


<b>Section A</b>		
<b>Institution:</b> University of St Andrews		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA 29: Classics		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Transforming practice in schools and the performing arts through Greek and Roman drama		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2000 - 31 December 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Jon Hesk	Reader	01 September 1998 - present
Giuseppe Pezzini	Senior Lecturer	01 September 2016 - present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014 - 31 December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>Section B</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>St Andrews research on classical Greek and Roman drama has informed and transformed knowledge, attitudes and practice in the creative arts and educational sectors, specifically among two user groups (i) teachers and pupils in the secondary sector, in 13 schools in both the UK and in Italy, and (ii) UK practitioners in professional and community-based theatre, dance and music. Teacher training events and written resources have led to changes in teaching practice. Hesk's work has influenced the productions of two professional theatre companies. Finally, workshops and performances have helped local learners develop new understandings of ancient drama. Both user groups have updated and enriched their work through close engagement with Hesk and Pezzini's nuanced interpretations of the meaning and contemporary salience of Greek dramas, Roman comedies and their original contexts of performance and reception.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Misconceptions about classical drama have stemmed from a historic failure to read it within its own socio-political and cultural contexts. Between 2000 and 2020, Hesk and Pezzini have published world-leading research to correct these misconceptions, under the umbrella (since 2017) of the Centre for the Public Understanding of Greek and Roman Drama (CPUGRD). The research has had two major purposes: (1) to challenge oversimplified understandings of the nature and function of Greek drama, and (2) to broaden understanding of Roman comedy, particularly regarding its connection to culture and identity struggles of the Roman Republic, and the challenges of the evolving Roman society of the time. Overall, this body of research is distinctive for its ability to balance two complementary yet rarely combined approaches: advancing knowledge of how ancient drama was experienced and understood in its original context/s, with a sensitivity to the continuing meaningfulness and relevance of ancient drama, even in and up to our own time.</p>		
<p><b>Greek drama:</b> Hesk has employed contextualist approaches to show the significant place of drama in ancient Athenian society. Hesk's research identifies how Athenian drama addressed the challenges of citizenship in the world's first participatory democracy. His first monograph analysed Greek dramatic representations of deception (R1); his book-length study of Sophocles' <i>Ajax</i> interrogated the play's presentation of individual reputation and responsibility (R2); some of his more recent research demonstrates that Greek tragedy and Aristophanic comedy (R3) had a fundamental concern with 'pathologies' of leadership, debate and decision-making which were salient to the everyday experience of its audience. Hesk shows that it was <i>tragedy</i> which directly</p>		

engaged both ordinary and elite Athenians' role as decision-makers in the city's democratic-deliberative institutions.

**Roman comedy:** Pezzini's research also has a strong historical and contextual approach aimed at reconstructing the public dimension of Roman comedy, focusing in particular on two different but ultimately related strands. First, his philological works (including most prominently R4), which adopt a strong socio-linguistic approach, have shown how particular features of comic language reflect important social and political concerns of the time. These include, above all, the Roman attempts, encouraged by the political elite, to develop a literary language that could vie with the Greek, as well as the efforts to promote Latin to the top of the multi-lingual pyramid of the contemporary society. Second, his articles on key literary features of Roman comedy (realism and absence, R5 and R6) have revealed neglected connections between the dramatic fabric of the genre and the main anxieties of contemporary Roman society, especially including the problematic relationship between (Roman) masters and (Greek) slaves, miscommunication in a heavily-biased society, and the inter-generational struggles between a relatively uneducated, old-fashioned age group, and a new generation imbued by Greek culture.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

All six of these have been submitted to REF/RAE as outputs and/or appear in peer-reviewed publications by recognised academic presses.

R1. Hesk, J. P. 2000. *Deception and Democracy in Classical Athens*. Cambridge University Press. 336 pp. ISBN: 0521643228; DOI: [10.1017/CBO9780511483028](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511483028) (book)

R2. Hesk, J. P. 2003. *Sophocles: Ajax*. London. 208 pp. ISBN (E): 978-1-4725-4012-6; DOI: [10.5040/9781472540126](https://doi.org/10.5040/9781472540126) (book)

R3. Hesk, J. P. 2007. 'Combative Capping in Aristophanic Comedy', *Cambridge Classical Journal* 53, pp. 124-160. DOI: [10.1017/S1750270500000087](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1750270500000087) (journal article)

R4. Pezzini, G. 2015. *Terence and the Verb 'To Be' in Latin*. Oxford University Press. 376 pp. ISBN: 9780198736240; DOI: [10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198736240.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198736240.001.0001) (book)

R5. Pezzini, G. Due to have been published in 2020 – delayed due to Covid, 'Terence and the *speculum uitae*: Realism and (Roman) Comedy', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*. (journal article) – Submitted as REF2 to REF2021 - [http://drama.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/files/2019/05/Terence\\_and\\_the\\_speculum\\_uitae\\_ACCEPTED.pdf](http://drama.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/files/2019/05/Terence_and_the_speculum_uitae_ACCEPTED.pdf) [Covid -19 delayed output].

R6. Pezzini, G. 2019, 'Pontem interrumpere: Plautus' Casina and absent characters in Roman comedy', *Pan: Rivista di Filologia Latina*. 8, pp. 185-208. DOI: [10.17417/0817](https://doi.org/10.17417/0817) (journal article)

### 4. Details of the impact

The Greek and Roman research described in Section 2 has **informed the teaching of ancient drama in 13 English, Scottish and Italian schools**. Here, the beneficiaries have been by turns both pupils, who have found new ways of expression through Greek drama, and teachers, who have changed their pedagogical practice as a result of Hesk and Pezzini's interventions. The research has also **changed the creative practice of theatre professionals**. Three groups of theatre practitioners (Byre Youth and Community Arts, St Andrews, Scotland; NMTAutomatics, a theatre company in England; Fleur Darkin and Amy Hodge, another theatre group in England) have transformed their working practice through deep consultation with Hesk regarding his underpinning research on Greek drama. In the case of NMTA, the knowledge and consultation provided by Hesk has undergirded "*the transformation of NMT Automatics from a fledgling theatre company, into an impressive arts organisation*" (Director of NMTA) (S1).

#### 1. Informing the teaching of ancient drama in selected English, Scottish and Italian schools

Hesk and Pezzini have worked with secondary school teachers and students not only to influence pedagogy on their specific areas of research expertise, but also to incorporate lasting curriculum change and to use the results of university research more widely in their practice. These activities have been concentrated mainly on Scotland and Italy, because these are the networks most

readily available to Hesk and Pezzini. But they have also made efforts to inform teaching practice in England too, as the next section attests.

### Changing the pedagogy of Greek drama through learning resources

Downloadable briefing sheets for UK secondary school teachers have changed the pedagogy of Greek drama, with 295 downloads and counting (NB: these numbers **exclude** downloads from links embedded in emails, blogs, other websites, social media posts, and javascript-disabled browsers). For example, the Head of History and Classics at Longsands Academy in St Neots used these sheets (based on R3) with 60 people (students) over 6 years. This resulted in greater understanding for students: *"As far as teaching the plays to students, the articles were a godsend. I was able to articulate more clearly that Aristophanes was not just "funny", but serious as well. However, by using sheets like 'Satire and Seriousness', it was easy for the students to see that there are different views about the levels of seriousness, and that different scholars disagree on why this is."* (S2) The sheets also helped teachers gain a greater understanding of the subject: *"Hesk's article on 'Combative Capping' was especially helpful in understanding the role of Better and Worse in the play, and how their capping fitted in with the larger agons later in the play."* (S2) The Head of History and Classics at Longsands Academy found the sheets also 'invaluable' in 'updating and transforming' the subject knowledge of a colleague who had not taught Classics for 30 years. (S2)

In addition to these permanently available resources embedded into the Centre for the Public Understanding of Greek and Roman Drama website, 77 people (school students) at Royal High Edinburgh and Mackie Academy Aberdeen have benefited from a module closely based on R2 devised by Hesk in collaboration with Undergraduate Research Assistants. The Principal Teacher of Developing the Young Workforce at Mackie Academy highlights that Hesk's *"specific arguments...about the flawed nature of Ajax's heroic identity changed the students' understanding of the nature of ancient Greek heroism across their other texts. They moved from judging Greek tragic figures by their own, modern and personal concepts of heroism to a more nuanced understanding of these figures' complexity as products of their environment"* and that *"the direct relevance to the syllabus engendered pupil discussion and confidence, encouraging pupils to take greater ownership of their intellectual responses to ancient texts. It also improved the quality of the discussion"* (S3). She also remarks on her own changed practice and understanding: *"greater confidence in engaging classes with questioning and analysis of Classical Literature, developed skills in delivering discussion based pupil workshops and introducing and engaging pupils with academic level texts in preparation for Further Education experiences"*. (S3) This is echoed by the Teacher of RMPS and Classical Studies at Royal High Edinburgh: *"my collaboration with Jon Hesk has already changed the way I incorporate research into my pedagogy"* (S4, pg 6).

### Developing curricula and student engagement with ancient comedy

Hesk and Pezzini have influenced the pedagogy of 30 people (Latin and Greek teachers) across 7 schools in Sicily, which has in turn led to a change in their students' thinking on the topics of Greek and Roman Comedy. These students would not ordinarily have access to cutting edge research from UK academics. Classics teachers who participated in Hesk and Pezzini's workshop attested an immediate effect: one teacher felt they *'acquired a greater understanding of the realism of comic theatre'*, another that their *'perception of ancient comedy [had been] enriched'*, and that they *'will strive to encourage students to read comedies...more than they do now'*. (S5, p. 2, 3 & 6) The pedagogical change has also been longer lasting. Teachers at the Istituto Superiore Giovanni XXIII-Cosentino (one of the 7 schools) have immediately incorporated Hesk and Pezzini's research findings on Aristophanes and Terence into their teaching (of approximately 4,000 people (school pupils)); and have confirmed that other schools have 'implemented similar changes' in their curriculum (S5, p. 1). This has resulted in a pool of at least 5,000 people (Italian school students) thinking about Aristophanic Comedy and Roman comedy in new ways.

The primary vehicle for these shifts was a two-day event on classical comedy (*Vis Comica on the Stage*) at Marsala, Sicily, in March 2019. In addition to the 30 people (teachers) from 7 schools, 200 people (secondary school students) attended. The core of the event consisted in two keynote

lectures from Hesk and Pezzini incorporating material from R3 and R5, as well as sustained engagement over the full two days.

## 2. Changing the creative process in theatre communities

Hesk and Pezzini have used their research to shift the practice of 3 theatre organisations and 134 people: 4 young adults actors and 130 secondary school participants (10 teachers, 120 students). This has taken the form of **changes in new production processes for theatre groups, development of artistic and educational techniques, increased student facility with practical drama, and improvement in the understanding and perception of Greek and Roman drama.**

Hesk has collaborated closely with NMT Automatics Theatre Company, an emerging London based theatre company whose work has been called 'gripping, bold and exciting'. The artistic director and choreographer from this theatre group – specialising in staging ancient myths and epics via drama, song and dance – consulted with Hesk and others for two significant periods in April and August 2019. As a result, NMT Automatics have created a new production closely informed by Hesk's research (R2: 'Tempus Fugit: Tales from Troy', performed at the British Museum on February 22, 2020 (<https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/troy-myth-and-reality>)). NMTA's testimony says Hesk's research-based consultation "*completely re-shaped the way in which we approached our company's fourth show, Tempus Fugit, in that it enabled us to find complexities and richness in the themes and subject matter before translating our reading into physical theatre, rather than attempting to stage a play and then coming back to deal with authenticity*" (S1). This change in practice is ongoing: Hesk and NMTA collaborated (along with König: see Coulston and König REF2021 UoA29 ICS, "Shaping modern perceptions of military culture through Roman experiences") on the Army's virtual Edinburgh Fringe Festival event in August 2020. Consultations continue into 2021.

Similarly, Hesk has had a direct influence (using R3) on the research and development for Fleur Darkin and Amy Hodge's planned new production of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. Darkin (choreographer) and Hodge (director) are an established theatre team, whose recent National Theatre production (*Mr Gum and the Dancing Bear – The Musical!*) was nominated for an Olivier Award for Best Family Show 2020. Hesk's influence goes beyond their *Lysistrata* production currently in development, to affect Darkin and Hodge's very mode of artistic production. Sustained conversations between Hesk, Darkin and Hodge over R3 "*allowed us to radically rethink our writing process for the adaptation of Lysistrata and gives us the keys to look at co-authoring a new work inspired by the processes that created these works, as opposed to just working with translation in a word-for-word, faithful (or slavish) way.*" The experience has shifted the way these theatre professionals approach ancient material in their work: "*This research has empowered us to take on the texts with confidence as we seek to interpret them as relevant to our contemporary world*" ... "*This research has been crucial and important, and fundamentally changes our approach to adaptation for stage.*" (S6)

Hesk's work has also triggered an ongoing change in practice for an influential community theatre educator, the Theatre Arts Practitioner at Byre Youth and Community Arts. Working closely with this practitioner over the period of February to June 2017, Hesk used his research findings on Greek tragedy (R1 and R2) to achieve longlasting effects on the Byre practitioner's artistic and pedagogical 'toolbox': "*this project and the research insights which it was designed to deliver have offered me a completely new set of approaches and resources to add to my 'toolbox' as a professional theatre educator who works with young people in a variety of settings.*" (S7, p. 3) Hesk's work has generated in the Byre practitioner a 'profound realisation' about the centrality of theatre to polis life in ancient Athens, and has resulted in his incorporating new pedagogical techniques (e.g., the integration of 'more 'choral' movement and voicework into my teaching and mentoring'). This change in practice has affected 90 people (students) per year since 2017. (S7, p. 2)

Hesk has also changed the way a group of 4 people (young adults) engage with Greek drama. These young people were all in sixth form or Further Education courses from across Fife and Tayside, and all had very limited access to classical drama prior to this project. Hesk's work led to

a realisation among them that tragedy can still be a politically relevant art form today. This was achieved through St Andrews Classics' flagship collaboration with Byre Youth and Community Arts, an independent community group, in 2017, entitled 'Greek Drama in the Community'. Hesk drew on the insights of R1 and R2 to help the young adult amateur practitioners produce an original theatre production, *Hamartia*. Via their sustained discussions and formal talks involved in the production of *Hamartia*, the practitioners realised that Greek tragic forms and themes can become the building blocks for a serious drama about politics and ecology. As one student said of the experience: "*the theme of deception became so important in our play [...] It made us happier with our ideas when we made connections to what Jon had been talking about*". The Byre practitioner affirms: "*this workshop made a big impact on the students and changed the direction of their devised piece considerably*". (S7, p. 2 & 3)

The Byre theatre was also the venue for the rare performance of the Roman comedy Plautus' *Menaechmi* in 2019, for which Pezzini was the main academic consultant, drawing on R4, R5 and R6. This was the first ever public performance of this play in Scotland, and the first in Britain since 1979. The show attracted an exceptionally large audience of 378 people (general public) at two public performances (a typical theatre performance at the Byre attracts only 86 people on average). In addition, a matinee performance and workshop for 130 people (participants: 10 teachers, 120 students) from 3 local primary and secondary schools from Fife and Dundee, Scotland (S8). Pezzini drew on R5 for the workshop talk, and students came out with a new appreciation of the continuing relevance of Roman comedy: one student singled out how well the workshop presentation related Roman comedy to the present day, another how they learned that 'Roman theatre has had an effect on how we act in theatre today', another how 'people back then found similar things funny to what we do now'. (S8, pp. 15, 29, 51) 25% of students surveyed (9% of the total) said they learned 'a lot' (the highest descriptor available in the feedback forms) from Roman theatre in general thanks to the event. 50% of students surveyed said it helped them understand Roman theatre better; 34% said it made them realise how little things had changed from the past; and 14% said it helped them understand how comedy works. (S8) The event also shifted the perception of the school teachers themselves, one of whom was particularly impressed by how the presentations "*made the performance meaningful and relevant to our students*". (S8, p. 41)

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of ten references)

- S1. NMT Automatic Theatre Company
- S2. Longsands Academy, St Neots
- S3. Mackie Academy, Aberdeen
- S4. Royal High Edinburgh
- S5. Istituto Superiore 'Giovanni XXIII – Cosentino' (Letter plus questionnaire forms)
- S6. Fleur Darkin and Amy Hodge
- S7. Byre Youth and Community Arts
- S8. Questionnaire forms from students and teachers from St Leonards, Greyfriars and Dundee High