

# Introduction

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This volume is a tribute to John Morgan, from his colleagues and research students, past and present, and from post-doctoral researchers who have spent time in Swansea, drawn there by John's presence. Over the course of a 36-year career at Swansea, and then since his retirement in 2015, John has worked with and influenced a great many people, and, as editors, we were extremely pleased that those whom we approached about participating in this volume responded so enthusiastically and promptly: almost everyone was able to contribute, and those who were not were profuse in their praise of, and expressions of affection for, John. These responses are a sure sign of the high regard in which the honorand is held, as teacher, supervisor, colleague, and friend: we hope that when John observes this volume from the hilltop of his retirement and the lights of his eyes survey its contents, he will see value in the weight of the feeling it contains (and perhaps even of the scholarship) and beam like the sun.

All the contributions to this volume reflect John's interests. Looming large is narrative, which has always been at the forefront of John's teaching and research. The forms, structures, strategies, and functions of numerous ancient narratives, especially fictional, have been elucidated by John in a voluminous body of scholarship, whose details are provided in the bibliography which follows this introduction. In the chapters we present here, the contributors consider a wide range of narratives, extending from those which show the influence of older stories on the beginnings of ancient Greek civilisation, through various narrative genres in different periods of antiquity, and up to later eras when the impact of Greek and Roman learning, stories, and ideas has been felt. The fact that the core of this volume contains discussions of narratives from the Roman imperial period, especially the Greek novels, is no coincidence, since this is the area to which the majority of John's work has been devoted and where his outputs have been seminal.

Global influence and renown of the kind John has achieved may not be a realistic ambition for many, but we hope that the chapters contained herein will provide him with pleasure, and that other readers, too, will encounter this offering in the grove of academe and think it beneficial. Each contributor has tried to reflect the kinds of approach John himself has used in his research. These include appreciating the joy that can be gained from good stories; close and sensitive reading; analysing details while at the same time not losing sight of the bigger picture; explicating intratextual dynamics; exploring the meanings generated by intertextual relationships; and not being afraid to venture into territory which is unfamiliar or unknown and bringing it to a wider audience. Similarly, the levels on which a narrative might work and the different messages it might communicate are an important feature of John's investigations and feature in several of the discussions here. The ways in which fiction works and can be understood are particular interests of John's, and these are important aspects of the work presented in this collection. Having such methodological and thematic similarities, especially given the range of narratives under consideration, means that the reader may find the index a useful navigational tool. In addition, there are elements of this volume's paratextual paraphernalia which are designed to reflect John's love of cryptic crosswords. Shoe-horning in less serious but sometimes simultaneously cerebral aspects is, after all, central to John's *modus operandi*.

It remains for us to mention a substantial achievement of John's which has made a significant difference to the research environment at Swansea and more widely. While the connections between John and the contributors reflect the full extent of his career, there is a relatively high proportion of chapters from those who have worked with John in the last fifteen or so years. One important reason for this is KYKNOS, the Centre for Research on the Narrative Literatures of the Ancient World, which was established in 2004 at John's initiative and thrived under his leadership. It has attracted academic staff, postgraduate students, and post-doctoral researchers from all over Europe and beyond. There are associate members all over the globe. There have been regular seminars, conference panels, and conferences, and we hope it will please John that several of the contributions, at various stages of development, were delivered and discussed at KYKNOS gatherings, including the 'Lies and Metafiction' conference, which was KYKNOS' first major event. It is an important part of John's legacy that KYKNOS continues to flourish, and we hope that this volume will be seen as part of that. More broadly, of course, this Festschrift showcases the vitality, range, and innovation that have characterised Classics in Wales throughout John's time in Swansea, and we hope that there will be many more occasions and publications which will include John

and reflect his erudition and good humour, even if the latter does not always entail good jokes ...

IAN REPATH AND FRITZ-GREGOR HERRMANN,  
THE JOINT EDITORS,  
HAVE  
enthusiastically  
GATHERED IN THIS NARRATIVE PRIZE  
FOR A GENT,  
THE HONORAND,  
JRM.