

NOVA

THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY



**WHAT IS THIS? WHERE CAN YOU FIND OUT?
ARTEFACT FROM THE R D MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM**

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EDITORIAL

Ann Scott

This *Nova* celebrates the reopening of the R D Milns Antiquities Museum. After the tremendous upheaval of having to pack up all the artefacts at the time of the floods in January 2011, then mount an exhibition in the University's Art Museum so that it could still be used as a teaching resource and be available for school visits, the long-suffering staff and volunteers had to pack up yet again and move into their new space in the Michie Building. They managed to achieve this just in time to have some of the artefacts back on display for the beginning of the 2012 academic year. Many congratulations to the staff and students involved. Congratulations also to the University's Property and Facilities Division for providing this outstanding new exhibition space.

I am grateful to the Head of the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics, Professor Clive Moore, and Professor Nancy Wright, Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts, for allowing me to publish excerpts from the speeches they gave at the reopening. Professor Wright's talk on 'The role and future of the R D Milns Antiquities Museum', draws attention to the important role the Museum plays in promoting the study of classical civilization. The Museum is a resource that is available to all, and its staff welcome visits from school groups or groups from the wider community. Details on booking group visits are provided on page 3. I have sprinkled images of artefacts from the Museum through the first few pages of this *Nova*, without any description. Visit the Museum to find out more about them.

On 4 March, after Dr Amelia Brown's Adrian Heyworth-Smith Memorial lecture we held a launch for *The Statue of Zeus at Olympia: New Approaches* (for details of this book see the last issue of *Nova*). This was an opportunity to congratulate all concerned in producing the book. However, some people were surprised that this was a 'book-free' book launch, but such is the way of much modern publishing. Visit <http://www.c-s-p.org/Flyers/The-Statue-of-Zeus-at-Olympia--New-Approaches1-4438-2921-8.htm> for details on how to buy the book.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Margaret Mapp

The year has started on a positive note. Our Sunday Series lectures in February and March were very well attended. Emeritus Professor Bob Milns' talk on the Classics in Music was stimulating and an innovative approach to an interesting subject. The Adrian Heyworth-Smith Memorial Lecture given by Dr. Amelia Brown provided insights into the influence of religious beliefs on ancient seafarers in the Mediterranean, especially the role of Aphrodite, the goddess born on the foam near Cyprus.

The opening of the new Antiquities Museum went off very well thanks to the organisation of the staff, especially Janette McWilliam and James Donaldson. Members of Elsie Harwood's family attended the preview and more than 300 attended the opening. The prize exhibit, the recently purchased Egyptian artefact is still in transit from Denmark, but there is a large photograph at the museum entrance.

The Solomos Greek-Australian Cultural Association have extended an invitation to members of FoA to attend their meetings. The aim of the Society is to foster interest in the language, arts and culture of the Greek World - Ancient, Byzantine and Modern. Details of the meetings are at the end of this *Nova*.

Two exciting international exhibitions will be opening in 2012. The first, 'Mummy: Secrets of the Tomb', from the British Museum, will open in Brisbane on 19 April. The second, 'Alexander the Great - 2000 Years of Treasures, from the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, opens in Sydney on 24 November (see details at the end of this *Nova*).

I can also recommend to our members the Three Score Club talks. I attended the talk by Emeritus Professor Bob Milns on Greek influence on the modern world from art, architecture, literature and science. Dr Dorothy Watts will be giving a talk on the Celts: Myth and Reality (Women's College, 10-11am, Wednesday 20 June) in which she will look at modern perceptions of the ancient Celts and dispel some misconceptions which arose with the eighteenth-century 'Celtic Revival' and are still widely held.

REDUX: THE OFFICIAL REOPENING OF THE RD MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM

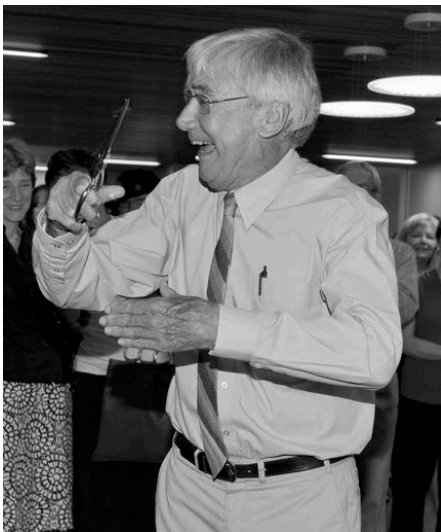
Daniel Press, Assistant Manager

After spending fourteen months in a temporary gallery in the UQ Art Museum, the RD Milns Antiquities Museum was officially reopened on Friday the 23rd of March in a brand new, state-of-the-art gallery in the Michie Building.

The occasion was celebrated with two events, named Redux in evocation of the return of the triumphant Roman general to his hearth and home.

This symbolic return was one of the most successful events that the Museum has ever hosted, attended by over 300 visitors over the two events. The preview for friends and donors recognized the support that groups such as the Friends of Antiquity provide to the Museum and its collections. At the Preview, Professor Milns, ever enthusiastic in his support of UQ Classics, reflected upon the journey of the Museum, from its beginnings in 1963 as a small assemblage of artefacts to the present-day collection of over 7000 objects.

A group of 250 eager visitors attended the Official Reopening. Speakers included Professor Clive Moore, Head of the School of HPRC; Professor Nancy Wright¹, Executive Dean of Arts; and Mr Michael Turner, Senior Curator of Sydney University's Nicholson Museum. Then the RD Milns Antiquities Museum was officially reopened when the ribbon was cut by Professor Milns himself.



The Antiquities Museum is on the Great Court level of the Michie Building. You now walk from the Great Court into a welcoming open space with several rooms leading off it, one of which is the Museum. This new arrangement has already received glowing praise from visitors.

The Museum will soon be exhibiting its newest acquisition, an Egyptian sandstone stele featuring the cartouche of Queen Nefertiti, wife of the so-called 'heretic pharaoh', Akhenaten. The purchase of this object was made possible by a generous bequest from the late Dr Elsie Harwood, an enthusiastic member of the Friends of Antiquity.



The R.D. Milns Antiquities Museum is open between 9am and 5pm from Monday to Friday. In addition, guided tours are offered for a small fee. **The Museum is closed at weekends.**

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¹ Abridged versions of the speeches by Professor Moore and Professor Wright appear on the next pages.

PROFESSOR CLIVE MOORE
Professor of Pacific and Australian History
Head, School of History, Philosophy,
Religion and Classics²

The collection of the RD Milns Antiquities Museum spans 3,500 years and is now the foremost collection of classical antiquities in Queensland. The museum has gone through several incarnations and in this presentation is quite stunning, both in the items displayed and the state-of-the-art lightening and cabinets.

What I will attempt to do in this short speech is outline the history of the Discipline of Classics and Ancient History within my School, and the history of the development of the museum.



There have only been four professors of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Queensland. The Department of Classics was a foundation Department under Professor J.L. Michie (1910-1946). Originally housed on the George Street campus, the Department moved to St Lucia in 1949 to Main (since 1967 Forgan Smith) Building under the second professor, Gordon Cooper (1947-1969). Professor Bob Milns was appointed in 1970 and remained until 2003. Tim Parkin was appointed as the next professor. His tenure was brief by comparison with his predecessors, as he moved to the University of Manchester. The fifth professor is about to be appointed.

The first antiquities were purchased in 1963. The UQ Senate provided £500 which enabled the purchase of an Attic red-figure amphora, a black-figure cup and a selection of Roman coins. Today's collection, now valued at several million dollars, has been largely assembled through financial donations from the Alumni Friends of UQ (formerly the Alumni

Association) and the Friends of Antiquity. The early modest collection, mainly Greek pottery, a little Roman glass and significant Greek and Roman coins, was housed in the offices of first Professor Cooper and then Professor Milns.

In 1970, the Department moved to the Hartley Teakle Building, where a public display case was installed, although its corridor position in that open-brick design building left it exposed to the elements. The Michie Building was completed in 1975 and when the Department moved to the seventh floor for the first time a special room was provided for the collection, where it remained until the museum was shifted to the refurbished third floor in the early 2000s. The Department was incorporated into the School in 2001.



Since the 1960s, many staff have played a role in assembling the collection, particularly Don Barrett, Max Kanowski, Bruce Gollan, Bob Milns, Dorothy Watts, Sonia Puttock and Janette McWilliam. Special mention needs to be made of past and present professional staff, Lyn Milns, Lesley Burnett and James Donaldson. It's a magnificent collection, integral in teaching, used for research, and also engagement with schools and the public. In 2003, the museum was named after Bob Milns to mark his great dedication to the Classics and Ancient History discipline and in assembling the collection of antiquities. The museum is a central jewel of the School and Faculty and will continue to grow and prosper.

² An abbreviated version of the speech given by Professor Moore at the re-opening of the museum.

THE ROLE AND FUTURE OF THE RD MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM

PROFESSOR NANCY WRIGHT
Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts

It is a delight to be with you today to celebrate the opening of the new RD Milns Antiquities Museum.

I've been asked to speak briefly about the role and future of the Antiquities Museum at UQ. The purpose of the museum is to promote and support the study of the Classical Civilizations of Greece, Rome, Egypt and Western Asia both within the University community and among the regional community, particularly through study tours for schools. The Antiquities Museum is regularly visited by school groups and community groups who enjoy tours and hand-on sessions with Classics students who act as trained guides.



On a day to day basis the Antiquities Museum provides what is now inelegantly called a 'platform' for teaching, learning and research. The collection of the Antiquities Museum is integrated into the majority of the courses in Classics taught at UQ so that students can interact with the objects it contains. It is a wonderful pedagogical resource with many students engaging as volunteers who work with the collection to learn about the conservation of the antiquities. This kind of experience represents the UQ Advantage; acting as a volunteer or intern working with the Antiquities Collection is an example of the enhanced learning experiences we offer students.

The collection has for many years been the hub of a vibrant student intern program whose participants have subsequently been employed by some of the foremost international collections: the Getty Museum in

California, the Tate Gallery in London and the Metropolitan Museum in New York to name just a few. Within Australia many interns who first gained experience working with the Antiquities Collection at UQ have been employed by the National Gallery in Canberra, the Nicholson Museum at the University of Sydney, and the National Museum of Sport at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The Antiquities Museum is a special treasure of the University of Queensland. And by calling it a treasure I am not simply referring to the wonderful rare and precious objects, like the Mummy Mask and some outstanding examples of Greek pottery and Roman sculpture that it houses. It serves a special role in enriching our understanding of the relationship of ancient and modern worlds. This special role informs plans for the Antiquities Collection – in the future – to become a Centre of Research Excellence with a special concentration on epigraphy, that is, Greek and Latin inscriptions. The new gallery gives greater presence and access to the Collection for our students, staff and community partners to enjoy in the future. It was established in the past by a wonderful circle of donors, including the Friends of Antiquity, who continue to support it. Their generosity is responsible for many of the most outstanding objects on display today.

In conclusion I want to recognise the special role of the RD Milns Antiquities Museum, most importantly its role as a point of convergence for the past, the present and the future; it binds together our past, present and future academic staff, students and community partners who share a passion for teaching, studying and preserving the civilizations of Greece, Rome, Egypt and Western Asia.



VALE

In January we noted the loss of one of our long-term members, Betty Crouchley. Sadly we lost another of members early this year: Brian Brandenburg. Both will be greatly missed by the Friends of Antiquity, and our condolences go out to both their families.

Betty Crouchley 1922 – 2012³

Betty Crouchley was a much respected member of Alumni Friends, Friends of Antiquity and the Three Score Club, and regularly attended the Friends of Antiquity Sunday Series and our annual Ancient History Day. Some of our members may recall her better as Betty McDougall from the Fryer Memorial Library, where she made a 'special home for students most interested in Australian literature' or later as Head Cataloguer at the University library. With a deep love of the outdoors and bushwalking Betty was a keen gardener. It was on Stradbroke Island that she met her future husband, Jim a physicist from Perth. An avid reader, author and co-author she had many interests, including music, art, and history. Betty continued to travel overseas and round Australia with her friends even rafting down a river in Poland on her eightieth birthday.

Brian John Brandenburg - 1946 to 2012

Brian was described as 'activist, amateur historian, soldier, student, teacher, singer, playwright and librarian'. He was conscripted and served in Vung Tau for two years during the Vietnam war, and when he returned he received a National Service Grant which enabled him to enrol at the University of Queensland in 1971. He loved acting, and performed at the Cement Box and Schonell theatres with fellow student actors such as Geoffrey Rush and Billie Brown. He was spurred into his political activism by the police charge on demonstrators picketing the South African rugby team during the Springbok tour, and was later arrested during a street march, defending the right to hold protest marches. After graduating he spent 27 years as a teacher and later a teacher-librarian, in Toogoolawah, Monto, and then Brisbane.

SUNDAY SERIES LECTURES**Zenobia, Queen of the Desert⁴****Emeritus Professor Trevor Bryce**

In the year 64 BC, the Roman commander Pompey the Great arrived in Antioch in northwestern Syria and established Syria as a Roman province. This the most ambitious extension yet of Roman imperial power in the Near East inevitably led to tensions and conflicts with the kingdom of Parthia. Based in Iran and founded by Arsaces I, the Parthian kingdom spanned five hundred years, from 247 BC to 224 AD. At its peak, it held sway over a broad expanse of territories extending eastwards from the Euphrates to the Indus river, and southwards from the Oxus river to the Indian Ocean. Pompey's declaration of Roman sovereignty over Syria meant that Rome and Parthia now controlled neighbouring territories, and disputes arose over where the boundaries between them lay. An early resolution of the matter came in 53 BC, at Carrhae in northwestern Mesopotamia, when a small contingent of Parthian archers annihilated the army of the Roman commander Crassus. This episode in particular (a few years later Mark Antony conducted another disastrously unsuccessful Roman campaign against the Parthians) consolidated Parthia's hold on its territories up to the Euphrates, and established a clear division between Roman and Parthian territory along the river, which was subsequently confirmed in a peace agreement between Rome and Parthia in the reign of Augustus. The arrangement held for more than a century, during which time relations between Rome and Parthia were generally peaceful, and sometimes cooperative. But Roman emperors of the 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD, notably Trajan (98-117), Septimius Severus (193-211), and his son Caracalla (211-217), resumed campaigns across the Euphrates, intent on expanding their territories through Babylonia to the Tigris river and beyond, and once again provoking a series of conflicts with Parthia.

³ With thanks to:- Janet Russell, Spencer Routh, Dr Lynette Liddle, and Peggy Burke.

⁴ A shortened version of the talk to Friends of Antiquity in November, 2011.



Monumental arch, Palmyra
(courtesy of Bernard Gagnon, WikiCommons)

It is at this point that we can introduce the city of Palmyra into our story. The history of this 'City of Palms', so called in our Classical sources, extends over almost 4,000 years, from at least the end of the 3rd millennium B.C. until the early Islamic era (7th-8th centuries AD). Called Tadmor in Near Eastern sources, Palmyra was an oasis-settlement in the Syrian desert, 235 kms east of Damascus. Its location midway between the Euphrates river and the coastlands of Syria made it a natural focus for the caravan trade which brought the goods and products of a remote eastern world, from as far afield as Indonesia, China, and India, to the lands of the Mediterranean. For much of its existence, it had provided a well-watered encampment for caravaneers, and may also have served as the centre of a large Arab tribal organization, whose leaders had access to a substantial fighting force when needed. During the Roman imperial period, and under Roman influence and patronage, Palmyra developed progressively, with its rich cultural mix, into one of the most distinctive centres of urban civilization in the ancient Near East. Important for its position at the hub of caravan routes, it replaced Petra in the early 2nd century AD as the centre of an international trading network, providing the conduit for an enormous range of goods that passed from east to west, including salt, dried foods, purple cloth, perfumes, silk, jade, muslin, spices, ebony, incense, ivory, precious stones and glass. Palmyra's centrality in the international trading network in the Near East, and the insatiable demand in the Roman world for the goods which passed through it on their journey from east to west, contributed

substantially to the wealth of the city, particularly its merchant class.

Already in the 1st century AD, some of the great building projects which became defining features of the city's urban development had been undertaken. This century saw the rise of the first great temples for which Palmyra became renowned, and is still renowned today – above all, the great Temple of Bel, one of the oldest gods in the Semitic pantheon, followed by the Temple of Baalshamin, the Lord of Heaven, and the Temple of the Babylonian god Nabu. Palmyra prospered under Roman rule, enjoying imperial patronage and being allowed considerable autonomy in the management of its affairs. In terms of its own defence resources, it could muster a formidable fighting force, renowned particularly for its cavalry and archers, which afforded protection not only to the city itself, but also to its trade routes and the merchant communities distributed along them. Given its strategic location, half way across Syria to the Euphrates, its central role in provisioning the western as well as the Near Eastern world with a range of exotic products in high demand, and its military capabilities, a loyal Palmyrene administration was a valuable asset to Rome.

This was amply demonstrated in the middle decades of the 3rd millennium BC. In 224 AD, the last Parthian king Artabanus IV was overthrown by one of his provincial governors, a man called Ardashir, satrap of Persis. Ardashir became the founder of a new Iranian dynasty, the Sasanian dynasty, which lasted almost as long as the Parthian dynasty – until the Islamic conquest in 651. It was to prove far more ambitious in its imperial aspirations than its Parthian predecessor, and a far greater danger to the Roman world in the east. Seeing himself in the mould of the great Persian kings of the Achaemenid period, notably Cyrus II and Darius I, Ardashir demanded the restitution of all former territory of the Achaemenid empire, up to the Propontis and Aegean Sea – in other words, the surrender by the Romans of all their Near Eastern provinces. No Sasanian king was ever to achieve so ambitious a goal, but Ardashir and a number of his successors, beginning with his son Shapur I, made serious inroads into Roman sovereign territory in the Near East, and inflicted some severe defeats on the Roman

forces that confronted them. This was particularly so in the period of Roman history commonly referred to as the 'crisis years'. It began in 235 with the accession to the imperial purple of a Thracian of peasant origin called Maximinus (a giant of a man, reputed to consume thirty to forty pounds of meat and up to eight gallons of wine per day) and ended with the accession of Diocletian in 284. It was a very volatile half-century, that saw – and saw off – at least eighteen 'legitimate' emperors, far more if one counts the numerous usurpers of the period. Nearly all met violent deaths after short reigns.

It was in this same period that the Sasanian empire rose to great heights. The second Sasanian king Shapur I became the driving force of the age. Following the death of his father Ardashir in 241 or 242, Shapur ordered the occupation of the Roman-controlled city of Hatra in northern Mesopotamia (c.80 km south of modern Mosul) and other outlying settlements of the Roman empire, and then advanced westwards across the Euphrates, sweeping through Syria and occupying Antioch, the Roman headquarters in the region. On three occasions, Roman emperors led armies against him – first Gordian III, then Philip the Arab, and then Valerian. All were resoundingly defeated. And all were humiliated by their conqueror – most of all Valerian who was taken alive and spent his remaining years as a Sasanian captive, in highly degrading circumstances according to some accounts. His son and co-regent Gallienus was too preoccupied with affairs in the west, particularly problems with Gauls and Goths, to make any attempt to rescue his father and retrieve Roman honour, or in fact to make any attempt to deal with the Sasanians.

There now appears on the scene a self-styled champion of the Roman cause – a citizen of Palmyra called Udaynath in Arabic (modern Arabic Uday). He is better known to us by his Roman name Septimius Odenathus. A member of one of Palmyra's leading families, Odenathus had by 257/258 come to the attention of the Roman administration and been appointed governor of the province of Syria Phoenice. No doubt increasingly concerned about the mounting risks posed by the Sasanians to his city's prosperity, and indeed to its very existence after the emperor Valerian's capture in 260, Odenathus decided it was

time to take matters into his own hands. He rapidly built his authority in Palmyra, becoming the city's ruler, and at the same time strengthened his city's militia, very likely through alliances with desert tribal groups. It was now time, he believed, to take on Shapur's army. It was a formidable undertaking. Indeed, a challenge to the might of the Sasanian army, fresh from its Syrian conquests, by a local Arab ruler seems quixotic in the extreme! As it happens, the challenge paid off. As Shapur's forces were returning homewards from their Syrian exploits, Odenathus' army pursued them along the Tigris river, all the way to the Sasanian capital at Ctesiphon on the Tigris, plundering their baggage train and even capturing the king's harem. Ctesiphon itself was placed under siege, and though it may have held firm against capture, the countryside around it was ravaged and destroyed by the attacking force. Odenathus then returned to Syria, where he took possession of the city of Emesa (modern Homs) from a pretender to the imperial throne. All this was accomplished, apparently, within the space of a couple of years (260-261). Valerian still remained in captivity, but Odenathus had won back for Rome all its conquered eastern territories, and eliminated at least for the foreseeable future the Sasanian menace to the eastern Roman world. Great honours were allegedly bestowed upon him, presumably by the emperor Gallienus, and others were bestowed upon Odenathus by himself, including, probably, the title 'King of Kings' – even though there were some sceptics who wondered whether the Palmyrene's achievements were as great as he had made them out to be.

In 267 or 268, Odenathus's career ended abruptly, with his death and that of his son and heir Hairan, in mysterious circumstances (leaving us with one of the most puzzling 'whodunnits' from the ancient world – but that is a story for another time). His sudden demise, whatever the manner of it, paved the way for the succession to royal power of his second wife Zenobia, who became for a brief few years one of the most powerful rulers of the ancient world, a serious rival to the emperor of Rome himself.

Zenobia actually became de facto ruler of the Palmyrene kingdom. De facto because,

initially at least, she acted merely as the regent for her son by Odenathus, Wahballath, 'Gift of (the goddess) Allat'. Roman sources call him Vaballathus. He was still a child when his father and step-brother Hairan were killed. Zenobia had already built up a formidable reputation throughout the region, in Palmyra and beyond, as a great hunter and warrior, accompanying Odenathus on military expeditions and demonstrating the same qualities of endurance and courage for which her husband was apparently renowned. Arab and Classical sources are united in presenting her as a powerful, charismatic figure, noted for her great beauty as well as her hunting and military skills. The sum total of our knowledge of her ancestry is very slight and very confused. The likelihood is that she was at least partly of Arab descent, and that one of her recent ancestors was a desert sheikh – that is what a tradition preserved by the Arab poet Al-Tabari tells us. But by the time of her birth c. 241, her family was probably already a settled part of Palmyra's urban community, and very likely of considerable distinction – a family of merchants who had cast off their desert origins and become an important element in the city's wealthy elite commercial class.

The first (almost) three years of Zenobia's reign passed peacefully enough. Her installation of her son Vaballathus on Palmyra's throne as the formal successor to his father Odenathus was apparently readily accepted by her fellow-citizens, as was her role as regent since Vaballathus could have been no more than about ten years of age at the time. She spent these early years consolidating her authority within the region over which her husband had held sway, which included much of Syria and part of northwestern Mesopotamia. This initial period she also devoted to developing Palmyra as a great cultural centre, with the palace as its focal point. She sought to create a court that was renowned for its culture and sophistication and learning, wherein the queen was surrounded by a glittering array of poets, rhetoricians, and philosophers. Palmyra would become the greatest intellectual and cultural centre of the eastern Roman world. Or so Zenobia hoped. In fact, it never came close to Alexandria or Antioch in this respect, or even Tyre or Edessa. Nevertheless, as part of her attempts to realise her aspiration she hired one of the eminent Greek philosophers of the

age – Cassius Longinus, a native Syrian, probably born in Emesa, who taught philosophy in Athens and eventually became the head of the Academy established by Plato. Longinus was to become one of Zenobia's closest confidants and advisers, a role for which he was later to pay a heavy price.

It was probably in the spring of 270 that Zenobia embarked on a grand programme of expansion through the regions west of the Euphrates, and eventually far beyond. Her initial venture took her armies into the Roman province of Arabia, and beyond it into the broader region that the Romans called Arabia Felix. Up to this point, she might well have claimed that she was acting in Rome's interests, restoring on Rome's behalf control over its eastern territories while the emperor was heavily engaged in attempting to sort out problems in the west. Indeed, Zenobia may have taken care up to this point to avoid doing or saying anything likely to suggest that she had ambitions beyond what Odenathus's successor might reasonably entertain, above all ambitions which might be construed as threatening the authority of the Roman emperor. But that was to change as she now set about her next objective – the land of the Nile.

At this time, Egypt was under direct Roman rule, being governed by a man called Tenagino Probus. To invade might quite reasonably be construed as a declaration of open hostility to Rome. The Sinai desert was Zenobia's Rubicon – and she did not hesitate to cross it. Some time in the second half of the year 270, Zenobia gave orders to her general Zabdas to invade Egypt with a force of 70,000 men, significantly outnumbering the Roman and Egyptian forces that would oppose them. But it took several battles or a series of battles, and perhaps two invasions by Zenobia's forces before the armies that confronted them were defeated. Zenobia entered the land of the Nile in triumph, and proclaimed herself Queen of Egypt, in the image of the notorious Cleopatra VII. She can hardly have doubted that her occupation of Egypt would arouse the wrath of Rome. Even her identification with Cleopatra was highly provocative, for at the end of her life Cleopatra, along with her paramour Mark Antony, had become Rome's mortal enemy. Besides, the seizure of Egypt from its Rome-appointed governor was a direct threat to what was vital to Rome – the grain supplies,

for Egypt had become an essential supplier of basic food to the Roman world.

Yet it seems that Zenobia was at pains to present herself not as an enemy of Rome but as a partner with its emperor; far from rebelling against or attempting to break away from Roman rule, she was, on the contrary, seeking the status of co-emperor (theoretically on behalf of her young son), and ruler of the eastern half of the empire. But that cut no ice with the formidable new emperor of the Roman world, a hard-headed soldier of humble origins from the Danube region, Lucius Domitius Aurelianus, who became emperor on the death (by plague) of his predecessor Claudius Gothicus in 270. But Aurelian had pressing matters to deal with in the west, including a Germanic invasion of Italy and a secessionist movement in Gaul, before he could turn his attention to a resolution of the Zenobia affair.

In the meantime, probably in the middle months of 271, Zenobia made ready to invade Asia Minor. Her motives for this invasion are quite uncertain. Perhaps, she believed, a successful campaign in the Anatolian peninsula might strengthen her case for a partnership-deal with Rome. But she had taken a step too far. Her Asia Minor expeditionary force managed to get only as far as Ancyra (modern Ankara), leaving the western half of the peninsula totally untouched, before it was forced to turn back and head for Syria. Zenobia had far overstretched her resources, and may well have decided to retreat after she had received alarming news from the west: Aurelian had rejected any prospect of a diplomatic settlement, and was now marching east at the head of a large army, determined to settle his score with Zenobia. Setting out in late 271, Aurelian crossed the Bosphorus into Asia Minor by April of the following year, and then proceeded rapidly across the Anatolian plateau via Ancyra, which he recaptured. All the other cities on his route promptly threw their gates open to him, with the exception of the city of Tyana, whose resistance he quickly overcame when a traitor showed his forces a secret way into the city through its walls.

By one means or another, Rome regained control of Egypt during Aurelian's campaign. It probably did so without opposition, the likelihood being that Zenobia had withdrawn all her forces from the country for the defence of her territories in Syria. To no

avail. In two engagements with Aurelian's army, one at a place called Immae near Antioch, and a second one near the city of Emesa, Zenobia's forces were heavily defeated, and the queen was forced to flee with the remnants of her troops back to Palmyra. Aurelian promptly followed, and though his troops suffered severely from the harsh desert conditions and were attacked repeatedly by local tribesmen, he reached the city with his army largely intact, and placed it under siege. For a considerable time Palmyra held out against the besiegers. But the investment took its toll on its inhabitants, who began to suffer extreme privations as the besieging army blockaded all supplies to them. Realising that Palmyra's fall was inevitable, Zenobia decided on one last ploy: she would secretly leave the city and travel with a few companions to the Euphrates; after she had crossed it, she would be in Sasanian territory, where she would throw herself on the mercy of the Sasanian king. That would be better than falling into Aurelian's hands, she believed, and her departure would allow her city to surrender to the Romans and thus bring their sufferings to an end. The ploy almost came off. Zenobia left Palmyra without being seen by the enemy. But Aurelian had got word of her escape, and sent a detachment of cavalry in pursuit. They caught up with her just as she was about to cross the river, and took her directly to the emperor. Palmyra, now leaderless, surrendered to Aurelian, its inhabitants bringing gifts and sacrifices to the emperor in the hope of mercy. Aurelian was disposed to be magnanimous, and spared the population, taking prisoner only a select group of Zenobia's supporters, and leaving the city intact.

He now returned to Emesa, where Zenobia and her supporters were put on trial. At this point, Zenobia's nerve failed her. When confronted by her accusers, she declared that she herself was innocent of the charges laid against her, putting all the blame for her conduct on her advisers. The philosopher Longinus was particularly singled out in the accusations she made. It was he above all who had led her astray by the counselling he had given her and by the ambitions he had cultivated in her. He was found guilty of all the charges against him and was immediately sentenced to death by the Emperor. The Greek writer Zosimus tells us that 'He bore the sentence with such fortitude

that he was a comfort to those who were indignant at his suffering.'

Aurelian then began his return home to Europe, taking with him Zenobia and her son Vaballathus and other supporters who had been spared execution. But before he reached Rome, when he was attending to some problems in the Danube region, he received news that a rebellion had broken out in Palmyra, resulting in the massacre of the entire 600-strong garrison that he had left in the city. Infuriated by the Palmyrenes' abuse of his earlier act of clemency, the emperor promptly turned back, marched directly to Palmyra, and razed the city to the ground.

Returning now to Rome, he organized a spectacular triumph, of which Zenobia bound in golden chains, was one of the two chief showpieces. The other was the Gallic Emperor Tetricus, leader of the Gallic secessionist movement that Aurelian had now firmly crushed. The Palmyrene queen's subsequent fate is unknown. Suicide by self-starvation, death by disease, execution by beheading figure among the ends attributed to her by various ancient sources. But other sources tells us that Aurelian spared her life after the triumph. The most appealing story informs us that he presented her with a fine house in Tivoli, near Hadrian's villa, where she lived out her days in comfort and security, with her children and in the manner of a Roman matron.

In the early 19th century of this era, a titled Englishwoman, Lady Hester Stanhope, travelled to the East, where she adopted a number of local customs. On 20 March, 1813, she set out from the city of Damascus and travelled to Palmyra, dressed in Oriental garb. Thousands of the local peoples escorted her on her progress. For their great queen Zenobia had come back to them. It was a role Lady Hester readily accepted. And as the procession honouring her halted beneath the great monumental arch of Palmyra, she declared: 'I have been crowned Queen of the Desert'.

Music and the Classics⁵

Emeritus Professor Bob Milns

Music and the Ancient Greeks: music is a Greek word and music was a vital part of Greek education and social life. Polybius narrates the dreadful fate of Kynaitha, a Greek city that neglected music in their education and life. [Music 1]

Our Inheritance from the Greeks: to the Greeks we owe much in the area of musical theory and terminology (e.g. harmony, tonic, chord, symphony, organ, guitar)



Apollo wearing a laurel or myrtle wreath, a white peplos and a red himation and sandals, seated on a lion-pawed diphros; he holds a kithara in his left hand and pours a libation with his right hand. Facing him, a black bird identified as a pigeon, a jackdaw, a crow (which may allude to his love affair with Coronis) or a raven (a mantic bird). Tondo of an Attic white-ground kylix attributed to the Pistoxenos Painter (or the Berlin Painter, or Onesimos). Diam. 18 cm (7 in.). From a tomb (probably that of a priest) in Delphi. Archaeological Museum of Delphi, Inv. 8140, room XII.

Classical Themes in European Music up to Modern Times: we can only scratch the surface on this topic. Starting with the gods, goddesses and semi-divine figures from before the Trojan War, some examples are:

Jupiter – Mozart's Symphony 41 ('Jupiter') [Music 2];

⁵ A shortened version of the February 2012 Sunday Series lecture. The music played to illustrate the talk are listed at the end in the order in which they were played. The relevant number (e.g. Music 1) is inserted in the text.

Uranus – G. Holst, from the Planets Suite [Music 3];

Apollo – I. Stravinsky's ballet 'Apollon Musagète', music for Diaghilev's ballet of the same name [Music 4];

Orpheus and Eurydice - C.W. Gluck's opera 'Orfeo ed Euridice' – the aria 'Che farò senza Euridice' ('What shall I do without Eurydice') [Music 5];

Ariadne and Theseus on Naxos – Part of R Strauss's music for a production of Molière's comedy *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Strauss's opera 'Ariadne auf Naxos' was originally intended to be part of the production of the play but was later performed as a separate opera and the original incidental music published as a suite [Music 6].

The **Trojan Cycle**: of the many figures about whom music has been composed, the most famous (infamous?) must be Helen herself. Offenbach's comic opera *La Belle Hélène* contains the witty aria in which Paris tells the Greek seer Calchas about the famous Judgement of Paris [Music 7] on Mt Ida, the start of all Troy's and Greece's woes.

The **Return of the Greek Heroes to their homes after the war**: under this theme we may include Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, where the Cyclops Polyphemus, at this stage a young lad, sings his love-song to the nymph, Galatea, who lives in the sea and already has a lover, Acis. His famous aria is 'O Ruddier than the Cherry', sung by Owen Brannigan [Music 8]. It was Polyphemus who devoured Odysseus's comrades in his cave in the 'Odyssey' of Homer.

The **Theban Cycle** (i.e. the story of Oedipus): apart from such famous operas as R. Strauss's 'Elektra', Stravinsky wrote the music for an oratorio/opera 'Oedipus Rex', with words by J. Cocteau, whose text was turned into Latin. Here is the final Chorus, lamenting the fate of the self-blinded Oedipus [Music 9].

Historical Themes in Music and Opera: the first ever opera on an historical theme was C. Monteverdi's 'Coronation of Poppaea' in 1642 and since then innumerable historically based works have been composed, with more than twenty operas on the theme of Antony and Cleopatra alone. Mozart wrote at least four of his operas on

historical themes (*La Clemenza di Tito*; *Mitridate, re di Ponto*; *Lucio Silla*; and *The Dream of Scipio*).

Some Composers of the late 19th and 20th century: one of the most eccentric composers of this era is Eric Satie, amongst whose most famous compositions are the three *Gymnopédies*, and *Trois Gnossiennes*; the former is based on the Gymnopedia, the festival of naked youths at Sparta, while the *Gnossiennes* probably refer to (idealised) girls from Knossos in Crete dancing a solemn dance in honour of a god [Music 10].



'Satie playing the harmonium'. Charcoal drawing by Santiago Rusiñol, 1891 (Wiki-Commons)

The 1909 Cambridge production of Aristophanes' *Wasps* had its incidental music composed by R. Vaughan Williams, who issued it as a suite in 1912 [Music 11].

Benjamin Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and String Orchestra* has a splendid setting of Ben Jonson's *Hymn to Diana* [Music 12], sung originally by Peter Pears with Denis Brain playing French horn.

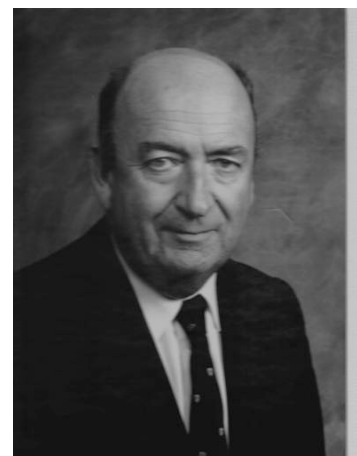
Australian Composers: Peggy Glanville-Hicks's unperformed opera *Sappho*, written with Maria Callas in mind, is due to be produced later in 2012. Richard Mills' 2007 opera *The Love of the Nightingale*, based on the story of Procne, Philomela and Tereus, has been performed with great success in Brisbane. Lastly – and not least! – a presentation called *The Gods of Olympus* was performed at 2010's Greek festival Paniyiri, with words by Bob Milns, music by a range of composers, and with Meryl Papas directing the performance and seeing to the costuming of the deities.

Music

1. 'Hymn to Nemesis', from 'Musique de la Grèce antique'.
2. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Symphony no. 41 in C, 'Jupiter' (1788), first movement.
3. Gustav Holst, 'Uranus, the Magician', from The Planets Suite (1917).
4. Igor Stravinsky, 'The Birth of Apollo' from 'Apollon Musagète' (1928).
5. Christoph Willibald von Gluck, 'Che Farò senza Euridice?' from 'Orfeo ed Euridice' (sung in English as 'What is life to me without thee?' (1762).
6. Richard Strauss, 'Der Fechtmeister' (The Fencing Master) from the suite 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme' (1920).
7. Jacques Offenbach, 'Le Jugement de Paris' from 'La Belle Helène' (1864).
8. George Frideric Handel, 'Oh Ruddier than the Cherry' from 'Acis and Galatea'; lyrics by John Gay (1718).
9. Igor Stravinsky, final chorus from 'Oedipus Rex'; lyrics by Jean Cocteau (1928).
10. Erik Satie, Gnosienne I (1890).
11. Ralph Vaughan Williams, incidental music for Aristophanes' 'Wasps' (1909 and 1912).
12. Benjamin Britten, 'Hymn to Diana' from 'Serenade for Tenor, Horn and String Orchestra'; words by Ben Jonson (1958)



2012 ADRIAN HEYWORTH-SMITH MEMORIAL LECTURE



Adjunct Professor Adrian Heyworth-Smith

Seafaring Saviour Goddess of the Ancient Mediterranean

Dr Amelia R. Brown

Saviour gods of the Ancient Mediterranean were higher powers who oversaw safe travel by water. Though I never had the chance to meet Adrian Heyworth-Smith in person, I've heard stories of the good times he had sailing with many of you aboard his yacht Achates. Thus I hope this maritime theme forms a fitting tribute to his memory.

Around the shores of the Mediterranean sea in Antiquity, as once along the east coast of Australia, travel by water was the primary mode of transport. Ships small and large took people and goods between natural and artificial ports for purposes of travel, trade, fishing, warfare and colonization. Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey are all peninsulas ringed by cities and harbors, and almost every horizon in the northern Mediterranean is dotted with islands, promising passage to the next shore, or shelter in a storm. The Levant is a virtual peninsula, between water and sandy desert, as is Egypt, between the Nile and the Red Sea.

My own experience of sailing in North America, the Mediterranean and now Australia make me wonder what role religion played in ancient seafaring, and how seafaring in turn shaped gods, goddesses, prayers, cults and gifts carried aboard ship from port to port, offering help for sailor, fisherman or merchant alike.

Ancient authors like Hesiod, Herodotus and Pausanias were interested in Greek maritime religion, its festivals, and its connections with other Mediterranean sailing traditions like those of the Phoenicians and Egyptians. Beyond the ancient texts, however, harborside sanctuaries and shipwrecks also help reconstruct the religion of ancient Greek seafaring, and some unexpected connections and cults, like the seafaring saviour goddess Aphrodite.



Uluburun Goddess

The Uluburun shipwreck sank off the southern Anatolian coast about 1300 BC. She was a merchant ship, from the Levant or Cyprus, with a cargo of copper and glass ingots, incense, olive oil and Cypriot pottery. A single small statuette was found on board: a bronze female figure, with gold-sheathed head and limbs, and daedalic hair, perhaps the erstwhile protector of vessel and crew. She would probably have been wrapped in a cloak of real cloth once, but her name and rituals were lost with her crew.

Greek literature relies on the alphabet, a Levantine technology brought west by sea in the 8th century BC, and used first by the Greek cities on Euboea, with the most active trading and colonizing fleets. In Homer, Hesiod and Archaic poets, Poseidon or Hera cause storms, as venerable deities of Bronze-Age lineage and power. Yet goddesses or sea nymphs most often come to the rescue, like Ino (Leukothea), Thetis or another Nereid, Ourania, heavenly Aphrodite, or Tyche, Fortune, the female counterpart to Hermes, god of luck and commerce, who helped along with dolphins, Apollo and the Dioscuri.

Hesiod names Hecate and Poseidon as those who give fishermen a good catch, or take it away, and grant the greatest extremes of good and bad fortune in other areas of endeavor (Theogony 442-5). Athena saves her wily Odysseus and Herakles at sea; Hera helps Jason; and Aphrodite as Roman Venus saves her son Aeneas from angry Juno, the Roman Hera.

Euripides said Artemis and Aphrodite ruled the seas (Hippolytus 148, 447), and Thucydides' Sicilian fleet as well as most colonial expeditions sacrificed to Apollo at both embarkation and disembarkation. Festival processions like the Panathenaia and Dionysia featured land-borne ships as part of the spectacle of movement through the city.

Besides attending to gods or goddesses in their ports of call, sailors brought them with them on their ships, and practiced cult there. The ships themselves also had eyes, figureheads and names, so were thoroughly personified, usually as female. The sternpost was carved into the curling neck, of a goose, swan or mare, while the bow was adorned with an image of the ship's goddess.

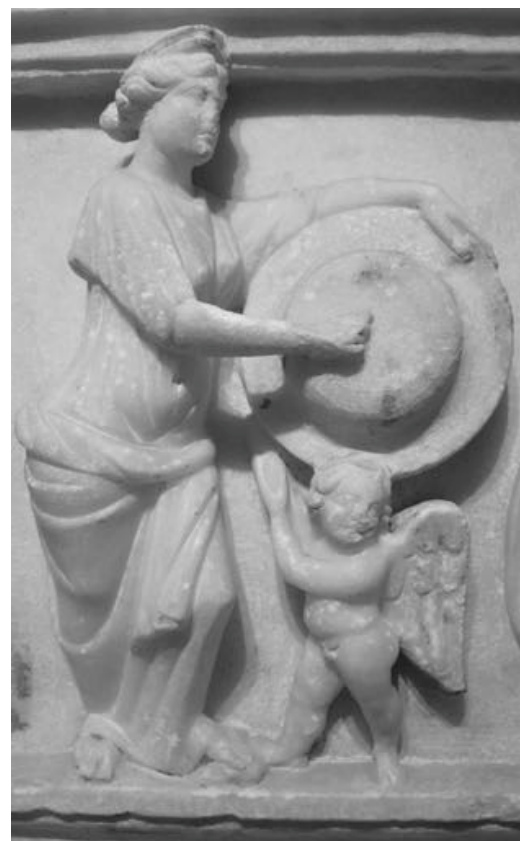
Aphrodite is the original travelling goddess: moving over the sea from her very birth, everywhere there is desire, love and relationships between people, but rarely established in any structure larger than a naiskos and open-air temenos, or a tripartite semitic-style shrine as at old Paphos. She has a special relationship with the sea, as she came straight out from the sea foam, or aphros, stirred up by the severed genitals of Ouranos at the very beginning of creation, before the Olympic gods even existed; hence her epithet Ourania (though in some myths she was born from Zeus and his female counterpart Dione, mother of Pelops, Poseidon's favorite). Aphrodite first came ashore at Paphos on Cyprus, after passing the island of Cythera off the southern Peloponnesus, and thus was known by epithets cognate with the names of both islands: Cypria and Cytherea.

While most Greeks seem to have accepted her Cypriot origin as primary, Herodotus (1.105) has the cults of Aphrodite on both Cyprus and Cythera brought there by the Phoenicians, apparently as the city goddess of Tyre, Astarte. Pausanias connects her with Assyria, Ascalon near Gaza, and with port cities all across Greece.

Aphrodite's husband Hephestus is god of arts and crafts, and likely also an eastern import into Greek myth, where he became the fatherless child of Hera. Aphrodite's lover is Ares, God of War, making a martial city-protecting couple at Corinth, for example, or imperial Venus and Mars at Rome. This association seems to be rooted in the conjunction of the planets Mars and Venus, two brightest stars of the 'wanderers', ancient planets.

Among sailors, Aphrodite's epithets include Limenia, of harbors; Euploia, of good sailing; Pontia and Pelagia, of the sea. She was specially honored at the opening of the good sailing season with the Euploia festival in March, near the vernal equinox, and in her own month of April. Her springtime festival eventually became associated with Isis Pelagia as savior and fertility goddess, in Egypt as well as Greece. The year was divided in two, the summer for sailing and the winter for tilling the land; this duality is present in Hesiod's Works and Days (663), and in statues of Aphrodite-Tyche-Isis, with rudder and cornucopia, wealth by sea and land.

The Aphrodite of Homer and Hesiod, goddess of beauty and desire, is also saviour at sea, both morning and evening star, and a traveler. She is both essentially Greek and related to Near Eastern goddesses of the heavens and war. The close connections between her cult places and her festivals were maintained through her carriage by sea between the Greek world, the east and the west.



Aphrodite of Corinth, on an osteotheke from Lycia (now National Museum, Athens)

Besides her birthplace shrines on Cyprus and Kythera, Aphrodite's main sanctuaries in the Aegean were at Corinth and Cnidos, major port cities of the western and eastern Aegean respectively. At Corinth, she had her chief civic sanctuary on the peak of Acrocorinth, and as the main city goddess at Corinth she bore the epithet Ourania, Queen of Heaven, as at Paphos, and as fitting for the counterpart of Helios, who shared ownership of the rocky height of Acrocorinth with her after he won it from Poseidon.

On the Agora of Roman Corinth, she was worshipped as Aphrodite Tyche or Fortuna alongside the civic god Apollo and the market god Hermes. She also had an extramural shrine just outside the city, as

'Black' Aphrodite, counterpart of the heavenly goddess on the heights, connected with Hecate and the care of the dead who were buried in that area.

She also had a presence at Corinth's two harbors, alongside Poseidon. At the western harbor of Lechaion, there were sanctuaries of both Aphrodite and Poseidon, and a bronze statue of the latter god in the artificial harbor. At the eastern harbor of Cenchreae, which served the Aegean, Aphrodite's shrine was on one headland opposite that of Isis Pelagia, while the bronze statue of Poseidon was on the mole. The major festival for the opening of the sailing season in the Roman period involved games and a procession down to the harbor from the city of Corinth, memorably described in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.

The most distinctive attribute of statues of Aphrodite is, of course, her nudity, like that of the Uluburun goddess. Though the Corinthian Armed Aphrodite (best known in the copy of the Venus di Milo) was topless, the first completely nude Aphrodite was only sculpted in the middle of the 4th century BC, possibly as a challenge to Corinth in a bid to have the most daring and hence most notorious and powerful civic image of the goddess. It was carved for the city of Cnidus by Praxiteles, and stood in a small round temple overlooking that city's double harbors. In a famous epigram Aphrodite asked- where did Praxiteles see me naked?



Aphrodite-Tyche-Isis
(National Museum, Athens)

There was a potent combination for poets in the nostalgia of desire for a beloved, male or female, for home, and for safe travel on the sea. The highs and lows of love were frequently compared with fair and foul weather, especially by sea, where the potential profits and danger were always greatest. Thus in the *Palatine Anthology* (AP 5.11) we find a prayer which might be used today as well:

Εἰ τοὺς ἐν πελάγει σωζεις, Κύπρι, κάμῃ τὸν
ἐν γᾶ
ναυαγόν, φιλή, σῶσον ἀπολλύμενον.

If you save those at sea, Cypris, then save me too on the land, as shipwrecked, dear goddess, I am dying (of love).

'THE SWERVE: HOW THE WORLD BECAME MODERN

Emeritus Professor Bob Milns

In 55 BC (or perhaps 51 BC), the greatest Roman poet before Virgil died at the age of 40 or 44, having been driven mad, so the story goes, by a love potion. His name was Titus Lucretius Carus and his great poem has come down to us under the title 'On the Nature of Things' (*De Rerum Natura*). This didactic poem in six books is a verse exposition of the philosophy of the 4th/3rd centuries BC Greek philosopher Epicurus, about whose ideas and teachings you can find a summary in the previous volume of *Nova*. The physics of Epicurus, passionately expounded by Lucretius, stated that the universe consists of infinite space and an infinite number of tiny particles called atoms. All matter is formed by random collision of atoms as they moved downwards at an even speed through the vacuum of space. To explain how, in such circumstances, the atoms could collide, Epicurus stated that every so often, quite randomly, an atom would swerve slightly in its downwards motion and collide against another atom, forming what we would now call a molecule, which in turn could collide with other atoms and so produce basic matter. The same random collisions could also destroy matter back to its constituent atoms. This random swerve is called by Lucretius 'clinamen'. The universe has no beginning or creation and will have no end. For human beings, there is an (atomic) animating principle, or soul, but this dies with the rest of the body, so that

there is no life after death, no heaven, no hell. As can be imagined, a philosophy that denied divine creation of the world and the concept of an immortal soul and the possibility of eternal bliss (or eternal damnation) did not go down well with the teaching of Christianity; and it should be no surprise that Lucretius's Latin poem almost disappeared for centuries during the Middle Ages, surviving in only a handful of manuscripts. It is likely that Dante had not read Lucretius's poem, since in Canto X of 'Inferno' (the first part of the Divine Comedy), Epicurus is found in Circle VI, among the heretics in their burning tombs, but there is no mention of Lucretius.

It is the story of the rediscovery of Lucretius's poem and its impact on the world of the humanist Renaissance (a term that signifies the rebirth of classical learning and literature) that forms the subject of Stephen Greenblatt's new book 'The Swerve: How the World Became Modern' (Norton, 2011). The 'Swerve' in the title underscores, in its use of the Epicurean-Lucretian term, the fact that the rediscovery of Lucretius was almost purely the result of random chance: 'In 1417, however, a swerve worthy of Epicurus himself brought On the Nature of Things back, not just to life, but also into the cultural swim' (Anthony Grafton). The prime mover in his revival was the great humanist and scholar Poggio Bracciolini, for some time secretary to Pope John XXIII. In 1417, probably in the monastery of Fulda in south Germany, Poggio found the text of Lucretius. 'Poggio read the shocking book and changed the world' (Grafton). The manuscript that Poggio obtained was itself copied over and over so that more than fifty of these copies have survived. Lucretius and the philosophy of Epicurus once again began to be read and to influence great thinkers of the Renaissance and early modern times, as Greenblatt's book shows, including such names as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Thomas More and Montaigne. Though Grafton, in his review, concludes that 'We never quite learn [sc. from Greenblatt's book] ... how the world became modern', it sounds to be a fascinating and eminently readable book, which might impel some, at least, of its readers into an even more fascinating, illuminating and stirring work of literature – the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius himself, available in A.E. Stallings' Penguin translation of the work (2007).]

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Emeritus Professor Bob Milns

Here are two words that came up recently chez Milns in the course of conversation. The first is the expression 'red letter day', which goes back to the fact that it used to be the practice in ecclesiastical calendars to mark saints' days and feast-days with red letters to make them stand out. But this practice itself goes back, I suspect, to the practice of the Romans of depicting in red the individual section headings of a publicly displayed law. This was known as *rubrica*, from the adjective 'ruber', meaning 'red'; and this is the origin of our word 'rubric', which we tend to use these days to mean, for example, the set of instructions given to candidates at the head of an examination paper ('Read the rubric carefully').

The second word, whose derivation arose when we were doing the crossword and using a pencil, is 'pencil'. This word is from the Latin 'penicillum', which means basically a little tail and then a painter's brush. The noun in Latin that means a 'tail' is none other than that from which the male sexual organ gets its name, viz. 'penis', which in Latin means both 'tail' and 'penis'. That wonder-drug penicillin is from the same word in the sense of 'painter's brush' and is so named because the sporangia fungus from which the antibiotic is obtained looks like the tufts of hair on a painter's brush. So here's a 'one upmanship' question to ask your GP at your next visit: what is the connection between Sir Alexander Fleming's great discovery and the male sex organ?

Finally, I saw some lupins when out walking recently and the thought occurred to me that the name sounded as though it was connected with the Latin 'lupus', a wolf. When I looked it up in my English dictionary, my conjecture was confirmed. The flower is called 'lupin' from the Latin 'lupinus', wolfish, because it was believed that the plant 'ravenously exhausted the soil', i.e. like a wolf gulping down its food. Botany, it must be said, is a rich source for aspiring Greek and Latin etymologists.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL JOURNAL REVIEWS

Dr John Ratcliffe

American Journal of Archaeology

Last month I described the respectful burial of ally soldiers who had fallen at the critical battle of Himera in Sicily. This month, by contrast, I am reviewing an article on how approximately 20 dead or dying Roman soldiers were disrespectfully piled up by their enemy as a human plug to block an underground tunnel.

The fortress of Dura-Europos on the Euphrates marked and protected the Eastern edge of the Roman Empire in the third century CE. The troops of the emerging Sassanid Persian empire laid siege and then overwhelmed the fortress in about 256 C.E.

Excavations by a self taught French archaeologist, du Mesnil, in the 1930s revealed evidence that elucidated the methods of antique siege warfare. Simon James, a professional archaeologist, has recently sifted through du Mesnil's material and presents the data in a new light. His paper, 'Stratagems, Combat, and 'Chemical Warfare' in the siege mines of Dura-Europos' is valuable because it describes some of the techniques of siege warfare in antiquity, and also has 'human interest' because we can imagine the horrific circumstances of the deaths of those twenty dead defenders in the dark and airless tunnels under the city walls.⁶

The Romans had made the fortress almost impregnable by reinforcing its stone curtain wall externally with a rampart and mud brick sloping bank (glacis), and internally with an earth and rubble rampart. The Persians needed to make a fifteen-metre breach in the wall to allow a column of troops to storm through to take the city. They first tried digging an approach tunnel about forty metres long to undermine part of a defensive tower in the curtain wall and then proposed to dig, at right angles to their approach, for about fifteen metres directly beneath the curtain wall. The roof of the tunnels would be held up by wooden props. When the tunnel under the wall was large enough the Persians intended to withdraw, filling the

tunnel with combustible material which would then be lit. The supporting props were expected to burn, causing part of the tower and wall to come tumbling down.

The really exciting and horrifying things occurred before the combustible sap was set alight. The Romans realised that the Persians were intending to undermine the wall and decided to dig a counter tunnel through the earth rampart on the city side of the wall in order to meet the Persian sappers in their tunnel and drive them off. The Persians reached the ground under the curtain wall before the Romans broke through into their tunnel. The Persians had not had time to complete their plan and dig sideways beneath the curtain wall, so they retreated to give themselves more time. When the Romans broke into the tunnel the Persians lit a brazier in their own tunnel, on which they piled bitumen and crystalline sulphur which was blown through into the Roman countermine killing or very severely disabling at least twenty Roman defenders.

The burning bitumen and sulphur would have consumed much of the available oxygen in the tunnel and also created gases such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and sulphurous oxide. When the sulphurous oxide came into contact with the moisture in the Romans' respiratory tract and eyes it would have formed sulphurous acid which is nearly as nasty as sulphuric acid. This would have taken place in complete darkness and in an incredibly restricted tunnel.

When the poisonous smoke had succeeded in killing and disabling the Roman soldiers, the Persians opened the tunnel to allow the wind to blow the poisonous gases out. They then rushed in and piled the bodies of the dead and dying Roman soldiers into a tight heap as a human wall close to the Roman entrance to the tunnel. This is where their skeletons were discovered one and a half millennia later by du Mesnil. This grim corpse wall delayed a Roman counterattack and gave the Persians time to rapidly bring combustible material into the counter tunnel excavated by the Romans under the rampart on the city side of the curtain wall. The Persians burned the combustible material and the props while they retreated. The roof of the tunnel under the inner rampart collapsed when the supporting props burned,

⁶ *American Journal of Archaeology*, January 2011, pp 69-101. Call number CC1.A6 SS&H library.

cutting off Roman access to the Persians. The Persians had time to dig out sideways under fifteen metres of city wall and set up and fire their sap, collapsing the roof of the tunnel under the wall. However, the wall did not tumble over as intended, because it was supported by the huge earth ramparts built by the Romans on both sides of the curtain wall; the wall just fell vertically, by the height of the tunnel, rather like a sash window falling vertically down its tracks. In spite of the brilliant Persian tactics and their enterprising and innovative use of poison gas, the fortress wall remained upright - as it does to this day.

Archaeological Diggings

The second article, 'Edge of Empires: Pagans, Jews and Christians at Roman Dura-Europos', is closely related to the first.⁷ I could not resist reviewing it because I had been so fascinated by the story of the siege. I am happy to recommend it to you because it gives further background to the polyglot and cosmopolitan cultural history of the city and fortress of Dura-Europos.

Because Dura-Europos was not much occupied after it fell to the Persians, the wealth of artefacts recovered from the site is enormous. Of particular interest are the unique figural frescoes from the synagogue, evidence of Christian 'house-churches' and evidence of regional religious syncretism. One beautiful example of the discovered artefacts is illustrated: this is a bas-relief of Tyche, a bearer of ambivalent fortune with a bird to her left and to her right which may also represent East and West.

As a city goddess she is also known as Turrigera and one can see that her crown is modelled as a castle wall. She was thus an appropriate goddess for Dura-Europos and the image is pertinent to this review and to the journal article above about the siege mines. Not only are the objects on display decorative and religious items contemporaneous with the siege but also mundane household artefacts, such as a child's shoe. The objects are mostly from the Yale University Art Gallery's collection of 13,000 items from the ancient Mediterranean world.

A visit to the Yale gallery should be on the must-do list for FOA members when visiting the USA.



Relief of the Goddess Atargatis, or Tyche, with Doves. Limestone, H. 13.0 cm, W. 25.5 cm, D. 5.0 cm. From the Temple of Adonis, Dura-Europos, 1st century CE.

Yale University Art Gallery, Yale-French Excavations at Dura-Europos: 1935.46
Photography © 2011 Yale University Art Gallery
(with permission)

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Roger Scott

The Last Pagans of Rome

In the New York Review of Books (7.4.11) Peter Brown reviewed *The Last Pagans of Rome* by Alan Cameron, published by Oxford University Press, a book which represents excellent value at US\$85 for 878 pages. OUP clearly make their money out of their dictionaries and reference books, for which scholars everywhere should be duly thankful.

The review is itself long, with the usual NYRB contextual depth, and is also enthusiastic: Brown's concluding remarks identify the enduring importance of the period (when paganism co-existed with Christianised Rome) that Cameron has brought back to us 'shorn of melodrama, but bursting with rare energy, in his masterful and zestful book'.

Brown reflects on the generous, even romantic treatment afforded the 'last pagans' who were sometimes portrayed as continuing to represent traditional and republican values

⁷ *Archaeological Diggings*, Vol 18, No 5. This journal is held by several BCC branch libraries or may be purchased from newsagents. The article promotes an exhibition of archaeological artefacts in New York at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, but the exhibition finished on 8th January 2012.

against the modernity of god-fearing Christian emperors, supporting tolerance and dissent in a struggle against fundamentalism. So that not only Quintus Aurelius Symmachus and Flavianus but 'everybody who is anybody should wish to be a last pagan'.

Not, however, Alan Cameron. 'In his work of magisterial and relentless erudition, he challenges every aspect of the high-pitched scenario of the end of paganism in Rome that, in the past two centuries, has worked itself deep into the historical subconscious of the West.' The last pagans had been transformed into fearless champions of senatorial privileges, literature lovers and preservers of classical tradition rather than 'the arrogant, philistine land-grabbers most of them were'.

Paganism did not lose a war; it faded away because of the costs of funding ancient rites and privileges could no longer be borne by anyone apart from the emperor and these became redundant with the growth of 'the institutionalised egotism that was a central feature of the late Roman imperial system'.

The reviewer skilfully links Cameron's demolition job to the social context within universities in America and Europe after 1945 which had created the original myth. 'But now almost half a century has passed. The Last Pagans of Rome is the book of a generation. A model of erudition and integrity of argument, it is a book that will be with us for many generations to come.'

But Brown then asks himself - 'what is the main thrust?' The second half of Cameron's story is seen to be about the positive aspects of the process by which paganism and its values were incorporated into the evolution of Christianity and also sustained knowledge about Latin literature across the ages.

More specifically, 'Cameron makes a strong case that classical literature and classical art may well have bulked larger in the minds and feelings of the upper classes of the Western Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries than did the relatively recent conflict between Christianity and paganism. ... He proves conclusively that the enjoyment of the classical culture was far from being the monopoly of the die-hard pagans. Rather, he points out that it provided the middle ground where pagans and Christians could meet with equal

enthusiasm ... it is the 'centre-Christians' who emerge as the unsung heroes of his book.

Tacitus' Germania - A Most Dangerous Book

The London Review of Books (14.7.11) carried a review by Anthony Grafton, of a recent book by Christopher Krebs published by Norton with an intriguing title: *A Most Dangerous Book : Tacitus' Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich*.

Grafton references Italian, then French, Dutch and then latterly German-American writers all drawn on to interpret Tacitus in order to support analyses of the nature of the evolution of human societies. Vico focussed on the description in Tacitus that 'in Germany masters and slaves spent their days amid the same flock and on the same ground and that their sons, naked and filthy, grow up with those limbs and bodies that we admire. Hotman saw the origins of republicanism which appealed to Grotius, and most recently Herbert Baxter Adams argued that the mores Tacitus had described long ago still underpinned American freedoms, as they had British ones.'

Krebs links his analysis more closely to the purpose and content of *Germania*: 'The bulk of his attention goes to the historian's writing, in which he dissected the moral and political iniquity of the empire with the ironic detachment of an Olympian and the local knowledge of a cog in the machine. Krebs suspects that Tacitus wrote this pamphlet-sized work with a practical purpose in mind. Like other aristocrats, he hoped to convince the emperor Trajan to invade and conquer Germany.' Krebs also suggests that Tacitus wrote in the long tradition of ethnographers going back to Herodotus in recycling common-places rather than undertaking systematic recording of new information or seeking to resolve inconsistencies: 'The *Germania* was a mosaic: an assembly of easily-found objects, glued into standard, if complex, patterns, and spiced with multiple signs of disapproval from the narrator'.

The bulk of the book then traces the reception accorded the book in succeeding centuries, mainly indifference until the fifteenth century. It then played a useful role in the internal dynamics of the Holy Roman Empire, sustaining the notion of a long-standing and separate German identity which might - or might not - have benefited from association within an empire dominated by

Italians. Krebs traces a thread though to German unification based on an imagined community during the nineteenth century, via Wagner to its apotheosis under the Nazi regime of the twentieth century.

The reviewer takes exception to the notion that this saga validates including Germania high on the list of the most dangerous books ever written. Grafton suggests that it is the readers who were dangerous, finding clarity among the ambiguities they chose to ignore. In some passages the review takes on the flavour of a scriptural contest when Krebs and Grafton disagree about the meanings accorded specific passages or even single words chosen from Tacitus by the various ideological warriors.

Where author and reviewer agree is that the reception accorded Germania was linked to frightening consequences in the modern era: 'Ancient texts have played central roles in the most wracking and terrible moments of modern history. No-one who reads this book will be in any danger of dismissing the study of the classical tradition as an antiquarian enterprise.'

And wave your flags and sing and dance and shout with single voice
That Basil is the greatest and
Byzantium's only choice.



Basil II, ruler of the Byzantine empire from 976-1025 AD, fought against the Bulgarians for more than 20 years until they were totally conquered. On one occasion he is said to have ordered the blinding of more than 15,000 captive Bulgarian soldiers. His adoring subjects gave him the surname 'Bulgaroktonos', i.e. 'the Bulgar Slayer.'

BASIL THE BULGAR SLAYER⁸

Bob Milns

My proper name is Basil, though folks often call me Baz;
I'm just a plain and simple bloke –
with me no razz-ma-tazz;
But when it comes to fighting, I'm
Byzantium's top player,
And I'll go down in history as the
dreaded Bulgar Slayer.

People tell me that I'm cruel, but it isn't really true;
I love all the human peoples – aye,
and little kittens too;
And even those Bulgarians – I really do not mind them;
And it's only very rarely that I take a stick and blind them.

So when I come back home from war,
all bloody from the slaughter,
Just try to think from what I might
have saved your wife and daughter;

ENDOTE

Ed

Archaeologists and music experts believe they have found the remains of the earliest stringed instrument ever found in Western Europe – dating to more than 2,300 years ago – at the excavation of Uamh An Ard Achadh (High Pasture Cave) on the Island of Skye. Burnt, broken – but not silenced.

The artefact had been broken and burnt, but the notches where strings would have been placed are easy to distinguish. The original fragment is the burnt remains of a 2,300-year-old bridge from a lyre instrument found on the island of Skye. (Historic Scotland).

See <http://www.pasthorizonspr.com/index.php/archives/03/2012/the-music-of-the-islands-2300-year-old-lyre-comes-to-life>

⁸ Written c. June 2011 in preparation for a visit to Bulgaria. Illustration from 11thc English ms. (source WikiCommons).

MEMBERSHIP OF FOA AND ALUMNI FRIENDS

1. Alumni Friends single membership is \$33.00 (joint membership is \$44.00);
2. Friends of Antiquity membership is \$16.50 for each member;
3. Friends of Antiquity mailing list fee is \$27.50;
4. Full time student membership is \$5.50.

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St Lucia 4067

or email:

alumni@uq.edu.au

ARCHANGELS AND ARCHAEOLOGY: J S M WARD'S KINGDOM OF THE WISE BY DR GEOFF GINN

Our members will surely remember the talk given by Dr Geoff Ginn at our Sunday Series, 6 June, 2010, on the topic 'Archangels and Archaeology: the Life and Collections of J.S.M. Ward'. Dr Ginn teaches British history and heritage studies in the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at the University of Queensland, and has been working on John Ward's biography since 2004.

We are pleased to announce that on Friday 30 March Dr Ginn's book *Archangels and Archaeology: J.S.M. Ward's Kingdom of the Wise* (Sussex Academic Press) was launched at the Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology at Caboolture. The book traces

the remarkable life and career of John S.M. Ward (1885-1949) who started the Abbey Folk Park in 1934 at New Barnet, north of London. Unfairly disgraced in a sensational court case in May 1945, Ward and his followers left England for Cyprus in self-imposed exile, along with his collection of artefacts. After Ward's death, his community moved to Queensland, where his collection, and more, can be seen in the Abbey Museum www.abbeymuseum.asn.au/⁹

THE SOLOMOS SOCIETY GREEK-AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

The Solomos Society has invited members of the FoA to the following 2012 meetings:

20 June: THE 1896 OLYMPIC GAMES: WHY ATHENS? by Dr Ian Jobling;

19 September: THE POSITION OF ATTIC WOMEN IN DEMOCRATIC ATHENS, by Dr David Pritchard;

17 October: STYLES OF ARCHITECTURE IN CHIOS, by Atha Vasdekis.

Dionysios Solomos (1798-1857) was the poet of the Greek Revolution of 1821-27, the foundation event of the modern Greek nation-state. He is most widely known as the author of Hymn to Freedom, part of which is used as the Greek national anthem.

The Constitution of the Solomos Society states that its aim is to foster interest in the language, arts and culture of the Greek World – Ancient, Byzantine and Modern. Its meeting program reflects this aim and the Society invites those with similar interests to attend the meetings. Meetings are held at 7.45 pm in Respite Hall, rear the Greek Club, Edmonstone Street, South Brisbane. The \$6 charge to non-members includes supper. A copy of the full year's program or further information, may be obtained from Francine Hinton (President) Phone 3366 3585, or Dawn Whyte (Secretary). Phone 3870 1747.

⁹ An Australian paperback edition will be available at the Abbey Museum or the Avid Reader bookshop in West End from May 2012.

COMING EVENTS

MUMMY: SECRETS OF THE TOMB

EXHIBITION OPENING AT THE QUEENSLAND MUSEUM ON 19 APRIL

FoA members should not miss 'Mummy: Secrets of the Tomb', an exhibition of over 100 objects and four mummies! This exhibition from the British Museum will be on show at the Queensland Museum from April 19 to 19 August 2012. Tickets, for 'timed' entry are now on sale. This exhibition promises to be one of the highlights of 2012. Details at: <http://www.mummy.qm.qld.gov.au>

ALEXANDER THE GREAT - 2000 YEARS OF TREASURES

EXHIBITION OPENING IN SYDNEY on 24 November 2012

The Australian Museum in Sydney is holding an exhibition containing over 400 objects from the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, Russia.

Treasures on display will include the famous Gonzaga cameo and the polished black basalt statue of Cleopatra VII.

Visit the Australian Museum's website (australianmuseum.net.au) for more information about the exhibition and associated events.

2012: TOUR OF ROMAN BRITAIN

Two week tour of Roman Britain with Emeritus Professor Bob Milns as Tour Leader.

Departs Brisbane Friday 14 September 2012.

Expressions of interest to: Atlas Travel Service, West End. Ph. (07) 3844.1304 or email rebecca@atlastravel.com.au

**ANCIENT HISTORY DAY
24 & 25 AUGUST 2012**

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

(ALL LECTURES IN THE ABEL SMITH LECTURE THEATRE)

**FRIDAY 24 AUGUST : PUBLIC LECTURE
8 PM**

DR SUSANNE BINDER
TOMB ROBBERIES IN LATE RAMESSIDE THEBES: WHAT WAS GOING ON?

SATURDAY 25 AUGUST : 9AM-4PM

DR BOYO OCKINGA
(KEYNOTE SPEAKER)
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN THE WORKMEN'S VILLAGE OF DEIR EL MEDINA

EMERITUS PROFESSOR TREVOR BRYCE
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN THE HITTITE WORLD

EMERITUS PROFESSOR BOB MILNS
**DEMOSTHENES, AESCHINES AND THE CROWN TRIAL OF 330 BC
(Policy on trial in the law court)**

DR DOROTHY WATTS
ROMAN ARMY DISCIPLINE

DR TOM STEVENSON
THE CRIME OF PARRICIDE IN ANCIENT ROME

DR AMELIA BROWN
**BREAD, WINE & CRUCIFIXION:
DIOCLETIAN'S EDICTS ON MAXIMUM PRICES
AND CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION**

**A FLIER WILL BE INCLUDED WITH THE
JULY ISSUE OF NOVA**

FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY PROGRAM

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE JULY MEETING,
ALL SUNDAY SERIES LECTURES WILL BE IN
ROOM E302 - FORGAN SMITH BUILDING

6 MAY : SUNDAY SERIES

2 PM

Dr Alastair Blanshard
GREECE THROUGH THE EYES OF ITS
TRAVELLERS

23 MAY (WEDNESDAY)

LITERARY LUNCH

11 AM

Emeritus Professor Bob Milns
ANCIENT HUMOUR

(WOMEN'S COLLEGE - see enclosed flier)

26 May (SATURDAY)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

11 PM

WOMEN'S COLLEGE
to be followed by lunch
(see enclosed flier)

June 3 : SUNDAY SERIES

2 PM

Ms Stephanie Golding
CAMILLUS: LIVY'S IDEAL ROMAN

2.30 PM

Dr Victoria Bladen
RENAISSANCE DIALOGUES WITH THE
CLASSICAL PAST: FROM BOTTICELLI TO
SHAKESPEARE

JULY 1 : SUNDAY SERIES TO BE HELD IN THE ABEL SMITH LECTURE THEATRE

2 PM

Dr David Pritchard
THE INCONGRUOUS ATHLETES OF
SATYRIC DRAMA

FOLLOWED BY REPORT FROM THE 2011
BETTY FLETCHER SCHOLAR
Book Launch - Dr Sandra Christou,
*Sexually Ambiguous Imagery in Cyprus
from the Neolithic to the Cypro-Archaic
Period*

8 PM 24 AUGUST 24 , & ALL DAY 25 AUGUST

ANCIENT HISTORY DAY
SEE DETAILS ON PREVIOUS PAGE

9 SEPTEMBER : SUNDAY SERIES

2 PM

Mrs Juliet O'Brien
THE MYSTERY OF THE RING

2.30 PM

Professor Eric Csapo
(UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY)

7 OCTOBER : SUNDAY SERIES

2 PM

Dr John Ratcliffe
(topic to be announced)

2.30 PM

Dr Luca Asmonti
DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND
ARISTOCRATIC SPIRIT IN ANCIENT ATHENS

4 NOVEMBER : SUNDAY SERIES

2 PM

Mrs Vera Heath
THE EXCAVATION OF TELL HALAF, SYRIA
2.30 PM

Emeritus Trevor Bryce
THE SEARCH FOR HOMER'S GREEKS