

NOVA

THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY



CELEBRATIONS PAST AND PRESENT

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EDITORIAL

Ann Scott

Readers may have thought that after the events of 2013 our major anniversaries were over for a year or two. However, there is one more birthday to note. That is *Nova's* own. This issue marks 25 years since the journal first hit the presses, and I would like to pay tribute to all the editors who have kept *Nova* in print over the years. In the early issues the editor remained anonymous. I thank my nameless predecessors for initiating and sustaining the journal for a quarter of a century. Production was far harder when *Nova* started than it is today, and a glance at the early editions takes one back to the difficult era when secretaries had to battle with messy Gestetner or mimeograph machines and ink-stained hands. Modern technology offers the editor much more scope (and, I admit, pleasure).

Given this anniversary, it is apt that much of the issue is devoted to Friends of Antiquity celebrations at the end of 2013, particularly the Christmas Lunch and Donor Celebration at which our guest of honour was Dr Paul Eliadis, donor of the Paul Eliadis Chair in Classics and Ancient History. On the following pages you will find the text of the speeches by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Eliadis, and Dr Alastair Blanshard who will be returning to UQ this year as the inaugural Paul Eliadis Professor of Classics and Ancient History. Dr Blanshard has accepted my invitation to provide a regular column in *Nova*. On behalf of *Nova*, I look forward to his contributions.

Politics was also a topic for discussion in 2013, a year in which VLAD¹ took on a new meaning. Emeriti Bob Milns and Roger Scott gave us an overview of political systems ancient and modern in our Sunday Series. The tragic political situation in Syria was not far from our minds as we heard Vera Heath describe the archeological finds (and perhaps now losses) in Qatna. Their talks are reproduced in this issue of *Nova*.

We had two photographers at the 2014 celebration lunch: FoA member, Sue Chick, and an official university photographer, their excellent pictures can be found at <http://www.friendsofantiquity.org.au>, the FoA website.²

¹ To remind readers about the original VLAD, *Nova* republishes Bob Milns' 2012 poem about Vlad Tepes.

² We are grateful to Adam English for maintaining our Friends of Antiquity website.

³ See *UQ Contact* 6 May 2013.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Roger Scott

'Happy New Year' is more than a conventional greeting this time around - 2014 promises to be one of the most exciting years since I became active in the Friends about twenty years ago. The discipline will have something approaching a full staffing complement despite the bleaker wider financial stringency; the museum is expanding its holdings and its community engagement and thus its visibility and reputation; the new chair will be stamping his presence within the academic community as well with the wider public.

A number of people have contributed to this, especially the many distinguished members of the Friends as well as the long-suffering existing staff. One new Friend has made a particular mark and it is worth reflecting on the comments placed at various places on the public record by Dr Paul Eliadis.

His central proposition is that:

Any western university that doesn't have a department that teaches the classics does not have a birth certificate. It is not just one faculty that makes a university, they are all important, but to forget about where you came from is bizarre'.³

Waxing more eloquent in his address to the November lunch celebrating his beneficence, reproduced later on in this *Nova*, he drew out the contemporary relevance of ancient civilisation and the values it espoused:

The essential features of our society which include civil society, liberal democracy, the rule of law, individual rights and personal responsibility are the inheritance of these two interrelated civilisations.

So, as we look forward to the flourishing of classics within the confines of the university, we need also to be cognisant of threats outside the university to these essential features of civil society. Universities exist to promote the inheritance identified by Eliadis and we should not be deterred from speaking out and researching about the ways in which these features and the values which underpin them are being sustained or undermined.

CHRISTMAS FUNCTION AND DONOR CELEBRATION, 17 NOVEMBER 2013

VICE-CHANCELLOR PROFESSOR PETER HØJ



It is a very great pleasure to join this celebration today. I call it a celebration, but given the convergence of so many significant milestones, perhaps gala celebration would be more appropriate. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the R D Milns Antiquities Museum, the 25th anniversary of The Alumni Friends of Antiquity and to welcome the inaugural Paul Eliadis Chair in Classics and Ancient History on the same day is truly remarkable.

I especially acknowledge the presence of Honorary Research Associate Professor Don Barrett, who was closely involved in the purchase from a London auction-house of the museum's first artefact - a Red-figure Attic amphora - in 1963. I am told that at the time, Don wrote an article in the University of Queensland Gazette, describing the start of the collection as 'a major contribution to the scholarly life of the University. May it continue and prosper'. Your words have proved to be prophetic. The R D Milns is now the foremost collection of classical Mediterranean antiquities in Queensland, with more than 7,000 original objects spanning 3,500 years.

The Classics have been at the heart of a liberal arts education since the ancient Greeks first turned to these fields to educate their citizens. They give us tools to apply historical and cultural perspectives to contemporary

understanding and decision-making. UQ is proud to be the only University in Queensland to offer courses in the history, culture, language and literature of Ancient Greece and Rome.

The R D Milns Antiquities Museum is a focal point for these studies, providing our students and researchers with a physical link to the ancient world. And it harnesses modern technology to do so. With the assistance of committed and technologically-inclined volunteers, students, staff and researchers, 3D scans of some of the artefacts have been created – something unheard of back in 1963.

It must be acknowledged that the growth of the museum, and the high regard in which our Classics and Ancient History research is held, are the result of the hard work of many individuals. People such as Emeritus Professor Bob Milns, the third Professor in the Department of Classics, who retired in 2003. In Bob's years the antiquities collection rapidly increased in size and in 1975 the collection was given its own display room in the Michie building. It is fitting that the museum now bears Bob Milns' name. Bob was presented with an Honorary Doctor of Letters last year – a fitting tribute to his long association with and dedication to UQ.

Then, of course, there is the work of the Friends of Antiquity. For the past 25 years you have supported staff of the School to maintain the profile of Classics and Ancient History within the University and in the wider community. The contributions you have made over the years - including the monthly Sunday series lecture, the Betty Fletcher Memorial Scholarship, the purchase of antiquities and the printing of publications — are significant. Thank you.

It seems apt to quote Aristotle, who wrote in his Ethics:

To give away money is an easy matter, and in any man's power. But to decide to whom to give it, and how large and when, and for what purpose and how, is neither in every man's power - nor an easy matter. Hence it is that such excellence is rare, praiseworthy and noble.

I am very grateful that so many friends and alumni of UQ have chosen to make donations, not only towards the maintenance, development and protection of the antiquities collection, but also to the R D Milns Classics and Ancient History Perpetual Endowment Fund. The fund, as you know, was established to give students in Classics and Ancient History the opportunity to meet and interact with scholars from interstate and overseas. The vision, belief,

generosity and dedication of those who have given their time, money and artefacts over so many decades have provided current and future generations with this magnificent museum, and with the chance to learn about the Classics and Ancient History.

Our guest of honour, Dr Paul Eliadis, meets Aristotle's 'rare, praiseworthy and noble' benchmark. His generous donation was accompanied by a succinct explanation:

To me, any Western university that doesn't have a department that teaches the classics does not have a birth certificate. It is not just one faculty that makes a university. They are all important, but to forget about where you came from is bizarre.

An endowed Chair is a gift that keeps giving and is a way of building the capacity of the University to ensure that generations to come can benefit from an exceptional education in classical knowledge. It is an extraordinarily generous gift to your alma mater and will give young people the best opportunity to study the ancient traditions.

I am delighted to welcome our inaugural Paul Eliadis Chair of Classics, Dr Alastair Blanshard, a UQ alumnus who joins us from the Department of Classics and Ancient History at The University of Sydney. Dr Blanshard is internationally recognised as a leader in the field of the classical tradition, and is a series editor for the *Classics after Antiquity* monograph series published by Cambridge University Press. Dr Blanshard's view that museums are not just for displaying antiquity, but are also sites for research, will be welcomed here.

If I could borrow from Don Barrett's description of the Attic amphora purchase in 1963, the appointment of a Chair in classics is a major contribution to the scholarly life of the University. May you continue and prosper.

As I understand it, an amphora is a storage vessel used to transport, among other things, wine. This brings to mind another important donation from Dr Eliadis that must be acknowledged – the wine at this event. You have added a bacchanalian touch which has helped make it a gala celebration. Thank you!

DR PAUL ELIADIS



Professor Scott and Friends of Antiquity thank you for inviting me to today's Christmas luncheon

It is now more than forty years since I first attended UQ as an undergraduate and attended Orientation Week. Of that week there are two things which I still remember very clearly through the haziness of time. One is a lunch time lecture given in the Abel Smith Lecture Theatre by a Mr. Barry Humphries on the sexual habits of university students. I don't think I or the audience I was part of have laughed so much as we did during that one hour since. The second, not as funny but more contemplative, is the Greek inscription which remains over the entrance to the Forgan-Smith Building. At the time I didn't understand it although I was able to read it in my broken Modern Greek. Since then I have revisited these Greek words many times in my amateur study of the Classical World.

One cannot separate the history of the ancient Mediterranean world of Greece and Rome as it forms a natural whole. To try and do so would be analogous to attempting to separate the software and hardware of a computer and expecting it to still work. This is not to deny that there are deep incompatibilities and antagonisms between the tides of Greek and

Roman history but they are part of the one and same story.

The Acropolis lies in ruins; tortoises crawl through the scrub of the ancient Agora of Athens; at night, pimps, whores and drug pushers stalk the ancient Forum of Rome; and the great land walls of Constantinople have crumbled to the ground as tourist buses constantly pass by, their passengers oblivious to the drama that was played out in front of these walls 560 years ago one chilly Tuesday morning in May. Nevertheless the story of Greece and Rome continues to nurture and sustain our modern Western Civilisation just like a large underground river or artesian basin does to our outback. It has always been there ever ready to inspire and guide. The essential features of our society which include civil society, liberal democracy, the rule of law, individual rights and personal responsibility are the inheritance of these two interrelated civilisations.

Many years after my memorable Orientation Week in 1971, I had the good fortune and privilege of meeting Professor Bob Milns. Bob taught us many beautiful things but one which has remained forever etched in my mind is the importance to a university, and the society it finds itself in, of having a Department of Ancient History and Classics. A university without such a department is not a true university Bob! It is a gypsy child wandering the streets lost and forlorn looking for its parents.

It was therefore with dismay that I learned from Bob some years ago that the Chair that he occupied with such distinction for many years was to cease. I was astonished and perplexed. For me it was as though the Persians had again crossed the Hellespont, it was as though Sulla had again besieged Athens, it was as though Attila was again advancing on Rome with his hordes, it was as though another Mehmet, despite the respect and admiration that I have for the man, had again appeared at the walls of Constantinople.

I feel fortunate and privileged that I have been able in my own small way to help reverse the destructive policy inflicted on our fine Department of Ancient History and the Classics. We must all seek to defend and extend Australians' understanding of the inheritance bequeathed to us by Greece and Rome. It is this very inheritance, in part at least, that makes Australia the envy of so many countries. If we lose our cultural memory, God help us! Tyrants have understood this very well over the centuries. Erase or pervert a society's cultural

memory and you will be able to do whatever you then wish with that society.

In conclusion, I wish to thank Dr Fred D'Agostino, Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts, and Ms Clare Pullar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Advancement), for agreeing to meet with me, and also for their advice and support. My further thanks to our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Peter Høj, and the University of Queensland for their support. Finally, my congratulations to Dr Alastair Blanshard, Professor-elect the Paul Eliadis Chair of Ancient History and Classics. Alastair's election was made after an extensive international search and he comes with impeccable credentials. On top of all this he is an Australian! His election to the Chair will strengthen not only the Department but also the University of Queensland and our society generally. Alastair may you be ΠΑΝΤΑ ΑΞΙΟΣ!

DR ALASTAIR BLANSHARD



Let me begin by saying how delighted I am to be returning to Queensland to take up this exciting new post.

As I mentioned in my interview for the job, those of us in the traditional humanities have an important role to play at the University of Queensland. Owing to the federal nature of the Higher Education system and the fact that students do not tend to travel interstate to study, the teaching of classics takes on a particular significance here. If the Classics disappear at

UQ, they disappear for a whole state and they disappear for generations.

That is why gifts such as Dr. Eliadis' are so important. It means that students from as far away as Emerald, Mackay, Dalby, Winton, Cloncurry, and Townsville will still have the opportunity to hear the words of Homer, Horace, and Herodotus. On Wednesday night, I was the guest speaker at the Toowoomba Grammar School's speech day and I was struck by the extraordinary goodwill that rural Queensland has for UQ and their keenness to strengthen connections with us. I am pleased to announce that plans are already under way to capitalize on this and I'm currently working on plans for a project that I'm calling 'Bringing Rome to Roma'.

In the context of talking about the importance of the Classics at UQ, I would like to pay tribute to the tremendous work that groups like the Friends of Antiquity and, in particular, figures like Bob Milns and Dorothy Watts have done over the years in keeping the study of Classics so strong.

And in many ways the need for Latin and Greek remains as strong as ever. One of my hobbies is mentally correcting the Latin of people's tattoos as I ride Sydney buses. And I often wish I was brave enough to go up to them and say: 'That's a really lovely neck tattoo, but I don't think I would have used the imperative there'.

There is a lot to get excited about here. The Antiquities Museum is an absolute jewel that punches so far above its weight that it's extraordinary. I am amazed when I think how far it has come since I was a student here – and all done with largely volunteer labour and donations. The collection that it has assembled is first-rate and its program of outreach activity is really unmatched.

I am very excited by the opportunities that this role presents. One of the aspects that I really like about the egalitarian spirit in Australian intellectual life is the way that it constantly calls you to account and asks you justify your position. Unlike the UK (where I spent so many years), in Australia no privilege is ever assumed and you always need to defend your position. It makes for a robust intellectual culture.

So I'm looking forward to being able to articulate why the Classics matter in the present age. Not only for the state, but also nationally and internationally, we should be looking to make a contribution.

Part of this involves making new (and re-establishing old) connections within the university and I'm looking forward to meeting colleagues in philosophy, early modern studies, gender studies, and art history to see what potentials for collaboration exist.

After all Classics offers so much to the urgent conditions and debates of the modern world. If you want to think about the consequences of conflict, then I can think of no better text than Euripides, Trojan Women - a play that takes every comfortable assumption about how war should work and turns them on their heads. By all means think that one should live one's life 'helping friends and harming enemies', but - as the play warns - if you buy into this all-too-simple platitude, you may find yourself reduced to a monster, throwing innocent children off battlements. Humanity requires more than slogans.

If you want to think about how power operates, then I offer you Thucydides and Tacitus. There is a reason why every discussion of realpolitik and international relations theory has to begin with the Melian dialogue.

If you want to think about environmental concerns, then I offer you the image of Erysichthon, his indifference to the natural world and his ever-consuming jaws. Jaws so greedy that they consume even his own children.

There is a reason why the Classics are foundational. Almost every aspect of the human condition was discussed by the Greeks and Romans first, and often they do it best. Take a universal emotion such a love. As I tell my students when we're reading Sappho fr. 31:

look into the eyes of your beloved and if you're not struck dumb, if you don't feel a fire under your skin, if you're not close to death, then it's not really love and you're probably best advised to end it now.

In this way, I think I've put an end to more undergraduate relationships at Sydney than any staff member - so it's probably a good time to be moving on.

All of this is a very longwinded way of saying that, for numerous reasons, I'm delighted to be here today and that I'm looking forward tremendously to taking up the Eliadis Chair in Classics and Ancient History and making myself a good friend of the Friends of Antiquity.

POETRY COMPETITION WINNERS

The end of year celebration lunch included an inter-table competition to see which group could compose the best poem using the maximum number out of a list of specific words.

THE ELIADIS GIFT

The scholars who look into pottery
Often find it a bit of a lottery
When a treasure of gold
In the dark of a hole
Ends up as a desert and curse.

But when studies of Greece and of Rome
Looked like losing their permanent home
Santa Paul Eliadis' gift so amazing
Saved us from ruin or worse.

THE DODWELL STELE – A TRIUMPH



Dodwell was an amazing scholar
Eager to make a Greek dollar
He went there for pottery
But then won the lottery
Dug a hole and gave a great holler!

In the trench he dug up a stele
The discovery caused a great melee
Gold fell out of his purse
He gave out a curse
And boarded a ship bound for Calais.

On a foggy night in December
Met a Royal Society member
His name was Charles Ede
They shared some warm mead
The meeting turned into a bender.

Ede walked off with the inscribed stone
Then got straight on his mobile phone
He rang up UQ
They said Woo Hoo!
Now they call Dodwell's stele their own.

**EXCAVATION OF THE ANCIENT KINGDOM
CITY OF QATNA**

Vera Heath

The city state of Qatna in central western Syria is located at the crossroads between the two most important ancient trade routes of the Levant. One of these trade routes went from Anatolia, Turkey, to Palestine and Egypt. The other was an east-west road from Mesopotamia through the Syrian Desert via Palmyra to the Mediterranean coast and the ancient city of Byblos. All routes passed the city-state of Qatna, on the Orontes river.

The Orontes river played a critical role throughout Syrian history in supplying water to the many city-states also located on the river. The region around the Orontes was known as the 'Fertile Crescent'. Around 3000BC great settlements, city-states, began developing in this region. Like Mari, Ugarit, Ebla, Aleppo, Qadesch and Qatna in Mesopotamia.

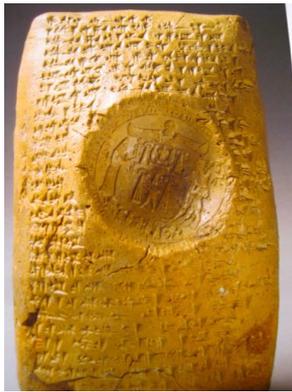
All our information of the region comes from clay tablet libraries that have been discovered. The most important of these, with 6,000 clay tablets, was Ugarit. Of these, 2,500 were in Akkadian language, which was the international language of the time. Another most important library was found in Ebla.

Qatna was founded around 2600BC during the early Bronze Age on a limestone plateau. From clay tablets we know that Qatna was one of the most important merchant centres (Karum), dealing with merchandise including tin and lapis lazuli from Afghanistan, copper from Cyprus, wine, cloth and fabrics. A caravan – a camel transport method – took ten days, starting from the Euphrates river, through the desert to Qatna. The caravans had to pay for protection, providing most of the wealth for the city-state. Qatna was famous for its white horses – luxury. In terms of craftsmanship, a large dye kiln was found to be used for making purple dye; purple was the colour for the nobility and kings, the most valuable commodity. Also found was a city quarter filled with pottery workshops for both local use and export.

The living city of Qatna had an area of one square kilometre, with a perfect square perimeter constructed by the fortified walls 4km long x 20m high. There were four gates leading into the city, one in the middle of each wall. These gates were guarded by 500 soldiers. Today the walls have been partly preserved. The central acropolis was the King's Palace and

temple. Beside this, the walls of Qatna also protected the living quarters, gardens and working quarters.

During the late Bronze Age (1600-1200BC) Qatna was a local Kingdom on the border territories contested by the military and political powers of the Egyptian Kingdom, the Kingdom of Mitanni, and the Hittites' power from Anatolia. Like today, it was common to have alliances between the city-states. Clay tablets tell us of the marriage between the house of Mari and the house of Qatna with a bride's dowry of 35kg of silver, 6kg of gold, 4000 sheep, and 100 cattle.



Wedding tablet

In terms of religion, there were hundreds of demi-gods, though the most important Gods were the weather god, Addu ore Baal and his wife, Hapat ore Anat. The living King was considered the son of the highest god. The main temple was the living area of the gods with cult statues as the representation of the gods for the people. Only priests or priestesses were permitted to enter the inner sanctuary of the temple.

The ancestor cult was a central part of the culture at the time. It was believed the dead and living had a partnership where the living provided food and drink for the ancestor's after-life. The living required their ancestors' blessing for health, prosperity and fertility as well as to be remembered in their own afterlife. Keeping ancestors satisfied was a means of bringing good fortune, at times also in battle. It was believed the ancestors acted as mediators between the gods and the living.

War and unrest began in 1350BC when the Hittite empire contested the power of the Egyptian Kingdom. The battle of Qadesch brought an end to this. But before the Hittite King, Suppilulima the First, moved towards the city state of Qatna, the last king of Qatna, King Idanda feeling the pressure of the looming attack sent a clay tablet letter the Pharaoh of

Egypt to ask for help in the oncoming Hittite attack. His reply from the Pharaoh read:

Don't be in despair, I will protect you. Strengthen the city of Qatna until I come.

But his reply was false. No-one came to help. The Hittite troops ransacked Qatna in 1340BC, burning and taking the population and treasures of the temple to Hattusa. How do we know? At the excavation of the King's Palace, temple and living quarters, we found traces of fire. After 500 years of being a major, powerful city-state of the region, Qatna's reign was over.



During this battle, King Idanda was below ground, presenting gifts of food and drink to his ancestors, to bring good fortune, hopefully victory and safety, to the city state. He did not participate in the battle. A feast was held within the tomb with priests and the royal family many storeys below ground at the King's Palace.

The King, his priests and members of the royal family formed a procession with oil lamps and a few torches in a windowless, secret corridor. At the end of this was a landing followed by a descending ladder to an antechamber. The food and drink was passed along the procession down the shaft. Idanda led the way into the main chamber of a four-room rock-cut tomb, stepping carefully so as not to disturb the bones lying on wooden benches. The whole royal family was then buried for ever.

A small settlement established later on the site of Qatna, was destroyed again in 720BC by the Assyrian King Sargon.

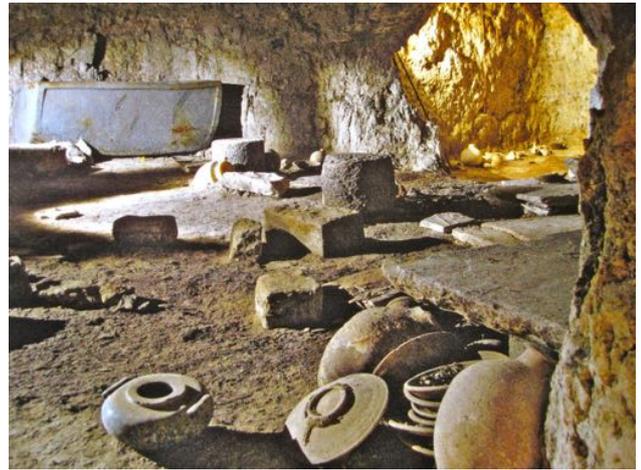
And then Qatna remained dormant for some 3000 years.

In 1860 a small Christian community settled within the protected walls of Qatna to build their mud brick homes and a church. An Italian and German team resettled the Christian community outside the city walls in 1982 in order to excavate the area.

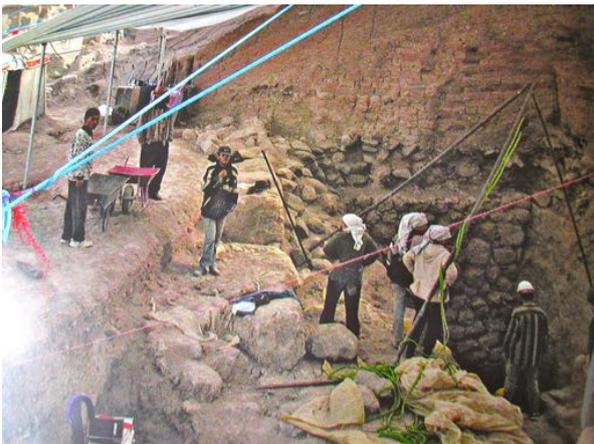


Aerial view of the Qatna excavations
Courtesy Wikicommons

In October 2002, the German excavation teams were losing hope, but through luck in November they found a shaft and so continued the excavation through the winter months of November and December.



In 2004, the Syrian, German and Italian team started a project with the goal to preserve and restore the 2000BC Royal Palace of Qatna, creating an archaeological park. During the second season of the project, 60,000 new mud bricks were made. Unfortunately, due to the present situation in Syria, all work has stopped; we hope not destroyed.



The shaft led down to the undisturbed tomb of the royal family where King Idanda held the ancestral feast during the battle between Qatna and the Hittites.

A chamber was below ground-floor level with its wall almost completely intact, with a collapsed timber roof acting as an antechamber leading to the tomb cellar. The cellar was very spacious, 4.9 x 6.3 metres, divided into two chambers by a wall of hollow rock.

A huge number of human bones were found along with beautiful artefacts, gold jewellery, bronze spears and ceramic and alabaster vessels. It was the sensation of the century.



Sitting God found at Qatna
The Louvre Museum AO3992
Courtesy Wikicommons

**THE BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT:
ANCIENT**

THE IDEAL ‘CONSTITUTION’

Bob Milns

The ancient Greeks gave us democracy, both the word and the system. They may also be regarded as the originators of Political Science. From early times Greek thinkers discussed the question of the best form of government for a state (politeia, often translated ‘constitution’). Democracy, it is interesting to note, rarely comes at the top of the list.

The first recorded debate on this topic occurs in Herodotus, who was writing his history of the Persian Wars c. 430- BC. In Book 3 the seven conspirators who have just overthrown a usurper to the Persian throne, discuss what to do next. One argues for isonomia, equality before the laws, i.e. a democratic form; another argues for oligarchia, i.e. rule by the few; and the third, named Darius, argues for monarchia, i.e. one-man rule, i.e. kingship. Darius prevails, is chosen king and continues the Persian tradition of monarchy.

Writing towards the end of the 5th century BC, the Athenian historian Thucydides, in his account of the disastrous war between Athens and Sparta, twice engages in comment on our topic. In Book 2 there occurs the famous Funeral Speech delivered by the politician Pericles over the Athenians who had been killed in the first year of the war. The speech is nothing less than a panegyric of the Athenian democratic way of life, for which those being buried died. You can see two clauses from that speech carved in Greek above the door of the eastern end of the University’s Forgan Smith Building. Their translation is “We love beauty together with thriftiness; we love wisdom without (physical) softness”.

Twenty years later, when the war was going badly for Athens, a ‘right wing’ coup overthrew the democracy and replaced it with an oligarchy of 400, which in its turn was soon overthrown by what would now be called a ‘centre right’ government of 5,000, all of whom possessed a minimum property qualification. The poorer citizens were excluded from this ‘constitution’, which may be called either a limited democracy or an extended oligarchy. Thucydides, in Book 8, says that ‘in the first period of this new regime, the Athenians appear to have had a better government than ever before, at least to

my time’. It did not, however, last long and the full democracy was once again restored.

In the 4th century BC, there emerged in Athens different ‘schools’ of philosophy, which constantly discussed our topic. Of these schools, the most significant was Plato’s Academy (Plato was a student of Socrates) and the Lyceum of Plato’s pupil, Aristotle. Plato’s most famous work is the Republic (Politeia), in which Plato sets out, through the mouth of Socrates, the ideal form of government and what are called the perversions of this. Plato’s ideal is aristocracy, but NOT based on birth but on fitness through long training so as to become ‘best’ fitted for government. Aristocracy means ‘rule of the best’. The imperfect perversions of this are, in descending order: timocracy (rule based on ‘honour’); oligarchy (rule based on wealth); democracy (where everybody does what they want); and, vilest of all, tyranny. Plato was a passionate believer in the predominance of the expert in every branch of human activity, but especially in politics. He had a deep contempt for democracy.

Aristotle, in his companion-pieces Ethics and Politics, adopts a different approach from Plato, his old teacher. For him, there are three ‘right’ and three ‘perverted’ constitutions. The ‘right’ ones are, in descending order: kingship (basileia); aristocracy; and what he calls simply ‘politeia’, which looks very much like the rule of the 5,000 as described by Thucydides. The ‘perverted’ forms are: tyranny; oligarchy; and democracy, with the last being the least perverted. Aristotle was, unlike Plato, a pragmatist and argued that we must often choose the practical best as compared with the ideal. The essence of his practical best is that there should be as few as possible at the extreme, both of wealth and of poverty, with as many as possible in the middle – a sort of middle class democracy.

Around the middle of the 2nd century BC, the upper class Greek politician and general, Polybius, now a hostage at Rome and friend of Rome’s philhellene aristocracy, decided to write a history relating Rome’s rise to super-power status in the Mediterranean world. The ultimate cause, according to Polybius, was Rome’s constitution (politeia). It was the supreme example of the ‘Mixed Constitution’. For Polybius, there were three ‘good’ constitutions: kingship; aristocracy; and democracy (in this descending order); and three ‘deviant’ constitutions, into which each good constitution would decay: tyranny; oligarchy; and ochlocracy (i.e. mob-rule). The rise and fall of constitutions went on in a cyclic process in which eventually

we shall come back to the beginning. This cyclic process can be slowed down by forming a constitution which is a blend of the three good forms, called by Polybius 'mixed constitution'.

This constitution itself would eventually decay, but the mixture would slow the process on a grand scale. At the time of the Hannibalic War, Rome had evolved a mixed constitution, in which the two consuls were the regal element, the senate the aristocratic and the popular assembly the democratic element. It was this mixed constitution, in which the aristocratic element predominated, that enabled Rome firstly to stand firm against Hannibal's onslaught and then to follow through and defeat Carthage and then all the other powers around the Mediterranean.

A hundred years or so later, in the middle of the first century BC, the Roman politician and philosopher, Cicero, took up this idea of the mixed constitution as the best form of government. He did this in a 'Platonic' dialogue called De Republica (On the State), set in Rome in 129 BC, with Polybius's philhellene Roman aristocrats as the speakers in the dialogue. Rome's constitution, it is argued, is the best of all because it is the result of a long, natural development, not an artificial creation, such as the Greeks dream up. Alas! Only a fraction of the manuscript of this dialogue has survived, but enough to give us an insight into Cicero's thinking.

From all the above we can see how seriously – and thoughtfully – the system of the best, or ideal, form of state was taken by the ancient Greeks especially. Democracy, however, was obviously not held in high regard by the 'intellectual' class. One can imagine what they would think of our modern Western, capitalist democratic system – one suspects, more harshly than Winston Churchill, who said that our modern democracy was a silly form of government until one considered the alternatives!

THE BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT: MODERN

Roger Scott⁴

PROLOGUE

The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed, lest our country will become bankrupt. People must again learn to work instead of living on public assistance.⁵

Appealing to middle-class 'hip-pocket' nerve, hostility to public sector and rejection of assisting the poor locally or overseas – is this Abbott vintage 2013 or Newman vintage 2012? Neither – it is Cicero vintage 55BCE.

1. Small 'p' and large 'P' politics

To understand the language of politics, we need to start with the experience of the classical world and those who analysed this experience.

Political scientists debate whether the term "politics" should be reserved for the State or used to identify politics as a pattern of human behaviour happening in any social group such as a church, a union, a family or even the Friends of Antiquity. This behavior can be seen as operating within a political system. Typically the more broad-ranging the group the more complex and formalised its political structure - but a group as small as FOA has a history of worrying about complex constitutional issues. Perhaps this is because some of its distinguished members were either lawyers or experienced university bureaucrats.

Colloquially we often use the term "Politician" to refer to those elected to operate political systems which govern specified territories such as cities, states and nations. This term is frequently translated into a term of abuse, so Ministers accuse their opponents of "playing politics" by not accepting what Ministers have defined as "the public interest" – an equally ambiguous term often used to defend a

⁴ **DISCLAIMER** : The views expressed above do not represent the views of either the FOA or the University of Queensland. When I am not pursuing duties as an elected official of the Friends of Antiquity, I work pro bono as Executive Director of the T.J.Ryan Foundation. I connect with the 'think tank' as a private citizen and not in my honorary capacity as a professor. The Foundation website will be launched early in 2014.

⁵ How to Run a Country: An Ancient Guide for Modern Leaders, Marcus Tullius Cicero, edited, translated and summarised by Philip Freeman, Princeton University Press, 2012.

multitude of sins and activities designed to benefit special interests.

A key characteristic of a State as a political system is its successful claim to operate a monopoly over the use of force within a given territorial area. Here the term "State" is being used in a generic sense to refer of the superior level of government in any political system - superior in the sense that the State has responsibility for all the other organisations within its specified territorial area. Australia has a problem with this notion of "authority" or "sovereignty" because of the constitutional divisions which exist within the federal constitution. But there is always high sensitivity on the part of politicians about this issue of monopolizing or regulating the use of force in their territory and preserving the sovereignty of their state – something Ann and I have seen at first hand with 'failed states' in Africa in the 1960s, no-go areas in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and currently with politicians' promises to turn back the boats or eliminate Bikie Gangs.

The bigger issue is whether the politicians can be trusted to keep these and other promises or whether they deserve the opprobrium heaped upon them when it seems the promises were never intended to be kept once they had served the immediate purpose of gaining votes at an election. Here again, we can find some guidance from the classical world.

2. Athenian democracy from different perspectives

Arguments relating to the making of appropriate moral judgments about the conduct of political leaders are as old as the study of the classics. The analysis by later scholars tends to reflect changing concerns of different generations and different nations. Here are quotations from three writers – Mosse (French), Bengtson (German) and Sagan (American), all writing about Athenian politics:

Mosse wrote:

The history of Athens is a subject of absorbing interest, which has never ceased to arouse impassioned controversy. At different times, and from different points of view it has been cited as a model of moderate democracy, of humanism triumphant, or, on the contrary, as an illustration of the disorders due to demagoguery or the misdeeds of imperialism.⁶

Bentson wrote that:

Originally the Delian League was a free federative union, with all its members having equal legal status. This relationship shifted slowly, though more and more distinctly, in Athens' favour. Nevertheless even today this union, led by Athens, deserves our fullest admiration. . . it proved to be an indispensable influence for order in Greek politics.⁷

Sagan entitled his 1991 comparative study of ancient Athens and modern America *The Honey and the Hemlock*, alluding to a quotation from Plutarch's generally admiring study of Athenians.⁸ Sagan suggests that

It is of crucial importance to try to understand what gross immoralities are still compatible with the forms of democratic society. Athens provides us with one of the sharpest, if not the sharpest example of this awesome human contradiction.⁹

3 MACHIAVELLI AS THE FIRST MODERN POLITICAL SCIENTIST

A much earlier classical scholar (Italian) wrote passionately about his findings from the classical world and shaped the subsequent debate about morality and political leadership. Until the time of Machiavelli, (1469-1527) the Catholic Church dominated all aspects of political thinking in Western Europe, with a reliance on notions of natural law and respect for hierarchies and divine right of monarchs which ignored or re-interpreted the classical traditions of individualism and democratic politics.

⁶ Mosse, C, 'The rebirth of imperialist democracy, 404-359 BC', *Athens in Decline 404-86*. London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.

⁷ Bengtson, H, "Pericles and Athenian Democracy", *The Greeks and the Persians from the Sixth to the Fourth Centuries*. London : Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968.

⁸ 'But true it is, what is said of that city (Athens), that the good men she breeds are the most excellent, and the bad the most notorious; as their country also produces the most delicious honey and the most deadly hemlock', *Life of Dion*, p 300, Dryden's translation revised by Clough, 1893

⁹ Sagan, E. 1991. *The Honey and the Hemlock: Democracy and Paranoia in Ancient Athens and Modern America* Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1991.

Machiavelli was the first modern political scientist because he looked beyond the formal structures and prevailing moral codes to the realities of behaviour. Machiavelli based his contemporary analysis and advice to rulers on the study of the classical past because in his view human nature was immutable. He suggested that one of the keys to predicting the future is to analyse the present in terms of the past. Here is an example of Machiavelli drawing lessons from classical history:

He who would foresee what has to be, should reflect on what has been, for everything that happens in the world at any time has a genuine resemblance to what happened in ancient times. This is due to the fact that the agents who bring such things about are men, and that men have, and always have had, the same passions whence it necessarily comes about that the same effects are produced.¹⁰



Niccolo Machiavelli
Courtesy Wikimedia

Machiavelli was not tempted by an idealistic view of human behaviour which assumes humans were naturally moral creatures - fear was a more reliable guide to human action rather than sympathy or loyalty to 'Princes' so

the wise Prince appreciated that it was more important to be feared than loved. In creating this fear, deception was accepted as part of the armoury because politicians were not governed by the same moral code as everyone else.

It is essential to understand that a prince - especially a 'new' prince - cannot follow those practices by which men are regarded as good, for in order to maintain the state he is often obliged to act against his promises, against charity, against humanity and against religion.

Rulers are justified in using the most ruthless methods, but only if the ends they pursue are achievable and worthwhile. The Prince should appear to be compassionate, faithful to his word, guileless, and devout. And indeed he should be so. But his disposition should be such that, if he needs to be the opposite, he knows how.

The promise given was a necessity of the past; the word broken is a necessity of the present.

I leave it to an informed readership to draw parallels with the current crop of "new Princes". My talk tended to the polemical, pursuing modern comparisons of Machiavellianism in more detail. This written record adopts a more sober tone. I would not want *Nova* to be banned from schoolrooms as if it were some sort of 1980's subversive curriculum document. Let me leave Machiavelli and pass on to more conservative Romans.

4. SLOGANS AND THE MEDIA: 'DELEND A EST CARTHAGO'

The capacity to mislead an uninformed audience by repetitive slogans characterized one election in the not too distant past. This strategy was initiated perhaps by Cato with his completion of his speeches on any possible topic or occasion with his famous destructive three-word slogan. So three-word slogans have a long tradition of confusing and misleading. Partisans might remember, for example, Balance the Budget, Stop the Boats, End the Circus as well as the even shorter two-word promise of 'No Surprises'. There appears to be a confident assumption that the wider electorate can be persuaded to think about something else by the time they are next consulted.

An experienced commentator on the recent federal election (Michelle Grattan) hints that

¹⁰ The full citation for this oft-quoted passage is Discourses 43-8, 'Further Reflections Based on the Samnite Wars', *The Discourses*, 1970, Leslie Walker translation, edited by Bernard Crick, Penguin, p 517. The full title of the *Discourses* is not often cited - *Discourses on the first ten books of Titus Livy*.

Cato had many admirers and successful imitators:

It is testament to the skill, discipline and persistence of the Coalition that it has been able to propagate a consistent series of catastrophist mythologies and then convince the public that it is best suited to manage the recovery from the "mess".

In response, Labor has shifted between resistance, timidity and defeat. Tragically, it communicated its considerable economic achievements – including dodging the global financial crisis using a stunningly successful Keynesian strategy – with all the flair of an undertaker contemplating a new career as a chartered accountant.

5. APATHY AND ACCOUNTABILITY : BREAD AND CIRCUSES

One of the major worries of many political scientists and even some practitioners is that the community is increasingly alienated from its political leaders. As one young author, Jonathan Green, reported in a new book eloquently called *The Year My Politics Broke*:

(We have) a system that looks among us for the most deluded egotists, people whose true belief it is that they among all of us would be best placed to run an entire country and who then waste that democratic gift on the aggrandisement not of us but of self.

Politicians take what we think, feel and fear, and then consider how they might best turn that to their own advantage. It's hard to say which is the greater scandal: that the legitimate aspirations of voters and the most basic needs of the country should be so cynically treated by the political class, or that we so unthinkingly accept this self-serving reality.

There is a search for authenticity which is not perceived to exist in any of the major parties. This manifested itself in the last federal election where large numbers of voters, forced to express a preference, preferred the anti-politician antics of Clive Palmer or cast senate votes for a galaxy of single-interest or even fraudulent political operators in preference to more mainstream alternatives. This has meant that Abbott has not been able to 'stop the circus' which he depicted as being a result of Gillard depending on a negotiated balance of power involving Greens and independents.

With Palmer in the lower house and a diverse and currently indeterminate number of

independents in the upper house, there is now a different circus in town. Abbott would undoubtedly see this as better than the last circus, since he will now be the ringmaster. Barry Jones, an ALP stalwart of the Whitlam-Hawke era and an intellectual giant compared to his peers, pointed this out in one of his contributions to *The Conversation* website in October:

Tony Abbott has good reason to be satisfied with the result as he pursues the mission to take Politics out of politics - that is, serious debate about priorities, values, ideas and future directions: As he said, "Happy is the country which is more interested in sport than in politics because it shows there is a fundamental unity.

This places Abbott quite close in thinking to Juvenal, except that Juvenal was writing a Satire:

... duas tantum res anxius optat, Panem et circenses ...

Only two things does (the modern citizen) anxiously wish for - bread and circuses.¹¹



A banquet of gladiators talking to each other and feasting in the arena and disturbing a herd of resting bulls.

Bardo Museum, Thysdrus (Courtesy of Wikicommons)

¹¹ Juvenal, *Satires* no 10, line 80-1.

THE MYSTERY OF NESPERENNUB'S MUMMY¹²

Pamela Rushby

We were in Singapore, and went to see the new Gardens by the Bay. They are going to be magnificent, given a little more growing time, and we easily spent a few hours there. By then the heat was getting to us, and we went looking for air conditioning. We found it at the nearby Marina Bay Sands shopping centre. And we also found – ancient Egypt. In the centre's ArtScience Museum's exhibition space was a travelling British Museum exhibition: *Mummy: Secrets of the Tomb*.

The exhibition promised 'four exceptionally well-preserved' Egyptian mummies, including that of the 3000-year-old mummy, in a cartonnage case, of the high priest Nesperennub, as well as a 3D film which 'virtually unwrapped' his untouched mummy. How could we resist? We joined the queue.

First, we had to pass through an entrance where we were lined up to have our photographs taken wearing Egyptian head-dresses. Well, it was a big hit with the local kids. Then, it was into a theatre for the film.

It was impressive.

Nesperennub's body, in the cartonnage case and a wooden coffin, was discovered at Luxor in the 1890s. The exact location of his tomb is not known. The mummy was purchased from a local dealer by E.A. Wallis Budge, who visited Egypt regularly to purchase antiquities for the British Museum. In 1899, Nesperennub travelled to England.

At the same time, Budge noted the coffin of Ankhefenkhons. The inscriptions on the coffin indicate he was Nesperennub's father, so the burial place of Nesperennub may have held other members of the family. (The Hearst Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, holds the coffin of the lady Neskhonspakhered, described as the wife of Nesperennub, son of Ankhefenkhons. The husband and wife's coffins were clearly made by the same craftsman.)

Nesperennub lived in the Third Intermediate Period (1069-664BC). He (and his father) worked in the religious complex of Karnak, largely dedicated to Amun-Ra, though Nesperennub appears to have been a priest of

Khons, an ancient god associated with the moon. Khons' temple was in the south-west area of the temple complex.

Nesperennub belonged to a family of priests, associated for generations with Khons. He was of high status, with the title 'Opener of the Doors of Heaven', which indicates that his duties included opening the doors of the god's shrine each morning. Another title indicates he carried a fan in religious processions.

As a person of high status, Nesperennub's body, after death, would have been mummified using the best and most expensive process. His mummy has never been unwrapped.

The film told us that X-rays of Nesperennub, taken in the 1960s, had been disappointing, showing little detail. A CT scan in 2000 gave clearer images. This was used to create a full 3D volumetric dataset, which enabled the mummy to be 'unwrapped' on-screen in a film made in 2004.

Technology moved on, as it does, and in 2007 a new CT scan of Nesperennub was taken. This used a 'multi-slice' technique, with cross-section images taken at 0.6mm intervals. Each 'slice' can be examined, or 3D reconstructions of parts of the body created. Much closer study of Nesperennub was now possible, including the amulets that had been placed within his wrappings. Jewellery could also be studied in detail.

We were treated to a 'fly-through' journey through the mummy case.

Nesperennub, we found, was fully adult at his time of death. His teeth were well worn and he had had several dental abscesses. (We sympathised.) The condition of his spine, with only a minor degree of ageing, suggested Nesperennub died as a middle-aged man. His skeleton also indicated he had suffered illnesses, or periods of poor diet, before he had fully matured. A small hole in the bone of the skull above the left eye suggests an anomaly of the vascular system – a knot of blood vessels. This may have been the cause of his death, but it is impossible to say for certain.

All very interesting. Then came the surprise. The early X-rays had shown an opaque object on the top of Nesperennub's head, under his wrappings. No one knew what it was. The new 3D images revealed that the object was a small bowl, made of unfired clay. The images are so

¹² Pam Rushby saw this exhibition in Singapore, after it had visited Brisbane.

clear that the finger-and-thumb impressions of the original maker can be seen in the clay. So what is Nesperennub doing with a bowl on his head?

It's been suggested it was all a dreadful mistake. On Nesperennub's head, and on the bowl, a solidified semi-liquid mass can be seen. Possibly this is resin, used in the embalming process. The bowl may have been temporarily placed under Nesperennub's head to collect surplus resin as it ran off his body. Then – the resin set. The bowl became firmly stuck to the skull. Imagine the dismay, the confusion, in the embalmer's workshop. Efforts to remove the bowl seem to have resulted only in skin being torn away. What could the embarrassed embalmers do?

The solution appeared to be – wrap the body quickly, cover the bowl up, and say nothing. So Nesperennub went to his after-life in the Field of Reeds, wearing a bowl on his head. The mistake remained a secret for around 2800 years.

From the film, we continued through the exhibition. Schoolchildren were having a wonderful time making clay bowls and writing hieroglyphs. We passed statues, papyrus with the spells of the Book of the Dead, shabti figures, other mummies. We giggled about Nesperennub's unconventional headwear all the way.

Then, in the last room, was the mummy case of Nesperennub himself. The room was dark. The mummy case was contained in a glass case. The floor of the room was made of black glass, and it reflected dozens of small, twinkling lights set into the ceiling. Nesperennub's mummy case seemed to float in space and time and stars. It was very, very beautiful – and it immediately stopped us laughing about poor Nesperennub's bowl.

So we came out into the heat and humidity. We'd made contact with a life from the past. We probably knew more about Nesperennub's health and medical conditions than he'd ever known himself. We'd seen a breathtakingly beautiful exhibition. And we'd done it all in blissful air conditioning.¹³

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Roger Scott

TWO NAUGHTY BOYS WHO GOT A BAD PRESS: SPARTACUS AND ALCIBIADES

Mary Beard, in the *New York Review of Books* (May 9 2013), reviewed *Spartacus* by Aldo Schiavone, translated by Jeremy Carden ('Revealing Antiquity' series, Harvard University Press, 2013) The review starts characteristically at a tangent, reporting on an intriguing sketch of two men fighting on horseback uncovered on the wall of a fairly ordinary house in ancient Pompeii. One is labelled 'Spartacus' and Beard speculates that this may have been *the* Spartacus, forever envisaged as looking like Kirk Douglas. She traces through the ways in which the life of Spartacus has been mythologised over several centuries, especially in the years before and after the French Revolution, but later in twentieth century writings by Koestler and Fast.



Slave Revolt: in the Final Battle Crassus Defeats the Slaves and Spartacus is Killed (painter: Nikolo Sanesi, 1818-89)
courtesy of Wikicommons

When she finally gets around to Schiavone, she notes the painstaking way in which he has sought to separate the myth from the reality - in particular whether close analysis of the very sketchy sources suggest that there was a serious military challenge to the authority of Rome rather than a psychic fear about slave rebellions. Again parallels are drawn with pre-Civil War USA. Schiavone suggests, not

¹³ Mummy and Painted Cartonnage of an Unknown Woman, Walters Art Museum, 1941 (not from the BM exhibition).

absolutely convincingly in Beard's estimation, that Spartacus led something more akin to a successful mass gaol-break. Once the slave/gladia-tors were beyond immediate control, their problem was what to do next in order to fulfil their aspiration to return to their various homes, mainly outside Italy. The lack of direction in their wanderings around Italy reinforce this notion of strategic aimlessness. Beard suggests that this underplays the significance of the continuing local community discontent following the Social War which pitted non-Romans against other Italians, but agrees that Spartacus did not deserve to be reviled as a seditious revolutionary - or to be later mythologised by Hollywood.

Peter Green, by contrast, explains the strange career of Alcibiades in class terms. In the London Review of Books of 25 April, he reports on Debra Hamel's book, *The Mutilation of the Herms : unpacking an ancient mystery* (CreateSpace, March 2012). As these reviews characteristically offer much more than an assessment of a particular document, Green uses the occasion to provide a masterly overview of the political and social scene in Periclean Athens. Indeed he is somewhat dismissive of Hamel's 'too brief pamphlet'

(which) could have been even more useful, especially as a teaching tool, had she provided the complete texts in translation of all the sources (inscriptions included) for this famous episode, some of which are hard to come by.

It is not clear in the rest of the long review whether it is Green or Hamel speaking, but the topic is certainly interesting. It is suggested that Alcibiades was framed by anti-democratic forces who had grown in strength and confidence after the death of Pericles. They had been able to emphasise the socially dubious antecedents of radicals engaged in urban trade rather than aristocratic agriculture and appeal to anti-plebeian bias in assemblies. This translated into a strategic antipathy towards resourcing the navy and foreign adventures (like the planned and ill-fated invasion of Sicily).

In the incident of the mutilation of the Herms, good luck statuary widespread in the city of Athens were defaced and (a new word for Bob Milns) 'dephallused'. The probable perpetrators were members of an upper-class social club (hetaireia) in drunken revels but they were protected by their political representatives. They recruited perjurers and rogues to testify that it was Alcibiades and his own gang of notorious hell-raisers. A commission of enquiry was set up to investigate an event which

appeared profoundly destabilising in its attack on established religion and internal security. The perpetrators also succeeded in widening the terms of the enquiry to include a totally unrelated charge of parodying the rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries at private parties, where Alcibiades was almost certainly guilty (unless he was too drunk to remember). Once the court was underway, the claims against Alcibiades over the Hermes incident were exposed as baseless and promptly forgotten but, after the fleet sailed for Syracuse, the Eleusinian Mysteries charge was used to persecute Alcibiades and undermine his political authority. In the end, he chose not to return to face a hostile reception and defected to Sparta.

The naughty boy' theme is elaborated in a letter in response to Green's review from Matt Shipton (*London Review of Books*, 9 May 2013). Shipton is broadly admiring but chides Green for continuing the conventional translation of the Greek 'hetaireia' as a club, with its echoes of aristocratic gentility. He suggests that members of such 'clubs' had become increasingly youthful and violent by the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, expressing their identity through acts of sacrilege or aggression.

Violence it seems was used as a way to prove loyalty to friends of the same age and social status ... it seems odd to me that these groups should be called clubs. If the hetaireiai were composed of poor young men, and not the sons of old aristocratic families, would they still be called 'clubs', or would they be called 'gangs'?

REVIEW OF LATE ANTIQUITY EMPIRES

Three books reviewed by the ubiquitous and reliable Peter Brown for the *New York Review of Books* on 11 July 2013 lifted a tiny corner on the shroud of my knowledge about late antiquity in the middle east. The first book, deals with Arabia and the Horn of Africa (Bowersock, G W, *The Throne of Adulis - Red Sea Wars on the Eve of Islam*, OUP), the second is a more general study by the same author (Bowersock, G W, *Empires in Collision in Late Antiquity*, Brandeis University Press). The third (Crone, P, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran : Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (Cambridge University Press) is a more specialised study.

All three are judged by Brown as worthy of attention by specialists but I will concentrate here on the second, as the one I would read if it came to my notice in the library - only 95 pages long. The library might cavil at the cost per page (\$45

in hardback) and its availability from a more obscure source - Brandeis University and the Historical Society of Israel.

Brown says complimentary things about both Bowersock books, which have a common theme discussing the way the two great empires of the period became embroiled in conflict - the Roman and the Sassanian/Persian. Empires in Collision is identified as especially noteworthy for the author's capacity to focus new evidence to discredit older viewpoints: 'once-fashionable dogmas have spectacularly dissolved one after another'. As someone barely aware of such dogmas in the first place, I am pleased to learn that my lack of awareness appears as a positive virtue.

Brown emphasises the importance of these discoveries, particularly the contribution made by the Sassanians in sustaining the level of complexity and wealth in the provinces of East Rome which they had conquered and briefly held. When the Arabs arrived in the 630's they walked into a world 'with a rich tradition of Judaism, Christianity, paganism and Hellenism'. The Arabs arriving in Jerusalem in 638 were well-informed and well-disposed towards the civilisation they found there and were sensitive to the debates between Christians, Jews and pagans. Umar, the Muslim leader, was acting with sincerity in adopting the humble dress of a pilgrim when he entered Jerusalem. 'Only later did Byzantine chroniclers (their attitude hardened by centuries of war) dismiss this pious gesture as an act of 'satanic hypocrisy'.

This adds a new dimension to the idea of Islam and the Arabs penetrating from the depths of the desert, and their awareness of the religious and political context which facilitated their impact. There was, in Brown's word, an 'inter-visibility' between the various religions in the regions and the early Muslims were 'both conquerors and good listeners'.

As Brown concludes in discussing the victory of their religion over all others:

Victory was not enough. Muslims needed to be reassured. Far from leaving their subjects alone, out of proud indifference or sheer ignorance, they wanted to prove the superiority of their own religion by participating vigorously in the debates of others. They knew how to pick up the religious twittering of the age.

WHAT'S IN A WORD? (WHAT'S IN A BREAKFAST?)

Bob Milns

Now that the festive season is over, you may be feeling that you would like a diet of simple foods. I was thinking about simple foods as I was munching (Latin manducare = Italian mangiare) my breakfast and marvelling at how many of the breakfast foods, and our words for them, have come ultimately from Greek and Latin words. You might like to share the menu with me.

Let's start with our cereals. The word is from the Latin cerealis, belonging to Ceres, the Roman goddess of crops. After this, you might go on to bread and butter and marmalade. Bread, of course, is a good German word, though if, like me, you enjoy pane di casa, you're getting back to Latin through the Italian (panis = bread; casa = a peasant's hut).

Butter, believe it or not, ultimately is a good classical Greek word, boutyron, meaning 'cow-cheese'. The earliest use of the word that I can find is in the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, translated into Greek at Alexandria c. 270 BC. The passage is Genesis 18.8 where Abraham offers the three angels (another Greek word) who have come to visit him and his hitherto barren wife Sarah a meal of veal, butter and milk.

Marmalade, which comes to us directly from French and Portuguese, ultimately is an ancient Greek word, melimelon, meaning 'honey apple', i.e. quince. If you want to be really indulgent, you could top up the marmalade with a dollop of cream – again, an ancient Greek word in origin, from the word chrisma, which you will recognise in its ecclesiastical form, chrism = holy oil or unguent. After this modest repast, you might like to finish with a nice cup of tea. I personally like plain, simple English Breakfast tea, but some people like flavoured tea, e.g. camomile, which, of course, has the scent and flavour of this aromatic plant, which allegedly has medicinal uses. But where is the word from? Greek, of course! From the ancient word chamaimelon = 'earth apple', allegedly because of the flower's smell.

Having now finished your classically based and so wholesome breakfast, you may dispense with all thoughts of a diet except one: it's yet another classical Greek word!! Diata, our English word 'diet', in Greek means a regulated way of life, often as the means of gaining or maintaining your bodily health by means of controlled intake of food together with exercise – which sounds an excellent resolution to make for the New Year.

Happy New Year to all readers,

TWO POEMS

Bob Milns

Vlad Tepes¹⁴

From Transylvania comes a tale,
So gruesome and so sad,
About a most ferocious man,
Bloodthirsty, brutal Vlad.

One trick he had to make you writhe –
I shudder to tell the tale –
His captured foes, when still alive,
On a sharp stake he'd impale.

And as they squirmed and shrieked with pain
And oh so slowly died,
Vlad sat and viewed his ghastly work
With pleasure and with pride.

His name lives on in infamy,
This so sadistic joker;
For he became the impulse
For the vampire of Bram Stoker.

The Constitutional Merry-Go-Round¹⁵

The office of king is a dangerous thing,
For a king can change to a dictator;
Office based upon birth often causes much mirth
When the holder turns out a fifth-rater;

All oligarchs are just like great white sharks,
For they just want to devour your cash;
Democracy's rules just empower the fools
Whose excess needs a touch of the lash;
And the mixed constitution brings its own retribution,

Since each part is at war with the rest.
So it's obvious to me that the world ne'er will be
Happy, since no constitution's the best!

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**SHAKESPEARE IN ROME
29 APRIL – 3 MAY 2014**

You are invited to be part of a unique study abroad program: 'Shakespeare in Rome' will be held at the British School at Rome and other venues, exploring Shakespeare and his engagement with classical culture. There will also be a wonderful day trip to the Renaissance gardens of Villa d'Este and Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli. No experience required; all welcome; limited to 10 places. Full flyer available at: <http://world-shake.ru/en/news/3607.html>.

For more details contact:
victoria.bladen@uqconnect.edu.au

¹⁴ 'VLAD' has been in the news recently as an acronym for the 'Bikies' legislation *Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment* laws. I thought readers might like to be reminded of Professor Milns' helpful verse, first published in *Nova* two years ago (ed.). Tepes ('the Impaler') was the name given to the Wallachian prince Vlad Dracula ('son of the Dragon'), who lived from 1431 to 1476 and fought against the Ottoman Turks. He was renowned for his cruel treatment of his captured enemies, with impaling his victims on stakes being his speciality. He was the inspiration for Bram Stoker's novel 'Dracula'

¹⁵ This poem was written for the talk on the Ideal Constitution (see p.10).

**2014 FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY
EVENTS PROGRAM ¹⁶**

**JANUARY - NO SUNDAY SERIES
LECTURE**

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 2

2pm
Dr Dorothy Watts, Emeritus Professor Bob
Milns, Mr Denis Brosnan, Mr Jack Taylor

**THE ADRIAN HEYWORTH-SMITH MEMORIAL
LECTURE**

ADRIAN'S FAVOURITE LATIN POETS

SUNDAY MARCH 2

2pm
Mr Michael Welch
**THE ROLE OF ANECDOTES, ETC. IN THE
CULTURAL MEMORY OF PHILIP II, FATHER OF
ALEXANDER THE GREAT**

2.30pm
Dr Amelia Brown

**IMAGE OF A LION: REMEMBERING
THERMOPYLAE IN ANTIQUITY**

SUNDAY APRIL 6

2pm
Mr James Donaldson

**IRON MIXED WITH CLAY: MARRIAGE
STRATEGIES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF
HERODIAN IDENTITY**

2.30pm
Dr Janette McWilliam

**CHILDREN AND PARENTAL AMBITIONS IN THE
ROMAN WORLD.**

SUNDAY MAY 4

2pm
Dr Richard Miles (University of Sydney)

**CARTHAGE: THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN'S
FORGOTTEN CIVILISATION**

SUNDAY JUNE 1:

2pm
Miss Lisette Cockell
topic TBA;

2.30pm
Dr Drina Oldroyd

**DANTE ALIGHIERI: MEDIAEVAL IMITATOR OF
THE CLASSICAL EPIC**

SUNDAY JULY 6

2pm
Emeritus Professor. Bob Milns

**RETRACING THE FOOTSTEPS OF ALEXANDER
THE GREAT**

+

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2014 BETTY FLETCHER
SCHOLAR

+

REPORT BY THE 2013 BETTY FLETCHER SCHOLAR.

SUNDAY AUGUST 10

speaker and topic TBA

SATURDAY AUGUST 30

ANCIENT HISTORY DAY

'CHILDREN IN THE ANCIENT WORLD'

¹⁶ Sunday Series Lectures will be normally be held in Room E302, Forgan Smith Building. Any changes will be clearly indicated on the day. An entry donation of \$5 includes refreshments.