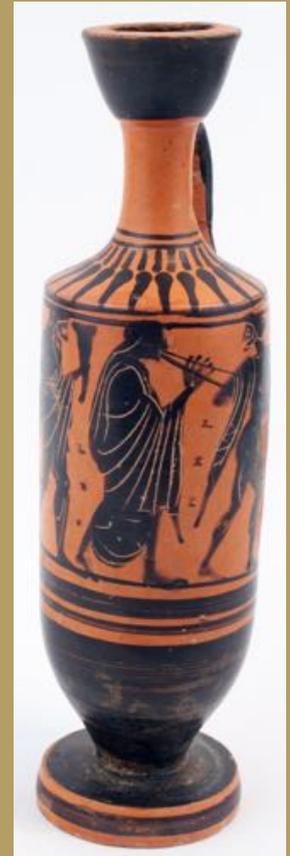
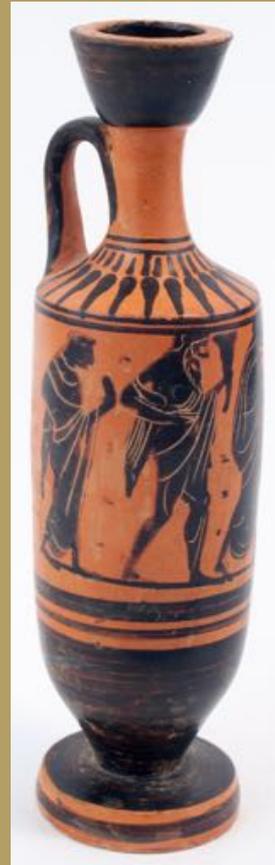
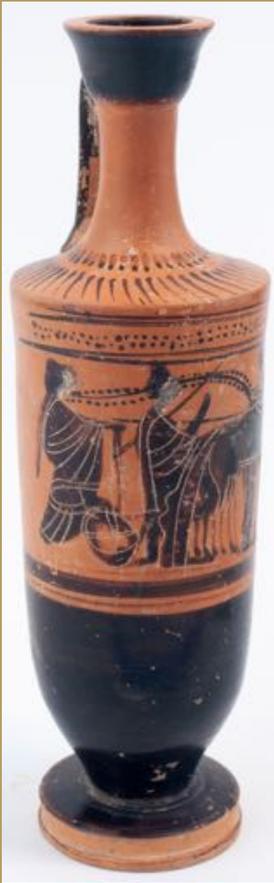


APRIL 2018

NOVA

THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY



Two views of lekythos 18.001

Two views of lekythos 18002

NEW ACQUISITIONS FOR THE R D MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM

GIFT FROM DR STEPHEN G PAPAS

TO MARK THE DIAMOND JUBILEE OF THE
ALUMNI FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

ALUMNI FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY
THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

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EDITORIAL

Ann Scott

The cover of this issue of *Nova* features two exquisite black-figure lekythoi that have recently been donated by Dr Steve Papas to the R D Milns Antiquities Museum, as an Alumni 50-Year Jubilee Gift. Dr Papas is a Patron of the Friends of Antiquity and has served on the Executive Committee for many years. The lekythoi will be on display at the Museum's exhibition *Dionysus: Portrait of a God* which will open on 29 June 2018. For more detail on this gift see the articles by Steve Papas and James Donaldson on pages 5 and 6 of this *Nova*.

The back page of *Nova* provides readers with the latest events that have been added to our 2018 program. Note, particularly, the Literary Luncheon on 23 May (see the enclosed flier).

I must thank our Program Committee, who work so hard to arrange interesting events throughout the year. We have already enjoyed excellent presentations in our 2018 Sunday Series and on Ancient History Day. As I have been a less energetic member of the Executive Committee recently, I particularly appreciate the organisational effort that goes into arranging the program, inviting the speakers and managing the events. I am sure that the Committee will agree with me when I record that Mrs Lyn Milns carries the heaviest load. Thank you to Lyn, and also to Desley Loch, Margaret Mapp and all members of the Program Committee and the Social Committee for their work.

Thanks also to our speakers who generously give their time to preparing and presenting their lectures. I am delighted to be able to publish summaries, as usual, in *Nova*. As editor, I am grateful to the speakers who have provided me with their scripts. I know from the feedback I have received from readers that being able to read the lectures that they have had to miss, or be reminded of those that they attended, is one of the primary attractions of *Nova*.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Paul Eliadis

Dear Friends,

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ has risen! I hope you and your loved ones had a happy Easter. Much has happened since the last edition of *NOVA*.

Importantly, The Friends of Antiquity and The Classics and Ancient History Society are working more closely together. Miss Tiffany Hales, the President of CAHS has attended our Executive Committee with both sides committed to a closer association with the ultimate aim being to ensure a brighter and more secure future for Ancient History and the Classics not only on the campus of the University of Queensland but also in the general community.

The CAHS has arranged their Gala Evening for their production of Euripides' *Medea* on Saturday the 21st April at 4:30 pm and has encouraged all of our members to attend. The production will also be performed on Thursday the 19th April and Friday the 20th April at 4:30 pm. Tickets may be purchased at: www.trybooking.com/VBDG.

The CAHS has also organised its Student Seminar which will be held on Tuesday 24th April commencing with canapés and drinks at 5 pm followed by the seminars at 5:30 pm. The winners of the 2017 Translation Competition will be announced at this function. The CAHS has again kindly invited the Friends to attend.

Tiffany and I have also mooted the possibility of a joint FoA and CAHS presentation over a half day or day later this year which we both feel would be worthwhile. This is still 'a work in progress'.

The beautiful cover of *NOVA* is not only due to the efforts and dedication of our editor Professor Ann Scott but also to the donation by Dr Steve Papas of two magnificent Lekythoi to the RD Milns Museum, to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Alumni Association, which adorn this issue of *NOVA*. They are

exquisite and a wonderful addition to the Museum's collection. On behalf of us all Steve many thanks! Φιλόκαλος! Φιλόσοφος! Φιλάνθρωπος! In the present edition of NOVA are articles by Steve, on why he donated them and by James Donaldson on their significance.

On Friday the 6th April I attended a lunch at Customs House to celebrate the donation to the University of Queensland by another alumnus Mr Andrew Liveris AO. This UQ Alumnus and his wife Paula have donated \$13.5 million to help establish the Liveris Academy in the University's Faculty of Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology. Andrew is spearheading an extraordinary effort to provide \$40 million to support his Alma Mater in innovation and leadership initiatives across the state and around the world. The Liveris Academy will be housed in the Andrew N Liveris Building, an 11-storey engineering education and research hub to be built on the St Lucia campus. What has this got to do with Ancient History and the Classics you may ask? As I was sitting at the lunch and thinking how fortunate we are to be living in a society such as ours I was thinking of Aristotle and what he had to say about πρὸς τὸν καλόν. Getting the best out of private individuals for what ultimately will also benefit the society generally that they live in. In his Ethics he had this to say:

πάντων δὲ ἀμιλλωμένων πρὸς τὸ καλὸν καὶ διατεινομένων τὰ κάλλιστα πράττειν κοινῇ τ' ἂν πάντ' εἶη τὰ δεόντα καὶ ἰδίᾳ ἕκαστῳ τὰ μέγιστα τῶν ἀγαθῶν

If everyone engaged in a competition for what is beautiful/noble/excellent and strained every sinew to perform the most beautiful/noble acts, then everything required (for the best life) would exist in the public sphere, while privately, each individual would have the greatest of goods.

Πρὸς τὸν καλόν!
Best wishes,

Paul.

ALUMNI 50-YEAR JUBILEE GIFT TO THE MUSEUM

Steve Papas

Inspired by the spirit of our Alumni Golden Jubilee celebration of benefactors to our Alma Mater I chose to advance my proposed gift to the RD Milns Antiquities Museum from the unpredictability of a deceased estate to the certainty of the present time so that I, too, may view and enjoy the outcome.

In front of a small gathering at the 'unboxing' ceremony a large package, filled with sufficient shockproof padding to theoretically protect the precious contents from a drop from the top of the Forgan Smith Tower, was opened.



Dr Steve Papas and James Donaldson



Taking a closer look

The two lekythoi had finally arrived, and safely, to take their place on display amongst the other teaching exhibits in the Museum.

ALUMNI FRIENDS GOLDEN JUBILEE GIFT FROM DR STEPHEN PAPAS

James Donaldson

A donation by Dr Stephen G Papas via the Alumni Friends of the University of Queensland has allowed the RD Milns Antiquities Museum to purchase two Athenian black-figure Lekythoi (oil flasks) of the early 5th century BC. The donation was made to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Alumni Friends.

The vases are beautiful examples of late black-figure, with scenes relating to Dionysiac festivities.

One lekythos (below) has a procession of figures, including two maenads, the female attendants of Dionysus, and a satyr (the half-man half-goat followers of Dionysus) holding a rhyton (drinking horn). The scene includes mock-Greek 'labels' for the figures made up of nonsense characters.



.Dr Papas with one of the Lekythoi

I thank most warmly the Senior Museum Officer and the Head of Department for their participation, assistance and advice during the process of selecting the two lekythoi.



Dr Papas takes a closer look at one of the lekythoi



**De-boxing - a family celebration
Dr Papas with his daughter Phoebe Andersen and granddaughter Thea Andersen**



NEWS FROM THE DISCIPLINE

Janette McWilliam

R D MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM NEWS

We began Semester One by opening our new coinage Exhibition 'Minting History: How Change in Coinage Helps us to Understand the Ancient Past' with a special preview on Friday February 9th. The Exhibition examines some of the changes that took place in coinage production and use amongst the Greeks, Romans, Persians and Celts, and highlights the important place of coinage in the study of ancient societies. The exhibition will run during 2018.

We are very pleased to welcome 10 student volunteers this semester. They are working on a range of projects including photographing the pottery fragments collection, updating the data base, and assisting with artefact and exhibition research. We also welcomed several new tour guides this semester to help facilitate our Secondary School Education Programs that are now all fully aligned with the new National Curriculum, and are proving popular with both teachers and students. For details please consult the museum website. Our last public program to be held in conjunction with our current exhibition 'Why Citizenship? Stories from Athens and Rome' will take place on May 18th at 6pm.

<https://antiquities-museum.uq.edu.au/event/session/374>

Please join myself, the museum team, and Dr Gilbert Burgh (Philosophy, School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry) for the last in our series of discussions on the meaning of citizenship in the ancient and modern worlds.

Our new 2018-2019 major exhibition will open on June 29th. *Dionysus: Portrait of a God* will explore the complexity of Dionysus, and enigmatic and mysterious god through exploring artefacts from our own collection at the R.D. Milns Antiquities Museum and loans from other Australian University Collections. On display for the first time as part of this exhibition are two beautiful black-figure



The second vase (above) features maenads in procession with a chariot drawn by two horses. One figure mounts the chariot while another, at the head of the procession, sits in a klismos chair. Two other figures hold vine sprays. Such festive scenes would have been common in ancient Athens as part of frequent public festivals.

Both pieces were purchased from a London-based dealer and come from a Swiss and a German private collection respectively, each formed in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Museum worked closely with Dr Papas to source pieces meeting his specifications and undertook a full, due diligence research process to meet international standards.

The vases are an important addition to the Museum's Greek collection and will be included in its upcoming exhibition *Dionysus: Portrait of a God* due to open on 29 June 2018.

lekythoi (vases for storing oil) recently donated by Dr Stephen G. Papas through the Alumni Friends of the University of Queensland (see the story in this issue of *Nova*.)

If you would like to attend one or both of these exhibitions, please remember to RSVP via the email invitation, or if you are not on our mailing list, by contacting the museum directly: antiquitiesmuseum@uq.edu.au.

If you would like to visit our exhibitions, or the museum in general, we are open Mondays-Fridays from 9.30am-4.30pm: the Museum is located on Level 2 of the Michie Building (9) at the St Lucia Campus. <http://www.uq.edu.au/antiquities/> (07) 3365 3010

DISCIPLINE REPORT

It has been a busy start to the semester, with teaching starting early to accommodate the Commonwealth Games. Our numbers remain strong; this semester, we are offering courses on Introductory Greek History, Julius Caesar, Roman Art and Archaeology, Myth Magic and Religion, Writing Ancient History, and Beginner through to Honours courses in Latin and Greek. We welcome back Dr Amelia Brown, who has been away from teaching duties while on her DECRA fellowship and two maternity leaves. Professor Blanshard and Dr Pritchard are currently away on research leave.

The Discipline recently hosted the 39th Annual Australasian Society for Classical Studies Annual conference (Jan 30th-Feb 2), convened by Associate Professor Tom Stevenson and Dr Amelia Brown. It was a very successful event enjoyed by all. Presenters not only came from Universities in Australia and New Zealand, but the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, China, Singapore and South Africa. The conference opened with the annual A.D. Trendall Lecture given by Associate Professor Anne Mackay (Auckland) on 'The Force of Tradition in Early Greek Poetry and Painting' and the keynote lecture was given by Professor Christopher Faraone (Chicago) who spoke on 'Women and Children First: The Earliest Evidence for Ancient Greek Body Amulets.'

We would like to offer our thanks once again to The Friends of Antiquity, the Queensland Friends of the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens, and the Mare Nostrvm Ancient Historical Society Reenactment Group for Sponsoring the Keynote Reception. Another highlight of the conference was the workshop on dealing with sexual harassment organized by the executive committee of AWAWS (Australasian Women in Ancient World Studies). Associate Professor Tom Stevenson was elected to the position of President of ASCS for 2018. Congratulations Tom.

Our Friday Research Seminar attendees have, to date, enjoyed papers by Mr James Donaldson (R.D. Milns Antiquities Museum, UQ) and Dr Tim Hamlyn (UQ). Upcoming visitors include Dr Kosta Simic (ACU) who is giving a paper on 'The Byzantine Augustus: The Reception of the First Roman Emperor in the Byzantine Tradition'.

On May 4th we are very excited to be hosting Professor Ray Laurence (Macquarie). Professor Laurence's paper will deal with 'Living to 100 Years of Age: Birthdays, Age Centenarians in Roman History' on May 25th. Our MPhil and PhD students will also be presenting their research on Fridays. For further information, please consult the School website: hapi.uq.edu.au/classics-and-ancient-history-seminar-listing

The 2018 R D Milns Visiting Professor will be Josephine Quinn who is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Classics and the Martin Frederiksen Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History at Worcester College, Oxford.

Professor Quinn is a Roman Archaeologist and Historian. Her research focusses on the Phoenician world and the cultural history of North Africa. She is co-director of the Tunisian-British excavations at Utica (Tunisia). We look forward to welcoming Professor Quinn from mid-September to early October 2018.

REPORT ON THE 39TH MEETING OF THE AUSTRALASIAN SOCIETY FOR CLASSICAL STUDIES

Amelia R Brown and Tom Stevenson

From 30 January - 2 February 2018, Amelia Brown and Tom Stevenson hosted the 39th meeting of the Australasian Society for Classical Studies (ASCS) at the University of Queensland campus in St Lucia. They were ably assisted by eight volunteers from the post-graduate students in Classics and Ancient History. They were very grateful for support from the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry. Around 140 papers on Classical topics from Greek History to Roman Literature and Reception Studies were given over three days, and there were over 180 delegates in attendance from Australia, New Zealand and around the world (including Israel, China and Japan).

The conference opened with a reception at the Terrace Room of the Sir Llew Edwards, followed by the ninth Trendall Lecture, sponsored by the Australian Academy of the Humanities. The lecturer was Associate Professor Anne MacKay of the University of Auckland, outgoing President of ASCS, who spoke on 'The Force of Tradition in Early Greek Poetry and Painting'. The conference also featured a keynote public lecture and reception sponsored by the Queensland Friends of the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens and the UQ Alumni Friends of Antiquity. The keynote speaker was Professor Christopher A. Faraone of the University of Chicago, and he spoke on the topic of his forthcoming book, 'Women and Children First: The Earliest Evidence for Ancient Greek Body Amulets'.

The organizers are grateful to all the sponsors mentioned before, and also to the RD Milns Antiquities Museum, Australasian Women in Ancient World Studies, Mare Nostrvm and the UQ students' Classics and Ancient History Society. An enjoyable and educational time was had by all.

SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL: NERO ON SCREEN

Arthur J Pomeroy

Among Roman emperors, Nero is the one most frequently depicted in film. The reasons for this are obvious: he remains associated with the great fire in Rome of AD 64 ('Nero fiddling while Rome burns') and his persecution of the earliest Christians led to him being identified with the anti-Christ in Christian tradition. Other events of his reign, such as his divorcing and executing his wife Octavia and approving the killing of his mother, his artistic ambitions and chariot racing, and his eventual overthrow and suicide are from time to time recalled. More often than not, Nero is recalled in comic tones: such was the portrayal by Charles Laughton in *The Sign of the Cross* (1932, fig. 1) which was then a major influence on Peter Ustinov's emperor in *Quo Vadis?* (1951).



Fig 1
Laughton as Nero in *The Sign of the Cross* (1932)

The image of a cowardly emperor in those movies is given further impetus by the Italian comic actor, Alberto Sordi, in *My Son, Nero* (1956, fig. 2), who wishes to avoid the quest for military glory visited on him by his mother and instead enjoy a more festive life.



Fig 2
Alberto Sordi in *My Son Nero* (1956)



Fig 3
Michal Bajor in Polish *Quo Vadis?* (2001)

In more recent times, Nero can be cited as the archetypal persecutor of Christians in Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man* (with emphasis on the herbs and spices he used to flavour his victims before throwing them to the wild dogs) or for killing his second wife Poppaea by kicking her to death. The anecdote is so obscure that it needs to be explained by a cowering Gene Wilder to the glowering Zero Mostel in Mel Brooks' *The Producers* (1965): 'I'm not going to jump up and down on you' shouts Mostel, leaping up and down over his victim in frustration. Even in the 2001 Polish version of *Quo Vadis?*, the role of the emperor, 'our copper-bearded ape' as Petronius describes him in Henryk Sienkiewicz's novel of 1896, is played by Michal Bajor (fig. 3), an actor particularly known in his homeland for his recordings of sung poetry. No one takes Nero seriously.

The negative aspects of Nero's character are undeniable: he was the first emperor to lose the support of the army as well as that of the aristocracy and his indecision and flight in his last days might be compared to the ends of recent tyrants. However, his reign was also notable for major diplomatic coups, such as the agreement with the Parthians jointly to appoint the ruler of Armenia.

The memory of the emperor lived on in the East, where no less than three imposters who claimed that they were the escaped emperor appeared in the decades following his death. Expeditions to unknown corners of the world (one to the Caspian Sea, another to the source of the Nile), grand engineering projects (a canal across the Isthmus at Corinth and another from Baiae on the Bay of Naples to Lake Avernus), Nero's grand palace, the Golden House, surrounded by magnificent gardens, and imperial patronage of inventions (water organs, revolving dining rooms, and even the collapsible ship used in an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Agrippina, the emperor's mother) show a remarkably modernist ruler, at least by nineteenth century standards.

In *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Alexandre Dumas, who began his career as a dramatist before becoming a best-selling author, expresses his admiration of the emperor's imagination when he expended huge amounts in trying to locate the fabulous treasure of Queen Dido buried in North Africa. The emperor thus foreshadows the rather more successful Edmond Dantès. Imagine if President Trump were suddenly to order the FBI to focus all their efforts on finding the briefcase full of cash that was lost on the snow-covered plains of Minnesota at the conclusion of the Coen brothers' *Fargo*.

Nero is treated much more sympathetically in the episodes dedicated to him as part of the television *Imperium* mini-series from 2004. However, his depiction as a would-be

shepherd poet, who only wished to run away with the love of his life, the freedwoman Acte, a man torn between imperial duty and the gentler teachings of Christianity, is hopelessly romantic, not to mention farcically ahistorical.

A much more interesting version is that offered by Franco Rossi in his 1985 television adaptation of *Quo Vadis?*, a series which is now readily available in English on DVD (his masterly adaptations of *The Odyssey* and *The Aeneid* are much more difficult to obtain). Rossi, with his collaborator Ennio de Concini, took Sienkiewicz's Nobel Prize winning novel, stripped away the nineteenth century underpinnings of Polish nationalism and Catholic polemic, and recreated the story by going back to the historical sources for Nero's reign and the development of early Christianity. As the national Italian television channel, RAI, treated this as a prestige production, Rossi was able to hire international actors such as Frederick Forrest (Petronius), Max von Sydow (Peter), Cristina Raines (Poppaea), and Olga Karlatos (Epicharis). Nero, however, is at the heart of the story and in that role the great Austrian actor Klaus Maria Brandauer (fig. 4) does not disappoint.



Fig 4
Klaus Maria Brandauer *Quo Vadis?* Italian TV adaptation (1985)

His emperor is fascinated by inventions (he is first seen within a planetarium, consulting astrologers about his horoscope) and has great plans for rebuilding Rome after the Fire of AD 64. Most of all, he is afraid: of plots against him by the Roman aristocracy and of the affront to his divinity posed by the new Christian sect. It is this fear, not any religious

belief, that leads him to blame the Christians for the fire at Rome and inflict exemplary punishment on them. Yet, Nero also wishes to display his dramatic skills, to enact the role of emperor on the political stage of Rome. This involves, *inter alia*, using Christians as Trojan victims in his re-enactment of Euripides' *Trojan Women* (fig. 5), as votive candles (the stench is overpowering), and as fodder for the lions ('not a spectacle, it's a carnival').



Fig 5
Reenactment of Euripides' *Trojan Women* from 1985 Italian TV *Quo Vadis?* adaptation

He is equally disappointed when the heroine's bodyguard, Ursus ('the Bear'), wrestles a bull to the death in the arena in the climactic scene heralding the triumph of Christianity over imperial Rome. Whereas in other versions this event leads to an unhistorical revolution that overthrows the emperor, in Rossi's treatment the emperor lives on, part Julius Caesar (but not assassinated), part Macbeth haunted by his crimes (but not yet overthrown). It cannot be accidental that Brandauer had only recently played the lead role in *Mephisto*, the story of a man who excuses his collaboration with the Nazi authorities with the cry, 'Ich bin nur ein Schauspieler' ('I'm only an actor'). Nero's punishment is to survive, a failed actor in a failed system.

ANCIENT HISTORY DAY 2018

LESSER KNOWN WOMEN OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Trevor Bryce

The regions I covered in my talk extend from Iran in the east to the Aegean coast of Turkey in the west, and south through Syria and Palestine to the Arabian peninsula. These provided the homelands of the Persian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Hittite, Palestinian and Arab civilizations. My time-span extended from the Late Bronze Age in the 2nd millennium B.C. to the Roman imperial era in the 3rd century A.D. Within this context, I discussed a number of women who rose to prominence in the ancient Near East, but are little known or unknown today outside scholarly circles.

Despite the patriarchal nature of ancient Near Eastern societies, some women did achieve high status in these societies, and my emphasis was on how they managed to do so. I used various examples to illustrate, grouping them under three headings:¹

- 1 **The power behind the throne;**
- 2. **The power on the throne;**
- 3. **Women warrior leaders.**

1. THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

The Tawananna

In Hittite society the highest office in the land held by a woman was that of the Tawananna. She was a close relative of the king, typically his wife. She was chief priestess of the Hittite realm, managed the royal household, and often exercised considerable political power. She occupied her position for life, even if she outlived the king she originally partnered. Sometimes she abused her powers, leading in one case to a king banning even the mention of her name. On another occasion a Tawananna was banished from the kingdom for murdering the wife of her stepson after he had become king.

The most powerful of all Hittite queens, Puduhepa, was wife of King Hattusili III, who signed a famous peace treaty with the pharaoh Ramesses II. Puduhepa was co-signatory of this treaty, and often exchanged letters with the pharaoh himself. Outliving her husband by many years, she fulfilled many offices of state, including presiding over important court cases.

Adda-Guppi

We now leap ahead almost 1,000 years, to Adda-Guppi, mother of Nabonidus, the last king of the Neo-Babylonian empire (6th century B.C.). Much is known about her from her autobiography, found on two inscriptions in the city of Harran in northwestern Mesopotamia. These tell us she lived to the age of 102. The enormous influence she exercised over her son led him on a course of action that provoked resentment among his subjects. Here is the reason. Adda-Guppi was a loyal devotee of the moon god Sin and worshipped him in his great sanctuary in Harran. According to Adda-Guppi's autobiography, Sin told her in a dream that her son would have kingship bestowed upon him if he restored Harran and rebuilt the god's temple there.

Nabonidus did so, and became king. But by his attention to Sin's affairs he was seen by his subjects to be neglecting the traditional gods, including Marduk, the most revered of them all. This allegedly caused widespread unrest in the kingdom. The extent of this unrest is now disputed. But there is no doubt that the empire came abruptly to an end in Nabonidus' reign, due to its conquest by the Persian king Cyrus the Great.

The Severan Women

We now move to the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries A.D. At this time, the Near East was dominated by the Roman empire, and in 193 a man called Septimius Severus became the empire's ruler. As a young officer, Septimius had served in the Roman army in Syria, and consolidated his ties with the province by marrying the daughter of a high priest of Emesa (modern Homs), a city on the Orontes river. Her name was Julia Domna. Many have

¹ On ancient women in general, see *Women in Antiquity*, ed. S. Budin and J. Turfin, Routledge 2016.

perceived Julia as the power behind her husband's throne. She became one of the most influential women in Roman history, as a politician, as the progenitor of a line of Syrian kings, and as a pervasive matriarchal presence within her family. She was in fact the first of three women within the Severan family to exercise a powerful influence over those who actually held the reins of sovereignty.

After Septimius' death, the couple's son Caracalla became king, and his mother maintained her influence in the empire's affairs. She had returned to her homeland Syria when Caracalla undertook his eastern campaigns, and was very likely a driving force behind many of his policies and enterprises. Then came news of her son's assassination and the accession of the man Macrinus who had brought it about. Julia Domna knew that her own days were nearing their end. And not simply because of Macrinus. She had but a short time to live anyhow. She had breast cancer, now in its final stages. Unwilling to prolong her sufferings or become a victim of Macrinus, she committed suicide.

But she had a sister, Julia Maesa who was determined to restore the imperial throne to its rightful line of occupants, by having one of her grandsons installed upon it. She did so by involving herself in a plot to get rid of Macrinus, and by offering to spread her considerable wealth among the local militia in return for their support. This they readily granted. Maesa's grandson was a young man originally called Bassianus. Till then, he had lived quietly as a priest of the sun god Elah-Gabal (Elagabalus), chief deity of Emesa. But with the defeat of Macrinus, and the troops' support, Bassianus was proclaimed emperor. On his accession in June 218, he called himself Elagabalus.

The goodwill extended to the new emperor soon evaporated, particularly because of his scandalous private life and his attempts to to make his god Elah-Gabal the supreme deity of the Roman world. His grandmother's attempts to save his throne proved futile, and eventually the emperor was lynched by his troops, along with his mother Julia

Sohaemias, another prominent Julia in the royal family. Their bodies were dragged through the streets of Rome and tossed into the sewers that ran down to the Tiber.

2. THE POWER ON THE THRONE

Rare though it was for a woman to become a ruler in the ancient Near East, it was not impossible – at least in the Arab world. 8th century B.C. Assyrian inscriptions record the names of two Arab queens, Zabibe and Samsi, who appear to have had diplomatic and commercial dealings with the Assyrian king of the time. Far better known is the queen of Sheba, ruler of Saba in the country now called Yemen in the Arabian peninsula – especially because of her dealings with the 10th century Israelite king Solomon. Ironically, though she is the most famous Arab female ruler, many scholars now believe that neither she nor Solomon ever existed. There is not one shred of contemporary evidence to indicate that they were genuine historical figures.

Zenobia (ruled 267/8 – mid 272 A.D.) In the Near Eastern world, the standout Arab female ruler really did exist – Zenobia, queen of Palmyra. We'll come back to her.

Cleopatra the Divine

Let's first talk about a woman called Cleopatra – but not the famous queen of Egypt. There were in fact many Cleopatras. Cleopatra 'the Divine' became sole ruler of the Seleucid empire in 126 B.C. after the execution of her husband and royal predecessor Demetrius, almost certainly on her orders. Cleopatra now decided to occupy the throne herself. And when her son Seleucus claimed the throne as his father's rightful successor, she shot an arrow through him. But then she decided it would be politic to associate with herself, as co-regent, another of her sons, the teenage Antiochus, known as Grypus, 'Hook-Nose' (joint reign 125-121).

Relations between the pair soon deteriorated. Fearing that her son's successes were undermining her status, Cleopatra decided to eliminate him. So one day, on his return from a hunting trip, she offered him a cup of

poisoned wine. But Hook-Nose, forewarned, insisted that she drink from the cup before *he* did. After repeated demands, she gave in and promptly expired.

3. WOMEN WARRIOR LEADERS

Semiramis

Several ancient female rulers not only ruled their kingdoms, but also led their troops into battle. Semiramis is best known as the wife of Nebuchadnezzar, and the inspiration for the construction of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. But there are many other traditions in which she figures. Behind the traditions, there is a genuine historical figure called Sammu-ramat. Mother of a 9th-8th century B.C. Assyrian king, Sammu-ramat became popular with the Assyrian army when she accompanied her sons on military campaigns, often through rugged, dangerous enemy territory.

Later she evolved into the famous Semiramis, a figure of legendary status in both Near Eastern and Classical tradition. In Greek sources, she is the wife of the Assyrian king 'Ninus' (*sic*). But she now became a great warrior-leader and builder in her own right, conquering Bactria in Afghanistan, and *allegedly* building the walls of Babylon and other monuments in the city.

Zenobia

Both Classical and Arab sources provide information about Zenobia, queen of Palmyra. She was particularly famous for her prowess as a war-leader. Indeed, for a few brief years she defied the might of Rome, building herself an 'empire' extending from the Anatolian peninsula to Egypt and through much of Syria and part of Arabia, before she was finally defeated by the Roman emperor Aurelian.

Amazons

The ancient Greeks were fascinated with the notion of a race of female warriors whom they called Amazons. One of the stories about them concerns the Amazon warrior-leader Penthesilea. Daughter of a queen, Penthesilea led an army of her fellow-warriors to Troy, to help Priam after Hector's death. She performed gallantly in battle till

overcome and defeated by Achilles. Greek vase paintings depict her final moments as she falls helpless before Achilles and he prepares to deliver the final death blow. The story then has it that at that moment he gazed into her eyes and fell passionately in love with her.

But he killed her all the same.



Black-figured pottery amphora depicting Achilles slaying Penthesilea. Made by Exekias and attributed to the Exekias Painter c.530-525BC (British Museum 1836,0224.127)

Description: 'Achilles steps to right, bearded, with long tresses, fully armed, high-crested helmet and short striped chiton, and has beaten down the Amazon queen Penthesilea on one knee, and plunges spear into her throat. She has a high-crested helmet with cheek-pieces and serpent in relief, short diaped chiton, over which is a pardalis (leopard skin), sword and shield, and looks back at him, thrusting vainly with spear; a stream of blood gushes from her wound.'

**LESSER KNOWN QUEEN OF EGYPT:
NEFERTARI MERENMUT**

Serena Love

Despite being married to one of the most powerful and revered Pharaoh's of Egypt, Rameses II, very little is known about Nefertari Merenmut and even less exists of her in the written record, past and present. She lived during Dynasty XIX and died in 1,255 BC. She was the first wife of Rameses II, before he was Pharaoh, and bore him six children, including Amenherkhepeshef and Meritamen. Nefertari was from a non-royal noble family from Thebes and nothing is known of her prior to her marriage. There is speculation that her parents may have served in the court of Seti I, the grandfather to Rameses II.



**Nefertari holding two sistra
(public domain image)**

There is no direct evidence linking Nefertari to any royal family of the 18th Dynasty, as she does not have the title 'kings daughter'. Nefertari's affiliation with Thebes may have been a motivational factor for their marriage. The Ramesside Dynasty began with Rameses I, a non-royal family from the Delta region. Their rise to social prominence occurred through military service under Pharaoh Horemheb, who had no heir or designated successor. At the time of Horemheb's death in 1307, he appointed his chief general Seti to succeed him on the throne. In an effort to validate and legitimize the Ramesside lineage, it is possible that the grandson of the first king married a Theban woman.

Rameses and Nefertari appeared to have a happy marriage, based on the adoring texts penned by Rameses. Rameses built his principal and most favoured wife a temple in Abu Simbel. The text above the door reads: Rameses II had made this monument for the Great King's Wife, Nefertari, beloved of Mut, a house hewn in the pure mountain of Nubia, of fine white and enduring sandstone, as an eternal work. Nefertari for whose sake the very sun does shine.

Another example of Nefertari's elevated status is from Luxor temple, where she is depicted holding two sistra for the chief god Amun-Re. This is a rare scene because the queen is shown participating in a religious festival, which is unusual because previously depictions of Great Royal Wives and King's Mothers are in tombs, not large state monuments like Luxor. This clearly represents the esteem Nefertari held.

She also held the title 'she who appeases the gods', a unique title that was created for her. No other queen is known to have held this title. This role gave her responsibility for observing religious rituals and making offerings to the gods. Typically, this religious role was exclusive to the king but Rameses bestowed this title on Nefertari in Year 1 and memorialised this event on the pylon at Karnak, where she is shown making offerings to the gods, participating in festivals. The role of most ancient Egyptian queens was to be passive, provide children and ensure a smooth running of the royal palace and harem. However, queens in the New Kingdom acquired more prominent roles and became powerful in their own right. Nefertari was no different.

Nefertari Merenmut means 'beautiful companion, beloved of Mut'. She had a consistent affiliation with the vulture goddess,

Mut, which associated her with the Theban area, where Mut is a patron goddess. The Mut Precinct in the Karnak Temple encompasses approximately 90,000 square meters of the entire area and contains at least six temples. The goddess Mut is the wife and consort of the god Amun-Ra. She was also known as the Mother Goddess, Queen of the Goddesses, and Lady of Heaven. Mut was the Egyptian sky goddess and her symbols were the vulture, lioness and the crown of Uraeus (rearing cobra).

Nefertari wore only the vulture headdress, either alone or topped by the solar disk and double plumes. In ancient Egypt, the vulture is the symbol for mother, as a mother vulture will place her young at her feet and spread her wings around them in protection. The ancient Egyptians believed that a vulture would spread her wings to protect her children of Egypt. Vultures are often painted on ceilings with their wings spread and rishi coffins were covered in vulture feathers.

Nefertari wearing this crown puts her in close association with Hathor but also identifies this queen with that goddess and also Isis, two of the pre-eminent goddesses in the Egyptian religion.



Hathor and Isis blessing Nefertari inside-the-Abu Simbel temple (public domain image)

Nefertari's prominence at court is further supported by cuneiform tablets from the Hittite city of Hattusa (in modern Turkey), containing Nefertari's correspondence with the king Hattusili III and his wife Puduhepa. She is mentioned in the letters as Naptera. Nefertari is known to have sent gifts to Puduhepa:

You have written to me because of the good friendship and brotherly relationship between your brother, the king of Egypt, The Great and the Storm god will bring about peace, and he will make the brotherly relationship between the Egyptian king, the Great King, and his brother, the Hatti King, the Great King, last for ever... See, I have sent you a gift...

In year 34 of Rameses reign, king Hattusili sends one of his daughters to marry Rameses. And there is another hieroglyphic inscription that suggests Rameses was married to a second Hittite princess, another one of Hattusili's daughters. This letter, penned by Nefertari, is significant in light of the famous battle where Rameses II fought and lost to the Hittites at Kadesh. And there is a letter from his wife to the Hittite Queen to broker peace. Furthermore, this letter indicates that Nefertari was literate, which was uncommon for women. Additionally, this letter is evidence of her role in affairs of the state, which no other queen is known to have done.

Nefertari's role as a political figure is further emphasized by scenes of her being crowned by Isis and Hathor in her temple at Abu Simbel. More than most of the King's wives that preceded her, Nefertari has the title "Lady Of The Two Lands", which was only reserved for the King. Also, she is shown holding an ankh in her hand, suggesting that she is one with the goddesses. This sort of scene is typically reserved only for kings and reinforces her position as a political figure.

Nefertari came from humble roots to become one of the more prominent queens of ancient Egypt. She is said to have lived to the age of 43, but died before the completion of her temple in Abu Simbel. None of her 6 children outlived their father, Rameses II. Her legacy was memorialised in her tomb, QV 66. Her body has not been recovered but part of a mummified leg and pair of sandals were found in her tomb. A recent study of these remains matches the age and presumed height of this long forgotten queen.

SAPPHO AND ERINNA: POETESSES IN A MALE SOCIETY

Bob Milns

SAPPHO

There are probably not many people who have not heard of Sappho, but only in the vaguest of terms. The purpose of this talk is to try to give a fuller picture of a great female poet and her milieu, even though most of her poetic production has been lost and much of her life is speculative.

She was born at Mytilene, on the island of Lesbos, at some time between 612 and 608 BCE and may have lived till c. 520 BCE, unless we accept another story, told below, which would give her a much shorter life. It is generally believed that the term 'Lesbian' in the sexual sense was named after her; and this is probably correct, though according to my etymological dictionary the word does not come into English in this sense until the 19th century.



Alcaeus and Sappho. Side A of an Attic red-figure kalathos, ca. 470 BC. From Akragas (Sicily) attr. Brygos Painter (State Collections of Antiquities, Munich, 2416 n2.jpg)

Her family seems to have been aristocratic and wealthy. We know the name of her father – Scamander, as in the Trojan river, or Scamandronymus; her mother was, probably, Cleis. She had three brothers who are known by name: Erigyus, Larichus; and Charaxus. This latter was a wine-merchant with

somewhat quixotic ideas, if we can believe the story told by Herodotus in Book 2 that he paid much money whilst in Egypt to redeem from slavery the courtesan Rhodopis of Naucratis. For this he was censured by Sappho.

She evidently was married, since she had a daughter, named after her grandmother, Cleis. According to the Suda lexicon her husband was Cercylas, 'a very wealthy man who traded from Andros'. It has been argued – seriously – that Cercylas is a pun derived from Greek comic tradition, as the word cercos (kerkos in Greek letters) can denote the male sexual organ. As Andros can be associated with the word for man (aner, andros), his name, it is argued, is an invention translatable as 'Dick from the Isle of Man'.

Sappho's appearance is said to have been dark and short. One source says that she was 'very ugly, small and dark – a nightingale with deformed wings enfolding a tiny body'.

According to some sources, Sappho was exiled to Sicily between 604 and 594 BCE. Cicero records that a statue of her stood in Syracuse. We have no idea why she was exiled, if this was true – perhaps because of the political sympathies of her family, e.g. opposition to the tyrant Pittacus. It is usually assumed that she eventually returned from exile to Mytilene, where she died – unless we believe the story of her passion for a ferryman named Phaon, whom she followed as far as Sicily and, her passion being unrequited, she went to the island of Leucas, where she cast herself into the sea. There is still today a cliff known as 'Sappho's Leap' on the island. The Roman poet Ovid invents a letter from Sappho to Phaon before her leap (Heroides 15). The Suda lexicon, however, says that it was not our Sappho but another who did this.

With respect to her poetry, nine books written in the Aeolic dialect were ascribed to her in antiquity; what has survived is the equivalent of one book, though new fragments keep turning up on papyrus. She was obviously highly regarded in antiquity: an epigram attributed to Plato calls her the 10th Muse;

the Roman poet Catullus called his married lady-friend Clodia by the pseudonym Lesbia. She is also referred to in very positive terms by such critics as Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Longinus.

To anybody reading Sappho, whether in Greek or in translation, there can be no doubting both the craftsmanship and the passionate intensity of the verse. That she was homoerotic, i.e. Lesbian in the modern sense, as were her female friends, cannot be doubted, despite the tendency in the Victorian era to ‘sterilise’ her and make her a sort of headmistress of a young ladies’ academy or a priestess of Aphrodite. The intensity of her passion can be seen from this famous poem to a woman friend or lover. The poem was translated almost verbatim by Catullus – but to his lady friend Clodia/ Lesbia.

To me he seems equal to gods
the man who sits facing you
and hears you near as you speak
softly and laugh

in a sweet echo that jolts
the heart in my ribs. Now
when I look at you a moment
my voice is empty

and can say nothing as my tongue
cracks and slender fire races
under my skin. My eyes are dead
to light, my ears

pound, and sweat pours over me.
I convulse, greener than grass
and feel my mind slip as I go
close to death.²

Imitation, so the saying goes, is the sincerest form of flattery.

It is also worth noting that a number of operas have been written about Sappho, including that by Australia’s own Peggy Glanville Hicks, herself a pupil of Ralph Vaughan Williams.

ERINNA

Little is known of the life and background of Erinna, but she probably lived in the late 4th century BCE and came from the island of Telos, where the Greek dialect spoken was Doric; her own dialect has been described as ‘literary’ Doric.

Little of her poetry has survived – three epigrams, two of which are epitaphs for a girl friend called Baucis and about twenty lines of a 300-line poem in hexameters written about the death of Baucis and entitled ‘The Distaff’ (in Greek, Elakate). It is not clear what the relationship was between Baucis and Erinna, who is said to have died aged 19, whether they were lovers or childhood friends.

It is, however, notable that her reputation in antiquity was very high. Thus the epigrams, though disputed in modern times, were included in the Greek Anthology and her work was praised by poets such as Asclepiades, Leonidas, Antipater of Sidon and Meleager, who places her in his ‘Garland’ of poets; and her work was compared favourably with Homer and Sappho.

The few lines of ‘The Distaff’ which have survived give some idea of the quality of the poetry and what a loss to us today the poem as a whole is. To quote Erinna’s words for Baucis as a lament for Erinna’s work:

Thus I lament, unhappy Baucis, and make deep moan for you. These traces of you, dear maid, lie still glowing in my heart: all that we once enjoyed is embers now.

² Translation by Willis Barnstone.

EMPRESS THEODORA: FROM ROMAN ACTRESS TO CHRISTIAN SAINT

Amelia R. Brown



Fig 1
Empress Theodora
San Vitale, Ravenna

Empress Theodora ruled the Eastern Roman Empire for over twenty years as wife of the emperor Justinian, but she started life as the daughter of a bear-keeper, an actress and possibly even a prostitute in Constantinople. She is depicted in all her royal regalia as an empress in her forties with her husband Justinian and their attendants in the mosaics of the church of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy (see fig. 1). She was hailed as a saint after her death in 548, and is still today honored in Greek, Syrian and Coptic churches. These wildly different portrayals of her in our sources entice many students of Antiquity to ask: who was the real Theodora, and what can her life tell us about real Roman women of the 6th century?

The main source for Theodora's life is Procopius of Caesarea, who was her contemporary in the imperial capital of Constantinople, though he outlived her by about 15 years. He wrote a monumental History of the Wars waged by Justinian and his own boss the general Belisarius against the Persians, Vandals and Goths, who beset the Later Roman Empire on all sides (and had even taken Rome). He also wrote a panegyric on Justinian's Buildings, but by far most famous today is his Unpublished (or Secret) History, widely read by the Byzantine Greeks of Constantinople in the middle ages (hence surely 'published' in some form, probably after Procopius' death), and then

translated into Latin and English in more modern times. The Secret History is an extended slander of Justinian and Theodora, as well as Belisarius and his wife Antonina, where Procopius claims to give the 'true' reasons for the problems which beset the Later Roman Empire, which are rooted in the inhumanity of these four. The existence of this account, however exaggerated, is good, in that it documents an empress's life in more detail than we possess for any other, but bad, in that it is clearly extremely biased and portrays Theodora as negatively as possible, using all the ancient Greek and Roman stereotypes of an evil and immoral woman. The works of Procopius may be consulted in Greek and English in the Loeb series (trans. Dewing, 7 vols., 1914-1940), or in the case of the Secret History in recent Penguin (2007, trans. Williamson and Sarris) or Hackett editions (trans. Kaldellis 2010, with a helpful appendix of other relevant texts for the life of Theodora). I have written elsewhere about the challenge of reconciling Procopius's invective against Justinian with historical fact (see Turner, Chong-Gossard & Vervaet, eds. Private and Public Lies: The Discourse of Despotism and Deceit in the Graeco-Roman World). A good scholarly biography of Theodora which I have drawn on is Theodora: Actress, Empress, Saint, by David Potter, in Oxford U.P.'s new Women in Antiquity series (2015).

Theodora was likely born in Constantinople about 395; her mother was an actress and her father, Akakios, Bear Keeper for the Greens. After his death, she was taken into the Blue circus faction when her mother remarried their Bear Keeper, and she remained a 'Blue' ever after (which is probably how she later met Justinian). As a member of a 'circus' family, she grew up as a Cheerleader in the Circus (the Greek Hippodrome) with her two sisters, then chorus girl, comic actress or Mime in the Theater, and possibly a Call Girl or Courtesan. Though her profession was disreputable, she was hardly poor, and her father and step-father likely earned more than Justinian's, at least when he was born in the northern Balkan hinterland a decade before her. As Concubine of the Governor, she lived in the Palace of Apollonia/Sozousa,

the port of Cyrene, near Benghazi, Libya. When she bore a daughter, he probably threw her out, so she went to Alexandria then Syrian Antioch, where she became an adherent of the Syrian church. This church was what we today call Anti-Chalcedonian, Monophysite or Miaphysite, and Theodora became an important patron of its bishops and monks. She worked for Macedonia, an agent in rebus, spy or imperial informer in the Blue faction, and back in Constantinople she met Justinian about 521. Despite his humble origins, he was nephew and heir apparent of the reigning emperor Justin, an imperial bodyguard who'd become emperor in 518 when the elderly emperor Anastasius died in his sleep (the empress Ariadne having passed childless in 515). Justin changed the law to permit ex-actresses with children to marry nobles, almost certainly focused on their relationship, and Theodora and Justinian were married by 525 and moved into the Hormisdas Palace. When Justinian took the throne, she thus became Empress, Augusta, on 1 April 527.



Fig. 2
(Back view of portrait head below)

As Empress of the Reunited Roman Empire, she is portrayed in all her finery in the apse mosaics of San Vitale, Ravenna, accompanied by her ladies-in-waiting and eunuchs, offering the chalice for the Eucharist to the new church. Justinian with his generals and courtiers was depicted opposite, on the left side of the apse. Similarities of image, and the type of crown worn, make a marble portrait head from Milan also likely a portrait of Theodora as empress. Now exhibited in Castello Sforzesco, the head was found in 1846, in the vicinity of via San Primo in Milan, during the demolition of the Medieval city walls. It may have been used as building material for the city's fortifications. It probably once stood along with a portrait of Justinian at a major gateway of Milan, an important imperial capital in the newly-recovered province of Italy. Theodora is wearing a diadem with pearls, her royal crown as empress, and has her hair up in a snood (see Fig.2). Her delicate features echo not only her image in Ravenna, but also her physical description by Procopius (see Fig. 3).



Fig 3
Portrait head believed to be of Empress Theodora
(Theodora Milano Castello sforzesco presunto ritratto
Teodora
image G Dall'Orto_6-1-2007-02)

She does not just take center stage in the Secret History, however. In January of 532, just 5 years into Justinian's reign, he faced a popular insurgency in Constantinople, the 'Nika' riots. As told in Procopius' History of the Wars 1.24, it was Theodora who persuaded her husband not to flee the city, though Green and Blue factions were calling for his head, and much of the city centre on fire. Dewing's translation reads:

And the Empress Theodora also spoke to the following effect: 'As to the belief that a woman ought not to be daring among men or to assert herself boldly among those who are holding back from fear, I consider that the present crisis most certainly does not permit us to discuss whether the matter should be regarded in this or in some other way. ... My opinion then is that the present time, above all others, is inopportune for flight, even though it bring safety. For while it is impossible for a man who has seen the light not also to die, for one who has been an emperor it is unendurable to be a fugitive. May I never be separated from this purple, and may I not live that day on which those who meet me shall not address me as mistress. If, now, it is your wish to save yourself, O Emperor, there is no difficulty. For we have much money, and there is the sea, here the boats. However consider whether it will not come about after you have been saved that you would gladly exchange that safety for death. For as for myself, I approve a certain ancient saying that royalty is a good burial-shroud.'

Theodora thus quoted from Isocrates, the 4th century BC Attic orator, and thus is represented even by Procopius as learned, brave, and the inspiration for her husband Justinian to send Belisarius into the fray with his troops, massacring the rioters in the Hippodrome. Whether or not this was a good outcome for them, or this portrayal owes more to conventions of Greek historiography and Procopius' antipathy to Justinian than reality, it reflects very well on Theodora.

All sources agree that she was instrumental in the construction of the innovative church of

St Sergius and Bacchus dedicated to Syrian saints beside the palace, and the great domed cathedral of St Sophia which rose from the ashes of the riot like a phoenix to stand over Constantinople up to the present day. She built orphanages and hospitals too, and even a convent for reformed prostitutes (who were also assisted by new laws passed under Justinian). She married her daughter into a noble family, and almost arranged for her grandson to become emperor. Before her death on 28 June 548, probably of breast cancer, she had also promoted the cause of the Syrian church in Constantinople, praised by John of Ephesus for her support of Jacob Baradaeus. She was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles, Constantinople, in a great stone sarcophagus, alongside previous emperors and empresses going back to Constantine.

ABBREVIATED LAY

Steve Papas

Ooh La La, Ooh La La
Julia Filia³
Cargohold precedence
Passenger en route

Pater exasperate
Dictum expatriate
Apropos relocate
Vexation acute

POEM

Bob Milns

THE DEATH OF EMPEDOCLES*

Empedocles, so we are told,
Embarked upon a trick so bold
To make the world believe that he
Was now invested with divinity.

One fine Sicilian summer's day,

³ Julia the Younger was daughter of Augustus. She was married three times. Scandal led to her exile for adultery in 2BC. She was famous for her wit and humour. When asked how it was, considering her free lifestyle, that all her children resembled her husbands she replied: 'Passengers do not embark until the holds are full'. Shedied in exile in 14AD.

To Etna mount he made his way;
And fearless of body and of soul,
He leapt into the fiery hole.

But alas the plan that he had wrought
Was very quickly brought to naught
As though for all the world to see
A trickster was our man, no deity.

The mountain groaned, the earth did quake
With fear did all the people shake;
And then the crater gave a mighty spew;
Out shot our hero's brazen shoe.

* Empedocles, c. 492-432 BCE, a philosopher from Acragas in Sicily. This story of his attempt to convince people that he had been deified is in Diogenes Laertius, Book 8.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Bob Milns

'CROCS AND GATORS' OR: 'AN ALLEGORY ON THE BANKS OF THE NILE'⁴



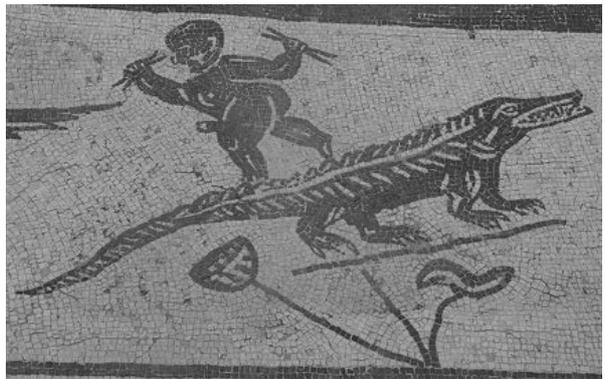
Egyptian Alligator
Roman period sculpture
Late 1st century B.C. – early 1st century A.D
(courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Recently I was reading with my Greek class the description of Herodotus of the crocodile and its habits in Book 2 of his Histories. This is the book in which he describes the land of Egypt, its people, customs and flora and fauna – especially the latter.

Though there are mistakes in his account of the crocodile (e.g. that it cannot move its lower jaw and has no tongue), it is still an excellent account of the animal. What is

particularly interesting is Herodotus's statement that the name crocodile was given to them by 'the Ionians', i.e. Greeks of coastal Asia Minor, who saw that they resembled the lizards commonly found on walls in their own country.

Since the normal Greek word for lizard is saura, why did the Ionian Greeks use the word crocodile? My big Greek lexicon is not particularly helpful here; perhaps the lizards that ran along stone walls in Ionia were saffron coloured (Greek krokos = saffron), which hardly seems plausible.



Crocodile depicted on Neptune's mosaic at Itálica, Spain
(courtesy Hermann Luyken, Wikicommons media)

Other attempts to explain the etymology of the word seem equally unlikely. I decided to put this one in the 'too hard' basket for the moment, but was fascinated to read in How and Wells' still excellent commentary on Herodotus that the New World 'cousin' of the crocodile, the alligator, gets its name from the Spanish 'el lagarto', which means 'the lizard', and the Spanish word comes straight from the Latin 'lacertus', a lizard.

So it looks as though the Ionian Greeks and the Spaniards used their own word for a lizard to describe the giant lizard-like creature which they found in Egypt and the New World respectively. But once again we see how much we owe to the ancient Greeks and Romans in our own language.

⁴ With thanks to Mrs Malaprop from Sheridan's comedy *The Rivals*.

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Some FoA administrative activities will also be taking place at the Long Pocket campus. For those of you who help with putting *Nova* into its covers ready to be mailed out, it is likely that this will always take place at Long Pocket (where parking is easier than at St Lucia).

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Sunday 6 May

2pm

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME: DIODORUS SICULUS, AGYRIUM, AND OCTAVIAN IN SICILY
DUSTIN MCKENZIE

2.30pm

OVID – MASTER OF LOVE
EMERITUS PROFESSOR BOB MILNS

Wednesday 23 May

11.30am

LITERARY LUNCHEON
(WOMEN'S COLLEGE)

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE
EMERITUS PROFESSOR BOB MILNS

FOR FULL DETAILS SEE ENCLOSED FLIER

Sunday 3 June

1.45pm

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
(SEE ENCLOSED NOTICES)

2.30pm

SLIPPED OR PUSHED? THE END OF ROMAN
BRITAIN
DR DOROTHY WATTS

Sunday 1 July

2.00pm

(TOPIC TO BE ADVISED)
CARLOS ROBINSON

2.30pm

MAGIC IN A LATER LATIN MEDICAL TEXT
DR YVETTE HUNT

Sunday 12 August

2.00pm

TO THE RHODIAN WINDS: PROTECTION POETRY
FOR SAILING ON THE ANCIENT SEA
NILE DE JONGE

2.30pm

THE ARCHERS OF ATHENS
DR DAVID PRITCHARD

Sunday 9 September

2.00pm

(TOPIC TO BE ADVISED)
NICOLA ERNST

2.30pm

THE STRANGE COLOURS OF ANCIENT GREECE
MURRAY KANE

Sunday 7 October

2.00pm

BETTY FLETCHER TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP
AWARD

2.30pm

THE PHOENICIANS FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE
ARAB SPRING
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JOSEPHINE QUINN
VISITING R D MILNS PROFESSOR

Sunday 4 November

2.00pm

(TOPIC TO BE ADVISED)
CATHERINE SMALLCOMBE

2.30pm

ANTIQUITIES AS SOUVENIRS IN THE FIRST
WORLD WAR
JAMES DONALDSON

Sunday 18 November

FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY CHRISTMAS PARTY
WOMEN'S COLLEGE

⁵ Sunday Series lectures will normally be held in Room E302, Forgan Smith Building. An entry donation of \$10 includes refreshments.