Dr Stephen Harrison  
Tutor in Ancient History  
Swansea University

[stephen.harrison@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.harrison@swansea.ac.uk)

**Seleukid Lecture Series II, Fall Term 2021 (December 15)**

**Antiochos at Daphne and Xerxes at Sardis:  
A Comparative Perspective on the Seleukid Vision of Empire**

This paper takes as its point of departure two processions, Xerxes’ exit from Sardeis *en route* to Greece in 480 and Antiochos IV’s parade at Daphne in the 160s. The latter has often been compared with the Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphos, but only rarely viewed through an Achaemenid lens. Here, I use these two episodes as a window into my ongoing project which seeks to explore the relationship between Achaemenid and Seleukid kingship. Thus, I draw in wider material regarding the representation of empire to demonstrate how these two events brought to life broader imperial conceptions. Two principal observations emerge from this discussion. First, I suggest that we need not think of the Seleukid or Achaemenid Empires as either ‘universal’ or ‘bounded’, as some recent scholarship has implied. Instead, I argue that these two conceptions of empire are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and that the acknowledgement of apparent borders can actually be used as part of a construction of a claim to universal rule. Secondly, I show that the Achaemenids and Seleukids took a contrasting approach to integrating the disparate territories that constituted their realms, meaning that their overall conceptualisation of empire was actually fundamentality different. This plays into ongoing scholarly consideration of continuity and change from the Achaemenid period to the Hellenistic, while raising important issues about notions of identity within the Seleukid Empire. The latter point builds on earlier discussions within the Seleukid Lecture Series by asking the question: what did it mean to be Seleukid?