

APRIL 2015

NOVA



GREEK WINE-COOLER (PSYKTER), ATTRIBUTED TO DOURIS. 500-470 BC

**ANCIENT HISTORY DAY 2015
'EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY:
FOOD IN THE ANCIENT WORLD'**

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Previous issues of *Nova*

Since 2011 electronic versions of previous years' issues of *Nova* have been loaded onto the Friends of Antiquity Website at: <http://www.friendsofantiquity.org.au/index.php?id=2>.

EDITORIAL

Ann Scott

Welcome to the 'new look' Nova. The term 'new look' reminds me of the moment, celebrating the end of the second world war, when my mother converted our best sheets into 'new look' dresses. I vividly remember them - one pale pink outfit and the other pale blue, scant choice of dyes or materials in those days of rationing and austerity.

The 'new look' for Nova is the result of a similar sense of liberation - mastering the software that produces an automatic table of contents. This mastery does not stretch to fitting the ToC onto the cover. However, this has two unanticipated benefits. The first is that I don't have to panic at the last minute to check that the page references are correct because the software takes care of that. The second is that I can add a short biographical note on each contributor, something that has previously resided in my good intentions basket.

To continue the war theme, I could not resist using this image from WW2 to urge you to consider nominating for the Friends of Antiquity Executive Committee. We would welcome nominations from staff, students and other members. After Ancient History Day a few of us sat over a glass of champagne in a candlelit Scott house (the power was out after the torrential storm) and discussed our various fragilities - and the wisdom of setting in train a form of succession plan - particularly engaging people a bit younger than ourselves in some of the planning and organisation of functions such as Ancient History Day.



The AGM is being held in the Forgan Smith Building combined before the Sunday Series lecture by Emeritus Professor Bob Milns on 31 May. See the back page of Nova for details, and enclosed flier which includes a nomination form. Do consider nominating - you can nominate at the AGM if you wish.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Roger Scott

We were delighted with the turnout for Ancient History Day in its new time slot. The busload of students from Laidley materially assisted in both adding numbers and reducing the average age of participants. They were enthralled, as we all were, by the archaeological evidence for the mass production of Egyptian beer and the drunkenness associated with the production of the pyramids. Regrettably the rain gods intervened to hamper afternoon activities. Feedback suggested that the shift to first semester was appreciated. However, in 2016 we need to make other changes to avoid a clash with school examinations.

This success was consistent with the appeal of the Sunday Series program as well, with our venue being comfortably filled on every occasion this year. The quality of the speakers has been matched by the efforts of members of the Executive Committee and volunteers.

This is my last Nova report as I will complete my two years in office at the AGM at the end of May. This period has been marked by a general up-turn in the morale of the teachers in the School, most notably with the arrival of a new professor and the enrichment activities made available to him by the Milns Fund. The Museum has also gone from strength to strength in both the quality of its collection and its engagement with the student body and the wider community. My two years ex officio on the committee of the parent organization of the Alumni Friends has seen more struggles for recognition of its role within the university and the Friends of Antiquity are well represented by former committee members playing key roles. Alumni House in Walcott Street has been scheduled for demolition and our administrative nerve centre will shortly be relocated into the lower reaches of the Seddon Building.

I will become an ex officio member of the FoA committee as 'immediate past President'. I will not be able to match the value of my predecessor, Margaret Mapp, who stepped into the role of Treasurer after a year of apprenticeship. If I had a particular virtue, it was knowing how the wider university system function, but my designated successor stepping up from Deputy (Denis Brosnan) trumps that with his long period of service as an elected representative on the UQ Senate and continuing role in collegiate administration. He also has a wild sense of humour, as Friends can witness by attending the next Literary Lunch on June 24.

NEWS FROM THE DISCIPLINE

Professor Alastair Blanshard

Semester 1 has commenced and it is particularly pleasing to see that our student numbers have risen in almost all of our courses. This is despite the Faculty reducing its overall intake of students this year.

Our program of Friday afternoon seminars has recommenced. This semester, we are primarily having talks given by our graduate students. The wide variety of topics offered attests to the varied interests of our graduate community. The program includes everything from banqueting Etruscans to wartime taxation strategies. If you would like more information about these seminars, please look at the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry website. One seminar worth noting is the seminar to be given by Professor Kai Brodersen who is visiting Australia from Erfurt University in Germany. Prof. Brodersen is a distinguished scholar and entertaining speaker. He has generously agreed to give two talks while he is here in Queensland. On Friday 15 May at 12 pm, he will give a talk entitled 'How Caesar made Britain an island' in E301 Forgan-Smith. Later that same afternoon at 3:30 pm he will give another talk entitled 'Romans and Barbarians in Pliny and his "ape" Solinus'. The venue for the second talk is E303 Forgan Smith.

For film buffs, Tom Stevenson is once again running his film showings on Friday afternoons. The theme is 'Caesar and Cleopatra' and Tom has put together a wonderful program of films. Highlights include Cecil B. DeMille's *Cleopatra* (1934), Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1953) starring Marlon Brando, and *Carry on Cleo* (1964). The films are shown every Friday at 12 pm in Goddard Rm 212. Contact Tom Stevenson if you would like a full program.

Finally, a number of colleagues are overseas conducting research this semester. David Pritchard is at Durham University, where he holds a visiting fellowship at their Institute of Advanced Study. Caillan Davenport is presenting at a conference in Germany before taking an extended research trip to Britain and Italy. Amelia Brown is heading off to Malta where she will base herself whilst conducting a research trip that includes the UK, Greece, Italy and France. Both Amelia and Caillan's trips are funded by the Australian Research Council as part of their Discovery Early Career Award (DECRA) scheme. We wish them safe travels.

MUSEUM REPORT

Janette McWilliam

2015 has already been a busy year with 4,011 visitors coming through the museum as of April 1st and the launch of our new coin exhibition 'Faces of Empire' which explores the relationship of the Julio-Claudian family through coins from the Museum's collection. A successful Masterclass on Archaeological Illustration run by Mr James Donaldson was also enjoyed by all in March. We are now busily working on our new Exhibition on Cyprus which will open in June 2015 and run until May 2016. The exhibition will explore the importance of Cyprus in the Ancient world, focussing in particular on how the Cypriot culture influenced, and was in turn influenced by the Near East, Greece and Rome.

We recently held our annual Lemuria student-focussed event, this year entitled 'Lemuria: A Festival of Mysteries.' The evening was introduced by Dr Chris Malone who gave a lecture on 'The Lure of the Mysteries: An Initiate's Guide'.

The Alberese Winter Archaeological Field School/R.D Milns International Internship Program 2014-2015¹

Students from Classics and Ancient History travelled to Italy in January 2015 to participate in the annual Alberese Winter Archaeological Field School/RD Milns Antiquities Museum International Internship Program.

We began in the wonderful city of Rome with visits to Galleria Borghese, Villa of Cardinal Scipione built in the 17th century as 'a kind of ante litteram museum, a microcosm of every form of art' and St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. Our second day was an amazing 'immersion' experience with rescue archaeologist Dr Massimo Brando who has lived and worked in Rome all his life. Not only did we learn all about the colosseum and the area of the Roman Forum and Palatine Hill, but we were given the unique opportunity to visit the excavation site of the theatre of Balbus at Crypta Balbi not normally open to the public. On the following days we visited the Pantheon, Ara Pacis Museum, Piazza Navona, Column of Marcus Aurelius and had a wonderful time exploring the streets of Rome around the Campo di Fiori area. We also experienced the culinary delights of Rome, having a couple of special meals at wonderful restaurants and eating amazing gelati, pastries and biscotti.

¹ For information on the 2015-2016 Field School/International Internship Program, contact Dr McWilliam, j.mcwilliam@uq.edu.au. This year the program will be run as a 2# course for credit.

We then travelled to the Medieval Tuscan town of Grosseto where we made a lovely hotel in the old town our home for the next couple of weeks, and had dinner at a local restaurant each evening. Monday to Thursday we worked with an inspiring range of international specialists on Roman glass, pottery, small finds (for example coins and artefacts made from bone and metal such as brooches, nails, dice, rings), and zoo archaeology. All these finds came from recent archaeological digs belonging to the Alberese Archaeological Project at Spolverino and Umbro Flumen, in the Alberese National Park near Grosseto. We learnt about what happens to artefacts between being dug up and being placed in Museums: we cleaned, identified, drew and classified many fragments and artefacts. On Fridays we visited local Museums (Grosseto has two impressive museums) and archaeological sites around Southern Tuscany including Cosa and Rusellae, and the lovely town of Massa Marittima. On weekends we had the opportunity to visit Siena, Pisa, and Florence.

What is very exciting is that all our hard work will go towards future publications on the sites at Alberese, which include a villa and workshops for metalwork and recycling glass. The 2015 UQ Team achieved remarkable results.

We catalogued: 7,262 glass fragments and drew 124 from Spolverino and 34 from Umbro Flumen, 3,200 pottery fragments from Spolverino and drew 124,200 small finds and completed another 213 drawings.



We also featured in the local paper.

THE LEGALITY AND ETHICAL INTEGRITY OF THE DODWELL STELE²

Charlotte Mann

By definition, museums are not a static reliquary of ancient artifacts but are evolutionary institutions, which must actively seek out new objects to promote the growth of their collection (Edson 1997: 189.) Nonetheless, the acquisition of ancient artifacts is governed by legal, historical and ethical considerations. Acquisitions must be made in accordance with Australian law and international conventions; consider an object's historical context, modern provenance and preserve the ethical integrity of a museum.

This essay will consider the acquisition of the Dodwell Stele by the RD Milns Antiquities Museum in 2013; first, by interrogating the legal and historical circumstances of its excavation from the Piraeus Necropolis in 1805, and then by considering the legality of its purchase by the museum on a national and international scale. Throughout, this essay seeks to demonstrate the consistent legal soundness and ethical integrity of the museum's acquisition.



The 'Dodwell Stele': RD Milns Antiquities Museum. 2014.001. Grave Stele.

The question of whether the Dodwell Stele was legally acquired by its first owner, the Irish aristocrat and artist Edward Dodwell, is contingent upon the historical, legal and social circumstances of its excavation (McWilliam 2014: 67). First, it is necessary to consider whether the Ottoman

² Charlotte Manne won the Ede Prize 2014 for this essay.

administration that occupied Greece throughout the eighteenth century was legally authorised to dispose of Greek antiquities, and then to question whether Edward Dodwell was permitted to acquire the stele.

Dodwell travelled to Greece for the second time in 1805, as one of the many aristocratic visitors who undertook ‘the Grand Tour’ of Italy and Greece in order to experience the remnants of classical material culture first hand. The Grand Tourists’ access to ancient sites was aided by the ‘advantageous relations’ that had developed between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire through Britain’s alliance with Turkey throughout the French-Turkish War, and it was formally acquired through administrative documents called ‘*firman*,’ which could be purchased from the Turkish governor of Athens (Greenfield 1996: 335; Blake 2000: 65-66). By definition, a *firman* was a document used to formally confer a ‘favour’ from the Turkish government upon an individual (Lapidus 2002: 260-261), and *firman* were issued by the Ottoman administration as legally binding documents upon the assumption that physical and military control of Greece conferred a solid claim to legal authority over all Greek public property, including the right to sell its artifacts and ancient sites (Greenfield 1996: 337).

The right of occupational governments to dispose of cultural heritage objects in their territory was unchallenged at the time of the Ottoman occupation, and international conventions enacted to prohibit these activities were not codified until the twentieth century, and then without retrospective effect. Without legislative means through which to contest the sale of ancient Greek artifacts to Grand Tourists, it is necessary to instead question whether Dodwell was permitted to enter the Piraeus Necropolis and remove the Dodwell Stele, to ascertain whether the object was legally acquired.

Customarily, Grand Tourists were required to purchase a *firman* from the Turkish governor in order to legally enter the ancient sites of Athens and were expected to confine their activities to those specified by the terms of their *firman* (Hitchens 2008: 50). On this occasion, however, Dodwell failed to formally acquire entry to the Piraeus Necropolis, despite his sincere attempt to do so. In the autobiographical account of his journey, *A Classical and Topographical Tour Through Greece*, Dodwell wrote that he gave the Turkish governor gifts to the value of 100 *piastres* upon arrival in Athens, and then offered to pay eighty *piastres* for a *firman* permitting him ‘free access to the Acropolis as

often as [he] chose’ (Dodwell 2008: 293; McWilliam 2014: 69).

However, Dodwell refused to pay for the *firman* in full until ‘he had completed his observations and drawings,’ and as a result the Turkish governor denied him admission to the ancient sites of Athens (Dodwell 2008: 293). Dodwell was forced to bribe his way onto the Piraeus Necropolis, and ‘obtained [the guards’] good graces by ‘throwing a few paras amongst them’ (Dodwell 2008: 293).

Despite its apparent illegality, this can be considered an unconventional, rather than unlawful, means of entry. If considered in light of the gifts made to the Turkish *disdar*, which were of greater value than the *firman* itself, it can be argued that Dodwell paid for his *firman* in an unconventional sense, and failed to acquire the formal paperwork due to what Dodwell described as the *Disdar*’s ‘bad faith and insatiable rapacity’ (Dodwell 2008: 293).

Although the acquisition of ancient artifacts by Grand Tourists will always be a source of legal and ethical ambiguity, the case can be made that Dodwell’s actions were lawful when held against the legal standards and social context of eighteenth century Athens.

It is also important to bear the historical context of Dodwell’s actions in mind when considering whether Dodwell was permitted to remove the stele from the Piraeus Necropolis. Although the terms of Dodwell’s *firman* granted him ‘free access to the Acropolis to make drawings and observations’ (Dodwell 2008: 293) rather than explicit permission to remove ancient artifacts, modern historians concur that the Ottomans ‘cared little about Classical antiquity [or for Greek artifacts with] no historical or religious connection to Ottoman history,’ and were aware that the Grand Tourists who sought permission to visit the ancient sites of Athens did not merely wish to experience classical ruins, but expected to acquire transportable antiquities as well (Hunt 2010: 80). Dodwell’s reputation as an enthusiastic collector was well established by the time of his second trip to Athens, and the *Disdar* drafted his *firman* in the knowledge that Dodwell was both an artist and a voracious antiquarian.³

This notion of ‘reasonably foreseeable behaviour’ is exemplified by a comparison between Dodwell’s interpretation of his *firman* and the behaviour of the 7th Earl of Elgin, whose removal of the sculptural frieze from the Parthenon was a gross misinterpretation of the permission to ‘dig and remove a few pieces of stone’ (Hitchens 2008: 61).

³ Dodwell developed this reputation on his first trip to Athens, and is reported to have been incapable of passing an ancient tomb without opening it up (McWilliam 2014: 69).

It is clear that although permission to remove the stele was not explicitly phrased, in the legal and social context of eighteenth century Athens, implicit permission was sufficient to authorise Dodwell's actions, and it may be argued that Dodwell legally acquired the stele when he removed it from the Necropolis.

Although statutes and conventions enacted in the twenty-first century cannot be used to retrospectively prosecute the unlawful excavation of antiquities, it is nevertheless imperative to demonstrate that Dodwell acquired the stele in legal circumstances, as the acquisition of an object without legal title or established provenance is prohibited by legislation and conventions on a national, international and institutional scale. When considering the legality of the Dodwell Stele, administrative documents, such as the stele's entry in the Charles Ede Sales Catalogue and the receipt of sale, which indicates that the stele was acquired from a reputable dealer, received adequate funding and was paid for in full, are conclusive evidence that its legal title was transferred to the Antiquities Museum in accordance with the UNESCO Convention of 1970 and the International Council of Museum's *Code of Ethics*.

It is also necessary to demonstrate that the stele is of 'good provenance' by establishing a clear chain of legal ownership from the time of the stele's excavation until its purchase by the Antiquities Museum in 2013.⁴ The good provenance of an object is a legal requirement, and prohibitions against the acquisition of illegally excavated, traded or looted objects is codified on both an international level by the UNESCO Convention of 1970 and on an institutional scale by the Antiquities Museum's collection policy. In addition, the detailed provenance of an object is a significant aid to conservation and scholarship, allowing the Dodwell stele to be studied within its historical, national and archaeological context.

The Dodwell Stele is of excellent provenance, and evidence of consistent legal ownership can be found in both the official paperwork pertaining to its sale and in the extraneous documentation connected to prior ownership (RD Milns Antiquities Museum n.d. Artefact File: 14.001). These records indicate that after Dodwell discovered the stele on the Piraeus Necropolis and documented the discovery through a vivid description and drawing in *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece* (Dodwell 2008: 443), the stele was sold to the Marquess of Sligo Sir Howe Peter Brone, and it remained in the Sligo family collection until 1958, when it was purchased

by the auction house Christies and sold to a wealthy Englishman as a garden ornament (R.D. Milns Antiquities Museum n.d. Significance Assessment 14.001. 2.1). As the Museum's *Significance Assessment* of the stele observed, the excellent provenance of this object is 'highly interesting and topical, [thereby making] this piece highly unusual and very significant' (R.D. Milns Antiquities Museum n.d. Significance Assessment 14.001).

The acquisition of ancient artifacts by the Grand Tourists of the eighteenth century will always be legally contentious and ethically ambiguous, and the prospective nature of twentieth century cultural heritage laws serves to complicate, rather than resolve, these issues. However, it can be argued that Edward Dodwell lawfully acquired the stele according to the legal standards and historical context of eighteenth century Athens, and the Antiquities Museum has shown a commendable adherence to international conventions, national legislation and codes of ethical conduct throughout its acquisition of the object. Thus, it is concluded that the purchase of the Dodwell Stele by the RD Milns Antiquities Museum is legally permissible and ethically sound.

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R.D. Milns Antiquities Museum.2014.001. *Gravestone*, accessed 1st October 2014.

Legislation

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- *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention*, opened for signature 14 May to 31 December 1954, 249 UNTS 240 (entered into force 7 August 1956).
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⁴ R.D. Milns Antiquities Museum n.d. Significance Assessment: 14.001 2.1; RD Milns Antiquities Museum n.d. Artefact File: 14.001.

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work gang as 'the drunkards of Khufu' so we can conclude that drunks built the pyramids, not slaves.

There are three different words for beer: heket, tenemu, and kha-ahmet, but the difference between these three is unclear. There are also references to 'dark beer', 'iron beer', 'friend's beer', 'beer of the protector', 'beer of truth', 'thick beer', and 'sweet beer'. Beer was a common offering to the gods, was often used in ritual practices and was also known in state festivals and local feasts. As a provision for the afterlife, beer jugs are a very common grave good. With all these different purposes for beer in ancient Egyptian society, we can ask, were different beers produced for different social classes, or for different occasions? Were different economic values associated with each type of beer? Or do the different names refer to differences in recipe and taste? These questions remain unanswered.

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BEER

Serena Love

Egypt was known as the 'bread basket' of the Mediterranean, providing wheat and barley for the ancient world. Grain is the primary currency of Egypt. Taxes and daily wages were paid in sacks of grain. In the New Kingdom, a sack of grain was used as standardized measures to measure the value of an item. The state controlled redistributive economy was based on grain collected as taxes and stored in massive magazines, usually attached to temples. Fishermen and sailors would trade sacks of grain at quayside markets for other goods such as sandals, cloth, and fruit. But for the ancient Egyptians, these grains became the elixir of everyday life: beer.

Beer was perhaps the most common drink and affordable enough that ordinary people could drink it every day. Beer came in jars and freshly made beer may have been consumed with straws. Beer is said to be safer than water to drink, so it was a very commonly consumed beverage. Part of the brewing process was to boil the water, which would kill bacteria therefore it was thought to be a safe beverage for daily consumption. The ration of the Old Kingdom pyramid builders was a jug of beer, a portion of bread and a ration of onions. A graffito inside the great pyramid of Khufu at Giza names the



Google Images credit: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz

The majority of surviving evidence of beer is from artistic representations, such as tomb scenes, paintings, and statues. But are these representations to be taken at face value? Is it valid to take the practices of some people and assume it is the same technology used by the whole society? The scenes represented in tombs are only for those people who could afford such embellishment- are the processes represented in these tomb scenes the same used by everyday people? Or is what we are seeing an idealized representation or maybe something that only occurred on ritual occasions, or

illustrate events and technology that was only available to the elite? In interpreting the art, we need to consider our own biases: how much are we interpreting what we see according to our own contemporary experience of what we consider to be similar activities, perhaps imposing our beliefs onto the ancient Egyptians?

Archaeology can often combat the bias in artistic representation using evidence from non-elite classes. Beer jars are the most common pottery vessel found on any archaeological excavation in Egypt. These beer jars were handmade vessels made from heavily tempered clay with chaff and sand. They have no handles and have a pointed bottom, were made to stand in the sand. The oldest evidence for beer brewing is from the Predynastic settlement of Hierakonpolis, dating to 3800 BC. It is possible that this brewery was established specifically to supply the funerary rituals and/or grave goods for the elite tombs, as well as to provide the priests in service at the temples and the local work force. Brewing was the largest industry and known at present at Hierakonpolis, with 10 areas of high production identified thus far. These breweries have large ceramic vats set into the ground and the soil around is burnt, indicating repeated episodes of intense burning. Inside each vat a thick layer of shiny black residue adheres to the interior. Preliminary botanical examination showed that the residue contained amongst other things, malted emmer wheat, so there is no doubt that the vats were made for heating grain mixed with water, the final product being beer. Each vat could hold 65 litres and each of these breweries had between 6-10 vats each. The brewing process took 2 days; one day to mash the grains and boil them and a second day to ferment.

This evidence suggests that one brewery with 6 vats could produce 2,440 litres of beer per week! And if the daily ration was 1 jug of beer per person, a single brewery could support 454 people.



Beer jars were needed by the hundreds (Photo by Keith Payne).⁵

Recent scientific analysis has shown that ancient Egyptian beer was made from emmer wheat and

barley, directly from malted (sprouted grains) and unmalted grains. Malting is a process whereby cereal grains are germinated, converting starch into sugar. These grains are then dried and roasted. The temperature and the duration of the roast will determine the flavour of the beer; pale ales are made from lightly malted grains, as opposed to stouts and porters which are made from dark roasted grains. The other possible ingredients are dates, honey, figs, coriander, chamomile, mint and pomegranate. The one ingredient known in beer today is hops but this was not available in ancient Egypt. Yeast is another common ingredient that is necessary for fermentation. We have no direct evidence for yeast but we assume the yeast originated either from the skin of dates or possibly a form of 'sourdough' mixture.



EMS-89615 Egyptian wooden model of beer making in ancient Egypt, located at the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose, California

The brewing process was a two-step process. The first was to coarsely grind the emmer wheat. The second was to malt the emmer wheat and then grind it. Cold water was added to malted grains and the unmalted grains were boiled. Both of these were combined, sieved, fermented and consumed. This process lacks a second fermentation process, suggesting that the beer was drunk while it was 'green'. The final product does not resemble modern techniques but produced a hearty drink.

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⁵ For the source of this image see: <http://emhotep.net/2012/10/12/structures/tombs-structures/from-pits-to-palaces-part-3-hierakonpolis-and-the-roots-of-royalty/>

THE PLEASURES OF THE GREEK TABLE

Alastair Blanshard

On the face of it, Ancient Greece seems an odd place to look for feasts and gastronomic delicacies. The diet of the Greeks was typically frugal. Indeed, they made a virtue of such restraint. This seems to be message of the anecdote recorded in Herodotus' Histories about the luxurious lifestyle of the Persians. Following the defeat of the Persian general Mardonius, the victorious Spartans led by the general Pausanias began to pick over the spoils of the vanquished Persians. These included a spectacular royal tent:

When Pausanias saw it, with its embroidered hangings and gorgeous decorations in silver and gold, he summoned Mardonius' bakers and cooks and told them to prepare a meal of the same sort as they were accustomed to prepare for their former master. The order was obeyed; and when Pausanias saw gold and silver couches all beautifully draped, and gold and silver tables, and everything prepared for the feast with great magnificence, he could hardly believe his eyes for the good things set before him, and, just for a joke, he ordered his own servants to get ready an ordinary Spartan dinner. The difference between the two meals was indeed remarkable, and when both were ready, Pausanias laughed and sent for the Greek commanding officers. When they arrived, he invited them to take a look at the two tables, saying, "Men of Greece, I asked you here in order to show you the folly of the Persians, who, living in this style, came to Greece to rob us of our poverty". [Hdt 9.82]

It is hard not to see in this story of Persian opulence and defeat, an example of the moral that comes at the end of Herodotus' work, namely that 'soft countries breed soft men' (Hdt. 9.122). The Persian loss at Plataea was, in part, the result of their devotion to the dinner table.

In this story, Pausanias' characterized the Spartan diet as poor, but he could have been speaking for the Greek diet in general. Literary evidence as well as archaeological excavation and agricultural modeling all confirm the same picture of poverty and restraint. The average rural Greek normally ate only one fixed meal a day, taken in the early evening and called in Greek *deipnon* ('dinner'). During the day, snacks and small quantities of food were eaten. For the wealthy, as well as athletes and the army, we have reference to another regular meal called the *ariston*. Traditionally, *ariston* is translated as 'breakfast', although in practice it seems to refer to any set meal that isn't *deipnon*.

The typical Greek meal consisted of a number of staples. Owing to its hardiness and drought

resistance, barley was much more common than wheat. Dried and toasted, it could be made into stews, flavored porridges as well as cakes. It was such a regular feature of the Greek diet that one of the pieces of equipment that brides brought with them to their new house was a barley-roasting pan. Beans, especially broad beans, were also a regular feature. They could be ground into a savory paste or boiled up as a stew. As one would expect, olives feature heavily in the Greek diet both for their fruit as well as their oil. Supplementing this basic diet was seasonal fruit.

The great source of protein and calories in the Greek diet was cheese. Evidence for cheese-making in the Mediterranean region can be traced back as far as 3000 BC and the development of cheese revolutionized the diet. Cheese was extremely nutritionally dense, portable, and easy to store. It is the ideal foodstuff for pastoralists and almost every Greek shepherd seems to have had a round of cheese on his person. Even the monstrous Cyclops, according to Homer, was a keen cheese-maker. Made from sheep and goat's milk, rarely from cows' milk, this cheese was often flavoured with, and stored in, brine, much like many Modern Greek cheeses. Fig-sap was used as rennet. Certain regions owing to the quality of their milk as well as their cheese-making techniques became famous for their cheeses. The cheeses of Sicily were particularly prized. Cheese could be eaten whole or grated as a condiment. It was even added to wine.

Relief from this rather monotonous diet was provided by occasions of public and private feasting. Indeed, for the average citizen, the public religious festivals, with their attendant sacrifices, were one of the few opportunities to eat meat. Almost all Greek religious ceremonies involved a sacrifice to the Gods in which the animal sacrificed was eaten by the community.

The most common sacrificial animal was a cow. However, certain deities preferred other animals. Demeter was regularly offered pigs, Poseidon could be offered tuna, and sheep or goats were often sacrificed to Aphrodite. The goddess Hecate, at first instance, seems odd in being offered puppies in her sacrifice. Yet, the consumption of dog-meat was not particularly unusual in Greece. Medical texts often advise consumption of boiled puppy-meat for certain ailments and archaeological excavations of a Greek rubbish assemblage showed that 3% of the animals bones were dog bones and these bones showed signs of butchery.

The more prosperous a city, the more opportunities for sacrifices, and the more meat consumption by its citizens. Athens, for example, had more festivals than any other state. A survey of the Athenian

religious calendar reveals that there was an opportunity to partake in some form of religious sacrifice almost every nine days. However, it must be remembered that the amounts of meat distributed were small. For example, at the Panathenaia, one of the most important festivals and one with the largest sacrificial distributions, each household only went away with a little over a 1kg of meat. Calculations show that Greeks probably consumed about only 1/20th of the amount of meat eaten by the modern European.

Laws relating to the apportionment of meat show that there was a clear hierarchy of cuts. The best cuts were the leg-joints, which in most religious sacrifices were reserved for the priests. At home, privileged guests might be served a leg joint (fig. 1). Below this were strips of muscles meat, followed by skewer of offal. At the bottom of the list was the scraps made into minced meat, often for sausages wrapped in intestines or caul.



Figure 1. Guest being served leg-joint and bread by a slave.

As well as public feasting, there were also opportunities, especially for the wealthy, to put on private feasts. These could be associated with particular occasions such as weddings or the birth of a child or the arrival of guests from another city. Once again, the consumption of meat played a large part in these festivities. The important addition in private feasts was fish, which apart from a few rites relating to Poseidon, was absent from religious rituals.

Fish was the true luxury food in Greece. Poets praised it. Courtesans traded under the names of prominent fish. It was a popular gift to give to your beloved. In South Italy, we see special dishes designed for serving fish. The fish painted on the bottom of the plates was supposed to trick the eye into imagining piscatorial plenitude (fig 2.).

The private feasts could be grand occasions. More common were the drinking parties called symposia.

Most of the decorated Greek pottery that survives was intended for these drinking parties (fig. 3).



Figure 2. Apulian fish-plate with perch and limpets. 340-320 BC. BM 1856.1226. 102



Figure 3. Symposium. Red-figure cup, attributed to Douris. 485-480 BC. BM 1843.1103.15

Wine was poured into mixing-bowls (kraters), water was added, and slaves served the wine out to the guests as they reclined on couches. In hot weather, the wine might be cooled by the presence of an ice-filled vessel called a psykter placed into the krater (fig. 4).



Figure 4. Greek wine-cooler (psykter), attributed to Douris. 500-470 BC. BM 1868.0606.7

Symposia were conducted in a convivial atmosphere. Games were played, songs and poems were sung, and each member of the group was required to contribute to the festivity of the occasion. Flute girls might be in attendance. The vases used in these occasions often helped to create and reinforce this playful ambiance. Their iconography often played witty jokes on the drinker. Shocking or pornographic scenes might lurk at the bottom of the cups. Sometimes they featured scenes of worse-for-wear drinkers suffering terrible hangovers, a bit like modern health warnings on cigarettes.

Moralists were often worried about the potential of these symposia to get out of control. We have numerous anecdotes of participants leaving their parties and causing mayhem on the streets. Still such over-indulgence is perhaps understandable. After all, what did tomorrow hold, but another plate of barley porridge?

THE 'BANQUET OF TRIMALCHIO'⁶

Tom Stevenson

Introduction

The *Cena Trimalchionis* ('Banquet of Trimalchio') is part of a larger, fragmentary work, known as the *Satyricon*, by Petronius. What can we learn about Roman banquets from reading Petronius' bizarre parody of banquets of the Neronian age? Probably very little that we can trust. What, then, can we learn about elite attitudes to 'vulgar' and 'pretentious' display at these banquets by social inferiors? Probably a good deal more. What this

means, in effect, for anyone interested in the details of what took place at the banquets of wealthy Romans during the reign of Nero, is that you have to be prepared for genuine details to be distorted greatly in service of the overall aim of presenting a nauseating spectacle – quite revolting and nauseating, in fact. It might even be better to suspend the historical impulse and enjoy the literary ride, if it is at all to your 'taste'.

The Author

Most scholars think the author of the *Satyricon* was 'Gaius' Petronius, consular senator and courtier of the emperor Nero. Tacitus describes him as being famous for his indolence (*Ann.* 16.17-20). He was for a time able to influence Nero in his pleasures, but when he was forced by Tigellinus to commit suicide in AD 66 he left a will denouncing Nero in embarrassing detail. It is not, however, established beyond doubt that the author is Petronius, the *arbiter elegantiae* (arbiter of elegance) referred to by Tacitus, Plutarch and Pliny the Elder, even if he seems a likely person, given his reputation and the Neronian detail, style and themes of the work. Tacitus (*Ann.* 16.17-18) refers to 'Gaius' Petronius, but the manuscripts of the *Satyricon* refer to 'Titus' Petronius, which is what Pliny (*HN* 37.20) and Plutarch (*Mor.* 60d) appear to call Petronius the consular.

The Title: *Satyricon* or *Satyrice*?

The manuscript is entitled Σατυρικῶν (sc. libri), viz. 'Books of Satyrlike Adventures'. The commonly used title *Satyricon*, however, is a misreading of Σατυρικῶν (genitive plural) as though it were Σατυρικόν (neuter singular). Thus we refer conventionally to the *Satyricon* (*Satyrice Adventure*) rather than (as we should) to the *Satyrice* (*Satyrice Adventures*). The title also refers to both Roman satire and (ironically) the far-from-satyrice sexual capacity of Encolpius the narrator, who has been cursed into impotence by Priapus, a fertility god.

Salient Features of the *Satyricon*

The adventures narrated in the *Satyricon* reflect the philhellenic atmosphere of Nero's court, having affinities with the wanderings of the *Odyssey* and the Hellenistic novel, and being set in places around the heavily hellenised Bay of Naples. It is the earliest piece of long fiction known in Latin, perhaps composed of c. 20 books and c. 400,000 words in length. We seem to have fragments of Books 14, 15 (including the *Cena Trimalchionis*) and 16, though the work has now been renumbered for its present scope.

⁶ *Cena Trimalchionis*, Petronius, *Satyricon* 26.6 - 78.8).

Greek cynic parodist and polemicist Menippus (3rd Century BC).



Encolpius, illustration by Norman Lindsay⁷

The *Satyricon* exhibits a mixture of prose and verse (known as *prosimetrum*), serious and comic elements, erotic and decadent passages. It is often classed as a 'Roman novel', like Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (*Golden Ass*), though both are very different from the modern literary form. More fundamentally, it is a work of Menippean satire, of the kind inherited from Varro (116-27 BC), and very different from the formal verse satire of Horace and Juvenal. The genre of Menippean satire is a form of satire, usually in prose, which has a length and structure similar to a novel and is characterized by attacking mental attitudes rather than specific individuals or entities. The term is used by classical grammarians and by philologists mostly to refer to satires in prose (rather than the verse *Satires* of Juvenal and his imitators). Typical types attacked and ridiculed by Menippean satires are 'pedants, bigots, cranks, parvenus, virtuosi, enthusiasts, and rapacious and incompetent professional men of all kinds'. The attitudes of such characters are treated as diseases of the intellect. The term *Menippean satire* distinguishes it from the earlier satire pioneered by Aristophanes, which was based on personal attacks. The form is named after the



An extempore declaration: railing against modern education. Norman Lindsay illustration fro *Satyricon* Ch 1-2.⁸

The 'Banquet of Trimalchio' (Cena Trimalchionis)

The plot of the *Satyricon* as a whole is difficult to reconstruct from the highly fragmentary text, but the main characters are **Encolpius** (who narrates the story) and **Giton**, his lover, a handsome, 16-year-old slave boy. They meet up with various shady persons during their adventures, including the unscrupulous adventurer **Ascyltus** and the lecherous poet **Eumolpus**. The sexual orientation of the lovers, the constant unfaithfulness of Giton, and many other elements, are evident parodies of the chaste fidelity of the boy-girl couples who regularly inhabit the Greek novel. Encolpius' impotence is a result of the wrath of Priapus and a parody of the wrath of Poseidon in the *Odyssey*.

In Chapters 26-78 of the extant text, Encolpius and his friends are invited to a banquet at the estate of **Trimalchio**, a freedman of prodigious wealth, who entertains his guests in a grandiose and grotesque way. The name 'Trimalchio' is formed from the Greek prefix τρις and the Semitic מלך (*melech*) in its occidental form *Malchio* or *Malchus*. The fundamental meaning of the root is 'King', and the name 'Trimalchio' would thus mean 'Thrice King', 'greatest King'.

⁷ A series of 100 etchings illustrating the *Satyricon* was made by the Australian artist Norman Lindsay. These were included in several 20th Century translations including, eventually, one by the artist's son Jack Lindsay.

⁸ I have taken some liberties with the Lindsay illustrations which do not relate directly to Dr Stevenson's text. Ann Scott

After preliminaries in the baths and halls (26-30) the guests, who are mostly freedmen – standing for the Roman *nouveau riche* – join their host in the dining room. His lavish dinner party involves numerous slaves bringing course after course of exotic delicacies, such as live birds sewn up inside a pig, live birds inside fake eggs which the guests have to ‘collect’ themselves, and a dish to represent every sign of the zodiac. Other features include Trimalchio’s incontinence, the vulgarity and pretentiousness of the mean conversation, supernatural stories (e.g. the first werewolf story), a reading of the host’s will, instructions on how to build his tomb, and a mock funeral for the host, directed by the host himself for his own amusement and egotism. So much noise is made that the firemen think there is a fire. When they burst in, Encolpius and his companions take their chance to escape the vulgar madhouse.

The banquet reflects a common setting of Roman satire (cf. Hor. *Sat.* 2.8). Trimalchio’s meal is a parody of acceptable and customary practice. It probably takes place in Puteoli, and while Trimalchio’s vulgar and ignorant display of wealth is clear, so too is the snobbishness of the narrator Encolpius. In a parody of Plato’s *Symposium*, the *Cena* contains a collection of tales told by Trimalchio’s freedman friends which gives some evidence for vulgar Latin, though Petronius has naturally not reproduced colloquial speech exactly.

Excerpt

An excerpt from the *Cena* might help to convey a sense of the ridicule. Remember that the narrator is Encolpius, who obviously considers himself better than the freedmen and freedwomen reclining around him, in spite of their wealth.



Tryphaena. A woman infatuated with Giton
Norman Lindsay illustration for the *Satyricon*

His attitude was evidently congenial to the upper-class audiences at whom the *Satyricon* was aimed:

The first course was served and it was good, for all were close up at the table, save Trimalchio, for whom, after a new fashion, the place of honour was reserved. Among the first viands (tasty dishes) there was a little ass of Corinthian bronze with saddle bags on his back, in one of which were white olives and in the other black. Over the ass were two silver platters, engraved on the edges with Trimalchio’s name, and the weight of silver. Dormice seasoned with honey and poppies lay on little bridge-like structures of iron. There were also sausages brought in piping hot on a silver gridiron, and under that Syrian plums and pomegranate grains.

Note the gold and silver tableware, complete with weights stamped on them, and the silver gridiron. It is probable, too, that the courses are being delivered in an atypical order, so that (e.g.) sweet treats come out first, before the palate is perhaps made ready for them.

We were in the midst of these delights when Trimalchio was brought in with a burst of music. They laid him down on some little cushions, very carefully; whereat some giddy ones broke into a laugh, though it was not much to be wondered at, to see his bald pate peeping out from a scarlet cloak, and his neck all wrapped up and a robe with a broad purple stripe hanging down before him, with tassels and fringes dingle-dangle about him.

The toga praetexta of senators was, of course, a toga with a prominent purple border, so it seems that Trimalchio is adopting the insignia of Rome’s leading citizens.

Then going through his teeth with a silver pick, ‘my friends’, said he, ‘I really didn’t want to come to dinner so soon, but I was afraid my absence would cause too great a delay, so I denied myself the pleasure I was at – at any rate I hope you’ll let me finish my game.’ A slave followed, carrying a checkerboard of turpentine wood, with crystal dice; but one thing in particular I noticed as extra nice – he had gold and silver coins instead of the ordinary black and white pieces. While he was cursing like a trooper over the game and we were starting on the lighter dishes, a basket was brought in on a tray, with a wooden hen in it, her wings spread round, as if she were hatching.

Aside from the silver toothpick, note that Trimalchio was late because he was playing a board game with his slaves, but instead of token pieces he was using gold and silver coins.

Then two slaves came with their eternal singing, and began searching the straw, whence they rooted out some peahen’s eggs, and distributed them among the guests. At this Trimalchio turned

around – ‘Friends’, he said, ‘I had some peahen’s eggs placed under a hen, and so help me, Hercules! – I hope they’re not hatched out; we’d better try if they’re still tasty.’ Thereupon we took up our spoons – they were not less than half a pound weight of silver – and broke the eggs that were made of rich pastry. I had been almost on the point of throwing my share away, for I thought I had a chick in it, until hearing an old hand saying, ‘There must be something good in this’, I delved deeper – and found a very fat fig-pecker inside, surrounded by peppered egg yolk.

There is a theme of food being disguised as something else in the Cena, as though things are not what they seem in this pretentious world. The eggs are made of pastry, the spoons are heavy silver, and Encolpius finds a fat fig-pecker where he thought at first that he had a chick.

At this point Trimalchio stopped his game, demanded the same dishes, and raising his voice, declared that if anyone wanted more liquor he had only to say the word. At once the orchestra struck up the music, as the slaves also struck up theirs, and removed the first course. In the bustle a dish chanced to fall, and when a boy stooped to pick it up, Trimalchio gave him a few vigorous cuffs for his pains, and bade him to ‘throw it down again’ – and a slave coming in swept out the silver platter along with the refuse. After that two long-haired Ethiopians entered with little bladders, similar to those used in sprinkling the arena in the amphitheatre, but instead of water they poured wine on our hands. Then glass wine jars were brought in, carefully sealed and a ticket on the neck of each, reading thus: ‘Opimian Falernia, One hundred years old.’ (A silver platter is treated as garbage when it falls to the ground, expensive wine instead of water is used to wash the diners’ hands, and the absurd label ‘Opimian Falernia’ makes no sense in historical terms, since Lucius Opimius, upon whose estates ‘Opimian’ wine was first developed, had served as consul in 121 BC, viz. c. 170-180 years earlier. The implication is that Trimalchio couldn’t tell the difference between a branded wine and a cheap knock-off. It was sufficient for him that the names sounded impressive.)

After a vulgar display of luxuries and riches, Trimalchio condescends to tell the company how he came by his vast wealth.

When I came here first (as a slave) from Asia, I was only as high as yonder candlestick, and I’d be measuring my height on it every day, and greasing my lips with lamp oil to bring out a bit of hair on my snout. Well, at last, to make a long story short, as it pleased the gods, I became master in the house, and as you see, I’m a chip off the same block. He (my master) made me co-heir with Caesar, and I came into a royal fortune, but no one ever thinks he has enough. I was mad for trading, and to put it all in a nutshell, bought five ships, freighted them

with wine – and wine was as good as coined money at that time – and sent them to Rome. You wouldn’t believe it, every one of those ships was wrecked. In one day Neptune swallowed up 30,000,000 sesterces on me. Do you think I lost heart? Not much! I took no notice of it, by Hercules! I got more ships made, larger, better, and luckier, that no one might say I wasn’t a plucky fellow. A big ship has big strength – that’s plain! Well I freighted them with wine, bacon, beans, perfumes, and slaves. Here Fortunata (my consort) showed her devotion. She sold her jewellery and all her dresses, and gave me a hundred gold pieces – that’s what my fortune grew from. What the gods ordain happens quickly. For on just one voyage I scooped in 10,000,000 sesterces and immediately started to redeem all the lands that used to be my master’s. I built a house, bought some cattle to sell again – whatever I laid my hand to, grew like a honeycomb. When I found myself richer than all the country round about was worth, in less than no time I gave up trading, and commenced lending money at interest to the freedmen. Upon my word, I was very near giving up business altogether, only an astrologer, who happened to come into our colony, dissuaded me.

There is nothing inherently unbelievable about this story of acquiring wealth through trade, especially in luxury goods, for which there was a thriving market at Rome in the early Empire. The snobbishness becomes apparent when you realise that commercial activities were always seen as inferior ways to make money in comparison to the management of landed estates, which implied inheritance and high social and political status.

Finally, Trimalchio asks his guests to show him what his funeral will look like. An absurd performance takes place, with the slaves playing very loud music and the diners wailing at the tops of their voices. Encolpius and his friends are desperate to find a way to escape the madness. They take their chance when the watchmen – firemen – burst in, thinking there must be a fire.

... and at last we, the guests, were already disgusted with the whole affair when Trimalchio, who, by the way, was beastly drunk, ordered in the cornet-players for our further pleasure, and propped up with cushions, stretched himself out at full length. ‘Imagine I’m dead’, he said, ‘and play something soothing!’ Whereat the cornet players struck up a funeral march, and one of them especially – a slave of the undertaker fellow – the best in the crowd, played with such effect that he roused the whole neighbourhood. So the watchmen, who had charge of the district, thinking Trimalchio’s house on fire, burst in the door, and surged in – as was their right – with axes and water ready. Taking advantage of such an opportune moment ... we bolted incontinently, as if there had been a real fire in the place.

Federico Fellini's *Satyricon* (1969)

While recuperating from a debilitating illness in 1967, the Italian film director Federico Fellini re-read Petronius' fragmentary text and was fascinated by its episodic and disjointed nature, which encouraged him to go beyond the traditional film-making approach to recreating the past. Rather than attempting to recreate a (by-now-familiar) reality, therefore, he sought an (unfamiliar and unsettling) unreality, based on imagination and the world of the dream. His visionary cinematic adaptation exploited the dream's imminent qualities of mystery, enigma, immorality, outlandishness, and contradiction. In *Comments on Film*, Fellini explained that his goal in adapting Petronius' classic was 'to eliminate the borderline between dream and imagination: to invent everything and then to objectify the fantasy; to get some distance from it in order to explore it as something all of a piece and unknowable.'

Fellini's film, then, is only loosely based on Petronius' text. It is more fantastic or surreal than the original work, and probably more dramatic in tone. Whereas the original text lacks cohesion between its bawdy and satirical episodes because of its disjointed, fragmentary nature, Fellini creates this lack of cohesion deliberately, bringing to the screen a world of unease and disquiet, through which it is difficult to navigate. Along similar lines, co-screen-writer Bernardino Zapponi noted that Fellini used a deliberately jerky form of dubbing that caused the dialogue to appear out of sync with the actors' lips. This was in keeping with his original intention of creating a profound sense of estrangement throughout the film.

The *Cena Trimalchionis* sequence in Fellini's film starts when Encolpio meets the poet Eumolpo at the art museum. The elderly poet blames current corruption on the mania for money and invites his young friend to a banquet held at the villa of Trimalchio, a wealthy freedman, and his wife Fortunata. Eumolpo's declamation of poetry is met with catcalls and thrown food. While Fortunata performs a frantic dance, the bored Trimalchio turns his attention to two very young boys. Scandalized,

Fortunata berates her husband, who attacks her, then has her covered in gizzards and gravy. Fancying himself a poet, Trimalchio recites one of his finer poems, whereupon Eumolpo accuses him of stealing verses from Lucretius. Enraged, Trimalchio orders the poet to be tortured by his slaves in the villa's huge kitchen furnace. The guests are then invited to visit Trimalchio's tomb where he enacts his own death in an ostentatious ceremony. The story of the Matron of Ephesus is recounted, the first story-within-a-story in the film.

Encolpio finally leaves the villa, helping the limping, beaten Eumolpo to drink water from a pool in a tilled field. In return for his kindness, Eumolpo bequeaths the spirit of poetry to his young friend.



Fortunata, illustration by Norman Lindsay

Reception

Fellini biographer Tullio Kezich noted that there were 'no outright negative reactions. The rampant moralizing of ten years ago seems to have passed out of fashion.' In his favourable *Corriere della Sera* review, Giovanni Grazzini argued that:

Fellini's Rome bears absolutely no relationship to the Rome we learned about in school books. It is a place outside historical time, an area of the unconscious in which the episodes related by Petronius are relived among the ghosts of Fellini ... His *Satyricon* is a journey through a fairytale for adults. It is evident that Fellini, finding in these ancient personages the projection of his own human and artistic doubts, is led to wonder if the universal and eternal condition of man is actually summed up in the frenzied realization of the transience of life which passes like a shadow. These ancient Romans who spend their days in revelry, ravaged by debauchery, are really an unhappy race searching desperately to exorcise their fear of death.

Kezich saw the film as a study in self-analysis:

Everything seems to be aimed at making the viewer feel ill at ease, at giving him the impression that he is watching for the first time scenes from a life he never dreamed could have existed. Fellini has described his film as 'science fiction of the past', as though the Romans of that decadent age were being observed by the astounded inhabitants of a flying saucer. Curiously enough, in this effort of objectivity, the director has created a film that is

so subjective as to warrant psychoanalysis. It is pointless to debate whether the film proposes a plausible interpretation of ancient Rome, or whether in some way it illustrates Petronius: the least surprising parts are those that come closest to Petronius' text or that have some vague historical significance.

Conclusions

Petronius' *Satyricon* has been used as evidence for the social life of lower class Romans during the early Roman Empire. Unlike Fellini's film, the caricature of the original text is normally thought not to deform the everyday life of the Roman people. Petronius uses real names for all his characters, most of them common people, who talk about the theatre of ancient Rome, the amphitheatre and the circus with the same enthusiasm as today's fans of football and other team sports. If there is parody in the *Satyricon* it is not about the main characters – Encolpius, Giton and Ascyltus – but about attitudes in the social environment, and the literary achievements of certain famous poets and writers, such as Homer, Plato, Virgil and Cicero.

Yet Petronius' satire is at once illuminating and misleading. It seems possible that scholars have been underestimating the various distortions involved in the satirising. There was, certainly, a very different Rome to glimpse away from Nero's court and elite social settings, but are we seeing a glimpse of that world in any depth in Petronius' fragmentary text? I wonder whether Fellini's film is actually a development from a development, or an adaptation from an adaptation, rather than a complete re-imagining of a Petronian reality. Petronius is not dream-like, but neither is he real, nor even balanced. Each tale, therefore, is differently refracted through the lens of its particular master's literary and dramatic aims.

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GOURMETS AND GOURMANDS IN ATHENAEUS'S *THE SOPHISTS AT DINNER*

Bob Milns

In our time the so-called haute cuisine has been elevated virtually to cult-status, as witnessed by the number of TV programs, magazines, books, etc. devoted to it. The modern obsession with food is also seen in the plethora of 'fad diets' that continually spring up and then disappear, such as the Paleo-diet. I read recently a newspaper article devoted to 'The Way We Eat Now – How food became a national obsession'. And how often do we hear of people sending pictures of their meal to 'friends' on Facebook.

Similarly in the ancient world, there were lots of people who claimed to be food-connoisseurs and seekers after ever more exotic diets. But there were also others who despised what they regarded as an excessive concern with elaborate food as compared with a simple, modest diet. Such were the philosophical schools, who praised and practised the simple life, for example the Epicureans, credited in both antiquity and today with being hedonists and dedicated to eating and drinking and other physical pleasures, when in fact they were quite the opposite. And Plato, in his dialogue 'Gorgias', puts some very scathing comments on the so-called science of the chef and of the beauticians in the mouth of Socrates.

After this somewhat negative introduction, we can turn to the generally more positive approach to food and drink and their accompanying social activities which we find in the work that is the subject of this talk – *The Deipnosophistae*, or *The Sophists at Dinner*, of the Greek writer, Athenaeus, perhaps the most fertile source of information on dining to come down to us from antiquity, but hardly ever read from cover to cover, perhaps because of its great length.

The author, Athenaeus, was a Greek from Naucratis in Egypt, who lived from c.170-230 AD. *The Deipnosophistae* is his only extant work and purports to be an account of a dinner-party where most of the conversation is about food and wine and everything that goes along with these, such as music, dancing, and singing. For modern scholars of ancient Greek literature, history, art etc. the work is invaluable, since the characters at the dinners constantly quote – often at length – from writers whose works have not survived, making it 'one of the most important products of ancient literature' (C B Gulick, translator of *Athenaeus: The Deipnosophists*, Loeb edition 1969).

The work, as we have it, cites about 1,250 writers and 2,500 works and quotes more than 10,000 lines

of verse, much of it from Middle and New Comedy. It survives in 15 books, but was probably originally twice that length. It is the oldest cookery-type book to have come down to us (the earliest which we know about was written in the 5th century BC by a Sicilian, Archestratus, entitled, according to some ancients, *Gastronomia*, the first occurrence in Greek of this quite uncommon word). The dinner-party is set at Rome, with 24 guests, and lasts into the third day. Known real people are among the guests, including Galen, the famous medical writer, and Ulpian, the great jurist.

I shall try to give a taste (no joke intended!) of the wide-ranging nature of the work by choosing discussions and stories from Books 1, 2, and 4.

A significant part of Book 1 is taken up with a well-reasoned discussion of banquets and food in Homer's time, as seen in the Homeric poems. The discussion centres on the moderation – 'sophrosyne' – that Homer tried to demonstrate in the heroes' eating and drinking habits. According to Athenaeus, later poets have sometimes tried to trace the extravagances and ease of their own times back to the Trojan War. Thus Aeschylus, in a now lost play, but possibly a satyr-play (cf. Euripides' *Cyclops*), portrays the Greek at Troy as so 'indecently' – 'aprepos' – drunk that they break chamber-pots on each other's heads. This is followed by a quotation from a lost play of Sophocles, *The Dinner Guests of the Achaeans*, about chamber-pots, followed by a quotation from the comic poet Eupolis, which seems to imply that the chamber-pot was the invention of Palamedes, the great enemy of Odysseus and inventor of board-games to help the Greeks while away the weary hours of the ten-year siege.



Ancient Greek child seat and chamber pot, early 6th century B.C., Ancient Agora Museum in Athens, housed in the Stoa of Attalus
(image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Book 1 also has a long discussion of wines, especially those of Greece and Italy. Galen talks of Italian wines, both dry and sweet, from the various regions of Italy. Athenaeus himself maintains that the pleasantest wines of Italy are those from the

Alban region and the highly praised Falernian. White wine is only mentioned later, where it is said to be 'by nature the thinnest, a diuretic and healing'. The Persian king, we learn, used only to drink wine from the Chalybonian district of Syria and water from the river Choaspes. Book 1 also quotes Aristotle, in an unknown work, for the statement that those who are drunk with wine fall down face foremost, whereas those drunk on barley-beer lie stretched out on their backs.

What is described as 'perhaps the funniest story of a drunken revel in ancient literature' (Gulick) is saved until Book 2. The story, in which a group of young men get drunk and throw the furniture out of the window of the house they are in, because they are convinced that they are on a ship at sea in a storm, does not ring strangely to modern ears!

A gourmandish tale from Book 1 tells how Philoxenus, son of Eryxis, finding fault with nature's provision for the enjoyment of food, prayed that he might have the neck of a crane.



Detail from Pygmy fighting a crane. Attic red-figure chous (oinochoe, type 3), 430–420 BC.
(National Archaeological Museum of Spain
image courtesy of Wikicommons)

This refers to the belief that the sense of taste was the result of the sense of touch in the throat and oesophagus. A gourmet tale is that of Aristoxenus, the Cyrenaic philosopher, who 'in his excess of luxury' – 'tryphe' – used to water the lettuce in his garden at evening with wine and honey; then taking them up in the morning, used to say that they were 'blanched cakes produced by the earth for him'.

Finally, from Book 4, which contains examples of banquets from various cities and tribes, is the story from Herodotus, Book 9, about the luxury of Mardonius's tent, captured after the battle of Plataea, and the Spartan king, Pausanias's order and comment, followed by the story ('some say') of the comment of the man from Sybaris in Southern

Italy, renowned for its soft, luxurious living, on the quality of food in the Spartan communal messes: 'It is no wonder that the Spartans are the bravest men in the world; for anyone in his right mind would prefer to die ten thousand times rather than share in such a frugal diet'. No doubt the Sybarite had in mind the dreaded Spartan black broth!

'AN ARMY MARCHES ON ITS STOMACH' – BUT WHAT ABOUT THE ROMANS?

Dorothy Watts

The Roman army was for many centuries the greatest military machine in the world. Much of its success must be put down to excellent leadership, intensive training and iron discipline. An adequate and appropriate diet was equally important, and contributed in no small measure to Roman success.

What did they eat?

We'll start with the well-known claim that the Roman soldier did not like meat, or that he was given it only rarely and had a mainly vegetarian diet. The text from Tacitus (*Ann.* 14.24) relates how in AD59 the army of the general Corbulo, when fighting the Parthians, was 'driven to ward off hunger by eating the flesh of cattle'. The modern authority on the Roman military diet, Roy Davies, has argued that the apparent reluctance of the soldiers to eat the flesh of animals was not from any dislike of it, but rather that they had a very real fear that, in the burning summer conditions, the meat would have been tainted. In the previous century there had been an incident when a Roman army besieged in Spain had had to resort to the eating of the flesh of deer and rabbit boiled without salt, with the result that many died from dysentery (Appian: *Iber.* 9.54). Thus it would seem that any unwillingness on the part of Corbulo's men to eat meat was understandable, but obviously their need overcame their caution.

Evidence for the consumption of meat (and especially beef) by the army is confirmed by a military calendar found at Dura-Europus dated to the early third century AD. This calendar records all the animals sacrificed to honour emperors and empresses past and present, and various Roman deities. In one month alone, 16 oxen or cows were killed and the meat distributed to the army.

Beef was not the only meat consumed: there is ample evidence at military sites for sheep, goat and

pig. Pork, especially cured as bacon, formed part of the 'iron rations' which soldiers carried with them on the march: hard tack (a kind of twice-baked biscuit), bacon and sour wine. Bacon fat or lard would be used instead of olive oil in places such as Roman Britain, where it was not so readily available. In AD 360, daily rations comprised 3 pounds bread, 2 pounds meat, 2 pints wine, and one-eighth pint oil. The cost of rations was taken from the soldiers' wages, and amounted to about one-third of his earnings.

On the march even certain generals and emperors such as Scipio Aemilianus, Metellus, and the emperor Trajan were known to have consumed this frugal fare along with their men; and the emperor Caracalla is said to have ground the corn, made his loaf, and baked his bread in the camp oven himself. But these would have been exceptions rather than the rule for military commanders.



Roman soldiers with marching packs
(details from Trajan's column, courtesy Wikimedia Commons)

When the legions were not on the march, the variety of foods available and consumed was far greater. Cheese, fruits, nuts, and vegetables were regularly eaten. Apart from the usual domestic animals, there is evidence for the consumption of red deer at sites in Britain and Germany. Clearly venison was not considered a delicacy in some areas, and hunting was a profitable pastime – for the officer class a prestige activity, and for the ordinary soldier a means of supplementing his military rations.

At the site of Vindolanda in Roman Britain, home to the Ninth Batavian Cohort, the army had its own herd of oxen, a piggery, and poultry were kept.⁹ At this and many other sites, there was also a lively trade with the locals. Other foods could be sent in

⁹ Vindolanda was a Roman fort just south of Hadrian's Wall in northern England, near the modern village of Bardon Mill. It is noted for the Vindolanda tablets, among the most important finds of military and private correspondence (written on wooden tablets) found anywhere in the Roman Empire.

to the soldiers from their family members: at Alexandria in Egypt, a legionary named Terentianus was sent bread and dates, and requested radish oil – which was probably a substitute for olive oil – and asparagus! Seemingly some soldiers did not miss out on luxuries.

Foods were not always local. Remains of shellfish are found in parts some distance from the coast, such as the oyster shells found at Vindonissa in Switzerland, and the salted fish remains found at Masada in Israel. But there was always the danger of food poisoning, and Terentianus, our legionary from Alexandria, tells his father:

... so violent and dreadful an attack of fish poisoning made me ill (that) for five days I was unable to drop you a line, not to speak of going to meet you. Not one of us was even able to leave the camp gate. (P. Mich. 478, ll 8-13)



Vindolanda archaeological site
(photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Many of the foods eaten would be enhanced by the addition of that Roman equivalent of Mr Heinz's Big Red: *garum* or fish sauce. This delicacy, exported throughout the Roman world, was made from the salted and fermented innards of fish. The resultant clear sauce was high prized, expensive and not generally consumed by the *hoi polloi*, who would have to make do with an inferior version called *muria*. It was this product that was listed in the household accounts of the Prefect at Vindolanda among foods served to visiting dignitaries. A watered-down version of *garum* may have been served to the soldiers: in the SHA *Elegabalus* (29.5) we are told that *hydrogarum* was a 'soldier's dish'.

What did they drink?

Rarely do we hear of Romans drinking water, but a reliable and healthy water supply must have been seen as essential, given the care that was taken to keep water for human consumption clear and clean

at military sites. Sour wine was part of the daily rations, and vintage wine would on occasion have been available at the camp, imported from Italy, Sicily, southern Gaul and Spain. But beer was readily brewed, and it appears frequently in the records. One of the craftsmen in the army train was a brewer whose services must always have been in demand. Beer was also obtained from the local inhabitants in the *vici* that sprang up outside the camps. Drinking with friends in the camp, or in a tavern in the village, was one way that soldiers of the empire everywhere could relax and enjoy their leisure time, as has been the custom for many soldiers in many armies ever since.

'Be merry'

Roman soldiers generally did not have much free time, and any entertainment would depend very much on whether they were on the march or in barracks, and whether it was peace or wartime.

If it was wartime, there would be very limited scope for relaxation at a camp site. After the soldiers had erected their temporary fort, there was little time left apart from cooking and eating their meals, and seeing to their kit. As members of a *contubernium* of eight or ten soldiers per tent, they might play some type of board game, or gamble.



This early game board was found near the agora (the market) in Aphrodisias and dates from the second century CE.

Gaming boards and associated counters or pieces are fairly common at military sites, as are dice. It is interesting to note that in Britain some of the dice were found to be loaded!

Gambling was not the only pastime, but was probably the most widespread, and it did not occur only in the NCOs' *scholae* (club houses) or in the soldiers' tents or barracks. All permanent or semi-permanent military establishments were set up with a baths block, and for the Roman soldier this was a standard feature of Roman civilisation. Here he and his colleagues could exercise, relax, write letters home, play board and other games, gossip and gamble. It is little wonder that one of the most popular Roman deities at military sites was the goddess Fortuna – she would keep the soldier safe

in battle, safe in the bathhouse (that is, it wouldn't catch fire), or alternatively that she would keep him when he was naked and unarmed, and she would bring him luck when he was gambling.

Other opportunities for entertainment and gambling were provided by the amphitheatre and the circus; and as the Roman empire settled after expansion, these facilities appeared throughout the empire, and not just in or outside large towns. There is literary evidence for soldiers' attending (and being involved in) inter-unit wrestling matches and horse races: Dio Cassius (56.25) tells us that in AD11, when on campaign in Germany under Tiberius and Germanicus, the soldiers held a horse-race 'under the direction of the centurions' to celebrate the birthday of the Emperor Augustus.

In the towns there were also theatres and brothels: a well-known graffito from Leicester proclaims: 'Verecunda the actress loves Lucius the gladiator' – and Leicester was a military supply base. Soldiers there would have had no problem in finding a way to fill in their off-duty hours.

The social lives of the officer class were less restricted, because officers were often accompanied by their wives and children and something approaching a 'normal' family life might be achieved. From Vindolanda we have a charming letter in which the wife of the commandant is invited to a birthday party by her friend who lives at a nearby military site (probably modern Kirkbride). Home entertainment and food and drink prepared with relatively elaborate ingredients for a family dinner constituted a domestic pleasure not available to rank-and-file soldiers until the third century, when finally all soldiers were permitted to marry.

Conclusions

It is true, I believe, that the Roman army did march on its stomach and that commanders took great care to see that their men were well fed. In the literary sources there is no mention whatever of any mutiny over the food the army supplied to its men. And as for entertainment, when he was not actually on campaign a soldier's leisure activities would not be so very different from his civilian brother's. What he did in his off-duty hours, as well as what he ate and drank, very much depended on the social class to which he belonged.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS: THE HOMERIC MOOC

Roger Scott

Gregory Hayes has written a review entitled 'The Homeric MOOC - will it revolutionise education?'. The intriguing heading relates to a book by Gregory Nagy, *The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours*.

Nagy took his Harvard doctorate in 1966, (the same year as I received mine by mail from Oxford). But whereas I continued as an itinerant like Ulysses, Nagy has stayed put ever since, taught much the same course all his life, stirred up hornets nests and reeled in a truckload of honours. In the eyes of the reviewer, 'he has managed to become an eminence grise without ever ceasing to be an enfant terrible'.

His first book was published in 1974, followed by *The Best of the Achaeans* in 1979 and he has apparently been recycling his ideas ever since, so that the reviewer suggests that if one were handed a random page, it would be hard to guess whether it was written in 1980 or 2010. (One thinks of the dramatic contrast in versatility with UQ's own Homeric scholar, Trevor Bryce).

Nagy's book has grown out of a long-standing lecture course offered to undergraduates and continuing education students, now transformed into a MOOC - an acronym for 'Massive Open On-line Courses'. The book serves as a kind of textbook for the MOOC, seeming to offer a wide-ranging survey course grounded in the Homeric epics but regarded by the reviewer as strange both in content and form.

Someone like Trevor Bryce would be better able to comment on the nature of the content, drawing as it does on depths of etymology and a lifetime of close engagement with the original texts. My purpose here is to pass on the reviewer's assessment of the pedagogy.

The book is arranged into sections labelled 'hours' to mimic the chronology of the lecture course. Its style and presentation reflect the strategies of conventional mass lectures, with uniform patterns of introducing themes based on a particular key word for the 'hour' and regular repetition of main points and allusions which link Homeric society to the audience's own cultural world. Hayes also notes that 'Nagy's own cultural horizons seem to run only from the late 1960's to about 1982', a trap into which other septuagenarian teachers need to guard against - and one of the reasons I gave up teaching.

Hayes suggests that 'for the general reader, a pervasive problem is the selectivity of Nagy's interest. Because his aim is to expose a discourse that the text conceals or occludes, the book

focusses on individual moments where the material bubbles to the surface. ... Nagy is a passionate close reader, but he reads passages not works. And his interests cohere better with some texts than others'. Hayes also reports that there is a wild unevenness in the assumptions made about the reader, from someone with a limited vocabulary to one able to grasp subtle and complex philosophical and etymological arguments about the specific shade of meaning of a Greek term.

There is also the problem posed for a printed book reader by the separate digital manifestation of a set of audiovisual and recorded materials best accessed on-line. This leads on to the most stimulating passage in Hayes's review:

In this uneasy oscillation between various technologies, The Ancient Greek Hero reminds one of nothing so much as the Homeric epics themselves: oral poems that are also, somehow, fixed in writing. Readers may already have noted that many of the book's lecture-like techniques - repetition, circular digressions, brief comparisons to the audience's own cultural world - are also characteristic of Homeric poetry.

But the resemblance goes deeper. Like The Iliad, Nagy's book is an ambitious work in twenty-four instalments, developed over a long period or oral performance, alluding to and reworking earlier versions (themselves fluid) before finally taking on a more lasting form under the stimulus of a new technology. As Nagy's Homer eschews local rituals in favour of Panhellenic appeal, so Nagy has transformed Harvard Yard and now addresses himself to an audience of thousands, from Poland to Peru.

And just as The Iliad aims to fold the entire war into the few days it actually narrates, so The Ancient Greek Hero summarises the author's entire career... Like The Iliad itself, The Ancient Greek Hero is a bid for imperishable kleos or 'glory' - for its subject, and perhaps also for its composer.

Hayes concludes his review as he began it, with speculation about the extent to which the technology supporting MOOCs represents a major shift in the nature of education and the processes of learning - specifically in the humanities.

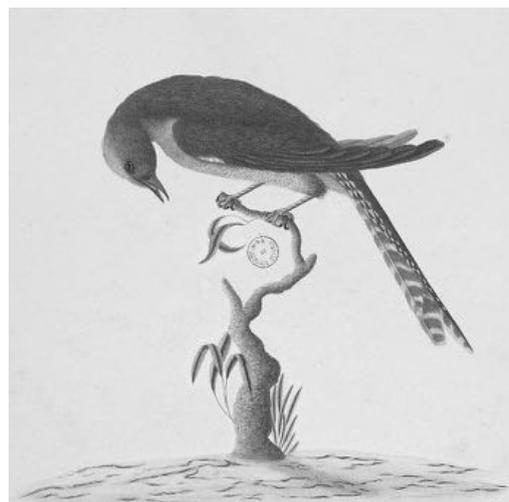
He believes that none of these big questions can be answered yet, and reports he is struck by the ordinariness of the whole package. He draws parallels with the slow realisation of the benefits and limitations of Gutenberg's new technology and suggests that MOOCs will be better suited for teaching skills such as accounting (or learning first-year Greek language):

It's not at all clear that you can 'learn' The Iliad in the same way you learn those things, or that a MOOC is

any real improvement on a conventional course, apart from being vastly more expensive to produce and maintain, administrators' dreams of cost-cutting notwithstanding. It is after all a medium not a message.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Bob Milns



Fan-Tailed Cuckoo [*Cacomantis flabelliformis*]
State Library of NSW
Collection 27: Drawings of birds chiefly from Australia,
1791-1792

There are two words for our delectation in this issue of Nova, one inspired by the fact that our Friday Greek-reading group is currently reading Aristophanes' comedy *The Birds*, from which comes our expression 'Cloud-Cuckoo Land', and the other prompted by our recent Ancient History Day with its theme of 'Eat, Drink and Be Merry'.

The first word is *coccyx*, which is the name of the bone at the bottom of the spine, which is extremely painful if you slip and fall on it!

The word itself is, in fact, the Greek word for the Cuckoo, the bird regarded in the northern hemisphere as the harbinger of Spring as well as being the origin of the word used to describe a man whose wife is being unfaithful to him ('he is being cuckolded'). But how does it come about that the Greek name of the bird is also the name of this particular bone? Apparently, because the bone resembles a cuckoo's beak! This discovery and naming goes back to ancient Greek times and continues to the present day. I must accept its appropriateness, as I have never seen a cuckoo's beak nor the bone in the human body which we used to call, somewhat indecorously, in our younger days 'the bum bone'.



Vertebrae (with coccyx)
 Illustration by Henry Vandyke Carter
 from Gray's Anatomy for students, 1858

Our second word is 'liquorice', which we always used to pronounce in the Yorkshire of my youth as 'licorish'. There are two types of liquorice, one, the black, sweet substance used in such 'lollies' as Liquorice All Sorts and the other, something like a branch snapped off a small shrub, with its bark still on it, which we used to chew and suck for hours on end and which had a sweet, ouzo-like taste.



Glycyrrhiza Glabra
 (the botanical name for the plant from which licorice is extracted)

It is this which is defined by my dictionary as (a) a perennial Mediterranean leguminous shrub and (b)

the dried root of this plant, used as a laxative (I don't remember this aspect!) and in confectionery. This word, liquorice, in fact is Greek in origin, going right back to the ancient Greek pharmacological writer, Dioscorides (1st century AD).

The original Greek word, incredible though it may seem, is 'glykyrriza', meaning 'sweet root', which defines it perfectly. It is worth noting that there is an English word 'lickerish', pronounced exactly as we used to pronounce 'liquorice'. But this word means 'lecherous, lustful, greedy, gluttonous AND appetising or tempting!

ON FALLING ON THE COCCYX

Bob Milns

An accident to make you groan
 Is falling on a certain bone
 Located at the spinal tail;
 The agony will turn you pale.

Its name comes from a certain bird
 Whose very voice sounds quite absurd.
 It lays its eggs in another's nest,
 Then disappears – a proper pest.

So if you fall upon this spot
 And searing pain is what you've got
 Don't cry out ah! And oh! And ooh!
 Or shriek and groan; just shout 'cuckoo'

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NOVA - APRIL 2015

2015 FOA PROGRAM

(SEE FOOTNOTES) ¹⁰

SUNDAY 12 APRIL

2.00 PRELIMINARY TALK

MR DAVID ANDERSON

BANQUETS OF THE ENEMY: AN ETRUSCAN FOIL

2.30 PM

MR JAMES DONALDSON

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

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**

31 MAY

1.45PM

FOA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING¹¹

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)

WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE

Literary Lunch at Women's College

MR DENIS BROSNAN

**THEY REALLY DID LAUGH, YOU KNOW. SOME EXAMPLES
OF WHAT AMUSED THE ANCIENTS**
(see enclosed flier for details)

SUNDAY 5 JULY

2.00

BETTY FLETCHER AWARD 2015

AND

MS JOHANNA QUALMANN

REPORT BY THE 2014 SCHOLAR

2.30 MAIN TALK

DR CHRIS MALONE

JORDANES

**(6TH CENTURY GOTHIC-ROMAN AUTHOR WHO RELATES
SOME BIZARRE BUT INTERESTING STORIES)**

SUNDAY 9 AUGUST

2.00 MAIN TALK

EMERITUS PROFESSOR TREVOR BRYCE
NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON

SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

2.00 MAIN TALK

DR JULIA KINDT
(UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY)

**DELPHIC ORACLES AND ANCIENT GREEK
PERSONAL RELIGION**

SUNDAY 11 OCTOBER

2.00 MAIN TALK

DR ANDY FAIRBAIRN
(SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE, UQ)

(SECOND IN SERIES ON THE THEME OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY)

SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER

2.00 MAIN TALK

DR JOHN RATCLIFFE

**CELSUS AND THE EARLIEST PRINTED LATIN
MEDICAL TEXT**

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

¹⁰ Room E302 Forgan Smith Building (Building no 1).

¹¹ Note that the AGM will precede the Sunday Series lecture given by Professor Milns.