

# AMPHORA™

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## MYTHS FOR MILLIONS

by Marie Cleary

In 1853, Thomas Bulfinch was fifty-seven years old, a full-time bank clerk in Boston's financial district, living as a bachelor in a respectable boarding house. His formal academic life as a member of Harvard's Class of 1814 and, briefly, as a teacher at Boston Latin School had ended almost forty years earlier. Nevertheless, in 1853, Bulfinch made up his mind to write the book that made him famous, *The Age of Fable; or, Stories of Gods and Heroes*. In this work, Bulfinch democratized classical mythology, a branch of knowledge traditionally reserved for members of the small minority who had studied Greek and Latin. A public-spirited man, he aimed to give to Americans (both men and women) in the middle and lower classes knowledge they lacked for the cultural activities to which they aspired. *The Age of Fable* became one of the most popular works ever published in the United States. For the rest of the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth, the words Bulfinch and mythology were inseparable because of the alternate name of his book, *Bulfinch's Mythology*, given to it after he died. Today the book is still being reissued and sold.

Bulfinch was born in 1796 in Newton, Massachusetts, the son of Hannah and Charles Bulfinch, the architect of the Massachusetts State House, University Hall at Harvard College, and the Capitol in Washington. Although his

family had been wealthy and renowned in Boston, he himself grew up in some financial difficulty because, in the year of his birth, his father lost his own and his wife's sizable fortunes in a daring building project of his own design, the Tontine Crescent, which aimed at bringing Boston to the aesthetic level of contemporary London.

In spite of little money, his family helped him receive a gentleman's education. Bulfinch had learned classical mythology along with a great deal of Latin and some Greek at Boston Latin School, Phillips Exeter Academy, and Harvard College. In the standard course of readings in the ancient languages, prose predominated, but boys in Latin school and college typically read four ancient poems – Vergil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Latin, and Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Greek. They learned their mythology above all through the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. For centuries, Ovid's long poem was the main repository of stories from the classical myths. People who knew Ovid had a great advantage in understanding Western literature and art, which abounded in mythological images and references.

When Bulfinch was entering college at age fourteen (the usual age at the time), his expectation and that of his family had been that he would enter

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## The Palace of Fine Arts: Classical Architecture in San Francisco

by Mary-Kay Gamel

When we think of architecture in San Francisco, what usually comes to mind is nineteenth-century houses in various styles – Queen Anne, Eastlake, Stick, Italianate – now often painted in bright colors, or the Beaux-Arts buildings in Civic Center, such as City Hall and the War Memorial Opera House. A few significant buildings in San Francisco, however, are inspired by Greco-Roman architecture. Two are temples to commerce. The Old Mint at the corner of Fifth and Mission Streets was one of the last Greek Revival buildings in the United States. Completed in 1874, it survived the great earthquake and fire of 1906 and for years was one of only three mints in the country, as late as 1934 holding one-third of U. S. gold reserves. Its severe exterior of



Fig. 1. The Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco. Looking over the lagoon towards the peristyle and the rotunda. Photo credit: Thomas A. Vogler.

granite and sandstone features a pedimented central temple façade with Doric columns. The Bank of California at 400 California Street, completed in 1908, features six huge Corinthian columns on each of its three unpeditmented façades. When expansion of the bank became necessary in 1967, the original structure was not

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one of the “learned professions.” Professional training, however, required the financial stability his family would only attain later when his father became Architect to the Capitol. Alternatively, Bulfinch might have chosen to be a writer. In that era, however, few Americans earned a living in that field.

In 1815, he found himself at a crossroads. Under pressure from his parents, and wanting to spare them the expense of further education for him, he went into his older brother’s hardware business. In an autobiographical sketch found among the family papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society, he describes this choice as “the great mistake of my life.” His “great mistake” led to a long period of stops and starts in the ways he earned his living. After repeated business failures, he finally found employment, in 1837, as Collections Clerk at the Merchants Bank of Boston, which guaranteed him a steady income and peace of mind. He would hold that position until he died in 1867.

The life he led as a bank employee was seemingly placid, but inwardly he struggled with an idea that had been taking shape in his mind. Throughout his adult life, Bulfinch had continued on his own the studies of history and literature he had loved in college. In the 1840’s, however, his mind branched out in new ways. Boston was churning with ideas. Scientists were launching new fields, a process he chronicled as Recording Secretary, 1842-1848, of the Boston Society of Natural History. The Transcendentalists – some people active in the group were among his acquaintances – were creating controversy with their philosophy. People in the Unitarian circles he frequented, such as Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, and Bulfinch’s close friend George Barrell Emerson, were breaking ground in education, including the improvement of education for women. Intellectuals were lecturing for the general public in lyceums, and public libraries were gaining strength. A mass audience for knowledge was expanding. During this exciting time, for several years before he wrote *The Age of Fable*, he had thought of writing a book of stories from classical mythology. He probably started working on it in earnest around the beginning of 1853. The book came out in 1855. With this book, Bulfinch became a teacher of mythology for a vast American public.

With its publication, for the first time in his life, he became prosperous and well known.

Why would a man of Bulfinch’s age, with a “day job,” spend his free time writing a mythology book? The answer is that he knew Americans needed such a book and that he was uniquely qualified to write it. He tried with his book to solve a vexing cultural problem: most Americans did not know the classical myths. Although images and references from those tales permeated the culture in literature and the decorative arts, most people had only vague knowledge of the myths as told in ancient literature. Bulfinch wrote for a rapidly expanding and enthusiastic audience of readers, many of whom were acquiring education at a rate never before attained. Along with this trend came a hunger for refinement and gentility.

In his Preface, Bulfinch describes his anticipated readership and his mission. Knowledge of the classical myths was vital for understanding literature and also, although Bulfinch mentions this only in passing, painting and sculpture. Formal instruction about the Greek and Roman myths was generally included only in classes in Greek and Latin, what he calls in his Preface “the languages of Greece and Rome.” People who did not know those languages – he would have known this was the great majority – could not be expected, he says, to study mythology on their own as a separate subject; there was too much else to study of “sciences of facts and things” in that “practical age.” He rejects the idea of people learning the myths by reading translations from the classics as those are full of allusions difficult to understand. A classical dictionary is too dry and the accounts too condensed. Readers needed the stories from the myths told in the manner of the ancient poets, “with the charm of a storybook.” He cites Vergil and Ovid as his main sources. He writes for both men and women, he says, and he is careful to heed the gender conventions of his time, leaving out details “offensive to pure taste and good morals.” Also, consistent with the book’s purpose, he includes translations from modern English poetry.

Not simply a manual, *The Age of Fable* is really a blend of storybook, myth-related passages from poems, and classical dictionary. In his Preface, Bulfinch pinpoints the book’s nature when he



**Fig. 2.** In this illustration from an 1875 edition of Bulfinch’s *The Age of Fable*, a modestly clad Icarus drops from the sky. The same illustration appears in the first edition (1855).

calls it “a Classical Dictionary for the parlor.” *The Age of Fable* contains, in forty-one chapters, mythological stories in prose, and quotations from English and American poetry that allude to those stories. Thirty-six chapters consist of Bulfinch’s narratives of classical myths, chiefly his own translations from Greek and Roman authors, especially Ovid, as well as explanations of related material, such as oracles, sculpture based on myths, and mythical monsters. The remaining five chapters consist of accounts of Asian and Norse myths and information about the Druids. In addition to an “Index of Names” at the end of the book, Bulfinch includes a short section, “Proverbial Expressions,” of brief quotations from Ovid and Vergil, in Latin with English translations.

From the start, he figuratively takes readers by the hand and reassures them that ignorance of mythology is nothing to be ashamed of, information is close at hand, and acquiring it will be a pleasant experience. For instance, readers mystified by the name “Daedalus” in a poem or story would first consult the “Index of Names.” Looking at Bulfinch’s list of mythological names, with accents included, readers would see that Daedalus is accented on the first syllable. Turning to the specified page, they would find the story, beguilingly told, of Daedalus and his son Icarus who escaped from their prison in Crete, on wings the father made from feathers, thread, and wax, only to have the son die tragically while flying too close to the sun (see Fig. 2). To impress the myth on his reader’s memory, Bulfinch added a quotation from the nineteenth-century poet, Erasmus Darwin, which reads in part, “. . . with melting wax and

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## The Palace of Fine Arts: Classical Architecture in San Francisco

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destroyed (as were other handsome classical structures in the city); instead a tower was designed to complement it.

Another, more exciting, example of classical architecture in San Francisco is the Palace of Fine Arts, which was designed in 1915 by Bernard R. Maybeck (1862-1957). Maybeck, now considered one of the pre-eminent architects of the Bay Area, produced primarily domestic architecture in various styles, often with Craftsman-type features including exposed beams, unfinished wood, and huge fireplaces. Yet Maybeck also designed public buildings with classical features, including an automobile showroom at 901 Van Ness Avenue (completed 1926): its design, with huge Corinthian columns, supposedly reflected the aristocratic quality of the Packard cars inside.

In 1915, eager to demonstrate its rebirth following the earthquake and fire of 1906, San Francisco prepared to host the Panama-Pacific Exposition, which celebrated the completion of the Panama Canal. The exposition site was created by filling in land along San Francisco Bay, an area now known as the Marina District. Maybeck was chosen to design the Palace of Fine Arts, the most important of ten exhibition palaces and his first large commission.

The central elements of the Palace are its circular rotunda and two elliptical peristyles curving out on either side. The gallery where paintings and sculptures were exhibited lies behind the colonnade. With its domed roof, the rotunda somewhat resembles the Pantheon in Rome, but it is punctuated by eight large arched openings. Maybeck turned the marshy site to his design's advantage by creating a large lagoon that surrounds the rotunda on three sides, reflecting it and the colonnade (see Fig. 1).

Academic critics condemned his design for violating the "rules" of architecture. Maybeck boldly used a variety of classical elements, combining Roman arches and dome with Greek friezes. The columns of the peristyle are eight rather than eleven diameters tall and have almost no base. This last detail, however, makes the structure seem to float on the water of the lagoon. Landscaping was an integral ele-



**Fig. 3. The Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco. One of the many funerary urns. Photo credit: Thomas A. Vogler.**

ment of Maybeck's design. The colonnade was punctuated by groups of four columns supporting huge planter boxes, intended to be filled with trailing vines.

Maybeck saw his design as "an old Roman ruin, away from civilization, which two thousand years before was the center of action and full of life, and now is partly overgrown with bushes and trees." Instead of the triumphalism associated with a world's fair, Maybeck emphasized vanished grandeur and melancholy: "The keynote should be that of sadness modified by the feeling that beauty has a soothing influence." Funerary urns are used throughout (see Fig. 3) and, at the corners of the huge planter boxes, Maybeck placed female figures leaning inward as if weeping and watering the (never installed) plantings with their tears.

An instant, hugely popular success, the Palace of Fine Arts was not torn down when the Exposition ended. As the years went by, the steel-beamed gallery was used in various ways – as tennis courts, as storage for trucks and jeeps, and as a telephone book warehouse. By the mid-fifties the rotunda and peristyles, made of wood covered with burlap and stucco, were crumbling. Maybeck suggested that the gallery be torn down and redwoods planted around the rotunda so that the Palace would "die behind those great trees of its own accord, and become its own cemetery." But, in 1962, efforts to fund a

restoration were successful, and the Palace was rebuilt in concrete at ten times the original cost.

At the urging of physicist Frank Oppenheimer, the Palace of Fine Arts became, in 1969, a museum of science and technology called the Exploratorium. Today, the Exploratorium provides interactive exhibits to over 500,000 visitors a year and sponsors concerts, films, and publications. Today's Palace

of Fine Arts is not Maybeck's romantic ruin but a lively institution that looks both back to the past and forward to the future.

Attendees at the upcoming 2004 meeting of the American Philological Association in San Francisco will be able to visit the Palace of Fine Arts and the Exploratorium on both Saturday, January 3, and Sunday, January 4, during a "Highlights of San Francisco Tour." For details, see the tour descriptions in the insert bound into the August 2003 APA Newsletter or visit the APA Web site ([www.apaclassics.org](http://www.apaclassics.org)) and click on "Annual Meeting" and then "January 2-5, 2004 135th Annual Meeting, San Francisco." For further reading before your visit, see the Web site for the Palace of Fine Arts at <http://www.exploratorium.edu/palace>.

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# ON HANNIBAL AND ELEPHANTS

by Keith G. Hart, B.V. Sc.

**H**annibal's extraordinary achievement in leading his army, including horses and elephants, over the Alps in autumn, against hostile tribes and through snow on the highest passes, has been a source of fascination for me for many years. Where did these elephants come from? Why did the Carthaginian Hannibal use them against the Romans? How many survived the rigors of water, snow, hunger, cold, and ancient battle?

The use of elephants in battle was not original to Hannibal. Before Hannibal, the Carthaginians had already faced, in Sicily, the Asian war elephants of Pyrrhus of Epirus (the Greek king who invaded southern Italy in 280 B.C.). They had probably decided, like Alexander the Great, who had faced the Asian elephants of the Indian King Porus on the Hydaspes River in 327 B.C., that this new arm of warfare was a strategic necessity. The Carthaginians probably obtained trained elephants, mahouts (elephant "drivers"), and others skilled in capturing and training elephants from the Egyptians, with whom they had excellent trade relations. They transported, in 262 B.C., about fifty elephants from Africa to Sicily for use in the First Punic War against the Romans.

When Hannibal launched his own expedition against Rome in 218 B.C., he also took along elephants. H. H. Scullard in *The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World* (1974) has shown that Hannibal's elephants were almost exclusively of North African origin. There are two subspecies of elephant in Africa today – the African Savannah Elephant, which is four to seven tons and up to thirteen feet tall (see Fig. 4), and the lesser known African Forest Elephant, which is two to four tons and up to eleven feet tall. In Hannibal's time, there were elephants and forests in North Africa, and a number of writers have suggested that the North African Elephant (now extinct) was a separate subspecies intermediate in size between the two existing African subspecies.

Hannibal faced a number of difficulties in getting his North African elephants to Italy. He took a land route but also faced the challenge of water. While there is some dispute about where Hannibal crossed the lower Rhone River, there is no doubt that he had considerable trouble transporting his thirty-seven

elephants. Because of the width of the Rhone and the strength of its current, swimming them across was not an option. Polybius informs us that Hannibal built piers jutting out into the river, to which he attached dirt-covered rafts (Polybius, *Histories* 3.46). After two female elephants were led onto the rafts, the males followed calmly. But when the towed rafts began to move, some elephants became frightened and overturned them.

Polybius suggests that some of the elephants saved themselves by walking on the river bed and raising their trunks above the water to breathe. Although this makes a good story, it probably is not true. If the depth and current were such that an elephant could safely walk across on the river bed, Hannibal would have swum his elephants across. Elephants are superb swimmers, and swims of twenty-four hours or more have been recorded. What Polybius and his informants may not have known is that when elephants swim in deep water, only the top of the head and trunk (and sometimes the trunk alone) are visible. It would be easy, therefore, to assume that they were actually walking on the bottom.

There is some doubt about the details, but all thirty-seven elephants reportedly reached the opposite bank. Some of the mahouts, however, were drowned, which was a significant setback. The relationship between mahout

and elephant is lifelong and characterized by mutual trust and understanding. Elephants and humans have similar life expectancies, and elephants may grow old with their mahouts. Elephants are loyal and highly intelligent (comparable to chimpanzees and dolphins in their mental capacity). In Asia, a mahout often has an assistant (trainee) mahout, both of whom work with the same elephant. Hannibal must have had a backup system to provide his elephants with a rider they knew and trusted should the regular mahout be killed or injured.

Although Hannibal suffered enormous losses of men and horses during the crossing of the Alps, as Scullard reminds us, not one of his elephants is recorded as lost (159). Why did elephants survive when men and horses died in droves? First, elephants are unusually surefooted. They will not go where they cannot walk in safety (hence the elaborate deception required to get them onto rafts at the Rhone), and mountains are not unfamiliar terrain. In fact, elephants have been found on Mount Kenya and Mount Kilimanjaro at significantly higher altitudes than the Alpine passes traversed by Hannibal, and North African elephants probably climbed the high slopes of the Atlas Mountains in northwest Africa. Hannibal would have known about the capacity of elephants to traverse mountain ter-



Fig. 4. African Savannah Elephant, Aberdare National Park, Kenya, 1989. Photo credit: Keith Hart.

rain. Second, elephants inspired fear in the enemy. Hannibal's foes along the way were skilled at attacking men and horses but probably chose not to take on elephants.

Hannibal's biggest problem during the crossing of the Alps must have been feeding his elephants. Elephants consume (depending on their size) 250-500 pounds of feed a day. In the wild in Africa, elephants will graze for sixteen or more hours a day. Their digestive systems are not efficient (80-90% of what goes in passes out again as droppings). Elephants eat a wide range of plant material and, although they have an excellent ability to "live off the land," this would not have been possible in the high passes above the snow line. It is unlikely that Hannibal carried enough fodder (500 pounds per animal per day) to sustain their needs. It is a tribute to the resilience of the animals themselves that they survived their ordeal.

Hannibal probably spent fifteen days crossing the Alps and emerged with his battered army in the vicinity of Turin. With a Roman army moving up the Po valley to engage him, it was now time for Hannibal's elephants to justify his decision to bring them. Besides the terror their physical appearance was sure to inspire, the devastation they could cause was formidable. War elephants could crush soldiers underfoot, transfix them with their tusks, or pick them up in their trunks and dash them to the ground. Alexander's troops, in their struggle against King Porus, used successful defense tactics. They let Porus' elephants charge past as the archers picked off the mahouts. They used spears and javelins in the most vulnerable parts of the elephant's anatomy (neck, belly, and under the tail) and used axes or scimitars to cut off the end of the trunk or to hamstring the animal by cutting it behind the leg. Attempting such tactics required courage, experience, and the right equipment. The Romans would not have lacked the first quality, but they probably came up short in the other two.

Hannibal engaged the Romans on ground of his choosing, on his side of the Trebia River. The battle took place in late December, 218 B.C., in very poor weather conditions, and the Roman forces had to ford several branches of the icy river, without breakfast, before they clashed with Hannibal's army. The elephants were arrayed on the wings of Hannibal's infantry, and their charge fell mainly on the allied troops rather than

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## Book Review: *Route 66 A.D.: On the Trail of Ancient Roman Tourists*

by Norma Wynick Goldman

Tony Perrottet. *Route 66 A.D.: On the Trail of Ancient Roman Tourists*. Random House (1-800-733-3000), 2002, Pp. 391. Generously illustrated in black and white. Hardcover \$25.95. ISBN 0-3755-0432-X. Reprinted as *Pagan Holiday: On the Trail of Ancient Roman Tourists*. Random House, 2003. Pp. 416. Paperback \$12.95. ISBN 0-3757-5639-6.

If you enjoyed touring the ancient classical world with Marcus Didius Falco and his pregnant fellow-traveler Helena, the imaginary Roman characters created by Lindsey Davis in her novels, you will enjoy the modern-day romp through classical geography in the book *Route 66 A.D.* with Tony Perrottet and his real-life pregnant fellow-traveler Lesley. What makes Perrottet's adventure a double treat is that he records not only his own present-day experiences but also the reactions and quotations of the ancient tourists who wanted to see the same historical and mythological monuments that we visit today: Delphi, the walls of Troy, the Pyramid tombs of the god-kings of Egypt, and the Nile on which Cleopatra and her lovers, first Julius Caesar and then Mark Antony, cruised in palatial pleasure craft.

Perrottet was born and educated in Sydney, Australia, where he was taught both Latin and Greek by the Jesuit fathers. He grew up with a healthy respect for classical history and literature, but his own travels around the world were to places like India, Zanzibar, Pago Pago, Iceland, Tanzania, and the Amazon, places off the beaten tourist tracks. He had studiously avoided Mediterranean lands as too crowded, too touristy, too noisy, and too expensive. But two factors changed his perspective: in the New York Public Library in Manhattan, he had discovered a wealth of graphic descriptions of ancient maps and ancient tourism, and he had learned that he and Lesley were six months away from becoming parents. If they were to see the Colosseum, the Acropolis, and the Pyramids unencumbered, it would have to be soon.

No maps of the ancient world are extant today but, based on his library research, Perrottet recreates the map that Marcus Agrippa (friend, supporter, and son-in-law of Augustus)

exhibited for the people in Rome. After an abbreviated visit to Pompeii and an Italian McDonald's, he continues with a description of the kinds of material that will make up his ancient sources: memoirs, travel guides, poetry, plays, and letters home from tourists.

The heart of the tour and the adventures, both ancient and modern, begin in Rome. The reader then travels with Tony and Lesley from Rome down to the Bay of Naples (Pompeii, Pozzuoli, Baiae, and Capri) using what the author calls "double vision," seeing the same sights that the ancient tourists saw, and quoting from what they had written about their experiences. Perrottet follows the style of Lionel Casson, who had recreated the trip from Rome to Brundisium that Horace took in 37 B.C. and described in Satires 1.5 (see "*Ex Itinere Lux: The Trials of Travel in Ancient Italy*," in *New Light from Ancient Cosa*, 2001, 219-225). Horace had described his trip via metal wheels bumping over basalt stones on the Appian Way and his suffering from mosquitoes, bad food, worse wine causing "traveler's tummy," and flea-bag hotels full of bedbugs. Perrottet follows similar routes south in Italy. He then continues on to the ancient Grand Tour – Greece, the Greek islands, the Coast of Asia Minor, with Troy as anti-climax, and Egypt. It is a journey filled with the perils of both ancient and modern travel: filthy inns, gouging landlords, insane hotel keepers, guides who give false information, poor roads, dangerous sea voyages, and money-grubbing natives who try to sell services and souvenirs. Perrottet notes the ironic resemblance of modern to ancient travel, but his own trip is on a shoestring compared to the experiences of far wealthier ancient travelers, who had the money, status, and leisure to make these trips.

His sources for Italian travel include Vergil, Ovid, Horace, and Petronius. For mainland Greece, Pausanias' complete surviving guidebook, the *Description of Greece*, is one of his best guides. In Asia Minor, he relies heavily on the writings of Aristides, a second century A.D. orator and essayist who, plagued with illnesses, traveled to spas seeking cures. Perrottet seeks the same sites.

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## Book Review:

### *Route 66 A.D.*

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In Egypt, Perrottet consults Strabo, Herodotus, and Pausanias as his guides to many of the areas. Today, tourists ascend upwards within the Great Pyramid to the present-day tomb room but, because of a reference in Strabo to an off-limits subterranean tomb, Perrottet repeats Strabo's dangerous descent under thousands of blocks of stone crawling through a narrow tunnel to find the same chamber Strabo described. We all suffer the anguish of Lesley that he may not return. In Alexandria, Perrottet tries to get a permit to dive into the harbor to observe firsthand the remains of the lighthouse, despite warnings that the harbor is heavily polluted.

If the reader has taken trips to these places, Perrottet's book is a warm reminder of the wonders already seen; if Perrottet goes into new territory, such as Crocodilopolis in Egypt, the book provides a new experience. The author has provided a map of the Mediterranean lands with Egypt as inset, as well as three valuable appendices at the end: a Timeline, a Who's Who in the Ancient World, and a valuable bibliography of Sources. In the bibliographical preface, Perrottet acknowledges two basic works: Ludwig Friedlander's *Life and Manners under the Early Roman Empire* (1965) and Lionel Casson's *Travel in the Ancient World* (1974) whose "chapters on the Pax Romana remain the finest – and wittiest – modern account of the tourist landscape in the imperial era. Indeed, without the groundbreaking work of Casson's oeuvre, which covers ancient sea travel, trade, communications, and exploration, this book could not have been written" (375).

Perrottet's rousing romp through the ancient world is delightful. I look forward to reading his next travel adventure.

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## ON HANNIBAL AND ELEPHANTS

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the Roman legions, which formed the center of the Roman line. The elephants helped to drive the Roman army and the remnants of their cavalry into the river.

After Hannibal's decisive victory on the Trebia, we hear little about the fate of his elephants. Although there is no report of the deaths of elephants in battle, Polybius informs us that all but one elephant died from the cold (Polybius 3.74). Livy, on the other hand, says that almost all perished and that later, when Hannibal was crossing the Apennines in arctic conditions, he lost the seven elephants that had survived Trebia. This, according to Livy, left him with one sole survivor. (Livy, *The History of Rome from its Foundation* 21.58).

Hannibal, however, succeeded in winning even greater victories without his elephants. Carthaginian attempts to reinforce him were often unsuccessful, but he did receive an unspecified number of elephants sometime after 215 B.C. The most spectacular reinforcement attempt was made by his brother Hasdrubal, who followed the same route as Hannibal across the Alps with an army and ten elephants. In his attempt to effect a junction with his brother's forces, Hasdrubal was caught and defeated by a Roman army at the Metaurus River on the Italian east coast. In recounting the episode, Livy provides a fascinating insight into the "double-edged sword" the elephant weapon could be. When faced with robust infantry defense, elephants might turn and stampede back through their own troops in a gruesome "own goal" scenario. To prevent this, Hasdrubal issued his mahouts mallets and chisels, which they were to drive into the elephants' spines if they got out of hand. Livy reports that six elephants had to be killed that way (Livy 27.48). The elephant's fall would have been immediate and the "dismount" of the mahout would have been life-threatening, to say the least. The remaining four elephants, which had broken through the Roman ranks and lost their mahouts, were later captured by the Romans.

We do know, from both Livy and Polybius, that by the time Hannibal crossed the Apennines in 217 B.C. after the battle at the Trebia, he had only one elephant left, which he himself rode. Pliny the Elder tells us (Scullard 174) that the elephant was called "Surus" (the Syrian). The Tigris-Euphrates valley in ancient Syria (now

Iraq) once harbored the largest Asian subspecies (now extinct) hunted by the pharaohs 3,000 years ago. It is possible that the Ptolemies in Egypt were still able to obtain Syrian elephants in Hannibal's time, and this may have been the original source of Hannibal's one surviving animal. In any case, while the majority of Hannibal's elephants were probably of North African origin, at least one may have been an Asian elephant.

It is highly likely that the surviving elephant, emerging from the Apennines with the great Carthaginian on his back, was none other than Surus. Pliny the Elder tells us that he was not only the bravest of the elephants but that he also had one broken tusk. Scullard suggests that this elephant, which could have been a large, male, Asian elephant from Syria, was a gift from Ptolemy to his ally, the great Carthaginian general Hamilcar Barca (174). Hannibal was Hamilcar's son and may have formed a relationship with Surus from childhood (as did Toomai and his father's great tusker, Kala Nag, in Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*).

In a flight of fancy, I like to think that Surus, possibly the only Asian elephant in Hannibal's team, may have survived the rigors of the Italian winter that felled his African colleagues because of a genetic trait for cold resistance passed down from a distant ancestor (the Asian elephant is more closely related to the cold-resistant Woolly Mammoth than to the heat-adapted African elephant). I visualize Hannibal riding Surus into Etruria at the head of a bedraggled but victorious army. Scullard sheds one final light on the scene by turning our attention to Etrurian bronze coins issued around 217 B.C. when Hannibal passed through (176). The coins clearly depict an Asian elephant. As Scullard points out, the coins could have nothing to do with Pyrrhus and his Asian elephants, who failed to reach as far north as Rome. The only other reasonable explanation is that the coins depict Surus, as he passes through Etruria and disappears into the mists of history.

**Keith Hart** is a veterinarian who specializes in farm animal medicine near Sydney, Australia. He recently completed a Masters degree in Environmental Law. He has had a lifelong fascination with elephants and has observed them in both Africa and Nepal. He also has an interest in both ancient and modern military history.



## Book Review: *Literature in the Greek World*

by John C. Warman

Oliver Taplin, ed. *Literature in the Greek World*. Oxford University Press (1-800-451-7556), 2001. Pp. xxvii, 299. 5 maps, 20 illustrations. Paperback \$16.95. ISBN 0-19-289303-3.

This collection of essays invites those who know a little about ancient Greek literature to learn more, and the more knowledgeable to consider a fresh perspective. For all those whose interest in classical literature is primarily Greek, it has been conveniently spun off, as has its counterpart on Latin literature, from *Literature in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (hardcover, 2000) into an attractive paperback that can be acquired at a substantial saving over the original, even with the addition of the Roman volume, which is also being reviewed in this issue (see page 9).

On one level, it forms a survey, remarkably comprehensive for its compactness, of Greek literature from the mid-eighth century B.C.E. to the end of the fifth century C.E. The first six essays are arranged more or less chronologically and defined by genre: editor Oliver Taplin on epic, Leslie Kurke on lyric, Peter Wilson on drama, Kurke on history, Andrea Wilson Nightingale on philosophy, and Chris Carey on rhetoric. The final two essays are by Jane L. Lightfoot, who has the formidable task of covering eight centuries of Hellenistic and later ancient Greek literature. These six British and American scholars manage impressively, in essays of twenty-three to forty-five pages, to treat in some detail each genre's origins, development, and major extant works (often quoting them in translations of their own) and to allude to numerous works known only in fragments or by attestation.

The collection's deeper level lies in its distinctive point of view, reflected in its carefully chosen title. The "Greek world" of the title is the people whose language was ancient Greek, by and for whom the literature in that language was made, and the essays are ultimately about how that literature functioned within that world. In his lucid and persuasive introduction, Taplin argues that fully appreciating an ancient literary work ought to take into account its context, what motivated its maker, what it

was for, and, indeed, for whom it was made. The last, he believes, is particularly significant, given the symbiotic interaction he sees between makers and receivers. Just as we all have the daily experience of our audiences influencing what we say and how we say it, Taplin maintains that, on a grander scale, the public helps shape its literature. Hence, along with the customary discussion of works and makers, Taplin and his co-contributors focus on the original receivers.

This approach raises a series of questions. Were these receivers an elite or a broader public? Local or cosmopolitan? Citizens only or slaves as well? Male, female, or both? Literate or, as is possible with aural reception, illiterate? In cases of aural reception, in what sorts of gatherings? What the essayists essentially do is apply such questions to each instance of literature, and, with a judicious combination of internal textual evidence (trusting in the reasonable authenticity of the texts as known and construed), external textual and archaeological evidence, previous scholarship, and what they admit is scholarly conjecture or historical imagination, suggest answers. While the male elite clearly emerge as the predominant receivers, there are enough occasional hints of a more diverse reception to provide a little suspense and a few intriguing surprises.

There are also recurring themes. One is that much of the original reception of ancient Greek literature was by audiences and spectators rather than readers. The plays were written to be seen and heard, many of the poems and speeches were composed and performed orally before they were ever written down, and even some of the historical and philosophical prose was likely the written record of originally oral discourse. Another theme is the kinship among the newly-invented genres. The epic, lyric, and dramatic poets were all composers of songs; and epic and lyric converged in drama. The epic poets, dramatists, and historians were all storytellers; and the dramatists, philosophers, and orators were all, in a sense, dramatists of ideas. Finally, there is the overarching theme that, although much ancient Greek

literature is irretrievable, seminal works survive that are among the greatest achievements of their own, or any, time or place, and still have much to say to us.

Mention should be made of this volume's many appealing and user-friendly features: evocative photographs of ancient artifacts related to literature; maps shaded to show the geographical extent of literary production and reception in various periods; timelines; place-finding subheadings and copious cross-references within the essays; suggested further reading, including translations; a parallel chronology of historical and literary events in the ancient world; and an index. On a closing note, besides meriting the attention of both general reader and scholar, this book could well serve as an adjunct text for a survey course in Greek literature or an introductory course in classical Greek.

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# AGAMEMNON, ACHILLES, ODYSSEUS: HOMER ON MILITARY LEADERSHIP

by Jonathan Shay

For the last sixteen years, I have worked in a clinic with combat veterans and, for about ten of those years, I have also spoken extensively with active and retired military service members at all ranks. Dialogues with active military people have partly been in an official capacity – performing the *Commandant of the Marine Corps Trust Study* or as Visiting Scholar-at-Large at the Naval War College or conducting invited Professional Military Education sessions – and partly serving as a “missionary” from the veterans I serve as a psychiatrist. What I can say from my encounters with present and former military personnel is that the great Homeric narrative fictions are experiments with the moral materials of the human condition. Some elements of the human condition are universal to all times and climes, but others are contingent on social practices. So long as humans engage in the social practice of war, and of returning to domestic life afterward, the Homeric experiments will offer substantial insights. It has been my privilege in two books on the Homeric epics to show how these experiments carry living information to us today. I am profoundly grateful for the large-spiritedness and kind generosity with which professional classicists have responded to the observations contained in these two books, my labors of love. They examine, in particular, the social and ethical world of soldiers within the ecology of power in their own forces.

Modern forces have no lessons to learn from the epics on weapons, planning, communications, tactics, organization, training, or logistics. But, for those who go to war and return today, the epics still vibrate with current meanings on cohesion and leadership. I speak many times a year with professional military audiences, usually on what might be called *jus in militaribus*, “right conduct in (internal) military matters.” My pitch is clear, simple, and not at all new. I say that three things protect the mind and spirit of persons sent into combat: (1) positive qualities of community of the face-to-face unit that create “cohesion”; (2) expert, ethical, and properly supported *leadership*; and (3) prolonged, cumulative, realistic *training* for what they actually have to do and face. I explain why, on both utilitarian grounds of winning fights with the least spillage of

blood (on both sides, potentially) and of “do unto others,” these three qualities – cohesion, leadership, and training – are ethical mandates for military institutions. I speak to these audiences for the veterans I serve: they do not want other young kids wrecked the way they were wrecked in Vietnam.

My focus in this article is on military leadership. When I use the English word, “leader,” do I mean the Homeric ἡγῶς, ἀναξ, βασιλεύς or ἡγαμόν? Hans van Wees’s *Status Warriors: War, Violence and Society in Homer and History* (1992) and Johannes Haubold’s *Homer’s People* (2000) open doorways into such philological research that I, an enthusiastic amateur, can only glimpse from the outside. But philological arguments aside, Haubold, in his fascinating monograph, goes so far as to say that the relationship of leader and his people is the common theme linking the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. “People” here refers to the key term *λαός* (*laos*). He says in the book’s conclusion: “Early Greek epic sings about the incurably vulnerable nature of the *laoi*. Their defining structure, encapsulated in the metaphor of ‘the shepherd of the people’ (ποιμὴν λαῶν), fails; . . . the leaders are said to have ‘destroyed the people’” (195). The Iliadic troops are almost always the *laos*, for which the leaders Agamemnon, Achilles, and Hector have a shepherd’s fiduciary responsibility, and all three fail catastrophically in their separate ways and for their separate reasons. The *Odyssey* uses the word *laos* only rarely outside Books 2-4, referring instead to Odysseus’ Ithacan troops/crew as “companions” and to the Ithacans remaining behind as “suitors.” Tellingly, the suitor Eurymachus pleads for the lives of the suitors, using the word *laos*, the moment after Odysseus puts an arrow through the neck of the most villainous and overreaching suitor, Antinous: “Then spare your people (λαῶν), your own ones” (*Od.* 22.54). And just before the brief final battle of the *Odyssey*, Eupheithes, the father of Antinous, whips up his posse with the words, “First he took many excellent men away in the vessels with him [to Troy], and lost the hollow ships and destroyed the people (λαούς)” (*Od.* 24.427ff.). Haubold comments, “Eupheithes’ version of the events is by no means absurd” (108). Nor is it absurd

from the ethical and professional perspective of today’s military officers.

In *The Mourner’s Song: War and Remembrance from the Iliad to Vietnam* (2003), James Tatum offers the novel argument that the *Iliad*’s point of view is that of the excellent leader, from whose perspective both Agamemnon and Achilles fall short. I was not convinced of this thesis until rereading Haubold’s *Homer’s People*, in preparation for this article. The key is the fiduciary duty embodied in the expression “shepherd of the people.” Haubold quotes Xenophon’s Socrates, who expresses this duty succinctly:

One day Socrates met a man who had just been appointed general. “Why do you think Homer called Agamemnon ‘shepherd of the people’? Was it because it is the shepherd’s duty to see to it that his sheep are safe and have their food, and that the purpose for which they are kept is achieved, and in the same way it is the general’s duty to see that his soldiers are safe and have their food and that the purpose for which they are serving is achieved – this purpose being [to defeat] the enemy?” (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.2.1, quoted and discussed by Haubold 21)

Possibly anticipating the cry, “anachronism!” that this article must bring to mind when I attribute a fiduciary duty to the Homeric military leaders, Haubold then meticulously documents textual evidence that the moral world of the Homeric poems held leaders to obligations of a fiduciary nature (24ff.).

The *Iliad* and Demodokos’ first song in *Odyssey*, Book 8, show Agamemnon as an almost perfectly *bad* leader – with one important exception, that he was personally brave and shared the lethal risks of combat with the rest of his forces. He did not orbit in his helicopter at 6,000 feet, yelling instructions into the radio for his people down in the mud. A ripe example of Agamemnon’s leadership is the *Diapira* in the second book of the *Iliad*, his “test” of the army. The army flunks the test, and Agamemnon has flunked as a leader, both through his (mis-)conduct the day before and this “test.” The whole tragedy of the *Iliad* had been kicked off in the first book by Agamemnon’s breathtaking twin violations of his



army's moral order. First, he impiously refuses ransom for the captive girl Chryseis from her father, the Priest of Apollo. Then, he publicly dishonors his most esteemed, most effective subordinate commander, Achilles, in front of the troops by seizing Briseis, Achilles' *geras*, his "Medal of Honor." The next day, Agamemnon was so obtuse that he demanded the following bizarre demonstration of the army's loyalty: he tells his officers that he is going to *pretend* to give up the war. It is the day after he has dishonored Achilles, and Agamemnon does one of the nuttiest things in the annals of military leadership, real or fictional. He says to his officers:

We'd better move if we're going to get the men [ready].  
*But I'm going to test them first with a little speech,*  
The usual drill – order them to beat a retreat in their ships.  
It's up to each one of you [officers] to persuade them to stay.  
(*Iliad* 2.77, translation by Stanley Lombardo, my emphasis)

Apparently he has done this before enough times that it seems normal, and nobody says to him, "That's a *really* bad idea!" Staff officer Odysseus never says, "Boss, you *sure* you want to do that?" Then, with the whole army mustered, Agamemnon stands before them and says that, even though they came ashore with a ten-to-one advantage over the Trojans, Zeus has decreed their failure after so much struggle and sacrifice:

Now this is what I say, and I want us all to obey:  
Let's clear out with our ships and head for home.  
There's no more hope we will take Troy's . . . town.  
(*Iliad* 2.150ff., Lombardo translation)

As one, the whole army stampedes for the ships, a mad rush that takes everyone by surprise. Apparently, in the past, when Agamemnon had pulled this dumb trick, the troops had stood fast and said, "Hey, we're here for the duration!" When the army bolts for the ships, Agamemnon is surprised and the Greek officers are surprised.

But should *we* be surprised? No, we should not be, because this is the predictable result of Agamemnon's betrayals of "what was right" the previous day with Achilles and with the priest. Motivation, loyalty, and perseverance go whooshing out of the troops like air from a balloon. They desert psychologically

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## Book Review: *Literature in the Roman World*

by Viola Stephens

Oliver Taplin, ed. *Literature in the Roman World*. Oxford University Press (1-800-451-7556), 2001. Pp. xxvi, 293. 6 maps, 20 illustrations. Paperback \$16.95. ISBN 0-19-289301-7.

This volume is a re-edition of the Roman portion of Oliver Taplin's earlier *Literature in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (hardcover, 2000). The shorter edition, which covers the major Latin authors and literary periods from roughly 250 B.C.E. to 500 C.E., is, along with the editor's introduction, a collection of nine essays by six distinguished British and American scholars. The essays, as expected, deal with information common to literary surveys: details of the authors' lives and times, and discussions of genre. What distinguishes this survey from others is an overriding perspective that unifies essays by six different and inventive minds at work on the task set by the editor. This task is to examine Latin works largely familiar to most serious readers of classical literature by focusing on the audiences for whom they were written or performed or, as often the case, both. Inherent in this approach is the notion not only that the author (in Taplin's words, the *maker*) seeks to influence and change his audience (the *receiver*), but also that the audience influences and molds the author. Taplin writes in the introduction:

The preferences and responses of the receivers have been assimilated by the makers, who have tried to meet them. And the makers, in their turn, have affected their audiences, have pleased them, and have led them to see things that were not already familiar and respectable. (xvii)

The concept of reception throughout the essays in this volume encompasses not just the aesthetic response of the receivers to the literature in question but also the political and social complexities of the relationship between literature and audience. The notion of audience is broad and fluid and includes the patron, the addressee, the intimate circle of like-minded men and women, the wider literate public, the emperor in post-Republican times, the later audiences of schoolboys, and modern audiences who

have read the text through the centuries. Some of the essays explore the ways in which readers are affected by their awareness of the "internal audience," figures within the text who witness the deeds and hear the words of other characters, for example, Dido, who hears Aeneas' account of the fall of Troy along with the reader.

Several devices in the collection link its myriad parts. The end of a chapter often anticipates the subject matter of the next chapter. Many cross-references in later chapters refer to earlier discussions of the same authors or of similar themes (and there are some errors in pagination here, doubtless the holdovers from the text's former life as a larger volume). Several of the chapters overlap in the periods and authors examined, dealing, for example, with different works by the same writer or different genres from the same time frame. The essays seem to have been written with an awareness of and concern for what the other contributors have had to say. This editorial care makes the necessarily dense content far easier to grasp as a continuous history.

All the essays in this volume emphasize the influences of literature in the long life of the Roman state, the ways in which it responded to the needs and interests of its contemporary audiences, and the important part it had in the lives of the political and military figures in Roman history. Whatever form or tone it took, literature was always a major player in the drama of Rome because, throughout her history, particularly for the Roman elite, it helped form a consciousness of what it meant to be a Roman and to act as a Roman.

The essays also deal with the way in which the audience influences the writer in many subtle and not so subtle ways. The audience in attendance at speeches and theatrical performances and the ever-watchful emperor are all familiar literary censors, and the varied and complicated roles such critics play in the genesis and success of literature are carefully explored. The changing tastes of audiences and the evolving relationship between patron and writer and writer and audience from Republican times to the late Empire are part of this creative relationship between maker and receiver. Cicero, for example, was a political

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## Book Review: *Literature in the Roman World*

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force through the success of his oratory, Vergil and Horace were sustained by powerful men like Maecenas, and they wrote primarily to be read by an elite audience as did earlier poets like Catullus. Later epic and particularly oratory became public entertainment, and oral literary contests became commonplace, but now the writer had to please not only the emperor but the judges if there were to be any financial return. Literary culture had changed into a “culture of recitation,” and poets such as Statius, who participated in contests like the Alban and Capitoline games instituted by Domitian, vied in the literary marketplace for their living. The ongoing story of this transformation ends with an essay by Michael Dewar, both wry and poignant, that describes the slow fading of the pagan world, with its sophisticated literary sensibilities and broad scope, before the onslaught of the formidable Christian Fathers.

It is fitting, finally, to consider the intended receivers for this volume of essays. The lack of footnotes and the frequent explanations of things familiar to professional classicists like the plot summary and general characteristics of the *Aeneid*, for example, and the useful time lines and chronological tables are features designed to help the neophyte. And so they do. Nonetheless, the book is pretty heavy going for anyone not fairly well read in the classics. It is hard to know, for instance, towards whom the rather spare and selective bibliography on Vergil is directed since more basic works might be more informative for those new to Roman literature. There are many things, however, that should be illuminating for students. As an undergraduate grappling with the strangeness of the *Georgics* or of the poetry of Lucretius, I would have benefitted from reading Llewelyn Morgan’s discussions of these works. There are even more things to interest scholars: imaginative, often brilliant, insights and compelling discussions not usually found in literary histories. For this audience and for those expanding a fairly strong grounding in classical literature, this is an agreeable and very rewarding book.

*Viola Stephens has recently retired from teaching in the Program in Classical Studies at York University. Her interest is Augustan poetry, particularly Vergil.*

# MYTH IN THE MIRROR: JOURNEYING WITH AENEAS

by Lois V. Hinckley

How should we read myths? As if they are paintings in a gallery, or objects in a museum? Or as if they are windows through which we climb into a different world for exploration or momentary escape? Or as if they are mirrors, reflecting our own struggles, longings, failures, and successes? Our first read of a myth, as I have observed in the classroom, is usually from the “portrait” perspective: an entertaining story, we might say, but irrelevant to our “real” lives. Yet it is not difficult, as my many students have helped me discover, to transform such “portraits” into mirrors and see ourselves.

The *Aeneid*, the epic poem written two thousand years ago by the Roman poet Vergil, is, despite its distance in time and space, an illuminating mirror for the twenty-first century. In this poem, Vergil tells, in twelve books, the story of the Trojan hero Aeneas: his journey and his struggles to find a place where his people may settle anew and form the foundation for the future city of Rome. Come, travel with Aeneas for a few minutes, and see how some of the poem’s mirrors can equip you to read and “reflect” on your own.

Aeneas had to leave Troy, in the second book of the poem, after its destruction by the Greeks. He would rather have remained there to die, but he was commanded in a dream to find a new home for the remnants of his people. Although, at first, he refused this “call to adventure,” in the end he leaves his burning city. My students often see “leaving Troy” as reflective of their own leaving home to come to college. There are, of course, obvious, important differences. For example, in most cases, their homes were not in flames, as Troy was, yet separation, search, and resettlement are necessary parts of growing up.

Once out of Troy, in the third book, Aeneas receives mixed signals and ambiguous advice on where his Trojans should settle. How many of us get it right the first time? We, too, may take the wrong road, misinterpret even good advice, and ignore our own intuition. Two settlements are begun, and fail, before Aeneas’ destination, Italy, becomes clear, and Italy is still far away. Unexpected encounters can dis-

tract or seduce any traveler to a “false” stop. On the western edge of Greece, Aeneas is amazed to find familiar Trojans, who escaped their Greek captors and are building a miniature Troy in Epirus. In addition to brooks named for Troy’s rivers and miniature Scaean gates, they have erected a cenotaph for the Trojan prince Hector, slain and buried at Troy. What an impact the sight of familiar faces and familiar structures must have had, and how hard it would be to break away! Aeneas’ farewell words convey his wistful envy, even while Vergil suggests to us, his audience, the wrongness of such an attempt to climb back into a lost past. When I was changing jobs and locations and making plans to buy my first house, a friend remarked, as I described the sort of house I hoped to find, “Sounds a lot like the one you grew up in!” The comfort of taking refuge in the familiar can beach us permanently in yesterday.

From Epirus, however, Aeneas sails with the tide. His encounter with Dido, queen of the new town of Carthage, in the first and fourth books, is a more seductive temptation, and not just because Dido invites the Trojans to make one city with her Tyrians, nor because Dido falls in love with Aeneas. Weary from seven years of wandering, Aeneas is now, following the recent death in Sicily of his father Anchises, the “older generation,” which, as many of us know, is a chilling time to reach. In Dido, Aeneas encounters not only a generous woman but also a comrade: like himself, Dido is a refugee, a leader burdened with responsibility as she tries to establish a new home. But her city is already well begun, and Aeneas exclaims at the sight of its new walls, “Oh fortunate people whose walls already rise!” Women in my generation, who set off for further training but chose instead to marry into the profession they had meant to join as colleagues, can recognize “the Carthage temptation” as could, for example, an artist who goes into advertising. Such choices are not wrong, of course, but they may preclude finding your own identity as a creative professional or as an artist.

To dislodge Aeneas from Carthage,

the gods send a direct message. Finding Aeneas overseeing the building of Carthage in a Tyrian outfit, Mercury's words accuse Aeneas of forgetting his duty and destiny to reach Italy so that Rome may be founded: "If you don't care about your own glory, remember what you owe to your son!" Aeneas' duty and destiny to become the founder of what would become, first, Rome and then the Roman Empire – an empire that began, under Octavian Augustus, more than a thousand years after Aeneas and that Vergil is both celebrating and questioning – is an important aspect of Vergil's portrayal of Aeneas. It is not an aspect in which it is easy to see our-

*The Aeneid, the epic poem written two thousand years ago by the Roman poet Vergil, is, despite its distance in time and space, an illuminating mirror for the twenty-first century.*

selves reflected. Vergil, however, is also portraying an individual who can make mistakes, or who can, for example, turn away from his mission, as he is doing in Carthage, or who may fail while trying to fulfill it. Yet error, refusal, or failure will alter a thousand years of history. We can see that a thousand-year responsibility, lived out in hundreds of choices each day, is an appalling burden. And one of my students found a deeper mirror in Aeneas' destiny by pointing out that we ourselves have our own thousand-year, or longer, responsibility neither to pollute our planet nor to destroy its resources. We could rephrase Mercury's exhortation to Aeneas with one for ourselves: "If you don't care about your own quality of life, remember that you owe your children a place to live!"

Aeneas' temptation to linger with Dido is matched by Dido's own temptation to abandon her duties as queen; when Aeneas chooses, with grief and pain, to follow his appointed path, Dido commits suicide and curses his descendants. After leaving Carthage, Aeneas revisits, in the fifth book, a group of Trojans who have resettled in Sicily; with them, he celebrates funeral games for his father who died there just a year before. It is the first time Aeneas has gone back to any previous stop, but Vergil makes it clear that this revisit is not a retreat but a "fall back and

regroup" moment. The games offer the partial closure of ceremony to the loss of Anchises' death, and, momentarily at home among Trojans, Aeneas and most of his band take vicarious courage from their fellow Trojans' success at having done what they themselves are still striving for. Imagine yourself visiting a couple of friends from your school years; they are making a go of their own small business, just as you all used to talk of doing. Re-energized, you return home with specific plans to launch your own agency over the next two years.

Each of the three settlements that Aeneas visits – Epirus, Carthage, and Sicily – can be, as we have seen, a useful mirror for different life choices we have to make or avoid. But before Aeneas reaches the mouth of the Tiber River, he has one more stop, in Cumae, where, in the sixth book, Apollo's priestess, the Sibyl, will guide him to the underworld to get counsel from his father's shade. This journey will offer both farewells to Aeneas' past and glimpses of the future that his mission will make possible, if all goes well. Anchises is the pivot or doorway between Aeneas' past and Aeneas' future. Meeting his father is the climax of Aeneas' encounters in the underworld with various figures from his past, and it is Anchises who shows his son the crowd of souls who will be major figures in the founding and development of Rome.

In literal terms, very few of us are granted such a vision, but we do have similar moments of re-visioning, and they are often triggered by experiences of death or near-death. A near-fatal heart attack, a battle with cancer, the death of a parent, child, or partner, even being down-sized – any one of these can serve as our own "trip to the underworld," jolting us loose from our assumptions or habits, inviting or forcing a re-evaluation of what matters to us, who we are, or who we feel called to be. As we watch Aeneas moving through the underworld, our view of him also changes: he descends as an exiled Trojan survivor, but he returns as the proto-founder of Rome. Such re-visioning experiences usually sink into the background of our minds (Aeneas never refers directly to his experiences in the underworld), but they lead us to greater confidence, to different values, or to different actions. After this journey, Aeneas acts and speaks with greater deliberation and determination than we have heard before.

The second half of Aeneas' story, the

last six books of Vergil's poem, is equally rich in insights applicable to our own lives. When Aeneas emerges from the underworld, he still has a long way to go, not in geographical terms, but in terms of roots, relationships, and community. In Italy, only one person, the kindly but not very strong king of the Latin settlement, welcomes the arrival of a stranger and his band of refugees. Aeneas must begin settling the Trojans in Italy; he must identify allies and enemies, expected and unexpected; he must find ways to thread this band of foreigners into Latium's already woven fabric of relationships. It is a long and laborious process. As with our own lives, the arrival itself – getting the job, getting married, or buying land for a home – is not enough; it is not the "happily ever after" moment, either for Aeneas or for us. Whatever our new "world" is, it will take patient effort to get rooted there.

In this short article, I chose to linger on the "mirror insights" of the first six books of the *Aeneid* for two reasons: first, because that part of Aeneas' story may be already a little familiar to you and, second, to suggest some ways that attentive readers can learn to shift from a "portrait" to a "mirror" perspective. Such a shift of perspective works with any myth. One frequent reason for the survival of old myths is that they had powerful tellers – Vergil, Homer, Ovid, and many more, named or anonymous. But the core reason for this survival is that myths offer universal truths about human efforts, longings, failures, and successes, and the limitations and the possibilities of human life.

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<http://www.drjclassics.com>

by Janice Siegel

**D**r. J's *Illustrated Guide to the Classical World* is a collection of Web pages I have been writing and illustrating with my own photographs since 1998. With a careful integration of text and image, I seek to make the ancient world come alive for my students as my trips abroad and schooling have made it come alive for me. It all began with the posting of a single Web page about my hike up Mount Olympus. Still my sentimental favorite, that page today joins more than 5,500 files (including 3,200 images and counting).

The whole can be divided into three main parts: "Sites," "Texts and Lectures," and "Course Materials." Over 13,000 internal hyperlinks have turned it into a self-contained nexus of information about the ancient world. (External hyperlinks also provide access to much useful material available elsewhere on the Web.) The design of the Web site attempts to reflect the intersection of myth, history, politics, science, religion, philosophy, and topography that flavors the literature, art, and architecture of the ancients. The content of the Web site is wholly determined by my experiences as a student and teacher of classics.

"Illustrated Sites" began as an opportunity for me to collate photographs and notes concerning a large number of archaeological sites from several extended tours of Greece (including one summer with the American School of Classical Studies in Athens). Each illustrated lecture provides a virtual tour of the site, and thumbnails of photos are linked to larger, captioned images. Each lecture details the site's excavations and finds but also connects the place with historical, mythological, and literary references to it.

Sites particularly germane to the study of Greek literature, such as Athens, Mycenae, and Delphi, have extensive and multiple illustrated lectures (see Fig. 5). Visitors may choose whether to take the scientific approach or a more fanciful one. "Dr. J's Illustrated Mycenae," for example, provides all the details concerning the archi-

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# RALPH ELLISON, ULYSSES, AND *INVISIBLE MAN*

by Patrice D. Rankine

**M**yth, in the Greek sense of *mythos* as "story" or "tale," structures our daily lives, our practices, and our beliefs. From morning to night, stories of other men and women who have traveled similar paths, whether from storybooks or the nightly news, shape our imagination. A consciousness of this aspect of culture led the African-American writer Ralph Ellison to embrace classical mythology as one of the central structuring devices for many of his works, including *Invisible Man*. This watershed novel, which was published in 1952, became the first work of fiction by an African-American author to win an American Book Award. Many critics still regard it as one of the best novels any American author has written in the past century. Although Ellison's commitment to the classics has always been clear to critics, no one has taken a look at his own classical education or the extent to which mythological figures, such as Ulysses (the Greek Odysseus) and the Cyclops, permeate *Invisible Man*.

Ralph Waldo Ellison (1914-1994) was raised in Oklahoma during difficult times. The Civil War had concluded just forty-nine years before his birth. Slavery in America had officially ended, but the closing decades of the nineteenth century saw the rise of segregation and open hostility towards African-Americans throughout much of the country. Experiences such as observing the white children of the local corner grocer dressed in white sheets and hoods for a mock parade shaped Ellison's childhood. Ellison biographer Lawrence Jackson reports that the first

laws instituted in Oklahoma were for "separate but equal" schools. At four years old, Ellison's mother told him that he would not be able to attend Bryant Elementary in Oklahoma City because the school was only for whites. Yet Ellison's family did not succumb to the social limitations imposed upon them. His father Lewis, who died in 1916, had given his son a literary name (after Ralph Waldo Emerson) and, by 1918, Ralph was attending kindergarten at Avery Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church. At five years old, Ellison's family moved into the parsonage. Young Ralph took full advantage of the church's extensive library. Beginning with first grade, he attended the segregated Frederick Douglass School in Oklahoma City until college.

Although Ellison was never a stellar student, his lackluster performance within the classroom belied his broad reading and sharp intellect. He showed a strong interest in music, and he would later transfer the idea of mastering one's craft, which he learned from his music teacher Hazel Harrison, from the trumpet to literature. At Douglass, Ellison studied Latin for four years under Henry Berry, a man who also knew Hebrew and Greek. Ellison graduated from Douglass in 1932 and went on to study music for three years at Tuskegee Normal School and Industrial Institute, the school founded by Booker T. Washington in 1881 for the vocational training of African-Americans. Ellison studied music at Tuskegee but, in the face of a declining music program, he left college for work in New York City in 1936. In New York, Ellison's ongoing interest in literature, which began at the African Methodist Episcopal Church library and was nourished by Morteza Sprague, his literature professor at Tuskegee, now flourished under the tutelage of Richard Wright, author of *Native Son* (1940). Ellison read and discussed such books with Wright as *The Tragic Sense of Life* (1913), the work of the Spanish existentialist and classicist Miguel de Unamuno. T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922), a poem that uses classical themes and languages to represent modern life, also influenced Ellison profoundly.

In the area of classical mythology, Ellison's primary influence was what he

Fig 5. Temple of Apollo at Delphi, August 1998, © 1999, Janice Siegel.



and others at the time called the Cambridge School, or the ritual approach to myth. This approach to myth, most exhaustively articulated in Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890), linked the customs and beliefs of a number of traditional, pre-modern societies to underlying patterns in myth and religion. Frazer's ritual approach to myth was pivotal to Ellison's thinking on myth and ritual in American society. As Ellison reveals in a lecture he delivered at West Point Military Academy in 1969, he was interested in using myth to "enlarge" characters in *Invisible Man*. This is an important point because, in Ellison's reasoning, exploring the mythical dimensions of characters helped him to come to terms with "the nature of leadership, and thus with the nature of the hero" ("On Initiation Rites and Power: Ralph Ellison Speaks at West Point," in *Going to the Territory* 44).

In the speech at West Point and throughout his other essays, Ellison provides the framework for our reading of classical mythology in his novels, and specifically the theme of Ulysses and the Cyclops. In the essay "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke" (*Shadow and Act*), Ellison writes about his own attachment to Ulysses:

I knew the trickster Ulysses just as early as I knew the wily rabbit of Negro American lore, and I could easily imagine myself a pint-sized Ulysses but hardly a rabbit, no matter how human and resourceful or Negro. (72)

Ellison embraced Ulysses as he did no other hero in Western literature. In doing so, he engaged himself in a modernistic tête-à-tête with the novelist James Joyce, but he also pointed to the broader significance of the hero in representing both the individualistic nature of early European society and the deeper spiritual cravings in the hero's longing for home.

There are general similarities in overall plot between Ellison's *Invisible Man* and Homer's *Odyssey*. Similar to Ulysses, who encounters many people and places on his journey home from Troy, the protagonist in *Invisible Man* travels throughout America, from an unnamed place in the South to Harlem in New York City, in search of "home," a physical and emotional space of belonging. In the *Odyssey*, Ulysses is displaced from home by war, wandering, and the upstart suitors of his wife Penelope. In *Invisible Man*, the unnamed protagonist – he is *invisible* because the social construct of

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## Notable Web Site: *Dr. J's Illustrated Guide to the Classical World* continued from page 12

lecture of the citadel and the tombs and their treasures. But as they scroll through the pages, visitors can also imagine that they are following in King Agamemnon's footsteps after he returns from the Trojan War: through the Lion Gate lined by Cyclopean walls, past the royal grave circles, up the rocky steps, over the threshold into the king's megaron and, beyond, into the private royal quarters and bath, where Aeschylus tells us the king was murdered by his wife Clytemnestra. After reading the *Agamemnon*, even a virtual tour through modern Mycenae-town takes on new meaning. It would take a daring soul indeed to spend a night at the local establishment advertised with this sign: "Hotel Klitemnestra: Rooms With Bath"!

Because essays overlap in content, students can explore a single aspect of the culture in multiple contexts. For example, the Battle of Plataea appears in its appropriate chronological place in the "Illustrated Classical Age Timeline." The details of the battle are discussed in "Dr. J's Illustrated Persian Wars" essay. The Tripod of the Plataeans, the monument dedicated at Delphi by the thirty-one Greek city-states who worked together to defeat the Persians, is shown *in situ* in "Dr. J's Illustrated Sacred Way." The temple whose frieze was inspired by the battle is described in "Dr. J's Illustrated Temple of Athena Nike," and the frieze itself, unusual because it depicts a historical and not mythological event, appears among my photos of artifacts in the British Museum. Internal hyperlinks provide instant interconnections among the essays.

Illustrated lectures such as "The Ancient Greek Theater" and "The Mythic Hero" explore particular themes or topics by using a wide assortment of photographs. Colored text is another way to make presentations memorable. In my "Illustrated Classical Age Timeline," accomplishments of dramatists (in green) and philosophers (in orange) are presented in the context of politics (in black) and war (in red). Here color-coding allows students to mark important singular events as well as to recognize patterns (the swath of green cutting across the middle of the fifth century, the stain of red at its beginning and end).

But, in addition to making the ancient world accessible to students, I also want to

show how it is relevant. For example, "Dr. J's Illustrated 'Pericles' Funeral Oration'" shows the source of fifth-century Athenians' pride and determination. "Dr. J's Pericles and America" then explores the similar ways two nations, ancient and modern, honor their war dead, with visits to Arlington National Cemetery in Washington D. C., the tumulus at Marathon, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Athens' Syndagma Square. My own service as a juror inspired "Dr. J's Illustrated Pericles and Philadelphia" and concerns the dichotomy of freedom and responsibility inherent in the principle of citizenship.

I write my Web pages for my own students (my most recent additions are Latin Grammar Pages and Mythology) and post them on-line for their easy access. But a constant stream of mail from teachers and students alike provides evidence of the pedagogical effectiveness of these materials for others as well. From July 2002 to July 2003, my single-authored Web site logged 377,546 visits made by 154,141 "unique visitors," 20% of whom surfed over from foreign shores. 21,121 people visited multiple times. The average number of visits per day was 1,034, and the average visit lasted nine minutes.

The internet breaks down the traditional walls that isolate similarly interested parties from each other, vastly increasing the potential audience of any teacher. It is both a great opportunity and responsibility for the professional classics community to provide reliable, accurate, and engaging on-line pedagogical resources. It is my privilege to contribute to that effort.

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## RALPH ELLISON, ULYSSES, AND *INVISIBLE MAN*

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race prevents people from understanding who he really is – cannot fully enjoy America as his homeland because of shortsighted antagonists who practice distinctly American rituals of exclusion within a segregated society. An example of this is the battle royal, the ritual described early in the novel in which black boys, including the protagonist, are forced to fight against one another for the entertainment of whites. Similar to Homer's drunken Cyclops, one of these men expresses the desire to "tear" the "ginger colored" protagonist "limb from limb" (*Invisible Man* 21).

Ellison's representation of the protagonist's grandfather at the beginning of *Invisible Man* sets up the entire novel as a rewriting of Homer's *Odyssey*. The grandfather is a pivotal character who had been a slave and had experienced but a brief freedom. To him the United States of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century must have seemed to be a frightening Cyclops' cave. Like Polyphemus in Homer's poem, who bashed out the brains of his guests and then ate them, some Americans during the period after emancipation practiced cruel, horrific rituals against African-Americans, like lynching. For African-Americans of the grandfather's generation, the Civil War and the subsequent reconstruction of the South led only to a kind of cave from which there was no escape, a cave of further circumscription of their freedoms by means of segregation and Jim Crow laws. The protagonist's grandfather, on his deathbed, counsels Invisible Man about life in the United States:

Son, after I'm gone I want you to keep up the good fight. I never told you, but our life is a war and I have been a traitor all my born days, a spy in the enemy's country ever since I give up my gun back in the Reconstruction. Live with your head in the lion's mouth. I want you to overcome 'em with yesses, undermine 'em with grins, agree 'em to death and destruction, let 'em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open. (*Invisible Man*, 16)

In the essay "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke" (quoted above), Ellison compares the grandfather, a former slave, to Ulysses in the Cyclops episode. The novelist's comparison is borne out in this passage of *Invisible Man*. The

grandfather's statement that he lived as a "spy in the enemy's country" parallels Ulysses' concealment of his identity at various points in the *Odyssey* and his identification of himself to the Cyclops Polyphemus as "Nobody." The grandfather's ironic instruction to his grandson to "let 'em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open" suggests perhaps that his grandson (unlike Odysseus' unfortunate crewmen) will be the destroyer of those who would "devour" him.

Throughout the novel, Ellison uses the story of Ulysses and the Cyclops to come to terms with the American experience of slavery, racism, and the protagonist's own struggle for freedom (which foreshadows the incipient Civil Rights movement in the United States). The grandfather tells his grandson to "keep up the good fight" (16); we think of Ulysses, described in the opening line of the *Odyssey* as the man who suffered many things, including near death in the Cyclops' cave. The Cyclops story is also used to illuminate further the story of the protagonist himself. After an episode in which rigged machinery malfunctions and causes Invisible Man to be "shot forward with sudden acceleration into a wet blast of black emptiness" (230), he lands in a hospital (well off-course) and sees the reflector of a doctor as the "bright third eye" (231), a reference perhaps to the eye of the Cyclops. The doctor, following good Homeric etiquette, only later asks Invisible Man, "What is your name?" (239).

Through his exploration of classical myth in his novel, Ellison undertook the shaping of heroic possibilities for all Americans. Ellison's characters are part of an epic struggle. As in the classical genre of epic, the hero's failure at a given moment does not preclude his eventual triumph. Epic characters are involved in an ongoing journey of adventure, failure, and eventual success. Ulysses was forced to disguise himself as a beggar when he returned to Ithaca until he was able to overcome his adversaries. Ellison's grandfather character and his grandson, Invisible Man, are involved in an epic struggle (which is at times comic and at times tragic) as individuals within a broader American story. Invisible Man's success is his decision to emerge from the coal cellar from which he writes his memoir, the novel itself. This heroic *katabasis* (the journey

to the underworld) and return leads to the protagonist's realization that "even an invisible man has a socially responsible role to play" (*Invisible Man* 581).

Ellison's approach to classical mythology brought him a great deal of criticism. Some critics felt that African-Americans should reject European philosophical, aesthetic, and cultural models as former sources of oppression. Other critics, notably classicists, tended towards more systematic, structured approaches to the field, handling outsiders with great scrutiny. As a self-made intellectual, uninitiated into the tribe of readers and preservers of Greek and Latin, Ellison was, for a good portion of his life, a classical outsider. Nevertheless, Ralph Ellison has much to offer classicists of our generation. Between 1955 and 1957, Ellison studied at the American Academy of Arts and Letters, in Rome, Italy, as a winner of the Prix de Rome (the Rome Prize). In his correspondence during those years with fellow novelist Albert Murray, Ellison writes about the strong presence of classicists at the Academy, noting, somewhat pointedly, that "some of the classical people here are snobbish about this mess but it belongs to anyone who can dig it" (*Letters* 99). As the United States struggles against fragmentation and tribalism along racial and class lines, Ellison offers for our consideration, the binding, universal force of a powerful Greek myth that, whether we know it or not, structures who we are and how we think about who we are.

*Patrice D. Rankine earned a Ph.D. from Yale University in 1998 in Classical Languages and Literatures. Since then, he has been Assistant Professor at Purdue University in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, and in the Interdisciplinary Program in Classical Studies. His interests include Greek and Roman tragedy, and the relationship between classical and modern literature. He is currently writing a book that takes Ralph Ellison's allusions to the Ulysses theme throughout Invisible Man and Juneteenth as a starting point for a study of Ellison's broader technique of grafting the African-American self onto the classical tradition.*



## A Note on the Transmission of Catullus

by Mark Possanza

Valerius Catullus of Verona,  
your hendecasyllables relieve me  
from sentences of hierophantic  
discourse; they sparkle from under the  
bushel  
where your slender corpus lay, vocal  
artifact.  
Imperium Romanum's high decaying  
walls wanted to swallow down the cloaca  
of filth and confusion your disciplined  
sound,  
but the polished libellus escaped somehow  
the hobnailed beat of calloused legionary  
feet and the herd of headbutting forensic  
bulls out strutting their heroic clausulae.  
Your lampoons pricked the tough CEOs of  
state:  
great Caesar's skin gibed at in zebra  
stripes and to famous Marcus Tullius's  
grave Ciceronian orotundities  
you gave nice thanks. From east to west  
you followed  
the Republic's triumphs to share the takings  
and felt it all shrink to a few unkind words.

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### APA Speakers' Bureau

The APA maintains a roster of enthusiastic speakers who are available to address a wide variety of audiences – civic groups, professional societies, library and other reading groups, middle schools and secondary schools, junior and senior colleges, universities, and many other organizations.

The Speakers' Bureau can be found by going to the APA Web site at [www.apaclassics.org](http://www.apaclassics.org) and clicking on "Outreach," listed on the left hand side of the screen of the home page. Under Outreach, you will find the Speakers' Bureau. The Bureau lists e-mail addresses of dozens of speakers as well as descriptions of the talks they are prepared to give. A glance through the topics described there will make clear the breadth of presentations that are available, from Medical Practices in Pompeii and the Roman Empire to Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt.

## AGAMEMNON, ACHILLES, ODYSSEUS: HOMER ON MILITARY LEADERSHIP

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even if they cannot desert physically. The stampede to the ships carries one of the *Iliad's* most important lessons for military leaders. "Command climate" is not the weather report of atmospherics in the boss's office or command post; it is the observed trustworthiness of how power is employed. What Agamemnon did to Achilles was no *private* wrong. There are no private wrongs in the use of military power. All watch the trustworthiness of those who wield power over them. If any dared to ask, Agamemnon would have said that what went between him and Achilles was none of their business. When a military leader violates "what is right" in the use of power, the injury afflicts everyone. Agamemnon caused Achilles' desertion yesterday, and today caused the stampede to the ships, the desertion of his whole army.

If the *Iliad's* Agamemnon is an almost perfectly bad leader, and its pre-Book 1 Achilles (see below) an almost perfectly good leader, Odysseus displays a mixture of both good and bad leadership in the *Iliad*. Odysseus is, as Homer says, *polytropos*, many-sided, mixed, multi-colored, piebald. He is a mixture of outstandingly good and outstandingly bad military traits. His night reconnaissance with Diomedes behind Trojan lines in the tenth book of the *Iliad* condenses, in a single episode, Odysseus' contradictory blend of brilliance and failure.

During this exceedingly dangerous mission, Odysseus and Diomedes discover the Trojan order of battle and learn that Hector and his top commanders are conferring *unguarded* by the tomb of Ilos. We know that Odysseus is armed with a bow and that he is capable of very rapid, aimed fire of great accuracy. So why do they not decapitate the Trojan leadership, or even try?

Greed for personal gain gets in the way. Diomedes wants to go after the tired and newly arrived Thracians for their booty, but Odysseus never says, "Whoa! Let's keep our eye on the ball," and wholeheartedly goes for the loot. Everywhere I turn, I stub my toe on the defects of Odysseus' character. In this case, he has lost sight of the military purpose of the night reconnaissance. He puts self before mission, forgetting that there is a good chance that the next morning the Greeks will be thrown out of their beachhead and all slaughtered, as Nestor has said earlier when proposing this very night reconnaissance.

Odysseus and Diomedes find the Thracian bivouac, kill the Thracian king and his sleeping soldiers, and then race away with the king's glorious team and chariot, outrunning the hue and cry. They drive it into the Greek beachhead. Amidst all the crowing and congratulations on their flashy prize, amid the relief that both Odysseus and Diomedes have returned safely, nobody remembers to interview them for information useful to surviving the next day's fight. The tenth book ends with the two warriors having a hot bath and a stiff drink. The next day the Greeks are saved, not by intelligence from Odysseus' reconnaissance, but by Achilles' release of fresh troops under Patroclus, who take the Trojans on the flank by surprise.

In *Odysseus in America*, I summarized the case for Odysseus' court martial, using data derived from both epics. In *Achilles in Vietnam*, I summarized the data scattered throughout the *Iliad* that Achilles had been an exemplary soldier and leader prior to our first sight of him during Book 1, in which he was so publicly humiliated by Agamemnon. The experiences of real soldiers and real veterans have greatly heightened my ability to hear submerged voices in the complex music of these compositions. In the *Odyssey*, the in-your-face theme in the brass is, "Odysseus is not to blame – his people brought destruction upon themselves." Only by consciously attending to the other instruments do you hear, "He destroyed the people!" In the *Iliad*, the announced theme is, "Achilles brought pain, suffering, and death on the people," but a second theme in another key weeps, "This was the tragedy of Achilles at the hands of the leader Agamemnon."

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# FROM ITALY TO INDIA: MEDITERRANEAN AMPHORAS AND ROMAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

by Elizabeth Lyding Will

As one stands on top of Monte Testaccio in Rome, 150 feet above the Tiber River, at the foot of the Aventine Hill, St. Peter's dome seems to float at eye level in the distance, above the Janiculum Hill. The graves of Shelley and Keats lie in the Protestant Cemetery across the street, and the showy Pyramid of Cestius is just outside the cemetery near the gate that leads to Ostia (see Fig. 6). A fascinating area, indeed, especially when one looks down and realizes that underfoot lie thousands of broken amphoras. Monte Testaccio is, in fact, entirely composed of amphora fragments, remnants of shipping containers that were broken because too many of them came to Rome during the Imperial period, when a shortage of olive oil forced Rome to import it in bulk from Spain and later from Africa. The amphoras that brought the oil would, when emptied, ordinarily have been reused for storage. In the Roman world, where few storage facilities were available, householders reused empty shipping amphoras for the storage of a wide variety of items, from fruit to eggs. Pompeii is full of jars reused for storage, carefully labeled as to contents. But even a city the size of Rome could not reuse all its amphoras for storage. The Romans, therefore, needed to break into pieces the ones that no one wanted. There were limits also on how many amphora fragments could be reused in building even though the building industry depended heavily on broken amphoras as a component of the cores of walls. As a consequence, Monte Testaccio, the "eighth hill of Rome," grew up gradually along the Tiber just inside the Aurelian Wall.

Another outstanding collection of Roman amphoras, this time from a ship that sank off the island of Spargi just north of Sardinia, illustrates for us how amphoras were shipped by sea. They were stored in the hold in layers, in a herringbone pattern that helped to prevent shifting of the heavy cargo. The Nino Lamboglia Museum of Naval Archaeology at La Maddalena on the island of Maddalena, east of Spargi, offers the visitor a reconstruction of the hold of the large cargo ship that was to become the famous Spargi shipwreck. Here we can see, at first hand, how the carefully arranged layers of amphoras

rested on each other in the hold. In spite of such precautions, storms and winds caused many wrecks in the Roman period, and the Spargi reconstruction allows us to appreciate not only the loss of human life but also the labor wasted in producing the amphoras and the wine they contained.

The profits from seaborne trade were clearly massive enough to justify the risks involved. Monte Testaccio and the Spargi shipwreck help us to understand the general importance of trade and the role played by commercial amphoras in the Roman world. But only a rigorous analysis of amphoras – their shapes, dimensions, stamps, and clay – can give us a clear idea of the economic history of a site, whether it is on land or under water. I have been engaged in the study of Roman amphoras since the 1950's when I began, in the hope of learning more about Roman trade, to catalog and study the Roman amphoras found in Athens at the Athenian Agora, the Kerameikos, the south slope of the Acropolis, and the National Museum. To set these Roman amphoras found at Athens more in focus, I added to my catalog the Roman amphoras found at Delos, Corinth, and Alexandria, and other smaller sites in the eastern Mediterranean.

As time went on, however, I began to realize that I needed to familiarize myself with the amphora finds at an Ital-

ian site in order to begin to draw any solid conclusions about Roman trade. I began, in 1974, my study of the long, thin Roman wine amphoras found at Cosa, a Latin colony founded in 273 B.C. and located about ninety miles north of Rome, and the adjacent Port of Cosa. I then realized, using the Athenian Agora dates, that it was possible to reconstruct the economic history of a site on the basis of the amphora finds. Amphoras helped to show that the port of Cosa was one of the chief Roman Republican export harbors. Wine amphoras from Cosa bearing the trademark of Sestius (perhaps the father of Cicero's friend, Publius Sestius; the family owned property at Cosa and also a fleet of ships) had been reported by Jacques Cousteau in the early 1950's as occurring in large numbers on the upper Grand Congloué wreck off Marseilles in France, and they were also being found throughout France and as far north as the Celtic city of Manching, which is on the Danube River near the modern German city of Ingolstadt (see Fig. 7). This distribution of amphoras gave credence to Cicero's statement in *De Re Publica* 3.16 that, in 129 B.C., the Romans did not permit the Transalpine Gauls to grow the olive or the vine. In other words, the Romans were practicing protectionism.

Not long after completing the work at Cosa and confirming that most of the finds included in the Agora catalog represented amphoras carrying olive oil from Brindisi to Alexandria and from Aquileia in the northern Adriatic Sea to Delos in the Aegean Sea, I had the unique opportunity to expand my understanding of Roman trade in the east by undertaking the study of the amphora finds of the Roman period at the site of Arikamedu, which is close to modern Pondicherry, on the Bay of Bengal in southeastern India (see Fig. 8). French archaeologists had conducted excavations there during the 1940's, finding quite a number of Mediterranean amphora fragments. In 1945, Sir Mortimer Wheeler discovered more fragments at Arikamedu, a few of which he published. My own work at Arikamedu in 1990 and 1992 involved study of the amphora finds of the Roman period made by the French archaeologists and



**Fig. 6. The eastern slope of Monte Testaccio in Rome, looking toward the Protestant cemetery and the Pyramid of Cestius. Fragments of broken amphoras appear in the foreground. Photo credit: Elizabeth Lyding Will.**



**Fig. 7. Roman wine amphora of Will Type 4a, an early variety of Dressel's Type 1. Manufactured at the Port of Cosa around 100 B.C., the amphora now lacks most of one handle. It was found in a cistern in the excavations of the Athenian Agora by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Photo credit: Eugene Vanderpool.**

by Wheeler, in addition to several hundred fragments from excavations directed in 1989-1992 by the late Indian-American archaeologist, Vimala Begley, with the collaboration of K. V. Raman of the University of Madras.

We knew already from their literature that the Tamil kings of southern India loved Mediterranean wine and praised its fragrance. The *Periplus* (49, 56), which is dated to the middle of the first century A.D. by Lionel Casson in his 1989 edition of the work, also refers to its exportation to India. The fragments from the Roman period found at Arikamedu are tangible proof of that importation. My study of them shows that over half of the fragments came from the Aegean island of Kos. The remainder consisted of amphoras from the Greek island of Rhodes and the city of Knidos, south of Kos, as well as imitations, made in Pompeii, of amphoras from Kos (known as pseudo-Koan amphoras). A small number of fragments (1.5%) came from southern France. We now have a possible explanation for why, in spite of the popularity and fame of Koan wine, Koan amphoras are relatively rare finds at import centers in the Mediterranean. The answer is that they were apparently being exported in great numbers to India, in partial payment, one assumes, for the Indian

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## Film Review: *Barabbas* (1962)

by Ruth Scodel

Although a visit to the *Internet Movie Database* ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)) shows that it certainly has fans, *Barabbas*, released on DVD in 2002, is unlikely to be on many lists of great films. Produced by Dino De Laurentis as an Italian-American co-production and directed by Richard Fleischer, the film is flawed in many ways, but carried by the hard work of Anthony Quinn in the title role and a solidly professional supporting cast including Silvana Mangano, Jack Palance, and Ernest Borgnine.

The main character, Barabbas, is the robber freed instead of Jesus (Matthew 27:16-21 and John 19:39-40). Nothing else is known about him. The film is based on the 1950 novel *Barabbas* by the Swedish author Pär Lagerkvist (1891-1974), who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1951. This is not the kind of novel that obviously begs to become a film even though it includes some dramatic events (and was also filmed in Swedish in 1953). It is an austere little book. Barabbas, profoundly afraid of death, is obsessed with Christ, but he is unable to believe. Although he sees Jesus surrounded by light, he himself has just come out of the darkness, and he thinks that his eyes have reacted to the sun. He sees the empty tomb, but does not witness the resurrection. A girl who has seen it tells him that the crucified rabbi taught people to love one another. She is stoned to death, and her memory, too, haunts him. He is drawn to Christians and repelled by them at the same time. When they find out who he is, they reject him. He is terribly lonely. Near the end of the novel, when he hears that the Christians are burning Rome, he runs around spreading the fire, believing that the end of the world has come. In prison, the apostle Peter pities him but even then there is no real contact. Dying, he says *as if* to the darkness, "To thee I deliver up my soul." It is not a Christian novel. It does not ask its reader to have or play at having the faith Barabbas lacks. It is about the modern nostalgia for faith, powerfully transferred to the ancient world.

The story of Barabbas must have been hard to resist in 1962 after the immense success of *Ben-Hur* (1959). The trailer for *Barabbas* called it "The motion picture that

begins where the other big ones leave off" – which must mean especially *Ben-Hur*, which, like *Barabbas*, deals with a man whose fate partially echoes that of Jesus and who, after long suffering, eventually achieves peace of mind through faith. "The other big ones" must also include *The Robe* (1953), which also concerns one individual's response to the crucifixion of Jesus, and *Quo Vadis* (1951), which, like *Barabbas*, ends with the great fire at Rome and Nero's persecution of Christians.

In the film *Barabbas*, the final conversion of Barabbas is unambiguous, and the audience is meant to have a Christian perspective throughout. The film, cleverly, gives Barabbas' fate a clearer pattern than the novel: Barabbas, saved in the place of Jesus, seems to be unkillable. Barabbas, who has gone back to his career as a robber, is told that he cannot be executed because he has once been freed. He is enslaved in a sulfur mine instead. He understands this to mean that he is immortal. He is, however, never saved miraculously; he just seems extraordinarily lucky. In the film, for example, the mine burns and collapses (this is one of the sequences that has given the film popularity as a mini-disaster movie). Barabbas and Sahak, the devout Christian to whom he is chained, are the only survivors, and their owner decides they would make good gladiators because they are lucky. Interestingly, Barabbas is never a gladiator in the novel, but, after *Spartacus* (1960), who could leave gladiators out of a Roman movie?

The gladiatorial sequence, however, is very effective in its own terms. Jack Palance does an over-the-top turn as a sadistic gladiator who fights from a chariot against opponents who are on foot. Barabbas wins against him, as he must, but his victory is won through intelligence. Barabbas hesitates to kill his fallen enemy. *Ben-Hur* is probably the inspiration here. In that film, Judah Ben-Hur cannot really receive the Christian message until near the end of the film because he is so consumed with hatred for his former Roman friend Messala; the story allows him to have his revenge and then achieve faith. As so often in Roman

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## FROM ITALY TO INDIA

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luxuries being sent west.

But why all the Koan amphoras at this site in India? The Roman writers Cato the Elder and Pliny the Elder give us recipes for Koan wine that make it clear that seawater was used in its manufacture. The salt in the water would have acted as a preservative (like the sodium nitrite regularly added to modern wines) during the long voyage to India, an advantage not offered by more expensive wines. Koan wine also had medicinal qualities and acted as a digestive aid. Its exportation to Arikamedu probably began as early as the late second century B.C. and lasted into the latter first century B.C.

Pompeii began to export pseudo-Koan wine in pseudo-Koan amphoras shortly after Sulla besieged and occupied the city in 89 B.C. Sulla left his nephew, P. Sulla, in charge of Pompeii, and the earliest pseudo-Koan jars from Pompeii bear the trademarks of P. Sulla. Another important Pompeian exporter of fake Koan wine was L. Eumachius, father of Eumachia, the well-known priestess and civic benefactor of the city of Pompeii. Pseudo-Koan wine was the wine of whatever area was producing it. That wine was then mixed, just like Koan wine itself, with “a rather large amount of sea water” as Pliny the Elder puts it (*Historia Naturalis* 14.78). Cato the Elder is more specific (*De Re Rustica* 112-13): he instructs the reader to fill about one-fifth of an amphora with sea water and then add grapes that have been pressed with the hand to soak in the sea water. After three days, the grapes are to be removed from the sea water, trodden, and, after several other recommended steps, stored in the sun in covered amphoras for not more than four years. Much later, in the first century A.D., at a time when other parts of Italy, like Cosa, were ceasing to export and giving way to provincial suppliers, it is interesting to note that Pompeii had taken over the task of supplying India with pseudo-Koan wine, even coloring the exteriors of its amphora exports with a pale green surfacing, in imitation of the pale greenish surfaces of authentic Koan jars. After the destruction of Pompeii in A.D. 79, a few flat-bottomed Gaulish wine jars from France made their way to India, as noted above, but by that time Rome’s trade with India was drawing to a close. Finds at several other sites of the Roman period in southeastern India appear to duplicate the evidence at Arikamedu, where Indian archaeologists are said to be planning



**Fig. 8. Excavation structure and pottery sorting area at Arikamedu in 1990.**

Photo credit: Elizabeth Lyding Will.

to resume excavation during 2004. Roman amphoras are also reported from many other parts of India, including Gujarat and Maharashtra. Now that we know in more detail the nature of Mediterranean exports to India during the Roman period, we are in a far better position to analyze Roman economic, and even political, history.

As more scholars enter the field, study of Roman amphoras is helping us locate export and import centers in Italy and the provinces during both Republic and Empire. The economic histories of Republican ports like Cosa and Pompeii are being reconstructed. Trade routes are being clarified. We can also estimate amounts of trade in a variety of commodities in different periods, and, through study of trademarks, identify individuals involved with that trade. The addition of India as a market for the Mediterranean helps us to see in clearer focus the nature of the economy during the period when the Roman Republic was giving way to the Empire. Increasingly, I believe, the abundant archaeological evidence provided by amphoras is pointing the way to a more complex and, at the same time, more accurate and precise view of Roman history, one in which the economy was of great importance. Did trade follow the flag in Roman antiquity, or was military activity a result of the desire to open and protect trade routes and markets? How important was protectionism during the Republic? During the Empire? Who made decisions about the economy? Amphoras are helping us answer these questions and, at the same time, achieve a more realistic view of the economic energy of the Romans.

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## Film Review: *Barabbas* (1962)

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films, the audience for *Barabbas* can have it both ways. Here, too, the audience can want *Barabbas* to refuse to kill and yet enjoy watching him kill his evil opponent. Quinn, though, plays the scene with dignity and restraint. He kills, but without emotional display.

*Barabbas* is not an outstanding film. It is, in many ways, typical of the Romano-biblical epic. As with other examples of the type, the movie’s appeal lies mostly in spectacle and violence but, because it deals with salvation, the audience can pretend that it is edifying. Although it is much shorter than *Quo Vadis* or *Ben-Hur*, *Barabbas*, at 137 minutes, is too long, and some parts drag. It is filled with all the clichés of the toga movie. *Barabbas* shows, in short, the exhaustion of the Christian epic in Hollywood filmmaking. If you are curious about the genre and want to see it in its essentials, this is a good choice. If you enjoy disasters and gladiators, fast forward to the exciting parts. But if you can handle the existential angst, read the novel – it deserves more readers than it has.

*Ruth Scodel is Professor of Greek and Latin at the University of Michigan. Her most recent books are Credible Impossibilities: Conventions and Strategies of Verisimilitude in Homer and Greek Tragedy (1999) and Listening to Homer (2002). She teaches a class on ancient Rome and the cinema.*

# AN OPERATIC AGAMEMNON PREMIERES IN WASHINGTON, D. C.

by Andrew Earle Simpson

Aeschylus' tragedy *Agamemnon*, which relates Agamemnon's triumphant return from the Trojan War and his subsequent murder by his wife Klytemnestra, projects a dark and unrelenting dramatic power. As a composer searching for an operatic subject, I was struck by this power at my first reading of the play, in English translation, in 1999. Its scenes of confrontation, jubilation, fury, and murder seemed to cry out for musical setting, and I knew that *Agamemnon* was made to be an opera.

What makes Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* operatic? First of all, its scale is grand, and many of the tragedy's scenes translate well to operatic staging. For example, Agamemnon's triumphal entrance, accompanied by choral acclamations, soldiers, and spoils (including Cassandra, his Trojan war prize), can accommodate almost limitless spectacle. The climactic moment in which Klytemnestra enters, exulting over the visible bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra to the shock and outrage of the Chorus, is theatrically rich. *Agamemnon's* operatic nature is also inherent in the structure of its text. Aeschylus clearly delineates choruses, speeches, and dialogues, each of which has a specific operatic equivalent: dialogues become recitative (a comparatively free and speech-like form of singing, the principal purpose of which is to advance plot), speeches become arias (extended songs for a soloist), and choruses are simply maintained.

Librettist Sarah Brown Ferrario and I began with a distinct goal: to make our fully contemporary opera, *Agamemnon*, reflect the spirit of Aeschylus' tragedy as closely as possible, without extensive "adaptation" or "modernization" of the text. Our fundamental belief was that Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* had no need of modernization to be dramatically successful; the play was, in itself, powerful, coherent, and relevant enough to speak directly to contemporary audiences. We wished to let Aeschylus "sing" for himself, albeit in English translation, in this opera.

Ms. Ferrario translated each line of the libretto directly from a corresponding segment of the ancient Greek. Furthermore, the order of events, principal characters, and each of the tragedy's choruses were preserved. Of

course, in a drama containing more than 1,600 lines, significant cuts were necessary if our one-act opera was to be anything less than four hours in duration! But even these cuts were made with an eye to preserving Aeschylus' original sectional proportions as closely as possible.

My principal goal as composer was to *illuminate* Aeschylus' work, amplifying and extending the inherent power of his drama through music. The music of *Agamemnon* is tonal: this gives the opera a clear harmonic center, against which dissonant chromatic inflections are set in strong relief. *Agamemnon* is also lyrical, in acknowledgment of opera as a singer's art form: each principal character performs at least one aria. Rich orchestral textures and sudden shifts of volume and color lend *Agamemnon* intensity and sonic power. In the manner of the Wagnerian *leitmotif*, dramatically significant musical ideas create additional narrative layers. One example is the opera's opening chord, heard frequently throughout the work, representing the death of Agamemnon. When heard before Agamemnon's murder, this "death chord" is a prediction; heard afterward, it serves as a remembrance of that event.

Four years after my initial encounter with Aeschylus' play, our new one-act opera *Agamemnon*, 100 minutes in length, was premiered at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C., on April 25, 26, and 27, 2003. It

was given a fully staged production – orchestra, chorus, dancers, sets, costumes, lighting, and projected supertitles for the English libretto – by Catholic University's Benjamin T. Rome School of Music in collaboration with professional artists from Washington, D. C. (see Fig. 9). *Agamemnon* is the first phase of The *Oresteia* Project, a multi-year enterprise that aims to set the three tragedies of Aeschylus' great trilogy as one-act operas. The second opera, *The Libation Bearers*, is scheduled for a concert workshop performance March 19-20, 2004, also at Catholic University. Work on the final opera, *The Furies* (based on the *Eumenides*), will begin sometime in 2004.

To enable an even wider audience to experience the music of *Agamemnon*, I have also created a song cycle, *Klytemnestra Songs*, for soprano and piano (premiered, appropriately enough, at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in March, 2002), and a suite of *Agamemnon's* choral music for concert performance.

The opera's Web site, <http://music.cua.edu/agamemnon>, contains streaming digital video of all three recent Catholic University performances of *Agamemnon*, detailed background information about the opera, its complete libretto, analytical essays on the music, lists of performance and production personnel, and links to other Web sites on Greek tragedy and opera. This site will be expanded as The *Oresteia* Project continues, to serve as a working resource for students, scholars, and interested members of the public, and to share Aeschylus' masterpiece with as wide an audience as possible.

*Andrew Earle Simpson, a composer and pianist, is Assistant Professor of Music at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C. His compositions include opera as well as orchestral, chamber, choral, dance, theater, and film music. Currently, he is teaching a new course, "Greek Tragedy and Opera," with Sarah Brown Ferrario at Catholic University. Earlier this year, he was named Composer-in-Residence for the exhibition "Art in Roman Life" at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art in Iowa, with commissions for two new chamber works inspired by Roman antiquity.*



**Fig. 9.** From the production of the opera *Agamemnon* – Agamemnon returns victorious from the Trojan War with Cassandra, who is behind him on his chariot. Photo credit: Gary Pierpoint, Office of Public Affairs, The Catholic University of America, 2003.

## MYTHS FOR MILLIONS

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loosened strings/Sank hapless Icarus on unfaithful wings.”

Bulfinch says in the Preface to *The Age of Fable* that his book is “for the reader of English literature of either sex who wishes to comprehend [mythological] allusions” so he intended his audience to include Latinless men as well as women. Although he wrote the book for both sexes, the author probably had in mind women more than men as his potential readers. Although his lineage and schooling qualified Bulfinch to be a member of Boston’s public-spirited elite in his volunteer activities, his daily life set him apart from most men of his social background. His up-and-down career had prepared him to understand the struggles and hopes of ordinary people, both men and women. He had a stereotypical woman-like role in his family of birth, for much of his life serving his parents and siblings as an emotional support (he never married). As job-holder and family factotum, he crossed barriers of class and gender. Because of this exposure, he was able better than most to discern the need of Latinless readers, including women, for a body of knowledge that had been for him a birthright.

*The Age of Fable*, moreover, would not have been such an enormous success without the advances in women’s education in the antebellum years. Beginning around 1820, secondary schooling became more and more available to girls. Many girls used their training in academies and seminaries to obtain work as schoolteachers. Although they were now able to study many subjects, girls were still not given the rigorous Latin training available to boys preparing for college. The few girls who learned enough Latin to read ancient Roman works in the original did not have in their curriculum the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, a work full of salacious detail. The reason for this omission was squeamishness about introducing girls to sexual knowledge. Bulfinch’s friend George Barrell Emerson (a distant cousin of Ralph Waldo Emerson) was a reformer in education, including “female education.” Writing about that subject, G. B. Emerson reflects the prevalent view of Ovid, leaving that poet out of the list of ancient authors he recommends for girls.

Bulfinch adroitly by-passed the gender conventions of his time by successfully overcoming two obstacles that had

kept women from systematic knowledge of the myths: the Latin language, which few girls knew well, and sexual content. Many of the stories in *The Age of Fable* – the best ones – are Bulfinch’s own translations from Ovid. He leaves out the incest, the cannibalism, the bestiality, and the adultery in Ovid’s stories, but he does not talk down to his audience. He bowdlerizes because otherwise he would not have had an audience.

*The Age of Fable* has an unobtrusive quality and fits comfortably into the lives of all kinds of people. This lack of pomposity may be one of the reasons Americans took it to their hearts. A reviewer of *The Age of Fable* in the *North American Review* for January 1856 wrote, “We . . . have, we believe for the first time, a ‘Pantheon’ [a famous mythology book used in boys’ schools], which might hold an unchallenged place in the drawing-room, or be read, with no shock to the moral nature, by a child of tender years. The book needs only to be known, to be widely esteemed, and welcomed into general use.” In fact, Bulfinch made classical myths accessible in a wide range of English-speaking classrooms (not just elite boys’ schools) and in millions of parlors throughout the United States.

*Marie Cleary, M.A., Ed. D., is an independent scholar specializing in American classical tradition and classics in education. She is a member of the Associates at Five Colleges, Inc., Amherst, a program that provides a base for qualified independent scholars. She has taught classical subjects from middle school to graduate-level and has directed national, regional, and local programs for teachers of classics and the humanities. She is the author of The Bulfinch Solution: Teaching the*

Ancient Classics in American Schools (Ayer, 1990) and is currently writing a biography of Thomas Bulfinch, which will be published by Peter Lang.

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- To ensure an adequate number of well-trained, inspirational classics teachers at all levels, kindergarten through graduate school;
- To give classics scholars and teachers the tools they need to preserve and extend their knowledge of classical civilization and to communicate that knowledge as widely as possible;
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