

JANUARY 2016

# NOVA

THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY



STAPHYLAGRA OR UVULA FORCEPS

R D Milns Antiquities Museum No 13.021

(purchased through funds raised and donated by the Friends of Antiquity)

ALUMNI FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

## IN THIS ISSUE<sup>1</sup>

EDITORIAL	3
Ann Scott	
PRESIDENT'S REPORT	3
Denis Brosnan	
NEWS FROM THE DISCIPLINE	4
Alastair Blanshard	
UVULA FORCEPS AND OTHER ITEMS DONATED TO THE RD MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM	4
John Ratcliffe	
EVORA – A PORTUGUESE GEM	8
Bob Milns	
DISCOVERING TAMUT	10
Pamela Rushby	
POWER AND PATHOS	11
Roger Scott	
WHAT'S IN A WORD? ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON	13
Bob Milns	
POLYBIUS AND ANCIENT EMPIRES	13
Roger Scott	
POEMS	14
Bob Milns	
MEMBERSHIP OF FOA AND ALUMNI FRIENDS	15
FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	15
FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY PROGRAM 2016	16

### Contributors

- **Professor Alastair Blanshard** is the Inaugural Paul Eliadis Professor of Classics and Ancient History.
- **Denis Brosnan** is President of the Friends of Antiquity and an honorary lecturer in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry.
- **Emeritus Professor Bob Milns**, a founder member of the Friends of Antiquity, was Professor of Classics & Ancient History, University of Queensland, from 1970-2003.
- **Dr John Ratcliffe** received his doctorate 'Cornelius Celsus and surgery in the first century' from UQ in 2015.
- **Pam Rushby** is a Brisbane writer, and a member of the FoA Executive.
- **Dr Ann Scott** is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, and has been editor of *Nova* since July 2009.
- **Emeritus Professor Roger Scott**, School of Political Science and International Studies, is Immediate Past President of the Friends of Antiquity.

---

<sup>1</sup> Since 2011 electronic versions of previous years' issues of *Nova* have been put on the Friends of Antiquity website at: <http://www.friendsofantiquity.org.au/index.php?id=2>.

EDITORIAL

Ann Scott

Welcome to a new year of Friends of Antiquity events. The January Nova always provides as much information as is available about the Sunday Series lectures for the coming year, Ancient History Day, and our Annual General Meeting. You will find all the FoA events on the back page.

The first FoA Sunday Series lecture of the year will be the Adrian Heyworth Smith Memorial Lecture to be presented by Emeritus Professor Bob Milns and our President, Mr Denis Brosnan, on the topic 'Pliny the Younger: the Original Sir Humphrey'. This will be held at 2pm on 7 February in the Sir Llew Edwards Building (see below). For details of this, and the 2016 program see the back page of this issue of Nova.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: There is some uncertainty about room bookings this year as the university will be refurbishing the Forgan Smith Building. Please keep an eye on the back page of this and future Nova issues to confirm venues. The first change to note is that the Sunday Series lecture on 7 February will be held in Room 116, SIR LLEW EDWARDS BUILDING (Building No 14).

Don't miss this year's Ancient History Day, to be held on Saturday 16 April, on the topic 'Plague, Filth and Garbage in the Ancient World'.

In addition to the FoA program, you will see from Professor Alastair Blanshard's 'News from the Discipline' (p.4) that a number of other interesting events are being planned by the staff of Classics and Ancient History. For example, one of these will commemorate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. The discipline together with the Friends of Antiquity and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences will be hosting an event entitled 'Shakespeare's Romans'.

We look forward to what will be an interesting and informative program in 2016.

With best wishes for the year ahead.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Denis Brosnan

I start by asking all of you to send me any suggestions you have for new activities/ improvements to what we are already doing. What follows shows that enjoyable things are certainly happening, yet we cannot just rest on our oars.

On 11 October, Andy Fairbairn spoke on the application of scientific method and techniques in archaeology and how this is transforming our ability to understand the nitty-gritty of past lives. This was especially interesting because Andy used examples from his own research from Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean.

On 1 November, we had the rare pleasure of hearing from a classical scholar who is also a surgeon and radiologist. John Ratcliffe knows so much about Cornelius Celsus, who wrote the earliest reasonably comprehensive medical and surgical text in Latin, and he told us how, in 1487, this work came to be the first Latin medical book to be printed. And if you ever wondered what a uvula forceps was/is, you'll have the opportunity to find out in this issue.

The executive of Alumni Friends UQ met on 16 November. Two items were of particular interest: very likely links with the discipline, especially the R D Milns Museum, to help celebrate the AFUQ's 50th Anniversary in 2017; and an upcoming estimate of the value - in current dollars - of AFUQ's donations to UQ. Donations of interest to the Friends of Antiquity feature prominently in that list.

22 November saw a very relaxed Christmas lunch at The Women's College. The catering was superb, as always; the atmosphere convivial. Bob Milns as quizmaster revealed some highs and not-so-highs of general knowledge. Special thanks to Desley Loch for organising the two baskets of goodies as raffle prizes, and to all those who bought so many tickets. We were delighted to thank Katharine Carter from the AFUQ office whose ever-ready support has meant so much to the Friends this year. And to welcome three members of the executive of the Classics and Ancient History Society - a group with whom we are seeking to cooperate as much as possible. One way to do this would be for you to join CAHS.

I renew my invitation to all Friends to attend meetings of your executive immediately before the lectures of the Sunday Series. You will be warmly welcome. The first will be in Room 116 of the Sir Llew Edwards Building, at 12:30, on 7 February.

**NEWS FROM THE DISCIPLINE**

**Alastair Blanshard**

2016 promises to be an exciting year for the discipline. A number of events have already been planned. Here are some of the highlights.

In March, we will be hosting a workshop in conjunction with Princeton University on the theme of 'Classics and the Contemporary'. The aim of the workshop is to bring international scholars and art practitioners into dialogue and discuss the status of classical aesthetics within contemporary art and how it has impacted on contemporary art practice. One of the key practitioners coming for the event will be Asad Raza who worked with Tino Sehgal on a number of his 'constructed situations' for the Guggenheim and the Tate museums. More recently they collaborated on an installation in the Roman Agora in Athens. Other scholars coming out for the event include Richard Neer from the University of Chicago and Richard Fletcher from Ohio State University.

In April, the discipline is joining with the Medical School to help launch the 80th anniversary of the University of Queensland Medical School. The evening should be a great event. The program is still being decided, but it will involve a talk about the exciting, often scandalous history of medicine from antiquity to the modern day as well as the official launch of the wonderful set of Roman equipment donated to the R D Milns Antiquities museum in memory of Dr. Owen Powell.

In June, to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, the discipline together with the Friends of Antiquity and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences will be hosting an event entitled 'Shakespeare's Romans'. The event will explore the legacy of Shakespeare's plays about ancient Rome. One of the highlights will be the screening of some of the silent films based on Shakespeare's text with musical accompaniment.

Finally, a number of the Friends of Antiquity were generous donors to the R.D. Milns Classics Endowment Fund. Members of the Friends may be glad to hear that the fund currently has a balance of \$420,457.72. The fund is still in an 'accumulation' phase and we welcome any donations. Last year's campaign raised \$7,455.

**UVULA FORCEPS AND OTHER ITEMS DONATED TO THE RD MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM**

**John Ratcliffe**

In 2013 the RD Milns Antiquities Museum<sup>2</sup> celebrated its 50th Anniversary, and the Friends of Antiquity its 25th Anniversary. To mark these two events, the Friends of Antiquity made a substantial donation to the Museum's Acquisitions Fund.

One of the items chosen by Dr Janette McWilliam, James Donaldson and other members of the Museum team is an absolutely magnificent and rare Roman surgical instrument called a uvula forceps, also known as a staphylagra. This was purchased from the well-known firm of London antiquity dealers, Charles Ede. It was from Charles Ede that the Antiquities Museum made a significant purchase nearly fifty years previously. In order to acknowledge this anniversary, and also for the many later purchases by our Museum, James Ede, the current director of the company, generously donated three additional valuable and extremely interesting Roman instruments.

The value to the University of these four items lies in their being excellent material for teaching and research, as well as being of interest to the increasing number of Museum visitors. Three of these comprise a uvula forceps, a scalpel handle, and a specillum/probe. The function of the fourth object is is yet to be discovered; it has been described as a probe or dilator, but more likely it is something else. All four objects are made from bronze, more correctly called copper alloy and all are difficult to date more accurately than saying that they were made probably sometime between the first century BC and the fifth century AD.

**Uvula Forceps**

The uvula forceps<sup>3</sup> is remarkably well preserved for a 2000 year old instrument. It is amongst the best preserved uvula forceps in the world. The other three instruments are less well preserved and have a heavy encrustation of copper and mineral deposit but are nonetheless extremely interesting and informative.

The uvula forceps was used in antiquity not only for the therapeutic partial amputation of the uvula but probably also for gripping other bits and pieces during various surgical procedures. The uvula is the soft, floppy, pendant fleshy appendage one can see

2 Formerly the Classics Antiquities Museum.

3 Illustrated in the three black and white images in this article, and in colour on the front cover of *Nova*.

at the back of the throat when looking in the mirror with one's mouth wide open. This is a generally harmless and apparently relatively non-essential appendage that, like other similar organs, ran the risk of removal for no scientifically-determined reason but without apparent detriment. A 'long' uvula was one pretext for amputation of the uvula in the United Kingdom until the twentieth century.

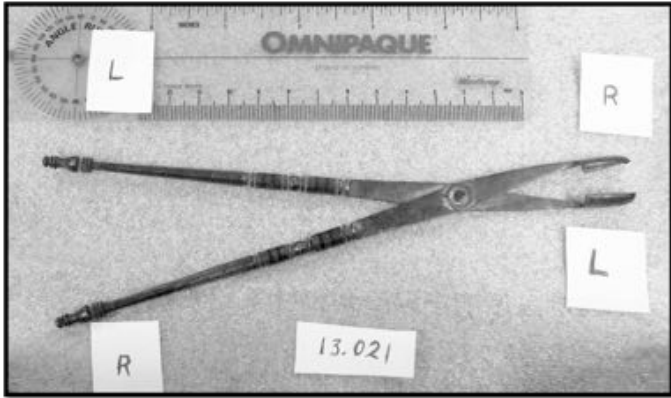


Figure 1 shows the elegant design and construction of the newly acquired uvula forceps

Figure 1 shows the uvula forceps looking much as it did 2000 years ago when it was used to grip and crush a thin segment of the lower part of a person's uvula prior to its being cut off with a scalpel.

The earliest surviving description of uvula amputation is by Cornelius Celsus, a Roman medical writer of the first century.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the most graphic description, however, is by a Greek surgeon, Aetius of Amida, in the fifth century AD.<sup>5</sup> Here is a slightly modified English translation of Aetius.

The sufferer must be placed in a well-lighted spot, and then his mouth shall be opened wide. Then inserting [into the mouth] a dissecting forceps and pulling on the uvula, the uvula forceps is fitted on about the middle, or a little below the middle, of the uvula and then it [the uvula] is pulled and twisted. By the twisting it becomes lifeless and, as it were, snared off; it curls up, becomes livid and comes off without much flow of blood. (T)herefore it is well to wait some time and hold it till the patient can stand it no longer, and then cut it off – the cut being made close to the forceps but nearer the tip [of the uvula] than to [the middle of] it.

The uvula is fairly far back in the mouth, so for easy access the handles of the uvula forceps need to be quite long and in this instrument they are just over

20 cm long. The handles are hinged like scissors by a single rivet two-thirds along their length. Unfortunately a bit of accidental mineral deposit at this rivet prevents the jaws of the instrument donated to the Museum from being either fully opened or fully closed.

One can imagine that when the instrument's jaws were tightly closed, the handles would be about four or five centimetres apart. Thus the handles could be easily and firmly held in the operator's fist resulting in a mechanical advantage of two or three to one in the jaws' grip because of the position of the rivet.

In 1992 Ralph Jackson, a world authority from the British Museum on ancient medical instruments, wrote a paper on twenty similar instruments from around the world. This series did not include our newly acquired instrument, so it can be considered to be an uncommon, if not a rare instrument, in world terms. Furthermore, it is in a better state of preservation than most of the others. One feature which emphasises the relative rarity of the RD Milns Museum's specimen is the presence of dark decorative bands of metal inlay in the handles. Only one other uvula forceps, now in the British Museum, has this feature.

I shall now describe some of the details of the RD Milns Museum's uvula forceps – the 'business end' first.

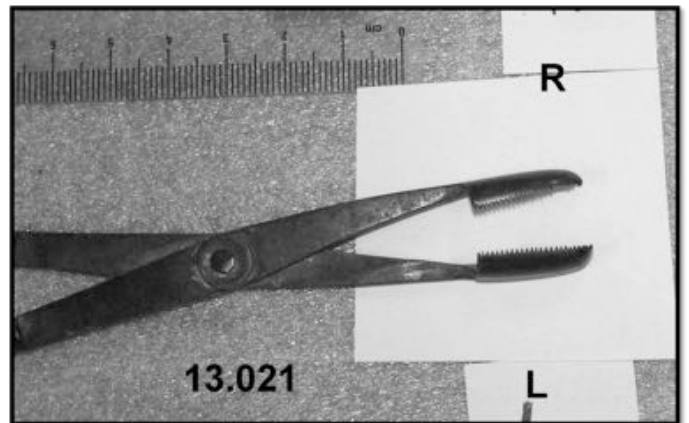


Figure 2 shows the 'business end' of the RD Milns Museum's uvula forceps

Figure 2 above illustrates the regularity of the teeth, apart from where they are worn or broken near the front end of the two jaws. The shadow cast on the

4 Celsus. *De Medicina*. VII. 12. 3. Translated by W. Spencer. Loeb Series: 1935-1938.

5 Aetius II. 4.12. Quoted from Jackson, R, *Staphylagra, Staphylocaustes, Uvulectomy and Haemorrhoidectomy: the Roman instruments and Operations. From Epidaurus to Salerno*. A. Krug. Rixensart, Belge, Conseil de l'Europe, 1992, 34: 174.

white paper backing demonstrates absence and attrition of some of the upper teeth to advantage.

The toothed jaws are 19mm long and are curved both at the front end and along the sides so that when closed they would have formed a boat shaped cavity about 10mm wide, 5mm deep and 19mm long. The metal of the jaws is about a millimetre thick and there are fine, sharp-pointed, interlocking teeth two millimetres long and spaced at thirteen to the centimetre along the opposing edges of the jaws. Imagine that the forceps is applied to the uvula with the boat-shaped cavity uppermost and the line of interlocking teeth tightly closed on the middle of the uvula; the forceps' teeth are sharp-pointed but not sharp-edged; the waist of the uvula is crushed and held steady but it is not cut and the blood supply to the lower part of the uvula would be cut off. It would then be easy for the surgeon to take a sharp scalpel and slice off the lower part of the uvula, below the grip of the closed forceps' jaws, by running the blade along the 'keel' formed by the closed line of the forceps' teeth. There could be no immediate bleeding while the grip of the instrument's jaws persisted and the surgeon might be wise to continue to grip the stump of the uvula, as Aetius put it, 'for as long as the patient could bear it', until clotting had occurred within the damaged uvular blood vessels - perhaps a matter of a few minutes.<sup>6</sup>

Uvula forceps were used for other things. It was documented by a seventh century Byzantine surgeon, Paul Aegineta, that one of his predecessors, Leonides, used this type of instrument when operating on a patient's piles.<sup>7</sup> Those readers familiar with surgery for haemorrhoids might recognise how well a uvula forceps might be suited for this purpose, even if equally uncomfortable.

The uvula forceps in the Museum, and the others described previously by Jackson, were presumably used to grip some other, very hard, objects because most surviving uvula forceps, have a few broken teeth, and often the teeth at the front of the jaws show evidence of wear (Figure 2). Neither piles nor uvulae have bones in them. My guess is that uvula forceps were also used for the extraction of stone or metal missiles such as arrowheads.

Now let us look at the details of the handles shown in Figure 3 below.

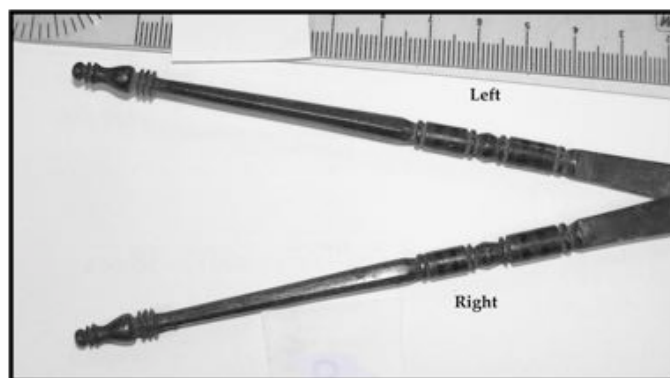


Figure 3. The handles of the uvula forceps showing the tapering shafts and their decorative components which are fairly prominent

Had it been necessary to tie the handles together in order to apply prolonged compression of the jaws, a slip loop tightened over the 'free' ends of the handles would have achieved this. However, it should be noted that there is not yet any identified written evidence that this was ever done.

The handles end in beautiful tear-drop balusters, whereas most other uvula forceps' handles end in rather stylised pine cones. The longer tapering component of the shafts are octagonal in cross-section with chamfered corners. The shafts continue towards the jaws through a pair of cylindrical drums, each approximately 10mm in length, separated, in the left handle, by a sphere and by an ovoid in the right handle.<sup>8</sup>

One would suspect that the ovoid is a manufacturing error. In addition, two thin rings in a darker metal have been inlaid into the two drum-shaped segments. This colour contrast is better shown in the colour image (see the front cover of *Nova*). Analysis of similar black metal bands in the British Museum uvula forceps reported by Jackson, shows that the bands are made from an alloy of copper 'with minor amounts of gold, silver and arsenic and have an artificially induced black patina'.<sup>9</sup> The aesthetic balance of the sculptural features, such as the numbers and sizes of decorative rings and the tapering of the handles make this a beautiful object but it is also very well balanced in the hand, so that it well adapted for function.

<sup>6</sup> This description has to be speculative because it is not reasonable to test this procedure on a living person or experimental animal.

<sup>7</sup> *Paulus Aegineta*, VI. 31. Quoted from Jackson, R. 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Because of the 'cross-over' nature of the handles, as with scissors or pliers, but not with shears, the right jaw is continuous with the left handle and vice versa.

<sup>9</sup> Jackson, R, 1992, p.174.

### Scalpel handle

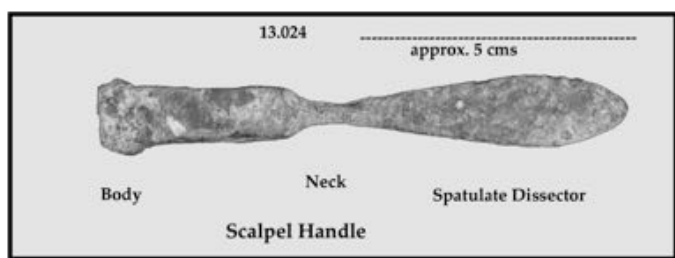


Figure 4 shows a typical Jackson Type I Roman scalpel handle<sup>10</sup>

The item in Figure 4 is a bit small and scruffy by comparison with the uvula forceps. It measures approximately nine centimetres in length. This object is a fairly typical scalpel handle made of copper alloy which has deteriorated over the last twenty centuries and is covered with verdigris.

This is not an uncommon item in collections of material from Roman sites in Europe. In some excavated sites scalpel handles have been found in which the rusty iron blades are still relatively intact. The iron blade was slotted and then soldered into the body of the instrument (the roughly rectangular part on the left in the image in Figure 4). In many first century scalpels this slot was shaped like a key-hole, probably to prevent accidental extraction from the slot during cutting. The iron blades of most of those that have survived from the first century, and many of those depicted in sculpture, were markedly convex in outline. These blades were probably sharp only on this convex edge.

The leaf-shaped spatulate dissector at the other end of the instrument from the blade would originally have been very smoothly polished. This would have been used to gently separate soft tissues beneath the skin without cutting them. The instrument was probably held by its rectangular body and not by the leaf shaped dissector for rapid or forceful cutting. Had the dissector been used as a handle for heavy work it is likely that the neck of the dissector would have been bent or broken. The only evidence of a blade in this specimen are some rust stains on the left hand surface of the body.

The two ends of this instrument can be used for immediately sequential tasks, cutting and dissecting. The Roman surgeon, after having made a rapid, but

accurate, incision through the skin, would have been able to flick the instrument quickly over in his hand without really letting go of it and he could then continue immediately with blunt dissection in the subcutaneous tissues. This skilful manoeuvre could speed up an operation considerably and reducing operating time in an era with limited anaesthesia was an important consideration.

### The Probe or Specillum



Figure 5 The specillum or probe.

The third item, shown in Figure 5, is a double ended specillum which could have been used as a probe to explore, by touch, the depths of a wound or some other hole on the surface of the body.<sup>11</sup> It is made of copper alloy with a deteriorated surface and it would once have been smooth and polished. It is approximately fourteen centimetres long and has evenly expanded ends, shaped rather like olives.

Before X-rays became available, surgeons would have passed one end of such an instrument down a wound, or down a sinus (a leaking hole on the surface of the skin), to try to feel where the sinus originated in the patient's interior. By this method one can often determine how deep the hole is and roughly to where it leads. With a bit of practice it is often possible to distinguish, by blind touch, between fragments of iron (arrow head), wood (an untipped arrow), fragments of living bone, dead bone from osteomyelitis and sometimes other foreign material such as clothing which has been dragged into a penetrating wound. Somewhat similar specilla, particularly those which at one end had a narrow flattened plate, or more rarely, a very narrow spoon, were probably used to introduce ointments and powders into the cavity with the intention of promoting healing.

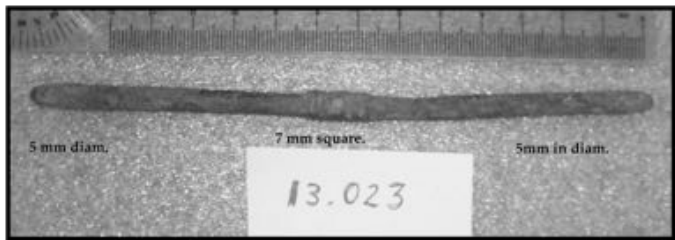
This probe has asymmetric expanded olive tips ideally designed for gently stretching up a stricture, or the mouth of a narrow opening on the surface of

<sup>10</sup> Ralph Jackson distinguishes between two general types of Roman scalpel, Type I and Type II. This one is a Type I scalpel. See Jackson, R and La\_Niece, S, 'A Set of Roman Medical Instruments from Italy', *Britannia* 1986, 17:133.

<sup>11</sup> A specillum is a probe which can be used to reveal things by moving obscuring material aside or probing something. It should not be confused with 'speculum' although both come from the same root. A speculum is a thing through which one may see something. A tube for looking up the anus or into the nose, or even a telescope, may be called a speculum.

the skin. In modern surgery, if a series of such probes, with ends of increasing diameter, are used, starting with the narrowest tip, and progressing up to bigger diameters, very effective drainage of fluids such as pus or urine from a cavity can be achieved with limited trauma to the patient. This probe, shown in Figure 4, has one tip measuring 2.5 mm in diameter and at the other end it is significantly bigger, between 3.5 and 4 mm; it is possible that the next probe in the series would have had slightly bigger tip diameters of say 5 mm and 6 mm. However, in the ancient literature there is no mention of sequential dilatations of the mouth of either a fistula, or of a stricture, having been performed; nor has a set of probes with suitably increasing diameters for this procedure yet been found in the archaeological record.

**The fourth gift: is this a mystery object or just an unusual probe?**



**Figure 6 - a rare and unusual object**

This last item to be described, shown in Figure 6, is at the moment an enigma. It is made of copper alloy the surface of which has now deteriorated. In the sale documents it was described as possibly being a probe but it is very different to most other probes. It is 14.8 centimetres long and symmetrical about a rectangular block at its centre which is seven millimetres in cross section and 15 mm long. This block is ribbed at its margins and has a central dimple on all four surfaces. The two 'arms' are about 6.5 centimetres long; one is slightly bent. The arms are circular in cross section with a diameter of five millimetres and they terminate with a simple rounded, slightly hemiovoid, end but, unlike a typical probe (specillum, as shown in Figure 5), there is no preterminal narrowing.

The slightly ovate ends could be consistent with use as a dilator. This shape at the end of each arm is similar to that of a Hegar's uterine dilator (used in modern practice to dilate the neck of the womb using the same principle for serial dilatation as described above in the section on the specillum). But, why have a dilator with identical diameters at each end? What was the purpose of the ribbed central rectangular section? What is the purpose of

the four central dimples? Has this object anything to do with medical practice at all, or is it something to do with a horse's harness or weaponry or something else entirely? Although this object is the least beautiful and least understood of these four instruments, for some of us at least, it is the most intriguing.

**Finale**

The RD Milns Museum has been the beneficiary of these very wonderful and intriguing gifts from the Friends of Antiquity and from James Ede of London. Many sincere thanks are offered to both donor organisations. There is an exciting future for the Museum.

**EVORA – A PORTUGUESE GEM**

**Bob Milns**

One of the highlights of our recent tour of Portugal must surely be our visit to the city of Evora, situated in the Alentejo district and just over midway between Lisbon and Badajoz on the Spanish border.

Evora, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has a population of about 60,000 (just over half the size of Toowoomba) but is a veritable treasure-house of fascinating and impressive buildings and history.



**Roman temple, Evora**

The town goes back to the ancient Celts, who named it Eborā, which means 'of the yew tree'. This, in fact, is the same word as we see in Eboracum, the ancient Celtic and Roman name of the English city of York (as a Yorkshire man by origin, I was fascinated to learn of this Portuguese connection). The Archbishop of York still signs himself as Ebor! Eborā came under Roman rule in the 1st century BCE, becoming a Roman municipality and receiving the name of Julia Liberalitas (Julian liberality) from Julius Caesar. It stayed under Roman rule until 584 CE, when it came under Visigoth rule.



The most conspicuous relic of Roman rule is the temple with Corinthian columns, in the centre of the town, built in the late first century BCE and dedicated to the emperor Augustus, though erroneously referred to at times as the temple of Artemis/Diana. In the course of its long post-Roman history it was used, amongst other things, as a place for the gallows at the time of the Inquisition, an abattoir, and a wood-store.

completely covered with human bones, including skulls, of monks, nuns and others. We had already seen a church similarly 'decorated' when we visited Kutna Hora in the Czech Republic a few years ago. To me, at any rate, there was nothing grisly or sinister about being surrounded by these signs of our mortality. A tinge of melancholy was perhaps the emotion I felt and wished I had the poetic talent of one of England's Romantic poets.



1530s aqueduct at Evora

Other highly impressive buildings in Evora are the large aqueduct, 9km long and built in the 1530s but to me looking for all the world like a Roman aqueduct.

There is a gothic cathedral, built mainly between 1280 and 1340.



Church of St Francis, Evora

Evora has a university, with a student population of about 10,000 (compare this with our own university, whose student numbers must be close to 50,000!). It was founded in 1559, making it the second oldest in Portugal after the University of Coimbra. Like Coimbra (the ancient Celtic Conimbriga) the university was run by the Jesuits until 1759, when the Jesuits of Portugal were exiled or imprisoned by the famous (notorious?) Marquis of Pombal, chief minister of the kingdom at that time. The university itself was closed down and did not re-open until 1973 as a public university. At the time of our visit to Evora (late September) the academic year was just beginning and I especially was delighted to see what were obviously advanced level students dressed in academic gowns and marshalling a procession of what we assumed were 'freshers', dressed in a variety of curious clothes. They marched as far as the steps of the cathedral and then, alas, we had to leave to catch our coach without seeing what happened next.



Apostles on the main portal of Evora Cathedral

There is also the Church of St Francis (late 16th/ early 17th century), which is especially interesting because it contains a chapel known as the Capela dos Ossos (Chapel of the Bones), which is

Finally, I must say a few words about the impressive main square of Evora, known as Praca do Geraldo (note that in Portuguese the letter 'l' in Spanish or Italian is often replaced by 'r'; hence Praca, not Plaza as in Spanish). Lyn, my wife, and I sat at one of the many outside tables there and had a morsel of lunch, both of us having the delicious vegetable

soup so common in Portugal, and I a glass of splendid Portuguese vinho branco (white wine; note again, the change from 'l' in Spanish 'blanco' to 'branco'). It was a beautiful day and next to us was a table of merry Germans, with whom we conversed in a mixture of German and English. An idyllic moment, worthy of an ode by the Roman Horace!

**DISCOVERING TAMUT<sup>12</sup>**

**Pamela Rushby**

In June 2015 the British Museum held an exhibition, *Ancient Lives New Discoveries: eight mummies, eight stories*. That was where we discovered Tamut.

The exhibition focused on eight mummies from ancient Egypt and the Sudan from the Museum's collection, and what had been discovered about them through using the new technology CT-scanning. This technology has enabled scientists to 'virtually unwrap' the mummies, virtually removing



layer upon layer to observe the bandaging, skin, muscles, skeleton, internal organs and objects placed inside. From this information, scientists have been able to form opinions on the health of individuals over their lives, the age at which they died, and the mummification processes used on them – all without physically unwrapping and thereby destroying the mummy.

The exhibition included the eight mummy cases and beside each one, images such as longitudinal and transverse CT scan sections, three-dimensional visualisations of bandages and mummified remains, and semi-transparent views of mummies and

skeletons. Many of these images could be manipulated by visitors – and, of course, we manipulated lots of them!

The eight mummies ranged in date from the natural mummy of a man preserved in sand (c 3500BC) to a Christian woman from the Sudan, also naturally preserved (c 655-775AD).

It was the mummy of an Egyptian woman c 900BC that particularly caught my attention. Her name was Tamut and her body was preserved in a beautiful, brilliantly coloured cartonnage mummy case with a glowing gold face.

Tamut's cartonnage mummy case was discovered in Egypt in the 19th century, possibly at Thebes, though no record of the find had been found. It was part of the collection of Raymond Sabatier, French consul in Egypt in 1852, and was purchased from this collection by the British Museum in 1890. Hieroglyphs on the case record the name Teyesmutengebtui (She whose mother is from Coptos) and the name appears in five places on the case – though each time spelled differently. In a scene painted on the breast of the case the name is shortened to Tamut. This was, possibly, the name used by the family. The inscriptions also indicate Tamut was married; she was 'Lady of the House', and that she was a chantress of Amun, meaning that she participated in religious ceremonies, probably in the temple of Karnak, cult centre of Amun-Re. Women of high-ranking families sang and chanted at religious festivals, accompanied by music from harps, lutes, drums and clappers, and the chantresses also played percussion instruments such as the sistrum. The inscriptions tell us that Tamut's father, Khonsumose, was a priest of Amun of high rank.

The scenes painted on Tamut's mummy, in bright colours, show her gilded face and a vulture-winged headdress. Symbolic images include Tamut being brought before Osiris and being bathed in sacred water by Horus and Thoth. Other scenes show Osiris and Ra, the passage of the sun across the sky, and figures of protectors of the dead, repelling harmful forces.

But, without unwrapping the mummy, that is all that can be known of Tamut.

CT scan technology has now revealed much more. First, a CT scan analysis of the skeleton confirmed that the mummy case did, indeed, contain an adult

<sup>12</sup> The illustrations for this article were taken from the British Museum website at [http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats\\_on/past\\_exhibitions/2014/ancient\\_lives\\_new\\_discoveries/eight\\_mummies.aspx?fromShortUrl](http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats_on/past_exhibitions/2014/ancient_lives_new_discoveries/eight_mummies.aspx?fromShortUrl). The exhibition has now closed.

female. (It's not unknown for a female mummy case to contain a male mummy, and the other way around. One of the other exhibits, a full-sized mummy case, actually contained the mummy of a child of about seven years.)

Scans revealed that the mummy's teeth are very worn, suggesting an age of at least 30 years when she died. She may, however, have been much older, depending on her diet – and whether or not she had the habit of grinding her teeth!



The skeleton measures 157cm, and Tamut's hair (also visible on the scan) was cut short. Tamut may have worn a wig.

The cause of Tamut's death was difficult to establish. There were no signs of accidental death, such as broken bones. Tamut had one dental abscess, caused by dental wear, which would certainly have caused inflammation and great discomfort. Tamut also had abnormally dense layers of calcified plaque on the inner walls of some arteries, which would have caused the affected arteries to narrow and the flow of blood to be affected – which can cause strokes and heart attacks. (I hope I have this right – hard to take notes in the middle of an exhibition!)

Tamut's body had been skilfully (and expensively) embalmed. The brain had been removed through the right nostril and the skull packed with cloth. More cloth had been used to reconstruct the shape of her face after the drying process. Artificial eyes had been placed in the eye sockets. Her internal organs had not been placed in canopic jars, but were placed in her chest. Thin metal, perhaps gold leaf, covered her finger- and toe-nails. Small objects of faience, glass and stone had been placed on her body: a heart scarab, beads, small amulets, plaques on the left arm and lower chest, and winged images of gods. Around Tamut's throat is a figure of a kneeling, winged goddess, probably Nut. Some of Tamut's amulets have not yet been identified.

Then, as Tamut's body was covered with layers of linen wrappings, the linen appears to have been coated on at least two occasions with a substance such as molten resin, to seal the layers.

Finally, Tamut was probably placed in a series of two or three wooden coffins. These have not survived. Remaining is the inner case of cartonnage (layers of linen, soaked in glue and shaped to the body), fitting closely around her mummy and laced at the back – something like a corset.

So, from knowing little about Tamut other than her name, her father's name, and the fact that she was a married woman and a chantress, CT-scanning technology has revealed much about Tamut. Her height, her hair style, her approximate age, the state of her teeth (poor woman). And the state of her health. Which is probably a great deal more than Tamut knew herself.



## POWER AND PATHOS

### Roger Scott

An article in the August 2015 *New York Review of Books* discussed a series of art exhibitions which travelled through the year and is still on display in Washington.<sup>13</sup> The main focus of the contribution by Ingrid Rowland is on a series of exhibitions of bronze sculpture, entitled 'Power and Pathos' which travelled from the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, to the Getty Museum in Los Angeles for five months, before landing just before Christmas at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, where it will remain until March 20, 2016.<sup>14</sup>

The centre-piece consists of two bronze statues, by Greek sculptors, discovered during excavation on Rome's Quirinal Hill, statues who, according to the

<sup>13</sup> Rowland, I, 'The Grandest Art of the Ancients', *New York Review of Books*, 13.8.15.

<sup>14</sup> The catalogue, edited by Jens Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin, has been published by Getty - and 368 pages for \$65 (US) sounds good value.

imaginative Ms Rowland, 'seemed to greet their release from oblivion with fully human bemusement'. One leans casually on his gilded spear:

endurance or pity his bleeding fragility? Is his story a grim tale of abuse and violence, or has he suffered to some purpose?

with the grace that makes the weapon look like a scepter. Robust and muscular, young but no longer youthful, he poses with surprising lightness, a coiled spring of energy, with a shock of wiry hair and a stubble beard to signal exuberant virility. Yet his eyes are wary under his prominent brow; what drives this body, stripped of every trapping except a coat of gold leaf, is pure mind.

Rowland then provides a valuable overview of many of the ancient world's most famous bronze images and the role of boxing in portrayals of victorious athleticism. She suggests that the cost of producing this statue would mean that the subject must have been a champion and that, given that boxing was more of an aristocratic sport than it is today, this may have been paid for by the subject himself, marking the point of his retirement. One classicist even has identified a particular claimant to be the subject, Mys of Taras, an aristocratic version of Cassius Clay in his prime.

Sounds like a strong candidate for a dating website, though.



Terme boxer - Boxer at rest

The second, estimated to have been produced slightly earlier, is of a life-size boxer who is identified as more poignantly human. The archaeologist who discovered him in 1885, Lanciani:

photographed him sitting on the ground, watching the excavation, looking more like a mascot for the workers than a masterpiece of ancient sculpture.

His body is also muscular but battered by the effect of plying his trade, which are represented by the sculptor with copper alloy for blood and purple bronze applique for bruises. Again Rowland waxes lyrical:

Is that suffering face, with its unique pattern of damage done, a mask to cover his intimate self or the true image of his soul? Was it the soul of a poet or a brute? Are we meant to admire his

The work of Lysippos dominates the exhibition and Rowland provides a detailed discussion of the mechanism of creating bronzes in contrast to working with marble, illustrating her comments from the works in the exhibition. The most interesting aspect for an amateur is the extent to which Hellenistic bronzes were originally multi-coloured and shiny. This is demonstrated in the works of Etruscan sculptors in particular, notably the late second century bronze known as the Arringatore, the Orator, shown in this exhibition.

Rowland also discusses two smaller exhibitions which remained behind in Italy. She reviews the catalogue produced by the National Archaeological Museum of Florence, devoted to small bronzes from the Medici collection, both ancient and Renaissance.<sup>15</sup>

Complementing this focus in Florence on Hellenistic bronzes, the Prada Foundation of Milan unveiled its own paired exhibition of classical sculpture in two settings under the same curatorial team ('Serial Classic') and created in Venice another exhibition called 'Portable Classics'.

The Venice exhibition showed how sculptors both ancient and modern reproduced large works of art in miniature, most dramatically by arranging a series of fifteen replicas of a colossal marble statue, the Farnese Hercules, in order of size.

The replicas run through the gamut of media from bronze to marble to terra cotta but the smallest clearly did not impress:

a six-inch miniature Hercules in porcelain with rosy cheeks and a rosy belly, more jolly than majestic,

<sup>15</sup> Piccoli Grandi Bronzi, Archaeological Museum of Florence, Catalogue edited by Barbara Arheid and Mario Iozzo, Florence, pp 234.

lacking every trace of the world weariness which makes the colossus so affecting.

Rowland shows more respect for the ‘Serial Classic’ in Milan, which addresses the issue of colour more successfully:

Another lost bronze statue, an Apollo with a marble copy now in Kassel, has been reconstructed both as coloured bronze and pure gilt, each version of the sun god more blindingly solar than the other

- not sure what that means – and

outside the window, the curator has covered an entire pavilion of the Prada complex in gold leaf.

If this sounds over the top, perhaps that is the final sentiment expressed by Rowland, that pressures towards international exchanges and even show business have undermined the tone of common sense of appreciation of a single heritage.

We can simply drown out ancient voices in a babble of contemporary chatter.

**WHAT’S IN A WORD? ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON**

**Bob Milns**

Mercury is the Roman god equated by them with the Greek Hermes, with whom he shared the same characteristics, e.g. escorter of the dead souls to the realm of Hades; messenger of the gods; protector of travellers; and patron of merchants AND thieves. To us he is best known because his name has been used to describe a certain type of person (mercurial) and because it is the name of a very interesting metallic element, mercury. It is this aspect that is the subject of this “What’s in a Word?”

I’m sure we all know that mercury, which is a silver-coloured, liquid metal that runs everywhere if you spill it and is highly poisonous, was always used in thermometers, barometers and dental fillings. I also remember well an experiment from my chemistry lessons at school whereby mercury, if placed in an atmosphere of the gas ozone (from the Greek, ozo, to smell, as it has a mushroomy smell) will rapidly become oxidised on the surface and cease to run or flow.

Mercury is also often called quicksilver in English and its chemical symbol is Hg. It is interesting that neither the ancient Greeks nor the Romans, both of whom knew well the metal and at least some of its properties, called it either Hermes or Mercury. The Greek name is hydrargyrum, which literally means

‘water-silver’, from its appearance and fluid nature and it is from this word, mentioned in Greek texts at least as early as the 2nd century BCE that the modern chemical symbol Hg is taken.

The Romans, on the other hand, called the metal ‘argentum vivum’, which literally means ‘living silver’, because of its behaviour. This is exactly what the English ‘quicksilver’ means, since the basic, though now archaic, meaning of ‘quick’ is ‘living’ or ‘alive’, as can be seen in several biblical passages and in the Apostles’ Creed, where it is said that Jesus shall come to judge ‘the quick and the dead’, where ‘quick’ means ‘the living’ and certainly not those who are fast on their feet.

I must confess that I have not been able to discover with accuracy when the metal started to be called mercury, but the indications seem to point to the middle ages, when the alchemists were trying to find the secret of transmuting base metals into gold. Mercury, the god and the metal, were regarded as having special magical powers in this quest, as can also be seen from the fact that the word ‘hermetic’ was coined, according to my etymological dictionary, from Hermes, from the belief that the great secrets of alchemy were discovered by Hermes = Mercury.

I’ll close this article, which once again shows how enormous is the debt we owe to the ancient Greco-Roman world in practically every aspect of our lives, with some words appropriate for the time of year which are purely English in origin: all best wishes for a very happy and healthy New Year.

**POLYBIUS AND ANCIENT EMPIRES**

**Roger Scott**

Is there any human being so indifferent and idle as not to want to know how, and through what kind of regime, almost the entire society of the inhabited world, in less than fifty-three years, came under the sole rule of the Romans – an event to which the past offers no parallels?

Four books reviewed in the *New York Review of Books* (5.3.15) by the indefatigable Peter Green would have helped Polybius frame an answer to his question:

*By the Spear: Philip II, Alexander the Great, and the Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Empire* by Ian Worthington, (OUP);

*Alexander’s Heirs: The Age of the Successors*, by Edward Anson, (Wiley-Blackwell);

*The Age of the Successors and the Creation of the Hellenistic Kingdoms, 323-276 BC* edited by Hans Hauben and Alexander Meeus, (Peeters).

*Taken at the Flood : The Roman Conquest of Greece*, by Robin Waterfield, (OUP).

Green starts his review with a description of Polybius as a political activist saved from Roman retribution by his uniquely privileged status as an aristocrat well-connected with the 'optimates' of Rome. He then goes on to assist Polybius in answering the key questions about the well-springs of Roman imperialism by a suggestion that he needed to look back two centuries to the history of Greece, Macedonia and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Green's strongest endorsement is for the Worthington book, even though this is scarcely new ground. In particular, Green applauds his treatment of Alexander, which recognised his 'megalomania and eccentric indifference to institutional instability'. Both Worthington and Anson support the conventional view that Alexander owed an enormous amount to his father's achievements, not least in the superb military machine that was bequeathed to him. They thus commend the views of the ancient historians Diodorus and Justin who regarded Philip as the greater of the two.

Anson and the Hauben-Meeus edited collection both focus on the significance of the fifty years after the death of Alexander which 'constitute a crucial stage in world history with the development of a balance of power that would determine the history of the eastern Mediterranean for centuries to come'. Anson also emphasises that 'personal monarchy and warfare remained the staples of the new age' (rather than nationalism or democracy) and that 'for the conquered peoples of Egypt and Asia the index of stability was a settled royal dynasty'.

Waterfield's book on the Roman conquest of Greece is less well received by Green: 'a brisk but at times confusing narrative of, mostly, military action interspersed with useful discussions of such matters as culture and identity, the nature of Roman triumphs, and inevitably the relative merits of Macedonian phalanx and Roman legion'.

There is some disagreement about the answer to be offered to Polybius's central question. As Green puts it:

What Waterfield sees here is an evolving imperialist venture so successful as to convince the

Romans that Jupiter had indeed granted them endless empire. There may be something in this: but what I have always also sensed in those early years is a fundamental mutual misapprehension of character.

The Greeks regarded the Romans as barbarians, and therefore essentially stupid; the Romans, on the other hand, saw the Greeks as clever but ill-disciplined children, and themselves as the grown-ups whose business was to keep them in order. This order did not permit the Greeks to engage in independent activities (such as military force) in the pursuit of freedom, an aspiration only acceptable to loyal clients of Rome, and not always even from them.

Anchorises, Aeneas's father, in the *Aeneid's* great prophetic scene, announces that Rome's mission will be *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos* - spare the conquered and subdue the arrogant. Green concluded that 'those who read the works under review in chronological sequence will end with a very clear idea of how this state of affairs came about'.

Green notes one reservation:

There are times when – if the concept of freedom, Greek *eleutheria*, is not to be abandoned as meaningless – a sacrificial stand against insuperable odds may, despite all reason, be chosen as the only acceptable answer to force majeure. It is this awareness – which Waterfield nicely conveys – that gives Polybius's account of Rome's half century of Greek conquest the melancholy, ambivalent, un-stated theme that so often lights up his unimagined prose."

POEMS

Bob Milns<sup>16</sup>

Antony's Christmas Gift to Cleopatra

(This poem has its origin in the story found in Pliny the Elder (see *Nova*, Oct. 2014) in which Cleopatra, in order to win a bet made with Mark Antony, dissolved a valuable pearl in a glass of sour wine (vinegar) and then drank it. A modern commentator on this story maintains that acetic acid cannot dissolve pearls; what Cleopatra really did was to swallow the pearl in a glass of wine and recover it a couple of days later when it had passed through her system naturally.)

Cleo, my dearest, sweetest girl,  
I'm sending you this shining pearl

<sup>16</sup> The three poems here were all composed by Emeritus Professor R D Milns.

To replace the one that from your bet  
Disappeared down your toilet.

But this time, Cleo, darling mine,  
Don't claim it's melted in your wine.  
For pearls in wine don't melt, my dear,  
But go straight through and out the rear.

**A Muse's Demotion**

(a) No chance there is that history itself now will  
repeat;  
Its Muse has been demoted and encircles ladies'  
feet.

(a) Beneath girls' feet teetering in high heeled  
shoes,  
I, Clio, now must shuffle, once History's lofty Muse.

(Clio is the name of the ancient Greek Muse of History.  
The name is now being used as the brand name of a  
style of women's footlets. The packet cover shows an  
elegant female leg slipping into a very high heeled shoe.

These two distichs are meant to be in the style of ancient  
Greek epigrams.)

**A Stench from the Trench**

You'll never guess what we've recently found;  
It really does sound something dotty!  
It's shaped like a bell, and emits a foul smell;  
It's an upper class, posh baby's potty.

So Santa, dear Santa, please take it away;  
It's making our life such a hell.  
And please give it to dear old Winnie the Pooh,  
Whose name fits its function so well.

(This poem was composed by Bob Milns to be sung to  
the tune, 'Abdul Abulbul Amir' suggested by Steve Papas  
and submitted as an entry in a competition at the  
Christmas luncheon 2015 at the Friends of Antiquity end  
of year party.

The theme was as follows: 'Santa Claus has just visited  
your archaeological discovery. In a poem or song explain  
what you have found and what he can take with him in his  
sack of presents'. Examples of chamber-pots designed  
so that babies can sit in them have been found by  
archaeologists. The ancient Greek word for chamber-pot  
is 'hamis'.)

**MEMBERSHIP OF FOA AND ALUMNI FRIENDS**

**Alumni Friends** single membership is \$38.50 (joint  
membership is \$49.50).

**Friends of Antiquity** membership is \$16.50 for  
each member;  
Full time student membership is \$5.50.

*Change of addresses should be sent to:*

Friends of Antiquity  
Building 91c, Alumni House  
50 Walcott Street  
St Lucia 4067

or  
email: [alumni@uq.edu.au](mailto:alumni@uq.edu.au)  
telephone: 3365-1562

Friends of Antiquity website:  
<http://www.friendsofantiquity.org.au/>

**FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**President:** Denis Brosnan  
[d.brosnan@duchesne.uq.edu.au](mailto:d.brosnan@duchesne.uq.edu.au)

**Deputy President:** Emeritus Professor Bob Milns  
[lmilns@bigpond.net.au](mailto:lmilns@bigpond.net.au)

**Secretary:** Associate Professor Don Barrett  
[don.barrett@optusnet.com.au](mailto:don.barrett@optusnet.com.au)

**Treasurer:** Margaret Mapp  
[margaret.mapp@hotmail.com](mailto:margaret.mapp@hotmail.com)

**Editor of Nova:** Adjunct Professor Ann Scott  
[aemscott@icloud.com](mailto:aemscott@icloud.com)

**Executive Committee members**

- Professor Alastair Blanshard (ex officio)
- Llynneth Crawford
- Dr Paul Eliadis
- Desley Loch
- Dr Janette McWilliam (ex officio)
- Lyn Milns
- Dr Steve Papas
- Dr John Ratcliffe
- Pam Rushby
- Emeritus Professor Roger Scott (ex officio)  
Immediate Past President
- Dr Dorothy Watts
- Jason Yu (ex officio) President of AFUQ

**FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY PROGRAM  
2016<sup>17</sup>**

Dr Shushma Malik

SUNDAY 7 FEBRUARY

2pm

**ADRIAN HEYWORTH-SMITH MEMORIAL LECTURE**

**'PLINY THE YOUNGER:**

**THE ORIGINAL SIR HUMPHREY'**

Emeritus Professor Bob Milns

and

Mr Denis Brosnan

**NOTE THAT THIS WILL TAKE PLACE IN  
ROOM 116, SIR LLEW EDWARDS BUILDING  
(BUILDING 14)**

SUNDAY 5 JUNE

**400TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHAKESPEARE'S DEATH  
EVENT**

Schonell Theatre

(full details will be in the April *Nova*)

SUNDAY 6 MARCH

2pm

**A LOST ROMAN TOWN: AMMAIA, PORTUGAL**

Mrs Sue Edmondson

2.30pm

**STORIES BEFORE THERE WAS HISTORY:  
RECONSTRUCTING SOCIETY IN A PREHISTORICAL  
BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT IN CYPRUS**

Dr Andrew Sneddon

SUNDAY 3 JULY

1.45pm

**FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

2.30pm

**MITHRIDATUMS AND THERIACS – TOXICOLOGY AND  
BRAND RECOGNITION IN THE ROMAN WORLD**

Dr Yvette Hunt

SUNDAY 3 APRIL

2pm

**AUGUSTUS AND TIME**

Associate Professor Tom Hillard

(Macquarie University)

SUNDAY 14 AUGUST

2pm

**THE ANTIKYTHERA MECHANISM**

Emeritus Professor Bill Caelli

(Faculty of Science and Engineering QUT)

+

**BETTY FLETCHER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD  
ANNOUNCEMENT**

SATURDAY 16 APRIL

**ANCIENT HISTORY DAY**

**PLAGUE, FILTH AND GARBAGE IN THE  
ANCIENT WORLD**

SUNDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

2pm

Mr Michael Turner

(Senior Curator, Nicholson Museum, Sydney)

SUNDAY 1 MAY

2pm

**MEGALITHIC MONUMENTS OF THE ORKNEY ISLANDS**

Mr Jack Taylor

2.30pm

**WHEN IS A TYRANT NOT A TYRANT?: MARY STOCKS'  
'HAIL NERO!'**

SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER

Dr Rashna Taraporewalla

(topic to be announced)

SUNDAY 6 NOVEMBER

to be announced

<sup>17</sup> The March, April and May Sunday Series lectures will be held in Room E302 in the Forgan Smith Building. An entry donation of \$10 includes refreshments.