAC\)](#)

The great value of participating in the W.O.C.E.-session to me was that I could take part in an accessible way even though I am currently not in the midst of academia. It was great to experience that my personal everyday experiences, as a classics teacher of colour, could add to an academic discussion. This invites me to think and talk more actively about the themes of the W.O.C.E.-sessions in my day-to-day life.

[Mona Palmeira \(MA student CAC\)](#)