

## PATRIARCHY AND *PIETAS* IN THE *STAR WARS* TRILOGY

by Margaret Malamud

A deeply embedded historical myth lies at the heart of Western views of ancient Rome. In its simplest form it is this: once upon a time there was a virtuous Republic of citizen-farmers who embodied *pietas*, a term that encompasses respect for the patriarchal family, selfless devotion to the laws and traditions of the civic order, and reverence for the gods who watched over the affairs of the family and the Republic. Simplicity, sobriety, frugality, and fortitude were all characteristics of the good citizens of the Republic. Republican virtues and military prowess enabled conquest, and soon the Republic acquired an empire. The acquisition of wealth and imperial power brought in its wake corruption, decadence, and a loss of the qualities that had made the Republic great. Materialism, avarice, and a lust for power undermined the fabric of the Republic; corrupt and depraved rulers and their imperial guards dominated a cowed senate; and a degenerate citizenry ceased to observe and respect the old customs and traditions and spent much of its time enjoying spectacles of violence and cruelty in the arenas.

The roots of this narrative of a slide from Republican virtue into imperial corruption are in the works of Roman historians, especially Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus, and it has become a standard commonplace in Western historiography.

Permutations of the myth appear as explanatory devices for decline in a number of post-Roman historical narratives, notably in American nostalgic evocations of its own Republic and its subsequent fall from earlier virtues and values. For the American Founding Fathers, the Roman Republic had served as an exemplary political model for the young nation, and it was invoked in art, architecture, and political oratory to help articulate and legitimate America's identity. Republican Rome offered a political ideal, but imperial Rome, the Rome of the Caesars, was more problematic for, according to the common view, wealth and imperial expansion brought in their wake political and moral corruption. This was the analysis Roman historians and their modern successors had offered for Rome's decline; would it be true for America as well? Americans have identified with both Republican and Imperial Rome at different moments in their history, and the rise and fall of Rome has offered models to emulate and avoid.

George Lucas' enormously successful science fiction trilogy *Star Wars* (1977), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), and *The Return of the Jedi* (1983) gives cinematic form to the paradigmatic and powerful myth of a virtuous Republic undermined by a corrupt empire. It is

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## Book Review: *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome*

by Elaine Fantham

Anthony A. Barrett. *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome*. Yale University Press (1-800-405-1619), 2002. Pp. xviii, 425. 29 illustrations. Hardcover \$45.00. ISBN 0-300-09196-6. Paperback \$20.00. ISBN 0-300-10298-4.

As Rome's first emperor Augustus lay dying, he kissed his wife and said "Livia, remember our marriage while you live, and fare well!" At this point (so Suetonius, *Augustus* 99 tells us), he had dismissed his friends, leaving only Livia to share his last moments. They had been married for more than fifty years, presenting a model union to the public eye. Even when their busy schedules prevented them from meeting, Augustus consulted his wife in writing over family problems, and some of their letters survive in Suetonius' imperial biographies for us to read. Augustus

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Fig. 1. Head of Livia. Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, Copenhagen. Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML (*Greek Mythology Link*, <http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/>). Printed with the permission of Carlos Parada.

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unlikely that Lucas had read Roman historians or later reconstructions and uses of their works, and it is apparent that he also made use of other motifs and archetypes in his films, notably those described in the work of the mythologist Joseph Campbell. I contend, however, that the trilogy's narrative structure and some of its key themes derive from the myth of the rise and fall of Rome, a myth so pervasive in American (and European) culture that direct knowledge of its origins is not necessary for its employment. Lucas had absorbed this explanatory paradigm, and he used it to imaginatively structure his futuristic films.

Lucas' trilogy boldly transposes the ideological conflict between a virtuous Republic and a decadent Empire to the context of science fiction. The prologue to *Star Wars* reads like a lament Livy could have written: "The Old Republic was the Republic of legend . . . Once, under the wise rule of the senate and the protection of the Jedi knights, the Republic thrived and grew. But as often happens when wealth and power pass beyond the admirable and attain the awesome, then appear those evil ones who have greed to match." The galactic conflict revolves around the disintegration of the Old Republic and the corresponding emergence of a corrupt Empire. Like many Roman authors writing after the collapse of the Roman Republic, Lucas mythologized an Old Republic and critiqued the evils of the present imperial era by contrasting them with the vanished virtues of a bygone age.

Prior to the present corrupt Galactic Empire, a senate had ruled. The Jedi knights, an aristocratic class of virtuous warrior-priests, guarded its moral, religious, and physical safety. An excess of wealth and power eroded the internal moral fiber of the Republic, and a corrupt senator, Palpatine, seized power through the treacherous promise to restore the glory of the Republic. Supported by power-hungry elements within the Old Republic, Palpatine declared himself emperor and set about consolidating his power. In a manner worthy of the Caesars of Suetonius or Tacitus, Palpatine eliminated his enemies (the Jedi knights), allowed an imperial bureaucratic guard to govern the empire, and ushered in a reign of terror.

In Lucas' story the duty of restoring the Republic fell to a small band of "freedom fighters" led by Luke Skywalker, a young man of humble agrarian origins.

At the beginning of *Star Wars*, Luke is an adolescent who feels trapped in the rural society of Tatooine, his home planet; he is pining for adventure. Luke is called upon to rescue a princess, Leia, and help her and a federation of rebel loyalists restore the Republic. The trilogy traces Luke's personal transformation from an impetuous, untried youth to a pious, restrained warrior-priest; and his maturation enables the overthrow of the evil empire and a return to the virtuous Republic.

In a 1995 interview, Lucas stated that the focal point of his series was Luke's quest to redeem his fallen father. Unknown to Luke, his father, Anakin Skywalker, had succumbed to corruption (or the dark side of the Force) and had become Darth Vader ("dark father"), the chief villain of the films (see Fig. 2). Vader serves as the evil Emperor Palpatine's chief lieutenant, and he uses any available means to crush the vestiges of the Old Republic. Before giving in to the dark side of the Force, Anakin Skywalker had been the star pupil of Obi-Wan Kenobi, spiritual and physical trainer of Jedi knights. Obi-Wan Kenobi becomes Luke's surrogate father and trainer; he instills in Luke the spiritual values, martial skills, and self-control necessary to complete his quest. When Luke discovers Vader's true identity, he redirects much of his energy to redeeming his father. Luke's quest to restore to his father the Republican virtues his father once possessed as a Jedi knight encapsulates, in a microcosm, his attempt to restore the Republic.

Luke travels into Lucas' version of an underworld to save his father: he willingly surrenders himself to Vader, who brings him before Palpatine, who is attended by a silent praetorian guard garbed in red. Refusing Palpatine's offer to join him, Luke is forced to fight his father. His inability to save himself by killing his father forces his father to kill the emperor in order to save his son. The final exchange between father and son proves that it was filial loyalty and devotion that has wrought the transfor-



**Fig. 2. Darth Vader beckons Luke to join the dark side. *Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back* (Lucasfilms Ltd., 1980).**

mation of Vader back to father. The son redeems the father, and Luke and Anakin Skywalker are reconciled just before the death of the father. The empire falls and the Republic is restored; the connection between the maintenance of proper family (father-son) bonds and a return to a more virtuous form of government is inescapable. Filial loyalty and a devotion to the Republic are interconnected, and patriarchy and *pietas* are conflated in a very Roman manner. Many ancient Romans would have agreed with Lucas' message that the right relationship between fathers and sons and between citizens and the state is one governed by the willingness of the son to subordinate himself even to death for father and country. Self-transformation ensues, and Luke attains maturity.

Lucas began work on the script of *Star Wars* in 1972, and his vision and the production and release of the films in the late 1970's and early 1980's need to be seen within the context of a resurgence of conservatism in the United States and the rise of the New Right as a national force. Neo-conservatism was a backlash against the sweeping changes and traumatic events of the 1960's and 1970's and a response to increasing economic dislocation: inflation, unemployment, and recession wracked an economy that had once appeared unstoppable. The 1960's witnessed the Vietnam War; the Civil Rights movement; the rise of the feminist movement; shifts in sexual attitudes and practices; the Black Power movement; and the assassinations of the Kennedy brothers, Martin Luther King, and Malcolm X. In the 1970's, Watergate, the decline of American imperial power and failure in Vietnam, inflation, unemployment, and

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## Book Review: *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome*

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claimed publicly that other men should control their wives as he did and allegedly wore homespun togas that she and his daughter wove for him. People and cities in need of help or pardon approached the emperor through Livia, and one famous episode is recorded in which Livia's wise and merciful bedside advice prevented him from exposing a young nobleman Cornelius Cinna to senatorial condemnation: pardoned and promoted by the emperor, Cinna remained loyal. Livia understood their relationship so well that she condoned or even provided his sexual diversions.

A model wife, indeed. Perhaps few remembered in A.D. 14 that, when the republic still enjoyed a half-life, the married Octavian had met the wife of the newly restored Tiberius Claudius Nero, a former supporter of Sextus Pompeius. Octavian wooed her and won her, divorcing his bride Scribonia the day after the birth of their (female) child, and marrying the beautiful Livia (see Fig. 1) within the month, three days after the birth of her second son Drusus. Barrett, already author of successful biographies of Livia's grandchildren, Caligula (1990), and Agrippina the younger (1996), explores the disputed chronology of this scandal in one of his useful appendices and seems to have established that Octavian could not have met Livia early enough to father her second son.

Barrett is surely right that most of us now have an image of Rome's first first-lady preformed by Sian Phillips' wily portrayal in BBC TV's 1976 production *I, Claudius*. (Her portrayal of Livia resonates still today, since, apparently, Tony Soprano's mother Livia was named after Sian Phillips' unforgettable matriarch). He is right, too, to aim to counteract Tacitus' technique of innuendo, but then Tacitus himself, like Barrett, was a revisionist, trying to penetrate behind the official Augustan version of those fifty years. Barrett's sympathies seem squarely Augustan. Thus, Brutus and Cassius are "assassins" (11, 15), Sextus Pompeius a "renegade" (15), and Tiberius Nero a loser who deserved to lose Livia ("a worthy failure," 16). Scribonia, at least, is exonerated from her ex-husband's charge of bad temper (20). But Barrett writes as though

Romans of the triumviral years should have supported Octavian, something neither morally nor politically obvious in the first years after Caesar's death.

Even those who resist the whiff of authorized royal biography cannot deny the interest or the scholarship of Barrett's narrative. The book's organization is both original and successful, beginning with the sequential narrative of marriage and succession problems (Part I: "The Life of Livia," which contains five chapters) before separate discussions of aspects of her personal life (Part II: "Livian Themes"): her domestic interest and her home (ch. 6), her public persona and financial affairs (ch. 9), her role as patron and intercessor (ch. 10), and her posthumous honors and reputation (ch. 11). Only chapters 7 ("Wife of the Emperor") and 8 "Mother of the Emperor" (see below) are inevitably concerned with political power.

Barrett has set a model for future biographies of Roman dynastic figures by prefacing his many short appendices on specific problems of place and time with a catalogue of textual and material evidence, citing and translating inscriptions, papyri, and coins, as well as listing gems and statuary. For teachers and students writing on this all-important period or on the imperial cult, for example, the appendix will prove both indispensable and easy to consult.

Livia survived her husband by fifteen years, but these years as mother of his successor, the prickly Tiberius, offer an unhappy contrast. We do not have to swallow the gossip that accused her of poisoning Augustus' chosen successor Marcellus or scheming against her stepdaughter Julia and Julia's male and female children to recognize that Livia gave every support to the career of her firstborn son and that Augustus, too, once left with no alternative, equipped Tiberius with a full share of his authority in his last decade. But Augustus seems to have mistrusted Tiberius even as Tiberius mistrusted both himself and others, and he demonstrated this by the extraordinary decision to adopt Livia in his will as his daughter and co-heir with her son.

Romans took adoption very seriously, and Augustus, who had become his great-

uncle Julius Caesar's son by testamentary adoption, would first turn his grandsons Gaius and Lucius into his sons while they were still infants, then finally mark Tiberius as his successor by adopting him in A.D. 4. But he did not give Tiberius the title of Augustus. Now, by this will, Augustus made his widow not just his daughter Julia (to replace the daughter he had exiled and disowned in 2 B.C.) but Julia *Augusta*. There were no precedents for adopting a female because no female was expected to fill either the private or public role of heir. What purpose would such adoption serve?

Barrett follows his report of this bombshell (73-77) with a full and clear discussion of its implications in chapter 8. He quotes sympathetically the modern view that Livia's new title – one which Tiberius himself would not accept from the senate – gave her a public role: "either she was expected to have some sharing in governing or [she] exploited the opening that Augustus' will inadvertently created" (153). But Augustus did not do things inadvertently, and Livia may herself have suggested to him this unprecedented title, which she certainly deployed, as she did the equally unprecedented role as priestess of the deified Augustus bestowed on her by the senate. As Barrett points out, the senate seems to have shared Livia's understanding that she was meant to be in some sense co-ruler with her son. She gave formal receptions to the senators and wrote and received official letters jointly with Tiberius; the senate in turn offered her titles and honors, even the tactless proposal to add "son of Julia Augusta" to Tiberius' titulature. As biographer of Nero's mother Agrippina, Barrett is alert to the likelihood that some of these details have been retrojected from that dreadful mother of a monstrous son to the more sober Livia and Tiberius.

Old age often brings troubles, not just of health (Livia seems to have been unusually hearty) but from failure to accept a natural loss of authority and the new generation's need for control. Livia's undoubted prestige and patronal influence in Rome, the gratitude of the senate, and the honors and worship lavished on her by the cities and provinces of the East cannot have compensated for estrangement from her only surviving son, who is said to have left Rome

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# DRUGS FOR AN EMPEROR

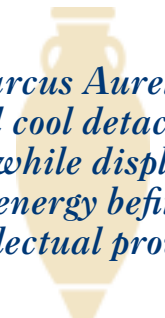
by John Scarborough

**A**wakening at dawn, Galen the court physician had his usual light breakfast of crusty three-day-old bread dipped in olive oil, washed down with a cup of cheap and diluted wine. Soon he was gathering ingredients from his limewood drug boxes, tins of silver, and glass flasks in the first stages of preparation of a daily potion, shortly to be imbibed by Marcus Aurelius, emperor in the years A.D. 161-80.

The coming day just might include some of those interminable embassies from the East, orientals singing adulation, and with stentorian verses, demonstrating their eternal loyalty to the ruler of the world. Galen's trusted assistants, slaves and freedmen trained in the best Hippocratic and Aristotelian medical logic, as well as safe surgeries and the multitudinous actions of simple and compound drugs, stood by their master, waiting and watching for instructions in helping to assemble the emperor's drug, or for any other tasks deemed useful to the great Pergamene doctor, so honored by Marcus Aurelius. Today, it seemed appropriate to send a slave to inquire about the emperor's appointments, audiences, and legal duties, and how long these imperial labors might last. If onerous, then Galen would compound some fresh parts of a powerful, sixty-ingredient theriac (a protective or "prophylactic" drug) invented a century before by Andromachus, a physician in the court of the emperor Nero.

The slave returned with a long list of greetings, salutations, and conferences that required Marcus' careful attention, perhaps cases at law that would dictate publication of *decreta principum* or *edicta imperatorum* in keeping with the Roman emperor's role as chief lawgiver in the Empire. Tedious details, but essential. Marcus Aurelius needed cool detachment, all the while displaying a mental energy befitting his intellectual prowess. Thus with the slave's list in hand, Galen and his assistants began to put together the sixty substances of Andromachus' theriac, carefully noting proportions and weights of each item. Especially important was the latex (the sap or juice) of the opium poppy (here in pre-prepared sun-dried lozenges), previously verified as genuine as contrasted to the common counterfeit latex, with its adulterants of animal fat, the gum of the acacia, and the juice of wild

lettuce (see Fig. 3). Also significant was the clarity of the rose oil, a warm aroma assuring Galen the fifty-eight other ingredients were completely mingled to produce in Marcus a sense of well-being, comparable to that produced by a modern antidepressant. Large quantities of clarified honey would be available to the emperor throughout the day, ensuring that component number six (opium) acted as a mild tranquilizer, occasionally adjusted to maintain the emperor's famous cognitive acuity.



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Andromachus' theriac was one of a number of these "protective drugs" that Galen had gleaned from earlier records of antidotes, and many of them had the name Mithridatium, commemorating the celebrated acquired immunity gained by Mithridates VI of Pontus (120-63 B.C.), who thereby could not commit suicide with poisons but had to be slain by an attendant running him through with a sword. Some of these theriacs had proved dangerous in the hands of inexperienced physicians. Dioscorides of Anazarbus (fl. ca. A.D. 70) had warned of the death-dealing qualities of the opium poppy latex, and as a very learned philosopher-physician, Galen knew quite accurately how raw opium could be used for murder and suicide. Yet Galen was well aware that sometimes Marcus suffered from insomnia, even though he became exhausted by the late afternoon, so physician and royal patient often employed greater quantities and proportions of the Mithridatium of Andromachus, with a larger measure of opium in the mixture than usual, a proportion of opium that brought blessed rest without the sinister outcomes recurrent from untutored administration.

The daytime dose for Marcus of this fully mixed theriac was quite insignifi-

cant – the "size of an Egyptian bean" – indicating that the emperor was not addicted to the poppy, which was only one of the sixty ingredients in the theriac. In setting down his account, Galen makes sure his readers will understand that Marcus preferred not the opium-containing theriac of Andromachus but rather the reliably uncomplicated four-ingredient theriac of Heras, to be taken in wine and olive oil, with the daily preparation also in the form of lozenges melted and then dissolved in the wine and oil. This theriac was made up of rue, aristolochia, bitter vetch, and bitumen. Rue was widely known for its stimulant effects, and the highest grade of aristolochia was repeatedly prescribed as a tonic and stomach-calmer. The bitter vetch was nourishing and produced moderate heat (so important in Galen's concepts of digestion), and combined with rue and aristolochia, thickened with the finest Dead Sea bitumen and augmented with honey, this theriac was neither narcotic nor dangerous. Only on those days requiring long hours and careful responses did Marcus use the theriac of Andromachus.

Critical, of course, were the grades of simples made into compound medications: each had to be as fresh as possible or fashioned into a form that could be stored for longer or shorter periods of time (modern "shelf-life"), while retaining beneficial properties (the *dynamis* of Greco-Roman medicine and pharmacology). Galen's multilayered medical expertise incorporated the varied technologies of preparing drugs, an accomplishment attained only after many years of study and inquiries into how wine was produced, how oils of olive and sesame and linseed became useful in cooking and pharmaceuticals, and why mineral-drugs (such as the bitumen) had to be procured from the sites of best quality, often mines yielding natural ores of gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, and zinc. They also incorporated inquiries into the many "earths" frequently used as antidotes (modern kaolin – thus the trade name Kaopectate – was Samian Earth, a natural compound of silica and alumina, often occurring as pure white, satiny crystals, not to be confused with chalk, formed from millions of fossil foraminifera). Galen comments on the poisonous properties of lead and knows of the dangers of cinnabar (the common ore of mercury) and realgar (arsenic monosulfide), the last a favorite of poisoners. He knows and explicates the full range of toxic substances derived from animals

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to escape her. Even after his mother's death, Tiberius absented himself from her funeral and cheated her of the senate's honorific arch. We can only remind ourselves that until she was over seventy Livia contributed in a very real sense to the stability of the new emerging autocracy, sharing with the unsung hero Agrippa the credit for sustaining a surprisingly vulnerable *princeps*.

Is there anything Barrett could or should have added to his portrait? I missed only more focus on Livia's role as leader of Rome's elite women and more curiosity about Livia's responsibility for bringing up the imperial children (and grandchildren?), both at Rome and when she joined Augustus on his long provincial tours. Just as Octavia brought up Lullus, Antony's son by Fulvia, as well as her own three children by Marcellus and two daughters by Antony, so Livia brought up not just Tiberius and Drusus, but Octavian's daughter Julia. In 25 B.C. Augustus also invited Agrippa (who had a villa of his own on the Campus Martius) to share his own residence: did this mean that Livia helped supervise the upbringing of Gaius and Lucius Caesar after their early adoption? Did they and their siblings stay on the Palatine when their natural parents were touring the Aegean?

While recent art-historical studies such as Elizabeth Bartman's *Portrait of Livia: Imaging the Imperial Woman in Augustan Rome* (1999) and the treatment of Livia in Susan Wood's broader *Imperial Women: A Study in Public Images* (1999) or C. B. Rose's *Dynastic Commemoration and Imperial Portraiture in the Julio-Claudian Period* (1997) have been primarily concerned to reflect Livia's changing official portraiture, (e.g., Barrett, Figs. 12-14), I would choose the private Vienna cameo (Barrett, Fig. 19) as best symbol of our subject: in it, a seated Livia is contemplating a small bust of her husband, as if she had both made him and controlled his image! Even if this carries too far the power we ascribe to her, there is no doubt that Barrett's double approach to Livia offers a well-rounded and appreciative portrait of a truly indomitable woman.

**Elaine Fantham** ([fantham@princeton.edu](mailto:fantham@princeton.edu)) was born in Liverpool and educated at Oxford. She came to the United States with her husband as a visiting professor at Indiana University (1966-68). After many years teaching at the University of Toronto, she returned to the United States as Giger Professor of Latin at Princeton University (1986-99). She has published commentaries on Seneca's *Troades* (1982), Lucan's *Civil War, Book 2*, and Ovid's *Fasti, Book 4*. She is the author of *Roman Literary Culture from Cicero to Apuleius* (1996) and co-author with Helene Foley, Natalie Kampen, Sarah Pomeroy, and Alan Shapiro of *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text* (1994). This year she is president of the APA.



**Fig. 3.** The raw opium latex is gathered from the capsule (left) after it is slit vertically with special "poppy knives," almost exactly as was done in Roman antiquity. *Papaver somniferum* L. opium poppy, courtesy of USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N. L., and A. Brown. 1913. *Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada*. Vol. 2: 137.

(snakes, spiders, scorpions, blister beetles, salamanders, insects as a whole, and many more) and, from his written sources, understands the very deleterious qualities of botanical poisons, some cultivated for nefarious use, others combined with beneficial drugs to engender stimulant effects (aconite, hyoscyamus, mushrooms, hemlock, mandrake, this last common in Roman times as a reliable anesthetic). Galen commanded the technical details, best recorded in Greek by Dioscorides of Anazarbus, of animal, botanical, and mineral pharmacology, and thereby served Marcus Aurelius with a decisive knowledge of which drugs were beneficial, which were somewhat harmful but still salutary if used with care, and which were simply poisonous.

Drugs and poisons in the Roman Empire were easily obtained by all inhabitants and shoppers in the *fora* of the West or the *agorai* of the East, where the *rhizotomoi* (semi-professional root-cutters) hawked their herbs, seeds, fruits and potent roots, and leaves and stems in known stalls in each marketplace. Anyone could purchase anything, and Roman literature numbers many

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## Book Review: *Murder at the Panionic Games*

by Mary C. English

Michael B. Edwards. *Murder at the Panionic Games*. Academy Chicago Publishers (1-800-248-READ), 2002. Pp. 260. Hardcover \$23.50. ISBN 0-89733-500-7.

Although classicists devoted (or perhaps addicted) to detective fiction have enjoyed several award-winning series set in Republican and Imperial Rome, they have long awaited an author who can effectively adapt the genre to the political and cultural contexts of ancient Greece. In this debut novel, Michael Edwards rivals such “favorites” as Lindsey Davis and Steven Saylor as he spins a tale of murder and intrigue against the backdrop of the Panionic Games of seventh-century archaic Greece.

Edwards’ protagonist and leading investigator is Bias, the minor priest at the Temple of Poseidon Helikonios in the Ionian city of Priene where traditionally the celebrations on the opening day of the Panionia (the primary festival for the twelve member cities of the Ionian League) take place. Bias comes from an aristocratic line, although his family’s farmland suffers from poor location and its coffers are committed to supplying dowries for his six sisters. In the weeks before the games, Bias and the major priest Crystheus work tirelessly to prepare the shrine for the sacrifice to Poseidon that

inaugurates the Panionia. Excitement mounts and citizens from the other eleven cities in the Ionian League begin to arrive for the festivities. On the day before the competitions begin, the unmarried girls of Priene lead the athletes to the shrine of Poseidon. When the slayer faces some minor problems with the sacrificial bull, the spectators grow nervous and Crystheus quickens the pace of the ceremony. The city magistrates hurriedly distribute the libation cups to the athletes and the girls pour wine for the League’s heroes. Just as Crystheus is about to chant the solemn prayer to Poseidon, Tyrestes, Priene’s best hope for victory at the games, clutches his chest, falls to the ground, and is pronounced dead by poisoning.

After the crowd disperses and Tyrestes’ family claims his body, the city magistrates – Valato, Euphemius, and Nolarion – along with Crystheus and Bias convene to discuss the implications of this death. Since Bias rushed to Tyrestes’ aid and was the last person to touch the athlete, Crystheus decides that his pollution marks him as the ideal candidate to investigate the murder. Like many other detectives, Bias can ill afford to be implicated in a scandal as he struggles to secure a more influential position in his city. He also possesses no real qualifications to undertake such a task. Nevertheless, his duties to Poseidon and to the magistrates of Priene compel him to accept the assignment. Warned by his father to tread with caution and diplomacy, Bias, accompanied by his clever slave Duryattes, sets out to question anyone who had access to Tyrestes moments before his death.

Before the first day of competition has ended, the list of suspects becomes alarmingly long. Two of the magistrates have clear motives. Valato has a beautiful daughter Ossadia whom gossip identifies as Tyrestes’ lover. Did Valato discover their illicit affair and avenge Ossadia’s honor? Nolarion, once considered Priene’s best athlete, is the father of Endemion, Tyrestes’ best friend and fellow competitor in the games. Did he murder Endemion’s rival so that his son could uphold family tradition and claim victory at the Panionia? To complicate the situation further, Bias also learns

that Tyrestes had a second girlfriend Bilassa. Did she learn of his dalliances with Ossadia and kill him out of jealousy and anger? Just when matters cannot seem worse, Bias discovers that Tyrestes’ brother Usthios, now the master of the family estate, wanted to marry Bias’ own sister Risalla but Tyrestes forbade the union. Did Usthios, or worse Risalla, murder Tyrestes to secure the couple’s happiness?

While Bias is juggling the investigation of all these leads, a serious accident occurs during the chariot race and a second athlete, Habiliates of Miletus, dies. Polearchus, the uncle of this victim, approaches Bias and shows him definitive proof that someone tampered with Habiliates’ chariot before the contest. When Polearchus intimidates the magistrates of Priene with the threat of an international incident at the closing ceremony, they insist that Bias find the murderer before the games conclude. As the deadline draws near, Bias’ own life is threatened. Despite personal risk and imminent political upset, Bias sets in motion his plan to trap the killer.

In *Murder at the Panionic Games*, Edwards proves himself more than capable of combining the suspense of a well-crafted mystery with the rich period detail of convincing historical fiction. He has chosen an interesting setting for this new series, and the twelve cities of the Ionian League will certainly provide a wealth of material for his subsequent mysteries. Although the plot of the novel is slightly less intricate than those of Davis and Saylor, readers will no doubt grow attached to Edwards’ detective and eagerly await Bias’ next case. An adept storyteller and a master of suspense, Edwards can look forward to a long career in the genre of ancient detective fiction.

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### Coming in Future Issues of *Amphora*

Matthew Dillon on Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*

Sean Richards of Legio IX Hispana on Roman army reenactors

Sally Grainger on what’s new in classical cookery

Jeanne Reames-Zimmerman on Alexander the Great in film

William Murray on Actium

The Classical Buzz: David Fraunfelder on reality shows and gladiatorial combat

Charles Beye on classical architecture in Boston

Jacqueline Long on cats in Rome





# TWEEN GOOD AND EVIL: GREECE, ROME, AND HARRY POTTER

by David W. Frauenfelder

“Is there a villain in *Harry Potter*?” I ask a set of literature-loving tweens (kids aged 8-12), who have consented to what I hope will be an instructive Q & A session about the popular series of novels by J. K. Rowling – and their ancient counterparts.

Eight hands shoot up like rockets.

Lydia answers first: “Voldemort!”

“And what about Greek mythology?” I continue. “What villains do you know in Greek mythology?”

No hands. A silent grinding of mental cogs. Blank faces.

I let the silence run until Will wonders aloud, “What about that bad king who didn’t do what the oracle said?”

Kate wants to know what an oracle is.

“Hades is the god of the dead,” Miriam says. “He might be a villain.”

“No, he’s not,” Molly counters. “In *Say Cheese, Medusa*, he’s not.”

She is referring to a book in a popular Scholastic Press series that sends up Greek myth for the tween crowd. She seems most impressed that Gorgonzola cheese might have been invented by the Gorgons.

Others consider the question further.

“Hera does some mean things,” says Zachary finally.

“There’s no one I know in Greek mythology,” says his sister Erin, “who kills people just for fun.”

Erin is right. Bestsellers tell us about ourselves, and it’s clear our American story culture values an honest-to-goodness villain, a person so devoid of human feeling that he, according to Erin at least, “kills people for fun.” The bestsellers of ancient Greece and Rome (what we call classics were very often for their audience popular culture) took a different view. There, Good and Evil did not exist in capital letters. They always mingled, as they do in real life. The change between then and now is dramatic, but an awareness of the change on young readers’ parts – our kids, grandkids, nieces, nephews, students – could make an even more dramatic difference in their lives.

Much of *Harry Potter*’s appeal comes from the evil-fighting premise, which is why I was perplexed at the reactions of some conservative Christians, who con-

demned as Satanic the series’ use of magic. Though institutionalized religion is absent, the values espoused in the *Harry Potter* novels follow the traditional lines of British Christianity, the Christianity of heroes from King Arthur to Frodo Baggins. This brand of faith allies itself with the life-affirming aspects of paganism and can use things like magic – and mythical creatures like hippogriffs – with confidence in their good, evil-fighting purposes.

In the tradition of J. K. Rowling’s experience, the Evil One, the Satan of Christianity, merges with forces of death in native British myth, giving birth to opponents like Voldemort, a kind of fallen angel who, according to Harry’s protector Hagrid, “Went . . . bad. As bad as you could go. Worse. Worse than worse.” Voldemort lives close to the grave and yet somehow robs from it (*vol de mort*, which can mean “theft from death”), always finding a way to prolong his life at others’ expense – such as by drinking unicorn blood.

Tolkien’s Sauron, the evil, far-seeing eye of this year’s Oscar-winning *Lord of the Rings*, provides a convenient parallel to Voldemort. But another, closer example to Voldemort may be found in Lloyd Alexander’s Newbery Award-winning *Prydain Chronicles*, where the less-than-fearsome god of the dead in Welsh myth, Arawn, morphs into an evil sorcerer bent on world domination. His army, which includes the “Cauldron Born,” soldiers who cannot be killed because they are already dead, are animated through Arawn’s magic cauldron. These beings are reminiscent of Rowling’s Dementors, faceless guards of the magical Prison of Azkaban who have the ability to suck the soul out of anyone they encounter (the Dementors, as well as the hippogriff, play a pivotal role in the newly-released third *Harry Potter* movie).

In ancient Greece and Rome, this alliance of evil and death – and its apocalyptic menace – never found a place. To be sure, folk tales could turn spooky, reminding their audience of the power of the dead and those beyond the grave, from furies to ghouls to bogey-men. Lamia, for example, was a once-beauti-

ful woman turned demon who stole or ate children. Nevertheless, Lamia and her kind are necessary creatures who signal to their audience death’s natural fearsomeness. Ghost stories have a right to exist: death is scary and we need to hear that.

My young interviewees ranged far and wide to find true villains in ancient story: Hera, Hades, the king who didn’t obey the oracle. They did well with the material available. In a world where, according to the poet Pindar, divine beings dole out one good for every two ills, there will be no absolutely good being – nor evil one.

Sometimes a character’s anger does resemble that of modern villains, especially to those used to American plots and characters. In the *Aeneid*, for example, the goddess Juno (Greek Hera) comes close to Voldemort status. Her “implacable hatred” of the Trojan remnant led by Aeneas could easily prompt a modern screenwriter to stamp her as villain. In the opening lines of *Aeneid*, she schemes to create a huge storm that will scatter the ships of Aeneas and his followers. Juno gnashes her teeth over her inability to destroy the Trojans, jealous that Minerva killed Ajax the son of Oileus, “impaled on a sharp, rocky crag.”

Juno’s villainous ways continue throughout the poem, but to the Romans, she can never become a true Voldemort. Juno was a respected goddess in Roman religion; she may have at one time in history opposed Rome, but no more. In the *Aeneid*, Juno is never defeated in a cataclysmic fight to the finish. She accepts a compromise from her husband Jupiter, the guarantor of fate: the Trojans will go on to become Romans, but the Trojan name will be lost.

And what about Hades? First-time readers of the Demeter/Persephone story can certainly take the god of the dead as an enemy: he snatches the frightened Persephone from the meadow where she picks flowers with friends. Her mother, Demeter, spends many a sad day searching for her child, and all because of that dastardly Hades.

Yet for Greeks and Romans, Hades and Persephone were always a married couple, and she possessed considerable power as queen of the underworld. In Aeneas’ poem, our hero had to submit the Golden Bough to Proserpina

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# NOVEL APPROACHES TO THE CLASSICS: PART II

by Thomas Falkner

In a culture obsessed with image and perception, it is only natural that academics should note the kind of “press” they are getting, and classicists have good reason to do so. Classics has often served in the popular imagination and in the media, particularly during the “culture wars” of the last decades, as a conservative outpost within the academy. This is understandable, given the antiquity of the discipline, its traditional place at the center of Western education, and the conservative values of the Greek and Roman elites that are conspicuous in our core texts. As a discipline, moreover, classics has been more cautious than some others to embrace controversial new approaches and intellectualities. But the perception also suggests some false, if deep-seated, impressions about the value of the study of antiquity. Many classicists have found themselves disagreeing with those who seem to support the discipline for the wrong reasons, promoting the ancient texts as timeless touchstones of greatness or Latin as part of a “back to basics” curriculum.

So, it is not surprising that in contemporary academic fiction, which is often satirical in nature, the figure of the classicist should serve as a foil to administrators, feminists, leftist critics, the politically correct, and assorted academic evildoers. Such is the case in *The Human Stain* (2001) by Philip Roth, whose protagonist, Coleman Silk, will be the subject of the third part in this series of essays in *Amphora*. It is also an apt starting point for a discussion of Robert Hellenga’s *The Fall of a Sparrow* (1998), the story of a classics professor in a small Midwestern liberal arts college. The behavior of Hellenga’s protagonist – specifically, a prolonged sexual affair with one of his students – puts him at odds with his dean, his colleagues, and the institution’s policy on “amorous relationships” with students, leading him, Achilles-like, to remove himself from the community altogether.

Hellenga, an emeritus professor of English at Knox College, clearly draws on personal experience in his portrayal of Alan Woodhull (“Woody”), a professor of classics at St. Clair College in downstate Illinois. Academic novels frequently quarry the real world for material: Morris Zapp, from David Lodge’s *Changing Places* (1975) and *Small World*

(1984), is a caricature of Stanley Fish, and Alan Bloom lies just below the surface of Saul Bellow’s *Ravelstein* (2001). Like his protagonist, Hellenga is an alumnus of the University of Michigan, teaches classical mythology, and has a wife who teaches Latin and three daughters. In the novel, the Woodhull daughters all go off to college – Cookie, the eldest, to Harvard; Sara (who serves intermittently as narrator) to St. Clair; and Ludi, the youngest, to Grinnell. The girls recall their father as a great storyteller with a penchant for stories about a father and three daughters. The fairy tale analogues end there, however, as we learn at the outset that Cookie died on August 15, 1980, at age 22, in a neofascist bombing at the train station in Bologna, an event based on the historical bombing of the same time. Collateral damage includes Woody’s twenty-five year marriage to Hannah who, in the aftermath of the tragedy, leaves the family to become a nun.

The novel takes up Woody’s spiritual odyssey some six years later. Part One, set in 1986-87, tells of his departure from St. Clair after he is questioned about a “conflict of interest.” Turi Mirasdiqi, an Iranian student and senior at St. Clair, is not only his sexual partner but a prize student he has recommended to Harvard. She is also the daughter of his dear friend Allison, whom Woody had loved in graduate school and who had comforted him in Rome in body and soul after the bombing. Even worse, Allison is a college trustee, and she and her husband Alireza, an Iranian businessman living in Rome, are poised to present a sizeable gift to the endowment. Part Two is set the following year in Bologna, where Woody attends the trial of two of the terrorists both to testify and to cover the story for the *Tribune*. In the process, he reengages with life.

He becomes personally involved in the fate of Angela Strappafelci, a young terrorist Cookie’s age who planted the bomb, and active in the Association of Families of the Victims. He also begins a relationship with the woman who owns the restaurant-pension where he lodges and literally sings for his supper.

The *Aeneid* is clearly the model for the narrative which, as in Brooks Otis’ analysis, has an Odyssean and an Iliadic half: the protagonist’s wanderings in the first half are followed in the second by

his arrival in Italy and the new life he is undertaking. Where Odysseus’ revitalization begins with the building of the raft, Woody’s begins with the purchase of a National Steel guitar (we are given an epic *ecphrasis*, or digression, on the instrument). He resumes his long love of the blues, like Odysseus giving voice to his own suffering; Turi, though less innocent than Nausicaa, offers a sexual and emotional reawakening. The second half draws on materials from the *Iliad*. Like Achilles, Woody is given leave to move beyond the past by the appearance of Cookie in a dream. In a reprise of the ransom of Hector, Woody seeks a rapprochement with Strappafelci’s father as two grieving parents. Like Achilles, Woody’s struggle is ultimately with mortality itself. The author gives the theme dramatic force by framing it as a conflict between Woody and Hannah. Cookie’s remains have been interred in a hillside cemetery in St. Clair, but the monument lacks an epitaph until the novel’s end. Sara recounts: “Mama wanted a line from Dante – *La sua voluntade è nostra pace* – but Daddy wouldn’t go for it. And now I’m glad. He wanted something that tells the truth. And I think he’s got it” (457). Woody substitutes the medieval *contra vim Veneris| herbam non inueneris;| contra vim mortis| non crescit herba in hortis* (“Against the strength of love, you will find no herb; against the strength of death, no herb grows in the garden”).

Woody achieves no special insight into the reason for his daughter’s death, though he does come to recognize the power of love as an offsetting reality. But his victory over his wife in this contest of wills, not to mention Sara’s celebration of it, points to some problems with his character and the novel as a whole. Few readers will approve of his relationship with Turi on professional or personal grounds. But at no time does Woody recognize the affair as a betrayal of both Turi and her family, even when he personally helps the college to accept the family’s money for an endowed chair in classics! At the college hearing to which he is summoned, he cannot appreciate that his colleagues’ concern has nothing to do with puritanical morality or political correctness. His defense – “I was lonely” – suggests his inability to see beyond himself. Unfortunately, the novel conspires to justify



his behavior, as first Allison and then her Muslim husband come to forgive their dear friend with surprisingly little effort.

Throughout the novel, those who might offer a critical view of the protagonist are squelched or made to look foolish. In a classroom scene, for instance, Woody leads a discussion of Odysseus' decision to decline Calypso's offer of life and sex without end. The selection of the materials is apt, underscoring the "heroic choice" that Woody will make to embrace life and its limits in the face of death, and Woody succeeds in persuading the class to agree with him/Odysseus. More troubling is his dismissive treatment of students who attempt, however ineptly, to challenge him – questioning Odysseus' choice as "a male thing" or relating it to the role of women in "the archetypal patriarchal text." Such questions are simply, and tellingly, brushed aside. So too with his dean who, with her East coast preferences and her habit of referring to herself in the third person as "the dean," is stiff and stuffy, thereby undermining her legitimate objections to Woody's behavior. The college's president is concerned mostly about the possibility of losing the gift from the Mirasdiqis.

Most disappointing is the short shrift given to his relationship with his wife Hannah. We learn that the night of Cookie's death she walked the streets of Rome crazed, imagining herself Mary Magdalene, and her subsequent breakdown is reported without context of history or psychology or, for that matter, sympathy. Inexplicably, she decides to abandon her life and family to join a convent that in its severity is a caricature of 1950's Catholicism. As a result, Hannah's calling to a new life, unlike his, appears merely aberrant, and she another version of the madwoman in the attic. She finds no understanding in the family, and just as inexplicably, her departure seems to take no emotional toll on her daughters.

In the end, Woody reminds the reader of the disagreeable colleague down the hall who is dedicated above all else to the demonstration of his own superiority. Woody does it all. He throws "Homeric banquets" for his students, has a dog named Argos, and sings the blues in seven languages. He hunts ducks, knows his olives and cheeses, and writes an Italian cookbook with his new partner. His children adore him, indeed, can hardly be imagined ever disagreeing with him. He is also,

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## Book Review: Cicero

by Jane W. Crawford

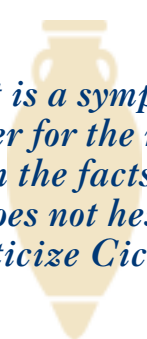
Anthony Everitt. *Cicero*. Random House (1-800-733-3000), 2001. Pp. xix, 359. 5 maps. Hardcover \$25.95. ISBN 0-375-50746-9.

Anthony Everitt's new biography of Cicero is a welcome addition to the corpus of works about the great Roman orator and statesman. It cannot be said that it advances our knowledge of the events or the politics of Cicero's life to any significant degree, but it offers a new and appealing way of looking at this fascinating man and his equally fascinating times.

Everitt's approach is to let Cicero speak for himself, through quotations primarily taken from Cicero's own words and those of his contemporaries. It is clear from his use of the sources that Everitt has a very solid grasp of the issues and personalities of Cicero's period, and his apt choices enable us to see the world of late Republican politics through the eyes of one of the major players of the day. Yet the book also shows us the personal and private side of Cicero, revealing his triumphs and frustrations in a very accessible manner. Everitt is a sympathetic biographer for the most part, but when the facts demand it, he does not hesitate to criticize Cicero. The book is thus not a compendium of praise but rather a balanced view of a complicated and multifaceted personality.

The preface is enticing and helpful at the same time, setting the stage and discussing the problems of reporting accurately on the period. The actual opening of the book sweeps the reader into ancient Rome on the Ides of March, 44 B.C. Beginning thus, *in medias res*, with the assassination of Caesar at the end of the Republic, Everitt invites us to consider the impact of Cicero's career in shaping and guiding the state in its turbulent final half-century. The contrast between Cicero, the senior statesman, and Caesar, the radical dictator, is well taken. The divide between conservative oligarch and daring populist, sometimes wide, sometimes almost non-existent, shaped Cicero's persona and influenced his political and personal choices throughout his public life. It explains much of why Cicero was what he was, and Everitt is right to signal this at the outset.

The book, as with most biographies, proceeds chronologically, following a brilliant chapter ("Fault Lines") that summarizes the history of Roman conquest and growth and explains the condition of the Roman state in the years before Cicero's birth. The provincial upbringing of the fledgling politician and his first forays into oratory and politics are treated in the two following chapters, which take us to the year 77 B.C. In both, Everitt takes care to set the stage accurately and informatively, dealing with the impact of the dictatorship of Sulla and Cicero's speech for Roscius of Amerina (a complicated tale, well told by Everitt), the nature of Roman religion, and so on. He also takes the reader on a guided tour of the Roman Forum, explaining how the structure of the area both influenced and reflected the realities of Roman political life. Everitt is obviously writing for the non-specialist, but experts will also appreciate his skill in providing the necessary background in deft and sure strokes. His style is appealing and the information presented is, with a few exceptions, correct.



*Everitt is a sympathetic biographer for the most part, but when the facts demand it, he does not hesitate to criticize Cicero.*

With chapter 4, Everitt begins the exposition of Cicero's career as an advocate at the bar and as a *novus homo* ("new man") striving to gain a foothold in Roman politics. This is again a carefully-crafted chapter that explains much that needs to be understood about Cicero's position as an outsider and the forces that shaped his remarkable rise to the consulship in 63 B.C. Everitt's treatment of this period includes discussion of Cicero's important court cases from these years, including the Verrines, and deals with the complexities of the political scene with skill and insight.

Equally impressive are the next three

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## Book Review: Cicero

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chapters (5-7), which cover the most important events of Cicero's career, from its heights to its depths: his consulship and the suppression of the conspiracy of Catiline; the Bona Dea scandal and the trial of Clodius; the growth of Caesar's influence and the position of Pompey; and the terrible blow of exile. Although there are some details that are unclear, Everitt, in general, shows great mastery of the complex and often obscure events of these initially triumphant and then increasingly bleak years in Cicero's life. His coverage of the alleged "first Catilinarian conspiracy" is deft; his treatment of the actual conspiracy and the debate that followed it is excellent. Making careful use of quotations from Cicero's own letters and speeches, Everitt reveals clearly the orator's personality, in all its pride in achievement and desolation at failure. We see how Cicero acts and reacts; we learn how he analyzes personalities and internalizes events according to his own (sometimes faulty) perceptions; we feel his power and his anger, his cockiness and confusion. Through a sensitive selection of sources, Everitt gives us a compelling and extraordinarily readable account of Cicero's political and private self during these years.

In the ensuing chapters (8-12), Everitt provides an informative and accessible study of the philosophical, rhetorical, and political writings that spanned Cicero's lifetime. At the same time, he explicates the pressures and problems leading to the fatal competition between Pompey and Caesar that resulted in civil war in 49 B.C. Cicero himself was not much involved in politics then; he was busy with court cases and with his writing. In discussing this less public, more contemplative, period of Cicero's life, Everitt uses the sources masterfully to reflect Cicero's mature years. His treatment of Cicero's family, especially the death of his daughter Tullia and his somewhat prickly relationship with his brother and son, is sensitively presented. We see Cicero, warts and all: his uncertainty and vacillation during the war; his retreat to writing and to the pleasures of his country houses; his humor, temper, happiness, and despair.

In the last year and a half of his life,

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# WHAT'S NEW IN ALEXANDER STUDIES

by Waldemar Heckel

In the 1970's and 1980's it seemed that one could scarcely pull a classical journal off the shelf without finding some article, note, or review of a work on Alexander the Great or the Alexander historians. Greek historians appeared to have abandoned the well-traveled roads of the fifth century B.C. and sought new adventures in the untamed jungles of Alexander studies and the Hellenistic world. In 1969, J. R. Hamilton, in the Preface to his commentary on Plutarch's *Alexander*, lamented that "no ancient writer on Alexander, not even the invaluable Arrian, had been provided with an English commentary" (v). Yet the lost historians for Alexander's period – forty or so writers, contemporary with the events they describe, whose works survive only in fragments (mostly in the form of quotations and paraphrases) – had already been the subject of intensive study for 120 years, culminating, but not ending, with a book published by the APA, Lionel Pearson's *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (1960). Furthermore, three important bibliographies of Alexander studies appeared in successive years in the early 1970's – Nancy J. Burich, *Alexander the Great: A Bibliography* (1970); E. Badian, *Classical World* 65, 1971, 37-83; and J. Seibert, *Alexander der Grosse* (1972). Nevertheless, my own bibliography (<http://hum.ucalgary.ca/wheckel/bibl/alex-bibl.pdf>) contains some 1,240 items of which over 700 appeared after the last of the above-mentioned surveys was published (cf. also the useful electronic bibliography maintained by K. H. Kinzl at <http://www.trentu.ca/ahc/ch207b-bib.html>).

Now, in the twenty-first century, we have, in addition to Hamilton's work on Plutarch's *Alexander*, commentaries on Arrian by A. B. Bosworth (1980, 1995; vol. 3 in preparation) and on Curtius by John E. Atkinson (1980, 1994) and even on Justin's epitome of Pompeius Trogus by John Yardley and Waldemar Heckel (1997). Specialized studies of Arrian and Curtius have appeared, along with a new edition by Raffaella Tabacco of the *Itinerarium Alexandri* (2000); a commentary on the *Metz Epitome* is in preparation; and at least two scholars have indicated to me that they are working on commentaries to Diodorus' Book 17.

The important inscriptions pertaining to Alexander's relations with the Greeks were published, translated, and discussed by A. J. Heisserer in *Alexander the Great and the Greeks* (1980); and, for those without Greek or Latin, there are countless sourcebooks and translations containing relevant documents. For those who cannot keep the actors straight without a program (and that includes most of us), there is my forthcoming *Who's Who in the History of Alexander*, which represents an updated and only slightly less ambitious reworking in



**Fig. 4. Silver tetradrachm of Alexander. Alexander as Heracles with lion head-dress on the obverse. Photo reprinted with permission from the Nickle Arts Museum, University of Calgary.**

English of Helmut Berve's *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage*, vol. 2 (1926) and relies heavily on earlier prosopographic studies: see my *The Marshals of Alexander's Empire* (1992), A. Tatakis's *The Macedonians Abroad* (1998), and Elizabeth Carney's *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia* (2000).

So, the question must be asked: why, with all these tools now available, does the study of Alexander and, perhaps, even the number of Alexander scholars themselves seem to be declining? I am not talking about the dilettante: today virtually everyone with a historical bent is an authority on Alexander, and every war-gamer has an Alexander Web site, while lawyers and executives indulge their passions by writing for *Military History Quarterly* or *Military Heritage*. James R. Ashley's *The Macedonian*

*Empire* (1998) will satisfy the needs of “war-gamers” but is essentially the work of a well-meaning amateur. Others have sought to extol the strategic lessons of Alexander’s conquests for business leaders. We need only consider Partha Bose, *Alexander the Great’s Art of Strategy* (2003), subtitled *The Timeless Leadership Lessons of History’s Greatest Empire Builder*. (In fact, “history’s greatest empire builder” was probably Genghis Khan, and neither he nor Alexander could be considered a proper role model for anyone but the most ruthless modern executive.) But what of the academic factories that once rolled professional Alexander historians off their assembly lines? Have they retooled and programmed their newest models, if they study Alexander at all, to search for different truths? What, if anything, is new in the world of Alexander studies?

Before that question can be answered, it is important to remind ourselves that the study of Alexander embraces a number of aspects that have, for quite some time now, been regarded as old-fashioned or misguided. It involves the study of the “great man,” of war and politics, of elites, and, of course, imperialism. Historians have focused so much attention on the achievements of Alexander that their works read more like biographies than histories. Much of this is the result of the nature of the ancient sources: the evidence for economic and social issues is scant; the spotlight, trained on the army and its leader, never remains in one place long enough for us to observe meaningful change; and, even for the political historian, the politics are those of the army and its commanders. There is little that can be regarded as constitutional or legal because there are very few legal documents, and most acts of the king and “state” are reactions to the situation, dictated by expediency rather than determined by tradition. Is it time, then, to retool or close shop? Has Alexander scholarship become old and boring? James Davidson certainly thinks so. In “Bonkers about Boys,” a review of *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (2000), edited by A. B. Bosworth and Elizabeth Baynham, he comments:

In Alexanderland scholarship remains largely untouched by the influences which have transformed history and classics since 1945. Some great beasts, having wandered in, can still be found here decades later, well beyond the forces of evolution. Secluded behind the high, impassable peaks of proso-

pography, military history and, above all, *Quellenforschung*, Alexander historians do what Alexander historians have done for more than a hundred years... (*London Review of Books*, 1 November 2001, 7)

In his conclusion, Davidson warns:

The texts are finally running out and Alexander historians are finally running out of excuses *for not doing something more interesting with their subject* (10, my italics).

Is the message sinking in? Are Alexander scholars finally freeing themselves from the tyranny of the text, the pedantry of prosopography, and the meaninglessness of military history?

Simply put, the answer is “no.” Davidson’s “forces of evolution” have indeed had little impact on Alexanderland, and yet the “great beasts” are evolving – evolving within their own lost world and still employing the same tried and true methodology. The extant accounts, whether written in Greek or in Latin, all derive from the Roman world – from the late Republic to the middle Empire – and this aspect is beginning to receive the attention it deserves: Elizabeth Baynham’s *Alexander the Great: The Unique History of Quintus Curtius Rufus* (1998) pays special attention to “Roman Curtius,” and this book now finds an interesting companion in Diana Spencer’s *Roman Alexander: Reading a Cultural Myth* (2002), which goes well beyond earlier studies of conscious imitation of Alexander by Roman politicians and emperors. In 1996, A. B. Bosworth’s *Alexander and the East: The Tragedy of Triumph* examined historical and historiographical parallels between the history of Alexander and that of the conquistadors and the conquest of New Spain. In the same year, P. M. Fraser produced a thorough and scholarly study, *Cities of Alexander the Great*. Furthermore, a number of studies in the last decade have given much needed attention to the “reading” of art and coinage (see Fig. 4): one thinks particularly of Andrew Stewart’s magisterial, *Faces of Power: Alexander’s Image and Hellenistic Politics* (1993), Ada Cohen’s *The Alexander Mosaic: Stories of Victory and Defeat* (1997), and Frank Holt’s *Alexander the Great and the Mystery of the Elephant Medallions* (2003).

Will the next generation of Alexander scholars lament, as Alexander is said to have done to Philip, that there will be no new worlds to conquer? Only if they

## Book Review: Cicero continued from page 10

Cicero was reborn to politics and to the role of senior statesman. Following Caesar’s murder, Cicero took up the challenge of restoring the Republic that he had loved and worked for all his life. The momentous events of 44 and 43 B.C. (covered in chapters 13-16) were ultimately fatal to Cicero. But he did not go down without a fight. Cicero’s renewed prominence, the masterful “Philippics” delivered against Mark Antony, his high hopes and his deep disappointments are all chronicled with understanding and insight by Everitt, relying on Cicero’s own perceptions and words. Everitt’s account of Cicero’s death is not emotional but elegant and restrained.

This is an excellent biography of Cicero that will be enjoyed by professional classicists and the general public. The few inaccuracies (for example, 73: Padua for Capua), the sometimes burdensome need to flip back to the source lists to trace the quotations, and the occasional missing reference do not detract from the considerable value and pleasure to be found in Everitt’s *Cicero*.

**Jane W. Crawford** ([jwc8n@virginia.edu](mailto:jwc8n@virginia.edu)) will be moving to the University of Virginia in mid-August. She has published two books on Cicero: *The Lost and Unpublished Orations* (1984) and *The Fragmentary Speeches* (1994). She is currently working on an edition of Cicero’s pro Caelio and preparing a translation of the fourth century commentary on some of Cicero’s orations by the Bobbio Scholiast.



## Film Review: *Gladiator* (2000)

by Martin M. Winkler

“On this day we reach back to hallowed antiquity.” With these words fictional senator Cassius announces the equally fictional reenactment of the Battle of Carthage in Ridley Scott’s *Gladiator*, the first Roman epic produced for the silver screen since the mid-1960’s. To everybody’s surprise, *Gladiator* overcame prejudices against a film genre long discredited for the elephantine size of its last exemplars and for their often lumbering, if inspirationally-minded, plots. The colossal box-office success of Scott’s film has again made epic cinema a promising venue for filmmakers and studios. But does *Gladiator*, which contains countless inaccuracies, anachronisms, and distortions of fact, really reach back to antiquity, or is it not rather firmly rooted in its own time?

As will be immediately apparent to anybody with a sense of what academics like to call intertextuality, *Gladiator* owes far more to the history of epic cinema than it does to the history of imperial Rome. Its chief, if unacknowledged, source besides other films is Anthony Mann’s *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964), the last big-screen Roman epic before 2000 (and your reviewer’s favorite). Both films begin with the final days of the noble emperor Marcus Aurelius during his campaigns on the German frontier. His murder gives the throne to his callous son Commodus and not to the film’s hero, a fictional general whom Marcus had preferred – earlier, Livius; now, Maximus. Alongside a romance with Marcus’ daughter Lucilla, the hero’s efforts to thwart the designs of Commodus, who is bent on destroying Marcus’ legacy, form the chief plot of either film. In both, the city of Rome plays a major part as the setting of the theme of empire and power, and both end with a duel between the hero and Commodus at historically important sites: earlier, the Forum Romanum; now, the Colosseum. The “bad guy” is predictably vanquished, although Maximus dies in Lucilla’s arms while Livius could walk away from it all with her.

*Quid novi*: what is new, one might ask, in *Gladiator*? New for a Roman spectacle, although to be expected in a film that had to stay competitive with contemporary

action cinema, are the scenes of graphic violence on the battlefield and in the arena, meant to deliver the thrills that today’s audiences expect or demand. Much of the violent action in *Gladiator* is enhanced by means of cranked-up sound effects, extremely rapid editing, and, by contrast, occasional slow motion – all geared to a

*The cinema has been a kind of seismograph of social and political currents throughout its history, and *Gladiator*, too, addresses contemporary issues.*

generation of viewers brought up on music videos and computer games. Scott, who started out by making television commercials, clearly shows his hand when Maximus, about to be killed on Commodus’ orders, turns the tables on his executioners. He hurls – whoosh, whoosh – his sword through the air after one who is trying to escape on horseback and, of course, brings him down. Sophisticated special-effects technology that a director like Mann could never have imagined makes it all possible. But this technological advantage comes at a price. In *Gladiator*, the reconstructed Colosseum, for example, looks magnificent and authentic (except for the

*metae*, the turning posts for chariot races, that seem to have wandered in from Mervyn LeRoy’s 1951 *Quo Vadis*). But even so, most of the Colosseum is computer-generated and looks it (see Fig. 5). Experienced viewers will immediately realize that the famous “fly-over” of Cyber-Rome, which gives us the first glimpse of the Colosseum, appears distinctly different from the “real” images surrounding it. By contrast, the gigantic Forum built for *The Fall of the Roman Empire* looks almost like the genuine article. Indeed, this ravishingly beautiful set has made Mann’s film famous.

While responding viscerally to the computer-generated images that provide much of the thrills of *Gladiator*, audiences know that it is all fakery, put together on computers. As a result, Scott runs the risk of relying too much on special effects to draw his audience into his story. The final duel in *Gladiator* is a case in point. It can thrill momentarily because of its souped-up visual and aural effects but, considered as pure action, which is the acid test of any spectacle, it is disappointing. Little, if any, intelligence seems to have gone into the design of the climax to a plot that has been unfolding for well over two hours. The corresponding part in Mann’s film exemplifies how this sort of thing ought to be done: it presents a carefully structured sequence of stunts so intricate, suspenseful, and realistic-looking that it remains a superb example of action cinema even today. It is an appropriate culmination point to an accomplished epic. Tellingly, it lasts significantly longer than Scott’s perfunctory version.

*Gladiator* shows us a familiar view of the city and empire of Rome. Scott resuscitates



**Fig. 5.** The computer-generated Colosseum in *Gladiator* (DreamWorks/Universal Pictures, 2000).

the Nazi iconography to which directors of Hollywood's Roman epics in the 1950's and early 1960's – but not Anthony Mann – had resorted to characterize pagan Rome as an evil empire. On the other hand, the Republican ideals surviving even in this imperial Rome are presented as worth preserving. Commodus' rule, the film implies, is a dangerous aberration. Maximus' sacrifice might put the empire back on the right track, with power returned to the senate as the Roman people's governing body. This would restore the harmony between rulers and ruled that many Americans today miss in their own country. It is indeed this and related contemporary issues that give *Gladiator* an uncanny relevance for and beyond the time of its release.

Today, political discussions of the United States as the sole remaining superpower regularly tend to make reference to ancient Rome. More and more frequently since the American war in Afghanistan, the U. S. has come to be called an empire, both here and abroad, and analogies to the Roman Empire and its eventual fate have surfaced on an increasing scale. The cinema has been a kind of seismograph of social and political currents throughout its history, and *Gladiator*, too, addresses contemporary issues: those of empire, militarism, and heroism. Its primary significance, then, is not its global commercial success or its revival of historical epic cinema but the remarkable fact that it managed to reach – no, not so much back to hallowed antiquity as forward to a rather less hallowed future.

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## TWEEN GOOD AND EVIL: GREECE, ROME AND HARRY POTTER continued from page 7

(Persephone's Roman name) before he was allowed to see his dead father. Hades himself always had a dual nature, as fearsome lord of the dead but also as giver of wealth through the richness of the earth.

On the human side of the equation, there is the king Will proposed in our Q & A session who failed to obey the oracle. There are plenty of these, but Oedipus may be the most famous. In Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, Oedipus appears on stage first as hero in a detective story where the question is, "Who killed Laius?" Oedipus spends most of the play fulfilling his noble detective role, inching closer to the truth. But then comes the twist. We find out that the killer, the villain, is Oedipus himself. He killed Laius, his father, though he didn't know what he was doing at the time. Unlike Tolkien and Alexander, Sophocles does not allow us to separate the good guy from the bad. For him, life isn't so simple so stories won't be either.

Five books into Harry Potter's saga, J. K. Rowling has left ample hints that good may not be so good. She has darkened her hero's character, for one thing. My young experts will tell you that in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Harry spends most of his time yelling. And he has begun to realize a strong connection between himself and Voldemort. For a little while, he psychically "becomes" Voldemort and has a desire, among other things, to bite Dumbledore's head off.

My tweens shrug off these shadings in Harry's character. "Over the five

books, do you think Harry has gotten worse, or better?" I ask them.

"Better," Aaron assures me. "He's a teenager now, so he's going to be a little grouchy."

The kids expect good to win out in the end. Well and good, I say. But does that mean that they must only hear this reassuring type of story? Books like *Say Cheese*, *Medusa* sell – and remove the original stories' healthy Greekness. If we are serious about a true multicultural education for our children, we will want to think hard before giving them ancient stories watered down for American consumption. The Greeks had it right: villains are hard to pin down, and sometimes we have to look inside ourselves before we blame others. If children knew that early, they'd be better prepared for the shadings to come later in life: on juries, in the voting booth, everywhere.

After all, nearly no one "kills people for fun" – not even, as I suspect J. K. Rowling will reveal, Voldemort himself.

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### Notable Web Site: **Greek Mythology Link**

<http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/>

An Internet site with free access dedicated to the Greek myths and related subjects, created and maintained by Carlos Parada.

The *Greek Mythology Link* is a collection of myths retold by Carlos Parada (author of *Genealogical Guide to Greek Mythology*, 1993), containing essays, images, tables, and maps (more than 1,400 web pages and more than 2,200 images of mythological motifs). The mythical accounts are based exclusively on ancient sources and are referenced. Among the contributors are Professor Jerker Blomqvist (Lund), Professor Juan Antonio López Férrez (Madrid), Ian Johnston (Malaspina), Dr. Susanna Roxman (Lund), and Professor Fritz Graf (Ohio).



# I, CLODIA – A PLAY FOR LATIN LOVERS

by Emily Matters

Since 1982, our Classical Languages Teachers Association (CLTA), based in Sydney, Australia, has held a Drama Festival at ten-year intervals, featuring one or more plays in authentic Latin or Greek. Sydney audiences have seen Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* and Sophocles' *Antigone* in Greek, as well as a dramatization of Vergil's *Aeneid 4*, called *Dido*, in Latin. What is perhaps remarkable is that the actors are high school students, chosen from a number of our members' schools, tutored and rehearsed out of school hours to reach a high standard of dramatic and linguistic fluency.

The 2002 production took a different, more light-hearted direction from the productions listed above – a musical comedy entitled *I, Clodia*. For some time I have been pondering the dramatic potential inherent in the character of Clodia Metelli, as portrayed by Cicero in *pro Caelio* and by Catullus, in his poems, as “Lesbia.” (I conveniently put aside all academic controversy about Lesbia's identity.) Not only would Clodia, a woman making an impact in her own way on the male establishment in Rome, be interesting to portray, but the activities of her colorful brother, Publius Clodius Pulcher, and the political intrigues involving Cicero, Pompey, and Caesar seemed to offer many possibilities for the stage. Throw in some Egyptians as Rome sorted out the Ptolemies, and you have material for a stage hit!

The script began as a patchwork of original Latin pieces, mainly from Cicero's letters and some of his speeches, and a number of Catullus' poems. Some lines from Sulpicia's poetry (from a slightly later period) were used to give Clodia a real Roman woman's voice. To compose the necessary linking dialogue, I stole liberally from Plautus and other Latin authors to ensure that the language was as authentic as possible. There are two Greek set-pieces: one, a Homeric hymn to Demeter, is performed as a women's tribute to Bona Dea; the other, Sappho's poem *φαίβεταιί μοι*, is performed at a dinner party attended by Catullus and inspires him to compose his own poem 51, *ille mi par esse deo videtur*. There are bits of additional Greek dialogue in the “Egyptian” scenes.

Somewhere along the process of script-writing, it became clear to me

that this was material for a musical, and I sought collaboration with The Conservatorium High School, a public high school for students talented in music that teaches Latin as part of its general curriculum. The Conservatorium offered not only the use of its Choral Assembly Hall for the production but also a sixteen-year-old composition student, Marianne Scholem. Marianne's grasp of the task was amazing. All I had to do was to give her copies of the poems to be set to music, indicating the meters with musical notation, and to spend a couple of hours in conference with her and her composition teacher, discussing the style, desired atmosphere, and emotional tone of all the pieces. There needed to be some background and linking music as well and some strong repeated themes – the main one being *odi et amo*. After six months of hard work, Marianne came up with a stunning score for a twenty-piece orchestra, solo singers, and chorus.

The CLTA engaged a professional director and drama teacher, Adam Macaulay, who proved ideal for the task of auditioning and training a cast of about seventy young people recruited from twelve schools, both public and private. Adam's lack of background in the classical languages was no real handicap; the students were coached in their lines for three months before rehearsals began and then continuously through the rehearsal period by a team of volunteer teachers. They reached a high standard of fluency and accuracy – not 100%, perhaps, but easily 98%.

To make the play more accessible to the general public, we used English surtitles projected above the stage, as is commonly done with foreign-language operas. The process was difficult and costly, but the results were very worthwhile. *I, Clodia* had wide appeal and won the admiration of many non-Latinists. One member of the audience asked me afterwards what “dialect” they were speaking and went on to say it reminded her of Spanish. The overall response, including local media coverage, has been very favorable and has brought Latin into the public eye in a novel and arresting way.

Above all, *I, Clodia* has been a teaching project. Booklets containing the original extracts from the play, with vocabularies, were prepared by Karyn

Moon, the co-producer. Background material was sent to all teachers who made group bookings. The complimentary program contained extensive notes and informative articles. All patrons, on departure, were issued with a “Latin Lovers' Kit” containing small promotional items with a Latin theme. The play was professionally filmed, and a videotape, with English subtitles, has been prepared. This should be a useful resource for general use, but particularly for classes studying *pro Caelio* and Catullus' poems.

The CLTA has made available for purchase all the materials associated with *I, Clodia*. The contents of the teaching package (items available separately) are

- Videotape of *I, Clodia* original 2002 production, with English subtitles (\$25 plus \$14 for shipping by air mail)
- *I, Clodia* script – in Latin/Greek with English translation (\$50)
- Complete musical score to *I, Clodia* (\$50)
- Booklet of verse and prose passages used in the play – with English vocabulary, historical background notes, and literary information (\$20-\$25)

All prices are in Australian dollars and include performance rights.

The best thing about *I, Clodia* is the number of students who really enjoyed learning Latin, speaking Latin, interpreting Latin, and meeting other students of Latin. Their sense of fun came through to the audience whose appreciation left us in no doubt that it was all worth it.

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## Book Review: *Gardens of Pompeii*

by John Van Sickle

Annamaria Ciarallo. *Gardens of Pompeii*, translated by Lori-Ann Touchette. J. Paul Getty Museum (1-800-223-3431), 2001. Pp. 84. 139 color illustrations. Hardcover \$24.95. ISBN 0-89236-629-X.

The title of this slender yet weighty volume may well attract enthusiasts of gardening and Greco-Roman culture, yet anyone inspired to pursue the topic further (via internet search) would find the title shared with widely praised scholarly tomes by Wilhelmina Jashemski (1975, 1992). Ciarallo does offer numerous vignettes of fruits, shrubs, and flowers excerpted from wall paintings that adorned Pompeian houses until buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Yet the images serve Ciarallo to illustrate not gardens themselves so much as plant population and its social and economic context. Her project statement emphasizes that in the classical period there was a strong bond between human society and the plant world, with plants playing roles in “every sphere of daily life: for food, textiles, and cosmetics; for religious and above all for healing purposes” (4-5). Thus, Ciarallo reads wall paintings as “observation of nature” (4-5) and seeks to correlate them with other evidence (pollen, wood, seeds, fruit, root castings) that makes it possible to determine what plants Pompeians actually used. She appends two lists with the scientific names of plants present then and today.

The first chapter sketches not only native plants but evidence from paintings for the later introduction of important species like the lemon and apricot, as well as species like the peach, so long established that many variants were developed, which was also the case with figs. Readers may be surprised to learn how energetically ancient horticulturalists developed varieties of favorite species.

The second chapter broadens horizons to offer a systematic account of the region’s complex ecosystem: the Sarno river meandered across a fertile plain below the backdrop of a Vesuvius that was still a single, tranquil peak cloaked in vineyards and woods. Near the sea were reed beds and

canals allowing cultivation of flax and hemp for textiles. Close to the town were large vegetable gardens. Upward and outwards on the slopes rose scattered agricultural estates (*villae rusticae*), their grain fields, vineyards, and olive groves interspersed with pastures, and, still higher, forests of oak (with provender for herds of pigs) and groves of beech (*fagus*) in which deer thrived.

Turning from the rich rural context, the third chapter describes the “large and small green spaces” (37) within the 163 acres of the town. Here new methods of excavation have made it possible not only to identify specific plants but also to describe how they were arranged to enhance views from rooms around the courtyards and how the plantings were fenced and supported by reeds. Excavators have distinguished ornamental use of fruit trees as well as orchards and vegetable gardens within the city walls.

The fourth chapter turns to staples of Mediterranean culture: grain, olives, and grapes. In each case, Ciarallo provides a brief summary of the evolution of the species and development of multiple varieties and adaptations to the local economy. Fascinating details emerge, for example, that the stone wheels in olive mills could be adjusted to perform three degrees of pressure, from a light first pressing for the finest oils, to a final crushing of the seeds, which produced a residue burned in lamps; or that root cavities show how city vineyards were planted in keeping with “a planting system whose distances and dimensions were recommended by the classical authors” (60) – here a specific referral to the sources would have been welcome.

In short, the botanico-ecological plan provides a significant frame for much interesting information with informative images. In many cases, too, we are referred to passages in ancient authorities, most notably the compendious *Natural History* of Pliny, but also Varro and Columella on agriculture. But detailed arguments, citations, and demonstrations are lacking since the book summarizes recent scholarship in Italian, much of it from the catalogue of an exhibi-

## NOVEL APPROACHES TO CLASSICS: PART II

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frankly, a pedant, with an annoying tendency of offering tedious allusions and digressions and untranslated lines of Greek and Latin that do little to advance the story. It would be different if the author were presenting Woody as an object of satire, but there is little in the narrative voice that encourages such a view.

Woody lacks the capacity for introspection, much less self-criticism. At no time in this existential journey does he find anything wanting in his relationships with his wife, children, or colleagues. All the characters in this story (almost all are women) are merely instrumental in Woody’s pursuit of his own destiny – he is closer to his Odyssean model in this respect than he might like. This would not be so bad were he not the protagonist in a novel that is supposed to be about the possibility of growth and redemption in the wake of tragedy. Woody has the requisite experience, but without reflection, he is missing the other half of the equation. Despite the acclaim the book has received, its protagonist presents a figure largely unsympathetic, one whose politics are not so much conservative or liberal as reprehensible, and a view into the discipline that few classicists would find flattering.

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## PATRIARCHY AND *PIETAS* IN THE *STAR WARS* TRILOGY

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recession all contributed to an uncertain and anxious present.

Within this cultural and political context, it is not surprising that many Americans wished to retreat to simpler times. Lucas had already tapped into that desire with his second feature film, *American Graffiti* (1973), which was a sentimental and nostalgic recreation of pre-1960's suburban life (modeled after his hometown of Modesto, California). Like the response of Livy and other Roman writers to the tremendous upheavals of their times, Lucas' cinematic response to his times was a retreat into a fundamentally conservative mythology. In the preface to his *History of Rome*, Livy wrote:

The study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind; for in history you have a record of the infinite variety of human experience plainly set out for all to see: and in that record you can find for yourself and your country both examples and warnings; fine things to take as models, base things, rotten through and through, to avoid." (translation by Aubrey de Selincourt, *The Early History of Rome*, 34)

In a similar vein, Lucas said that he wanted his films to provide models and myths that would inspire young audiences; in one interview he said: "The 60's shot the hell out of any shared vision we had for this place. I wanted to make a kid's film that would strengthen contemporary mythology and introduce a kind of basic morality. Everybody's forgetting to tell the kids, 'Hey this is right and this is wrong.'"

Like Livy's *Early History of Rome*, Lucas' modern myth in his back-to-the-future trilogy is profoundly conservative. Both offer a message of social reconstruction and personal transformation through a return to the traditional values of the patriarchal family and state. Luke is a traditional populist hero writ large – like Cincinnatus or George Washington, he emerges from the farm to save the Republic. A white male who embodies agrarian origins, spiritual virtues, martial prowess, and filial loyalty, he saves a mythical Republic and redeems his father. The politics of the trilogy opt for restoration rather than revolution: after the divisive 1960's and 1970's, the reconciliation of fathers and sons was an appealing fantasy. Part of the New

Right's appeal lay in its masterful refiguring of the recent history of the United States. The era prior to the upheaval of the 1960's was portrayed as an era of prosperity and social stability. Ronald Reagan's overwhelming defeat of Jimmy Carter had much to do with his nostalgic evocations of America's "golden age." Reagan reached back in his speeches before the upheavals of the mid-1960's and 1970's to a mythical, stable, prosperous, and rooted past. Lucas' nostalgic evocation of a romanticized historical era and the Golden Age of film in *American Graffiti* and in his later collaborations with Steven Spielberg in the Indiana Jones trilogy meshed well with the rhetoric of the Reagan era, which drew heavily on Hollywood for its history and sentiments. The affirmation of conservative patriarchal values, embracing of individualism, and the back-to-basics moral fundamentalism of the *Star Wars* trilogy were suggestive of the Reagan era yet to come. Indeed, the conservative ideology of the *Star Wars* films fit so well with the New Right's militant patriotism and its call for a return to the values of the traditional patriarchal family that one film critic claimed that "Lucas and Spielberg helped make the world safe for Reagan." According to the February 10, 1997 issue of *Time*, which featured the resurgence of the *Star Wars* series as a cover story, Lucas remains committed to these ideals. The article suggests that, if anything, Lucas' earnest desire to generate a "wholesome" fairy tale for audiences of all ages has increased. And, as the spectacular success of the recent film *Gladiator* (2000) attests, the cinematic vision of a restoration of the virtuous Republic (American and Roman) through a return to the traditional values of the patriarchal family and state remains deeply satisfying to American audiences.

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## Book Review: *Gardens of Pompeii*

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tion identified only as *Homo Faber* (Milan, 1999), which proves to be *Homo Faber: Natura, scienza e tecnica nell'antica Pompei* (cf. <http://galileo.imss.firenze.it/pompei/indice.html>). Ciarallo's only reference to non-Italian scholarship is to Jashemski's work.

The final product is not so thoroughly digested as one might wish. The drawbacks of scholarly haste are aggravated by editorial flaws, above all, by failure to translate idiomatically from the original tongue. It would have taken a general awareness and conscious effort to get from Italian academic style, with its often abstruse and allusive manner, to the concrete narrative more typical of what the Italians themselves call "the Anglo-Saxon world." Idioms would have had to be interpreted, not transliterated. Given the evident expertise of Ciarallo, consulting with a careful editor could surely have weeded out the host of opacities and even solecisms while elucidating such annoyances as vague reference to "symbolic meaning" or failure to specify when describing medicinal uses whether they are still thought to work. Typographical flaws are few, but the Appian who grafted an apple thus named *appiana* ought not to be identified as "a member of the *Clauda* family" instead of *Claudia* (20); and "*coronarum*" ought to be *coronarum* (16). The white on black printing of supplementary sections is very hard to read. No garlands, then, for copy readers and editors, above all the Getty, which ought to have devoted more of its fabulous resources to assuring that such a subject received the editorial quality it deserves.

A reader might wish, after seeing so many vignettes excerpted from particular Pompeian houses (notably the House of the Wedding of Alexander), to be given some sense of the dwelling itself as an ensemble and its place in the social and urban fabric of the town: this would have added the domestic component or level to the ecological scheme (putting the *oikos* back into the ecology). Also, although most of the illustrations serve their documentary purpose, the

strip of Cupids making perfumes (House of the Vettii) should be larger to show details of the craft. That likely group of readers who love Italian gardens may sympathize with the attempt to evoke city gardens in Pompeii by printing a photograph of the Cinquecento fountain terrace at Villa Lante (40); but the caption locating it in Caprara will puzzle aficionados, who have savored the delicate Villa Lante in Bagnaia (Viterbo) then threaded narrow roads across the Cimini mountains to the opposite slope overlooking the Tiber valley, where Alessandro Cardinal Farnese erected his massive villa at Caprarola.

Readers of diverse levels may glean something from this book, from its welcome ecological perspective to its manifold tidbits of botanical and local lore, despite the frustrations signaled above.

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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.

## DRUGS FOR AN EMPEROR

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tales of expert poisoners who plied their trade for high fees to those who could afford their services. And since most citizens and non-citizens of the Roman Empire were farmers or those who made their livings in the countryside, there was a consequent and widespread proficiency in food plants, plants employed as beneficial drugs, and all varieties of poisons, whether derived from plants or from animals and minerals. From the time of Theophrastus of Eresus (372-287 B.C.), writings in Greek and Latin set down specifics of natural pharmaceuticals, and the Hellenistic and Roman multi-ingredient theriacs were basic antidotes or prophylactic compounds that would negate an attempt at stealthy assassination by means of an imperial dinner. The pharmacology and toxicology of the Roman Empire have crucial roles in politics and, only when modern readers assume this, can they comprehend the stories in Suetonius, Tacitus, and other authors about death through poisoning.

Fictional inventions in the preceding are few: Galen's breakfast, his assistants, and the anticipated arrival of eastern embassies are deduced from corollary Greek and Latin texts of the same era; all other details (drugs, formulas, methods of manufacture, the technologies of oil seeds, mineral drugs, and poisons) emerge from the Greek of Galen of Pergamon and Dioscorides of Anazarbus, with bits drawn from Pol-lux's *Onomasticon* (marketplaces and items for sale), Justinian's *Digest* (Marcus' *decreta* and *edicta*), Nicander of Colophon's *Theriaca* and *Alexipharmaca* (poisonous animals, plants, and minerals augmented in the *Scholia* of both works), and Theophrastus' *Historia plantarum IX* (the *rhizotomoi*, who remained quite prominent in the Roman and Byzantine centuries). Pliny the Elder's marvelous potpourri the *Natural History* also contains thousands of details about what we would term folk medicine, and the overarching prominence of farm life shines forth for Greek, Roman, and Byzantine times, from Homer and Hesiod to the *Geoponica* (in Greek) and in the Roman evocations of honest livings gained from agriculture depicted by Cato the Elder, Varro, Columella, Palladius, Pelagonius, and the later veterinary manuals (in Latin).

Galen's "drug books" were last edited (more or less) by C. G. Kühn as Vols. XI-XIV in the still-standard *Cl. Galeni Opera Omnia* (1821-1833). The Latin "footings" below the half-pages of Greek are simply reprints of Renaissance translations, and many of the corruptions in the Greek reflect Renaissance collations; sometimes the Latin bears little resemblance to the Greek so a "Greekless" scholar cannot trust the Latin versions. Galen's *Antidotes* (from which details about Marcus' use of opium are drawn) is in two books, and the text is in Kühn, Vol. XIV, 1-209. Some of the articles in Armelle Debru, ed., *Galen on Pharmacology* (1997) bear directly on theriacs and poisons. Secondary literature on Roman drugs and poisons is rather sparse, given the mass of texts available. For an introduction to some of the important questions and problems of ancient Roman pharmacology, interested readers may consult John Scarborough, "The Opium Poppy in Hellenistic and Roman Medicine," in Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, eds., *Drugs and Narcotics in History* (1995), 4-23, and "Drugs and Medicines in the Roman World," *Expedition*, 38, no. 2, 1996, 38-51; and Charles Brewster Randolph, "The Mandragora of the Ancients in Folk-Lore and Medicine," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 40, no. 12, January, 1905, 487-537, which is still unmatched for its collection of references.

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## Video Review: *The Storyteller: Greek Myths* (1991, 1999)

by Betty Rose Nagle

The late Jim Henson is best known, of course, for his Muppets, but a must-see for readers of *Amphora* is the marvelous series *The Storyteller: Greek Myths*. This Henson and Associates production first aired on HBO in December 1991 and was released on videotape eight years later. These little gems each have a running time of 25 minutes (Theseus and Orpheus on one cassette, Perseus and Daedalus on another), and they are outstanding both as creative adaptations of the myths and as children's videos which, like the best of children's literature, have depths only adults can plumb. They feature such well-known actors as Derek Jacobi (Daedalus), Art Malik (Orpheus), and Michael Gambon (the Storyteller himself and, incidentally, the new Albus Dumbledore in the just-released third *Harry Potter* film). Other film notables involved are the producer of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994), the director of *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), and the cinematographer of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002) and *Troy* (2004). The series was spun off from an earlier one on European folktales titled simply *The Storyteller* (1987), also produced by Henson and written by Anthony Minghella, who wrote and directed both *The English Patient* (1996) and *Cold Mountain* (2003).

Designed for children, the videos feature monsters from Henson's Creature Shop (the Minotaur, the Gorgon, and a vulture invented for Daedalus). In addition, they assume their audience will know nothing about these stories – the Storyteller provides background when he answers questions from his talking Dog, his charmingly childlike interlocutor and a source of comic relief. This ancient Athenian Storyteller roams the ruined Labyrinth, scavenging artifacts which prompt his stories – Orpheus' lyre, the clay figure of a winged boy, and the Gorgon's head from a broken statue of Perseus. In the latter case, the Storyteller reassembles the statue as he tells its story, a process emblematic of the way a culture uses myth to make sense out of the world.

These episodes present all the familiar details, but they also invent many others that flesh out and reinterpret the standard ver-

sions. Daedalus, for example, is last seen compulsively making figurines of a winged boy. An earlier scene in his story introduces the contrast between his inept son and talented nephew: Icarus, the son, clumsily drops and breaks a toy owl with wings that flap; Talos, the nephew, quickly fixes it. Talos' death – maybe accidental, maybe subconsciously intentional – happens when Daedalus swings his nephew around over his head in an imitation of flight, and the boy falls from a rooftop. Talos' fall not only foreshadows Icarus' own more famous one, but the Storyteller explicitly makes a causal connection between the two since Icarus fell on the flight from Crete where he and his father had fled in the aftermath of his cousin's death. A vulture who witnessed Talos' fall in Athens reappears on Crete to taunt Daedalus; the inventor then kills it and uses its feathers to make the famous wings. The episode concludes with a ceiling panel in the Labyrinth sliding open to reveal two winged figure silhouetted against a full moon (an homage to Steven Spielberg's 1982 film *E.T.*, perhaps?). The other episodes are no less impressive in their invented details. When Danaë gives little Perseus a toy sword, she tells him "you kill monsters with it," anticipating his later adventure. Theseus forgets to hoist the white sail because he has wrapped the Minotaur's head in it as a trophy. As Orpheus serenades an alder tree, it splits open to reveal the nymph Eurydice inside, as if his music has brought her to life.

One of the strengths of both the Theseus and Orpheus episodes is the way their structures bring out latent meanings. The former is punctuated by a contrast between the hero's broken promises and the effective curses of female characters. Aegeus' death climaxes a series of accelerated crosscutting between Ariadne cursing Theseus as he leaves, and the king watching for his return; it is accompanied by the echo of Medea cursing the reunion of father and son as she flees Athens. We are left with the powerful image of Theseus alone in a gloomy throne room, wearing a gold bull's horn crown, while a voice-over recounts the Athenian hero's recurrent

nightmare: in the Labyrinth he is looking for the monster, and finds it in his own reflection. The Orpheus episode stresses that singer's influence on the natural world and is organized around the agricultural cycle and its rituals. It starts at planting time, with a dance honoring Persephone, and has Orpheus and Eurydice live happily through spring and summer; her death interrupts the harvest celebration, and wood laid for the harvest bonfire becomes her funeral pyre. When Orpheus loses her the second time, he forsakes music, and uses a rock to pound on his lyre strings; the malignant jangling blights all fertility; the crazed women who kill him do so to end that blight.

The construction of these four episodes never lets an audience forget that they are *stories being told*. Each unfolds with constant cuts and dissolves between the myth proper and its narrative frame, buttressed by constant interaction between the teller and his canine companion. The Dog is a sort of implied audience who resembles the children in the actual audience. Receptive to stories, and familiar with some of their conventions, such as the "happily ever after" ending, he interacts with the Storyteller as children might, by asking questions, reacting emotionally, and anticipating developments.

The stories are shot in full color, while scenes in the shadowy Labyrinth are in color so washed out it resembles black-and-white (an effect famous from the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*). Moreover, the cuts and dissolves that call attention to the relationship between frame and tale produce some striking visual effects. After we have seen Medea tell Theseus to purify himself before dining with the king, in the frame the Storyteller idly pours water from a small urn; this dissolves into the waters of the stream where Theseus is bathing, and that image in turn dissolves into the stream of poisoned wine Medea pours for him. Elsewhere, the screen is filled with the image of a vase painting whose animated figures enact the Storyteller's voice-over; when these dissolve into human actors, the story's action resumes. In addition to these visual effects, the Storyteller's penchant for rhetorical and poetic devices calls attention to these myths as stories being told.

These videos have provoked thoughtful

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## WHAT'S NEW IN ALEXANDER STUDIES

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buy into the theories of the doomsayers who believe that there is nothing left to do in the traditional areas and that only new-fangled theories and topics are “interesting.” The fact remains that there is still much to be said about military matters, although I hope that what does appear does not follow the disturbing trend that seeks to legitimize the actions of right-wing governments through dubious interpretations of the past. No serious study of Alexander’s generalship has been published since J. F. C. Fuller’s *The Generalship of Alexander the Great* (1960). A definitive treatment will need to consider D. W. Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army* (1978) as well as older works like B. H. Liddell Hart’s *Strategy* (1967, repr. 1991) and C. E. Callwell’s *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (3rd ed. 1906, repr. 1996). In fact, in this age, when guerrilla warfare in the Middle East and Central Asia – that is, in the very heartland of Alexander’s empire – dominates the news and, indeed, the lives of many families whose relatives are engaged in operations there, the study of Alexander’s campaigns is anything but a tired and meaningless pursuit. I say nothing of the “experience of war,” which has become, since John Keegan’s *The Face of Battle* (1976), a minor industry of its own. So dominant a figure is Alexander in world military history that both B. H. Liddell Hart, in his *Great Captains Unveiled* (1927), and Bevin Alexander, in *How Great Generals Win* (1993), have omitted him entirely in order to leave room for some other important commanders. Diplomacy and administration are also areas that require further attention.

The important question of Alexander’s interaction with the East – culturally as well as militarily – has taken on new meaning as scholars have moved away from Eurocentric views and as the publication of Near Eastern evidence has made it possible for historians to gain a more balanced picture. Pierre Briant’s massive *L’Empire perse* (1996) has now been translated into English by Peter T. Daniel as *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (2002).

Access to Alexanderland has been made easier by various recent publications (in addition to the texts and commentaries noted above): Joseph Roisman’s edition of *Brill’s Companion to Alexander the Great* (2003) complements

the second edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 6 (1994), as will the forthcoming *Alexander the Great: A Concise Guide* (edited by Waldemar Heckel and Lawrence Tritle). Ian Worthington’s *Alexander the Great: A Reader* (2003) is the first serious attempt at making a broad range of (“undoctored”) scholarship available to students since G. T. Griffith’s *Alexander the Great: The Main Problems* (1966). There are now very few literary sources for Alexander that have not been translated into English: Iolo Davies has translated the *Itinerarium Alexandri* in *The Ancient History Bulletin* 12, 1998, 29-54, and Richard Stoneman has given us *The Greek Alexander Romance* (1991) and *Legends of Alexander the Great* (1994). Furthermore, new Loeb editions of Aelian’s *Varia Historia* and Valerius Maximus supplement the existing translations of Arrian, Plutarch, Diodorus, Curtius, Justin, and Strabo. N. G. L. Hammond produced two works of *Quellenforschung: Three Historians of Alexander the Great* (1983) and *Sources for Alexander the Great* (1993), and Ian Worthington has announced the ambitious *Brill’s New Jacoby*. Hence, Alexander is now much more accessible for undergraduates than he was when the first baby boomers entered college.

What does this mean for the future of Alexander studies? Well, first of all, it means that the work of Davidson’s non-evolving “great beasts” has not been in vain. Since we must face up to the reality – and those who do not are the true dinosaurs and worthy of reproach – that the majority of our students are no longer approaching Alexander through the study of Greek and Latin, we can take comfort in the fact that the work of the past twenty to thirty years has made it possible for them to approach (and wish to learn) the ancient languages because of their interest in Alexander. Second, recent work makes Alexander studies more accessible to scholars in other fields, and since the door to interdisciplinary studies swings both ways, this will ultimately stimulate new research of a comparative nature. Third, for those who are not primarily Alexander scholars but are required to teach the subject, the task will be less daunting and consequently more interesting for their students. The history of Alexander will cease to be something that is dealt with superficially in the last two lectures of a Greek history course, in which students are advised to fasten

their seat belts as they move from the Hellespont to the Hydaspes at speeds that would put the Concorde to shame.

And what will be the reaction of students who discover Alexander and of scholars in related fields of study? Will they recoil from the tedium of the text? I think not. The apparent lull in scholarly activity, at least on the part of younger scholars, is nothing more than that, a lull. New edifices will soon rise on the foundations of scholarship laid in the past thirty years.

*Waldemar Heckel received his Ph.D. from the University of British Columbia in 1978 after jumping on the Alexander bandwagon of the seventies. He shows no signs of ever wanting to jump off even though he has difficulties in getting the band to play his tune. He is currently Professor in the Department of Greek and Roman Studies at the University of Calgary.*

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discussion in my college-level classical mythology course, especially of the differences between them and assigned text versions. I have watched them numerous other times, always discovering something more. They would be ideal vehicles for introducing these myths to elementary students, whose age-group was their intended audience, but high schoolers and college students will not find them childish. Henson’s earlier eight-part *Storyteller* series (with John Hurt as the Storyteller) has recently been released in DVD format. I hope that the DVD release of his later series, *The Storyteller: Greek Myths*, will soon follow.

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