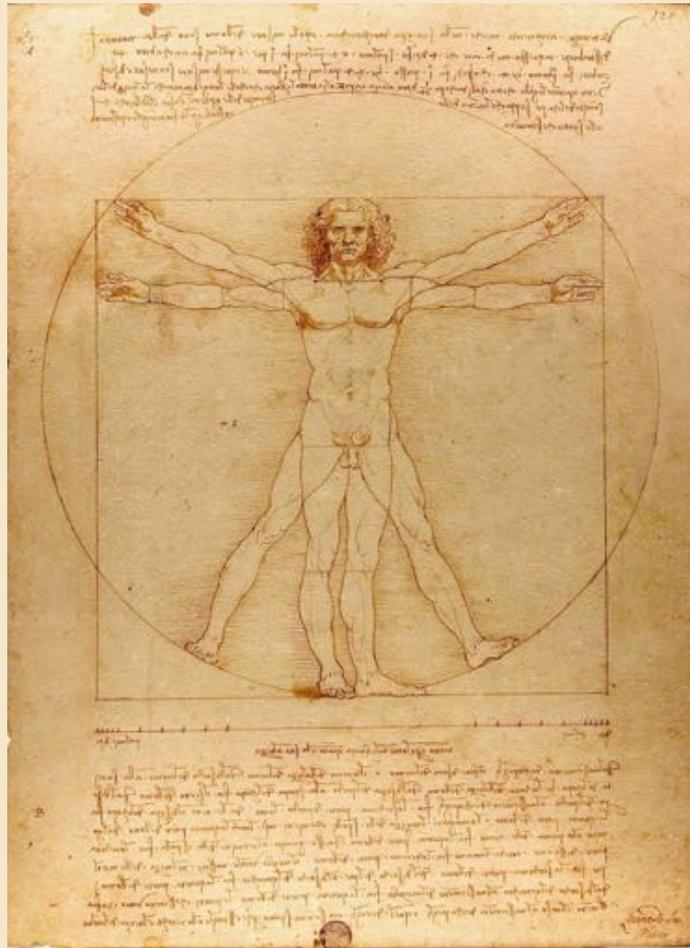


# NOVA



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**EDITORIAL**

**Ann Scott**

**Program changes**

Please double check your diaries against the 2015 program details on the back of this issue of *Nova*. We have made a few date or topic changes since we published our provisional program last October.

There are two significant changes from recent years. The first is that we will be holding Ancient History Day earlier in the year in order to make it more convenient for schools. So you will see from the program on the back page of this *Nova* that this year's AHD will be held on Saturday 21st March, on the topic:

**'Eat, Drink and Be Merry: Food, Drink and Nutrition in the Ancient World'**

The other change to note is that we will not have our AGM at Women's College. Instead we will have it immediately preceding the Sunday Series lecture being given by Professor Milns on 31 May 2015. The Committee felt that this would be a practical change to our previous routine, making the AGM more accessible to our regular Sunday Series attenders.

**Weekend parking - update**

One other practical matter to report is that we were distressed last year that people were deterred from parking in the multi-story carparks by confusing signs when wanting to come to the Sunday Series lectures or Ancient History Day. We have received confirmation from the University authorities that the electronic sign should have been programmed to turn off over the weekend. This error should have been corrected by now, so please don't let this deter you from parking there in future.

**A special *Nova***

Towards the end of 2014 the Head of School, Martin Crotty, described Classics as 'punching above its weight'. We reproduce his speech in this *Nova*). It was certainly an excellent year.

On 29 October, Professor Blanshard gave his inaugural lecture to a packed lecture hall. He has kindly agreed to allow *Nova* to publish his address.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Roger Scott**

**What's in a name? 'Historical and Philosophical Inquiry'**

Associate Professor Martin Crotty gave his last speech as Head of the School of 'History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics' at the end of 2014; heard by an audience which will no longer identify with the acronym of HPRC.

Instead Martin, and all of us, will learn to relish the shortening of the acronym by one letter to HPI and the shortening of the full name by two letters and a comma. Still, it could have been worse. This HPI title was the outcome of hard bargaining and creative introspection inside the School. The need for change was apparently non-negotiable - and the solution self-evident once it had been determined that inclusive abstractions must be the symbol of the wider change away from an old-fashioned four-letter word like Arts.

As a political scientist and former senior administrator, I was not at all surprised that those further up the hierarchy preferred something even simpler - like a School of History and Philosophy. So much neater and shorter, almost saucy - HP for anyone? Those within the School and especially those within Classics and Ancient History felt aggrieved that two of the four discipline areas would have been expunged.

A selective letter-writing campaign by Old Friends was sufficient to mobilise support to convince the hierarchy to adopt the negotiated new title suggested from within the School. Again, political scientists would expect that those further away from 'the factory floor' have less stake in the local outcome. They can shift ground on items at the margins so as to concentrate on the 'bigger picture', in this case Faculty amalgamations.

The School name change in this case should benefit teachers and students of Classics and Ancient History. Two faculties - Arts and Social Sciences - were merged to become Humanities and Social Sciences. This opens up new market opportunities, a bit like Free Trade Agreements. The Arts degree and various other degree combinations will allow more students to choose the benefit of a 'classical' education alongside their chosen specialist vocational preparation. It will also allow staff the opportunity to work in wider and potentially fruitful fields of interdisciplinary studies previously segregated by faculty borders. HaPI outcome: RIPHPRC.

**CLASSICS AT UQ ‘PUNCHING ABOVE ITS WEIGHT’<sup>1</sup>**

**Martin Crotty**

Welcome everyone. It’s another week as Head of School, and another Classics and Ancient History function to open. I sometimes think I should just put a permanent slot in my diary for ‘Classics and Ancient History’ – and as the details come in, I can just tick off whether it’s an exhibition opening, a public lecture, an inaugural lecture, an undergraduate debate, or a function where Classics and Ancient History staff and students collect yet more richly-deserved prizes and honours.

I thought the Classics and Ancient History discipline had a stellar second half of 2013 with Janette McWilliam’s teaching award, the wonderful donation of an endowed Chair by Dr Paul Eliadis, and the appointment of Professor Alastair Blanshard as its inaugural holder, as the most conspicuous standouts.

But the discipline in 2014 seems to have done its best to exceed even those ridiculously high levels of achievement. Two or three weeks ago I adjudicated a debate between Classics and Ancient History undergraduates and those of the Medieval and Early Modern Society. What fun that was to spend time with students who took a very large view of their education and who have such an obvious passion for their discipline. Two nights ago I had the honour of chiring Alastair Blanshard’s extraordinary inaugural professorial lecture. It’s about two months since I signed off on David Pritchard’s prestigious fellowship at Durham, and about six months since we welcomed Tom Stevenson back from his fellowship in Cincinnati. I had celebrated the Museum staff collecting the Chancellor’s awards for general staff excellence earlier this year, had the pleasure of opening the ‘A Study in Stone’ exhibition, and there was much more besides.

I must also mention and, if you’ll be patient, read to you an email that I received from a student some weeks ago. Out of the blue, this student wrote to me:

I am writing to say thank you. Last year I travelled back to England to visit family, and made the obligatory pilgrimage to the British Museum to pay homage to the Parthenon marbles. I sat on a bench in the atrium and realised that I would regret it for the rest of my life if I didn’t pursue my passion

for Classics. I applied through QTAC that night and four days later I received an email from The University of Queensland confirming my enrolment in a (graduate) Diploma of Arts in Ancient History.

I spent the next few weeks explaining to friends, family and my (shocked) employer that I was resigning from my graduate job and heading back to university to fulfill a life-long passion for Classics.

This past year has opened my eyes to a whole new world and society of people that share my passion and enthusiasm for all that is Greek, Roman and made of marble. I have held coins circulated during the reign of Julius Caesar, I have inspected Roman oil lamps, and just this week I read through the pages of a four hundred year old book of Homer. I have been taught by lecturers who seem ready to burst with excitement for their subject. I have met students who share my buzzing delight at reading archaic poetry.

As my course comes to an end this semester, I just want to express my sincere gratitude to you and your wonderful school. The Ancient History major has consistently been fulfilling and rewarding. ...

Please pass this on to your wonderful teaching staff and course coordinators. You have created a spectacular course.

I want to congratulate, warmly, even fulsomely, and most sincerely, the Museum staff, the Museum Director, all of the volunteers and interns, the Classics and Ancient History staff, Classics and Ancient History honoraries and alumni and the Friends of Antiquity. Tonight’s exhibition opening is yet another instalment in a record of remarkable achievement by a discipline which at one stage, not so very long ago, was passing through some rather difficult times indeed.

As a discipline, Classics and Ancient History at UQ punches far above its weight, achieves remarkable things, and offers both inspiration and a shining example for the rest of us. I am sure that everyone here who is not of the Classics and Ancient History discipline will happily join me in figuratively ‘doffing my lid’ to those of you who are. Well done.

Tonight’s opening of this exhibition, Curious Cabinets, is a great way to celebrate another successful year for the Antiquities Museum, and to

<sup>1</sup> In October 2014, the Head of School, Associate Professor Martin Crotty, opened the ‘Curious Cabinets’ exhibition at the R D Milns Antiquities Museum. I asked whether I could reproduce his speech in Nova because he summed up so well the recent achievements in Classics. (Ed.)

celebrate another group of people who contribute to the discipline. The three interns were chosen from a field of nineteen applicants, and they have spent several hours in the museum every week learning about museum practice and doing it themselves, in a very 'hands on' way, as part of their assessment for ANCH2090 Classical Archaeology in Museums.

Janette McWilliam tells me that European aristocrats from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment collected artefacts, which they displayed in informally or aesthetically arranged cabinets, which were known as "cabinets of curiosities". Curious Cabinets draws inspiration from these eclectic collections. Organised thematically into four distinct but related sections, the curious artefacts on display tell two parallel stories. Chiefly, the exhibition explores the evolution of modern museums from private, aristocratic collections into modern, scientifically arranged museums. However, the exhibition also draws on the Antiquities Museum's own collection, displaying artefacts with curious stories of their own. By showcasing the very essence of curious cabinets, both antique and modern, it is possible to gain an insight into the way that museums developed and our approaches to the past.

One might say, in a rather off-hand way, that an event such as this 'ticks all the boxes'. In a rather more sincere way, can I say that this embodies much of the good of academia, and many of the great strengths of the Classics and Ancient History discipline. We have volunteers, in effect, in the interns. We have the museum – what an asset! We have award-winning staff extracting teaching and research value from the collection. We have active, hands-on learning. We have a community coming together to celebrate the work of these interns. And if course, we have the exhibition itself. It thus gives me tremendous and very genuine pleasure to declare the Curious Cabinets exhibition open.

**WHY THE ANCIENT GREEKS MATTER**

**INAUGURAL LECTURE**

**Professor Alastair Blanshard**

When extra-terrestrial life first encounters mankind, it is almost certainly going to be disappointed. If NASA's plans work out, aliens should arrive expecting a planet populated by creatures with the physique of classical statues. The fatter, softer, older, and more ethnically diverse reality of the world will come as a huge surprise. Certainly, the strong impression given by the plaques attached to the Pioneer 10 and 11 spacecraft (fig.1) is that

humanity only comes in one shape – and that shape is Greek.

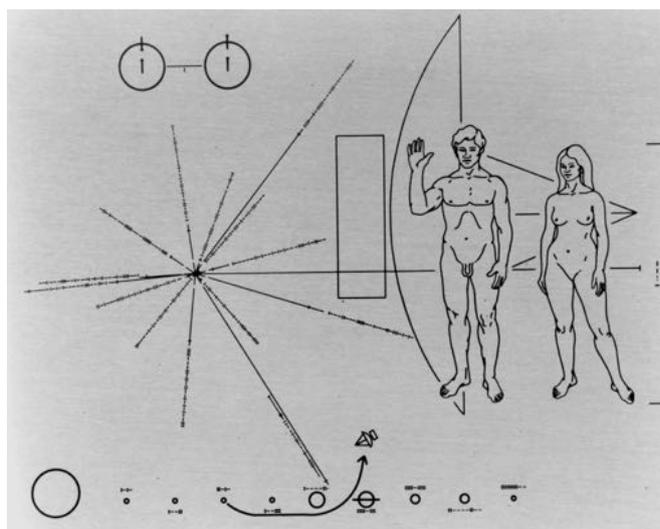


Fig. 1  
Plaques attached to Pioneer 10 and 11. Designed by Linda Salzman Sagan, 1972.

The Pioneer plaques, described as 'mankind's first serious attempt to communicate with extraterrestrial civilizations,' were designed by the American cosmologist Carl Sagan and his wife Linda. Composed of gold-anodized aluminum, the plaques are designed to last in the vacuum of space for over 100 million years, making them mankind's most durable artifacts. When the Earth is no longer habitable, these plaques will still remain as testament to how mankind saw itself. The plaques are divided into two sections. The radial lines on the left of the plaque represent the position and periods of fourteen pulsars with respect to our solar system. Using this information, alien civilizations should be able to pinpoint the time and location of the spacecraft's launch. The right-hand side represents the species that sent this probe into outer space.

The Sagens were explicit about the influence of Greek art in their drawings of mankind. The figures were drawn by Linda and it was to Greek statuary that she turned for inspiration. 'The body shape and proportion are derived from Greek sculpture; only in the hair styles did we make a concession to contemporary fashion', Carl Sagan said. The figures were depicted nude because that was what Greek art decreed. It also meant that the bodies were hairless. The conventions of Greek art even decided the form that the nudity took.

One of the most controversial elements of the representation related to the depiction of women. A fact that upset a number of people at the time of

the Pioneer 10 launch was the lack of female genitalia in the representation of the woman. Once again, the Greeks came to the rescue. Challenged about the lack of any hint of external genitalia in the depiction of the woman, Carl Sagan responded that 'the decision to omit a very short line in this diagram was partly made because conventional representation in Greek statuary omits it.'

The Sagans felt confident in turning to Greek art for their representation of ideal man because they were working in a long-established and venerated tradition. Leonardo da Vinci's 'Vitruvian Man' (fig.2) was cited by them as an important precedent for their endeavour. This work of art has become canonical in our thinking about the human body. And once again, the influence of the classical world can be easily felt. The title of the work gives the clue. The work is called 'Vitruvian man' because it is an illustration of a section of Book Three of the Roman writer Vitruvius' masterwork, De Architectura ('On Architecture')

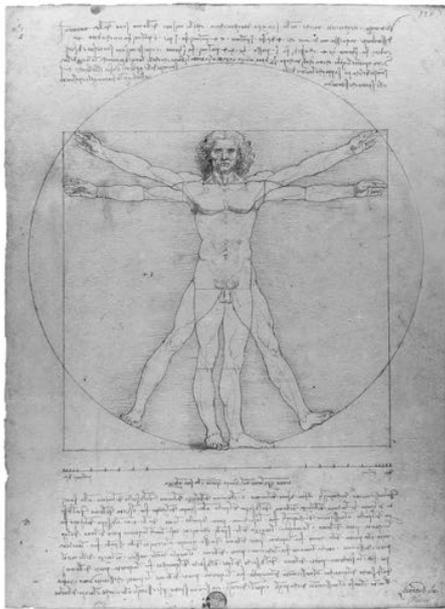


Fig. 2  
Vitruvian Man, Leonardo da Vinci, c. 1490. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

This section is devoted to a discussion of the correct design of temples. The design of these buildings, Vitruvius says, should be governed by principles of symmetry and proportion. In this, they resemble the body, whose form, Vitruvius argues, represents a model of geometric perfection. For Vitruvius there was no better evidence of this perfection than the ability of the body to be contained by both a square and a circle. :

In the human body the central point is the navel. If a man is placed flat on his back, with his hands and feet extended, and a pair of compasses

centred at his navel, the fingers and toes of his two hands and feet will touch the circumference of a circle. And just as the human body yields a circular outline, so too a square figure may be found from it. For if we measure the distance from the soles of the feet to the top of the head, and then apply that measure to the outstretched arms, the breadth will be found to be the same as the height. (Vitruvius, On Architecture 3.1.3)

It was this description that inspired Leonardo's famous cartoon. The writing that surrounds the image in the manuscript in which it is located shows Leonardo's notes (written in his famous mirror writing) on this passage of text.

But, of course, Vitruvius wasn't writing in a vacuum. He was the heir to a specific set of ideal proportions of the human body that had come earlier from the Greeks. In particular, the famous canon of the sculptor Polykleitus, whose prescriptions on the proportions of the body were extraordinarily influential. When Vitruvius thought of the perfect body, it was a Greek body that he was thinking about.

The Pioneer plaques represent an extraordinary sequence of events, where Greek sculpture is picked by a Roman writer, who then proves inspirational to a Renaissance artist, who then inspires a 70s cosmologist, who then sends out the image into outer space to become emblematic of man for alien civilizations.

What is important is that at each step - whether it is in the Roman period, the Renaissance, the 70s, or 100 million light years from now - when we have to think about what it means to be human, when we want to represent ourselves to the best of our ability, when we want to reduce ourselves to our essential essence, when we want to find some point of communication with the Other, it is to the Greeks that we turn. The Greeks run through our cultural DNA. They set the parameters of what it means to be human.

And that in essence would be one of the most important reasons why the Greeks matter. They are inexorably and intrinsically tied up with our notions of ourselves. Put simply, the Greeks matter because of their influence - on some level, as Shelley put it, 'We are All Greeks'.

However, there are other arguments that could be advanced about why the Greeks matter. Another way of arguing this case would be to say that the Greeks matter because of their primacy. Namely, the Greeks matter because they did things first. It is a tremendous catalogues of firsts that belong to the Greeks. The stories of philosophy, democracy, mathematics, and science all begin with the

Greeks. There is also the great catalogue of literary genres that they bequeathed to us – drama, epic, bucolic, lyric etc. So many firsts. Paul Eliadis is very keen on the image of the Greeks writing the birth certificate for civilization, and he’s absolutely right.

So far, I have canvassed two very traditional ways of arguing for the importance of the Greeks. I would now like to think about another way of answering the question. Instead of focusing on their influence or the things they did first, I want to argue that the Greeks matter because of what they did best.

In the rest of this lecture, I want to single out three elements that I think are exceptional about Greek civilization and hold important lessons for us today. Those three elements are the importance the Greeks gave to ‘frank speech’; their capacity to create a strong sense of community; and finally their ability to inculcate of a sense of wonder in their populace.

**Frank Speech**

At a key point in Plato’s Republic, Plato turns to thinking about what constitutes the democratic city. He offers the following observation: ‘[The democratic city is] the city that is overflowing with freedom and frank speech.’ (Plato, Republic 557b)

These days we are very good at thinking about that first element. The political discourse of rights and freedoms is something that democratic theorists know and understand well. But it is the second aspect ‘frank speech’ - the slightly usual addition, the bit that looks to me most Greek in the formulation - that I want to focus on.

The word that Plato uses here for ‘frank speech’ is the Greek word *παρρησία* (*parrhesia*). It is a word largely unknown before the birth of democracy and indeed the institution and the vocabulary seem to go together. *Parrhesia* is a compound word from ‘pas/pan’ meaning ‘all or everything’ and ‘rhesis’ meaning ‘speech or utterance’. So literally *parrhesia* is the saying of everything, nothing is excluded, no idea is too dangerous to entertain.

And here I think it is important to underline one of the key features of *parrhesia*. *Parrhesia* is not ‘freedom of speech’, which is how it is often translated. It includes that idea, but it also gestures towards something more. It is edgy, surprising, disturbing, and unconventional speech. Speech not varnished by rhetoric. It is a form of truth-telling. It is saying the things that people don’t want to hear.

This ethos of frank speech manifests itself in a number of ways. It is the element that makes Greek political debate so fascinating and vibrant. And it is, correspondingly, its absence that makes

contemporary political speech so dull. It is the cult of frank speech that allowed a politician like Demosthenes (fig.3) to stand up and make unpopular, but necessary proposals. As he remarks in his *Olynthiacs*:

‘I am not talking just to pick a quarrel with you ... rather I consider it my duty as a citizen to put matters of safety above issues of popularity. This was the principle that guided the orators of the past ... I refer to the famous Aristides, to Nicias, to my own namesake [Demosthenes, the general], and to Pericles.’ (3.21)

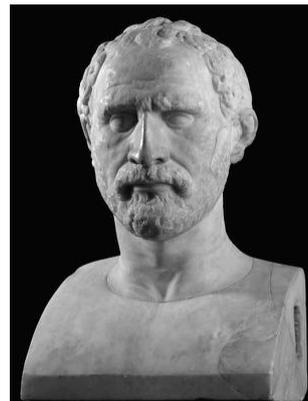


Fig. 3  
Portrait head of Demosthenes. Roman copy of statue by Polyeuktos. British Museum 1973,0303.2

*Parrhesia* does not just create the space for Demosthenes to say unpopular things. *Parrhesia* gives them weight and authority. However, it is not just in the political arena that we see ‘frank speech’. Frank speech bleeds into every aspect of democratic culture. It informs politics and literature.

One of the great pleasures that I have had over this last semester has been running an upper-level undergraduate course on the history and literature of the Peloponnesian War, the great conflict that consumed the Greek world in the final third of the fifth century BC.

This was a war of unprecedented scale and brutality. It rewrote the nature of Greek conflict. Never had a war lasted so long, never had so many died, never had the consequences been so great. This is the war that will see the end of the Athenian Empire.

Yet what is striking about it for me is the bravery of the literature produced during this period. Athens does not retreat into soft, comfortable patriot rhetoric. Think in contrast about the dreadful war films our own culture produced during the Second World War. Films like *Hitler*, *Beast of Berlin* (1939), *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939), and my all-time favourite, *In Which We Serve* (1942) all

perpetuated stereotypes where two-dimensional noble, plucky Allies fought off evil, brutal Germans bent on world domination.

It is notable that it is hard to find any parallel for this sort of nonsense in Athens during the time of the Peloponnesian War. That Athens, at the point in its history when it was most under pressure, when it was most threatened, most vulnerable, eschewed the easy call of patriotic art seems to me remarkable.

Instead, Greek drama - especially tragedy - took this fragile city and turned the screws. There was no sense that the duty of art was to toe the party line or be unquestionably patriotic. Moreover, this wasn't some fringe theatre. Athenian dramatists were not Bloomsbury pacifists scribbling to each other in private letters. The Great Dionysia at which theatre was staged was one of the largest state-sponsored festivals in the civic calendar. All citizens were invited to attend and the city went out of its way to help ensure this. The citizens and generals fighting the war populated the audience.

These days, it has become popular to play down the radical and transgressive nature of tragedy - to see it as just another form of democratic ideology. While it is a view for which I have a certain degree of sympathy when thinking about the framing of tragedy, it does seem to me to miss the central project of tragedy. Because at the heart of tragedy lies reversal. Tragedy delights in taking your comfortable assumptions and turning them on its head.

Tragedy is the enemy of slogans. For example, you might think that it is perfectly acceptable to live your life guided by the principle that you should 'help your friends and harm your enemies.' Tragedy takes this maxim and shows just what a world governed by it would look like. In Euripides' Trojan Women (415 BC), we see Troy in the aftermath of the Greek victory. The picture it paints of revenge and recrimination is a terrible one. Once noble women are parcelled out to cruel or indifferent masters. An innocent child is hurled from the battlements lest it grow up seeking revenge for its murdered father. A young girl is sacrificed on a tomb, her blood an offering to a now dead hero. Never has victory looked so inglorious.

And it is worth noting that this play was performed in the aftermath of one of the most brutal Athenian massacres of the Peloponnesian War, when Athens slaughtered the citizens of the island of Melos. A number of members of the Athenian audience who attended Trojan Women would have left the theatre to go back home to be attended by Melian slave women still mourning their murdered husbands and

for whom the destruction of their city was still fresh and raw.

Trojan Women is not an isolated example. We see this same sharp critical knife applied again and again. Tragedy never lets you get comfortable.

If you think that all you need to do in life is serve the State and obey your elders then Sophocles' Philoctetes will prove unsettling. Here we see the older Odysseus corrupting the young Neoptolemus and the pitiful plight of the abandoned, wounded Philoctetes, left by his comrades to rot on an island as they pursued greater glory at the walls of Troy.

Likewise if you thought hope lay with the Gods, tragedy has some surprises for you. Piety proves to be a difficult virtue on the tragic stage. If you are too zealous in your devotion you will end up like Hippolytus, your body shattered and broken as a result of your father's curses. On the other hand, if you are too reticent to offer divine flattery, then the fate of Pentheus awaits, your head ripped off by your mother's bare hands as she dances in an ecstatic trance.

If you think that it is perfectly OK to deny women any say in the running of the State, to disenfranchise them and keep them at home, or to think that they are powerless or lack the capacity to govern. Well, tragedy has some lessons for you.

Whether it is the heroine Antigone, who will stand toe-to-toe with the ruler of Thebes in order to give her brother the burial that he deserves, or Electra, a woman prepared to take on the task of organizing the revenge of her murdered father, or even the abandoned child-killer Medea, each tragic heroine will remind you, not only about women's extraordinary capabilities, but also the plight of the women that you exclude from public office. The theatre may have involved male actors performing for an almost exclusively male audience, but tragedy refuses to completely silence the feminine. As Medea laments:

Of all creatures that have breath and sensation, we women are the most unfortunate. At an exorbitant price we must buy with a dowry a husband and master of our bodies, and this husband determines our fortune ... If our husbands live with us without resenting the marriage-yoke, our life is enviable. Otherwise, death is preferable. A man, whenever he is annoyed with the company of those in the house, goes out ... But we must fix our gaze on one person only. Men say that we live a life free from danger at home while they fight with the spear. How wrong they are! I would rather stand three

times with a shield in battle than give birth once.  
(Medea 230-50, trans. Kovas)

It is a powerful, moving, challenging text. It is easy to understand why it proved so popular with early twentieth-century suffragettes. The Actresses Franchise League used to begin every meeting with it and Sylvia Pankhurst regarded it as one of her favourite works.

The challenges that tragedy – a State-sponsored and promoted medium - posed to normative ideology is a story that could fill a whole lecture, but I want to move on and discuss the second of my Greek virtues.

**A Sense of Community**

It is remarkable that, despite all this frank speech, the Athenians managed to maintain a strong sense of community. It is a feature that we find paralleled in a number of other city-states. I have long been interested in the nature of crime in the ancient city and why incidence of certain crimes such as property theft seem to be remarkably low. For example, in comparison to other cultures, Athens (and indeed most Greek states) has a very underdeveloped legal system for dealing with theft.

Amongst the many distinctive criminological features of ancient Greece, one has always intrigued me. Why are there no serial killers in the ancient world? The claim that Rome at its height was a city the size of Victorian London is routinely made. If this is true, where then is antiquity's equivalent of Jack the Ripper?

Part of the answer might be to say that there were not any serial killers in the ancient world, because even today they are very rare. That is to say, the serial killer is largely a phenomenon of our media and our particular fears and anxieties. On some level, this must be true. However, I am also interested in what explanatory discourses such as criminology and psychiatry might say, because their answer would be slightly different.

If you start to look at the literature on the topic, there is a reasonably robust set of predictive factors for serial homicide. These are that the subject feels a sense of isolation from community and family; that he (it is almost always a 'he') lacks a defined place and role in social hierarchy; and that the killer lacks role models able to mitigate social humiliations.

The unifying feature underlying these factors is the idea of isolation and loneliness. Yet in the ancient world, particularly the ancient Greek polis, it seems that it was impossible to ever be lonely.

Certainly the Ancients have a developed concept of solitude, but loneliness is another matter. In the ancient city, you were always surrounded by friends, family, or slaves. Your social status was fixed in a way that is not possible in the modern, industrialized, atomized State. In the ancient Greek world, you did not have the burden of having to face your problems on your own. In fact, trying to find moments where individuals exercise independent judgment is hard. Every decision from marriage, to sale of property, to how you would vote in the Assembly was done in concert with others.

Finding lonely people in Athens is difficult. This seems to be the point of Menander's play, the *Dyskolos*, which begins with a grumpy old man, Knemon, who just wants to be left alone. In his opening lines, he laments the presence of people and wishes that he had wings so he could avoid people and Medusa's head so that he could turn them to stone, if they came too close.

However, the whole trajectory of the play is to show the impossibility and undesirability of Knemon ever getting his dream. Through the actions of the god Pan and a cunning slave, he is eventually reconciled to his community and the play ends in an elaborate wedding feast and Knemon forced to join in the drinking and singing with the others.

Even apparent misanthropes like Diogenes of Sinope thrived on human contact. Diogenes, the founder of the philosophical movement known as Cynicism, was infamous for his anti-social activities. Many stories were told about his life. He supposedly lived in a giant storage jar in the central marketplace of Athens. Unshaven and unwashed, he rolled his jar onto the hot sands in summer so that he sweltered and in winter he wandered the streets barely clothed and embraced snow-covered statues so that he could experience the pain of bitter cold. No person, no matter what their status, was exempt from his abuse. He berated Alexander the Great for standing around and blocking out the sun when he came to visit him. In an insulting lesson to the prince, he pretended to be unable to distinguish the bones of Alexander's father Philip from the bones of a common slave. Thereby teaching him a lesson about the equality that we all experience in death.

Yet the important point about so many of the stories of Diogenes is that they require an audience. Paradoxically, it is very hard to be misanthropic by yourself. It takes two to be grouchy. There seems to me no better illustration of this than the famous story of Diogenes, wandering the city with a lamp during daylight

hours, pompously declaring that he was looking unsuccessfully for an honest man (fig. 4).



Fig. 4

Diogenes looking for an Honest Man. 18th-century print. British Museum 1935,0522.3.64.

The act only works if somebody stops Diogenes to ask ‘why are you wandering the streets with a lamp while the sun is shining’. If no one stops to talk to Diogenes, then the joke doesn’t have a punch line. Without an audience to play off and question him, Diogenes would just be a madman alone in a barrel. It is society that makes him a philosopher.

**A Sense of Wonder**

The final Greek virtue that I want to address is the creation of a sense of wonder. From the beginning, the Greeks had a strong sense of the marvellous. Arguably, it was this sense that led to the creation of the discipline of history. The opening words of Herodotus’ *History*, the first work of history in the Western tradition, capture this feeling:

Herodotus of Halicarnassus here displays his inquiry (historia), so that human achievements may not be forgotten in time, and great and marvelous deeds — some displayed by Greeks, some by barbarians — may not be without their glory. (1.1)

History then is a catalogue of great things. This cataloguing of marvels is a project that starts with Herodotus, but continues long after him, all the way through to the Hellenistic period. The most famous catalogue of marvels is, of course, the list compiled at some point in the Hellenistic period that we know as ‘The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World’. It was a tremendously influential list including the statue of Zeus by Phidias, the lighthouse of Alexandria, the mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the Great Pyramid in Egypt, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, and the Colossus of Rhodes.

It is important to note that this list of wonders is not exclusively Greek. Just as Herodotus regarded the great achievements of the barbarians as worthy of inclusion in his history, so too does the ‘Seven Wonders of the World’ include the Great Pyramid of Egypt and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Now, as anyone who has been to Egypt will tell you, it would be hard to draw up a list of ancient wonders and not include the Pyramids.

The Hanging Gardens are a very different matter. And the main reason why their inclusion is so odd is that no Greek ever saw the Hanging Gardens. By the time the list was drawn up, they had long gone. Indeed, it seems highly likely that they never existed in the first place. They are a myth. We cannot find any archaeological evidence for their existence in Babylon. The stories about them are terribly inconsistent and just do not make sense. What seems to have happened is that stories about fabulous gardens in Nineveh over time have been embroidered and elaborated and then translated to Babylon

The fact that we have an invented wonder by a foreign power on our list is significant. It speaks of a deliberate desire to include non-Greek works into the list; a belief that wonder exists beyond and, is not owned by, any particular ethnicity and nationality.

It has become very fashionable to deride the Greeks for their xenophobia and ethnic stereotyping. Works such as Edith Hall’s *Inventing the Barbarian*, Benjamin Isaacs’ *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, and Francois Hartog’s *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History* have been very good at bringing to our attention the ways in which the Greeks could be exclusionary and xenophobic.

Yet, it is worth stressing that these features are most extreme during the period of the Athenian Empire, an empire whose claim to authority rested on resisting the Persians. It seems to me that there is another stream that runs through Greek culture and thought and that is a theme of curiosity and a desire to engage with the Other.

We see it in the early Pre-Socratics. Take, for example, Xenophanes who observes that the nature of God varies from culture to culture and that the nature of divinity is embedded in that culture.

‘The Ethiopians make their gods dark and snub-nosed while the Thracians make them blue-eyed and red-haired.’ (fr.16).

It is this observation that allows him to make his more radical conjecture that the nature of god is only relative and that our understanding might be flawed. As he observed, if horses and cows could make images of gods, they would produce gods that look like horses and cows (fr.23).

Now you can only undertake such radical thought experiments (and they can only be persuasive) if you start from the position that the Ethiopians and Thracians are not wrong or inferior or deluded, but that they actually have something important and interesting to say.

So we see at the beginning of Greek thought a deep interest in non-Greek culture. It is a habit of thinking that I believe we can trace through Greek history and it seems to me that it comes to prominence – indeed it is a necessary precursor for – the tremendous flowering of Greek culture in the Hellenistic period where we see the rise of extraordinary hybrid cultures that combined elements of Greek with Egyptian, Syrian, and Indian cultures. Alexander may have conquered the known world, but the truly remarkable achievement is the vital culture that emerged from the ashes and ruins that he left behind.

Whether it is Greco-Buddhist Gandharan art, where we see the legacy of the Greek communities that were founded in modern day Pakistan, or the multifaceted nature of Ptolemaic propaganda, a regime that seems equally at home in multiple modes of representation as we can see from these two portraits of Ptolemy Philadelphos (figs. 5 and 6), time and again, we see engagements of a profound nature.



Fig. 5

Limestone relief showing Arsinoe II and Ptolemy II Philadelphos. c. 260 BC. British Museum Inv. No.: 1885,1101.5



Fig. 6

Coin of Ptolemy II Philadelphos, c. 277-76 BC. British Museum Inv. No.: 1964,1303.1

In conclusion, individually each of these elements - frank speech, a feeling of community, and a sense of the marvelous that transcends any individual culture - are admirable virtues. Together, they create a very special kind of discursive space - a conversational society, which always leaves the door open for the miraculous; a place where radical politics can occur.

This, I suggest, is part of the reason why free thinkers - whether it is Erasmus and the Renaissance humanists, Diderot, Voltaire, and the philosophers, Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, or Jung – turn to the Greeks to argue with, appropriate, and sometimes even misrepresent. It is mistake to imagine that the classical tradition is a conservative or comfortable one. In fact, it is the opposite, it is a quite radical place.

In a lecture in 1983 in Berkeley, the philosopher Michel Foucault took as his topic the Greek word that I began this lecture with, parrhesia ‘frank speech’. For him ‘frank speech’ was one of the central concerns of Greek philosophy. The Greeks, he suggested, posed certain questions for themselves and for us:

Who is able to tell the truth? What are the moral, the ethical, and the spiritual conditions which entitle someone to present himself as a truth-teller? About what topics is it important to tell the truth? (About the world? About nature? About the city? About behavior? About man? ) What are the consequences of telling the truth? And finally: what is the relation between the activity of truth-telling and the exercise of power? (‘Concluding remarks’ from Discourse and Truth: The Problematization of Parrhesia)

Foucault’s Greeks pose the central questions that any university should have at its very core and it is because they create the preconditions for precisely this sort of exploration, because they put these questions onto the agenda and make them urgent, that the Greeks matter.

**R D MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM**

**James Donaldson  
Senior Museum Officer**



Late in 2014, three new exhibitions opened at the RD Milns Antiquities Museum that members may not yet have seen. They are well worth a visit over the summer while students are away on their holidays and the gallery is quite an oasis given the excellent air-conditioning! We hope to see you in the Gallery soon.

**Curious Cabinets<sup>2</sup>**

Three students (Alice O'Brien, Socrates Aronis and Oscar Goldman) from the second level undergraduate course ANCH2090 were chosen to take part in the Museum's 2014 Internship program, sampling our work and experiencing the process of putting on a small exhibition. 'Curious Cabinets' explores the way that modern museums are the product of early collecting and display techniques first developed in European aristocratic collections in the Renaissance and Enlightenment. The students curated a series of curious objects from the Museum's own collection, including glass from the Dr J Tranberg private collection, donated in the 1990s, a range of curiously designed ancient lamps, and a 1000 year old Byzantine bronze lock in the shape of a horse.

**Form and Function**

In early November, the Museum team closed the gallery for a few days to install two new permanent exhibitions of Greek and Roman ceramics. The first of these, entitled 'Form and Function', explores the different sizes, shapes and uses of ancient ceramics, from functional storage vessels like the Museum's Transport Amphora (03.058, 125-75BC, purchased from Charles Ede Ltd, 2003), to more decorative pieces such as our fine Bell Krater by the Sikon Painter (64.001, 375-350 BC, purchased from Galleria Fallini, 1964). Visitors will recognise many old favourites in the exhibition, but will appreciate the added text panels and decorative frieze that brings the exhibition to life.

**Style and Sequence**

The second permanent exhibition is entitled 'Style and Sequence', drawing on a favourite subject of teachers and undergraduates alike – the sequence of Greek and Roman ceramics, from the Mycenaean period (such as our small stirrup jar 69.001, 1300BC, purchased from Folio Fine Art Ltd, 1969) to the later Roman (for example our very fine red-ware jug, 200–300AD, purchased from Charles Ede Ltd with funds donated by Dr D Watts, 2005). The most striking elements, after the vases themselves, are the three silhouetted column capitals that provide a visual and ideological structure to the exhibition. Also included is a fine explanatory text that provides some much needed interpretation of the Museum's collection. We hope to replicate the success of these two exhibitions with an upgrade to our Egyptian material late in 2015 – watch this space!

**CLASSICS AND ANCIENT HISTORY DISCIPLINE**

On 9 December 2014, Dr Janette McWilliam was presented with a Award for Teaching Excellence, awarded by the Office for Learning and Teaching, at a ceremony at Parliament House in Canberra. This outstanding achievement builds on Janette's previous Faculty of Arts and University of Queensland awards for teaching excellence.<sup>3</sup>

The full citation for Janette's award reads:

Dr Janette McWilliam inspires students through her unique teaching methods which foster a rich appreciation for ancient cultures at the foundation of western civilization. Her students engage with innovative and personalised blended learning resources to learn Latin and Greek. They gain real world experience by participating in local and international work-integrated learning internship and study tour programs in Ancient History, and they undertake advanced research in Australia and Italy. Dr McWilliam attends to the whole student experience and her approach has a profound impact on student learning outcomes, reflected in her students' success in coursework and research and in their employment in a diverse range of careers. She is a recipient of a University of Queensland Award for Teaching Excellence, a Faculty of Arts Award for Teaching Excellence and numerous Faculty of Arts Most Outstanding Teacher Nominations.

<sup>2</sup> A guide to the exhibition is available at the Museum front desk, Curious Cabinets is open until 1 May 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Information provided in an email to all members of the School from Associate Professor Martin Crotty.

**SUNDAY SERIES AND ANCIENT HISTORY DAY LECTURES<sup>4</sup>**

**DISTORTIONS OF ANCIENT HISTORY FOR PRESENT PURPOSES (PT 2)**

**Dr Tom Stevenson**

In Part 2 of my paper 'Distortions of Ancient History for Present Purposes' I consider politics in the USA. Using speeches and writings of the past two decades, I survey references to Julius Caesar, as emperor and imperialist, in support of vastly differing political agendas. In addition, in connection with the politics of race, I note the power of contemporary arguments about the African racial characteristics of Cleopatra and Hannibal.

**Julius Caesar in Recent American Politics**

Julius Caesar featured regularly in American politics of the 19th and 20th centuries usually as a cautionary figure, viz. the kind of imperial (and indeed imperialist) figure Americans did not want their president to be. In more recent years, military interventions and ongoing occupations have led to both George W Bush and Barack Obama being compared to Julius Caesar, and the US compared to Rome as an imperialist state.

The concept of 'Caesarism' has featured in many debates about US militarism and presidential style under Bush and Obama, largely in reaction to policies which have maintained crippling military commitments in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The imagery has been employed by both the right and the left, a boast as well as a condemnation, and by hawks and doves, sometimes simultaneously. My main point here is twofold:

to stress that such comparisons have long been a part of the American political scene, normally made in negative spirit, viz. pressing the point that the president is not an emperor and that the US is not an empire ... BUT ... to stress that under President George W. Bush, the US deliberately flirted with concepts of Caesarism and empire that judged such presidential leadership and such imperial control as indeed a good thing; this situation has largely reverted to the default position under Obama, viz. with critical references emphasizing that Obama is not an emperor and the US is not an empire.

How, then, did the atypical view develop under Bush, and what forces were behind it?

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, an influential neoconservative foreign policy group published a manifesto and established a website in 1997, Project for the New American Century (PNAC), through which it began to advocate aggressive intervention abroad, expressed as a doctrine of military might in association with moral leadership. Prominent members of this list included later Bush advisors, Paul Wolfowitz (National Security Advisor), Dick Cheney (Vice-President), and Donald Rumsfeld (Defence Secretary). A new hawkishness, accompanied by new readiness to embrace the concept of a US 'empire', followed the horrors of 11 September 2001. On 29 January 2002, during his 'State of the Union' address to Congress, President Bush notoriously attacked North Korea, Iraq, and Iran as an 'axis of evil', thereby prompting positive comparisons with an imperial Caesar from right-wing commentators. Such comparisons rapidly grew in strength. On 12 September 2002, Bush declared to the United Nations that if the UN was not going to act against Iraq, the United States would do so alone. At this point, negative comparisons with Caesar began to rise once more, though slowly in the bullish environment. It was said that Bush had crossed his Rubicon. On 11 October 2002, Congress invested the president with the power to order an invasion of Iraq whenever it occurred to him to do so. Liberal observers commented sarcastically that the Senate and House of Representatives were much relieved to escape the chore of republican self-government and pass it over to Caesar's sword.

The US, of course, occupied Iraq, but it seems to have had very little idea of how to organise the post-war country, with disastrous results which are still working themselves out in devastating fashion. Attitudes to Caesarism and concepts of imperial rights and responsibilities began to decline markedly, especially as the number of American war dead increased.

Now, when Obama is compared with Caesar, the point is usually that he needs to give up overseas military adventures and/or that he must be bound by Republican principles - both theoretically and in terms of the political party of that name. The cautionary, negative Caesar is once more the default counter to a perceived

<sup>4</sup> Part 1 of Dr Stevenson's Sunday Series address was published in *Nova*, October 2014.

embrace of empire by the US government and its president.

The current situation seems far healthier. The salient fact for me about the historical Caesar, I have to say, is that he ultimately failed to bring power and stability to his people. In achieving power, even if autocratic power was probably not his original aim, Caesar could not bring benefit even to himself: he grabbed hold of a wolf he didn't dare let go and others didn't want him to let go. When he did let go, hoping that he had secured his personal safety and the stability of his new regime, with the plea that he was indispensable for civil harmony in his state, the wolf spun round and tore him apart. A new round of civil wars ensued almost immediately.

Happily, those who experience apocalyptic anxieties about American expansion and presidential fiat have concentrated on arguments which stress that the US is overstretched and financially overburdened, and that the Presidency is becoming an imperial, ruthless, and arbitrary mode of leadership. Caesar's example is not used to advocate a new system of government, even among those who imply that both the 'Caesar' and his 'Rome' might be heading for a fall. The 'Caesars' who are described are not primarily associated with assassination (thank heavens!), and no one to my knowledge has called for the military to take over from a wayward Caesar. Yet of course no Caesar is indispensable. It is perhaps significant that Denzel Washington played Brutus in a famous New York production of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* under Bush (2005). Could he have been a stand-in for Colin Powell?

**The Politics of Race: Cleopatra and Hannibal**

Many primary school classrooms in the United States will currently be adorned with posters and artwork depicting African-American and African leaders. Nelson Mandela's death on 5 December 2013 will have been felt powerfully and commemorated notably in such settings. Alongside the African leaders of more recent times will hang posters of historical figures, and among these there will almost certainly be depictions of Cleopatra and Hannibal with African features, viz. with features currently associated more with sub-Saharan than North African peoples. This situation has arisen predominantly (but not only) because of race relations and racial politics in the United States. A common argument among African-American scholars is that white scholars have systematically suppressed the contribution of African culture to Western Civilization, in order to foster the fiction that Greece is the cradle of Western Civilization.

In 1987, Martin Bernal, an Englishman working in the US, a professor of East Asian Languages, published a famous book entitled *Black Athena*, which took up the cause of the primacy of African culture and the argument that white scholars continue to be complicit in a racist interpretation of Western Civilization. I would like to make four points about this debate, before ending with a brief look at three items of evidence.

Racist attitudes have characterised the attitudes of certain classicists at certain times, notably in periods of Fascism, but surely these attitudes are anathema to the vast majority of current and former Classics researchers. The offenders were offenders because they were white racists, not because they were white classicists. Indeed, it often seems that African-Americans will simply not listen to white scholars on this topic, unless they agree with the Afro-centrist interpretation. Thus, we have the unfortunate situation of a kind of reverse racism, which inhibits rational debate.

Classicists and Ancient Historians are very familiar with, and accepting of, terms like 'Orientalizing' and 'Orientalist', which denote significant cultural influence from the East. It is simply not correct to say that Eastern influence is never countenanced and is systematically suppressed. Indeed, this fact tends to promote the view that cultural influence or transmission is a much more helpful way of looking at 'Afro-Asiatic Roots of Classical Civilization' than race.



Greek Pottery of the Orientalizing Period (late 8th to early 6th Centuries BC)

It is perfectly possible to borrow a cricket bat and play a different game using different rules at a different level (or perhaps to borrow a rounders bat and invent cricket, or to intervene with a lump of wood in a game of bowls, depending on your preferred view of the origins of cricket in England). Classical Greece, if you'll forgive my crude example, seems to have

done something similar. It is important to stress the borrowing, but it seems far more important to stress what was done with it, and how influential the new product and example has become subsequently, even such that it created a new, spiritually different tradition. This is not the same as denial of cultural borrowing in accordance with a program of systematic racism, in which virtually all white Classics scholars remain complicit.

In terms of the racial characteristics of Cleopatra, it is important at first instance to remember that race is a modern concept, which seems not to have operated with anywhere near the same significance in the ancient world. Writers spoke about their enemies in terms of their nationalities (e.g. 'the vile Asiatics' of Egyptian texts) rather than their skin colour. Second, it is important to distinguish Egypt and early Egyptians from Cleopatra. I am listening intently at the moment for more studies of the kind which have suggested what modern typologists would call sub-Saharan features or elements among early Egyptian populations. The authorities involved, e.g. Neil Oliver of the BBC and the Austrian Academy of Science, are sufficient to make me take notice.

What, however, would this mean? I wouldn't be particularly disturbed at all, if it could be proven that ancient Egyptians, even prior to Nubian or Ethiopian or other invasions of Egypt, including Macedonian and Greek, had much darker skin than mine and features more akin to those I think of as sub-Saharan today. It would really only become a problem, if (e.g.) Hollywood were to continue defiantly to represent ancient Egyptians as white. This, of course, is the nub of the problem, for these kinds of representations are about power in the present.

They tend to assert present power in favour of some groups and to the disadvantage of others. Understandably, some people would have contemporary power shared differently. The Hollywood situation, by the way, speaks to other types of racism, not just to putative racism among white Classics scholars. It is quite likely that African-Americans find it harder to get jobs as leading men and ladies, and that the studio bosses find (e.g.) Christian Bale, who will soon star in a new Ridley Scott blockbuster set in ancient Egypt, a more bankable star. But such difficulties confront African-Americans in many walks of life, not merely in film.

**As for the three items of evidence:**  
Greeks were able to represent sub-Saharan features, and they seem to have distinguished them from the features of other Egyptians, whom

they knew well, at least from the Mycenaean period and among whom they had lived since at least the founding of Naucratis in the Nile Delta in the 7th century BC.



Drinking vessels with different racial characteristics, Athens, National Archaeological Museum



Rhyton 11725 Athens, National Archaeological Museum

It seems that the Greeks were indeed capable of recognising sub-Saharan African ('negro') features (e.g. curly hair, full lips, dark skin colour) and of differentiating them from the features of people who lived around the fringes of the Mediterranean Sea. The ancient Egyptians, then, are unlikely to have been 'black'.

One of the arguments frequently used by Afrocentrists is that Egyptian cultural elements demonstrate Egyptian conquest and colonies in the Greek world, e.g. on Santorini, from an early point. They say that Greeks refuse to accept

this thesis from nationalist motives. Archaeologists such as Christos Doumas (the excavator of Santorini), however, counter that pottery and other archaeological remains give the distinct impression of continuity rather than change in respect of the peoples who inhabited the site. For another society, viz. Rome, where literary and archaeological evidence make the reality plain, it is clear that the appearance of pyramids, obelisks, and Nilotic scenes in Rome and Italy during the reign of Augustus are products of the Roman conquest of Egypt in 30 BC rather than the other way around.

Finally, Cleopatra's ancestry and looks have been of particular interest in this debate. Once again, if her skin and hair were darker than mine, and her features rather different, I would hardly feel disappointment. But her ancestry is known quite thoroughly. She is either wholly or substantially Macedonian, the product of a string of closely related (including brother-sister) marriages following Ptolemy I's seizure of Egypt. Surely this is a long way from saying that she was black.

The US Classics community has handled the challenge professionally, not dismissively, recognising its potential for political controversy. Women classicists often took the lead, knowing that white men could too easily be criticised as symbols of the study of 'dead, white males'. Yet it is the influence of the Afro-centrist thesis, rather than its academic strength, which is worthy of note. It has won many followers in the US, and is probably the default position among black communities. Moreover, many school teachers, whether white or black, seem to be heavily influenced by Bernal's ideas, perhaps out of a misguided political correctness (cf. *UTube* and blog comments). This can't be healthy for race relations in the US, especially for African-Americans.

**THE MANY FACES OF CLEOPATRA**

**Don Barrett**

This paper considers what has been said and written about Cleopatra VII (69-30BC) from ancient times to the present, as well as how she has been represented in art, the cinema, opera and advertising. Plutarch (c. AD 50-120) described her thus:

Her own beauty was not completely incomparable, nor was it the kind that would amaze those who saw her. But to interact with her was fascinating. Her looks and her character, together with her

ability to persuade in discussion, were stimulating. The sound of her voice was pleasurable; her tongue resembled a many-stringed instrument which she could turn to any language she wished. Few were the barbarians with whom she conversed wholly through an interpreter. She gave her own decisions in person to most of them, including Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes and Parthians. It is said she learned the languages of many others as well. (Life of Antony 27)

Her ancestry was essentially Macedonian-Greek: she was descended from Ptolemy I, a general in Alexander's army and founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt.

Julius Caesar was in Alexandria, Cleopatra's capital, after defeating Pompey at Pharsalus in 48 BC. Learning that there was tension between Cleopatra and her twelve-year-old husband-brother Ptolemy XIII, Caesar sent for her in the country. Plutarch describes the encounter:

Cleopatra, taking with her only Apollodorus the Sicilian from all her retinue, travelled in a small boat. She approached the palace when it was already becoming dark. As her only way of escaping detection, she covered herself in a carpet and lay down flat. Apollodorus carried the carpet inside to Caesar. This initial artifice captivated Caesar. She appeared adventurous and enticing. Her charm and the delight of associating with her were too much for him. He reconciled the brother and sister and insisted she should have equal power. (Life of Caesar 49)

Caesar supported her against her brother's faction in the battle for Alexandria, during which Ptolemy XIII died in 47 BC. Cleopatra then married her other brother Ptolemy XIV. The marriage was arranged by Caesar as a cover for his own designs on her. Cleopatra gave birth to a son, Caesarion. There was little doubt concerning his paternity. In 46 BC she moved to Rome with Ptolemy XIV and Caesarion. Lucan (AD 39-65) was disgusted:

That wicked sister married her brother and now is brought as the bride of Latium: racing between husbands, she is Egypt's mistress but Rome's whore. Cleopatra must have overcome the elderly Caesar with drugs. (Civil War 10.357-360)

It certainly was a scandalous situation: even though she did not stay in Caesar's own residence, Caesar was married, to Calpurnia, and Cleopatra was a foreigner. After Caesar was murdered in 44 BC, she returned to Egypt. Ptolemy died in the same year, presumably

poisoned by Cleopatra. She made Caesarion joint ruler. Three years later, Cleopatra was summoned to Cilicia by Mark Antony. He wished her to answer a charge that, during the Civil War, she had given extensive resources to Cassius, one of Caesar's murderers. Plutarch gives a detailed account of the amazing spectacle. The following is a small sample:

She prepared as many presents and as much money and finery as suited her great project and royal status. She sailed up the River Cydnus in a ship with a stern plated with gold, with billowing purple sails, with rowers straining on silver oars. There was the music of flutes, pipes and lyres. It was reported that Aphrodite had arrived to revel with Dionysus for the benefit of Asia. (Life of Antony 25-26)

Antony and the Queen immediately tried to outdo one another in displays of extravagance. He invited her to dinner. She bade him come to her instead and staged a banquet of mind-blowing splendour. Next day he again invited her to dinner. It was ordinary by comparison, and he knew it. The competition continued. Then, at another wonderful banquet, which Antony mocked as being cheap, she declared that she alone would consume ten million sesterces. Pliny the Elder continues the story:

The attendants placed before her just a single cup of vinegar, the acidity and strength of which reduces pearls to a pulp. In her ears she was wearing that highly unusual and quite unique product of nature. Antony was agog with anticipation. She removed one pearl and dropped it in the cup. When it had disintegrated, she swallowed it. (Natural History 9.121)

The story is hard to believe. Vinegar could never dissolve pearls, and any acid that could would have a devastating effect on the stomach and throat of the one who drank it. This is a stock anecdote which fits Cleopatra's character of legendary indulgence. Suetonius ascribes the same behaviour to Gaius Caligula. (Life of Gaius 37)

Antony followed Cleopatra to Egypt in 41 BC and spent that winter with her in Alexandria. The two formed a permanent alliance in 37 BC. The union produced three children.



In 32 BC Antony issued a remarkable silver denarius. After the battle of Philippi in 42 BC, he and Octavian had divided the Roman world between them. Antony acquired Asia, which included Armenia. The obverse of the coin bore the head of Antony. Behind his neck was a tiara, symbolising Armenian monarchy. The legend was ANTONI ARMENIA DEVICTA, "Antony's Armenia subdued". The reverse showed a rather mannish Cleopatra and the legend CLEOPATRAE REGINAE REGVM. [MATRI] FILIORVM REGVM, "To Cleopatra, queen of kings, mother of the sons of kings". Antony bestowed Armenia on Alexander, one of his children by Cleopatra.

But time was running out for the high-living couple. In 32 BC Octavian, the future Augustus, declared war on Cleopatra. He also stripped Antony of his power as he had surrendered it to a woman. He defeated them in a naval battle at Actium in 31 BC. If we can believe Plutarch, Cleopatra was to blame:

Canidius (commander of Antony's land forces) pointed out that it would be dreadful if Antony, a master in land warfare, did not capitalise on the strength and preparedness of so many foot soldiers but instead divided and dissipated his power among ships. Notwithstanding these arguments, Cleopatra had her way and elected to decide the war in a naval battle. Yet she was already planning to flee and organised the situation not so as to secure victory but to make an easy escape in case of defeat. (Plutarch, Life of Antony 63)

Let me summarise Plutarch's version of the couple's last days. They became separated. Antony, thinking Cleopatra had died, attempted suicide. Then, learning she was still alive, he demanded to be carried to her and died in her arms. Octavian occupied Alexandria and took Cleopatra prisoner. When she appeared before him, she was a picture of abject terror. Her actions, she said, were driven by necessity and fear of Antony. She appealed to Octavian's pity and begged him to spare her life. Octavian for his part wanted badly to keep her alive for his triumphal procession. She ultimately denied him the pleasure by suiciding from the bite of an

asp concealed in a basket of figs. This was preceded by a series of cruel experiments in which she tested the potency of various poisons on men and beasts.

Enobarbus in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* said of her. "Age cannot wither her nor custom stale her infinite variety." Certainly her memory through the ages has never withered, and to this day she has been constantly rewritten and re-presented.

In the 1350s Boccaccio in his *On Famous Women* saw her as the personification of two of the deadly sins, lust and avarice. Yet his near contemporary Chaucer in *The Legend of Good Women* saw the exact opposite. Chaucer's good women demanded nothing for themselves. On the contrary, they gave everything, even their lives, for the men they loved. Chaucer's opening line is, "Here begins the legend of Cleopatra the martyr." He makes no reference to her liaison with Caesar.

Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* emphasises the perils of passionate love and unbridled feeling. His Cleopatra has been played by many famous actors, including:



Vivien Leigh (1945)



Peggy Ashcroft (1953)



Judi Dench (1987)



Helen Mirren (1998)

The poster depicting a kiss between Dench and Anthony Hopkins was famous worldwide.

George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* portrays Cleopatra as a kittenish, flirtatious child rather than a lover:

I like men, especially young men with round, strong arms, but I am afraid of them. You are old and rather thin and stringy, but you have a nice voice, and I like to have someone to talk to, though I think you are a little mad.

Caesar is generous, kind, level-headed but devoid of passion or emotion. Shaw's and Shakespeare's plays have both been made into films.

In Thornton Wilder's *The Ides of March* Cleopatra, Caesar, Antony and others reveal their characters through their correspondence. Cleopatra is both beautiful and, to Caesar's chagrin, keenly interested in current affairs. She wins over the populace of Rome with her demure, unpretentious behaviour, a visit to Calpurnia, generous presents and a party which, while lavish, has no cruel, degrading games or heavy drinking.

In 1997 Colleen McCullough published *Antony and Cleopatra*, the seventh and final novel in her *Masters of Rome* series. The Roman world is depicted in astonishingly accurate detail. Did McCullough have a team of research assistants? The big disappointment lies in the

dialogue: it sounds like some kind of fake medieval speech, but in truth resembles no kind of English ever spoken.

Karen Essex' *Kleopatra* appeared in two volumes in 2001 and 2002. Cleopatra is seen as a brilliant, resourceful ruler and diplomat. While we see her first as a headstrong, precocious three-year-old, she becomes her father's favourite: she supports his pro-Roman stance, is an efficient interpreter and – only this is questionable – accompanies him when he goes into exile.

When the visiting Russian Ballet staged Cleopatra in the United States in 1909, it inspired no fewer than three films portraying her as cruel, licentious, a veritable man-eater. The only film before these was a French production *Cleopatra's Tomb*, in 1899. It abounded in horror and was truly horrible.

In 1917 Theda Bara emerged as the cinema's last romantic, murderous Cleopatra. She was the archetypal vamp. Posters depicted her draped over thrones or tiger skins.



Theda Bara (1917)

Her costumes were revealing, her eyes heavy with Indian kohl eye makeup. Fox Studios concocted a false story about her background to suit the role she played in the film: she was a native of Egypt, born in the shadow of the Sphinx to an Arabian princess mother and an Italian artist father. As a baby she was nourished not on milk but on the venom of serpents. Her name was an anagram of "Arab Death". The public soon grew tired of this nonsense, however, and by 1920 Theda Bara was out of work.

In Cecil B de Mille's 1934 extravaganza *Cleopatra*, Claudette Colbert lent excitement to the public's humdrum lives by playing a smart, beautiful, amoral and thoroughly wicked queen.



Claudette Colbert (1934)

In 1963 Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton did exactly the same, only more so. In their stormy relationship life imitated art and, indeed, surpassed art. The movie almost bankrupted Twentieth Century Fox, yet today it is generally recognised as a complete turkey. Evan Williams, film critic for *The Australian*, commented:

Not even the presence of Rex Harrison as Julius Caesar could save this monumentally pretentious and boring exercise, listlessly directed by Joseph L Mankiewicz.

One visual artist with a cruel sense of humour says it all.



Rather more fun than the 'serious' movies are the parodies. *Carry on Cleo*, 1964, actually used some of the sets from Mankiewicz's epic.



is an obvious link to another legendary temptress Eve.



It is as much a parody of Taylor's Cleopatra as of the real one. Several cartoon comedies in the *Asterix* series have a Cleopatra character. One film with real life actors stars Gerard Depardieu as Obelix, the huge Gaul with a gargantuan appetite and Monica Bellucci as Cleopatra. In *The Twelve Labours of Asterix*, Cleopatra has a bit part, a cheerful, dutiful little housewife calling Caesar, now living a quiet life in retirement, to come and have his lunch. If only if it could have happened like that in real life!

Finally, advertisers have always used Cleopatra to suggest luxury and sexual power. She has helped to sell such products as soap, perfume, bathroom fittings and shampoo.



Handel's portrayal of Cleopatra in his opera *Giulio Cesare* carries considerable conviction. In one scene with her husband-brother Ptolemy XIII, for example, she bullies and mocks him. She exults at the news of Pompey's murder, says she will enthrall Caesar and dances and sings with abandon. But, once assured of Caesar's love, she sings happily, "Safe to harbour now I'm sailing to the crown of all desire." The desire to dominate is matched by the wish to cherish and be cherished. In a magnificent DVD issued in 2005 the young French soprano Danielle de Niese plays the role to perfection.

So was Cleopatra a heroine or a monster? Clearly she was both.

Horace's famous 'Cleopatra' Ode (1.37) exalts initially in the capture of a crazed woman bent on destroying the Empire, along with her herd of mutilated, diseased 'men'. The tone then changes dramatically to one of pity and admiration for her noble death.

Three illustrations typify the many different ways in which people continue to see Cleopatra. She appears as a cat with a snake in a boat. The Egyptian cat goddess Bastet with her strength and agility was the guardian of mankind. (This cat does not look particularly agile.)

Truly Cleopatra was all things to all people.



**THE PUBLIC FUNDING OF ATHENIAN WARMAKING IN THE 370s BC**

**Annabel Florence**

Fourth century Athens has traditionally been seen as a city in decline – a city critically short of the revenue needed to fund its democracy, festivals and war. The costs of warmaking in particular as we shall see were exceedingly high. Yet at this time Athens initiated an

In a sixteenth century Flemish engraving Cleopatra, naked beneath a tree with a serpent,

ambitious foreign policy, which meant it went to war more often in the fourth century than it ever had before. In 1817 Augustus Böckh wrote a two volume work on the public economy of Athens and in it he draws some damning conclusions about the financial abilities of the Athenians: he argues that their financial system was simple, that it seldom looked to the future and that it regularly incurred expenses so great the state was placed into financial difficulty. In particular he thinks Athens spent more money on festivals than on warmaking.

Recently, using evidence unavailable to Böckh, David Pritchard has corrected this view. Part of David's research costed festivals and war in the 370s and showed that the Athenians spent considerably more on warmaking than on festivals. In doing so he has provided us with some very large figures for military expenditure. But expenses are only half the picture; the other side of the ledger must be examined too, that is, just how did Athens pay for this military expenditure; where did the money come from?

Thirty years ago Patrice Brun came to the conclusion that Athens' inability to organise its military finances led directly to the death of the city as an independent state.

Other scholars have looked at various streams of revenue used to fund military expenditure individually, but none of them have pulled all the streams together and added real data to see if in fact, when they are all combined, these various income-streams provided enough funds to pay for war. So with this in mind this paper aims to do just that, to gather together all the known revenues used to fund military expenditure and to test whether or not David's figures for the 370s can be met. In doing so I then want to draw some conclusions of my own that contradict Böckh and Brun's bleak assessment of the Athenian financial system.

The Peloponnesian War ended in 403, and the peace brokered at this time lasted until the mid-390s when Athens joined the Corinthian War against Sparta. Persian gold and Persian triremes, brought to Athens by Conon, enabled Athens to fund this war. However Persia changed allegiances and this allowed Sparta to defeat Athens on the water. By 386 Athens had no alternative but to agree to the terms of the King's Peace which sought to ensure that all the cities of Greece were autonomous.

Sparta was made the guardian of this peace; however it abused its position and punished those states it believed were hostile to it during

the Corinthian War. At this point Athens is just sitting back watching. It's being very cautious – several cities appeal to it for aid but it resists. At the same time though, it quietly forges a defensive alliance with Chios. This is the foundation of the Second Athenian League and as time passes more and more cities join the league. Sparta then captured the Theban acropolis – an act that directly contravened the terms of the peace that it was bound to uphold. Thebans harboured by Athens assassinate the pro-Spartan leadership at Thebes and in retaliation Sphodrias, a Spartan general stationed at Thespias, launched an attack on the Athenian Piraeus. He failed. But it was enough for Athens to feel that its security was at risk. It then demands that Sparta discipline Sphodrias appropriately or it will be seen as an act of war. Sparta put him on trial but acquitted him. Athens was outraged and so began a decade of war.

During this decade Athens repeatedly dispatched its fleets and troops on gruelling campaigns sometimes for three months, sometimes three years. Athens was remarkably successful against Sparta; the decade ended with the naval supremacy of Greece returned to them. This was a great achievement for Athens given that it presented a considerable financial challenge for a city without access to a large annual public income.

According to Xenophon and Diodorus there were eleven campaigns, of varying durations, fought throughout the 370s. And David's research has provided us with a good estimation of the annual budget necessary to fund these campaigns, and he conveniently divides war expenditure into capital, fixed and variable costs (see table 1).

**Table 1 David Pritchard's Costing of Military Expenditure 378/-370/69**

Public and Private Expenditure on Military Affairs in the 370s				
Archon Year	Capital Costs	Fixed-Operating Costs	Variable Operating Costs	TOTAL
378/7	24t.	133t.	72t.	229t.
377/6	24t.	133t.	112t.	269t.
376/5	7t.	133t.	787t.	927t.
375/4	7t.	133t.	858t.	998t.
374/3	7t.	133t.	229t.	369t.
373/2	7t.	133t.	500t.	640t.
372/1	7t.	133t.	787t.	927t.
371/0	7t.	133t.	-	140t.
370/69	7t.	133t.	60t.	200t.
<b>ANNUAL AVERAGE</b>				<b>522 T</b>

But you will note that his figures include private and public costs. Private costs were the

contributions by individuals to support warmaking; they include things like the trierarchy and voluntary contributions. Because I am only interested in the cost to the Athenian state, that is public costs, I have eliminated private costs from his table (see table 2).

**Table 2 Military Expenditure without Private Costs**

Public Expenditure on Military Affairs in the 370s Fixed, Capital and Variable Costs										
	378/7	377/6	376/5	375/4	374/3	373/2	372/1	371/0	370/69	
Fixed	124	124	124	124	124	124	124	124	124	
Capital	17	17								
Variable	70	107	742	823	218	473	736	0	60	
Outstanding	211	248	866	947	342	597	860	124	184	

Fixed costs were the yearly recurring costs associated with the upkeep of the Athenian military regardless of whether or not the state was at war - for example, the pay and maintenance of a cavalry available for immediate deployment. Capital costs were the injection of funds needed to prepare the Athenian military forces for war – for example, to build and equip ships. Variable costs were essentially the misthos or ‘pay’ for military personnel whilst on active campaign.

Like any city Athens had fixed costs it needed to meet every year so we can assume that this expenditure was only approved as long as the state already had sufficient internal revenues to pay for it. Internal revenues included harbour taxes, court fees, fines and confiscations, rents, etc. These revenues had to cover not only the fixed costs of war but also the recurring costs to the state of its festival program and the costs associated with running the democracy. If we dive back into David’s research we find that internal revenue in the 370s had to cover 272T in fixed costs: 50T for festivals, 98T for the democracy and 124T for war. So did Athens have the money to cover all these recurring costs? Given that in the 430s internal revenue was 400T, and just after the Social War of 360/50s it was at 400T, I think it’s pretty reasonable to say that yes it did (see table 3).

Now, Capital costs – these are a source of frustration at the moment because we just don’t know where this money came from. What we do know is that the capital costs of 17T in 378/7 and 377/6 relate to the construction and fit-out of 29 triremes required to boost the numbers of ships for war. From the early 370s the dockyard supervisors in the Piraeus, for the first time, kept an annual record of the number and condition of ships in the fleet and all equipment supplies.

From these lists we know that Athens did not build any others throughout the decade. We know that this capital outlay would have been debated by the dēmos, who would have approved the number of ships to be built, the cost, and how it would be funded. The funding would have come from either surpluses of internal revenue or internal revenue itself. If it was directly from internal revenue it would have meant taking money specifically allocated for one purpose to pay another, thus leaving a shortfall. It is more likely that the money came from an internal revenue surplus.

These internal revenue surpluses may have been deposited into a fund created specifically for military purposes, perhaps in the early 370s, the stratiōtika. The stratiōtika pooled money from surplus revenues and the eisphora, and perhaps even booty brought back from successful campaigns. We know that it was in existence in 374/3 because it is mentioned the Grain Tax Law of that year but I think, in all likelihood, it was created much earlier in the decade if not sometime before. But I don’t have enough evidence as yet to argue this, so capital costs at this point must remain in our outstanding amounts.

However the other revenue to end up on the stratiotika was the Eisphora, or property tax, levied during times of war. Prior to 378/7 there were two big problems with the eisphora –

- 1). All wealthy citizens, regardless of how wealthy they were, paid the same amount in tax as each other. This put a financial strain on those at the lower end of the ‘wealthy’ scale and resulted in a large number of outstanding debtors and tax evasion.

- 2) it was difficult to administer.

So at the beginning of hostilities in 378/7 Athens brought in two significant reforms. Firstly, it grouped taxpayers into symmories, and each symmory was responsible for a fraction of the tax levied, ensuring easy collection and reducing the amount of late payments. Secondly, wealthy citizens were required to submit an estimation of their capital wealth, their timēma, from which the amount the individual owed would be calculated, thereby taxing citizens proportionately to their wealth.

Scholarship has agreed that there are at least three times we can be reasonably sure the eisphora was levied in the 370s: 378/7, 375/4 and 373/2. I believe that during this exceptional decade where war was constant Athens levied

the tax at 2% on the state taxable income of 5750T. This provides a substantial contribution of 115T to the budget for war (see table 3).

Yet this is still nowhere near enough to cover the wartime expenditure of most years, particularly in the middle of the decade. After its most expensive year in 375/4 the dēmos passed the grain tax law. This law legislated that the proceeds from the sale of grain were to go directly into the stratiōtika, meaning the proceeds were specifically for military expenditure. This provided about 18T per year for the military budget (see table 3).

It was at this time too that Athens began to call for syntaxeis, or 'contributions' from members of the Second Athenian League to help defray some of its costs. It is thought that the allies annually contributed around 65T to the League between 373/2 and 371/0 (see table 3).

**Table 3 Known revenues**

Public Military Revenue & Expenditure in the 370s									
Fixed, Capital and Variable Costs									
	378/7	377/6	376/5	375/4	374/3	373/2	372/1	371/0	370/69
Fixed	124	124	124	124	124	124	124	124	124
Capital	17	17							
Variable	70	107	742	823	218	473	736	0	60
	<b>211</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>184</b>
Internal Rev	124	124	124	124	124	124	124	124	124
Eisphora @ 2%	115			115		115			
Grian Tax					15	15	15	15	15
Syntaxeis						65	65	65	
Booty Surplus			210						
Outstanding	(28)	124	532	708	203	278	656	(80)	45

But again despite these contributions Athens still cannot afford to meet its costs (see table 3). This is it for domestic revenue – it is all they have, yet fleets still went on campaign. So it begs two really important questions: how could Athens send its fleet out so underfunded and expect it to be successful and how were variable costs on campaign met? For this the demos looked to its generals.

The greatest sources of funding available to Athenian generals on campaign were what Vincent Gabrielsen calls the 'disreputable trio': plundering, extortion and the sale of protection. The exploitation and acceptance by Athens of what ostensibly were acts of piracy, as legitimate sources of finance is fundamental to understanding how Athens successfully managed its warmaking program of the fourth century. We see an increased dependency on this type of revenue-raising beginning during the Ionian War and it continues in the campaigns of the Corinthian War in the 390s and early 380s. And so by the 370s it's entrenched - generals were

regularly sent out with little or no funding and they were authorised by the dēmos to ravage the lands of their enemies, to collect levies from both hostile and friendly states, and to seize any booty available. Any money raised in excess of what was needed belonged to the state and was handed over to the treasury upon the general's return to Athens. And they were really good at it. They were so good at it that generals like Chabrias were employed in the following decade by Tachos the king of Egypt to teach him and his men how to do it. As an example let us look at Chabrias' four-month campaign against Sparta at Naxos in 376/5. He has a fleet of 83 triremes, and the monthly wage bill for a trireme is 1T. Total cost of wages for the four months would have been 332T (83 ships x 4 months x 1T/month). Let us assume he set sail with one month's wages in advance. Therefore he would have needed to find 249T (83x3x1) in the field to pay his troops. At the end of this campaign Chabrias brought home to Athens and handed over to the treasury 210T worth of booty and slaves. This means he raised at least 459T in the field through the disreputable trio.

To get an idea of the sorts of things he would have done to gather such an amount we can look at Xenophon's description of Iphicrates' fifteen-month campaign to Corcyra in 372/1. Iphicrates begins his campaign with a fleet of 70 ships and initially maintains his men by raiding cities along the coast of the Peloponnese for food, water and provisions and by levying cities in and around Cephallenia. After reaching Corcyra he captures nine Syracusan triremes. The crews of these triremes he ransoms for 60T and he cuts the prows off the ships, the bronze giving him an extra 1T. During the winter he hires out his sailors as labourers in the Corcyran fields, and he takes hoplites and peltasts across to Arcarnania and offers them as mercenaries for hire. After this he sails back to Cephallenia, collects more money from both hostile and friendly cities, and then, only then, he prepares to ravage the lands of the Spartans. Over a period of about fifteen months Iphicrates, it seems, spends more time pursuing money to pay his men than fighting for Athens.

So what does this tell us about Athenian military finances during the 370s?

Firstly, the organisational structure and the processes which governed the internal revenues of Athens allowed the dēmos to allocate a set amount to cover the annual fixed operating costs of war. Additionally, I think,

these processes permitted the dēmos to use surpluses of internal revenue for the capital costs of building and equipping the triremes needed to mount successful campaigns.

It tells us that Athens knew finances were tight and it could not afford to waste money. It began to keep track of its ships and equipment, it reformed the eisphora at the very beginning of hostilities and it levied the tax at a rate of two per cent. It created the stratiōtika and funnelled as much money as it could into it. In response to its most expensive campaign years it legislated that the proceeds of the grain tax go to the stratiōtika and it called for contributions from its allies. So we see that Athens is striving to come up with new ways to increase its revenues but it is just not enough; domestic revenue was not going to solve the problem. The variable costs of campaigning were too great. The bulk of these funds were raised in the field by Athenian generals through disreputable means, as had been done since the Ionian War. And it is these acts of piracy that are the key to Athens' success against Sparta; they allowed the dēmos to send its generals out underfunded and to be successful in battle.

By 369 the Athens was again a regional power. The decade between 378 and 369 is an important one for Athenian military finance. We see Athens trying to organise its finances and generate new revenue streams but at the same time still having to rely heavily on old methods. Clearly though, through these efforts David Pritchard's figures could be met and clearly Athens had a strategy to fund its warmaking of the fourth century. It may not have been one that is acceptable to Böckh, Brun or the modern era, but it was complex, and innovative, and it worked.

**'MY DEAR PHARAOH'**

**Trevor Bryce**

Some of the most illuminating and entertaining of all the written sources we have from the ancient world are the letters which people wrote to each other. This applies particularly at the topmost levels of society. The letters a ruler of one kingdom wrote to his counterpart in another often tell us a good deal more about the author and recipient, and other persons within their elite circles, than all the other documents of their reign, including treaties, historical annals, royal

decrees and prayers. Letters often provide much information about the personalities of their senders and recipients, and the dynamics of their relations with one another – information which by its very nature is generally excluded from other records of state.

The tablet archives of the Late Bronze Age Near Eastern kings and a number of their subjects contain many letters, exchanged between members of royal courts, between a king and his officials, between officials writing to each other, and merchants writing to each other. This provided me with a rich source of information for a book I published some years ago, now reissued in paperback<sup>5</sup>, about the letters written to each other by the Great Kings of the Near Eastern world in the Late Bronze Age. Four major kingdoms dominated this era – firstly, the kingdoms of Hatti (i.e. the kingdom of the Hittites), Mitanni, Babylon, and Egypt. Halfway through the Late Bronze Age, the Hittites destroyed the kingdom of Mitanni, and it was replaced by Assyria in the Big League of Four. Tensions often ran high between the great kingdoms as their rulers sought to expand their territories at the expense of their neighbours. But amazingly, there were hardly any occasions where the superpowers actually came to all-out war (only four recorded instances in almost 500 years). For this we should give much credit to the fact that the Great Kings regularly kept the communication channels open between themselves, with frequent diplomatic missions sent between the kingdoms, their chief envoys bearing letters from one 'Royal Brother' to another. In my book I quote and discuss many of these letters. They often begin with effusive expressions of love of one 'Royal Brother' for another, and with 'heartfelt' concern for a royal brother's entire establishment, beginning with his family and extending to his magnates, his horses, his chariots, and indeed to all the lands over which he held sway.

Such expressions of love and concern were sometimes outdone by even more effusive expressions of grief when a king learnt of the death of a brother-ruler. Thus when King Tushratta of Mitanni heard of the death of the pharaoh Amenhotep III, this is what he wrote to his successor Amenhotep IV (later called Akhenaten): 'On that day I wept and consumed neither food nor water. In my grief I said: "Let me die, or let 10,000 in my own country die, and let 10,000 in my brother's country die as well –

<sup>5</sup> Trevor Bryce's book *Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East: The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age* is now available in paperback. Visit [routledge.com/9780415642347](http://routledge.com/9780415642347) for more information.

if only my brother, whom I love and who loves me, could live as long as heaven and earth.” Of course, it was all part of the expected diplomatic hypocrisy, especially since none of the Great Kings ever met, and were often suspicious of and disliked each other. But political pragmatism prevailed over sincerity. (Has it ever been any different in the world of movers and shakers?)

After the diplomatic niceties had been dispensed with, the royal letters then got down to their real purpose. Almost without exception, they were asking for something, or complaining about something that hadn't been delivered as promised. Thus the Assyrian and Mitannian kings complained to their Egyptian brother about his stinginess with his gifts of gold: 'One simply picks up gold in your country as if it were dust,' grumbled an Assyrian king to the pharaoh. 'Why are you so sparing of it? .... When my ancestor Ashur-nadin-ahhe wrote to Egypt, he was sent twenty talents of gold!' In another rebuke to Akehnten, Tushratta declared: 'My brother has failed to send the solid gold statues that your father was going to send. Instead you have sent me plated ones of wood!'

On another occasion, Tushratta complained that his gift of gold from Egypt was heavily adulterated with baser metal. This became obvious when he melted it down to check. The pharaoh Amenhotep III had claimed that he loved his Mitannian brother very much, Tushratta pointed out in a letter he wrote to Amenhotep. But how could he really love someone so much and send him such a gift – especially when in Egypt, as everyone knew, gold lay around everywhere, just waiting to be picked up?

On another occasion, the Hittite king Hattusili III wrote to the pharaoh Ramesses II, asking if he could send him one of his doctors to assist the Hittite princess Massanauzzi to become pregnant. She was married to an important vassal ruler, and so far the marriage had been childless. Hattusili did admit that his sister presented a challenge, since she was now fifty years old. But then again, Egyptian doctors were famous for their skills. Ramesses' response was a most unchivalrous (but probably truthful) one: 'You say your sister is fifty? Fifty?? She's sixty!!' 'Well', he continued, 'I'll send you a doctor along with an incantation priest to see what they can do.' It's unlikely the mission proved successful. Even Egyptian doctors couldn't work miracles of the kind Hattusili was after.

Marriage-alliances figure prominently in the royal correspondence, in letters in which a king for political reasons seeks to marry off his sons or

daughters to the offspring of his royal peers. He is not always successful in his attempts. A Babylonian king Kadashman-Enlil wrote to Amenhotep requesting that he send him one of his daughters to wed a Babylonian prince. The pharaoh pointed out in reply that pharaohs never sent their daughters abroad for foreign marriages. It was a matter of time-honoured tradition! Kadashman-Enlil wrote back with a suggestion: his royal brother could satisfy his request while still adhering to Egyptian tradition by sending him a fake princess.' Someone in Egypt must have beautiful grown-up daughters available,' he said. 'Why not send me any beautiful woman, as if she were your daughter? Who would say "She's not the daughter of the king?"' Of course his suggestion missed the point Amenhotep was trying to make. If in fact a fake princess were successfully passed off as the genuine article, then irrespective of the truth, the perception would be that the pharaoh had broken with tradition and made a concession never before granted to a foreign ruler. Such a perceived break with longstanding tradition might have done much to enhance the status of the Mitannian king in the eyes of his peers and his subjects. But it would surely have diminished the pharaoh's status! There can be little doubt that Amenhotep gave his correspondent very short shrift.

It was regular practice for Hittite scribes to write letters or bulletins dictated by their king to governors in the kingdom's regional centres. The communication on receipt would be read to the governor by one of the local scribes. Sometimes, the scribes would append to an official document of this kind short messages to each other. In one of these, a scribe in the Hittite capital Hattusa assures his colleague stationed in a province that his wife and family back in Hattusa are well, and there's nothing for him to worry about. He asks his colleague to send him greetings in return, presumably as an appendage to the next letter from the governor to his king. In a note attached to another official letter, a province-based scribe complains to his colleague in Hattusa that the maid he had sent him on loan had been stealing the silver (or items to such effect). He said he was sending her back to her owner, but would give her a good beating first. The owner was not at all pleased when he read this. He didn't want his property returned to him in a damaged condition. So he added a message to the next official letter from Hattusa, demanding that the miscreant be sent home unharmed: 'See that you hand her over to the messenger in good condition, and he will bring her back to me. And whatever the girl has stolen you can take

threefold compensation for it! This is a good example of the sometimes amusingly incongruous character of two or more communications inscribed on the one tablet: in this case an urgent warning issued by His Majesty on matters of regional security is followed abruptly by a scribe's complaints about a housemaid with sticky fingers.

Of all the books I have written, this was the most fun. If you have the chance to read it, I hope you enjoy doing so as much as I enjoyed writing it.

**HOW STOICAL WAS SENECA?**

**John Ratcliffe**

In an October issue of the New York Review of Books Mary Beard, everyone's favourite telly classicist, wrote a review of three recent books about Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Seneca was a Roman writer many of whose works have survived. He was first tutor and then adviser to the Emperor Nero and thus able to observe the power-play of the Roman Empire at that critical time in Roman history. Subsequently Seneca wrote numerous letters and essays on moral philosophy and several plays which question moral responsibility. Nero was threatened by a conspiracy against him in which Seneca may have been implicated and on these uncertain grounds he forced Seneca to commit suicide.

Professor Beard reviews three books by eminent scholars on Seneca. She structures her commentary into three main sections. Firstly she describes the reasons for, and the events surrounding, Seneca's suicide drawing largely on the evidence in Tacitus' Annals; she then expounds at length on the surviving visual representations of Seneca as a Stoic philosopher; and lastly she compares how much two of the three books she is reviewing casts light on these factors.

She scarcely refers to the third book which consists of new translations of some of Seneca's moral essays by Fantham and others. To me this is a great opportunity lost. It is only through Seneca's writing that we can hope to understand his complex and sometimes sympathetic and sometimes oppositional appreciation of the world in which he lived and the moral contradictions he both faced and presented to his contemporaries and to us, his inheritors.

On the other hand, reception studies of an historical idol, such as the two books she discusses more fully, tell us more about the zeitgeist of the commentators than of their subject; undoubtedly

they are interesting in the way Beard presents them. Reception studies sell books, television dramas and films which in turn popularise classical history and draw students into the class rooms of Classics departments; some students, in due course, will thus be drawn to read the original writings in the original language in which this history was written. Beard and the two authors, Romm and Wilson whose books she actually reviews, probably intentionally aimed to do just this and they have probably been successful.

However, one should not believe that figurative representation of historical figures reveals much about that person's character, intellect or ideology, even if the portrait artist is as eminent as Rubens. Modern photojournalism should have taught us all that portraiture is unreliable to reveal a person's character or meaning; some of the world's most hideous mass criminals and some of our far too few modern saints often look equally bland and ordinary. Character reading from portraiture is as totally misleading as is phrenology to assess intellect.

Beard does give us Tacitus' version of the immediate circumstances of Seneca's rather protracted and inefficient suicide. Read about that in Tacitus' *Annals* 60-65 if you want to know about it, but remember that every translator will use her or his own morally or emotionally loaded words, particularly in such an emotionally loaded event as suicide, so try to read versions by several different translators. For this reason I regret that Beard hardly mentions Fantham's and colleagues' translated version of Seneca's essays on life which will show us more about his Stoicism than any description of a botched suicide. I think our Mary could have written a fantastic review of Fantham's volume entitled *Hardship and Happiness* had she tried.

**HERODOTUS AND IMPERIALISM**

**Roger Scott**

'Father of History: Herodotus and the human dimension in the past' is the title of a contribution from Joseph Epstein to a valuable but (to me at least) little-known magazine called *The Weekly Standard* which emerges from Washington DC. The rationale for the piece is the publication of a new translation by Tom Holland which has already been the subject of commentary by Peter Green in the *London Review of Books*, discussed in an earlier Nova and noted by Epstein. Green himself is about to produce his own translation.

Epstein's piece is valuable for the overview it provides of the vicissitudes of Herodotus's reputation, initially stimulated by the contempt in which he was held by his near-contemporary Thucydides. Only Cicero seemed to have a good word for him. Three hundred years later, following the Thucydides line, Plutarch provided an essay, 'the malice of Herodotus', which suggested that Herodotus showed undue sympathy for the Persians and other barbarians - rather as leftist historians are now accused of being unduly sympathetic to 'Islamists'.

Later critics tended to focus more on his methodology and even suggested he was plain dishonest. His reputation was rescued at the beginning of the 20th century by Arnaldo Momigliano, suggesting it is a strange truth that Herodotus has really become the father of history in modern times. Epstein reports on the process by which trust was regained:

History, or, more precisely, historical methods, Momigliano explains, finally caught up with Herodotus. Ethnographic research brought a new respect for Herodotus' own early interest in ethnography. Those who did archaeological exploration in Egypt and Mesopotamia found Herodotus' writings on these subjects useful. His writings also became valuable to biblical scholars in their study of Oriental history. Oral history, on which he drew heavily, became a standard tool of modern social science and history. Herodotus was also the first serious historian to give due attention to women. In his Histories, he devotes several pages to Artemisia, the queen of Halicarnassus, who commanded the Asian Dorian fleet during Xerxes' attack on Greece. As for his accuracy, Momigliano writes, 'We have now collected enough evidence'.

However, reputations tend to become ensnared in the wider political context into which their views are received - something of which my former classmate Henry Reynolds is acutely aware, as he strives to gain recognition that war studies and war memorials in Australia need to start a century earlier than 1914.

As Epstein notes:

Thucydides gained greatly on Herodotus in popularity during the Cold War, as his History of the Peloponnesian War, which chronicles the conflict between Athens and Sparta, found a ready analogy in the clash between the United States and the Soviet Union—at least among people who read history for lessons about the present. Now that that war is over, the analogy is of lessened cogency, and Herodotus' star is rising.

Herodotus was publishing too early to cover the rise of an Athenian brand of imperialism but Epstein

suggests that such military adventurism was doomed to fail, just as do contemporary critics of American (and Australian) adventurism into the Middle East:

In Herodotus' view, the Persian plan of continuous expansion doomed their empire from the outset. The Greeks, owing to their belief in honor and civic pride, their love of freedom and independence, and their distrust of too-great opulence, were wary of empire—at any rate, empire on the scale that the Persian kings craved. Later, in a period not covered by the Histories, the plans of expansion on the part of the Athenians, when they acquired their maritime empire, would in turn doom them, the debacle in Syracuse putting fini to all hopes of further expansion. For Herodotus, instability is the rule of life; the fortunes of countries, like those of men, go up and down. "Human happiness," he writes, "never continues long in one place."

**THE MOSAIC IN ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL:**

**Robert Braun**

I'm grateful to Pamela Davenport and John Carr for alerting me to the fact that my article in the October edition of Nova contained an error in the description of the older, rather mysterious mosaic in St John's Cathedral in Brisbane.

Originally thought to be from a Constantinian church, later archaeological work on the site (which seems to have survived the ravages of war) has come to the conclusion that it was not a church, but a sixth century synagogue in the village of Na'aran. The remarkable thing about the excavated pavement is that it included a large number of animals, people and non-Jewish mythical identities. Helios, the sun god, and the signs of the zodiac were present.

Originally, when the mosaic was unearthed, it was believed that the Jewish religion had always forbidden the depiction of such images in synagogues. Subsequently, additional ancient synagogues with figurative images were unearthed and it is now accepted that for a time (from the 6th to 8th centuries?), such images were permitted, at least in some areas. John Carr writes that later there was a return to proscription of 'graven images'. It is presumed that iconoclastic authorities (as well as World War 1 soldiers from Australia) were responsible for roughly prising offending tiles from the site, where today there are many gaps where figures have been removed, though the outlines clearly show what was once there. The cathedral mosaic depicting the cloven tongue, originally thought to have been a symbol

of the Holy Spirit was probably just a stylised leaf-like device, with no specific symbolic significance. This mosaic has a companion piece, also from the Na'aran synagogue, which is displayed in St James' Anglican Church, King Street, Sydney. Both mosaics were presented to the custodian churches by the World War 1 chaplain, William Maitland Woods, and are worth a church call to view these relics from a time when Judaism unashamedly used secular and pagan images in its synagogue decorative arts.

Sorry if I originally misled readers about the origins of the Na'aran mosaic in our cathedral. I guess it just goes to show that history and archaeology never stand still, but research and discovery are always throwing new light on the lives of those we once thought we knew. Take things for granted and they have a tendency to turn around and bite you, as the mysterious leaf-like mosaic in St John's Cathedral did to me!

**WHAT'S IN A WORD**  
**Food, Glorious Food!**

**Bob Milns**

I read the other day the startling news that a significant portion of the adult population of Australia would eat on each of the festive days of Christmas c.8500 calories per person (the item used calories, not kilojoules), when the normal healthy daily intake per person is 2500 for men and 2000 for women! This set me thinking about some of the many words we've inherited from the ancient Greeks and Romans that deal with eating and drinking, many with the idea of excess or greed. For me as an admirer of the philosophy of Epicurus (341-270 BC) it is always sad to see how his name has come to be used of people dedicated - often to excess - with the pleasure of rich food and drink, as in the noun 'epicure' and the adjective 'epicurean'. Epicurus certainly believed that Pleasure was the Supreme Good, but his idea of pleasure was far from the pursuit of elaborate and exotic banquets washed down with vintage wines. For Epicurus, a simple, quiet life, with simple food, free from physical and mental disturbance (e.g. making huge sums of money), surrounded by like-minded friends was true pleasure and happiness.

Gastronomy, defined as 'the art of good eating', is always in fashion, one might say 'to excess', to judge by the seemingly endless series of programs on television devoted to cooking. The word is itself of Greek origin, from the word that means 'stomach' (gaster) and that meaning 'regulation or governing' (nomos). So, gastronomy should mean 'stomach-regulation'. The word 'gastronomia' is, in fact, quite rare in classical Greek, but was one of

the titles of a now almost all lost work written by an Arcestratus of Sicily in the 4th century BC, translated by one modern as 'Almanach des Gourmands' and described as 'a culinary tour of the Mediterranean' - which sounds just the right title for a new TV series on cooking!

The words 'gourmet' and 'gourmand' are interesting to me, not only because the one (gourmet) is used to denote a food-connoisseur while the other 'gourmand' means a glutton, but because nobody seems sure of what the words' derivations are. We do, however, know that 'glutton' is originally a good, honest Latin word, 'glutire', meaning to swallow or gulp down and that a person who did this was, in Latin, a 'gluto'.

I'm writing this on New Year's Eve, when, no doubt, the world over, there will be much drinking to excess, resulting in horrible hangovers in the morning. The Latin word for intoxication, inebriation, and hangover, is the splendid sounding 'crapula', borrowed from the Greek kraipale. From this we get our English word 'crapulous' and 'crapulent', meaning a person given to intemperate drinking or drunken or suffering from the hangover and headache therefrom. I remember that at my school in England there was a master who would refer to a misbehaving boy as a 'crapulous codfish'. We didn't understand the word then - nor, I suspect, did the teacher.

To Auld Lang Syne and a Happy New Year to all readers,

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2015 FOA PROGRAM<sup>6</sup>

SUNDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2 PM

ADRIAN HEYWORTH SMITH  
MEMORIAL LECTURE

PROFESSOR ALASTAIR BLANSHARD

THE IONIAN EXPEDITION 250 YEARS ON:  
DILETTANTI AND THE BIRTH OF ARCHAEOLOGY

SUNDAY 12 APRIL

2.00 PRELIMINARY TALK(TBA)

2.30 PM

MR JAMES DONALDSON

THE J H ILIFFE COLLECTION AND THE  
ARCHAEOLOGY OF MANDATE-ERA PALESTINE

SUNDAY 1 MARCH

2.00 PM PRELIMINARY TALK

SUSAN EDMONDSON  
(BETTY FLETCHER SCHOLAR 2011)

A JOURNEY IN THE SOUTH OF ROMAN  
LUSITANIA

2.30 PM

DR CAILLAN DAVENPORT  
CONSTANTINE AND CONSTANTINOPE

SUNDAY 3 MAY

2.00 PM PRELIMINARY TALK : TBA

2.30 PM MAIN TALK

DR KERRY HECKENBERG

THE STATUE OF ZEUS AT OLYMPIA  
AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF POWER AND  
MAJESTY IN EUROPEAN, AMERICAN AND  
AUSTRALIAN ART

SATURDAY 21 MARCH

ANCIENT HISTORY DAY 2015

‘EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY - FOOD, DRINK  
AND NUTRITION IN THE ANCIENT WORLD’

31 MAY

1.45PM

FOA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING<sup>7</sup>  
FOLLOWED BY

EMERITUS PROFESSOR ROGER SCOTT  
THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF THE FRIENDS  
OF ANTIQUITY

2.30PM

EMERITUS PROFESSOR BOB MILNS

ANCIENT GREEK ASTRONOMY AND  
ASTRONOMERS

(FIRST IN A SERIES ON THE THEME OF  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY)

<sup>6</sup> Room E302 Forgan Smith, at least for the February and March Sunday Series.

<sup>7</sup> Note that the AGM will precede the Sunday Series lecture given by Professor Milns.