

CA Prize-winner 2021: Michael Scott



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The Classical Association Prize is awarded annually in recognition of work that has raised the profile of Classics in the public eye. This year's winner is the academic, author and broadcaster Professor Michael Scott, who is being recognised for both his longstanding commitment to championing Classics in popular media and for his tireless support of the Lytham St Annes branch of the Classical Association.

Michael is a Professor in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Warwick, where he has worked since 2012. His research and teaching focuses on aspects of ancient Greek and Roman society, and he is perhaps best known for his work on Delphi, which has been the focus of two of his monographs (*Delphi and Olympia: The Spatial Politics of Panhellenism in the Archaic and Classical Periods* and *Delphi: Centre of the Ancient World*), both of which were shortlisted for the Runciman Award, and a BBC4 documentary (*Delphi: Bellybutton of the Ancient World*). His work on Delphi also saw him awarded an Honorary Citizenship of Delphi in 2015 in recognition of the worldwide impact of his scholarship on the sanctuary.

Michael is also well known for his wide-ranging and prolific public engagement and outreach work, which has led to his recent appointment as Director of the Warwick Institute of Engagement. This work has included a number of critically-acclaimed popular history books, including *From Democrats to Kings: The Brutal Dawn of a New World from the Downfall of Athens to the Rise of Alexander the Great*, which was also produced as a BBC audiobook, and *Epic Worlds: An Epic History of East and West*. He has written and presented countless TV and Radio programmes, including: *Guilty Pleasures: Luxury in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (BBC4); *Jesus: Rise to Power* (National Geographic); *Ancient Discoveries* (History Channel); *The Greatest Show on Earth* (BBC4, in conjunction with the Open University); *Invisible Cities* (BBC1); and *Sicily: Wonder of the Mediterranean* (BBC2).

In addition to his media profile, Michael has been a passionate advocate for Widening Participation both within and outside of his own institution. As founder and director of the Warwick Classics

Network, set up in 2018 to promote and support the development of Classics teaching in state schools in Coventry, Warwickshire and beyond, Michael has been a major driving force in this thriving community of teachers and academics. Since its inception, the Warwick Classics Network has attracted over 2000 students and 150 teachers from schools across the UK to events that include an Ancient Worlds Day, Ancient Drama Festival, and Classical Civilisation Teachers Day. It has also produced a suite of online resources to support the teaching of ancient history and classical civilisation, which has been viewed over 60,000 times since March 2020.

In 2014 Michael took on the role of President of the then newly-formed Lytham St Annes branch of the Classical Association, which has gone on to become the largest of our branches. Throughout this time, Michael has been very much a hands-on president, with his contribution extending far beyond his annual lecture for the branch to include the support of its numerous outreach activities for young people, including the annual Classics Competition and the innovative Classics Ambassadors Scheme. Michael never rests on his laurels, but constantly continues to expand his broad portfolio of outreach work. In recent years this has seen him seek to communicate his passion for the ancient world to a wider audience through a weekly live Q&A session on Facebook, as well as taking on a new role as a trustee of the charity Classics for All.

Michael's outstanding contribution to the discipline is demonstrated by the high regard in which he is held, from receiving a University of Warwick Outstanding Community Contribution Award to being elected as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and – arguably the ultimate marker of esteem – being inducted into the Lego Classicists hall of fame in 2019. What stood out in the nominations we received for Michael was the sheer diversity of those who sought to see him recognised for his work to raise the profile of Classics in the UK: both young and old; followers on social media and self-confessed 'armchair history buffs'; teachers in schools and academics. Nominations paid tribute not just to *what* Michael does but *how* he does it, with a combination of accessibility and rigour, and to the work he does quietly behind the scenes, interacting with the public with a genuine warmth and enthusiasm. It is these qualities that make Michael a worthy recipient of the Classical Association Prize and we extend our thanks to him for his commitment to sharing his belief in the value and power of Classics.

Dr Sharon Marshall
Chair, CA Teaching Board