



Auckland Classical Association

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Newsletter 2: September 2009

1. SUBSCRIPTION

Subscriptions for 2009 are now due. Please forward \$20 subscription or inform the Secretary if you wish mail-outs to continue. Please make cheques in favour of the Auckland Classical Association.

Please remember to notify the Secretary of any change in residential or email address.

2. PROGRAMME

Our regular venue is The Federation of Graduate Women's Room on the first floor of Old Government House. The time is usually 7.30pm. Where the time and place are otherwise, this will be specified.

There are more events planned but the dates and topics are still to be arranged at this time, and announcements will be made by email and on the website www.classics.org.nz.

Important ACA dates for 2009:

Monday, 5 October 2009, 4.00 pm, Clocktower room 029 (Old Arts Building)

Professor Barbara K Gold: "*The Martyr Perpetua: Athlete of God?*"

Perpetua was martyred in the amphitheater in Roman Carthage in 203 C.E. She was a young woman of about 21 years and a nursing mother. We have now a text that she is said to have written in her own hand while she was in prison awaiting execution (it has come down to us in both Latin and Greek), an astounding piece of writing that is one of the earliest prose pieces we have from a Christian woman (or any woman). Her narrative, which is embedded in a longer narrative written by someone else about her life and death, contains four visions. In one vision, Perpetua is in the amphitheater fighting a large Egyptian man; their fight is vigorous, physical and athletic, and Perpetua turns into a man. The athlete was a figure often used as a model and metaphor for Christian martyrs. It was a cultural symbol that embodied traits recognizable to all who would have come to see the games. Professor Gold will discuss Perpetua's life, death, vision of her final contest, and how her portrayal as an athlete is used by her and by others afterward to set her in a proper Christian context and to make sense of her martyrdom.

Monday, 5 October 2009, 7.30 pm, Clocktower room 029 (Old Arts Building)

Professor Barbara K Gold: "*Inhuman She-wolves and Unhelpful Mothers in Roman Poetry: A Consideration of Roman mothers and Some Remarks on their Colonial American Counterparts*"

Many mother figures in Roman literature are dangerous characters, who often play a role in destroying their children. These figures seem to be modeled on mythological bogey figures like Empousa and Lamia, frightening creatures who can change shapes (often taking on animal form), devour children, and rush out from dark places to do untold damage. If these creatures are the models for the mother in a Roman poet like Propertius, what can this tell us about the role that mothers played in Roman society at the end of the first century BCE and the first century CE? Women seem in this period to be playing a more central role in the social life of the Roman republic and to have great influence over their children, especially males who were rising into positions of influence, but how does this historical and social reality interface with the impressions we get from the literature of the period? Professor Gold will discuss the complex paradigm of the Roman mother, the historical context of these figures, and make some remarks on the differences between Roman mothers and early colonial American mothers.

Professor Gold is the Edward North Professor of Classics and Coordinator of Humanities at Hamilton College (USA). She has written two books on literary patronage, edited volumes on Roman dining, satire, and medieval and Renaissance literature, and written numerous articles on Greek, Roman, and medieval literature, in particular Roman lyric and elegy and Roman satire. She was the Editor of the *American Journal of Philology* from 2000-08. She is currently writing a book on Perpetua, *Perpetua, Athlete of God* (forthcoming OUP), is editing the *Blackwell Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, and is (when done with those projects) writing a book on *Performance, Rhetoric and Subjectivity in Juvenal's Satires*.

Tuesday, 20 October 2009, 4.00 pm, Clocktower room 029 (Old Arts Building)

Professor Denis Feeney: "*Greek Historiography and the Traditions of Early Rome.*"

Wednesday, 21 October 2009, 7.30 pm, Clocktower room 029 (Old Arts Building)

Professor Denis Feeney: "*The Beginnings of Roman Literature: the Originality of Translation.*"

Professor Denis Feeney is Giger Professor of Latin at Princeton University. He received his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Auckland, where he graduated in 1976, and a D.Phil. from Oxford University in 1982. He has also been a Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge and New College, Oxford. He teaches in the area of Latin poetry in particular, and has published two books on the interaction between Roman literature and religion (*The Gods in Epic* (1991); *Literature and Religion at Rome* (1998)), with another on Roman representations of time (*Caesar's Calendar* (2007)). He is currently working on a book tentatively entitled *Roman Horizons*, on the way the Romans modernised themselves in the third and second centuries BCE.

Thursday, 19 November 2009, Clocktower room 029 (Old Arts Building)

Professor Bill Dominik: "*The Gates of Sleep in Vergil's Aeneid.*"

Professor Dominik, who has a PhD from Monash University, is the author and editor of several books and numerous other publications in such areas as Roman literature, especially of the Flavian era; Roman rhetoric; the classical tradition; and lexicography. He is also the founding editor of the journal *Scholia*. He has taught widely in Classics and the Humanities at a number of universities, most recently at the University of Natal, where he was Professor and Chair of Classics before coming to Otago.

Tuesday, 24 November 2009, 6.30 pm, 1 Wynyard Street, Dept of Classics and Ancient History, tea room.

Annual General Meeting. There will be a dinner to follow at the Café, the Hyatt Hotel. Please notify the Secretary if you will be attending the dinner.

3. THIS YEAR IN HISTORY

The following events have their bimillennial anniversaries in 2009 (ie, events that took place in AD 9):

- The disastrous slaughter of the army of Quintilius Varus in Germany.
- Banishment of the poet Ovid to Tomis on the Black Sea.
- Birth of the emperor Vespasian.
- The passing of the Roman law the Lex Papia Poppaea designed to encourage marriage and childbearing and to penalise bachelors for their antisocial behaviour.

4. NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF CLASSICS

All news articles were sourced by Kylie Burling unless otherwise cited, and have been abridged. Please send news articles of possible interest to the Association to the Secretary. These will be collated and edited for inclusion in future newsletters. Thank you again to the editing team for the time and effort expended on our behalf, especially Professor Gray.

The Tomb of Antony and Cleopatra?

23 April 2009, Time

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1893329,00.html>

Dr. Zahi Hawass walks inside the Temple of Taposiris Magna in a western suburb of Alexandria, Egypt, on April 19, 2009

History's most famous suicide happened more than 2,000 years ago: rather than surrender to the Romans who had captured her Egypt, the lovelorn Queen Cleopatra succumbed to the venomous bite of an asp. Ancient historians chronicled the act, Shakespeare dramatized it, and HBO even added its own to spin to the tragedy with the lavish TV series "Rome." Yet while we may know how Cleopatra died of snake poison, after her consort Mark Antony fell on his sword, archaeologists have yet to pin down where the legendary couple was laid to rest.



That is about to change, according to the world's most flamboyant Egyptologist. Zahi Hawass, secretary-general of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, announced earlier this week that his team of archaeologists was readying for the final approach toward what could be the tomb of Cleopatra. The site is at Abusir, some 30 miles from the port city of Alexandria, among the ruins of an ancient temple to the Egyptian god Osiris. Nearly two dozen coins unearthed there bear Cleopatra's profile and inscription, and carvings in the temple enclosure show two lovers in an embrace. A ceramic fragment supposedly mirrors the cleft chin of the rebel general Mark Antony — leading Hawass to speculate that it is the Roman's own death mask. Archaeologists already dug up the mummies of ten nobles around the site, a sign, perhaps, that a more regal prize dwells within. Using ground-penetrating radar, they have spied out three further subterranean passageways which they believe could lead to the grave. "If this tomb is found," Hawass told TV reporters as they set about their dig this week, "it will be one of the most important discoveries of the 21st century."

"Cleopatra has come to symbolize Egypt for a lot of people," says Joyce Tyldesley, an archaeologist at the University of Liverpool and author of *Cleopatra: Last Queen of Egypt*, published last year. Debates still rage over everything from Cleopatra's identity — cranial scans of her half-sister's skull this year suggested she may be African, though her known lineage was Greek — to her looks. Close scrutiny of coin portraits have led some to believe that she was rather plain, a conclusion borne out by the Roman historian Plutarch who wrote "her beauty was in itself not altogether incomparable, nor such as to strike those who saw her."

Even more questions linger surrounding her death, which signaled the dawn of the Roman Empire under Julius Caesar's nephew Octavian, who was waging a bitter civil war with Mark Antony. "She definitely died at a very convenient time for Octavian," says Tyldesley. "There is no absolute proof that she committed suicide, and so it is possible that she was either forced to do so, or that she was killed. Of course," she adds, "there is no proof that she died by snakebite, either."

And so now many wait for further developments over the coming weeks, thrilled by the possibility of seeing a legend turn real.

Extraordinary Bronze Statue Excavated from Pompeii Goes on View at the Getty Villa

8 May 2009, Art Daily

http://www.artdaily.org/index.asp?int_sec=2&int_new=30689

Unknown maker, Italian, Statue of an Ephebe (Youth) as a lampbearer, about 20-10 B.C. Bronze, with inlays of copper and glass.

Statue of an Ephebe as a Lampbearer, a long-term loan from the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples, is now on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa. The



object, which was excavated from Pompeii in 1925, will remain on view at the Getty until March 2011. The Getty has also begun conservation work on another object from Naples' archaeological museum—a statue of the Apollo Saettante—that will go on view at the Getty Villa following conservation.

In addition to these two loans, the Getty is also undertaking a series of exhibitions that will include material from the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples. The first of these pieces will come as part of the recently announced Chimaera of Arezzo exhibition, which will open in July 2009 at the Getty Villa.

“On the heels of having announced a long-term collaboration with one of Italy's greatest archaeological museums, the Museo Archeologico in Florence, I am pleased that we are now able to announce this partnership with one of Italy's other great cultural institutions, the Museo Archeologico in Naples,” said Dr. Michael Brand, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. “Because the Museo Archeologico in Naples houses many of the objects unearthed from Pompeii and Herculaneum, its collection is especially relevant to the Getty Museum since the Getty Villa is designed to emulate the Villa dei Papiri, a Roman villa in ancient Herculaneum.”

In making this announcement, Dr. Brand also offered his appreciation to the Honorable Sandro Bondi, Minister of Culture of Italy; Dr. Stefano De Caro, Direttore Generale per i Beni Archeologici, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Roma; and Dr. Pietro Giovanni Guzzo, Soprintendente Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompeii.

The General Director of Archaeological Heritage, Stefano De Caro adds, “We are very thankful that the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Napoli e Pompei has offered to that “little Parnassus,” the Getty, two such remarkable works from Pompeii, a generosity that further consolidates the excellent relationship established with the Museum in Los Angeles.”

Statue of an Ephebe as a Lampbearer

Created about 20-10 B.C., the Roman bronze figure of an ephebe (youth) was excavated in 1925 in a well-appointed residence, now called the House of the Ephebe, off Pompeii's Via dell'Abbondanza. Referred to as the “Efebo Lampadoforo” (lamp-bearer), the figure holds ornate tendrils that served as candelabrum branches. At the time of the eruption of Vesuvius, the Ephebe was being stored together with other bronze furnishings in a central room off the atrium. The house was in the process of being refurbished, and the sculpture had been covered with a protective cloth, traces of which are still visible on the figure's shoulder and thigh. The Ephebe survived the volcanic cataclysm in an excellent state of preservation. Found with its right arm broken off and the candelabra detached, the Ephebe was restored in the mid-1990s at the Centro di Restauro in Florence—a treatment that revealed that the youth's lips and nipples were crafted in copper. (Less fortunate were three individuals, perhaps workers engaged in the refurbishment project, whose skeletal remains and bedding were recovered in a front hall.)

The Apollo Saettante

A bronze statue of the god Apollo shown in the act of shooting an arrow (known as the “Apollo Saettante”) was discovered in the western area of Pompeii, and has been associated with the Temple of Apollo. Dating back to at least the sixth century B.C., when the cult of Apollo was imported from Greece, the temple is the town's oldest and most important religious sanctuary. Together with a bust of Artemis drawing a bow that was found in the vicinity of the sanctuary, the Apollo Saettante likely derives from a group composition depicting the slaughter of the children of Niobe. The original base of the sculpture bears an inscription referring to the Roman general Lucius Mummius, who sacked the Greek city of Corinth in 146 B.C. and shipped a trove of statuary back to Rome. Archaeologists suggest that the bronze Apollo may have been a donation made by Mummius from the spoils of his military campaign. Due to the structural instability of previous restorations, the bronze Apollo has long been confined to the storerooms of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples.

The new Acropolis Museum to open to public

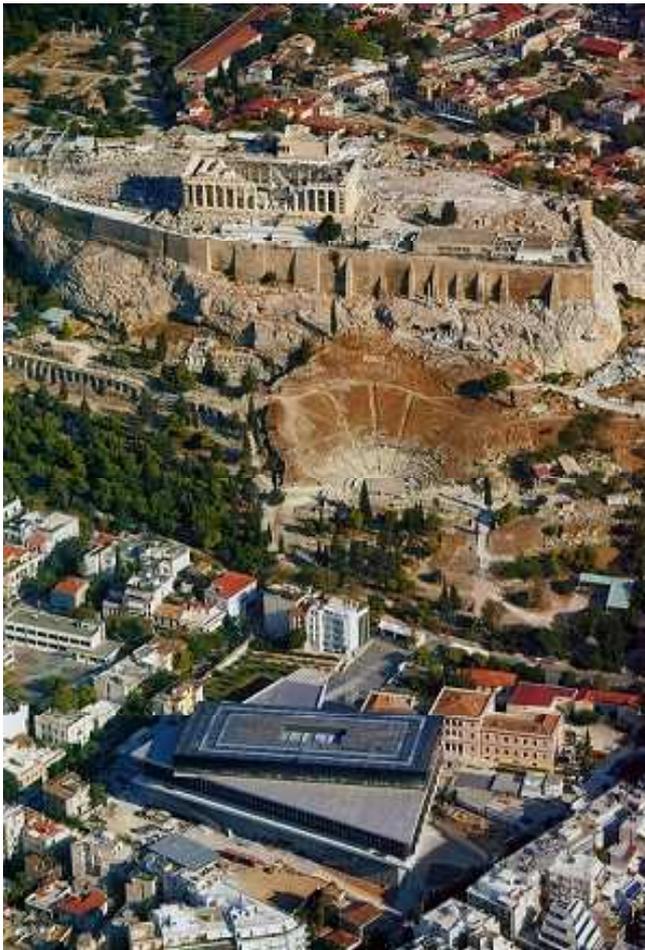
16 June 2009, People's Daily Online

<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90782/90873/6679343.html>

The Parthenon temple of Acropolis in Athens and the new Acropolis museum about 300 meters below the Parthenon temple.



Covering 25,000 square meters, the new Acropolis museum is located below the well-known Parthenon temple of the Acropolis. The new Acropolis Museum comprises three levels. The base of the museum design "hovers" over the existing archaeological excavation. The middle is a large, trapezoidal hall that accommodates galleries from the archaic to Roman period. A mezzanine level includes a bar and restaurant with views towards the Acropolis, and a multimedia auditorium. The top comprises the rectangular Parthenon Gallery arranged around an indoor court.



The extensive use of glass allows natural light into the museum and all the visitors can see the Parthenon temple clearly through the glass-walled gallery where the treasures of the Parthenon are displayed. Furthermore, the museum contains a glass-floored entrance ramp overlooking the in-situ excavations on the site below.



The unique design of the new museum is the 160-meter-long frieze wrapped around the central core of the gallery and with the Greek originals coated in a soft brown plating standing alongside white-plaster copies of the Parthenon sculpture sections removed by Lord Elgin some 200 years ago when the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire ruled Greece. The Greeks hope that public opinion will slowly force a change of heart in London, according to a British newspaper.



To protect the sculptures of the Acropolis of Athens from pollution, most of the marble sculptures should be carefully moved indoors, but the old museum built 200 years ago cannot accommodate the treasures. And this is another important element in deciding to build the new museum.

Evidence suggests it was cats who chose humans

17 July 2009, Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/sciencetoday/2009/0716/1224250747190.html>

The domestic cat may be the most popular pet, with more than 600 million in homes worldwide. The cat was a cult animal in ancient Egypt and until recently it was believed it was first domesticated there about 3,600 years ago. However, recent research indicates that domestication of the cat began about 10,000 years ago when agriculture was beginning. The story is told by CA Driscoll, J Clutton Brock, A Kitchener and SJ O'Brien in *Scientific American*, June 2009.

It was long suspected that all varieties of domestic cat are descended from the wild-cat species *Felis silvestris*, which is scattered throughout the Old World. Driscoll, O'Brien and others recently analysed DNA from wildcats and domestic cats across the Old World to determine which subspecies of *Felis silvestris* gave rise to the house cat. The DNA clustered into five groups, each coming from a specific region – Europe, central Asia, southern Africa, China and Middle East. Domestic cats grouped only with *Felis silvestris lybica*, the Middle Eastern wildcat, showing that all house cats are descended from *Fs lybica* alone.

When was the house cat domesticated? In 2004 the National Museum of Natural History in Paris reported that adult human remains were found in a shallow 9,500-year-old grave in Cyprus and 40cm away in its own little grave was an eight-month-old cat whose body was oriented in the same direction as the human. Cats are not native to most Mediterranean islands and must have been taken there by boat. Together with the archaeological data, this indicates that people had developed a special relationship with cats almost 10,000 years ago, about the time agriculture was beginning in the Middle East.

There is good reason to wonder why cats and humans developed a special relationship. Driscoll and colleagues point out that cats are unlikely candidates for domestication for a number of reasons. First, other wild animals were domesticated to supply humans with food, clothing or labour, but cats contribute neither sustenance nor work to humans. Second, cats would be difficult to domesticate. The ancestors of most domesticated animals lived in herds with hierarchical structures. Humans simply supplanted the dominant herd individual. Cats, however, are solitary hunters that defend their territory. They are obligatory carnivores and cannot be fed on easily available plant foods. And cats certainly do not take well to instruction. It is therefore highly likely that cats chose humans rather than the other way around as with other domesticates.

Settlements at the dawn of agriculture about 10,000 years ago provided new opportunities for animals capable of exploiting them, for example the house mouse who moved indoors to feed on stores of wild grain. These mice attracted cats, as did trash heaps on the outskirts of settlements. Natural selection favoured the survival of those cats capable of collaboration with humans.

Cats would have appeared attractive to humans since they got rid of mice and snakes. Also, wildcats have "cute" features – snub face, large eyes and high rounded forehead – known to elicit nurturing feelings in humans. The authors explain that as agriculture spread out from the Fertile Crescent, so too did the now tame *Fs lybica*, occupying the same niche everywhere they went, thereby preventing the local wildcat population from fulfilling that role.

The high-point of the domestic cat came during Egypt's golden era, which began 3,600 years ago. Paintings from that period show that cats were fully domesticated. The cat became the "official deity" of Egypt in the form of the goddess Bastet. Egypt banned the export of cats for centuries, but by 2,500 years ago cats had reached Greece, from where they spread throughout the Roman Empire.

We do not see the wide variety of size, shape and temperaments in cats as we do in dogs, eg Great Dane and chihuahua. Humans have selectively bred dogs since prehistoric times to do useful things such as herding, guarding, hunting and so on, but cats show no inclination to do tasks that are useful to humans and consequently were never subjected to much selective breeding pressure.

'Roman emperor's villa' unearthed

7 August 2009, BBC

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8190955.stm>

The villa has floors with marble from across the Mediterranean region

Archaeologists in Italy say they have unearthed the remains of a sumptuous villa thought to be the birthplace of the Emperor Vespasian.

The ruins were found in the Roman city of Falacrine, about 80 miles (130km) north-east of Rome.

The villa's location and luxury suggest it was probably Vespasian's birthplace, an archaeologist said.

Vespasian lived from AD9-79. He was emperor from AD69-79, restoring peace after a period of civil war.

The villa in Falacrine stretches over 14,000 sq m (16,750 sq yards).

The archaeologist leading excavations there, Filippo Coarelli, said it was not marked as belonging to Vespasian's family, but its extravagant trappings were an indication of its ownership.

"It's clear that such things could only belong to someone with a high social position and wealth. And in this place, it was the Flavians," he said, referring to Vespasian's dynasty.

The villa was decorated with luxurious marble "coming from the whole Mediterranean area", he told the Associated Press news agency.

Vespasian, whose full name was Titus Flavius Vespasianus, had a successful military career before becoming governor of Africa and an aide to the emperor Nero.

The Colosseum was begun under his rule with spoils of the AD70 conquest of Jerusalem.

He was the founder of the Flavian dynasty of emperors.



5. ACA WEBSITE

www.classics.org.nz

If you have photos of classical sites which you would like to offer for the website, please send these to the Secretary for consideration. It will not be possible to use all photographs for the website as there are certain criteria which must be met (including rights to publication), and there is a size limit to the site, however all donations will be gratefully received and contributions not used for the website may well be utilised in other ways.

Also, if you have Greek or Latin phrases (and their translations), classical cartoons, or other things which could be of interest to our members and/or stimulate interest in non-members, please feel free to send these to the Secretary.

6. REPORTS 2008

Attached for your information are the 2008 Financial Report the President's Report which were supposed to have been attached to the first newsletter for 2009.

7. SUBSCRIPTION FOR 2009

The subscription for 2009 is \$20. This may be paid at a meeting or by mailing a cheque with this form to the Secretary at 52 Kohekohe Street, New Lynn, Waitakere 0600.

Membership is free for students and for graduates of less than one year's standing, however the return of the form would be appreciated in order to maintain the database of members.

Please make cheques payable to 'Auckland Classical Association'.

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