

JULY 2016

# NOVA

THE JOURNAL OF THE FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY



**ROMAN JEWELLERY: STATUS, BEAUTY, LUXURY**  
(SEE PAGE 4)

Sheet gold and pearl diadem  
from Pompeii, Villa Imperiale

(Image courtesy Alfredo and Pio Foglia, Naples)

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

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	<b>2</b>
Ann Scott	
<b>PRESIDENT'S REPORT</b>	<b>2</b>
Denis Brosnan	
<b>NEWS FROM THE DISCIPLINE</b>	<b>3</b>
Alastair Blanshard	
<b>USELESS BEAUTY: LUXURY AND ROME - A NEW EXHIBITION IN THE R D MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ROMAN JEWELLERY: STATUS, BEAUTY, LUXURY</b>	<b>3</b>
Monica Jackson	
<b>UNIVERSITY MEDALLISTS IN ANCIENT HISTORY</b>	<b>5</b>
Johanna Qualmann	
Marianne Asmonti	
<b>AUGUSTUS AND TIME</b>	<b>6</b>
Tom Hillard	
<b>MITHRIDATES, MITHRIDATUM, AND THE SUCCESS OF A LIE?</b>	<b>8</b>
Yvette Hunt	
<b>CATULLUS: THE PASSIONATE POET WHO INSULTED JULIUS CAESAR</b>	<b>10</b>
Don Barrett	
<b>THE UNBURIED DEAD BY CHRISTOPHER CLARKSON</b>	<b>15</b>
Review by Trevor Bryce	
<b>MUDLARKING ON THE THAMES</b>	<b>16</b>
Pamela Rushby	
<b>WHAT'S IN A WORD?</b>	<b>17</b>
Bob Milns	
<b>THE ABDUCTION OF PERSEPHONE (PART 2)</b>	<b>18</b>
Bob Milns	
<b>MEMBERSHIP OF FOA AND ALUMNI FRIENDS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2016 FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY PROGRAM</b>	<b>19</b>

## Contributors

- **Marianne Asmonti** received a University Medal in Ancient History in the July 2016 graduations.
- **Don Barrett** is Honorary Research Associate Professor in Classics, School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry.
- **Professor Alastair Blanshard** is the Inaugural Paul Eliadis Professor of Classics and Ancient History.
- **Professor Trevor Bryce** is an Honorary Professor in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry.
- **Dr Yvette Hunt** is Honorary Research Fellow in Classics in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry.
- **Dr Tom Hillard** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Ancient History, Macquarie University.
- **Dr Monica M Jackson** is an archaeologist, ancient jewellery consultant, and lecturer in the Department of Archaeology, University of Sydney.
- **Emeritus Professor Bob Milns**, a founder member of the Friends of Antiquity, was Professor of Classics and Ancient History from 1970-2003.
- **Pam Rushby** is a Brisbane writer, and a member of the Friends of Antiquity Executive.
- **Johanna Qualmann** received a University Medal in Ancient History in the July 2016 graduations.
- **Dr Ann Scott** is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry. She has been editor of *Nova* since July 2009.

---

1 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 the third issue of *Nova* for 2016. The year began with the Adrian Heyworth-Smith lecture which was a 'double act' by our President, Denis Brosnan, and Deputy President, Emeritus Professor Milns.



**Emeritus Professor Bob Milns, Dr Robyn Heyworth, Mrs Jenny Heyworth-Smith, and FoA President Denis Brosnan at the 2016 Adrian Heyworth-Smith lecture**

This *Nova* contains summaries of some of the 2016 Sunday Series lectures, and also other contributions, such as Don Barrett's Literary Luncheon presentation on the poet Catullus, and Pamela Rushby's article on mudlarking in London. It also includes the fascinating talk 'Roman Jewellery: Status, Beauty, Luxury' given by Dr Monica M Jackson at the opening of the R D Milns Antiquities Museum's new exhibition *Useless Beauty: Luxury and Rome* on 10 June.

Dr Jackson's talk is followed by articles by former students, Johanna Qualmann and Marianne Asmonti, who received University Medals in Ancient History in the July 2016 graduations. Both are now in the workforce, but returned to attend the opening of the exhibition.

It is always good to be able to provide feedback to members of the Friends of Antiquity about what benefits current and past students have received from the support we provide, whether it be the Betty Fletcher scholarship, assistance to students for overseas study tours, or donations to the Museum. It is a pleasure to be able to reproduce contributions, not only from our guest lecturers but from members of the FoA, staff and students.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Denis Brosnan

On 3 July, I reported to our AGM that the Friends had enjoyed another remarkable year. Not least had been the leadership and active involvement, in countless ways, of the Paul Eliadis Chair in Classics and Ancient History, Alastair Blanshard. Thanks to the tireless and detailed work of our Program Committee, especially Lyn and Bob Milns, we enjoyed Ancient History Day and many stimulating Sunday presentations, the like of which I doubt could be matched by any other discipline on campus. We helped to fund students to enrol in the Greek and Roman Study Tours. We rejoiced when Johanna Qualmann, a recent winner of the Betty Fletcher Travelling Scholarship and Marianne Asmonti were awarded University Medals.

We enjoyed two Literary Luncheons and our end-of-year lunch was, as always, a social highlight, complemented by the presence of student leaders from the Classics and Ancient History Society <https://cahsociety.com/> and by the ever-obliging Katharine Carter from Alumni Friends of UQ.

I wish to place on written record my thanks to some people without whom we simply would not have been attending that AGM at all. First, Don Barrett for his remarkable service as our Secretary. As the late Sam Rayner used to say, the Secretary's job is to ensure that that everyone else's job gets done, and Don does this with a smile and unflinching grace. Thank you to the Social Committee, especially Desley Loch. And to our financial gurus, without whom we could not maintain the real value of the Betty Fletcher Travelling Scholarship or our support for the R D Milns Antiquities Museum. And Ann Scott, without whom we'd be sunk, as our lovely NOVA just could not exist in its current state of excellence.

I had started the year with a call to arms, encouraging Friends – and other readers, who are all potential Friends – to be marshalled for action, to be "FoA activists", as Roger Scott has called us. We are still an engaged, active and connected special interest group, yet we continue to run a risk, without a regular transfusion of talent and energy, of subsiding "into geriatric irrelevance...(if) we end up recycling a steadily declining band of enthusiasts." So, as we start another year, I urge any reader who wishes to become more involved to let me know. If ever you have an idea to share, do contact me on 0430 432 974 or [d.brosnan@duchesne.uq.edu.au](mailto:d.brosnan@duchesne.uq.edu.au) Finally, there is plenty more coming up; please see the back page for details. Your Program Committee will soon be working on events for 2017. If there are topics about which you would like to hear, or if you can suggest a speaker, please let me know and I'll follow up.

NEWS FROM THE DISCIPLINE

Alastair Blanshard

The break between semesters has been a busy one as staff madly catch up on overdue articles, cram in as much research time in libraries as they can, and give lectures and papers at various international meetings. The prize for 'most conferences attended in the least amount of time' goes to Caillan Davenport who found himself dashing (often literally) between Durham, St Andrews, and Dublin in the course of a few days as he attended conferences on topics related to his research interests in late antiquity and imperial politics. No sooner was he back than he was off again. This time to a slightly less exotic location – Bundaberg – where he and Tom Stevenson ran sessions on the Late Roman Republic and on the Parthenon for teachers and school children as part of a series of seminars sponsored by the Queensland History Teachers Association (QHTA).

We have an exciting range of events lined up for second semester. At the start of semester, this year's R D Milns Visiting Professor, Nancy Worman from Barnard College in New York, will be giving a couple of talks for us. Nancy is a distinguished scholar of Greek literature, especially Greek tragedy. She will be giving two talks for us. The first is a masterclass on Aeschylus' Oresteia, the trilogy of plays that deal with the fall of Agamemnon and the cycle of vengeance that ensues. A week later, Nancy will give a talk on Aristotle's Poetics in the discipline's Friday afternoon seminar series.

Later in the semester, we are delighted to have another distinguished visitor, Professor Katja Sporn from the German Archaeological Institute at Athens. Professor Sporn is this year's visiting AAIAI (Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens) professor. She is an expert on the topography of Greek religious sites and will be presenting two lectures. The first lecture will be given on Thursday, 1 September and is titled 'Natural Features in Greek Cult Places and Ritual: The Case of Athens'. The following day, Prof. Sporn will present her second lecture on 'Sanctuaries and Cults in Ancient Phokis'. Both lectures promise to be exciting events, not to be missed.

USELESS BEAUTY: LUXURY AND ROME - A NEW EXHIBITION IN THE R D MILNS ANTIQUITIES MUSEUM

The museum's new exhibition *Useless Beauty: Luxury and Rome* opened on 10 June. The Friends of Antiquity contributed supplementary funds to assist with this opening event, when costs rose as it had to be repeated as a result of the demand for places at the opening. Dr Monica Jackson FSA gave a guest lecture on Roman gold jewellery, in which she included discussion of some of the items in the exhibition.

ROMAN JEWELLERY: STATUS, BEAUTY, LUXURY

Monica Jackson

Historical Overview

The right to own and wear gold jewellery during the latter years of the Roman Republic was due to the resolve of Roman women, who demonstrated against the passing of the Lex Oppia in 215 BC.

The law, which curtailed the ownership of gold and the display of finery by upper-class women, was passed when Rome faced economic crisis during the Punic wars. It was repealed in 193 BC when victory over Carthage flooded Rome with wealth, but there are no notable examples of the goldsmith's art from this period. It was only in 27 BC BC when Octavian - now called Augustus Caesar - became the sole ruler of Rome and its empire that luxury, and with it gold jewellery, became common in everyday Roman life. Contact with the Hellenistic Greek world ensured that jewellery production flourished.

The Jewellery

The most popular items of Roman jewellery for both men and women were finger rings. Men were limited to fibulae and a single personalized signet ring, used primarily to make an impression in sealing wax to authorize documents. Women of higher rank demonstrated a strong desire to achieve both beauty and individuality. In spite of lingering conservative male attitudes, jewellery was a means of distinguishing an individual's status within Roman society. Pliny tells us that pearls were a Roman passion while Juvenal adds that a woman thinks she can get away with anything when her ear lobes stretch under the weight of big pearl earrings.



**Fig. 1. Sheet gold and pearl diadem, Pompeii, Villa Imperiale, Inv. P7654 1st Cent. AD L. 7.7 cm. H. 3.3 cm. Image courtesy Alfredo and Pio Foglia, Naples.**

Elaborate jewellery was limited to the imperial court and the wealthiest classes. The evidence from the Campania region around Pompeii suggests that jewellery in the provincial cities was not lavish, and reflected in the main the tastes of the middle classes. The gold and pearl diadem (Fig. 1) above is a rare exception. The openwork wave motif design contains three large highly ornate pearls.

The towns in the region of Vesuvius have yielded the most copious quantities of jewellery, particularly finger rings and pendant earrings. The simply crafted pieces featured a range of exotic gems and semi-precious stones in gold settings; lapis lazuli, garnets, amethysts, emeralds, sapphires, and aquamarines. Apotropaic (to ward off evil) jewellery was popular throughout the empire from Alexandria to Antioch, as were sphere-segment earrings with either plain or decorated surfaces. Embellishment consisted of close-embossed dotting, imitating the more refined technique of granulation, which was gradually abandoned by the Romans.

**Granulation Techniques**

The technique of applying gold granules to an object's surface to create decorative patterns goes back to Iran and the Sumerian goldsmiths of the 3rd millennium BC. By the 7-6th centuries BC the Etruscans had mastered the art of microscopic dusting granulation known as 'pulviscolo'. The technical virtuosity of granulation lay in the accurate placement of the spherical grains, which could be soldered over an entire surface or in a range of different formations such as linear, cluster, silhouette or point.

Linear granulation involves the soldering of grains to a flat surface in parallel lines.

Figures 2a, 2b and 2c below are penannular hoop earrings with linear and cluster granulation, AD 300-400 from the R D Milns Antiquities Museum. The front of the Late Roman penannular hoop earring (Fig. 2a below) has a three-sided pyramid with a triangular base, decorated with linear granulation.



Cluster granulation is the process by which three-dimensional structures are built up by the bonding together of granules usually arranged in a conical shape.

Multiple granules are bonded not only to the substrate but also to each other.



The front of the penannular earring (Fig. 2b above) has a granulated cone, arranged in five concentric circles diminishing in size towards the tip, which is embellished with a large globule.

The twisted wire earring (Fig. 2c) below has a small decorative pyramid, made from ten cluster granulations of similar size, six at the base, three on the next level and one at the tip.



Jewellery from the end of the 2nd century AD often featured coinage, bearing representations of the emperors as a major decorative element. The practice of mounting coins became increasingly common in the 3rd century AD when inflation under the Severan emperors resulted in the minting of new coins of a lighter weight. Consequently, the intrinsic value of the earlier and heavier coins rose above their face value. Older gold coins were prudently withdrawn from circulation and hoarded as bullion. For this reason, and also because of their historic significance, they were mounted in jewellery as medals.



An overall assessment of the typology and thematic repertoire of the relatively small corpus of extant Roman jewellery, illustrates its remarkable continuity and resilience through the centuries. The jewellery served its purpose – which was to enhance the beauty, status and distinctiveness of the wearer, and to elevate a superior art form to erotic provocation.

**UNIVERSITY MEDALLISTS IN ANCIENT HISTORY**

Here are some autobiographical comments from the two students who received University Medals in Ancient History in the July 2016 graduations.

**Johanna Qualmann**

Sometime in my first year at UQ, my over-eager nineteen-year-old-self discovered the existence of university medals – the top honour awarded to some fifty-odd graduating students every year – from a list hanging on the HASS Faculty noticeboard. I still remember the rush as my ambitious streak kicked in. I decided then and there that come graduation, it was going to be my name on that list.

At the time, I think my main motivation was to prove that I didn't have to be a small fish in the huge new pond that was the University of Queensland, so different to the regional town in which I grew up. I wanted to make my mark on the university. Now, five years later and about to return to graduation to receive that medal, I'm realising that it wasn't about that at all. It was about the mark that my time at university, studying Ancient History and Archaeology and Latin, left on me.

For me, the university medal I'm about to receive isn't just about academic achievement or grade point average. I won't lie, I poured a lot of energy into my coursework. I remember well the weekends spent in the library learning Latin declensions and conjugations, the frantic rush to make sure I got all the reading done in time for a tutorial, the determination that I wasn't going to give my Honours supervisor a heart attack by leaving my thesis to the last minute. But the university medal means more to me than that. It's a reflection of the extraordinary experiences and opportunities that I had at UQ, that taught me some of the things I value most: to think, to question, to learn.

Some of my strongest memories are of the lecturers who taught me. They pushed me to do my best, to find what I was passionate about and pursue every opportunity that came my way. They supported me through fits of procrastination and thesis-induced madness. They reassured me that everything would be ok when I realised I'd answered the wrong exam questions and burst into tears in front of them. (They were right, of course – it did end up being ok.) My

experience would not have been the same without them.

Nor would it have been the same without the opportunity to travel and see with my own eyes the artefacts and sites I was studying. I was lucky enough to do so twice – as part of the study tour to Italy in the summer of 2013, and after receiving the Betty Fletcher Memorial Travelling Scholarship in 2014. I worked on archaeological sites in Naples and Turkey, spanning from the early Neolithic to the 4th century AD, and visited others in England, Italy and Germany.

Back at UQ, some of my best experiences came from working with the R.D. Milns Antiquities Museum, both as a regular volunteer and as a summer research scholar, researching the museum's history for its 50th anniversary. I also loved being able to get a glimpse of academic research by participating in the Classics Advanced Research Programme (CARPE) and the Arts Research Training Experience (ARTE) in my third year. My research on Faustina the Younger spurred my lasting interest in women's history, and I also had the chance to present my findings at the UQ Undergraduate Research Conference (an Arts student in a sea of Science and Engineering students).

The university medal I'm receiving at graduation this year isn't just about having good grades. It represents the culmination of all these opportunities and experiences, each of which has made me who I am today. And although I've taken a slightly different path than I once planned – scoring a place in a competitive government graduate program in public policy – I'll continue to value the time I spent as an Ancient History and Archaeology student at UQ. Who knows, I might even be back to write that book on Roman empresses someday.

**Marianne Asmonti**

I came to UQ in 2008 as a part-time Arts student, keen to begin my degree and planning to major in Archaeology and History. 'The Rise of Ancient Rome' was one of the turning points in my life - it was my first Ancient History course and, under the outstanding guidance of Dr Tom Stevenson, I became hooked! I loved everything about Classics at UQ – not just the exceptional teachers and courses but the sense of collegiality and community that was so natural in that discipline. With each Ancient History course I took, I found myself further captivated by Classics. The 'Classical Archaeology and Museums' course was another turning point for me. As well as enjoying the course immensely, my eyes were opened to the fascinating world of museums and I knew it was a world in which I wanted to be involved. I was so excited that UQ had such an

extensive collection of antiquities and was proactive in my enthusiasm, volunteering at the R.D. Milns Antiquities Museum from 2012 just after it opened in its new premises. That was a very exciting time to join the Museum and I was given many opportunities to experience the different aspects involved in running a museum, from cataloguing the collection and formatting signage to helping out at events. The Museum staff were always passionate and encouraging so I learned a great deal from them and made some very good friends along the way.

It was through my volunteer work at the Museum that I got to know Dr Janette McWilliam very well and decided to participate in the study tour she was taking to Italy in 2013. The study tour was an experience that I will never forget and it helped me make up my mind to complete an extended major in Ancient History. Dr McWilliam agreed to supervise my honours thesis, which focused on attitudes towards women, pregnancy, childbirth and neonatal care in ancient Rome. It was a topic that I enjoyed researching and writing, making honours a very rewarding (and exhausting!) experience that left me with a great sense of achievement at the end.

During the course of my degree, I was given many opportunities to enrich the experience of studying Ancient History at UQ. I was selected to take part in the Arts Research Training Experience (ARTE) Project of Dr McWilliam that allowed me to study in-depth an item from the R.D. Milns Antiquities Museum. I chose to investigate the red-slip piriform flask from 2nd Century North Africa and was fascinated to discover all the elements of the Roman Empire that were evident in this small and seemingly insignificant object.

I was also awarded the Osiecki Honours Scholarship for Classics which enabled me to travel to Italy with the Ancient World Study Tour in 2015. Participating in this study tour was a richly rewarding experience. It allowed me to inform and enhance my honours thesis by using the material remains in the archaeological museums we visited in Rome, Naples and Southern Tuscany that I would not otherwise have had access to.

I graduated with Honours First Class in July 2015 and decided to take a break from study for a while. I was surprised when I found out I had been awarded a University Medal – it is an honour that I was not expecting! I have been working full-time since last July but this medal has made me nostalgic about how much I enjoyed volunteering at the Antiquities Museum and studying Ancient History.

I came back to the Museum to see the 'Useless Beauty' exhibition and, even though it has been a while since I had visited UQ and the collection, I felt the same eagerness and sense of belonging that I

had always felt as part of the R D Milns Antiquities Museum and Classics at UQ.

### AUGUSTUS AND TIME

Associate Professor Tom Hillard gave the April Sunday Series talk in which he looked at Augustus' relationship with time.

#### Tom Hillard

This lecture deals with Augustus' relationship with time both in terms of his management of time, and the part that time played in the establishment of a fundamentally transformed Roman political system.



Augustus wearing a civic crown (Glyptothek, Munich, courtesy Wikimedia)

Augustus himself seems to have been particularly cognizant of this element. At some time in his career (at least, after his rushed, radical and particularly bloody rise to power), he took up the curious proverb "hasten slowly" which he delivered in Greek — and 'often', according to our sources. Augustus, dying at the age of seventy-six, only about a month shy of the seventy-seventh birthday, simply outlived most of his coevals.

That is a simple fact that is remarked upon by many scholars, but this presentation took its cue from the commemoration of Augustus' death on its bimillennium on August 19th two years ago (2014) to use various bimillennial anniversary dates to measure the passage of time and to contemplate its behaviour-altering impact on the Roman community.

Augustus transformed the Roman landscape — not only the topography of Rome which he did in no uncertain terms, boasting that he had found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble, but the phenomenological landscape, which is that

'artificial' landscape, a blend of perception and reality, which is brought into being by memory, on the one hand, and human design, on the other.

It is in this new landscape that Augustus played with people's minds. In 12 BC, Augustus became Rome's Chief Priest, the pontifex maximus. He was, literally, a Time Lord, with oversight of Rome's calendar. Inter alia, he 'repaired' Julius Caesar's new calendar, which had already (because of a miscalculation of the priestly college based upon inclusive counting) fallen a few days out of synch with the solar year. But the calendars of Rome had multi-functions which included both the ritual appeasement of the gods and the commemoration and celebration of Rome's past. This means of ensuring the security of Rome's present opened the ways to manipulating the future.

This talk focuses particularly on the feriale Cumanum, a calendar of annual festivals found at Cumae, the focus of which on anniversaries of Julio-Claudian significance underlines for us the yearly round of fetes celebrated in Augustus' honour during his lifetime — and the length of time over which the Roman citizenry was committed to such ritual celebration.

By the time Augustus died, the Roman people had been celebrating each year his victory over Antony and Cleopatra for more than forty years. Many places in the East had established that date as the beginning of a new era. The people of (the Roman province of) Asia had been celebrating his birthday (September 23rd) as New Year's Day for over two decades. The Roman people had been celebrating the day with an annual sacrifice for more than four decades. By senatorial resolution, they had been calling their sixth month (the eighth in the modern calendar) Augustus for more than twenty years. (Pick a Prime Minister who was in office two decades ago and/or before that, and imagine that we had been calling the name of a month after him for that period. It is longer than the lifetime of many people who attended the lecture.)

For about the same amount of time (since 9 BC) they had enjoyed an annual festival on January 30th (coincidentally [?], the birthday of Livia) to commemorate the dedication of the Altar of Peace, a monument which so well illustrates the Grand Design.



Altar of Augustan Peace, Rome (courtesy Manfred Hyde, WikiCommons)

It was a decorative addition to the physical landscape with powerful symbolism in play — not least, it seems, an annual light show when the shadow of Augustus' 'horologium', an obelisk brought by Augustus from Heliopolis (Sun City) in Egypt and erected in Rome's Field of Mars to measure the year's passage, reached towards the Altar on Augustus' birthday. (Exciting new computer calculations are in the offing and we await their release.) Augustus was the Sun's representative on earth.

The Altar of (Augustan) Peace was built to commemorate the man's return to Rome in 13 B.C.; his 'homecomings' were occasions for outpourings of joy and then installed as annual festivals. Another saw the establishment of the Temple of Fortuna Redux (Returning Fortune) in 19 B.C.



Relief on the Altar of Augustan Peace

The day, October 12th, was named the Augustalia. By the time Augustus died, it had received its ceremonial recognition thirty-two times. Horace's articulation of national sentiment stuns us:



Great guardian of the race of Romulus /Born when the gods were being good to us, / You have been absent now / Too long. // Restore, kind leader (dux bone), to your countrymen / The light they lack. For like the sunshine when / It's springtime, where your face / Lights on the people, there / The weather turns to fair /And the day travels with a happier pace.

The translation above is by James Michie, who shares a name with, but is not to be confused with John Lundie Michie, one of the first four professors of the University of Queensland and a great champion of the Classics in this state, after whom the Michie Building was named.

It is, just in passing, a little ironic that the good Dux, il Duce, should be associated with the sun's radiant light, given the problem that the very mortal Augustus had with sunlight in reality, a problem underlined in a paper with which the Friends might be familiar: I refer to the paper by Dr John Ratcliffe and Professor Bob Milns ['Did Augustus Caesar suffer from psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis?' *Ancient History Bulletin*, 22 1 - 2 (2010), 71-81].)

As great a poet as Horace was, it is hard to avoid the word 'unctuous'. The age of imperial panegyric was not simply just around the corner; it was on the block.

Is there any wonder that the historian Tacitus observed, with reference to the death of Augustus, that there were few at the time who recalled 'the Republic' (used so artfully here to depict, probably for the first time, a past era)? The new phenomenological landscape had recalibrated Roman minds.

**MITHRIDATES, MITHRIDATUM, AND THE SUCCESS OF A LIE?**

**Yvette Hunt**

Mithridates VI Eupator of Pontus was a fascinating character whose interest in toxicology has shaped not just his own place in history, but the history of compound drugs well into and beyond the 18th Century.

We know of his toxicological studies because Pompey had his freedman not only collect this research, but also translate it into Latin. As for his practical use of it, Sallust wrote that Mithridates poisoned his own mother, and numerous sources state that he used the results of his research on himself.

Our earliest extant source, Valerius Maximus, states that Mithridates also used poison successfully to commit suicide; the only source to say so. All later

sources say that he attempted to poison himself, and was unable to do so owing to his successful use of antidotes and had a bodyguard kill him with a sword.



**Mithridatus as Heracles**  
1st century Roman portrait  
(Louvre Museum - Wikicommons media)

The identity of these antidotes was the subject of conjecture in antiquity. Pliny states that the following prescription for a prophylactic antidote was written in Mithridates' own handwriting: two dried walnuts, two figs, 20 rue leaves, and a grain of salt compounded together and eaten while fasting to protect the consumer from all poisons for one day. This extremely easy compound took me less than twenty minutes to prepare, yet Pliny describes another 'Mithridatic antidote' (mithridatum) which appears to bear no resemblance to the fig compound. It:

... is composed of fifty-four ingredients, no two of them having the same weight, while of some is prescribed one-sixteenth part of one denarius. Which of the gods, in the name of Truth, fixed these absurd proportions?

Pliny's statement is hyperbolic to some extent. Two earlier mithridata recipes feature fewer ingredients: Celsus' (who says that Mithridates took this every day) used thirty-eight ingredients, Scribonius Largus' incomplete recipe used twenty-two, and both use same amounts throughout. After Pliny, Galen records four different mithridata, each containing forty-four, forty-three, fifty-four, and forty-nine ingredients. While clearly unrelated to the fig recipe, all are named after the king, and the version of history which states that he could not be killed by poison became the only version of Mithridates' death which continued to be recorded.

This complicated compound named after him had an afterlife of its own. In addition to preventing people from being poisoned, these drugs began to

be used to treat a variety of medical conditions; Damocrates' mithridatum was recorded by Galen as a panacea, and perhaps as a result, these miraculous compounds were not cheap.

The complete extant recipes of the 1st and 2nd centuries all included expensive imported ingredients: cinnamon, frankincense, storax, saffron, opobalsam, ginger, myrrh, castoreum, and poppy derivatives. According to the Diocletian Price Edict (AD 301) all of these cost 100 denarii/lb or more: Arabian saffron was the most expensive at 2000 denarii/lb.

These figures are interesting because the 3rd Century *Medicina Plinii* claimed that mithridatum was sold for 20,000 sesterces (5000 denarii) per pound. In addition, it states that simpler and cheaper drugs would do the job as well, and that doctors used imported ingredients to make it unnecessarily expensive.

Given that the most expensive known ingredient was less than half the price recorded, this indicates a significant mark-up which might reflect hyperbole on the author's part akin to Pliny's description, extreme price gouging, or a reflection of the worth of doctors' knowledge at the time.

The Greek medical traditions continue to refer to mithridata in later texts, and a similar description of the compound as a panacea is included in Aetius in the 6th Century, and an alternative recipe for a mithridatum recorded by Galen is included in Paulus (7th Century). Later references are rare, but an 11th Century Saxon medical text states that mithridatum was sent by the Patriarch of Jerusalem to Alfred the Great, but few other references are made prior to the 16th Century.

Throughout that century, mithridatum continued to be recommended, manufactured, and sold. While Milanese physicians queried whether its ingredients were properly identified, Francis Bacon named mithridatum as one of the few compounds whose ingredients were not substituted by doctors. Bacon's attitude might have been influenced by the Act for Physicians and their Privileges, 1540. This Act gave London's College of Physicians the right to appoint four inspectors of 'Apothecary Wares, Drugs and Stuffs' who could examine any apothecary's wares and order their destruction if found defective. Bacon became supportive of the apothecaries against the College, but the supervision of drugs, especially the manufacture of mithridatum was a growing trend throughout Europe. In 1586, only one London apothecary, William Besse in Poultly, was permitted by the College to manufacture mithridatum.

In 1625, this was expanded to three. The publication of the *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis* in

1618 included the recipe for mithridatum recorded by the College, and its translation from Latin to English by Culpeper in 1649 made this recipe more accessible.



Page from *Culpeper's Herbal* (courtesy Wikicommons)

Mithridatum continued to be used to treat a multitude of problems throughout the 17th Century, including the plague, but by the 18th Century its efficacy was questioned by the 1745 publication *Antitheriaca, Essay on Mithridatum and Theriaca*, by the Cambridge educated doctor, William Heberden. On account of his lobbying, mithridatum was removed from the *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis* in 1788, while similar compounds continued to be included in the *Pharmacopoeia's* of the continent until 1884.

While it began life possibly only containing four ingredients chosen by King Mithridates to prevent poisoning and might not have even worked, his name was lent to a compound drug and a legend was born: a drug which could not only prevent poisonings, but could cure everything.

Unfortunately, this compound's centuries of success might have been based on a lie.

**CATULLUS: THE PASSIONATE POET WHO INSULTED JULIUS CAESAR**

**Don Barrett**



**Gaius Valerius Catullus**  
(statue at Sirmione, Lake Garda, Italy)

Gaius Valerius Catullus (84-54 BC) wrote a wide variety of stunning lyrics. His poems celebrated the environment, friends and enemies, marriage and family life. Above all, they provide an unforgettable record of a tumultuous love affair. Some of them are very explicit, even shocking to many, but there is enough to cherry-pick from to suit any audience. Secondary school students love Catullus.

Catullus was born in Verona in Cisalpine Gaul to an equestrian family socially prominent enough to have entertained Julius Caesar when he was governor of both Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul.

Catullus' poems mention several prominent contemporaries, including Cicero, Pompey and Julius Caesar. He praises Cicero in extravagant terms:

*Most eloquent of all the sons of Rome that have ever been, o Marcus Tullius, or will be in the years to come, Catullus sends you his warmest thanks, he who is the worst of poets, the very worst of poets in the same proportion as you are the very best of advocates. (Poem 49)*

These rolling phrases reflect Cicero's own ample tones, but is the poem really a parody? Is Catullus really serious or is his tongue firmly in his cheek? Can we accept his claim to be the worst of poets at face value? If not, what can we make of his calling Cicero "best of advocates"?

Let us turn to Pompey or, more particularly, a woman believed to be Pompey's wife:

*When Pompey was first consul, there were two men who shared Maecilia's favours. Now that he's consul a second time, it's two again – but with three noughts added. Adultery: it's such a fruitful seed! (Poem 113)*

Julius Caesar, during his time in Spain, Gaul and Britain, had as his chief engineer a fellow called Mamurra. Catullus loathed Mamurra. Jealousy might have been a factor: Catullus may well have resented the way Mamurra became an important figure in Caesar's world. In a number of poems he depicts him as a pretentious upstart who had made a fortune with the help of Caesar and Pompey, run through the lot and become bankrupt. Apart from all else, Caesar and Mamurra were bed-fellows. Addressing Caesar as Sodomite Romulus, Catullus upbraids him for tolerating Mamurra. Readers with a strong stomach wishing to see precisely what Catullus wrote should refer to Poems 29 and 57. The following paragraph is perforce a cleaned up summary.

Caesar allowed the arrogantly affluent Mamurra to spend and guzzle to repletion. The two shared the same bed – and the same incurable sexually transmitted infection. They also seduced girls in a spirit of friendly rivalry.

The historian Suetonius describes Caesar's reaction:

*He never entertained spite and hatred against any man so deeply that he would not willingly renounce it when offered the opportunity. When Catullus, who had, as Caesar himself observed, fixed such a stain on his character as could never be erased, he asked Catullus to pardon him, invited him to supper the same day and continued to stay with Catullus' father as had been his custom. (Julius Caesar 73)*

Was Caesar the more tolerant as he knew that at least two of the qualities ascribed to himself in the poems, sodomite and womaniser, could be applied equally to Catullus, sixteen years his junior and arguably a work in progress? The answer seems to be yes. Catullus, although the great love of his life was one particular woman, was not averse to more than one kind of sexual dalliance. He had a boy lover, Juventius. Such relationships were tolerated in ancient Rome just as they were in Greece. The younger of the pair allegedly benefited from his older partner's patronage, his wealth and his worldly wisdom. The arrangement has been termed pedagogical pederasty. Several of Catullus' lyrics are unblushingly explicit about the phenomenon:

*Juventius, if someone were to grant me my fill of kissing your honey-sweet eyes, I'd kiss them and keep kissing them till I'd reached three hundred thousand. Then, never satisfied, I'd feel hungry to begin again. (Poem 48)*

Juventius could be quite the little tormentor, as Catullus found out when he stole a kiss without permission:

*I paid the penalty. I remember spending more than an hour excusing myself. No tears of mine could soften your savage mood one little bit. The moment it happened, you flooded your lips with water, then wiped them with each finger in turn in case any contagion from my mouth might linger as though you'd been infected by some foul tart's saliva. (Poem 99)*

So Caesar could look at Catullus and see another reprobate like himself, though not as yet so far gone.

But now to look at something more pleasant. Catullus paints an idyllic picture of a yacht that has travelled the world and now sits peacefully at anchor on a tranquil lake. It rocks gently on the undulating water. Catullus uses an iambic metre throughout the poem, a short syllable followed by a long, u –, throughout the poem:

*phaselus ille quem videtis, hospites,  
ait fuisse navium celerrimus,*

and one can only admire a clever translator, James Michie, who has produced an English version with exactly the same rhythm:

*The yacht you see here, friends, says that  
she's been  
The fastest piece of timber ever seen.*

There follows a list of places the yacht has visited, after which she devotes her prow to the twins Castor and Pollux, whom sailors invoked to ensure a safe voyage. (Poem 4)

Then there is a funny BYO invitation to dinner:

*My dear Fabullus, I promise you a good dinner at my house within the next few days, (note the unspecified date) if you're lucky, and if you bring with you good food and plenty, to say nothing of a fair companion, wine, wit and a full range of belly laughs. If, I repeat, you bring these with you, my charming sir, I promise you a good dinner. For your Catullus' purse is full of cobwebs. (He had a house in Rome, a place in the country and a yacht!) But in return you shall receive the quintessence of love, for I shall give you perfume presented to my sweetheart by the Loves and Cupids, and, when you smell it, you will ask the gods to make you all nose. (Poem 13)*

The usual dinner invitation has been turned upside down. Instead of the customary token gift, some wine or confectionery - the fashion today is Cadbury's Favourites - the guest has to bring everything because the host is allegedly broke. But then there is the intriguing twist: the promise of a

ravishing perfume from his mistress. Who could resist such an invitation?

One of my students summed up the poem in an amusing haiku:

*Don't trouble yourself. (5)  
Just bring girls, wine, laughs, feasts, for (7)  
My girl's heaven scent. (5)*

Now for the love affair that dominated Catullus' life. From the moment he set eyes on a woman called Clodia, he was hopelessly smitten. She was having a conversation with some man, and all Catullus could do was to gaze in speechless wonder:

*He seems to me like a god, he seems, if so it may be, to surpass the gods, who, sitting opposite, again and again gazes upon you and hears your sweet laughter.*

He's having an epiphany. The two having the conversation seem to be gods. Now for the symptoms of infatuation, physical and otherwise:

*This it is that robs me, alas, of all my senses. Once I set eyes on you, Lesbia, (more about this name below) my voice is gone and gone my wits. My tongue is palsied, a subtle flame steals down through my limbs, (this is peripheral neuropathy!) my ears hum with a noise of their own (this is tinnitus!) and my eyes are veiled with a twofold night.*

The last few lines I call the "cold shower" stanza. Catullus snaps out of his reverie and gives himself a good talking to:

*Idleness, my dear Catullus, is bad for you. In your idleness you run riot and want too much. Idleness has before now ruined kings and wealthy cities. (Poem 51)*

Some critics say the stanza simply does not belong with this poem. But it is quite consistent with other poems where Catullus tries to pull himself into gear, so I believe this one belongs where it is. It might also remove any impression that he is grovelling at Lesbia's feet.

Now what sort of a person was this goddess?

Clodia was the sister of Publius Clodius, a patrician and, later, with the help of Julius Caesar, a plebeian tribune. He was a social incendiary, notorious for his violence and wanton ways. He and his sister loathed Cicero. She was married to a consul Quintus Metellus Celer ("the swift"). He was governor of Cisalpine Gaul in 62. It is likely that he took the young Catullus under his wing and introduced him to some leading lights in Roman society, including, of course, Clodia. He died in 59.

Clodia could have married Catullus then, but she did not.



**Lesbia and her sparrow**  
**Sir Edward Poynter, 1919**  
 (Wikicommons media)

Clodia was known as Clodia Metelli, Metellus' Clodia, but in reality she was everybody's Clodia. Cicero described her as follows:

*If any woman without a husband were to open her house to the desires of all, openly adopt the lifestyle of a prostitute and arrange to frequent the dinner parties of men who are perfect strangers, if she were to do this in the city, in the gardens and the crowded environment of Baiae, if, in fact, she were to behave not only in her general demeanour but in her adornment and her companions, not only with her blazing glances and the licentiousness of her gossip but also with her embraces, her kisses, her beach parties, sailing parties and dinner parties, so as to give the appearance of a prostitute, if any young man should happen to "be" with her, would you think he intended to storm a fortress of chastity? (Pro Caelio 49)*

In short, Clodia was a piece of work. But we have to be cautious about Cicero's description. It is important to know the context: he is in a court defending one of Clodia's castoffs, Marcus Caelius Rufus, whom Clodia has accused of poisoning her. So naturally Cicero attacks the complainant's character as only he can.

Clearly Catullus saw another side to her. She was a cultured person. We know she wrote many poems herself. Cicero acknowledged that. Catullus in his poems addresses her as Lesbia, "Lady of Lesbos", the island that has been so much in the news lately.

This was not just to protect a married woman from the scandal of adultery. The name called up associations with that romantic island, which was then a source of inspiration, a centre of music, poetry, gorgeous women, beauty contests, an

environment of peaceful inlets and wildflowers. It was alive with the spirit of Sappho, a Greek poet of the seventh century BC, the leader of a coterie of women who led an idyllic existence devoted to the arts. Indeed the "epiphany" poem was in part a translation by Catullus of a poem by Sappho. Clodia, therefore, would have been flattered to be called Lesbia.

Sappho's most passionate love poems were addressed to women, but Ovid, the great story teller, invented a male lover for her called Phaon in his *Heroides*, a series of laments by celebrated women abandoned by their men. Thanks to Ovid, this fiction became the best known episode of Sappho's life. The legend is that, because Phaon rejected her, she threw herself over a cliff.

At all events, Catullus' affair with Clodia took off. Passion soared to a dizzy height with the "kissing" poems:

*Let us live, my Lady of Lesbos, and let us love. Let us value at a single farthing all the tittle-tattle of the old and dourer sort.*

(Has she raised the objection "But what will people say?")

*Suns may set and rise again, but for us, when once our brief light has set, there waits one never-ending night of sleep. (Then he becomes more urgent.) Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred, then another thousand, then a second hundred, then still yet another thousand, then a hundred. Then, when we have made up many thousands, we shall confuse the reckoning so that neither we may know it nor any ill-wisher have the power to look askance, knowing as he does there is such wealth of kisses. (Poem 5)*

(It is sobering at this point to read Dr Henry Gibbon's scientific definition of a kiss: the anatomical juxtaposition of two *obicularis oris* muscles in a state of contraction.)

The poem is an elegant appeal to both emotion and reason. The concluding sentence shows a fundamental difference between pagan and Christian thought. The old Christian hymn adjures us to "count our blessings one by one" so that we may recognise and acknowledge our debt to a God of loving kindness. Pagan thought, on the contrary, insisted that one conceal one's good fortune lest it attract the evil eye of a jealous god who was quick to resent and penalise any excess of happiness and good fortune enjoyed by mere human beings.

That Australian expatriate Clive James, whom Cambridge doctors keep pulling back from the jaws of death, has written a fascinating but wordy parody of Poem 5 in pseudo-scientific style. Here is some of it:



*Authorise us to breathe, my Lesbia, and authorise us to infatuate...Pony up to me 31.62 squared of pleasant lip smacks, then the square root of 10000 more...When we have manufactured an abundance of reactions between the biospheres, completing human osculation, it is no longer required to utilise algorithmic functions to calculate the unmitigated folio of intimacy and risk backbiting on a grudgingness quota.*

James is too clever by half. Far more appealing is Robert Herrick's simple, elegant lyric *Give me a Kiss*:

*Give me a kiss, and to that kiss add a score; then to that twenty add a hundred more... and, when that is done, let's kiss afresh as though we'd just begun.*

The kissing continues:

*You ask, Lesbia, how often I must kiss you to be quite content.*

(Has she become impatient with her lover's demands?)

*Your bemused Catullus would be quite content if he might give you kisses as many as the sands of Africa that lie in silphium-bearing Cyrenaica between the oracle of sultry Jove and old Battus' hallowed tomb or as many as the constellations that, in the hush of night, watch the stolen loves of men, kisses too many for the meddlesome to count or evil tongue bewitch. (Poem 7)*

Most of the poem moves in a fantasy world, where impossible questions receive elaborately poetic answers. It is replete with esoteric learning which presumably the cultivated Clodia would have enjoyed. Then at the end it returns to the real world of gossip and malice.

But Lesbia suffers a bereavement. Her pet bird has died, and Catullus associates himself with her grief:

*Mourn, you Loves and Cupids and every man with any sense of loveliness. My sweetheart's thrush is dead, the thrush that was my sweetheart's darling, dearer to her than her own eyes. Honeysweet it was and knew its own mistress as well as a girl knows her mother. Never would it stir from its mistress' lap but, hopping about now this way, now that, forever chirruped to her alone. Now it goes by the shadowy path to that place from which they say no man returns. A curse upon you, accursed shades of Death, that devour all things pretty. Such a pretty thrush have you taken from me. (It's his loss too!) O the sin of it! O poor little thrush! Because of you my sweetheart's dear eyes are now red and sadly swollen with weeping. (Poem 3).*

Most translators call the bird a sparrow. I prefer "thrush" because sparrows do not chirrup, whereas thrushes are renowned for it.

A few scholars with overheated imaginations have given an obscene meaning to the lively creature on Lesbia's lap which she loved to play with. Well, that takes a certain kind of mind. All I can say is that, when Catullus wanted to get down and dirty, he was rarely subtle about it, quite the contrary.

The poem is elegant, even playful. For example, Catullus surely did not believe seriously that dead animals went down to Hades. But, without wallowing in sentimentality, he helps Lesbia to detach herself from her grief.

In Catullus' eyes, no woman could compare with Clodia. These mocking words are addressed to Mamurra's wife, a list of a woman's good points turned upside down:

*Greetings, lady of the not very small nose, not pretty feet, not jet black eyes, not slender fingers, not dry mouth (she dribbled!) and certainly not over-refined tongue. Mistress of the bankrupt of Formiae (Mamurra's home town), is it you the province calls pretty? Is it with you my Lesbia is compared? O tasteless, witless age! (Poem 43)*

For a time Catullus is completely complacent in the relationship. He regards Clodia's husband as a fool:

*Lesbia says many harsh things to me when her husband's present, and this is a great joy to the simpleton. You senseless mule, if she had no thought for what's between us and said nothing, she'd be heart-whole. As it is, her snarling and butting in mean not only that she can't keep us out of her thoughts, but, what's more to the point, that she's cross. In other words, she's burning with love, and so she keeps on talking. (Poem 83)*

A mule, of course, is the offspring of a male donkey and a female horse and is usually sterile. So there is a subtle reflection on Celer's sexuality. Mules too are proverbially slow. So much for Celer, "the swift". As Catullus paints it, the relationship has its stormy periods but is fundamentally sound. But then things begin to unravel. Tranquillity is diminishing:

*Lesbia is always saying nasty things to me and never leaves me in peace. Hang me if she doesn't love me! How so? Because it's six of one and half a dozen of the other: I'm always praying to be rid of her, but hang me if I don't love her! (Poem 92)*

Catullus certainly wants the relationship to endure, but he has moments of doubt. He wants confirmation of what he feels sure of:

*You promise me, my darling, that this love of ours shall be happy and shall endure for all time. Mighty gods, grant that this can be a true promise,*

*sincerely spoken and from the heart. Then we may prolong forever through all our life this compact of inviolable affection. (Poem 109)*

The doubts increase. The poems become more bitter:

*The woman I love says there's none she'd rather wed than me, no, not if Jove himself should woo her. She says. But what a woman says to eager lover should be writ in wind and running water. (Poem 70).*

Then disillusion sets in. At first his manner is dignified and controlled:

*You once used to say, Lesbia, that Catullus was your only love, and that you would rather have me in your arms than Jove. I loved you then, not merely as the common sort love a mistress, but as a father loves his sons and sons-in-law.*

Then control slips away and indignation rises:

*Now I know you, and so, though my passion is more extravagant, you are in my sight much cheaper and of much less account. "How can that be?" you ask. Because such wrong as I have suffered makes a lover more of a lover but less of a friend. (Poem 72)*

Clodia was the one who stopped loving, not Catullus:

*No woman can truly say she was so loved as my Lesbia was loved by me. Never in any compact was there such loyalty as was found on my side in my love of you. (Poem 87)*

Next comes a perfect statement of what a person goes through when pulled two ways:

*I hate and I love. Perhaps you ask why it is so. I don't know, but I feel it happening and I am in torment. (Poem 85)*

It is all over and Catullus tries to come to grips with the bleak situation. He is an emotional mess. He refers to himself variously in the first, second and third person, an indication of the intensity of the struggle. Ideas and feelings just tumble out, not properly, not organised. But there is no self-pity here, no display of esoteric learning:

*Unhappy Catullus, have done with folly, and what you see is lost as lost write down. Once the sun shone bright for you in the days when you used to go where your sweetheart led, she that was loved by me as no other shall be...Catullus now is firm. No longer will he seek you or importune you against your will...Who now will seek you out? Who will think you pretty?...Whom now will you*

*love? Whose shall you be called? Whom will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite? But do you, Catullus, be firm in your resolve. (Poem 8)*

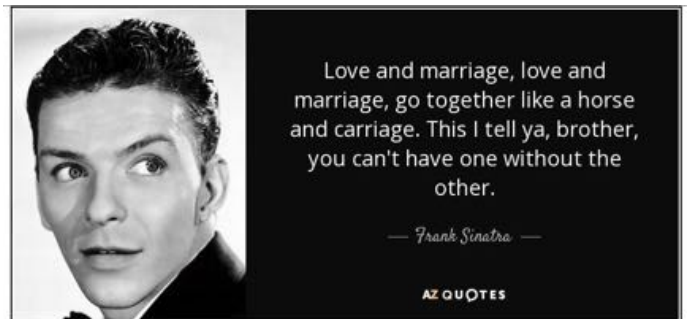
After that, it is a relief to turn to Catullus' beautiful wedding hymn, where his views concerning the joys of love, marriage and family life shine forth:

*What god is more to be sought by lovers who are loved? Which of the gods will men reverence more, o Hymen Hymenaeus?...Without you Venus can capture nothing of good report, nothing of comfort. But with your approval she can. Who would dare to compare himself with this god?*

The spirit of the hymn is captured in George Rennie's sculpture depicting Cupid kindling Hymen's marriage torch.

*Without you no house can produce children, there can be no offspring to support a parent... But with your approval there can be. Who would compare himself with this god? (Poem 61)*

Two thousand years later a popular singer was of exactly the same mind.



That Catullus was capable of strong family feeling is plain from the verses he addresses to his dead brother:

*So brother, dearer than my own life-breath, never again shall I see you. Yet I swear I'll love you till I die and keep your death fresh in my verses. (Poem 65)*

Algernon Swinburne, notorious in his own time for his licentious poems and ballads, addressed a poem to Catullus, whom he admired and called brother:

*My brother, my Valerius, dearest head of all whose crowning bay-leaves crown their mother Rome, in the notes first heard of thine I read my brother... How should I, living, fear to call thee, dead, my brother?*

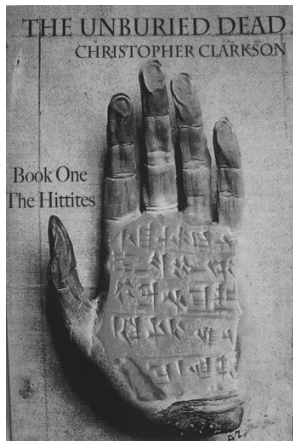
A touching tribute from one kindred spirit to another.

**THE UNBURIED DEAD BY CHRISTOPHER CLARKSON<sup>2</sup>**

Dr Christopher Clarkson is an archaeologist in the School of Social Science at the University of Queensland. He has research projects in Australia, India, Africa and France investigating Palaeolithic human behaviour, settlement and subsistence via the study of lithic technology. He has compared Palaeolithic core technologies in Africa and Australia and has investigated the technological and cognitive capabilities of Neanderthals in SW France, as well as the effects of the Toba Super Eruption on hominid populations in India, and the dispersal of modern humans from Africa to Australia.

For relaxation, Dr Clarkson writes historical novels which he publishes online. Hearing that his two-volume novel *The Unburied Dead* is set in the world of the Hittites I invited Emeritus Professor Trevor Bryce to review it for *Nova*.<sup>3</sup>

**Review by Trevor Bryce**



During the early 12th century BC, massive upheavals throughout Late Bronze Age Greece and large parts of the Near Eastern world brought to an end many centres of Bronze Age power, and the collapse and disappearance of their acolytes or subject states. Drought, famine, earthquakes, a breakdown in international trading networks, uprisings by subject peoples against their rulers, or a combination of all of these have been suggested as causes for this mysterious collapse.

Christopher Clarkson has put forward a very different explanation for the collapse in *The Unburied Dead*. Set in the Hittite world at the end of the Bronze Age, the novel intertwines three main stories. We begin with excavations at a newly discovered (fictitious) site in the Taurus mountains of southern Anatolia (Turkey). A spectacular discovery

is made, but it conceals a horrifying secret. Right from the beginning, we learn that all is not well when an officious and mysterious Turk arrives at the excavation, demanding to see the skeletons that have been unearthed, and that the site be shut down immediately. Though claiming to be the New Director General of Antiquities, we, along with the excavators, from Britain, Israel, and Australia, quickly realise he is not what he says he is, and from there on the plot thickens as the reasons for the Turk's sudden appearance become ever more mystifying.

So what is going on? Be warned. Clarkson's story, though displaying the expertise of a professional archaeologist, belongs to the genre of science fiction – or more accurately, horror fiction. So if you're into zombies and vampires, this is a book for you.

Of the novel's three-stories-in-one, which eventually all come together, the oldest is set at the end of the Hittite empire, the later ones both set in the present. The common link is that the horror unleashed from the Bronze Age site resurfaces in today's world and poses a severe existential threat to all of us living in it. 'Yes, I've heard it all before', you say. Certainly, the theme of dark forces set loose by investigators of the past wreaking havoc in the modern world is an oft-repeated one. But it's worth a fresh hearing – or reading. The three stories are skilfully unfolded as they separately progress, with the baton passed from one to another in successive chapters. The author's style is clear and spare – unencumbered by the pretentious, pompous, and sometimes banal verbiage that infest so many novels set in the ancient past.

Clarkson has researched his Hittite material well. There is an authentic ring about his description of Hittite people, their cities, and their customs, and only an occasional lapse in his factual information; for example, he confuses the Upper and Lower City of the Hittite capital Hattusha, and his claim that the Egyptian, like the Hittite, kingdom was destroyed at the end of the Bronze Age is incorrect. Nesha was indeed once a great city, but was of no significance at the end of the Late Bronze Age, even if a settlement existed there at all then.

Of course, mere historical accuracy should never get in the way of a good story, as Shakespeare and many other literary luminaries have so ably demonstrated. Clarkson has presented us with a rich mix of the macabre – inspired by a wide array of classic horror tales meshed with a dollop of Indiana Jones, all within a largely authentic Hittite context. There's also a whiff of Walt Disney in the ancient

<sup>2</sup> Two volumes, self-published, Brisbane, 2015. The first volume. *The Unburied Dead: Zombies and the Bronze Age Collapse: Book1 - The Hittites* is available on Kindle through Amazon.com, price \$3.01.

story, three of whose 'heroes' are two children, brother and sister, and their little dog.

I have to say that I think the book is considerably overwritten. Its 583 pages could be cut by about a third – eliminating a number of unnecessary repetitions and explanations, cutting back on the number of characters, and eliminating details and side issues that distract from the main story.

My main concern is that the story peaks too early. In Classic horror fiction, suspense is built up slowly; details of the full horror are revealed just a bit at a time, and it's our own imagination, and fear of the only partly known, that contribute much to the telling of the tale. In this case, the full horror of the 'unburied dead', with their ghastly appearance, smells and noises, and the terrible things they do to their victims are revealed too early, and subsequent repetitions of very similar scenes of the havoc and destruction they cause become a bit tedious. Some ruthless pruning is called for.

The two stories set in the present generally work very well. There are gripping episodes, and we sometimes feel frustrated when a scene is just reaching its climax when we break off and go back to the Hittite tale. Of course that is a standard ploy used by many story-tellers ('Meanwhile, back at the farm...'), often successfully.

Even in its present, uncondensed form Clarkson's novel is a good read – though definitely not one for the kiddies.

**MUDLARKING ON THE THAMES<sup>4</sup>**

**Pamela Rushby**

When we travel to London, we always go on one (or more) of the walks conducted by London Walks. Led by Blue Badge guides, historians, actors, writers and archaeologists, these fascinating walks get you into places you couldn't normally go – and wouldn't even know about.

There was one walk I'd been wanting to do for years, but the stars had never aligned – or, more correctly, the tides hadn't cooperated.

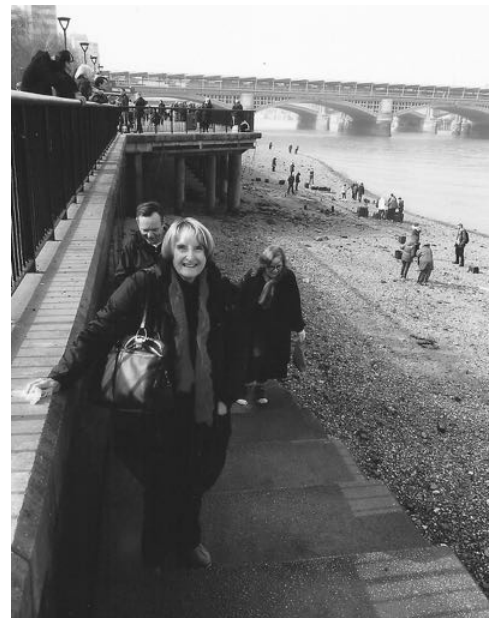
**The Thames Beachcombing Walk**

This walk can only be done when the tides in the Thames (an estuary, and tidal as far up the river as Richmond) are at their lowest. This March the stars aligned for us, and we were in London at the right time. So, at 10.30am on 12 March, we were at

Mansion House tube station, ready to go, for some archaeologist-guided beachcombing.

Mudlarking in the Thames began around the 18th century and continued into the early 20th century. People, often children, scavenged the shore at low tide for any small items they could sell, such as coal, nails, rope and bones. They were the very poorest of the poor, and scratched a miserable existence from the items they found. Today, people still search the Thames shores at low tide, but now their interest is in London's archaeology and history. There's even a Society of Thames Mudlarks.

There have been some amazing finds over the years, from periods ranging from Neolithic through Bronze Age, Roman, Saxon and Victorian to modern times. They include the fossilised tooth of a Megalodon Shark, which lived between 28 and 1.5 million years ago; chain mail; religious pendants; coins; buttons; Tudor pins and floor tiles; cutlery; china. And jewellery and gold – which is, of course, what everyone hopes they'll find.



**Mudlarker and author, Pamela Rushby (and FoA Executive member)**

We'd been told to wear 'sensible shoes' and to bring a plastic bag 'for your finds', so it seemed we could be fairly confident of finding something.

A small group joined us outside the tube station and then our guide arrived, introducing herself as Fiona, an intertidal archaeologist. This, we learned, is an archaeologist specialising in the area above low-water mark, and below high-water mark.

<sup>4</sup> Older readers may remember the 1950 hit film 'The Mudlark' which featured the adventures of a young mudlark who found a cameo brooch portraying Queen Victoria and made his way to Windsor Castle where, after being arrested, he eventually meets the Queen.

The first thing Fiona cleared up for us was that we would not be mudlarking. We were told, firmly, that ‘mudlarking’ implies actual digging, be it with tools, hands or feet, and this requires a Thames Foreshore Permit. We would be beachcombing, which means we would only be permitted to pick up objects lying on the surface of the ground.



Fellow mudlarkers

Fiona explained, as she led us across Southwark Bridge, that the south bank we were aiming for had been part of Roman London, that there had been Roman quays in the area, and that there had once been a forest there. Its submerged remains can be seen at low water, and the stumps of the 40 trees that now remained had been radiocarbon dated to 750BC.

Later, this area had been home to butcheries, a glass factory, ship building and leather works. Much of the waste from these had ended up in the river. Over many years the Thames had become so polluted that it was declared biologically dead. However, treatment plants built in the 1950s had resulted in cleaning up the river to the extent that it is now declared to be the cleanest river in the world, flowing through a major city.

But, Fiona warned us, there are still dangers lurking in the Thames. Issuing us all with disposable gloves, she told us about Weil’s Disease, and believe me, you wouldn’t want to catch it. The disease is an infection caused by bacteria called Leptospira. It can be transmitted by water or soil containing animal urine coming into contact with eyes, mouth or nose, or breaks in the skin. Untreated, it can be fatal. So, we were warned that if we developed severe flu-like symptoms (and that meant woman-flu, Fiona stressed, not man-flu), we should take ourselves to a doctor at once, and tell him what we’d been doing. In the meantime, we were told that once we’d handled any items we picked up from the foreshore, not to touch our faces. And it’s amazing how itchy your nose gets when you’ve been told not to touch it ...

Then, we were led down a long flight of slippery steps – the tide rises and falls nine feet in this area

– to the shingle along the edge of the river, and turned loose to fossick. Fiona encouraged us to pick up anything that looked interesting, and she’d have a look at it and try to identify it. We could keep an item or two as a souvenir, but if we found anything very interesting, it would have to go to the Museum of London to be photographed and catalogued, though it could then be returned to us. Any precious metals, however (we wished), would have to go to Treasury.

Already other groups and individuals were working their slow way along the edge of the water, so away we went – before they found all the good stuff.

So what did our group find? Lots of animal bones. Bits of glass from a glassworks, interesting shapes of molten glass waste. Small pieces of china. Bits of bricks, and whole bricks. A cassette tape (label unreadable). Bits of metal hawsers. Leather offcuts from a shoemaker. Many pieces of clay pipes (these were throw-away items, so are common, but hard to date unless they have marks stamped on them). Ships’ nails (also hard to date, because the design was so right for its purpose that it didn’t change for hundreds of years).



Pam’s finds

I found: a piece of a clay pipe stem (no markings). Pieces of glass (modern, but polished by water and stones). Bones. A piece of a Victorian or Edwardian gas fitting. And a ship’s nail. (Almost definitely, I believe, from the Victory.)

We spent two happy hours fossicking our way along the Thames, before the tide began to turn. Most of our finds were returned to the shore, for someone else to exclaim over on another day, but we all took home a few small souvenirs to remind us of our day mudlarking. And to thank heaven that, unlike the real mudlarks, we hadn’t had to do it to survive.

**WHAT’S IN A WORD?**

**Bob Milns**

I never cease to be amazed at the changes that can happen to words – especially Greek and Latin words



– as they pass into other languages, mainly, I suppose, through popular mispronunciation over the passage of time. We can see this in a modest way in the pronunciation of English in Australia, where words such as ‘pie’ are now regularly pronounced ‘poy’ – and no doubt in the course of time will be so spelled.

Here are three good examples of words originally Greek or Latin that have changed beyond recognition in languages that have borrowed them.

Firstly, I’ll quote the example given by Dr Yvette Hunt in her recent Sunday Series talk, where she showed that the English word ‘treacle’, which, I am sure, we all remember, especially if we are in the 60+ age group. The word, incredible though it may sound, is the lineal descendant of the ancient Greek theriaka, which was the generic name for antidotes against the bites of wild beasts (theria) and poisonous creatures!

My next example is a Spanish word, frequently occurring in Spanish literature and history or English writers writing on such themes (I think I first encountered it as a youth in C S Forester’s splendid novel *The Earthly Paradise*). The word is hidalgo, defined as ‘a gentleman, nobleman, especially of the minor nobility’. The word is ultimately formed from three Latin words folded into one; but one should bear in mind that Spanish words beginning with ‘h’ are often from Latin words beginning with ‘f’, e.g. Latin ‘facere’ meaning ‘to do’ becomes in Spanish ‘hacer’. Latin ‘filius’, ‘a son’ becomes in Spanish ‘hijo’. Our word ‘hidalgo’ turns out to be the Spanish end-product of the Latin ‘filius de aliquo’, ‘a son from somebody or something’, or in full in Spanish ‘hijo de algo’. What would the Romans say!!

My last example is the word ‘frieze’, which is defined as ‘the horizontal band between the architrave and cornice of a classical entablature, especially one that is decorated with sculpture’ and, more generally, as ‘any ornamental band or strip on a wall’. The word comes from the Latin ‘Phrygium’ (sc. opus), i.e. a work from Phrygia. Phrygia was the name of a large country in western central Asia Minor, which was first an independent kingdom, then part of Seleucid Syria and then divided between two Roman provinces. Phrygia was famous for embroidery in gold and the term ‘Phrygian’ (sc. work) came to denote any band or strip decoration, whether in a private house or on a monumental public building such as the Parthenon at Athens. Over time the word ‘Phrygium’ became mutated into ‘fregio’ (Italian), ‘friso’ (Spanish), ‘frise’ (French) and our own ‘frieze’. Who would ever have imagined how much lurks behind that little English word ‘frieze’!

## THE ABDUCTION OF PERSEPHONE (PART 2)

Bob Milns

Her mother knew naught of this need  
And no-one to her cries gave heed  
As she searched for her girl.

At last to her the Sun did tell:  
‘Your daughter now is down in Hell  
In Hades’ clutch a shining pearl’.

To Zeus the mother went to seek  
Surrender of her child so meek  
Back to her mother’s care.

When Zeus refused Demeter’s plea,  
‘No more’, she said, ‘of me you’ll see  
In Olympus’ halls so fair’.

And o’er the earth she cast a blight,  
No crops could grow up to the light  
And all mankind was dying.

At this did Zeus, the king, give way:  
‘Your girl will be restored this day;  
Cease now your mournful sighing’.

But crafty Hades to the girl so sweet  
A pomegranate seed did give to eat;  
And thus was sprung his snare.



Hades and Persephone  
fresco in the tomb called ‘Eurydice’  
Vergina, Greece  
(Wikicommons media)

For since of Hades’ food she ate,  
Condemned she was to be his mate;  
A prize for him so rare.

Three months at least of every year  
She must by Hades’ side appear,  
The doleful queen of Hell.

The rest, by joyous mother’s side  
She helps, with love and filial pride,  
To make the earth’s fruits swell.

**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 of the Alumni Friends;  
Full time student membership is \$5.50.

*Correspondence should be addressed 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)  
Lynneth 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  
Dr Dorothy Watts  
Jason Yu (ex officio) President of AFUQ

**2016 FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY PROGRAM<sup>5</sup>**

**SUNDAY 14 AUGUST**

2pm

**THE ANTIKYTHERA MECHANISM**  
Emeritus Professor Bill Caelli AO  
(Faculty of Science and Engineering QUT)

+

**BETTY FLETCHER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD  
ANNOUNCEMENT**

**SUNDAY 11 SEPTEMBER**

2pm

**A NEW BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE  
THE GOTHIC INVASIONS OF GREECE IN THE 3RD  
CENTURY AD**

Dr Caillan Davenport

**SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER**

2pm

**MEMORY, HISTORY AND THE DOUBLE BURIAL OF  
LEONIDAS**

Dr Rashna Taraporewalla

**SUNDAY 6 NOVEMBER**

2pm

**GARUM AND SHIPS: GARUM PRODUCTION AND TRADE IN  
WESTERN HISPANIA**

Mrs Sue Edmondson

2.30pm

**ARISTOTLE: 2,400 YEARS ON**  
Emeritus Professor Bob Milns

**\*\* DATE CLAIMER\*\***

**FRIENDS OF ANTIQUITY  
END OF YEAR PARTY**

SATURDAY 19 NOVEMBER

WOMEN'S COLLEGE  
DINING ROOM

12 NOON  
PRE-LUNCH DRINKS  
FOLLOWED BY LUNCH

COST \$50 PER PERSON  
(SEE FLYER INSERT)

<sup>5</sup> The Sunday Series lectures will be held in Room E302 in the Forgan Smith Building. An entry donation of \$10 includes refreshments.