

JULY 2015

NOVA

THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY



Terracotta figurines from a circular vessel used in religious devotion, 600–475 BC from Boghaz, Cyprus

On loan from the Museum of Antiquities, University of New England, 2015.

CYPRUS: AN ISLAND AND A PEOPLE

EXHIBITION OPEN UNTIL MAY 2016

**R D Milns Antiquities Museum
The University of Queensland**

**ALUMNI FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY
THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND**

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Contributors

- **Dr Ann Scott**, Adjunct Professor in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, has been editor of *Nova* since July 2009.
- **Denis Brosnan** was elected President of the Friends of Antiquity in May 2015. He was a UQ administrator for nearly 25 years; served on the UQ Senate for 21 years; and is an honorary lecturer in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry.
- **Professor Alastair Blanshard** is the Inaugural Paul Eliadis Professor of Classics and Ancient History, UQ.
- **Dr Janette McWilliam**, Lecturer in Ancient History, Classical Civilization and Classical Languages, is also Director of the RD Milns Antiquities Museum, UQ.
- **James Donaldson**, a postgraduate student, is Museum Manager, R D Milns Antiquities Museum.
- **Emeritus Professor Bob Milns**, a founder member of the Friends of Antiquity, was Professor of Classics & Ancient History, UQ, from 1970-2003.
- **Pamela Rushby**, a member of the FoA Executive Committee, has written over 100 books for children, and has been published in Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Malaysia.
- **Emeritus Professor Roger Scott**, School of Political Science and International Studies, is Immediate Past President of the FoA.

Back 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

The 2015 Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Antiquity was held on May 31 and Roger Scott's term as President came to an end. Denis Brosnan was elected to succeed him and Bob Milns was elected Deputy President. Juliet O'Brien has resigned after many years on the Executive Committee, including a term as President. Over this period she made a significant contribution to the Friends, and will be missed. However, she will be devoting her time to the Alumni Friends, so will continue to have a close involvement with the FoA.

Dr Llynneth Crawford has rejoined the Committee - as a result of our change of time for the meetings, which will now precede the Sunday Series lectures. And we are delighted to welcome Dr Paul Eliadis to the Committee.

Margaret Mapp will continue as our Treasurer, and Don Barrett as Secretary.

Roger Scott gave a farewell address in which he considered the future of the Friends. The text is reproduced in this *Nova*. Denis Brosnan responded, outlining his plans for the future (see his President's Report).

Most *Nova* readers will have contributed funds, in one form or another, to Classics and Ancient History. Many have also directly contributed to the R D Milns Perpetual Endowment Fund, initially established to raise funds to support the establishment of a Chair in Classics and Ancient History.

This goal was reached more speedily than we expected with the generous donation by Dr Paul Eliadis that enabled the first Paul Eliadis Professor, Alastair Blanshard, to be appointed in 2014.

Dr Dorothy Watts chaired the first R D Milns Endowment Fund committee. Both the School and the Discipline must be most grateful to her for her efforts on their behalf. Professor Blanshard has taken over responsibility for oversight of the R D Milns Fund and we have asked that he provide an annual report to the Friends, to be published in *Nova*, on its status. His first report will be provided in the October issue of *Nova*.

On the back page of this issue of *Nova* you will find the updated Program for 2015, including details of the Christmas Party which will take place on Sunday 22 November at Women's College.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Denis Brosnan

This is a call to arms! Friends – and other readers, who are all potential Friends – if you have time for nothing else today, you must read what our outgoing President, Roger Scott, said at our AGM, as it appears later in this edition. Roger's insights, generosity and wisdom are just about unbeatable, so please be gentle with me as I attempt to follow his example.

Taking up Roger's message by engaging with like-minded but generally younger folk, I shall be meeting with members of the Executive of the Classics and Ancient History Society to consider ways in which we and they can work together. And maybe play together too?

It's essential that all actual and likely 'FoA activists', as Roger calls us, be marshalled for action. We are a remarkably engaged, active and connected special interest group, yet we run a real risk, without a regular transfusion of talent and energy, of subsiding 'into geriatric irrelevance ... (if) we end up recycling a steadily declining band of enthusiasts'.

I say this not to diminish at all the exciting things we've done recently. May 31 saw an eye-opening presentation by Bob Milns, on 'Ancient Greek Astronomy and Astronomers'. Bob roved with his customary ease across centuries of ancient achievements and speculation and insights and left us wondering how those people did what they did, more than 2,000 years ago, with only their intellect, their naked eye and a fair bit of spare time to make and record their observations. And Chris Malone's good-humoured and IT-enhanced exploration of Jordanes' Goths left me determined to find out more about a period of which I had been so ignorant.

There is plenty more coming up; please see the back page for details. Your Program Committee is already working on events for 2016. If there are topics about which you would like to hear, or if you can suggest a speaker, please let me know and I'll follow up.

To finish, if ever you have an idea to share or a bleat or a sob, do contact me on 0430 432 974 or d.brosnan@duchesne.uq.edu.au

'I CAN'T AFFORD THE TIME' – THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF THE FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY¹

Roger Scott

In the dark recesses of my undergraduate career, I studied a major in the slightly disreputable field of 'Ancient Civilisations'— disreputable then because of the absence of a compulsory language until Honours year. Denied Latin at an early age like everyone at my so-called Grammar School, I studied all the great classical works only in translation and foreswore any ambition to become a serious classical scholar. The up-side of the arrangement was that 'civilisations' in Tasmania embraced those which formed the proximate influences on Western Europe, so I got to do a comparative course which included Sinuhe the Egyptian, the Epic of Gilgamesh and even the Book of Genesis.

Sandwiched in the rest of my course was one called 'administrative theory', abysmally taught but with a stimulating series of core texts circa 1950. The single word I cherished from that experience was 'satisficing', defined in my *Shorter Oxford* as 'deciding on and pursuing a course of action that will satisfy the minimum requirements necessary to achieve a particular course of action'. An American called Herbert Simon wrote a whole book about this word which helped earn him a Nobel Prize.²

Recognising the frequency with which humans engage in satisficing has made an important contribution to my understanding of social organisations. It helps me understand and interpret policy outcomes in many settings – including political organisations I have studied and universities where I have worked during most of the past fifty years. Those of us who can still afford the time need to make the commitment to encouraging others to choose to satisfice in ways which are mutually satisfactory.

This also applies in equal measure to the two organisations with which I currently engage – a think tank called the TJRyan Foundation³ and the University of Queensland Alumni Friends of Antiquity. Both these organizations rely on significant commitments of time by unpaid volunteers, with a minimal amount of paid administrative support. Mobilising this time commitment is the task of those committed to leadership roles. It also requires support from leaders in the wider organizational context – the

Queensland trade union movement in the case of the Foundation, The University of Queensland in the case of the Friends. Without that support neither will survive.

Let me concentrate now on the Friends and The University of Queensland, although some of my remarks apply also to the TJRyan Foundation. I have spent two years as President of the Friends and a briefer period as an apprentice. One of my tasks was to maintain an engagement with the membership of the Friends which recognized that every one of them, like me, is 'satisficing' when responding to a question requiring a time commitment. I remember being given a choice in a fund-raising drive between discharging a perceived obligation supporting a worthy cause by paying \$1,000, or undertaking to seek \$10,000 as donations from other people.

Choosing the money was easy because it was finite and immediate. We are all wary of making open-ended time commitments, especially when our priorities might change. And it is this need to choose priorities which is the central challenge for the Friends in the future.

There are often drolleries about the double meaning of being Friends of Antiquity: a reference perhaps to the high average age of the membership rather than the subject matter.

The active component of the Friends, and those who attend its seminars and support the Museum, have chosen to give the FoA high priority. This priority may be explained by the fact that so many of us are no longer in full-time paid employment. We accept that, when asked, we do not say 'I can't afford the time'.

But this answer is getting harder for everyone concerned, for perfectly legitimate reasons. For many of us, as we get older, there is a reduction in the quantum of energy we can apply. There are also new or expanded competing priorities, not least from changing family circumstances across several generations. And our interests change, so that it is difficult to sustain our level of commitment.

The obvious solution, and one that Denis Brosnan has committed to exploring, is to recruit younger members who share our attraction for learning more about classical civilisations. These might come from current university students – but they might have their fill of ancient history in regular classes when

¹ Address given by retiring President, Roger Scott, at the FoA Annual General Meeting, 31 May 2015.

² Herbert A. Simon, *Administrative Behavior, a Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organization*, New York, The Macmillan Co. 1947, revised 1957.

³ See <http://www.tjryanfoundation.org.au>.

other aspects of life beckon at the weekend. Or it might come from those further on and more specialised in their commitment to classics, postgraduate students, staff within the school and those teaching the classics in the primary and secondary schools. This last group has its own structure and existing links with the UQ discipline but it is a strategic asset which deserves to be cherished.

My hunch is that the most fruitful place to look for new members are older graduates who remember with pleasure their study of the classics in arts degrees combined with their professional qualifications. Or they regret not taking advantage of what was on offer when they were here twenty years ago. There seems a real opportunity to work with the Museum to create a hive of activity focused on the study of humanities which aims at an age group beyond the demands of their young children.

As President, I sat as the official representative of the FoA on the committee of the Alumni Friends, which embraces the small number of active 'Special Interest Groups' like the Gatton Past Students Association and the multi-disciplinary Three Score Club.

I use the term 'official' advisedly as FoA activists and former committee members are widely distributed among those attending meetings and adding their voice to our representations. In particular, while we regret Juliet O'Brien's dropping out of our specifically FoA affairs, we can be heartened by her own 'time priority choice' to continue as Secretary to the wider body and we all appreciate the services she has rendered.

My time on the Alumni Friends committee sometimes alerted me to signals that the central administration of the University might prefer a clearer line of accountability and control with respect to its own dealings with alumni. There is a general contrast at work here – between 'top-down' organisations and those which are 'bottom-up' in their focus, a distinction often associated with different patterns of resource allocation and the contrast between professionals and volunteers. Performance indicators also differ, with the centre concerned with issues of marketing and philanthropy and voluntary organisations like the FoA having a more scholarly orientation.

The latest issue of the UQ *Contact* magazine identifies the various levels of organizational engagement associated with alumni, with the Advancement Office at the centre and provision for the organization of discipline and faculty specialisations such as alumni of humanities and social sciences. At the next level 'down' would be

graduates holding degrees in specific subject areas. This is where there might be some organizational dissonance between the Advancement Office and the FoA which has as its members both classics graduates and also those who have graduated in other areas but have an enthusiasm for classical studies.

This dissonance could get stronger as the university presses on to a style of relationships with its alumni similar to that in American universities and its focus on private philanthropy. The FoA will need leaders who are savvy in the ways of the wider institution in order to create intra-organisational harmony. I am delighted therefore that Denis Brosnan is replacing me as President and can bring to bear his long experience within university and collegiate governance. I am equally delighted that our new Professor has already signaled a willingness to engage in roles such as Head of School and also collaborate with the Program Committee of FoA in shaping the mix of its scholarly outreach. The editor of *Nova* has shown me the historical file going back to the days of Adrian Heyworth-Smith, which reveal how deeply entwined the former Department was in the earliest days of the FoA.

We need to aspire to getting back to that level of engagement – with the School, with the Museum, with all current and past students and those who regret never having been students in the past. The FoA will lose its way and subside into geriatric irrelevance if it cannot keep its links across the generations and find a place within the new organizational context.

2015 BETTY FLETCHER SCHOLAR



Oscar Goldman has been awarded the 2015 Betty Fletcher Memorial Travelling Scholarship. He will work at the Alberese Field School archaeological excavation. Oscar is seen here with incoming FoA President, Denis Brosnan.

NEWS FROM THE DISCIPLINE

Alastair Blanshard

Things have been feeling very Greek round the discipline for the first half of this year. The semester began with one of the largest enrolments in first-year Greek history for quite some time. Our museum opened an exhibition devoted to the island of Cyprus and, at the beginning of June, we were honoured to host a visit by His Excellency Haris Dafaranos, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic of Greece to Australia, and his wife, the talented poet, Eva Dafaranos. The topic of the ambassador's talk was the 'soft power' of Greece and the way that Hellenic culture has always ensured that Greece has never been short of friends and allies even in its darkest days. It was a timely reminder of the tremendous resilience of Greece, especially as the talk was given in the shadow of the looming Greek monetary crisis. We also welcomed visits by Ares Tsaravopoulos, the distinguished excavator of the islands of Kythera and Antikythera, and Professor Gonda Van Steen, Cassas Professor in Greek Studies at the University of Florida.

If the first half of the year was Greek, the second half looks to belong to Rome. In July, we welcomed to The University of Queensland our newest member of the discipline, Dr Shushma Malik. Shushma comes to us from the University of Manchester where she has been teaching for the last couple of years. Shushma did her PhD at the University of Bristol; her thesis examined the imagery surrounding the Roman emperor Nero, especially the relationship between Nero and the Anti-Christ. Her interests range widely from early Christian thought to late nineteenth-century decadence. We are lucky to have Shushma with us for two and a half years. She will be replacing Caillan Davenport while he takes research leave to work on his Australian Research Council project on popular perceptions of Roman emperors.

On the subject of grant success, July also saw David Pritchard takes up a fellowship at the University of Strasbourg Institute for Advanced Studies (USIAS). These fellowships are highly competitive and it is great to see a member of the discipline succeed in obtaining one. The topic of David's research while at USIAS is 'War and Democracy in Ancient Athens and Today'.

In August, we will welcome this year's R D Milns Visiting Professor, David Levene from New York University, a world expert on the Roman author Livy. His books include Religion in Livy, and Livy and the Hannibalic War.

R D MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM

Janette McWilliam

The RD Milns Antiquities Museum supports and promotes the study of the Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Near Eastern civilisations through their material remains. It offers a wide range of programs for primary and secondary schools, university courses and the general public, drawing from its collection of over 7,000 original objects.

The Museum has been a busy place in Semester One, with 5,293 visitors at the close of June 2015, including 1,257 Year 7 students!

Our new 2015 Exhibition 'Cyprus: An Island and a People' opened successfully on 5 June. This year's exhibition features three guest curators, Dr Judy Powell, Dr Sandra Christou and Dr Amelia Brown, in collaboration with the Museum team of Dr Janette McWilliam, Mr James Donaldson, Ms Katee Dean, and Ms Charlotte Mann.

The exhibition celebrates the place of Cyprus in both the modern and ancient worlds, and includes artefacts representing over 10,000 years of history, from the Neolithic to the medieval period.

The Cypriot community of Australia is the second largest in the world outside Cyprus and many members of the local Brisbane Cypriot Community attended the opening and the Museum's Saturday Series Event on June 6th. I would once again like to thank the Cypriot Youth Dancers and the ladies from the Cypriot community who provided the most wonderful food.

CYPRUS: AN ISLAND AND A PEOPLE
Opening Hours:
Exhibition open June 2015 - May 2016
Monday – Friday 9.30am-4.30pm (Free admission)

Our new Museum Outreach Officer is Ms Rebecca Smith. Rebecca has both an Honours, and an MPhil Degree in Classics and Ancient History from the University of Queensland. She has been an International Museum Intern on the Alberese Field School, and also a museum tour guide.

Ms Katee Dean has stepped down from the position and will continue her association with the Museum as a senior volunteer and intern while she finishes her Museum Studies Degree. Thank you Katee, for all your hard work as Outreach Officer. We are very happy that you will still be associated with the museum.

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

James Donaldson

In 2012 I had a phone call at the Antiquities Museum from a gentleman who was trying to find a home for three ancient artefacts and a large archive of archaeological material. 'Do you know who John Henry Iliffe was?' he asked me, or something to that effect.

This was one of those serendipitous moments because, as luck would have it, I did know a little about Mr Iliffe, having used his important catalogue of eastern terra-sigillata pottery stamps in my own research. The archive and the objects originally belonged to Mr Iliffe, a lesser-known but important archaeologist and museum curator who worked in Canada, the Near East, Cyprus and Liverpool. It had passed down in the family until its present custodian, a cousin, was trying to find it a good home. There were three archaeological items:

A bowl of red clay with a sharply carinated lip and a roughly finished base. It is probably Roman in date, the type of imitation fine wares that were common in the eastern provinces.



A vase of a dense pink impasto, covered in a slightly lustrous black slip. Around the neck is a distinctive band of impressed rope that is filled with lime, dating to the Bronze Age.



Finally, the most impressive object: a limestone sculptural head, mounted on a modern base but with the distinctive hairstyle and almond-shaped

eyes of archaic sculpture in the Greek and Eastern Mediterranean. It is unquestionably from Cyprus where much of this kind of sculpture has been found and dates to between 800 and 700 BC.



Together these three items span a remarkable period of history in the eastern Mediterranean. From the Bronze Age palace societies almost 4,000 years ago, to the melting pot island of Cyprus in the archaic period, to the height of the Roman empire in the east, a mere 1,800 years ago. But unlike many items held in the Antiquities Museum, these three artefacts came with an archive of newspaper clippings, scrapbook, excavation diaries and photographs tracing the career of their collector. This archive is now housed in the Fryer Library at the University of Queensland Library and I should take this chance to thank the staff of the Fryer Library for assistance in accessing this material, and in particular Liz Alvey, now the manager of the Library's digitization service, who originally listed the material during her time as a librarian with Fryer.

The archive is many things: it is an archaeological treasure trove, including original day books and excavation photographs from Iliffe's later work on Cyprus. It is the scrapbook of a researcher with wide-ranging interests in the past, including newspaper cuttings on a variety of subjects, original research and published material. It is the record of the genesis of a museum: the Palestine Archaeological Museum, now known as the Rockefeller Museum. But it is also a photographic snapshot of a brief period of history, recording daily life in mandate era Palestine and the Middle East, complete with the conflicts and intrigues one expects of this period. I hope to give you a sense of this period, through the eyes of a man who lived and breathed it.

First, some background. J H Iliffe was born in Wales in 1902 and studied Classical Archaeology at Cambridge. His archaeological credentials were assured in an excavation in Alchester, Oxfordshire, where he led the Classical Association dig of the Romano-British town on the site. He also spent some time at the British School at Athens, taking part in a variety of excavations, including those at Sparta, before moving on to the Royal Ontario

Museum in 1927 where he undertook research into their eastern collections and taught the History of Industrial Art at the University of Toronto. Here he met his wife Marjorie and in 1931, at the age of 29, Iliffe successfully applied for the post of Keeper of the Palestine Archaeological Museum and stayed there through the Second World War until 1948. At the Palestine Museum he oversaw the collection's transition from its old building to a new purpose built structure outside Herod's Gate. From 1948 – 1958 he served as the head of Liverpool Museum and also excavated at Kouklia, Cyprus. On the 18th of October 1960 Harry Iliffe died after what was described as a long illness; he was only 58.

Iliffe's posting with the Palestine Archaeological Museum was, of course, as a British administrator as part of the mandate in Palestine. Since 1920 the British had been in control of both Palestine and Transjordan and had a policy since 1917 of supporting Jewish immigration to Palestine and the eventual establishment of a national home for Jewish people in Palestine. This was the source of considerable tensions between local Arabs, immigrant Jews and the British administration in Palestine for the entire period that Iliffe lived and worked in the region. Indeed in the period from 1931 – 1946 when Iliffe was in Palestine, the total population almost doubled from just over 1 million to a staggering 1.9 million. Of these additional 900,000 people, half were Jewish, considerably altering the ethnic composition of the region. In 1931 Arabs made up 82% of the population while Jews accounted for only 16%. 15 years later at the end of the mandate, Arabs were 67% of the population while Jews were 31%.

The Museum itself was founded in 1930 after discussions between James Henry Breasted, director of the Chicago Oriental Institute, Lord Plumber, British High Commissioner and John D Rockefeller Junior, the Jewish-American philanthropist. Its architecture was a mix of east and west in style and is still an imposing shape on the landscape. It is situated outside the Old City walls on a hill overlooking the nearby Herod's Gate.

Photos from his archive show the grand structure of the Museum as it appeared before the cases were filled with displays. Eventually these cases, after eight years work, housed material from each major excavation conducted in the 1920s and 1930s with cupboards below to house additional material not worthy of display. The structure of the Museum itself was also well documented, including a lovely series of the central courtyard in snow. A central pool anchors the space with the display wings projecting either side with cloisters for additional display and for shelter. Small decorations were added, representing allegorical scenes from the

history of the region – the stonework was a particular favourite for Iliffe who was a keen photographer and appreciated the symmetry and contrast of the stone. These reliefs were engraved by Eric Gill and represent Canaan, Egypt, Judea, Phoenicia, Assyria-Babylon-Persia, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, Islam and the Crusades.

The work of the Museum was wide ranging, including conservation and the preparation of artefacts for display. Iliffe described the work in a letter to the editor: 'Sir, I wonder how any of your readers are familiar with the work that goes on behind the scenes in a Museum. The enclosed photographs illustrate one aspect of this work by which visitors are always fascinated, the repair and reconstruction of broken or fragmented ancient pots.'

A wonderful portrait of Iliffe at work in his office also exists in the archive; phone in hand, he reads a text open on the cluttered desk. His office was near to the Museum library. The directorship was not without its struggles. The Israel Antiquities Authority website records an anecdote describing his battle with Henry Breasted and Rockefeller himself to include ethnographic exhibitions alongside the archaeological, showcasing traditional Jewish and Arab garb and customs. His request fell on deaf ears. Instead the displays were ordered chronologically in the long halls, with special exhibitions on some major excavations, or on special parts of the collection such as wooden panels from the Al-Aqsa Mosque or lintels from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Museum was finally opened in 1938 after seven years of development. But the opening was marred by the murder of James Starkey, the excavator of biblical Lachish, in Hebron. This assassination took place as Starkey was travelling to the Museum as Iliffe's guest for the opening and was part of broader disturbances affecting the region that we will meet again later.

Apart from his Museum duties, Iliffe also spent time researching, excavating and travelling while he lived in Palestine. A notebook in the archive is inscribed J H Iliffe Arabic – Notes and includes a special dictionary of terms written in Arabic and English script of important words, presumably for a local archaeologist to master. One page includes the terminology for goose and egg, a temple or sanctuary and prayer carpet, smooth, proportionate, symmetrical and statue. Presumably the terminology was important for communication by writing and speech in the city.

Iliffe's research work included a pioneering study on Roman potters' stamps in eastern collections and

the Fryer Library collection includes a remarkable notebook that records Iliffe's research into potters' stamps. It was published as 'Hellenistic and Sigillata Wares' in the near East, by the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* in 1936. Iliffe's work with the Athenian Agora gave him an appreciation of the vast quantity of pottery ignored by excavators from the Roman period. The material had sparked his interest, however, and with access to the Palestine Museum collections, and the ability to travel to a vast number of local museums, Iliffe compiled a basic survey of stamps in the hope of breaking down some common misconceptions of the scholarly community about eastern Roman pottery's production and trade. Indeed his principal assertion was that on the discovery of more evidence through excavation, the contemporary division of wares into Pergamene and Samian would no longer be tenable and that many local workshops would be recognized through their stamps. This of course turned out to be more or less true.

Apart from the information relating to the Museum and Iliffe's archaeological research, the archive is important for its record of daily life in mandate-era Palestine and Transjordan. Iliffe of course was a member of the British civil service in the region, who were not always on the most friendly terms with the local populace. His Transjordan identity card from 1946/47 records his position in Palestine and his photograph is signed by the British Resident in Amman, Alex Kirkbride. It is interesting that the card is valid until a period after the Emirate of Transjordan became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in March 1946. Kirkbride stayed on as British consul to Jordan and was an important representative in the 1948 Arab/Israeli war. Iliffe thus inhabited a rapidly-changing world in which, particularly towards the end of his tenure, national borders could change yearly.

But Iliffe was also a member of the Jerusalem social scene to a certain extent. Several Rotary Club of Jerusalem programs are included in the archive, with Iliffe as president. Members of the Club were few, with just over 50 active members, including at least one other archaeologist that I immediately recognized – Nelson Glueck, the noted biblical archaeologist of the Negev desert who died in 1971. In April 1943 club members could enjoy a variety of lectures on Wednesday afternoons. On the 7th, RD Smith addressed the club on Post-war reconstruction, on the 14th Rotarian Dr Hildeschimer of Haifa presented on the topic of 'Margarine and Other Edible Fats'. The programs present a small glimpse into the social lives of local Jerusalem scholars in the period of the mandate, of which Iliffe was a part.



Iliffe at his desk

Small glimpses into daily life are also recorded through the lens of Iliffe's camera



Telephotograph from the Museum tower of the sanctuary of the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque stand out on the Jerusalem landscape. The wooded area to the left surrounds Government House.



A Muezzin wearing a fez stands on top of a small minaret, calling the adhan, the Muslim call to prayer.



Men sit and drink morning coffee in Aqaba on the Red Sea



An old cannon signals prayers or the breaking of the fast during Ramadan, staffed by two Muslim men in greatcoats and fezes. The cost of firing the cannon is recorded on the back as 30 pounds for the month!



From the tower of the Museum, Herod's Gate is seen centre left with government offices. The King David Hotel to the far left with four flags.

Of course the King David Hotel was bombed in 1946 just two years before the end of the mandate and the end of Iliffe's time in Jerusalem. Ninety-one people died and 46 were injured when a militant Zionist group attacked the hotel which was the headquarters of the British administration in Palestine.

This brings us to a further theme, that of conflict. While it was ubiquitous during Iliffe's time in Palestine, one period stands out as most important. In 1936/37, violence broke out between Arabs and Jews in response to increasing Zionism in Palestine. Eventually, a general Arab strike was called, resulting in the Peel Commission's being sent by the

British government to investigate the situation. The Commission found that the mandate was untenable, but its proposal did not meet with support from the Jewish or Arab associations. In 1937/38, Arab violence was renewed and it was in this period that Starkey was murdered. As a result, 20,000 troops were sent by Britain to put down the revolt and stayed there until March 1939. During this period, British troops were billeted inside the Museum and Iliffe captured a series of pictures of the troops in his Museum's cloisters, surrounded by antiquities.

Even after the disturbances had come to an end in March 1939, problems persisted. In April newspapers reported that Iliffe had been shot and killed in Jerusalem, assassinated by Arab dissidents, 35 of whom were held by police for the murder. It turned out later that Iliffe had indeed been shot, but not mortally wounded. A curfew was imposed upon the city as searches continued and an interesting clipping in the Iliffe archive includes a handwritten note reading: 'This gave me the news of Harry having been shot and wounded'. Yet another clipping gives more information. It turns out that Mr and Mrs Iliffe had returned home from an outing to the American School of Oriental Research and while putting away the car, Iliffe was shot in the back with the bullet passing through his lung. It was less than a year since James Starkey had been killed while en route to the dinner marking the opening of the Palestine Archaeological Museum, hosted by Iliffe.

Such assassinations were part of the broader conflicts around the old European powers controlling the government and foreign affairs of mandated states, and also a reaction against the pro-Zionist stance of the British government who supported the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. British officials in the region were directly in the firing line of Arab and Jewish dissidents who wanted to make their point and force a settlement.

By 1948 the Second World War was over, however, and the British mandate was ending – the official date was the 15th of May 1948. Iliffe's position with the Museum ended too and he seems to have left the region bound for a new post in Liverpool. The Museum was handed over to an international council in April 1948 and the British High Commissioner left without any ceremony on May 14 1948.

Soon after his departure, the Arab/Israeli war of 1948 broke out, with heavy fighting occurring around the Palestine Archaeological Museum resulting in a Jordanian victory. The Museum became a base for the Jordanian Antiquities Department for a further decade until the Six Day war in 1967. On the 10th of June 1948 Harry was appointed to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his

work as the Keeper of the Palestine Archaeological Museum.

But this is not the end of the archaeological story of J H Iliffe. From 1948 he worked tirelessly to reestablish the shattered Liverpool Museum that was much damaged during the Second World War and left this post in 1958. This final decade of his life was characterized by this struggle to preserve the Liverpool collection. He is recorded as writing

The major part of our priceless, irreplaceable collections are moldering and disintegrating in packing cases in cellars and warehouses in different parts of the city... Better to give the collections away to museums in other cities who would care for them and put them on show to the public than to let them crumble into destruction as is happening now... How ironic that many of these relics which escaped the fury of bombs and fire are now endangered by Liverpool's own neglect.

But at the same time, Iliffe was excavating the site of Kouklia on Cyprus. Also known as Paleopaphos, Kouklia remained under excavation from 1950 - 1955 under Terence Mitford and Harry Iliffe who represented the University of St Andrews and the Liverpool Museum. Here they uncovered a number of important finds including a particularly fine series of limestone sculptural heads now in Liverpool. You can find details of these excavations in the Antiquities Museum's current show – Cyprus: An Island and A People.

At the beginning of this paper I set out to tell you a little about the history and archaeology of Mandate-era Palestine through the collection of J H Iliffe. His story is, I think, very interesting and his role in the establishment of the Palestine Archaeological Museum is often overlooked and under-represented.

This was his great work, but at a time when perhaps it wasn't really appreciated. As a researcher, Iliffe contributed many an important piece in the puzzle of understanding the history of the Near East in antiquity, but as a photographer and collector I feel that his archive provides us with a snapshot into the archaeological history of Palestine in the mandate era that is otherwise neglected and forgotten. I hope that today you have come away with a sense of the man and of the archaeologist that Iliffe was, and perhaps some sense of this critical period in the archaeology of the ancient near east and its modern history.

ANCIENT GREEK ASTRONOMY AND ASTRONOMERS

Bob Milns

Two initial points should be made: (i) we know of so much writing on astronomy by ancient Greeks but sadly most has been lost; and (ii) all ancient astronomy was done on the basis of personal observation.



Early depiction of a 'Dutch telescope' from the "Emblemata of zinne-werck" (Middelburg, 1624) of the poet and statesman Johan de Brune (1588-1658).

Though *telescope* is formed from two Greek words meaning 'the far-viewer', there were no telescopes for astronomers until the 17th century CE. The Greeks, however, did develop a wide range of instruments to help their work (e.g. the astrolabe, the forerunner of the sextant, and the so-called Antikythera Device, representing the relative motion of the sun and moon (see below). It must also be said that Babylonian observations and calculations were used by Greek astronomers, especially from the time of Alexander's Asian conquests.

One enormous contribution of the Greeks to future astronomers is terminology. Not only are most terms from Greek words, but they were also named by the Greeks, often from words that were in common, everyday use. They can all be traced back for their astronomical significance to the 5th or 4th centuries BCE. To give a few examples: astronomy itself means 'assigning, regulating the stars'; astrolabe is a 'star catcher'; comet means 'hairy star'; eclipse means 'a failing or abandonment'; meteors are 'thing on high'; planet means 'a wandering star'; and cosmos means 'order' AND the universe.

Cosmology is a fashionable science today, with speculation on the origin, nature and extent of the cosmos or universe. So it was also with the ancient

Greeks, who devised many theories (a Greek word!) about the universe. One very modern sounding theory is that the cosmos consists of nothing but atoms (Greek = uncuttables) and empty space (kenon, the void). All matter is the result of combinations of atoms. The atomic theory is usually associated with the names of Democritus and Leucippus. The theory was used by the Epicurean school as the basis for their physics (Greek word) on which their ethics were built.

A Geocentric or Heliocentric Cosmos: with one important exception, the idea of a geocentric universe with a central, usually spherical, earth prevailed throughout antiquity and right up to the time of Copernicus in the 15/16th century CE.

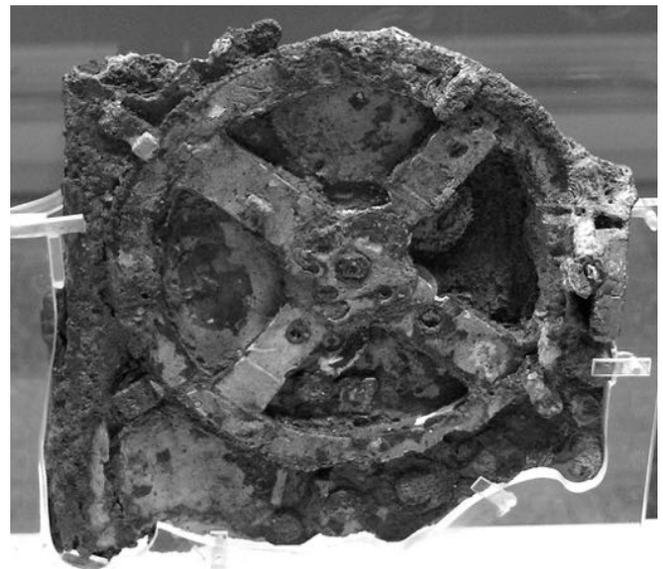
SOME SIGNIFICANT GREEK ASTRONOMERS

1. Thales of Miletus: made the first known prediction of a solar eclipse, viz. 25th May 585BCE, described by the historian Herodotus (1.74).
2. Meton of Athens, 5th century BCE, who devised the Metonic Cycle, i.e. the solar calendaric cycle after which the phases of the moon recur on the same day.
3. Eudoxus of Cnidos, c.390-340 BCE: ‘the first Greek to construct a mathematical system to explain the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies’. Very influential were his descriptions of the constellations, with calendaric notices of risings and settings. These appeared in his *Phaenomena*, which has not survived but is known through its adaptations by Aratus of Soli (c.315-c.240 BCE) in verse and also called *Phaenomena*. This verse-adaptation has been described as the third most read poem in antiquity after the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and perhaps the most translated into Latin, e.g. Cicero and Germanicus Caesar.
4. Aristarchus of Samos, fl.c. 280 BCE: for us today his most famous achievement is his proposal that the sun is the centre of the universe and the earth and other planets revolve around it. The theory was apparently known to Copernicus. We hear of this theory from a work of Archimedes, Sand Reckoner, but Aristarchus’s only surviving work is firmly geocentric.
5. Hipparchus of Nicaea (but lived mainly in Rhodes), fl.post-150 BCE: a very talented genius who may have been the inventor of trigonometry; developed the theory of parallax; discovered the precession of the equinoxes; and invented the plane astrolabe, whereby it is possible to tell the time at night from the stars’ positions. The only work of Hipparchus’s voluminous writings to

come down to us is his three-book Commentary on the Phaenomena of Eudoxus and Aratus.

6. Ptolemy (Claudius) of Alexandria fl. 146-170 CE: perhaps the most famous and influential writer in antiquity in many of the mathematical sciences, including astronomy and geography. His most famous astronomical work is that which is known to us as the *Almagest*, which is the Arabic form of the Greek *he megiste* (syntaxis), ‘the greatest compilation’ and which has been described as ‘a complete textbook of astronomy in 13 books’ and ‘a masterpiece of clear and orderly exposition... dominating astronomical theory for 1300 years’. Ptolemy’s *Geography* in eight books, in which he developed the theory of the Great Southern Continent, became the standard work on the subject until the 16th century CE. But amidst all this great work, it comes as a shock to learn that Ptolemy was a geocentrist.

The Antikythera Device: so called because it was found by sponge-divers off the Greek island of Antikythera c.1900 CE. When discovered it looked like a corroded lump of rock which later cracked open, revealing traces of bronze gear wheels and inscriptions in Greek. In recent times, modern techniques, including x-raying the inner workings, have revealed that it was a hand-wound clockwork device that showed the motions of the sun, moon and planets as seen from earth and could be used to predict solar and lunar eclipses. The device was made c. 150-100 BCE but the idea seems to have been developed by Archimedes in Syracuse. The mechanism has been described as technically more complex than any other device known for at least a thousand years afterwards.



The Antikythera Mechanism (courtesy of WikiCommons images)

The Lock of Berenice

In 243 BCE Ptolemy III of Egypt undertook a military expedition against neighbouring Syria. His newly wed bride, Berenice of Cyrene, vowed that if her husband returned safe, she would dedicate, in the temple of Aphrodite, a lock of her long hair as a thanksgiving. Ptolemy returned; the hair was duly cut and dedicated; and the next day disappeared. The court astronomer, Conon, to calm the furious king, declared that he had seen the lock as a new cluster of stars, which was duly named the Lock of Berenice (Plokamos in Greek; Coma in Latin), situated near the constellation Leo.

The court poet, Callimachus, wrote a poem about the metamorphosis, which has survived only in part on papyrus, but the great Roman poet, Catullus, made what seems to be a pretty accurate translation of Callimachus which has come down to us. The idea was taken up c.1750 years later by the great English poet, Alexander Pope, in his mock-epic 'The Rape of the Lock'. The star-cluster henceforth found its place amongst astronomers, though Ptolemy regarded it not as a constellation but a part of Leo. It was not promoted to constellation status until the 16th and early 17th centuries, but is one of the 88 modern constellations. But one cannot help wondering: had no Greek noticed this cluster of stars before Conon? Was Conon the first to have spotted it and suddenly had his bright idea? 'This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame' (Alexander Pope).

THE ANCIENTS REALLY DID LAUGH, YOU KNOW...

Denis Brosnan

The most accessible recent treatment of this topic is Mary Beard's *Laughter in Ancient Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014) and on 24 June I shamelessly plundered this treasure-trove at our Literary Lunch.

It is plain that we can never know for sure how, or why, people in the past laughed. We can barely explain why we ourselves laugh. And Mary makes clear that she has 'little patience with approaches that think they can explain and control the slippery phenomenon of laughter.' Most of our evidence shows some of what prompted urban, elite, male Romans to laugh; it seems we have almost no direct access to the laughter of the poor, of the peasants, of slaves or of women. Or of children. An added challenge is that authors like Quintilian have given us examples of what they feel are really good jokes, but some of the texts we have received are messy, even incomprehensible, so the jokes flop. Others need a lot of context to explain them,

and even 2,000 years ago, Cicero wrote that a joke explained is a joke lost.



Mosaic with Comedy Mask (Old Slave); Villa in Centocelle/ Rome (Italy); 2nd century AD (courtesy Wikimedia Commons)

Some moderns feel the best way to make humour live is to 'transpose' rather than to translate, to seek out contemporary terms that carry the same political and social charge as the Latin originals. Look at a few lines from Amy Richlin's version of the *Persa*, a comedy by Plautus:

Man, I'd rather duke it out with ... the Incredible Hulk than with Love; that's why I'm goin' nuts and tryin' to borrow some dough, but folks I ask don't know how to say nothin' to me but 'ain't no way.'

But when the text does not appear to be remarkably funny, we do get some clues on when to laugh. A dozen or so times in Classical Latin we read 'ha ha hae'; as Samuel Johnson said, 'Men have been wise in many different modes; but they have always laughed the same way.'

Another challenge is that Latin has relatively few words that mean something like 'laugh', so these few have to serve multiple roles, roles made clear only by context. *Cachinnus*, for instance, reflects the laughter of disbelief when Vespasian's grandmother was told he would become Emperor; the giggling of slave girls behind their mistress's back; the pounding of ocean waves or the gentle rippling of Lake Garda. An oddity is that while few words indicate laughter, there are many words for what caused it: *iocus*, *lepos*, *urbanitas*, *dicta*, *dicacitas*, *cavillatio*, *sal*, *salsum*, *ridicula* and *facetiae*, for instance.

Plutarch notes that what people laugh at depends on the company in which they find themselves – you can laugh at a joke with your friends that you could not bear to hear with your father or your wife. And a joke that is fine at a wedding will almost certainly not work as part of a funeral oration.

While Mary Beard is sure that ‘there is too much written – and still being written – on the subject of laughter for any one person to master; nor, frankly, would it be worth their while to try,’ she does agree that a bit of theory may help. There are essentially three.

First is the so-called superiority theory, where laughter is a form of derision or mockery. As Thomas Hobbes said in the 17th century,

The passion of laughter is nothing else but a sudden glory arising from some sudden Conception of some Eminency in our selves, by Comparison with the Infirmities of others.

Second comes the incongruity theory; laughter is a response to the illogical or unexpected. ‘When is a door not a door? When it’s ajar.’

Last is the relief theory. Laughter is the physical sign of the release of nervous energy or repressed emotion.

Here endeth the theory part of the talk. It’s time for a smile or two.

Contrary to what I had thought, Cicero is ‘the funniest man in the Roman world ... the most infamous funster, punster and jokester of classical antiquity’. On seeing his vertically-challenged son-in-law wearing a long sword, he said ‘Who tied him to his sword?’ And in referring to the timing of the murder of the gangster Clodius, Cicero said that it had occurred *sero*; i.e. ‘late in the day’ or ‘too late’ or ‘not soon enough’. He quotes Caesar Strabo, whose half-brother was named Catulus, or ‘puppy’.

Catulus was involved in a lawsuit involving stolen property and he was challenged by the defendant: ‘Why are you barking, puppy-dog?’ His reply? ‘Because I see a thief.’

The basic rule – or cultural stereotype, perhaps - seems to have been that good and wise rulers made jokes in a benevolent way; they never used laughter to humiliate, and they tolerated wisecracks at their own expense. Bad rulers and tyrants violently suppressed even innocent banter and used laughter against their enemies. Augustus could take a joke. A young man had come to Rome and he looked very much like the Emperor. Augustus ordered the fellow to be brought to him and said, ‘Tell me, was

your Mother ever in Rome?’ The answer? ‘No. But my Father was. And often.’

The notoriously bad Caligula had a writer of farces burned alive ‘for a dodgy pun’. Yet even he could handle being laughed at by a very ordinary person. A shoemaker saw Caligula dressed as Jupiter and burst out laughing. Caligula asked ‘How do I come across to you?’ ‘Like a right idiot!’ But he was let off, because he was so insignificant and thus posed no threat.

There were, in effect, court jesters who also had places in wealthy non-imperial families such as Seneca’s. Antony and Cleopatra had them, as did Caligula and Tiberius. They played nasty practical jokes on Claudius, before he became Emperor, and they were known as *copreae* – ‘found on a dung heap’. Mary Beard cannot resist translating ‘little shits’.

Little is available that relates specifically to Roman women. Ovid suggests they should open their mouths ‘only so far’ when laughing and that they should ‘make a nice little feminine sound’.

Macrobius features a story about Julia, daughter of Augustus, who had a very calculated approach to adultery. People who knew she took lovers were amazed at how her sons looked like her husband. Her reply? ‘I never take on a passenger unless the ship’s hold is full.’

The Romans had what we would call joke books, and an imperial librarian named Melissus compiled 150 volumes of ‘Trifles’ or ‘Jokes’. The closest we have is the *Philogēlos*, or ‘Laughter Lover’. Written in Greek but clearly for a mixed audience, it targets people from certain towns who were proverbially stupid, as well as greedy people and drunks, but especially *scholastikoi*, who might be called eggheads, intellectuals or absent-minded professors. You may wish to dip into this work at <http://publishing.yudu.com/Library/Au7bv/PhilogelosTheLaughAd/resources/index.htm>.

I have also compiled what I feel are the best of these jokes – some fall flat or are just not funny by any stretch of the imagination – and anyone who would a copy is welcome to contact me on 0430 432 974 or d.brosnan@duchesne.uq.edu.au. I’ll gladly send you the makings of a chuckle or two. It may be that you will agree with the view of that outstanding scholar, Erich Gruen, who says that the surprising thing about Roman laughter is not its strangeness. Yes, at times it’s incomprehensible, yet 2,000 years later, in a radically different world, we can still laugh at some of their gags.

MISS BROCKLEHURST AND THE WEST PARK MUSEUM

Pamela Rushby

In 1873 a 40-year-old English lady, daughter of a well-to-do silk manufacturer in Macclesfield in the north-west Peak District of England, set off on a Huge Adventure. Miss Marianne Brocklehurst, with her lady companion Mary Booth, her nephew Alfred, and a liveried footman named George, embarked on a voyage to Egypt.

Travelling to Egypt was quite the fashion at this time. The less well-off could join one of Thomas Cook's Tours, but those for whom expense was less of an issue could hire a *dahabeeyah*, a type of luxury houseboat with a full crew of sailors and domestic staff, and make their own leisurely way up the Nile. This is what Miss Brocklehurst and her party did. Their 1873-4 expedition up the Nile and back to Cairo took them four months. Miss Brocklehurst and her friends proceeded slowly up the river, anchoring regularly. Alfred took pleasure in shooting for sport. The ladies visited ancient sites, sketched, recorded their experiences in travel diaries, bargained for artefacts and souvenirs in bazaars – and did a little excavating of their own.

The two ladies named their boat *Bagstones* after their home in England. They travelled in a flotilla of similar boats, one of which was hired by Miss Amelia Edwards and her party. The three ladies became friends, and in her travel diary Amelia Edwards affectionately referred to Miss Brocklehurst and Miss Booth as 'the MBs'. (Amelia Edwards's diary was published as *A Thousand Miles up the Nile*. She later co-founded the Egypt Exploration Fund – now the Egypt Exploration Society – and on her death left her collection of Egyptian antiquities and her library to University College London, together with a sum of money to fund the Edwards Chair of Egyptology, under the condition that Flinders Petrie should be the first Edwards Professor.)

Miss Brocklehurst and Miss Booth excavated so effectively that the result was a large collection of antiquities. They became well acquainted with dealers in antiquities, such as Ahmed Abd el-Rasul, who lived in an old tomb in the cliffs on the west bank at Thebes. With his brothers, Abd el-Rasul had recently discovered a secret hiding place of mummies of New Kingdom pharaohs in the western desert, and the brothers were selling items from this cache. From this, Marianne Brocklehurst bought five shabtis from the tomb of the 21st dynasty priest king Pinudjem I. It's possible she also purchased another item from the brothers: the mummy case of Shebmut. This, Marianne Brocklehurst noted in her

diary, was a delicate negotiation, and it was feared it might be reported to the authorities. To keep another dealer quiet, Miss Brocklehurst noted that she bought some 'rather dubious antiquities' from him at a 'great price'. These were, possibly, a set of canopic jars – and more about these and Shebmut later.

North of Luxor, Miss Brocklehurst acquired from a village chief a scarab of the 18th dynasty Amenhotep III and Queen Tiye. She gleefully recorded she bought it for 12 shillings, an old railway lamp, and a small bottle of castor oil.

On her return to England, Marianne Brocklehurst became interested in a proposal to set up a museum in Macclesfield. An article in the *Macclesfield Courier* on 3 February 1894 stated: Make the people of a village or town, when unstimulated by beer or gin or licentious song, pleasant companions for themselves and others – and this can only be done with the help of art – and you break the power of public-house and low music-hall in the only way in which it really can be broken, and you make the living of decent life possible, if decent houses are provided.

Less than four weeks later two generous donors had offered funds for a museum. One of them was Miss Brocklehurst's brother, Peter. Marianne Brocklehurst was on the Museum Committee. However, trouble was brewing. The Committee approved a design for the proposed museum; the Town Council vetoed it and approved an entirely different design. Tempers flared. Miss Brocklehurst withdrew her support for the Museum. Four years went by before, in 1897, Miss Brocklehurst relented. The original design approved by the Committee was adopted. The Museum was opened in 1898.



Meanwhile, Miss Brocklehurst had not been idle. She had travelled to Egypt again, in 1882-3 and 1890-1, again avidly collecting antiquities, writing

and sketching. In 1890-1 Marianne Brocklehurst purchased a boat model from the Middle Kingdom period, and three shabtis from a cache discovered by the Abd el-Rasul brothers in the courtyard of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahari. Marianne Brocklehurst was also present when mummies from this cache were removed and taken to Cairo by boat. She recorded this in two watercolour sketches: one of the mummies lying on the ground around the vertical shaft, and the other of them being carried to the boats waiting for them on the Nile. These are believed to be the only eye-witness records of this incident.

Recently, I was staying near Macclesfield and in a brochure about Macclesfield Museums (mostly relating to the manufacture of silk) I was surprised and delighted to find out about the West Park Museum. I badgered my companions until they gave in and we went there. It's an interesting building featuring a frieze of plaster casts of the Elgin Marbles, set in a splendid parkland, at that time full of spring flowers.

To preserve the Egyptian antiquities, the lights in the building are kept low. So low, in fact, that those interested in examining the exhibits are offered 'Explorers' Torches' to light them more clearly. So, armed with my Explorers' Torch, I saw the items that Marianne Brocklehurst had so carefully collected: a lamp from the Osiris temple at Abydos; faience toys; shoes; slate palettes; cosmetic jars; beads; bronze statuettes of Osiris, Bastet, Sekhmet; a large statue of Sety II; pea pods, peas and wheat; a mummified hand and arm wrapped in linen; a mummified ibis, hawk and cat; and much more. I saw the famously dodgy canopic jars – judged as dodgy because the inscriptions are 'gibberish', and believed to be 19th century forgeries.

And I saw the lovely cartonnage mummy case of Shebmut, a young female singer in the temple of Amun in the 22nd dynasty. The mummy case has a sad story attached to it. The case, then with the mummy of Shebmut inside, was purchased in western Thebes. It was a rather involved and possibly somewhat less than legal acquisition. Marianne Brocklehurst then seems to have lost her nerve, and, concerned about the possibility of problems with the authorities, she arranged that the mummy of Shebmut was removed from its case and buried quietly on the banks of the Nile.

Marianne Brocklehurst never saw her collection of antiquities in the West Park Museum. She died in 1898, just after the Museum was opened. She had been too unwell to attend the opening ceremonies.

Her collection was left to a great-niece who donated it to the Museum. Later, Flinders Petrie also donated artefacts to the Museum.

And there they are today, in their charmingly eccentric small Museum building. When the Museum first opened, the collection was displayed packed together with many other 19th century curiosities including tropical beetles, ostrich eggs, a stuffed tiger, many pictures, and models of settlements in Canada. Today, Marianne Brocklehurst's Egyptian antiquities are the stars – and they're well worth a visit.

HOMER, THE EMPTY BATH AND THE SINGULARITY OF SPEARS

Roger Scott

The prolific scholar and reviewer Peter Green is himself reviewed⁴ in the 18 June 2015 edition of the *London Review of Books*. (vol 37, no 12) .

Reproduced below is the customary *LRB* introduction which aims to capture the reader without saying anything much at all about the book under review. Being neither a poetic nor a languages scholar, I found this opening section was the most accessible part of the review for me but I commend the rest of the review for those interested in matters of advanced literary scholarship.

Colin Burrow concludes that 'taken as a whole, Green's is the best line-for-line translation of the poem I know. ... Green also provides a detailed plot summary and a glossary of places and people, which combines wry and perceptive observations about Homer's characters with a mass of lightly worn historical scholarship'.

But back to the magical baths and Burrow's opening discourse:

At sandy Pylos (as Homer calls it) on the western coast of Greece it's still possible to see the bathtub of Nestor, who figures in the *Iliad* as an ancient, well-meaning but rather long-winded hero. Nestor's bath is a substantial piece of decorated terracotta fixed into a weighty base. It has sat in its present position since the late Mycenaean period (1300-1200 BC), which is roughly when the historical figures behind Homer's epics are thought to have strode the earth.

Bathtubs play a small but significant role in the *Iliad*. At the end of Book 10 the Greek heroes

⁴ Homer, *The Iliad*, translated by Peter Green, University of California Press, Berkeley, May 2015.

Diomedes and Odysseus go into the sea to wash off the sweat they have worked up during a night mission in which they have slaughtered a dozen Thracians and captured their horses. Then they 'climbed into polished bathtubs and bathed themselves'. The Greeks (or Achaians as Homer calls them) have been camping out on the shore near Troy for nine years, so it's conceivable that they had equipped their huts with a full Nestorian en suite. Or maybe they packed portable baths in their hollow ships as they set off for Troy, on the principle that for a long siege you would need a lot of kit including if not the kitchen sink then at least the bath. Alternatively the presence of these bathtubs may be a sign that the free-standing episode related in Book 10 (traditionally called the 'Doloneia') was, as most scholars now believe, composed by someone other than 'Homer', who was a bit more prone to nod than the writer he emulated.

But the magically-appearing bathtubs at the end of Book 10 are a marker of a very deep-seated feature of Homeric poetry. Objects can be conjured out of the air by a set of rules for narrative plausibility which are not ours. Diomedes and Odysseus are rich and powerful. They are exhausted and they have been successful. Rich and powerful warriors have baths, so the bathtubs have to be there and must be 'polished'. The way Homeric narrative deals with objects is determined not by probability or the laws of physics, but by social ambience, and by what a poet thinks an audience is likely to expect.

Another bathtub figures towards the end of the poem, when the Trojan hero Hector (as I will call him: Peter Green believes we should eradicate the familiar Roman equivalents for Homer's names, so he calls him Hektōr) has been killed by Achilles (and, phew, Green calls him Achilles rather than Akhilleus: two cheers for inconsistency).

Hector's wife, Andromache, calls her maids to heat water for 'a hot bath for Hektōr when he came home from the fighting –/unaware, in her folly, that far from all baths he'd been slain'.

Inside the walls of Troy there is no problem about the presence of baths or any other amenity: it is a well-built domestic space where there is weaving and warm linen. The problem with this particular bathtub is that the hero who is supposed to collapse into it to wash off the day's fighting can never do so. Hector is dead. The empty bath is a reminder of the way war abuts and busts up domestic life.

Recent English poetic responses to the *Iliad* have tended to emphasise its violence. Alice Oswald's Memorial (2011) makes the poem a string of elegies for the dead interspersed with similes, and pares away almost all narrative elements. Christopher Logue's dazzling paraphrases adopt a fragmentary form which appears to have been

broken apart by the violence it represents, which is often grotesque ('His neck was cut clean through/ Except for a skein of flesh off which/His head hung down like a melon').

Both of these versions are powerful re-imaginings of the *Iliad* from which anyone, whether they can read the original or not, can learn. But both Oswald and Logue risk turning Homer's socially subtle and carefully constructed narrative into a Poundian snuff movie, a poem in which one violent and vivid image of death succeeds another.

Homer's baths show how important domesticity is to his poem, but they also illustrate two other features of the *Iliad* that have got rather lost in contemporary poetic reactions to it. The *Iliad* is a poem of surprises – mostly nasty, when death rips into domestic life and a bath is left to cool as a wife grieves.

It is also magical in a particular way. It creates rhythms of expectation around objects and events, and then varies those rhythms with extraordinary emotional skill. In the process strange things can happen to both people and objects.

This can be illustrated if we backtrack from Hector's missed bath to the fighting that precedes his death, and follow the progress of one of the key implements of death in the poem: spears. Achilles has finally been drawn back into the battle with the Trojans after Hector has killed the gentle Patroclus.

He throws his 'far-shadowing spear', so 'massive and strong, that no other Achaian fighter/could wield it', at the Trojan Aeneas.

Aineias, crouching down, held his shield out away from him in terror: the flung spear passed over his shoulder, stuck in the ground, after breaking through both layers of the sheltering shield.

This moment of Marvel Comic heroism prompts a footnote from Green, who describes it as a 'physical improbability that suggests this passage may be the work of an interpolator'. Moments later Poseidon interrupts the battle in order to save Aeneas by shot-putting him right out of the fray, which some might argue is more of a physical improbability than a spear ripping through a shield.

The god doesn't want Achilles to be disadvantaged too much, however, so he pulls 'his well-bronzed ash-wood spear/out from the shield of great-hearted Aineias, and set[s] it/at the feet of Achilles'. This is the spear which we were told only moments before had passed right through Aeneas' shield and stuck in the ground. Where did the spear actually end up? Was it locked by convention into the shield of its adversary, or did it pass with a unique energy right through it?

In the *Iliad* as we have it the single spear seems to bilocate, and then a god obligingly returns it to its

owner, because on a battlefield once you have thrown your spear you're effectively left with three options: close combat, death or divine intervention.

art rather than accident, or of art happily co-operating with accident

A little later the singularity of heroes' spears is again an issue, this time a tragic one. Achilles 'let fly his far-shadowing spear' at Hector during their final combat. He misses and it sticks in the ground. Athene helpfully fetches it back. But Hector is not so lucky: he too 'let fly his far-shadowing spear'. It bounces off Achilles' shield. Hector calls for another from Deiphobos, but his mortal friend is 'nowhere near at hand'. Hector then knows he's had it. So do readers of the poem. The repetition of the phrase 'let fly his far-shadowing spear' highlights the asymmetry between the two heroes and anticipates what happens next. The son of Thetis has a god to help him. Hector, by contrast, can't even find a mortal friend. He is in the nightmare that precedes death:

As in a dream one can't overtake the quarry one's chasing –
the fugitive can't get away, nor his pursuer catch him –
so Achilles could not catch up, nor Hektōr get clear away ...

What this spear-play reveals is something central to Homer, and to many of the arguments about Homer which have raged over the past two centuries. It used to be held, chiefly by 19th-century German scholars, that the received text of the Iliad includes a number of interpolations by later hands. This would explain why Achilles' spear can be simultaneously stuck in the ground and in Aeneas' shield: a dopey interpolator messed up.

The next orthodoxy had it that 'Homer' was really a tradition of oral formulaic poets, and if strange things happen it is probably because the poet was on oral formulaic autopilot (spears – well, they stick in shields or in the ground and sometimes you forget which you've said happened).

More recent scholars, including Green in his wise and learned introduction to his translation, argue that the Iliad was composed probably by a single person sometime between 800 and 650 BC. The poem was grounded in a complex oral tradition which had grown up in the centuries after the Mycenaean bronze age, but which refashioned that tradition on a scale and with a sophistication that probably depended on writing. It may then have been augmented in various ways.

Whether this thesis is true or not, it does allow us to see some of the poem's more curious moments – like the baths and the spears - as the product of

ODE TO JOY

Bob Milns

Once I met a lovely woman;
Told me that her name was Joy;
Put me straightway on her Facebook,
Said I was a charming boy.

[We went out that night for dinner;
Sat and talked till very late;
Did the same again next evening;
Felt our meeting must be Fate.]

We were both great music lovers;
How it made our hearts rejoice;
Sat and listened to the radio;
Classic FM was our choice.

One night at a splendid concert –
Beethoven and Brahms and Strauss –
We decided to get married;
Now that beauty is my spouse.⁵

WHAT'S IN A WORD

Bob Milns

When I was a youth (14?) a relative gave me as a present a book by an author whose name meant nothing to me, except that it was very long and obviously foreign. The name was Maurice Maeterlinck and the book was *The Life of the Bee*. It took me a bit of time to work up the resolution to read it (definitely not the 'blood-and-guts' novels of my usual reading!), but then I gradually found myself sucked into the account of the marvellous life of that insect we all used to take for granted (but no longer!). My interest in and admiration for bees was renewed a few years later when as a student of Classics at university one of the Latin set-texts was the poem by the Roman poet Virgil, *The Georgics* (Farming Matters), called by the English poet Dryden, 'the best poem of the best poet'. In particular, I was fascinated – enchanted, I should say – by Book 4, which is concerned with bee-keeping and the wonderful social life of the bees. The book finishes with the heart-rending story of Orpheus and Eurydice.

Thus, one can imagine with what eagerness I went on 17th June to the meeting of the Three Score

⁵ This poem, without the second verse in order to comply with the rules of submission, won the ABC Classic FM's 'Ode to Joy' competition on 13/2/2015. Listeners were asked to write their own version of Schiller's 'Ode to Joy', used by Beethoven in his Ninth Symphony. The prize: for two persons - return air travel to Sydney to attend the Gala opening of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concert season at the Opera House which featured the Ninth Symphony and overnight accommodation at the Intercontinental Hotel, Sydney.

Club to hear Professor M V Srinivasan of the Queensland Brain Institute giving a talk on 'Visual Guidance in Bees, Birds and Bio-Inspired Flying Machines'. The talk was outstanding and showed how honey-bees use their vision 'to control/regulate their flight speed, negotiate narrow passages, avoid mid-air collisions and perform smooth landings, using computational principles that are often elegant and unprecedented'. I was especially fascinated by the account of the visual system of the bees, which consists of a pair of compound eyes, called ommatidia, and a pair of simple eyes, called ocelli.

As well as reflecting on the brilliance of nature in developing such an elaborate and efficient visual system, I admired the scientists whose knowledge of Greek and Latin was such that they were able to distinguish the two types of eyes by giving one a Greek diminutive name and the other a Latin diminutive name. For ommatidia is the diminutive of the Greek ommata, eyes, and means 'little eyes'; and ocelli is the diminutive of the Latin oculi, eyes, and also means 'little eyes'.



Parapsaenythia, Red Hairyeve Andrenid, collected in Argentina by Natalia Veiga (courtesy Wikimedia Commons)

Thus bees – and other insects – have a set of little Greek eyes and a set of little Roman (Latin) eyes. The lecturer also talked about how the vision systems of both bees and birds help in developing vision systems for 'autonomous aerial vehicles', i.e. drones. The English word drone applies to both the idle male bees whose only useful function is to fertilise the queen and to those unmanned aeroplanes, about which we hear so much these days. The word itself, in fact, is related to one of the ancient Greek words for a wasp, tenthredon. I have no doubt that Virgil and Maeterlinck would have enjoyed the lecture as much as I did.

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NOVA - JULY 2015

FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY PROGRAM

Sunday Series Lectures will be normally be held in Room E302, Forgan Smith Building. An entry donation of \$10 includes refreshments.

2015

SUNDAY 9 AUGUST
2.00 MAIN TALK

EMERITUS PROFESSOR TREVOR BRYCE
NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON

**REPORT BY BETTY FLETCHER MEMORIAL
SCHOLARSHIP WINNER 2014**
JOHANNA QUALMANN

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

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ANDREW FAIRBAIRN
(SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE, UQ)
**A WINDOW ON THE PAST: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY
AND THE ANCIENT WORLD**

(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)

SUNDAY 22 NOVEMBER

**FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY
CHRISTMAS PARTY**

WOMEN'S COLLEGE
(FULL DETAILS IN OCTOBER NOVA)

2016

DATE CLAIMERS

2016 SUNDAY SERIES DATES

FEBRUARY 7
MARCH 6
APRIL 3
MAY 1
JUNE 5
JULY 3
AUGUST 14
SEPTEMBER 11
OCTOBER 9
NOVEMBER 6

MAJOR EVENTS

FEBRUARY 7 SUNDAY SERIES:

**ADRIAN HEYWORTH SMITH MEMORIAL LECTURE
PLINY THE YOUNGER: THE ORIGINAL SIR HUMPHREY**

EMERITUS PROFESSOR BOB MILNS
AND
MR DENIS BROSNAN

APRIL 16:

**ANCIENT HISTORY DAY. THEME: 'PLAGUE, FILTH AND
GARBAGE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD'**

JUNE 5:

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
AND SUNDAY SERIES LECTURE**