

METABOLIZING THE METAMORPHOSES OF OVID

By Micheline Klagsbrun

To open Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is to step into a continuous and timeless narrative, a "seamless song" that echoes back to the caveman's fire and forward to our lives today. Over the centuries countless visual artists have been inspired by his intensely-described scenes, in all their drama, passion and shape-shifting surrealism. As just one of these artists, working with these stories for over two decades, I have been reflecting recently on how Ovid enters into my creative process.

I believe the groundwork of Ovid's influence was laid in my childhood, when I perceived the world (mostly the park I played in daily) as peopled by ducks, rabbits, swans, and, my favorite companions, trees, all capable of human interaction. The gnarled ancients that managed to ripple the London sidewalks with their hidden limbs were beings from another world. No wonder then that the first of Ovid's stories to capture my imagination, years later, was that of Daphne. A crumbling statue in Collodi, Italy, led me to the Bernini version in Rome, and I found myself painting over and over the details that fascinated me the most – her fingers and toes in the process of turning into branches and roots, the rigid bark

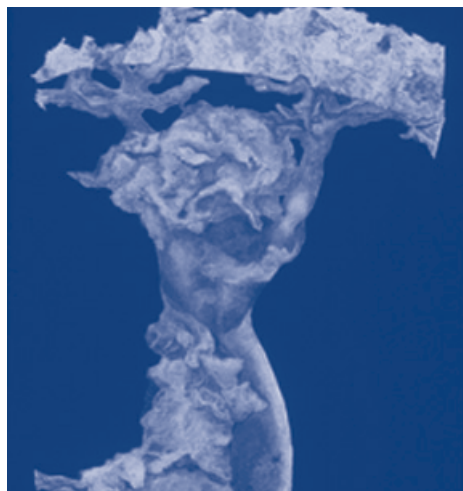


Fig. 1. Daphne begins her transformation into a tree.

creeping up her soft torso (see Fig. 1).

How to render the physicality of her transformation, its creepy horror yet at the same time the sensuality and presumed relief of her submission to being 'rescued'? How to express the irony and desperation of her compromise – she escapes her unwanted suitor forever, yet only by becoming permanently imprisoned. Liberty at the price of – liberty? And what about the implications of being rescued by her father? Over-protective paternalism? How do I feel

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Book Review: *Pots & Plays*

By A. J. Podlecki

Oliver Taplin. *Pots & Plays. Interactions between Tragedy and Greek Vase-painting of the Fourth Century B.C.E.* The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2007. Pp. 304, 94 color and 85 b/w illustrations. Cloth. \$75.00. ISBN 978-0892368075.

It is hard to imagine a more thorough and convincing treatment of this intriguing topic than Taplin's monumental study. What is more, it is a sheer joy to read (and review): sumptuously produced with numerous large, clear, well-captioned illustrations and an accompanying text to match, which presents, vigorously and magisterially, the author's mature thought on a subject to which he has devoted a good portion of his scholarly life.

Pottery imitative of Attic red-figure was being produced in the Greek West from c. 430 B.C.E. and about 25,000 pots survive, the most interesting and abundant category being Apulian, (from the southeastern coast of Italy) of which we have about 15,000 examples. Of the total some 2,000 are what Taplin terms "grander works" and of these he judges between 300 and 450 to be tragedy-related. He has selected for presentation here 109 vases, 5 Athenian and the rest from the southern part of Italy known as Magna Graecia. There is an interesting but so far unexplained tendency of the Greek West pots to depict individual actors "offstage," with the mainland vases showing mainly choruses (32; Taplin thinks this may indicate that in the West the chorus was "regarded as a secondary feature," 39). About a third of the total are related to extant dramas, the rest being divided (not quite evenly) between pictures apparently connected with lost plays about which something is known and those that can only be matter for speculation. Aeschylus gets

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about her desire to preserve her chastity – a feminist ideal? Or is it a virgin's fear of life, keeping her fixed in place, unable to move forward?

Intoxicated with this drama, I bought my first copy of the *Metamorphoses* and plunged into the stream. Later came other translations, which often differed from each other in the rendering of details. The realization that translation is itself a creative interpretation emboldened me to be more freely interpretive in my own work. My creative process, which I think of as 'metabolizing,' consists in reading and re-reading, mulling, free-associating, allowing images to emerge without conscious control. (Sometimes I imagine an unconscious communication connecting all of us readers of these stories, spanning centuries.) What emerges onto the canvas can relate to Ovid's text in several different ways.

The most direct re-imagining of an Ovidian story involves trying to capture its emotional essence, or sometimes the essence of the protagonist. Often several elements of the tale will be synthesized into a single painting, and combined with allusions to personal experiences or to current events in a way that adds layers of meaning.

In 2002 I was drawn to the story of Medea. Aware that few people know anything about her beyond the grim infanticide, I felt a need to redress the balance of her reputation. In a time of personal turmoil and impending divorce, I empathized with her narrative: her abandonment of country and family in order to devote herself to a husband who eventually betrays her. In addition, my imagination was fired by Ovid's detailed description of the magic rituals she uses to restore Jason's father to health and youth. I depicted her in her young glory as a sorceress, an incarnation of female power, hands thrown up and hair flying. She is clothed, literally, in magic invocations, which I had inscribed using special inks, twigs, and leaves onto translucent papers which I oiled until they resembled skin. Magic elements surround her, composed into a circle of power: the flaming altar, the river into which she dips her hair, the moon. But there are also intimations of the future. A shadow spreads behind her – it is dark green, yet its form suggests blood. A second Medea crouches at her feet, head in hands. Is she washing her hair, as Ovid (7.188-90)



Fig. 2. Alcione is transformed into a bird, to share her life with her husband Ceyx who has also become a sea bird.

describes? Or is she overcome by awe, grief-stricken for the loss of her family, or driven mad by the gods?

Sometimes I focus on the formal aspects of a narrative as a complement to its content. In my first exhibition to focus solely on the *Metamorphoses*, I took Echo and Narcissus as my central theme, and used multiple media to investigate qualities of surface and reflection, with visual and verbal echoing. Their dialogue was inscribed on a series of translucent papers, hung so that it could be read from different angles. A series of drawings of Echo showed her in the process of turning into thin air. We tend to think of wasting away as a process of shriveling or shrinking, but I had the opposite concept. With medical illustrations of osteoporosis in mind, I conceived of the pockets of air in her bones expanding into passages of blue sky, until flesh became voice.

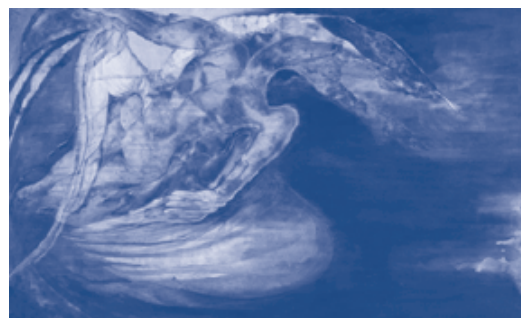
Narcissus, moreover, was portrayed at the very moment in which he realizes that the reflection he adores is himself. He simultaneously reaches out to his beloved, and tries to push away the knowledge that he is doomed: he tries to hide his eyes, yet a spectral reflection reaches forth to drag him down. Between them I installed their earlier dialogue, painted on translucent paper hangings in such a way that Echo's responses could be read through the previous page, providing a visual echo. Narcissus believed that he and his beloved were about to touch – all that

separated them was the thinnest shimmer of the water's surface. I explored this illusion in other pieces that used superimpositions, iridescent fabrics, even snakeskin (itself a symbol of transformation) to embody the theme of reflection and refraction. In the case of Narcissus and Echo, it also took an installation, a room filled with layers and echoes in three-dimensional space, to convey my sense of the story. At other times, rather than try to convey the whole narrative in a single piece, I use a series or group of works.

In my 2006 exhibition 'SeaChanges,' inspired by the story of Ceyx and Alcione, a number of works depicted moments in the story, while others were peripherally related to it. Alcione, beloved wife of King Ceyx of Trachis, had premonitions of terrible storms and begged her husband not to depart on his sea voyage to Claros. She dreams of broken planks on the beach, of reading the names of sailors on empty tombs. And indeed his ship is caught in a violent storm and destroyed. Ceyx murmurs Alcione's name into the waters as long as he has breath. Meanwhile, Alcione prays daily to Juno for her husband's safety, until Juno, tired of unanswerable prayers for a man already dead, sends her messenger Iris to the house of Sleep, asking that god to send Alcione a dream that will reveal the truth. Morpheus appears to Alcione as her drowned husband. On waking she runs to the shore where she sees far off a floating figure. Realizing that it is Ceyx, she runs along a jetty and leaps into the ocean – yet in her leap she is transformed into a bird . . . she soars, dives, and skims the ocean surface on new-found wings . . . with her mouth, now a slender bill, she kisses Ceyx, who rises back to life. As sea-birds they are never parted (see Fig. 2).

In "Alcione dreams of broken planks" and in "Alcione's long dark night" I use deep shifting colors layered with silvery strands that evoke a starry night sky, yet also entangle and trap Alcione's reaching

Fig. 3. In Alcione's leap of grief, she tries to join her husband Ceyx who has drowned at sea.



hands, along with Alcione's blank watery blue stare, to evoke both an anxious foreboding and a primal ocean from which some magic may emerge. I see "*Alcione dives to Ceyx*" as the climax of the story. It is the moment of truth, in which she takes a leap into the unknown (see Fig. 3). In her leap, she is transformed. No longer earthbound, she becomes a creature who can fly. Her courage enables her partner to become transformed and the two of them move into a new life.

In '*SeaChanges*,' I altered my level of focus, zooming in on change itself, on moments of chaos when all is in flux and new forms are born. I depicted transformations from human to bird, from arm to wing, from male to female, from larva to dragonfly, from dream to knowledge. Most of these pieces contain a more powerful mix of emotions than my previous work. The splashes of red, the sharpness of beaks, the oddness of some of the images, all speak to the pain and conflict that is an essential part of change. In my own life, a new chapter had begun. After much conflict and pain, I had come through my divorce, re-established a life of my own, and committed myself to a new partner. Like Alcione, I had taken a leap, grown wings, escaped one life, emerged into a new self.

One of the paintings in '*SeaChanges*' opened up a new avenue of development for my work through elaborating the story of Caenis. Famous for her beauty, Caenis refused all offers of marriage, preferring independence and lonely walks on the beach, until Neptune seized and raped her there. Filled with pleasure and in a generous mood, he offered to grant her any wish. She replied that her greatest desire was never to be hurt again in the same way and therefore not to be a woman. Neptune transformed her into a man and in addition, aptly enough, made him impervious to any penetration. Now named Caeneus, he became a celebrated warrior – spears bounced off him, sword blades shattered and left him unwounded. This infuriated his enemies, the Centaurs, who were disgraced that they could be mocked by one who had been a woman. In a final battle, the Centaurs piled mountains of rocks and uprooted trees upon Caeneus until he could not breathe. When he tried to lift his head, the mountains shifted as in an earthquake, and from a crevice flew a bird with golden wings, the like of which has never been seen before or since.

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Book Review: *Superheroes and Greek Tragedy: Comparing Cultural Icons*

By John Gruber-Miller

Sally MacEwen. *Superheroes and Greek Tragedy: Comparing Cultural Icons*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006. Pp. 545. Hardcover. \$139.95. ISBN 978-0773457768.

It is not uncommon, when I am teaching Greek tragedy, that some time during the course I will be asked, "Who is the hero in this play?" Sally MacEwen's study begins with this very question, rarely asked in the many interpretations of Greek tragedy that have been published in the last several decades, but fundamental to an understanding of Greek tragedy and Greek culture.

While MacEwen begins with this question, she takes an interesting turn in answering it. Rather than simply look at Aristotle yet again (although she does consider *The Poetics*), she asks us to think about heroes in Greek tragedy in comparison with our culture's idea of a hero visible in Hollywood westerns, sci-fi thrillers, and comic book remakes (see Fig. 4). In using Hollywood movies, she reminds us that seeing tragedy or film is first and foremost a visceral experience. We cheer for the hero, feel fear, and if all goes well, even identify with the hero. When people are in trouble and disaster is close at hand, the hero is the person in whom the audience places their hopes for safety and security, with whom they resonate on an affective, pre-cognitive level. Why? Because the hero enables the spectators to cope with conflicts within their system of cultural values. "The construction of a hero is so close to the heart of a culture," MacEwen argues, that the hero is "the place where its fundamental problems will be mediated" (321).

The heart of MacEwen's study is Chapter 3, in which she lays out five aspects of what it means to be a superhero, either in Greek tragedy or in Hollywood movies: prowess, autonomy, ability to save someone, vision to do the "right" thing, and congruence with the cosmos. While each of these five major characteristics remains the same whether in fifth-century Athens or twentieth-century America, each culture defines them based on different cultural values. In the process of discussing each of these five elements, MacEwen makes a number of important insights. For example, in ancient Greece, to



Fig. 4. This statue of Superman, one of the great modern heroes, stands outside the courthouse in Metropolis, IL. Image used under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License. Image source: Photo by Scott Goodhart at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MetropolisIL_Courthouse.jpg.

be a hero, one must be born to an elite family with an honored lineage, whereas in American adventure films, birth is not important: Shane, Peter Parker, Han Solo, and Frodo are "unlikely" heroes because there is no one group or type from which the hero would have to arise to be heroic. Second, while ancient and modern heroes are both outsiders, the modern hero will frequently "ride into the sunset" rather than be reintegrated into the community as the ancient one is. Finally, Greek heroes always save "someone" whom they know as part of the community and can have reciprocal relations with, while modern heroes save "anybody," even people they don't know, especially the innocent.

After MacEwen delineates the major characteristics of a hero, she then looks in detail at ten Greek tragedies by Euripides and Sophocles, developing a historical account of what it means to be a hero in Greek tragedy over the final four and a half decades of the fifth century. The earliest plays, such as *Oresteia*, *Antigone*, *Alcestis*, and *Ajax*, all express a basic optimism that *dike* (justice) will win out and that any conflict between the *oikos* (home) and *polis* (city) will be resolved. Her stereotypical hero is Heracles in Euripides' *Alcestis*, who rescues Alcestis and restores the correct hierarchies and reciprocal relationships in the *oikos* (Admetus' relationship with his wife) and the *polis* (his relationship with his guest friend).

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EURIPIDES ON THE MODERN STAGE: *THE WOMEN OF TROY*

By Anastasia Bakogianni

Greek tragedy is alive and well on the London stage, with Euripides currently enjoying a great wave of popularity (see Fig. 5). The wealth of recent productions of Euripides' dramas staged in British theaters (*Iphigenia at Aulis* in 2004, three versions of *Hecuba* in 2004/5 and the *Bacchae* in 2007, to name but some of the most talked-about of these productions) gave rise to fears among some members of the academic community that a backlash was imminent. In a conversation I had at the time with Lorna Hardwick (Professor of Classics at The Open University and Director of the Classical Reception and Poetry in English Project), she expressed a fear that the great number of productions based on Greek drama would eventually alienate audiences and cause them to flock to more modern plays that deal with contemporary issues. The negative reviews of British playwright Tony Harrison's version of *Hecuba* with Vanessa Redgrave in Britain, for example, seemed to suggest that the backlash had started by the end of 2005. This production was better received in the United States, however, partly because in London the production followed so closely after the very popular and acclaimed *Hecuba* of Irish playwright Frank McGuinness and partly because the American version of the production was improved after its negative reception in Britain. Fortunately, such fears that the theater going public would tire of Euripides proved groundless. The popularity of Katie Mitchell's production of *The Women of Troy* for the National Theatre is a recent example that clearly demonstrates that Euripides still 'speaks' to modern audiences. Let us consider some of the reasons why in productions such as Mitchell's, which premiered in November 2007 and ended in February 2008, Euripides continues to be popular with both theatrical directors and the theater-going public.

One might argue that Euripides' current popularity with British directors and theater audiences rests on the perception that he is the most modern and relevant of the three tragedians. This perception rests in part on the fact that so many of his surviving plays deal with events surrounding the most famous war in the literary corpus of ancient

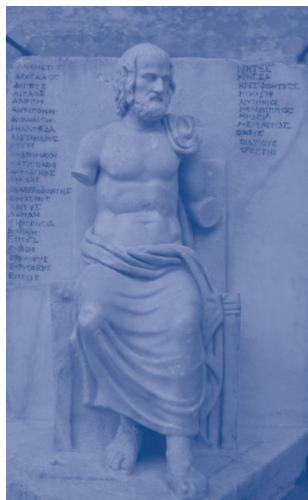


Fig. 5. This statue of Euripides, found on the Esquiline Hill in Rome, includes a list of many of his plays. Image source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Seated_Euripides_Louvre_Ma343.jpg.

Greece: the Trojan War. The immediate aftermath of the war is portrayed in his *The Trojan Women* and *Hecuba*, while his *Iphigenia at Aulis* focuses on the events leading up to the preparation of the Greek fleet before the war. His *Andromache*, *Electra*, and *Orestes* represent the longer term consequences of the war for both Trojans and Greeks: the dissolution of family units and the pain of those affected on both sides. His action-packed escape plays *Helen* and *Iphigenia at Tauris* also raise these issues.

War and its human cost have become a topic of particular relevance at the moment, given the ongoing public debate over the involvement of both the United States and Britain in the war in Iraq. Over the course of the twentieth century, Euripides became associated on the British stage with anti-war sentiments. In this turbulent century of two world wars and countless other conflicts, Euripides' war plays offered directors the opportunity to debate thorny issues related to war in a remote setting that allowed them to voice a relevant message without hectoring, as it were. (The dictionary definition of the word hectoring is to treat with insolence; to bully; to torment. Its root is the name of Hector, which hardly seems fitting as he is one of the noblest of the Iliadic heroes.)

This impression of Euripides among the general public as a playwright who condemns war owes much to the work of the British scholar and public figure

Gilbert Murray (1866-1957). Murray interpreted Euripides as condemning war in his plays, propagating this view of the tragedian not only in his scholarship but also in his popular translations of the plays for the stage (for more information on the life and work of Murray see *Gilbert Murray Reassessed*, edited by Christopher Stray and published by Oxford University Press in 2007). Modern directors often choose to follow in Murray's footsteps by highlighting the political dimensions of the ancient playwright's oeuvre. Recent productions of Euripides' plays capitalize on his image as an anti-war playwright to comment on contemporary events through the medium of Greek tragedy. The high status of Greek tragedy as the foundation of Western theater, coupled with the distancing effect that Greek drama has on audiences, allowing them to view the issues raised by these plays more objectively than those presented by a contemporary work, can – in the hands of a talented director – produce exciting results.

Contemporary directors are also attracted to Euripides because of his stark portrayal of war and his tendency to demythologize his characters, making them more accessible to a modern audience. Euripides' plays engender more questions than answers, adopting an approach that is perhaps more in line with the *Zeitgeist* of our own times. The best of the recent performances of Euripides' work on the modern stage demand a balancing act. On the one hand, they must not lose sight of the classical text; on the other hand, they must also engage the audience in the action of the play by making it relevant, but not allowing it to degenerate into mere propaganda. Although this is a difficult balance to achieve, some of the best theater directors have taken up this challenge.

Katie Mitchell is one of the most prominent directors who has embraced this challenge with great vigor. Throughout her career she has been involved in several productions of Greek drama for the Royal Shakespeare Company and more recently for the National Theatre. Her *Iphigenia at Aulis* produced in 2004 garnered her great acclaim. The production achieved the desired balance between accurately

representing the source text and engaging a modern audience emotionally in the plight of the heroine. Her production succeeded as theater because the audience viscerally felt the full horror of killing a young girl for the sake of a foreign war.

In her version Mitchell made it clear that Iphigenia dies at the end of the play, reinforcing the horror of Agamemnon's actions. Her *Oresteia* of 1998-99 based on Ted Hughes' version of the trilogy was, however, less successful. Despite her efforts, Aeschylus remained too remote for an audience unfamiliar with the conventions of fifth-century theater. What stood out for me in my own experience of watching this production was a long discussion I had with several fellow audience members during the intermission, in which I tried to explain the role of the *kommos* (Orestes and Electra's long prayer) in the play. My fellow audience members found that section too long and difficult to follow, even though Hughes had already cut down the original text out of similar concerns about the passage's length and function. Audiences, on the whole, found it hard to engage with the production.

But we should not assume for this reason that Aeschylus or Sophocles are not relevant for a modern audience or that they cannot be staged successfully. A recent version of Sophocles' *Oedipus* by the Irish playwright and poet Frank McGuinness and with Ralph Fiennes as the tragic king proved very successful at the National Theater in the autumn of 2008. Yet Euripides' plots and characters do make him easier viewing for a contemporary audience. Frank McGuinness' version of *Hecuba* (2004) produced for the Donmar Theatre was both relevant and powerful without losing sight of his classical source. His enslaved queen was powerful and tragic and had audiences flocking to see the production. In the best tradition of an avid theater-goer I spent over three hours in line with a fellow classicist in order to obtain a much sought after ticket and, once I purchased it, I refused all offers to sell it on. Mitchell's production also played to packed audiences and I was only able to buy a ticket after another long queue.

A crucial element of Mitchell's production is her choice of Don Taylor's translation as the basis of her script (see Fig. 6). Donald Victor Taylor (1936-2003) was an English director who worked in television and radio, as well as the theater. He also wrote plays of his own and translated some of Euripides' plays. His intimate knowledge of both the theater itself and of a director's craft

makes his translation very performable. Mitchell recognized this strength in Taylor's work (she had also used his translation of *Iphigenia at Aulis* at the National Theatre in 2004).

Taylor's translation of *The Trojan Women* was originally published in 1990 in *Euripides: The War Plays* by Methuen Drama. In his introduction he stressed the political aspects of Euripides' play, reading it as an indictment of Athenian foreign policy during the Peloponnesian War, faulting in particular the sack of the island of Melos by Athens in 416-415 B.C. In this incident, after the inhabitants of the island had refused to join the Athenian-led Delian League, Athens attacked in retaliation, laid siege to the island, killed all the men, and enslaved the women and children. Inspired by Euripides' play, Taylor also wrote a poem in 1994 called *Return to Sarajevo*, linking its scenario to the war in the Balkans sparked by the collapse of Yugoslavia. Both Taylor's poem and part of his introduction were reprinted in the program that accompanied Mitchell's production.

What makes Taylor's version of the play particularly suited for the modern stage is its evocation of contemporary events and its use of a modern idiom to express Euripides' immortal tragedy about the aftermath of the war at Troy. Taylor's introduction, following in the tradition of Gilbert Murray by emphasizing the political aspects of the play and their contemporary relevance, had a major impact on Katie Mitchell's staging of the play. For me, watching Mitchell's reworking of Euripides' *Troades* (*Trojan Women*) was an uncomfortable experience in more than one way. It was Greek tragedy made relevant for today's unsettled world.

Taylor's translation of the play also inspired Mitchell to locate the Trojan women in an industrial port of a war-torn city. The set resembles a warehouse, an iron prison where the women are locked in, awaiting their fate. Mitchell, however, omits the prologue, included by Taylor, where Poseidon and Athena discuss the future punishment of the Greeks for their impiety. Instead she focuses on the pain and suffering of the women and in particular the tragic figures of Hecuba and Andromache.

A catalogue of disasters follows: Hecuba is to be the slave of the unscrupulous Odysseus; Cassandra is to become Agamemnon's concubine; Hecuba's other daughter Polyxena is sacrificed at the tomb of Achilles; Andromache is to be the slave of



Fig. 6. Taylor's translation of *The Women of Troy* provides the text for Mitchell's 2008 production. (Cover image for the 2007 reprint by Methuen Drama.)

Neoptolemus, the son of the man who killed her beloved Hector. This series of catastrophes reaches its tragic climax with the decree ordering the death of Astyanax, Hecuba's grandson, the son of Hector. It is this child, the last male heir of Troy, who in this play is torn from his mother's arms and thrown down from the walls of Troy.

Even classicists familiar with this story of extreme grief and loss cannot help but be moved by this production, with its vignettes that underscore the humanity of the characters Euripides inherited from Homer and re-created over two thousand years ago (in 415 B.C.). Andromache brings Hecuba a supermarket bag containing Polyxena's handbag, shoes, and hair clips. As Hecuba reverently touches each token of her dead daughter she becomes a symbol for all grieving mothers who have lost their children in war.

In her production, Mitchell chose to portray Astyanax as a baby rather than as a small child. His pitiful crying caused Anastasia Hille's portrayal of Andromache to be all the more moving. Mitchell's Hecuba and Andromache are both brutally restrained as their children are taken away from them. This is a physical play where the consequences of slavery for the women are made horrifyingly visible to the audience; from Agamemnon's perverse sexual desire for Cassandra, to the rough manhandling of the women. The chorus also bears the

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Book Review: *Rome: Empire of the Eagles, 753 BC – AD 476*

By Aaron Irvin

Neil Faulkner. *Rome: Empire of the Eagles, 753 BC – AD 476*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2008. Pp. 400. Hardcover. \$45.95. ISBN 978-0582784956.

It was Rome's mission, nay its destiny, to conquer the world, drive back barbarism, and bring light and civilization to the dark places of Europe; so states Vergil in the *Aeneid*. (6.851-3):

*tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem,
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.*

On Christmas Day 800 A.D., for his services to the church and his campaigns against the "heathens," Pope Leo III saw fit to crown Charlemagne "Emperor of the Romans," some 324 years after the deposition of the last Roman emperor in the west, Romulus Augustulus (475-6 A.D.). In formulating their own imperial ideology, the British likewise looked to Rome as their example: Rome had civilized Europe, and it was the British "White Man's Burden" to continue this "great commission" and civilize the world. More recently, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, British diplomat Robert Copper, and left-wing intellectual Alex Callinicos have all called for a look back to Rome as a type of "good" empire that could serve as a template for empires and imperialism in the modern world.

Neil Faulkner's recent work, *Rome: Empire of the Eagles*, was written not for the academic community, but rather for Leo, Charlemagne, Rumsfeld, Copper, Callinicos, and others who, throughout the ages, have looked to Rome and the Roman empire as a force of good and civilization in a backward world of violence and barbarism. Faulkner asserts that the Roman empire was, in its purest form, a predatory state built upon extortion and exploitation, a system maintained by violence, genocide, rape, plunder, and slavery. In this way, his work is a valuable contribution to the study of the history of Rome, a type of "reality check" for those of us who occasionally fail to glance past the baths, arenas, and marble statues into the gritty

realities that life in the ancient world entailed.

Faulkner is frank and up-front about his own background and biases; in the introduction he clearly presents himself as coming from a Marxist background in his own analysis, his primary field of study being archaeology and not history *per se*. This Marxist bias by no means eclipses the narrative, nor does Faulkner attempt to force all of Roman history into a Marxist dialectical model. On the contrary, the flow of the narrative is excellent and the book is a pleasure to read, an outstanding accomplishment if one takes into account the fact that Faulkner is attempting to cover some 1200 years of history in a little over 300 pages. Faulkner's ability to highlight and expand upon those aspects of Roman history that are key to understanding important events and time-periods make the book accessible to a wide audience. Faulkner's talent for compressing a tremendous amount of material while still maintaining coherence and narrative cohesion is exceptional.

Although Faulkner's overall narrative and style are beyond reproach, his attempt to "tell" Roman history in such a way as to prove his argument is problematic. For example, despite establishing the late republican politician Tiberius Gracchus (168-133 B.C.) as a steadfast member of the Roman aristocracy, Faulkner insists on painting him as a type of progressive reformer fighting for the Roman people. Indeed, Faulkner presents much of the conflict at Rome during the late Republic in terms of reform versus reactionary movements, ascribing to each an ideological coherence that most Roman historians would agree was simply not present. As such, historical characters of the late Republic (133-45 B.C.) like the brothers Tiberius and Gaius Sempronius Gracchus, Lucius Appuleius Saturninus, Gaius Marius, Lucius Cornelius Sulla, Lucius Cornelius Cinna, and Gnaeus Papirius Carbo all play their reform or reactionary parts in Faulkner's narrative. Yet Faulkner doesn't seem to know how Pompey the Great fits with the rest, and thus Pompey becomes a self-interested, self-seeking individual. Yet the dialectic returns when Faulkner turns to Caesar, who is presented as a reformer with conviction at the head of a "reform party." Faulkner devotes a page and a half to Caesar's actual rule, with no mention of any sweeping reforms enacted by the dictator.

This is not to say that Faulkner's argument,

or his presentation of aspects of Roman history in terms of economic and political class conflict, is necessarily incorrect or flawed. Rather, it is unfortunate that Faulkner chose, in making this a non-academic work, not to present his own reasoning and his own analysis of Roman history and historical evidence. We have the end result, his conclusions; but we cannot see the reasoning and the thought process behind why Faulkner presents episodes of history the way he does, or why he dismisses some evidence while emphasizing other evidence. For example, he points to conquest as the source of the wealth Augustus used to grant largesse to the troops and provide games and circuses for the people, and he presents the conquest of Egypt as a primary source of this wealth. Yet, in the same paragraph, he also highlights the conquests of Moesia, Thrace, Illyricum, and the interior of Spain as sources of wealth. It may be that these campaigns provided significant revenue, but at face value it is hard to believe that tribes in the Thracian or Spanish wilderness provided anything significant at all when compared to the wealth of Egypt. The same can be said for his dismissal of Late Antiquity (300-600 A.D.) as anything more than a period of decline on the edge of chaos, or his view of Christianity as part of a counter-revolutionary program under Constantine (272-337 A.D.). It is possible to disagree with his points on principle, but not on the basis of any analysis or evidence: Faulkner simply doesn't present any.

Although the book is entertaining to read and, by presenting an alternative point of view, offers a sometimes intriguing new angle from which to examine an ancient empire far too often viewed with "rose-colored glasses" by academics and laypersons alike, the narrative of Rome it contains is finally frustrating, for, while Faulkner has indeed retold Roman history, he has not provided a solid scholarly basis for his conclusions, and offers no reason why we should accept his viewpoint as any more valid than that of Leo, Callinicos, or Rumsfeld.

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PODCASTING FOR CLASSICISTS: A MODERN PATH TO THE ANCIENT WORLD

By Jennifer Sheridan Moss

The pressures of the modern world leave little time for relaxation or reading for pleasure. Luckily, technology now allows us to learn while we're on the run. All you have to do is put on the ubiquitous white headphones of an iPod (see Fig. 7), download some free podcasts, and soon you can be learning about Greek history while stuck in a traffic jam, or Latin literature while sitting at your child's soccer practice.

Podcasts are digital recordings of news, information, or entertainment developed for playing on Apple's iPod. Some podcasts are audio-only, but some include images, either slide shows or video. Thousands upon thousands of podcasts are available free of charge from Apple's iTunes Store, and every day more classical podcasts become available. Once you begin downloading and listening to podcasts, you will see the great potential of this technology as an educational tool. Whether you are a Latin student, a classics aficionado, or even a professional classicist, spending some time each week with classical podcasts will teach you things you don't know, or at least help you brush up on things you've forgotten. And it will require little effort from you.

To load and listen to podcasts, you must install no-cost iTunes software (<http://www.apple.com/itunes>) on your computer (PC or Mac) and open an account in the iTunes Store. Don't be discouraged if you don't own an iPod; you can listen to podcasts on your computer's speakers or burn them to a CD. Used and refurbished iPods are widely available as well. Owners of other brands of MP3 players may have to import the podcast files into their proprietary software.

One note of caution: podcasts are not peer-reviewed scholarship. Anyone can publish on iTunes, and so the quality of both the sound and the material presented varies. Listeners, therefore, should exercise the sort of caution they normally would with web-based materials. Also, since the iTunes Store lists podcasts that are stored on other servers, it is not uncommon to find dead links or to have podcasts disappear from the site. Always check back later if your favorite podcast series is temporarily unavailable.

In this article I will introduce you to



Fig. 7. Augustus jams to the sounds of Livy's *History of Rome* and Vergil's *Aeneid*. Image supplied by David Moss.

the variety of classical podcasts that now exist. Because there seem to be new podcasts every day, and I can't possibly list them all, I will point you in the direction of some of my personal favorites which should be of interest to anyone, and then will review some of those which will help certain types of classics students.

Classical Podcasts

The number of classical podcasts available today is small but growing. Here are a few that are likely to interest anyone who studies the ancient world.

A podcast can sometimes take us just beyond the world we know. Byzantium is a direct descendent of the classical world, yet most classicists know little about it. If you would like to learn more, I recommend Lars Brownworth's podcasts, "12 Byzantine Rulers: The History of the Byzantine Empire." In eighteen short episodes, none longer than half an hour, Brownworth traces this period using both primary and secondary sources. What makes these podcasts stand out is Brownworth's fascination and enthusiasm for a world he discovered only recently. The production quality is also extremely high. "12 Byzantine Rulers" has received attention from the national media, and has earned high scores from listeners on iTunes as well.

Another classically-related series of podcasts is Patrick Hunt's "Hannibal." Hunt's archaeological endeavors, funded by National Geographic, have traced the route that Hannibal and his army

took through the Alps. The podcasts provide a detailed history of this most famous Carthaginian and his accomplishments, and would be an excellent supplement to a course on Roman Republican history.

Other podcasts take us back to familiar and comfortable places. My favorite Latin podcast is Chris Francese's "Latin Poetry Podcast." These brief podcasts, most under five minutes, include the familiar (Vergil, Ovid) and the not-so-familiar (Claudian). In each podcast Francese contextualizes the poem he is reading, and often provides a translation, making the material accessible to those who are not fluent in the language. Francese's comfort and delight in each poem is contagious; it is easy to imagine that you are sitting with him, sharing a glass of wine, reveling in the beauty of Latin poetry. His pronunciation is also lovely, and an excellent model for students.

The majority of podcasts on topics within Classics that are currently available are supplementary lessons for Latin classes. Many correspond to standard Latin texts that are used by high schools and colleges. Teachers and students will also find podcasts that can supplement language learning with material that provides cultural background, such as mythology or history.

Elementary Latin students can hear *38 Latin Stories* and some selections from *Wheelock's Latin* read aloud (Madeleine Henry's "Latin Stories"), or can listen to the vocabulary lists from each chapter of Keller and Russell's *Learn to Read Latin* (K. Baratz et al.'s "Vocabulary for 'Learn to Read Latin'"). There are more general vocabulary lessons by M. Fletcher entitled "Latin & Greek: Listen and Learn."

Intermediate Latin students will benefit from reviews of grammar presented in "University of Kentucky Classics 102 Podcast." Students who are reading Latin literature have many excellent podcasts to choose from. They can listen to Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum* or Cicero's *Pro Caelio* read in Xander Subashi's "Classics Texts" or in Bret Mulligan's "LATN101a: The Late Republic." "Mulligan's 'vcast'" (video podcast) of Catullus 1 is a mini lecture that includes a lesson on how to translate the poem as well as an interpretation of

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PODCASTING FOR CLASSICISTS: A MODERN PATH TO THE ANCIENT WORLD

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the poem in its context.

Oral Latin fans have many podcasts to choose from; this medium is ideal for audio learning. Evan der Millner's "Latinum" podcast now boasts more than three hundred episodes (for a review of this site, see *Amphora* 7.2). And don't forget the ever-popular news reports in Latin from Finland, "Nuntii Latini." These too are now available in podcast form.

There are podcasts to aid students who are studying Vergil for the Advanced Placement exam. Noted Latin scholar Susanna Braund presents a series of lectures on the *Aeneid* in "Vergil's *Aeneid*." The specific passages that appear on the Advanced Placement Exam are translated and reviewed in Henry Bender's "Vergil AP Podcast."

Latin teachers and students can supplement language learning with podcasts on related cultural material. These podcasts will also be of interest to the general public or to students taking broad survey classes which may be rushing through the classical world at too quick a pace. For example, John A. Bruzas reads Cicero's *Philippics* and related selections from Plutarch in translation in "Ancient Voices and the Roman Revolution." Need to brush up on Greek mythology? John Hughes of Missouri State University presents his entire Morford and Lenardon-based course, "Classical Mythology," in a series of video podcasts. Mike Duncan's "History of Rome" follows Rome from its founding through the end of the Republic.

If you find that you love podcasts, search frequently for new material. Keyword searches using the "power search" tool in the iTunes Store will lead you to more material, and many search results will show a cross-indexing feature that will call your attention to related podcasts.

Make Your Own Podcasts

As a teacher, you may want to create some of your own in your field of expertise, or to supplement the courses you teach. Podcasts are excellent for reviewing or supplementing materials that are presented in a class, for going off on a tangent, or for discussing intriguing topics that you just can't fit into regular class time (high school teachers restricted by state-mandated curricula might find this particularly attractive). Plan your podcasts so that a student who follows your syllabus will learn more from the podcasts, not use

them as a substitute for reading. If your podcasts are interesting enough, they may spur your students to read more! Or your students may want to make their own podcasts!

If you create some podcasts, there are some basic rules to follow. First, podcasts are best kept brief. The best model is the NPR news story – a focused broadcast of five to ten minutes. There are interesting podcasts created during classroom or scholarly lectures, but they tend to have poor quality audio, and are often interrupted by classroom activities or by extraneous noise. Keep in mind that the average human attention span is short, and, more importantly for this medium, that your listeners are likely to be listening to podcasts while doing something else.

Second, create a video podcast when visual materials will enhance your presentation. But the production of video podcasts is more complicated, and requires a more expensive iPod to view. Don't bother with visuals unless the podcast centers on them.

Third, respect all copyright laws. Since your podcasts will be educational and free, fair use provisions should apply. It is fine to quote a few lines of someone else's translation, but it would

be illegal to simply record a reading of the entirety of it. Images from museum websites are copyrighted; your own slide collection is not. When in doubt, consult one of the many websites that explain the use of copyrighted materials (such as <http://www.umuc.edu/library/copy.shtml>) and find out your own school's policies.

If you think you will create more than one podcast, it is nice to have a visual cover page for your podcasts, and an introductory jingle. This will give your podcasts a more professional quality and stamp them as yours. Images can be created in photo-editing software. For a jingle, either record something you have composed yourself (students are often fantastic composers too), or use a few seconds of someone else's recording, legal under fair use.

Recording a podcast is easy. You will need a computer, Mac or PC, and a microphone. There are good quality USB microphones available for under \$50. Alternatively, you could use a digital voice recorder, or add a voice-recording microphone and software to your iPod. On a Mac, use Garage Band (which comes free with every Mac) to record and edit your podcast; instructions are available on the Apple website. On a PC, use no-cost Audacity software (www.audacity.sourceforge.net) for recording. Both software packages are easy to use. Find a quiet recording spot;

Selected Classical Podcast Links

Latin:

"Nuntii Latini" (<http://yle.fi/radiosoitin/podcast.php?channel=35&program=392>).

Henry Bender's "Vergil AP Podcast" (<http://vergil.hilltech.org/>).

"University of Kentucky Classics 102 Podcast" (<http://www.uky.edu/~mskrau2/Classics102.xml>).

"Latin & Greek: Listen and Learn." (<http://latinandgreek.blogspot.com/>).

Keller and Russell's *Learn to Read Latin* (K. Baratz et al. "Vocabulary for 'Learn to Read Latin'" (<http://www.haverford.edu/classics/audio/krlatin.xml>).

Chris Francese's "Latin Poetry Podcast" (<http://blog.dickinson.edu/?cat=815>).

Madeleine Henry's "Latin Stories" (<http://www.language.iastate.edu/latinPreview/unit00/07podcast.html>).

Greek:

"Classical Podcasts" (<http://www.haverford.edu/classics/audio/>).

Culture and History:

John A. Bruzas' "Ancient Voices and the Roman Revolution"

(<http://www.owlhaven.com/ancientvoices/ancientvoices.xml>).

John Hughes' "Classical Mythology" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XU_MmbtLOEg).

Bret Mulligan's "LATIN101a: The Late Republic." (<http://www.trueveo.com/show/LATIN101a:%20The%20Late%20Republic>).

Patrick Hunt's "Hannibal" (<http://www.patrickhunt.net/index.html>).

Lars Brownworth's "12 Byzantine Rulers: The History of the Byzantine Empire" (<http://www.12byzantinerrulers.com/>).

be cognizant of ambient noise like buzzing fluorescent lights and heating and air conditioning units, and be sure to turn off your computer speakers when you record, or you'll pick up the sound of your incoming e-mail. Experiment with your microphone for the best sound quality.

You will find that reading from a script is easier than speaking extemporaneously. When composing the script, keep your audience in mind. Short sentences and jargon-free vocabulary make better podcasts. This is not a place for your best scholarly prose. Speak slowly and clearly with normal inflection.

There are many websites devoted to podcast production, and even podcasts on how to make a podcast. A recent APA panel was devoted to producing and using podcasts, and you can hear the lectures themselves (<http://podcasting-apa2009.blogspot.com/>) and learn from those who have already produced academic podcasts.

Podcasts are not just the latest fad. They are easy to create, and, unlike textbooks, cost nothing for students, most of whom already own a computer or MP3 player. Podcasts can be used to reinforce students' knowledge as they do the regular work of a class. They have great potential to teach students more without overloading them with additional reading that they are unlikely to do.

Like all good pedagogical tools, podcasts can be shared with other teachers teaching similar courses. A particular podcast may not cover exactly what you would have taught in your own class, but your students are likely to benefit from someone else's presentation or interpretation of the material. I urge all teachers who create podcasts to share them via the iTunes Store (instructions are available at <http://www.apple.com/itunes/whatson/podcasts/creatorfaq.html>).

Finally, podcasts provide an avenue for professional classicists to share what we know with the general public at a time when people seem increasingly interested in the ancient world. As classicists, we can reach out to today's busy but tech-savvy classics enthusiasts in ways that were never possible before.

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Book Review: *Superheroes and Greek Tragedy*

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MacEwen then outlines three more phases in which the notion of the ancient hero progressively loses the positive effect that Heracles has in *Alcestis* (see Fig. 8); the hero's vision becomes more and more limited, and he is increasingly driven by forces outside of his control. In the second phase, roughly the outbreak of the plague at the start of the Peloponnesian War through the uneasy peace of Nicias (430-415 B.C.), Oedipus in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and Theseus and Heracles in Euripides' *Suppliants* and *Heracles*, respectively, cannot save their community (Theseus), their household (Heracles) or even themselves (Oedipus).

The third phase, coinciding with the cynical opportunism of Thucydides' Melian Dialogue in 415 until just before the oligarchic coup in 411, constricts the idea of heroism even further. In Euripides' *Trojan Women* and his *tyche* (chance) plays, such as *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, a world governed by *tyche* constantly reverses what one feels and creates a sense of helplessness. The hero's vision means merely recognizing people's status based on their manners and restoring them to their family, but not doing anything good for the community as a whole.

The last phase of the hero in Greek tragedy – the plays of the last decade after the oligarchic coup – reflects an even greater tone of despair. In plays like *Orestes*, *Philoctetes*, *Oedipus at Colonus* (OC) or *Iphigenia at Aulis* (IA), heroes do not save anyone, think only of themselves, are driven to act by *anagke* (necessity), and have only a desire to escape this world. In fact, in OC and IA, spectators are asked not to mourn for the protagonists.

One would assume that a book entitled *Superheroes and Greek Tragedy* would appeal to a wide range of readers who are curious about the definition of heroism and about the intersection of the heroes of Greek tragedy and Hollywood movies. And Chapter 2 offers these non-specialist readers a long excursus outlining developments in Greek history within which they can understand the transformation of Greek tragedy over the last half of the fifth century. But I think that the generally-educated person will be frustrated by this book. For example, sometimes Greek words are translated, but often they are not. Once the hero is defined

in Chapter 3, furthermore, MacEwen assumes

that the characteristics of a hero are well under-

stood and uses these terms again and again throughout the rest of the book. Yet the discussion in Chapter 3 is so long (130 pages) that many readers may lose the essence of the five-fold definition. While generally-educated readers may know many (but not all) of the films that are cited, they are even less likely to know the plots of each tragedy discussed. Some further guidance and summarizing of both films and tragedies would help these readers. Finally, after Chapter 3, the discussion of Hollywood films is limited to short allusions here or there rather than extended comparisons. The focus switches to Greek tragedy. A clearer understanding of the intended audience and a tighter structure would have resulted in a book read and discussed by more people both inside and outside the field of classics.

In short, this is certainly a book that makes us rethink our notions of heroism, that asks us to reflect on how Greek tragedy (and film) affects us at a subconscious emotional level, that encourages us to consider how our values may or may not parallel the values of fifth-century Athens, and that drives us to consider what the plays of a certain time period have in common. Although I disagree about her interpretations of particular plays, such as *Philoctetes*, MacEwen asks good questions and provokes us to reevaluate our ideas of heroism and Greek tragedy. Even if general readers may find the book daunting, I hope that those who teach Greek tragedy will find it as provocative as I have.

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Fig. 8. Wall painting of Heracles and Alcestis. Image source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alcestis-Catacomb.jpg>.

Ask A Classicist

Q How did students look up Greek and Latin vocabulary words before they had the *Liddell, Scott, Jones Lexicon*, the *Lewis and Short Latin Dictionary*, and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*?

A Once Greek and Latin students are past their first-year textbooks, in which they are provided with vernacular definitions of relevant Greek and Latin vocabulary, they turn to resources that provide them with a greater depth of information about the meaning of words. The most important works available are three: Liddell, Scott and Jones' (LSJ) Greek Lexicon is a British work, the first edition appearing in 1843. Lewis and Short's (L&S) Latin Dictionary (First edition 1879) was the work of American scholars: Charles Short was a professor at Columbia; Charlton Lewis was an attorney in New York City. The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (OLD), after appearing in parts, was first published as a single volume in 1982. Although all three first appeared in traditional book form, today students may also consult LSJ and L&S by connecting to the Perseus internet site (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>), utilizing their iPhones and iPods, or in CD format.

As far as Greek and Latin dictionaries go, LSJ, OLD, and L&S are relatively recent phenomena. All three are "based upon scientific principles": that is, not only do they provide vernacular equivalents of Greek and Latin terms and demonstrate each term's usage by quoting passages from a range of sources, they also explain the etymologies of words by listing, where possible, each word's Indo-European cognate and other data relevant to its derivation.

Composing a dictionary from scratch is a huge undertaking, requiring the careful perusal of ancient texts, the collecting of note-cards, the formatting of entries, and the consulting of authorities in historical linguistics. Of our classical dictionaries, only the OLD claims to be a work of wholly original lexicographical scholarship. Neither LSJ nor L&S were original works in this sense, but took as their basis previous dictionaries. In the case of LSJ, this earlier text was the Greek lexicon of Franz Passow (1786-1833), which was in turn based



Fig. 9.
Cornelius Schrevelius (1608-1661) was a medical doctor, as well as a classical scholar from the

Netherlands. Image source:
<http://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Datei:Cornelius-schrevelius.jpg&filetimestamp=20090413200410>.

upon the original dictionary of Johann Gottlob Schneider (1750-1822). L&S adapted and expanded E.A. Andrew's English translation of Wilhelm Freund's four-volume lexicon, published in Leipzig between 1834 and 1835.

The Greek and Latin lexica available to classics students of the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries were certainly less scientifically and linguistically endowed (the entire field of comparative Indo-European philology was barely getting underway at the end of the eighteenth century). In some respects, however, these older lexica prove more useful to the present-day Classics major willing to take a chance with his or her developing philological skills.

Cornelius Schrevelius (see Fig. 9) of Leiden first published his *Lexicon Manuale Graeco-Latinum et Latino-Graecum* in 1654. Providing Latin equivalents of Greek vocabulary and Greek equivalents of Latin vocabulary, this manual was for its time an instant success: it was the kind of text a student could carry in his pack or a teacher keep in the classroom, unlike the more prestigious but huge and expensive *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* of Henri Estienne (a work, however, still respected in the nineteenth century, when it underwent two new editions). Schrevelius' Greek-Latin Latin-Greek dictionary appeared in the United States in 1808, undergoing multiple reprints in New York and Boston (under the title *The Greek Lexicon of Schrevelius*) and clearly intended for the student market. Classics students interested in trying their hand at this non-Englished Greek lexicon may still do so: one can find old copies of Schrevelius on ebay and rare books internet sites. A delightful feature of this old lexicon is its *Breves Sententiae Graecae Latine Explicatae* ("Short Greek quotes

in Latin") chapter: here Greek gnomes and proverbs are provided with Latin equivalents and alphabetically arranged by themes (e.g. temperance, justice, labor, pain, hope, etc.): one can imagine the use such a wealth of quotations would provide a student composing a paper, a professor a lecture, or a pastor a sermon.

While in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Latin students working their way through the early stages of language acquisition had a variety of manuals featuring vernacular equivalents of Latin vocabulary, none of these more convenient works was as popular, when it came to serious philological work, or as successful as the Latin lexicon of Egidio Forcellini. This extraordinarily hard-working scholar was a Roman Catholic priest assigned to pastoral duties in the Venetian Alps. Forcellini's four-volume lexicon, *Lexicon totius latinitatis*, didn't appear until 1771, six years after the death of its creator. The work is still in print: my library's copy is of the fourth edition, printed in 1965 at Padua. A glance at any page of this beautiful work reveals that it can still compete with the new kids on the block, not, of course, because it reflects "scientific principles" but because it meets just about every need an advanced high-schooler or undergraduate can have: each Latin vocabulary entry is given a Latin definition and set of synonyms, followed by an equivalent in Italian, French, Spanish, German, and English. If the term has a Greek origin, Forcellini discusses the manner of its derivation from that language. Ample quotations from Classical, post-Classical, and Ecclesiastical authors are given in abundance. If the classical scholar has ever thought about what books he or she would want to take along to some desert island for a long stay without internet access, Forcellini's lexicon would have to be high on the list.

For a fascinating and very readable description of the romance of lexicography, see Simon Winchester's *The Meaning of Everything: the Story of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press 2003). Thumbnail sketches of eighteenth and nineteenth century authors of our familiar classical dictionaries can be found in the second and third volumes of J.E. Sandys' *History of Classical Scholarship*, available for downloading on the Internet Archive (<http://www.archive.org>).

METABOLIZING THE *METAMORPHOSES* OF OVID

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When I first read this story, I was struck by how modern it is, by the poignancy of the abused woman who adopts an impervious masculinized self as a form of protection against the world, and by the fear of the unknown that can lead to mob violence. I thought of the horrible ending of the film *Boys Don't Cry* and the persecution suffered by the Hilary Swank character. I painted 'Caenis/Caeneus,' in which I envisioned Caenis shucking off her male cocoon/disguise as she transforms into the bird, a spirit liberated from her suffocated body (see Fig. 10).

That painting was included in the 'SeaChanges' exhibition, where it was seen by my son Abe Frank, a classics scholar and writer, who was inspired by my reimagining of this tale to send me his own original translation of Ovid's poem. His words brought out another aspect of the story: the militaristic posturing, the heedless destruction of the landscape, the ruin of war. In response I produced the seven pieces that made up a subsequent exhibition, 'Collateral Damage.' The centerpiece was 'Caenis: Wasteland,' in which Caenis is seen "buried beneath the monstrous body of trees" amid "... a desert of stumps and snapped-off trunks, a wasteland stretching shadowless across the sun-stained hills" (*Metamorphoses* 12.507-9, translation by Abraham Frank). Other aspects of the story appeared in the surrounding works, notably the Centaurs, which I saw as embodying a long tradition of soldiers, not just cavalry but a modern desert army, human from the waist up, tank from the waist down. As I painted Caenis drowning "in a tidal wave of trees," the news reports of Abu Ghraib and waterboarding gave the work new relevance.

Myths carry us beyond the familiar. *Metamorphoses* can be an expression of those moments of extreme emotion or passion in which we transcend our bodies, or when our being-in-the-world is altered in some irremediable fashion.

They also derive from a primitive notion, still present in many cultures and in the Western unconscious, that animals, plants, human, gods, rivers, and rocks are composed of the same substance in different forms. For my most recent exhibition, 'Mirar/Mirror: An Exchange of Gazes,' sponsored by the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, I spent last year researching indigenous myths of Venezuela, discovering stories that parallel those of the *Metamorphoses*. The title of the exhibition reflects some surprisingly similar themes that appear in both New World and Old World myths: the chaos and dangerous undifferentiation symbolized by doubling and reflection, the power of the gaze, the magic of the shape-shifter who eludes the eye, the possibility of rebirth through water. Even species matched, for example, the crimson-crested woodpecker: known as Picus to Ovid, Wanadi to the Indians of the Orinoco. These reflections between different ancient worlds are just some of the countless examples of the mystery and universality of myth. Yet it is not these specific examples that fascinate me the most, but the underlying concepts of shape-shifting and transformation. In my latest work, I find myself moving away from narratives, becoming increasingly focused on the process of transformation itself. In this I feel I have not abandoned Ovid, but remain true to his spirit and to the fluidity and seamlessness of his "perpetual poem."

Micheline Klagsbrun (mklagsbrun@gmail.com) studied art in Paris with Alfredo Echeverria and at the Corcoran with Bill Newman. She has exhibited widely, and is in private collections nationally as well as in Europe and the Middle East. Before devoting herself full-time to art, she was a clinical psychologist. For many years she co-chaired the Forum for the Psychoanalytic Study of Film, edited the journal Projections and was a mentor at the Corcoran School of Art. She is co-founder and President of CrossCurrents Foundation (founded in 2006) which as part of its mission sponsors art to promote social justice.

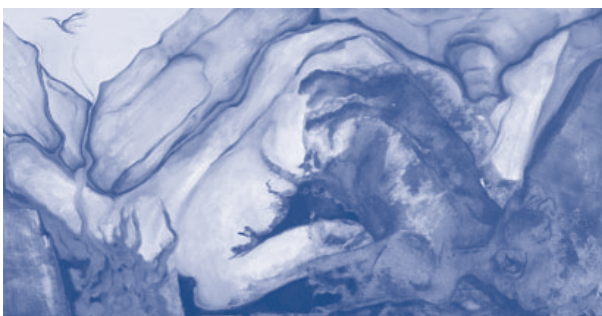


Fig. 10. Caenis/Caeneus begins the process of transformation.

Capital Campaign News

The APA's **Gatekeeper to Gateway Campaign** will establish an Endowment for Classics Research and Teaching and obtain the gifts necessary to receive \$650,000 offered in an NEH Challenge Grant. The Association is undertaking this Campaign to ensure that its members will have the scholarly and pedagogical resources they need to do their work for decades to come. The Campaign also shares with a wider public the excitement and commitment that APA members have for their subjects.

- The Association has received over \$1.4 million in pledges from over 350 donors and has claimed \$460,000 of the \$650,000 available from the NEH Challenge Grant.
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THE ART OF MEDICINE AND THE LOWLY FOOT: TREATING ACHES, SPRAINS, AND FRACTURES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

By Georgia Irby-Massie

“Because of the water, everyone in Troezen experiences foot maladies.”
Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 31.11

With 26 bones, 33 joints, over 100 muscles, tendons, ligaments, and a delicately balanced system of nerves, the human foot is a mechanical marvel. No less than we, Greek physicians were concerned with what could so easily go wrong with the foot. Consequently, the anatomy and pathology of the foot received attention in most Greek medical treatises, organized systematically, *a capite ad calcem*, beginning with the head and methodically working down the body to the feet (see Fig. 11).

From the Hippocratics onward, hands and feet were considered analogous in construction and purpose, as instruments of prehension. Just as concavity and variety of articulations allow the hands to clasp objects of every shape easily, so human feet, similarly flexible and concave, “can stand firmly in every sort of place” (Galen, *On the Usefulness of the Parts* 3.5). The human foot “is specially suitable for an intelligent animal” (Galen 3.4), and the anatomy of both leg and foot contributes to practicing *technae* (technical skills) – building, scrambling up yardarms, blacksmithing, etc. Round, hard feet (hooves) might render our feet swifter and less liable to injury, but the elongate, broad, soft character of the human foot, divided into toes, is suitable for walking on a variety of surfaces. Even softness is advantageous, since sandals, which protect feet like “solid hooves,” exist for every situation, tattered footwear is easily replaced, and it is occasionally better to go barefoot. The foot’s length and breadth help support the bipedal body when standing, walking, and running. Even the humble toes are useful in maintaining balance. Galen observes that frostbite victims who have lost toes might be able to walk with difficulty on smooth ground but they can never walk over rough terrain (3.5).

Although the complex and flexible design of both hands and feet contribute to intelligence in humans, this same complexity renders the foot prone to mishaps, and Greek physicians

describe treatments for many common podiatric complaints, including sore and swollen (or gouty) feet, callused and cracked feet, sprains, and dislocations.

Rubs and plasters for achy feet were compounded from ingredients chosen for their perceived medicinal properties. Amarantos the Grammarian (first century B.C.) recommends a sore foot remedy that employs thirty-two ingredients including, analgesics (frankincense; Fig. 12), astringents (gentian), anti-inflammatories (butcher’s broom, St. John’s wort), and warming botanicals (yellow iris, cardamom, eryngo, ginger: Galen *About Remedies* 2.17 [14.208-209 Kuhn]). Celsus preserves a twenty-one ingredient emollient attributed to Andreas (third century B.C.), recommended for relieving pain of all kinds, including achy joints and painful feet (*pedibus dolentibus*: 5.18.7). Pliny reports simpler remedies for sore feet: snails ingested as an analgesic drink (30.77); ashed remains of burnt hen or pigeon dung, presumably rubbed on the sores (30.80); plasters of cypress leaves pounded with soft bread and Aminean wine (a northern Italian variety described by Cato and recommended for a variety of health complaints including kidney stones) for sores on the feet (24.15); and elm leaves crushed and mixed in water as a plaster for swollen feet (24.49).

Clement of Alexandria (third century A.D.) commends the beneficial effects of ointments for the feet according to Christian ethics: “Rubbing the feet with warming or cooling unguents is practiced because of its beneficial effects” (*The Schoolmaster* 2.8). According to Clement, ointments applied for practical reasons do not *per se* provoke passion since the art of healing is divinely manifested (early Christians strove to avoid pleasure for its own sake):

unguents have been given manifestly for utility, not for voluptuousness. For we are by no means to care for the exciting properties of unguents, but to choose what is useful in them, since God permitted the production of (soothing) unguents for the mitigation of men’s pains. (*The Schoolmaster* 2.8)



Fig. 11. The health of the foot was of great interest to the Greeks and Romans. This colossal foot is part of the remains of a statue of Constantine. Used according to GNU Free Documentation License. Image source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Foot_of_colossal_statue_of_Constantine_1.jpg.

Clement even employs etymological wordplay to connect the Christian god to analgesic oils: “the oil (*ἔλαιον*) is the Lord Himself, from whom comes the mercy (*ἐλεος*) which reaches us” (*The Schoolmaster* 2.8). Oils used medicinally to rub achy feet are agents of the Christian god whose mercy alleviates pain in the feet.

For cracked and callused skin on the feet several treatments are recorded. The pharmaceutical encyclopedist Dioscurides (first century A.D.) includes healing cracked skin (*ῥαγάδες*) on the feet as among the medicinal effects of raw pitch (1.72.2), chaste-tree (1.103.3), and common polypody, a “many footed” fern whose very name may have recommended it as an effective treatment for foot complaints (4.186). To thin calluses on the soles of the feet, Dioscurides suggests a poultice of anti-inflammatory wheat (2.85.2). The Roman medical encyclopedist Celsus (first century A.D.) endorses a soothing, active, and repressant (*lene, vehemens, reprimens*) plaster compounded from copper scales, lead heated but not melted (calcined), cadmia (zinc oxide), and

wax, with “enough rose-oil” to yield a soft consistency (5.28.5). For a particular strain of the skin infection *impetigo* – which attacks the nails, renders the skin on the feet hard, chapped, white, and scaly, and is altogether “quite incurable” (fungus?) – Celsus records two therapies based on a treatment for scabies and compounded from lupin meal, nitron, liquid pitch, liquid resin, and vinegar (5.28.16-7). Pliny cites numerous outlandish remedies: pastes of pitch and ashes of burnt scorpion shells for cracked and abscessed feet (24.39, 32.34); green lizard’s blood for chafed feet (30.80); raw oysters for toes aggravated by cold or humidity (chilblains: 32.65); and for corns (*clavi pedum*), an application of mule’s urine, sheep’s dung, green lizard’s blood, earth worms, or spotted lizard’s heads (30.80).

Medical treatises preserve numerous gout-therapies, likely because gout was considered a disease of affluence. Rich diets and lack of exercise among the Roman elite contributed to the accretion of uric acid around the joints, especially the ankles. This in turn resulted in painful swelling. *Ποδαγρᾶν* (*podagran*, “to suffer from gout”) derived from the Greek noun for foot (*πούς*, *podós*) further emphasizes the disease’s virulence on the feet. Gout afflicted Sulla who visited the hot springs “suited to the cure of diseases” in Euboea (Strabo *Geography* 10.1.9; Strabo does not here specify gout), as well as Agrippa, who soaked his painfully swollen gouty feet in hot vinegar (Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 23.58). Neither author indicates whether or to what degree the cures worked. Dioscurides’ litany of substances to allay the symptoms of gout include common and exotic ingredients to relieve pain (cardamom: 1.15.2; Fig. 13), reduce swelling (willow: 1.104; land snails: 2.9.2; gillyflower: 3.123; opium poppy: 4.64.4; henbane: 4.68.4), draw fluids away from the joints (cyclamen: 2.164.3), or warm the affected area (pennyroyal: 3.31.2; Fig. 14). Jacob Pschrestus, “The Cooler,” who prescribed cold baths for numerous diseases (fifth century A.D.), significantly employed autumn crocus, the source of *colchicine*, the fundamental drug of modern gout-therapy (Scarborough *Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural*



Fig. 12. Frankincense comes from the *Boswellia scara* plant.

Scientists, edd. Keyser and Irby-Massie, 2008: 429-30).

Sprains, dislocations, and fractures of the feet were treated similarly with plasters, compresses, and bandages, secured tightly, with dressings replaced on the third day. Patients were urged to report their bandage’s relative slackness or tautness. Those who disregarded medical advice failed to recover fully.



Footcare has changed little from the techniques used in the ancient world.

Often the pain puts (some patients) in mind of the injury; and deservedly, for the feet sustain the weight of the whole body. When they walk about before they are whole, the joints which have been dislocated are cured incompletely; hence, while walking about, they have pains in the leg from time to time. (*Hippocratic Fractures* 9)

One Hippocratic author graphically recounts sprains resulting from violent jumping (*Fractures* 11): “the bones are separated, and the veins pour forth their contents, owing to the contusion of the flesh surrounding the bone, and swelling and much pain ensue.” The relatively large heel bone extends beyond the line of the leg, connects with important veins and tendons, and joins the leg’s back tendon to the foot. The injury should be treated carefully with compresses and “particularly good

and appropriate” bandages applied by an experienced bandager. A poor bandaging job may result in gangrene, “an impediment for life.” Meticulously explicated is the procedure for wrapping a severely sprained ankle (*Fractures* 11):

making many turns of the bandage around the heel, sometimes carrying it to the edge of the foot, sometimes to the middle, and sometimes around the leg; and, in addition, all the surrounding parts are to be bandaged in this direction and that. . . and the compression should not be too tight, but we should use many bandages, and it is better also to administer hellebore the same day or the next; and the bandages should be removed on the third day and reapplied.

Further, the foot should be kept elevated “generally raised a little higher than the rest of the body.” The regimen has remained unchanged for 2,500 years. Dioscurides cites narcissus root, crushed with honey and applied topically, explicitly to treat sprained ankles (*στέμματα σφυρῶν*: 4.158.2) but elsewhere catalogues remedies for sprains in general: analgesic *calamus* (1.85); anti-inflammatory walnuts plastered with honey (1.25.1); pungent, warming (and aphrodisiac) red Purse tassels (*muscaria comosum*, a variety of grape hyacinth) from Libya (2.170.1); cooling fleawort (4.69.2); diuretic black bryony (*tamus communis* L., a poisonous climbing woodland plant; 4.183.2).

Dislocations and fractures were potentially lethal, and setting them was especially troublesome in the case of fingers, toes, feet, and hands (Celsus 8.25). The anonymous author of Hippocratic *Joints* blithely declares: “if the leg is dislocated and projects through at the ankle, the patient usually dies; don’t bother reducing the lesion. Few patients last more than seven days, and they die from spasm (tetanus). Gangrene might set in” (*Joints* 63).

The Hippocratic method of correcting congenital club-feet in young children resembled their procedure for setting dislocations. With pressure and counter-pressure applied to the bones, the feet were manually realigned and then dressed with cerate (with a consistency between an ointment

Fig. 13. Cardamom was one of a number of plants used by the Greeks and Romans to reduce pain.



Fig. 14. Pennyroyal is a member of the mint family.

Book Review: *Etruscan Myths*

By Samantha Toman

Larissa Bonfante and Judith Swaddling. *Etruscan Myths*. London: The British Museum Press, and Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2006. Pp. 80. Paper. \$14.95. ISBN 978-0292706065.

Larissa Bonfante and Judith Swaddling's *Etruscan Myths* comprises part of the *Legendary Past* series co-published by the British Museum and the University of Texas Press. There are currently a dozen texts in this series, designed to introduce world mythologies through art to the non-specialist reader.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Bonfante and Swaddling's slim volume is its title – a cursory perusal of the book, with every page displaying works of art largely Etruscan in origin or inspiration, may lead one to believe that the book is, in fact, a survey of Etruscan art. Yet the title is no misnomer, for while the book provides an ample serving of Etruscan art and critical artistic analysis within its 80 pages, the analysis itself is directed toward a different, more challenging task: as no Etruscan mythological literature is extant, the wealth of Etruscan art itself must be read as a text. Etruscan mirrors, tomb-frescoes, and sarcophagi feature mythic characters and motifs (see Fig. 15), revealing what these mysterious people, who flourished during the time of classical Greek civilization in an area “in the centre of a world in rapid evolution” (7), revered most.

Etruscan Myths is cleanly structured and cleanly written, opening with a brief historical overview followed by a discussion of the sources which form the bulk of our knowledge about a civilization considered to have been “extremely literate” (8), of such reputation and artistic influence that neighboring, non-Etruscan city-states assimilated much of its art and culture (became “Etruscanized”). The Etruscans themselves delved into Greek lore, adapting the Greek alphabet around 700 B.C. along with entire cycles of Greek mythology and the Greek pantheon (8). Successive chapters treat topics in the Etruscans' mythology: the Trojan War, Theban Cycle, depictions of the Underworld and heroes such as Hercules and Perseus echo strongly the Greek

tradition. Equal attention is given the distinctly Etruscan concepts of blood sacrifice, prophecy, and the Evil Eye. The authors' discussion centers around particular pieces of art as vehicles of myth, generally accompanied by a photograph or drawing to help the reader follow along. This format makes the text enjoyable to read as the authors, progressing from piece to piece, examine material details in the art objects while providing critical commentary on the mythological content. The balance of visuals and text lends the book a lightweight, easy-reading feel suitable to a work designed to introduce interested amateurs to this burgeoning field.

The reader will find the authors' prose concise and informative. A general familiarity with the classical world is assumed. The distinctively Etruscan interpretation of well-known Greek figures and stories (briefly recounted to refresh the memory of the reader where such lore is initially referenced) will prove intriguing. One finds in Etruscan artistic styling a surprising departure from the traditional Greek depiction of figures such as the Minotaur, limned on an Etruscan wine cup as a horned, cow-eared infant nursing at the breast of Pasiphae

Fig. 15. This sarcophagus features the myth of the beginning of the Trojan War: Paris sits on the ship on which Helen is being led. Second century B.C., Volterra. Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum. Credits: Ann Raia, 2006. Image source: http://www.vroma.org/images/raia_images/etruscan_sarcophagus.jpg.



(44). Such reinterpretations of Greek mythological subjects suggest the imaginative, inventive capacity of the Etruscan people to recycle an old *topos* in a new value-mold: small practical details (such as the rendering of the Trojan Horse on the back of a bronze mirror, coming alive even while he is being constructed, for in the image his feet must be tethered [fig. 27]) or complete re-imaginings of figures (such as the baby Minotaur) paint new meaning into an old tale. Also notable is the frequency of scenes from Greek legends on quotidian objects, such as the backs of Etruscan women's mirrors (see Fig. 16), objects used regularly in daily life and which accompanied their owners to the grave (9). Even darker themes such as death and the Underworld (with which the Etruscans, like the ancient Egyptians, seem to have been greatly preoccupied), while appearing largely in tomb art, still grace the backs of many a bronze mirror. The Theban cycle, for example, is represented mostly by images of unnatural death: Polynices and Eteocles committing simultaneous fratricide (fig. 9, p. 22), Tydeus gnawing on the head of Melanippus who is depicted as still living (fig. 10, p. 23), Capaneus falling headfirst from the walls of Thebes after being struck by Zeus' thunderbolt (fig. 12, p. 24). Apotropaic images abound as well, disguised sometimes in the form of erotic scenes, yet able to be interpreted as such due to their presence on votive objects and sarcophagi. The link between eroticism and magic is one that the authors touch on briefly, suggesting that “the shock effect of certain images could serve to ward off evil, and fulfilled a specific ‘ritual’ or psychological function in the context of religious and funerary art and space” (70).

Indeed, the complexity of Etruscan culture compels contextual “spaces” and the art that occupies them to bleed together, and the unique artistic stylings attributed to them stuck in Italy's aesthetic consciousness long after the Romans assimilated Etruria and the Etruscan kings. In their eighth chapter, for example, Bonfante and Swaddling explore some of Rome's adaptations of Etruscan culture (and, of course, Greek culture *through* the Etruscans), not only in their depictions of their own Roman deities such as Venus Genetrix but in some of the myths of early Rome. This chapter also includes



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continued from page 13

and a plaster) and bandages, which acted like casts or braces to restore the bones to proper alignment (*On Joints* 62). Moulds, cerates of resin, lard, and yellow wax, and bandages or sandals fitted with sheets of lead were also employed to ease the bones of the feet back into natural arrangement (Hippocratic *Instruments of Reduction* 32).

Although treatments for sandal-chafed feet are noted (ashes of old shoes: Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 30.80) and although Greco-Roman sandals provided no arch-support, the open-weave and ventilating nature of ancient footwear helped protect against infections such as athlete's foot and trench foot. Bunions may also have been less common because ancient footwear was flat-heeled and open-toed. The textual evidence is vague on these and other questions. How, for example, did Roman soldiers, who marched long distances with heavy packs, treat fallen arches? Even in his guidelines for military medicine (*Epitome of Military Science* 3.2), the fifth century A.D. writer Vegetius is silent. Nonetheless, concern with universal and timeless complaints about feet is clear. Sore feet, calluses, swelling, sprains, and fractures were treated with emollients intended to restore humoral balance (removing excess liquid, restoring heat), splints, compresses, bandages, and medicated wraps.

Remedies focused on treatment rather than prevention, and they varied widely, ranging from simple to complex, from sensible (elevation of sprained ankles) and proven (vinegar soaks) to magical (ashes of old shoes). Greek physicians treated symptoms rather than causes. Thus, while Pliny the Elder may have observed that foot maladies were caused by the water at Troezen (on the northeastern edge of the Peloponnese), he does not explain how these ailments occurred, whether by drinking the water or wading in it, nor does he expound upon which foot ailments are particularly noted at Troezen, nor does he comment on the real or imagined potency of cures listed throughout his encyclopedia. Instead, Greek medical writers and encyclopedists tantalize the modern reader with *seriatim* cocktails compounded with ingredients from the common to the

bizarre for soothing achy feet or assuaging swollen ankles, but they rarely remark on the efficacy or popularity of a specific treatment. Greek medicine, nonetheless, was deeply informed by theory and observation, and foot therapies reflected both approaches. Humoral theory dominated gout therapy and treatment of skin complaints. Meticulous knowledge of anatomy governed the rehabilitation of sprained, fractured, or broken feet and ankles. Remarkably, little has changed regarding attitudes about feet and regimens of foot care: modern medicine employs rubs, wraps, and splints strongly resembling those found in the pages of Hippocrates and Galen; and these hard working appendages usually receive little attention until something goes awry.

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Fig. 16. Etruscans decorated the backs of mirrors with many images. This Etruscan mirror features Hercules and Athena on the reverse. Madrid, Archaeological Museum. Credits: Barbara McManus, 1985. Images source: http://www.vroma.org/images/mcmanus_images/herc_mirror.jpg.

an intriguing examination of echoes of Etruscan art in Renaissance artwork. The authors suggest, for example, that one can trace Etruscan mythic concepts in the work of such later artists as Michelangelo (1475-1564) and Signorelli (1445-1523).

An appendix detailing the Etruscan pantheon arranged according to the gods' Etruscan names and Greek equivalents (if these exist), is included. Supplied with additional illustrations, this useful addition summarizes what is known of each deity from Greek sources, then provides data on his or her Etruscan persona along with references to the places in the text where the deity is depicted. A tabulated chart of gods' names follows: the Etruscan, Greek and English versions of Latin divine names. The authors have also provided a brief "Suggestions for Further Reading" containing some excellent introductory studies for the interested reader. A thorough index concludes this very well-written and informative text.

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GREEK AND ROMAN KISSING: OCCASIONS, PROTOCOLS, METHODS, AND MISTAKES

By Donald Lateiner

Introduction. Touching another body or thing with the lips, by pressure, suction, shaping, or bite, conveys a panoply of (nonverbal) messages. It sends physical, emotional, social, and even political information. Indeed, the kiss has more often conveyed some deference than equality. Darwin noted (*Expression of the Emotions*, 1872) that not all cultures kiss. When did ancient Greeks and Romans kiss, and how did their oscular etiquettes differ? Occasions for kissing divide into erotic, familial, social, especially deferential.

‘Mouth’ identifies an organ of many parts: lips, tongue, teeth, saliva, blood, nerves, and several sensitive mucous membranes. (One hundred fifty facial muscles lie beneath the surfaces that participate in kissing.) The mouth is a complicated and dangerous organ. A host of other nonverbal behaviors require the mouth, such as smiling and frowning. The lips pout, pucker, and purse in exchanges that are not only visual, but also aural, olfactory, and tactile. The entry site of tastes, touch, and odors, the versatile lips also expedite vocal and salivary expulsions. The Romans had a mouth fixation; further, few acquaintances met their oral ideals. Romans focus praise and blame on the mouth: *os purum* (a clean mouth) and *os impurum* (a polluted mouth; cf. A. Corbeille, *Controlling Laughter*, 1996).

The data. ‘Classical Kissing’ sketches one thousand years of literary texts (prose and poetry, polite and obscene) and visual images (vase- and wall-painting, sculpture and metal-work). It largely reports the leisured elite’s behaviors and the products that that elite enjoyed (cf. W. Kroll’s survey, “Kuss,” *Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, Real Encyclopaedie Suppl.* 5 [1931] 511-20.) Two millennia of self-censorship and violent religious destruction of the visual evidence for kissing skew the record, but the paucity of images of lips sharing a kiss still surprises. The absence arises partly from ancient artists’ technique: one encounters fewer close-up focus moments on ancient Attic pots and Pompeian frescoes than in “the head shots” of art and cinema today.

Greeks. The love-kiss does not appear in Homer. The salutation-kiss was not rare in ancient Greece, but the Greeks reserved it for close relatives and dearest friends. The mastery of

proper procedures for “greeting up or down” requires intense education. The part of the body osculated reflects the hierarchies of greeting in welcome and in parting – kissing rights. The reticent Greek might kiss the cheek or head of an equal, but rarely his lips. Inferiors might kiss their betters on head and hands. Odysseus’ slaves kiss the hero’s hands, shoulders, and head, when they recognize their home-come master. These kisses express respect – even pseudo-relation – and Odysseus offers mutual affection (Homer *Odyssey* 21.223-5, 24.478). Eumaeus the swineherd, a foster-father, kisses Telemachus’ eyes, just as Odysseus’ grandmother had kissed his eyes (16.15, 19.417). A Pompeian fresco (Naples Museum) represents the gratitude of children, whom the hero Theseus had saved from the Minotaur’s snacking, by their kissing the hero’s hand. The freshly dead receive a farewell kiss expressing an affection that sometimes hoped for a transfer of the soul or *spiritus* (Euripides *Medea* 1207; Vergil *Aeneid* 4.684 [riffing on *Medea* in Apollonius *Argonautica*: 3.150]; Heliodorus *Ethiopian Story* 2.8).

Barbarian osculation was equally nuanced. Herodotus reports in his Persian ethnography (1.134) that Persian etiquette demands that one kiss an equal on the mouth, an inferior on the cheek, but the vastly superior person expects the inferior to prostrate himself and send a respectfully remote kiss. This self-subordinating posture constituted court ceremony in the ancient Near East. Ceremonial *pros-kunesis* (usually translated “kneeling before”) elsewhere consisted of a lesser abasement, “blowing a kiss toward.” Remote, deferential kissing, seen on Persepolis reliefs (Darius relief, Teheran Museum), co-exists with kowtow prostration (Shalmaneser relief, British Museum, 7.13.3, 8.118.4). The *Histories’* inclusion of barbarian kissing protocols indicates that Herodotus found Persian habits noteworthy and suggests that Greeks disapproved. Egyptians, however, do not kiss Greeks on the mouth, because the former reverence the cow, while the latter eat beef. Touching the mouth of such carnivores would pollute Egyptians (2.41.3). A subject might kiss the foot of a Persian shah or Ethiopian king in reverence, or at least in prudent deference (Heliodorus 10.6). Numidian kings kissed no one at all,

because royalty was too exalted (Valerius Maximus *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 2.6, 17).

Kissing gestures of affection can extend to a pet, or even something inanimate, such as a bow (Sophocles *Philoctetes* 656-7) or the land. After Odysseus returns to Ithaca after twenty years, Athena persuades him that he is truly home. Once convinced, he kisses his native earth (13.354), as do several tragic heroes (Philoctetes in *Phil.* 533, 1408; Theseus in *Oedipus at Colonos* 1654). American soldiers returning from danger have expressed their pleasure similarly (*New York Times*, p.1: 3 November 2007).

A less familiar kissing protocol – the suppliant’s kiss – appears when father Priam kisses the hands of his son’s killer (Homer *Iliad* 24.506), his enemy Achilles. His kiss supplicates this ferocious enemy for the corpse’s honorable release. His kiss and kneeling position express extreme but not redundant deference.

The Greek comic playwright Aristophanes names many exotic, lascivious kisses. Specified kisses include the “Spread-outer,” the “Doorbolt,” the “Doorhinge,” the “Weaver,” the “Potkiss” or *Chutra*, and the puzzling “Limper” (J. Henderson, *Maculate Muse*, 1991 2nd ed.). Two-dimensional Greek arts show few erotic kisses. Red-figured pots present two males kissing, the paederastic bonding of aristocratic Athenians, a bearded lover and beardless beloved (Louvre). A fifth-century Athenian tombstone commemorates a young girl kissing her pet birds (Metropolitan Museum). A red-figured vase shows a bird kissing, at least pecking, an ithyphallic herm (Berlin). Many images show sympotic orgies advanced far beyond kisses.

Romans. The Romans perhaps kissed more, and worried more about their kisses, than the reserved Greeks. The Latin lexicographers catalogued and distinguished with incorrect ingenuity three Latin words for kiss: *osculum*, *basium*, and *savium* (Philippe Moreau, *Revue de Philologie* 1978: 87-97; Isidore *Dictionary of Synonyms* 1.398). The various gradations offer more than a “distinction without a difference,” but the evidence eludes their prissy pigeonholes. The allegedly puritanical Cato joked that returning Romans should kiss their wives – a primitive form of

'breathalyzer' (Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 24.13; Plutarch *Roman Questions* 6). Social kissing became more common by Cicero's day (Catullus 79.4; Cicero *Letters to Family and Friends* 1.9.10). The adult Caesar openly kissed his mother farewell when departing for the elections for Pontifex Maximus (Suetonius *Caesar* 13). The archaic Romans otherwise disapproved of kissing one's wife or daughter before others – a point that surprised later ancient Greek and Roman writers.

Roman poets present erotic kisses between both heterosexual and homosexual couples. Catullus portrays both his girlfriend Lesbia (5, 7) and his boyfriend Juventius (99) as stingy with their kisses. This complaint is part of the needy, sexually frustrated erotic elegiac, not the aggressive and abusive elegiac tradition. Lucretius celebrates the familial *oscula* of children greeting homecoming fathers (*On the Nature of the Universe* 3.895). Vergil has Jupiter smilingly reassure his impatient daughter Venus with a kiss (*Aeneid* 1.253-5), has Aeneas kiss his son Ascanius (12.434), and has Venus command Cupid to incline hungry Dido to kiss that motherless child while obsessing over his father (1.687, cf. 1.718). Ovid imagines welcome familial, funereal, friendly, and ritual-religious examples but more frequently explores the erotic ones (e.g., *Loves* 1.4.39; *Art of Love* 1.424, 663; *Calendars* 2.714-19; *Metamorphoses* 2.357, 3.24, 4.75, 10.256, 13.420, 14.658; *Sad Poems* 1.3.58, 3.5.16).

One hears less, however, about pleasant Roman kisses than about the dark side, the dubious slips of Roman lips. Satirical texts abuse other men's visible, facial mucous membranes for telltale signs of impure activities. Impure lips had touched other delicate but (almost) unmentionable human passages. Liminal orifices (e.g., nostrils, ears) and visible mucous membranes (e.g., lips) may have been biologically selected for trapping germs (pathogens) and attracting mates, but they also anchor biting Latin humor and polluting invective. Catullus compares Aemilius' foul openings, his mouth to his anus (*os/culus*), before he launches his really offensive obscenity. He compares the object of this invective – Aemilius' mouth – to the vagina of a pissing mule in heat (97.5-8: *in aestu meientis mulae cunnus*; see also poems 98-9).

Reports of social deference greetings by kiss increase in the early empire. The philosopher Seneca, Nero's tutor, mentions this haptic or tactile custom of greeting by the lips as unfortunately

common (*Dialogues* 4.24.1; *Epistles* 75.3). (Recall that mouthwash and the toothbrush were yet rare.) Juvenal (6.51) and Martial invert the amicable kiss's meaning and intention. Martial invokes these kissers' imagined contacts with the vagina, or penis, and/or anus of countless third parties. He pities a friend, a man absent from Rome on business for fifteen years (12.59). This friend must now endure his many neighbors' kisses. These render his return home a gross mistake. He will have to kiss a hairy farmer, the fuller dealing in urine, the cobbler, the man afflicted with "barber's itch" or *mentagra* (an inflammation of the skin in the beard area), and the fellator and the cunnilinctor 'fresh' from their tasks. Martial wrote sixty epigrams mentioning oral sex, and the content of none of them fails to insult the mouther, the polluted lips of the object of Martial's ire.

Superiors bestowed kisses on inferiors, emperors on favored subjects, and patrons on clients – kissing down (Suetonius *Tiberius* 10, *Otho* 6; Martial *Epigrams* 8.44, 11.98, 12.29). The emperor Tiberius allegedly promoted a law prohibiting daily kisses among mere acquaintances (Suetonius *Tiberius* 34), although his motive is unrecorded. The father of Vitellius begged to hold the shoe of Messalina, the Emperor Claudius' wife. The favor-seeker fondled and would occasionally kiss the soiled object (Suetonius *Vitellius* 2) – kissing up – if one believes Suetonius. (J. Hall, *Maia* 1998, analyzes Roman deference greetings.) In Claudius' reign (41-54 A.D.), an outbreak of *mentagra parasitica* struck the Roman male upper classes. This version of a contagious ringworm disease, *trichophytosis barbae*, is spread by *Trichophyton tonsurans*, a common dermatophyte and an anthropophilic fungus that infects human beards. *Mentagra*, extremely disfiguring, starts from the chin and produces pustules and papules (Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 26.2). The Romans did not know how this disease spread, but they guessed. Martial recommends applying plasters and oily salves to the face, both to treat the disease and, for the healthy, to discourage (10.22) promiscuous kissers.

Sexual slanders circulated in all media and over the slippery Roman social ladder. Cicero called Rome "Abuse City" (*maledica civitas*; *For Caelius* 38). Oral-genital contact permeates Latin humiliation and invective. Petronius' *Satyricon* exhibits many slobbery and unwelcome kisses (e.g., 23, 24, 67, 74: Quartilla's catamite, Fortunata and Scintilla, Trimalchio's handsome servant). The cheapening of affection-

ate gestures characterizes the decline of civilized behavior. Apuleius' novel contains an unexpected spectrum of kisses (e.g., *Metamorphoses* 2.6, 4.26, 5.23, 8.29, 10.21: Photis' sexy kisses, Charite's kiss of the crone's hand, Psyche's lasciviously kissing Cupid, the catamite's slobbering over their captive peasant, the lady and the ass Lucius).

Visual images of ancient Roman kissing rarely offer face-to-face positions. Such postures for kissing obscure more personality, faces and other organs, than they reveal (cf. J. Clark, *Looking at Love-making*, 1998, e.g., on frescoes and mirror-backs). Genital penetration from the rear or a woman sitting atop a reclining man, however, allows good glimpses of many sexually stimulating actions other than kissing.

Kisses bestowed on tangible objects – sacred images or secular symbols – convey reverential deference. Some ceremonies expect worshippers to kiss divine images, for example, kissing statues of gods and heroes, e.g., Sicilian Heracles (Cicero *Verrine Orations* 4.94; Plutarch *Sulla* 29.11, Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 11.17). Similarly, certain Christians express veneration on Good Friday by kissing the wounds or foot of images of Jesus. (This paper cannot address ancient Hebrew and early Christian kisses of love, greeting, and betrayal, e.g., Judas' kiss ['of death'].)

Conclusion. Philematologists usually privilege the erotic kiss. Certainly advertisers do. The parental-infantile, asymmetric kiss may anticipate the two-way erotic forms, as Freud suggested. Both these intimate kisses may antedate the more metaphoric social kisses of salutation, respect, and reconciliation, but those latter signals of polite hierarchy are the most frequently recorded and arguably the most important. Ceremonial kisses in the oscular economy convey nuances of status. The charlatan cult-founder Alexander of Abonuteichus (second century A.D.) designated his enthusiasts as followers "within the kiss" (*Alexander, the False Prophet* 41). The origin of human kissing remains speculative among scientific colleagues, but few ancient or modern kisses have been entirely spontaneous. Every kisser must learn the calculus of his or her culture's oscular conventions.

Donald Lateiner, John R. Wright
Professor of Humanities-Classics at Ohio Wesleyan University (dglatein@owu.edu), was invited by the American Association for the Advancement of Science to participate in Chicago this past Valentine's Day on a panel examining "The Science of Kissing."

Did You Know...

The Philoctetes Project and a related project called **The Theater of War** use Sophocles' plays *Ajax* and *Philoctetes* to tackle the issues of health care, chronic illness, and the psychic wounds that result from war. Bryan Doerries, the translator and director of the readings, has brought these works of Sophocles to medical students, doctors, and now military men and women to help these different communities understand the needs of patients, both those who have returned from war and those who are suffering with chronic pain and long-term diseases. To learn more about these programs, go to <http://www.philoctetesproject.org>.

The debut EP of the band **Violet Vector and the Lovely Lovelies** contains three songs with classical content: "Can You Dig It?" is partly about archaeology; the title "Double Axe" refers to the type of Minoan

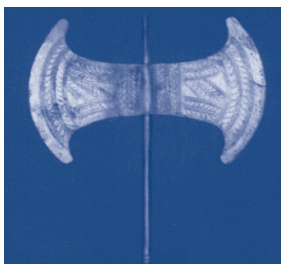


Fig. 17. This double axe comes from the Minoan culture.

Image source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Labrys.jpg>.

axe that appears on the EP's cover (see Fig. 17); and "Serva ad Manum" ("Slave at Hand") is told from the point of view of an academic secretary. (Lead singer and songwriter Amanda Brooks is a former secretary in the Classics Department at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.) The EP is available from Holidays for Quince Records (<http://www.holidaysforquince.com>) and from iTunes and Amazon.com.

Looking for truth in advertising? For those who prefer Latin, truth comes in the form of **Veritas Coffee**. Billing itself as the "true coffee," Veritas offers a wide variety of organic coffees on its website (<http://www.veritascoffee.com>). For those who prefer Greek, you have your choice of **Aletheia Consulting Inc.**, (<http://www.aletheia.com>) a technology consulting firm or **Aletheia Research and Management, Inc.**, (<http://www.aletheiaresearch.com/>) an investment advising company.

EURIPIDES ON THE MODERN STAGE. *THE WOMEN OF TROY*

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bruises of their treatment by the Greek soldiers. Mitchell humanizes the chorus by giving them names and by integrating them fully into the action of the play. By singing and dancing in accompaniment to Hecuba's sufferings, they partake of her misfortunes.

Even Helen is thrown about the stage, and a Greek soldier puts a hand over her mouth to prevent her from talking. It is perhaps the ultimate injustice that Helen, the cause of the war, will escape punishment because of Menelaus' lust for her. This happens despite all of the evidence that Hecuba provides against Helen in their debate. Menelaus' obsession with Helen is made patently obvious. He speaks of morality and chastity but then forcibly kisses Hecuba. He is a supercilious and cruel man who obviously enjoys his power over the women. Clearly no justice is to be expected from that quarter.

All that is left is to bury Astyanax's visibly torn and bloody small body, wrapped up in Hecuba's dress, in a cardboard box. There is no shield of Hector for Mitchell's Astyanax; instead he is given to Hecuba in a suitcase and he is taken out to be buried in a cardboard box. His mother Andromache has already been forcibly taken away, but she appears in a dream sequence heavily pregnant, a reminder of happier times and the promise of the bright future this little boy might have brought to Troy before the Greeks descended on the city. A horrific explosion ends the play as part of the set is destroyed and the women are hastily herded away. Troy is no more. A single chorus member escapes unnoticed and sits putting on her makeup, a lone survivor desperately trying to cling to her dignity among the ruins of the once proud city.

The dust of the explosion marking the end of Troy fell on the first rows of the audience, a tangible reminder that war and its consequences are everybody's business. Dusting it off afterwards made one feel complicit in the destruction of the city and the tragic fate of the women. The production was a memorable theatrical experience that reminded us that no matter how many times one has read the rich texts of Greek tragedy there is always another layer to discover in them, especially when experienced on the modern stage.

Even prior to the final explosion, Mitchell's version of Euripides'

masterpiece abounds with noise, fire, smoke and abrupt movement. The women run around the stage like maddened animals locked in a cage. The audience is never allowed to grow complacent; instead it is deliberately disconcerted by harsh noises, explosions and abrupt changes of mood as the consequences of war on the Trojan captives unfold before its eyes.

Mitchell succeeds in bringing Euripides to a modern audience.



The audience, which included three busloads of school students on the day I attended, was noisily appreciative of the director's efforts, audibly demonstrating the relevance of Greek tragedy as well as its pedagogical value. On this day Greek drama defied all negative predictions about its future. It is far from dead; it is in fact experiencing a renaissance on the modern stage because it addresses such fundamental issues as war and its consequences on the survivors, who are usually women and children. Relating Euripides' play to contemporary events is not a betrayal of the original but a necessary tool for making Euripides speak to a modern audience. Taylor and Mitchell understood this.

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Book Review: *Pots & Plays*

continued from page 1

twenty-one items, Sophocles only eight. Euripides is the clear winner with fifty-two (probably reflecting his immense popularity in the fourth century), the remaining twenty-eight perhaps related to otherwise unknown tragedies. Of the 104 non-Athenian specimens the vast majority (about 76) are Apulian, with the related Lucanian and then Sicilian, Paestan and Campanian far behind; that is, the south-eastern area of Italy produced many more than Sicily and the southwest coast of Italy. The time spread is c. 420 to c. 310 B.C.E. with only five pre-400 B.C.E. and the greatest number (fifty-eight by my count) coming in the quarter-century after 350 B.C.E.

Why were the grave deposits in the Greek West such a rich source of these pots? Drama, both serious and comic, was an art-form that crossed social boundaries. If children, slaves and – as I firmly believe – females could attend, it has to be considered the most “populist” of the ancient Greek arts. It spread westward when troupes of actors made their way there (and presumably elsewhere in the Mediterranean) and found appreciative audiences especially in Sicily (8 with n. 33: remains of twenty theaters there). That only nine have so far been discovered in Italy can perhaps be explained on the assumption that the actors’ troupes “probably set up their temporary stages and seating wherever the local city allowed” (10).

The biggest problem in a study of this kind, and one which Taplin faces head-on, is challenging the position of those who maintain that the scene in question is only generically mythographical and not connected with a dramatic performance. Taplin dubs these folk “iconocentrics” and their opponents, among whom he numbers himself, “philodramatists,” those who contend that the pot-painters have been influenced to a greater or less degree by a theatrical rendition of the story in question. He argues (rightly, in my opinion) that the picture does not have to be understood as reproducing a definite moment from a specific production of a particular drama, but that in more general terms a definite theatrical mounting “lies behind,” and hence “inspires” or “informs” or “enriches” the picture; “the interest for the viewer of some of the paintings in question is severely curtailed without a

particular tragic narrative to inform them” (25). Taplin suggests a variety of iconographic “signals” to alert the viewer that this is not just a story but a staged version of that story. The most persuasive seemed to me some details of costuming, elaborate detailing on robes and sleeves, or men wearing *cothurni* (high boots sometimes with ornate flaps), and structures that may have been carried over from the stage such as porticoes supported by slender pillars or arches painted in a “squiggly” manner to represent a cave or rocky outcrop. A few vases show tripods, elevated in the scene or on pillars, possibly marking a dramatic victory or dedication.

Not every reader will be convinced that Taplin has made an airtight case for all his examples. He uses an array of descriptions to mark degrees of certainty (or rather, uncertainty), the most frequent being “related to,” “closely (or “quite closely”) related to;” then, on a diminishing scale, “plausibly” (or “very plausibly;,” “plausibly related quite closely;” the designation “may be plausibly related to” for no. 54 is a little puzzling); “more than probably” and “probably;” “possibly” or “quite possibly.” There is a scattering of other phrases to mark some degree of reservation on the author’s part, but it would perhaps have been easier for the reader if Taplin had been able to bring himself to rank each vase, say on a scale of 1 to 10, the higher the ranking, the likelier the picture, in his estimation, to be “related to,” “connected with,” a theatrical production.

Readers will come up with their own favorites in this rich collection of beautiful and intriguing vases, but three appealed to me because of my own particular dramatic interests. No. 7 is an Apulian volute-krater from the 360s in Naples, the name-vase of “The Black Fury Painter,” showing a terrified Orestes holding on to a very credible *omphalos* (“navel,” a sculpture marking the center of the world) as an armed Apollo warns off a dark-skinned Erinyes whom Taplin aptly describes as “quite spooky.” A statuesque Artemis is at the right, not because she appeared in an actual re-mounting of *Eumenides*, but simply “as a kind of companion figure to Apollo” (62). In discussing no. 18, an Apulian calyx-krater attributed to the Branca Painter from the 340s now in Berlin, Taplin reverts to his own “more than possible” (I would have

called it totally implausible) earlier position that the work with which he (rightly) connects the vase, *Prometheus (Released)*, is authentically Aeschylean but that its companion, the extant *Prometheus (in Fetters)*, was composed by someone else in imitation of it. In any case, “this fascinating picture” (Taplin’s term) shows Prometheus with his arms bound to a rocky arch which appears to “signal” that the skênê door represented a cave-entrance. There is a distressed female figure in an almost identical pose, hands bound to a rocky arch, in no. 61, a lively scene on an Apulian loutrophoros (a ritual vessel) from the 340s formerly in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu that may “possibly” be related to Euripides’ *Andromeda*. A somewhat apprehensive-looking Perseus has his sword drawn against an “exotic and colorful” sea-monster which seems to be being urged on (presumably to defeat) by a winged Nike.

Readers-at-large will be grateful for a very clear map (ix), full Glossary (292 ff.) and a detailed Index, while specialists will appreciate the Vase Concordance on p. 268. I noticed just a few misprints: bought for brought (213), Athenianess (222). There is some ambivalence between tragedy-related (the vast majority) and tragedy related (about five occurrences), nor am I very happy about child carers (218) and asylum seeking (126). As for neologisms, I applaud teratomorphic (“monstrous in shape,” 286 n. 81), but deplore monodisciplinary (279 n. 38). And what of chorality (179)?

Those of us who have been tempted by the Sirens’ call to try our hand at this kind of mytho-iconographic decipherment can only be amazed at the ease with which Taplin navigates these treacherous waters, and grateful to him for the charts he provides (metaphorically speaking) for future voyagers.

Tony Podlecki (ajp@mail.arts.ubc.ca) taught at Northwestern and Penn State before moving to Vancouver in 1975 as Head of the Dept. of Classics at the University of British Columbia. After retirement in 1998 he held visiting appointments at Swarthmore College, and the Universities of Nancy and Grenoble in France. He continues his research interests in early Greek poetry and history and classical drama, especially Aeschylus.

TERENCE AWARDS HONOR STUDENT FILMMAKING

By Andrew Reinhard

Lampadarii. Camescopium. *Actus!* (Lights, camera, action!) Latin students are making films. Lots of them. Query YouTube (www.youtube.com) for “Latin class project,” “latinitas,” or even “Cicero” and you will receive hundreds of hits, mostly for student-produced videos. Over the past three years, digital movies produced as Latin class projects have increased dramatically. YouTube posts new ones from students and teachers several times a week.

Nearly 300 of the best, funniest, and strangest of these videos appear on the eClassics social network for teachers and students of Latin and ancient Greek (eclassics.ning.com). Some of the videos contain spoken Latin. Others feature Latin subtitles. Much of the Latin is original. Many of the films boast special effects, soundtracks, earnest acting, and even outtakes one might find as DVD extras.

After eighteen months of collecting and being entertained by these films, I wanted to do something both to honor excellence in student filmmaking and to promote the use of Latin in videos produced for class projects. 2008 inaugurated the annual Terence Awards, so named after the Roman comic playwright Publius Terentius Afer (195/185-159 B.C.).

American students, enrolled in either junior high or high school, or as home-schoolers, were encouraged to submit their best digital films for consideration in two categories: Best Picture and Best Use of Latin in a Film. Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers and eClassics sponsored the \$100.00 Best Picture prize. The Classical Association of the Middle West and South’s (CAMWS) Committee for the Promotion of Latin (CPL) sponsored the award for Best Use of Latin in a Film through a grant of \$250.00.

Some of the best films submitted included the story of the *Aeneid* recast as a *film noir* epic, Polyphemus’ tale from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* with Ovid as a pith helmet-wearing, Loeb-toting academic, and a comic retelling of the *Aeneid* cleverly featuring Google Earth animations tracing the voyage of the hero. One film even had *bona fide* Hollywood talent in the person of Tony Plana, the actor whose roles include Ugly Betty’s father and Omar on *24*.

The winning film, which received both the award for Best Use of Latin in

a Film and Best Picture, however, came from the students of Cedar Crest High School in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. *Bella Gallica* introduces viewers to life in Julius Caesar’s army in a comical romp against a tribe of Belgians. The entire ten-minute film is written completely in original Latin by Nate Deysher, one of the Latin IV students of *magistra* Catherine Zackey. Tim Reitnouer filmed the action and edited the movie. The remaining cast included Erika Lawson, Brent Miller, Aston Dommel, and Tyler Chanas. View the movie at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gJwuqyUcRE>.

Honored by receiving both Terence Awards, Zackey’s students quickly responded to the news by writing an acceptance speech:

As Catullus once said, “Of all men (and women) more blest than others, who is more glad, more blest, than I?” We are elated to have been chosen as the winners of these awards and are thankful for the opportunity to have presented a culmination of our Latin studies. Although many people are unaware of its importance, Latin forms the foundation of our own modern language. We also wish to thank our wonderful teacher, Mrs. Zackey, for her constant help and support! We hope that this competition will continue to allow future Latin students to express their mastery of Latin as well as their personal creativity!

Zackey was thrilled with the news that her students had been recognized. “I was delighted that my students won your first Terence Awards! The timing was right, as we had done a unit on Caesar’s *Gallic Wars* in November, and this was the culminating assignment, filmed over Thanksgiving break.”

Student filmmaker Reitnouer will attend Belmont University in Nashville in Fall 2009, pursuing a degree in audio engineering technology with a music minor. He commented on his experiences with both Latin and movie production. “My four years of studying Latin have provided insight and allowed me to make connections that have enhanced my style of thinking and made me a swifter and more engaged learner,” Reitnouer said. He continued,

Using an all-Latin script forces students to not only write their words in Latin but to think in a dialogue, rather than simply translating word by word. . . . When Latin students put their heads together, creative and intellectual juices start flowing, creating clever word play, humorous scenarios, and inventive takes on classic stories.

Reitnouer stressed the fact that creating digital films is one important way of both preserving and promoting classical languages: “One of the best ways to ensure these languages continue to be taught is by supplementing traditional styles of teaching with new and inventive projects like student films,” Reitnouer said.

Zackey agrees. “Putting the videos on YouTube should encourage more students to pursue Latin studies. One of our main aims is proving that Latin is *not* a dead language.” In the seven years that Zackey has taught Latin, she has seen many student films:

One of my favorites was created by my first Latin IV class, *Jackie Chan Goes to Rome*. It was made, not even as an assignment, but just for fun, by six boys . . . and featured a time-space displacement machine (microwave oven) so the characters could return to ancient Rome, meeting Romulus and Remus and Spartacus along the way, looking for a kidnapped woman (played by one of the boys).

Not all of Zackey’s students opt for a video project. In the past, some have produced puppet shows, PowerPoint presentations, and dioramas. Regardless of the project format, Zackey does use a rubric for grading the group-work that is done in Latin III and Latin IV. “It is difficult to be fair, as often one or two students do most of the work, but they must also grade themselves on effort, so they all participate,” Zackey said.

Zackey is not the only Latin teacher who encourages digital video projects as an option for students. Many other Latin teachers are engaging their classes and boosting Latin enrollment by suggesting or even helping to create Latin movies that are broadcast online and even shown at school assemblies. One such teacher is Charles Umiker.

Umiker teaches Latin to students at the Pennington School in Pennington, New Jersey. Prior to coming to Pennington, he taught Latin to middle schoolers for four years at Dutchess Day School in Millbrook, New York. It was during his first year of teaching in 2003 that his love of merging the kinetics of

filmmaking with classical mythology and Latin developed.

I was looking for a way to incorporate mythology into the curriculum. My idea was to have different students write short plays based on myths and perform them, and, as a sort of fun experiment, maybe film the skits. I envisioned doing a series of these throughout the year, and so we decided to start with the Greek creation story.

Umiker recounted how one of his students, Matt Constantino, delivered the first script, and how the students brought in costumes, and how he tracked down the school's video camera that he found in the science teacher's closet. The project lasted the entire year, becoming what his class called *The Latin Movie*. Umiker taught himself how to edit digital video. "This was in the early days of home editing, and we were pretty limited in terms of computer software and hardware at my school then," Umiker said.

I remember that the only computer I could use was in the after-school day-care room, so I would go there after classes and edit with kids running all around, teaching myself how to do this from scratch. . . . It was definitely a labor of love. It was all about doing something bold and revolutionary, for the cause of Latin.

Umiker recalled premiering the film at the year-end ice cream social.

The response was pretty sensational. I remember the audience cheering wildly over the final credits and people being sort of surprised that such a thing was possible. The combination of the students' acting, Matt's script, the music, the editing, and the sort of anarchic spirit that pervaded the whole thing made for a final product that not only reinforced lessons about Greek mythology but sort of summed up what that Latin class was all about.

As for how that year-long project affected his Latin enrollment numbers, Umiker said that the movie "was certainly a boon to the Latin program. . . . Latin enrollment went way up, and I was able to obtain much more hi-tech software and hardware for editing."

Umiker's classes continued to complete Latin movies in subsequent years. "There were three more Latin movies, and we even manufactured and sold DVDs, complete with making-of documentaries and blooper reels. The movies were the flagship of the Latin program,

and they gave it a sort of mystical aura." Taking this guerilla approach (Umiker describes this as his "school-of-rock"), Umiker believes that the promise of making a movie epic "brought many students to Latin who probably wouldn't have found it otherwise. I was able to build a serious and robust middle school program that prepared students for excellent high school Latin careers, and the movies were my secret weapon."

Umiker never graded the students or offered extra credit on the productions. He did find the movies to be excellent motivators. "I found that the movie provided a good incentive for students to focus on their work. They needed to learn their stuff so that we could get back to the movie," Umiker said.

Umiker's students' films have a growing international fan-base and can be found on YouTube and will soon be posted on TeacherTube (www.teachertube.com).

These films, plus the Terence Awards, are drawing world-wide interest. When the Terence Awards were announced, I received several messages from students and teachers studying classics in Spain and England asking if the competition would be open to students outside of the United States. I also received email from professors interested in seeing a category for films produced by college students.

It is both my hope and plan to offer new awards in 2010 for Best College Film, Best Use of Greek in a Film, and Best Foreign Film. American students should be aware that the quality of the Latin and Greek language films from Europe is outstanding. eClassics features some of these movies uploaded by students and teachers in the spirit of a thrown gauntlet.

The call for submissions for the second annual Terence Awards will be posted at the start of the 2009-2010 academic year.

With the Terence Awards supporting student filmmaking in classics, perhaps Umiker's success in building Latin programs will echo as more departments investigate a fun, invigorating, contemporary way to inject life into ancient languages for new generations of students.

Andrew Reinhard (areinhard@bolchazy.com) is currently the Director of eLearning for Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers. He also serves as CAMWS' webmaster (beginning on July 1) as well as its Vice President for Illinois. He was recently honored at the CAMWS annual meeting with the CPL Award for Outstanding Promotional Activity given this year for his creation of the Terence Awards. He is currently searching for the killer app for Latin on the iPhone.

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All of the APA's programs are grounded in the rigor and high standards of traditional philology, with the study of ancient Greek and Latin at their core. However, the APA also aims to present a broad view of classical culture and the ancient Mediterranean world to a wide audience. In short, the APA seeks to preserve and transmit the wisdom and values of classical culture and to find new meanings appropriate to the complex and uncertain world of the twenty-first century.

The APA's activities serve one or more of these overarching goals:

- To ensure an adequate number of well-trained, inspirational classics teachers at all levels, kindergarten through graduate school;
- To give classics scholars and teachers the tools they need to preserve and extend their knowledge of classical civilization and to communicate that knowledge as widely as possible;
- To develop the necessary infrastructure to achieve these goals and to make the APA a model for other societies confronting similar challenges.

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"IT WASN'T LIKE THAT": DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE, FICTION-WRITING AND MYTH IN MARGARET DRABBLE'S *THE PEPPERED MOTH*

by Hilary Mackie

In "Crossing the Styx" (*Amphora* 5.2, Fall 2006), Margaret Drabble discusses classical themes in contemporary fiction, including her own "conscious use" of the Demeter myth in her 2000 novel, *The Peppered Moth*. She describes classical literature in Jungian terms, as "a subterranean lake, a collective unconscious." Classical myth, the world of the dead, and the unconscious emerge from her discussion as analogues and metaphors for one another. All three are in play when she says, "[i]n writing about my mother, I felt that I was indeed crossing the Styx of hatred and ill-will and entering an underworld in search of reconciliation and enlightenment."

I was a bit startled to find the phrase "conscious use" in this context. Surely it is in the very nature of myth and writing, no less than of the unconscious itself, to resist conscious control? As Drabble herself puts it, "[n]ovels develop themselves and tell stories that their authors do not intend." Possibly there is a connection here with the disappointment the author expresses in *The Peppered Moth*'s non-fiction "Afterword" (read "Afterworld"?): "I went down into the underworld to look for my mother, but I couldn't find her. She wasn't there."

My own (conscious) intent here is twofold: to trace some images and themes from the Demeter myth that are developed in *The Peppered Moth*, and then show how they intersect with themes from another Greek *katabasis* (descent) myth: that of Orpheus. I do not know whether Drabble is using the second myth consciously or unconsciously. Either way, the Orpheus myth seems to address the very perplexities she raises in connection with her use of the Demeter myth.

Three women in *The Peppered Moth* may be identified as "Persephone figures." Each struggles with an attraction to death (real, metaphorical, or both), and to men who have "Stygian" associations. In each case, the woman's mother plays a significant role, for better or worse, in the daughter's struggle with death/"death." The first Persephone is Bessie Bawtry, a fictional character based on Drabble's real life mother. The others are Bessie's daughter Chrissie and Chrissie's daughter Faro. My focus here will be mainly on Bessie

and her granddaughter Faro.

Bessie Bawtry is born and raised at the beginning of the twentieth century in the South Yorkshire coal-belt town Drabble calls "Breaseborough." Breaseborough is represented as a deadly underworld. "The very earth was mined. . . . The ground might give at any moment and let one down into the darkness . . . the menace beneath would grab one's ankle and pull one down, however clean one's ankle socks" (14; page references are from the American Harcourt paperback edition). As she grows from precocious infant to school-leaving prodigy, her parents and teachers have no doubt that Bessie, along with others of her generation, will fulfill her resolve to escape. "The exodus from Breaseborough is part of our plot" (18), but especially Bessie's.

Yet Bessie fails to leave Breaseborough in a meaningful sense. She does move to Surrey in the south of England – "another world," as Faro explains to a visiting American (140), but only on the strength of her husband's career, not her own talents. Nor does she "marry out" of Breaseborough; she "married the boy next door" (140).

Some (like Glenda Leeming in her 2006 study, *Margaret Drabble*, 101) argue that the novel's narrator repeatedly tries and fails to find an explanation for Bessie's failure. I disagree. Again and again, we are shown how Bessie's distaste for the "underworld" of Breaseborough is matched by an equally deadly inclination for "inertia, failure, self-pity, collapse" (97). Her scholarly gifts are balanced by a talent for illness, and the two repeatedly converge. As a young child, she hides out under the parlor table, a "wooden cave," in which she rehearses passages from hymns and the Bible (8). When she gets the Spanish flu, her parents' four-poster bed provides a similar interior world (25-6). Studying feverishly for Cambridge entrance exams, Bessie longs for "the comfort of illness" and to be "sealed up for all time behind a large stone, with the grave trophies, the offerings, the Virgil, the French grammar, and Palgrave's Golden Treasury" (72). Her actual death occurs on a cruise on the QE II. Now elderly, Bessie has the opportunity to disembark and set foot in the "New World" of New

York, even. But, as so often before, she cannot face the "effort" ahead, and instead dies peacefully in her bed (293).

Where is the Demeter in Bessie's narrative? At least once, Ellen Bawtry does try to drag her daughter from death. When Bessie takes to her bed before Part I of her Cambridge Tripos (final exams), Ellen, alarmed, plans to visit the daughter whom, "in spite of all lovelessness, she loved." But Bessie abruptly "recovers," averting the visit; she "seals the tomb from within." The narrator then replays the story and imagines a different version of the past (yet another underworld) in which the "shade" of Ellen Bawtry *does* go to Cambridge, mingling with "[t]he ghosts of classical scholars and wrangling mathematicians." But these "learned ladies" have nothing to say to Ellen Bawtry; they "do not speak the same language." The visit would have been useless; mother and daughter do not "inhabit the same realm" (112-3).

Two generations later, Bessie's thirty-something granddaughter Faro is also preoccupied with death, but in rather more modern ways. Faro strikes outsiders as "obsessed" with her deceased father, whose "unspeakable" funeral she cannot resist describing to them in detail (141-2). She wakes in the small hours and frets about "the point of all the dead," wonders whether advances in science herald the death of death itself, and if so, "What of the *already dead*? . . . Shall there be a Harrowing of Hell?" (147). And she has great difficulty leaving a relationship with a "gaunt" and "cavernous" man (130) who lives in squalor and prefers the dark. When Faro tries to disentangle herself from Seb Jones, he hooks her back with the fictitious announcement that he has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Fortunately, no "sealed tomb doors" stand between Faro and her mother (see Fig. 18). Chrissie is able to rescue Faro emotionally from Seb Jones when Faro tells her all (334). Faro also differs from Bessie in that her Persephone associations include springtime and renewal, along with death. The morning after her wakeful night weeping for the dead, she "uncrumples and unfurls herself like a revived flower" (148). After an accident on the M1 (a British highway), she

retrieves her keys from the motorway verge and becomes absorbed in picking flowers. The “hot breath of the stream of cars wafts towards her with a Phlegraean stink” as she “tugs at hairy stems, and woody twines, at hollow culms” (314). In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Persephone is abducted while gathering flowers in a meadow. But we do not fear for Faro as we would for a traditional Persephone. For one thing, she has already emerged from the accident unscathed. Indeed, the car (or “chariot”?) of the other motorist (the offender in the accident) is far more badly damaged than Faro’s own.

In the Demeter hymn, Persephone’s marriage to Hades may be read as a “dynastic” arrangement whereby Zeus allies upper and lower realms of the cosmos. In *The Peppered Moth*, Faro mediates between different worlds, but not according to a patriarchal paradigm. This is not the first time Drabble has “feminized” a hero from classical myth. Roberta Rubinstein, in a 1982 article in *Contemporary Literature*, argues that in *The Radiant Way*, Drabble “writes woman” in Cixous’ sense, reworking classical tales based on male heroes like Perseus and Theseus, creating female characters who achieve self-knowledge while “confronting the monsters of myth.”

Female connections are strong and significant in the Demeter hymn; in Faro’s story, they predominate even more powerfully. The only character to be “quite fond of her poor old grandma” (306), Faro also persuades her (great) Aunt Dora to attend a presentation on tracing the migration patterns of Yorkshire families via mitochondrial DNA, which is passed down matrilineally. And the novel ends with Faro’s recollection of how she had always enjoyed spending Christmas at Bessie’s house – how she “had felt safe there . . . like a proper child” (365).

Yet Drabble herself objects fiercely to this ending in the Afterword to the book. “It’s all very well, imagining a happy ending, imagining Faro Gaulden’s happy memory of a happy Christmas. It wasn’t like that” (369). She wonders whether she should have tried to write a “factual memoir” about her mother instead (367). This seems to me to ignore the real issue. Ideally, either kind of writing – fiction or memoir – would transcend and bridge the gap between “what actually happened” and pure, unanchored invention. Even a fictional novel should feel “real” and relevant to real life; even a “factual” memoir will employ creative license for aesthetic effect. I suggest that the real source of discomfort here is analogous

to the objection the author has already made. The worlds of fiction and real life, thanks to the process of writing the novel, have come to stand in the same relation to each other as the worlds of the living and dead: they seem like mutually inaccessible realms.

But I also suggest that a solution is written into the last sentence of the Afterword. “I cannot sing,” Drabble writes, “my mother could not sing, and her mother before her could not sing. But Faro can sing, and her clear voice floods the valley” (369). She has just mentioned “an underworld story from another mythology” in which a woman smears herself with dead rat to enter hell in quest of her beloved. In such a context, I suggest, Faro’s singing evokes Orpheus. Specifically, the allusion, once again “feminizing” Greek myth, identifies Faro as a female Orpheus.

Orpheus’ music bends the hearts of the underworld gods; it enables living and dead to cross and re-cross normally untraversable boundaries. A scene towards the end of the novel explicitly uses music in this connection. After an explosion in the night up north, Faro and her new boyfriend Steve drive out to the site. Faro, weeping, at last experiences a katharsis that feels to her like the “harrowing of hell” she has been longing for. She has a tape of Handel’s *Messiah* in her car, performed by a local choral society, and plays it loudly. When a fireman comes over, Faro expects to be told to turn the music down or “fuck off back down the M1 back to where she came from.” Instead, he tells her that his father sang in that very performance, and the two of them “shake hands across the divide” (352-3).

As outlined above, the myth of Orpheus is the quintessential myth of the artist – a figure who dissolves the boundaries between different worlds. Why, in its author’s view (many readers would disagree) does *The Peppered Moth* – the novel itself, as opposed to its character Faro – not succeed at “the Orpheus thing”?

It is suggested that the problem lies in language itself. In the Afterword, Drabble also complains of difficulty finding a tone in which to “create or describe” the “harsh, dismissive, censorious” mother who “taught her language” (367). In the novel, Chrissie elects to be an archaeologist so she can deal with things, and evade her mother’s tyranny over the “Word” (179). Unlike the author, Chrissie *does* feel that words and language are freed for her on her mother’s death (305).

Where does this perceived, but artificial, distinction between words and

things originate? Bessie herself is disappointed in words early on. Or rather, she is disappointed by the reality they had promised to describe. When she first sees a Rose of Sharon – the actual bush, as opposed to the reference in the Song of Solomon – it strikes her as a “weedy, untidy, scruffy suburban undershrub.” She wonders: “Maybe words are always more beautiful than things and reality but a pale shadow of the word?” (10). Thereafter, Bessie chooses words over things, reality, and life, *all* her life. She prepares badly for her Tripos because it never occurs to her that bronze axes, Teutonic brooches, and the relics of the Beaker people have anything to do with English literature, with “The Word.” By contrast, she “has her *Beowulf* by heart” (114-5).

How, then, to revive words themselves, recognizing that they need not be lifelessly divorced from things, but have the power to interact with life dynamically? In her article on “Crossing the Styx,” Drabble also suggests that recalling a childhood struggle to learn Latin and Greek can revive a spirit of youthful enquiry. If so, and if classical study can (like Chrissie’s archaeology, 179) retrieve lost things, these might include a conviction in words as potent and efficacious. Odysseus’ tales, the Sirens’ song, Gorgias on Helen, Plato on Gorgias . . . these examples remind us of countless others. If there is a difficulty about words in classical literature, it is seldom that they are unreal or impotent, but quite the opposite: that they are dangerously potent. (Cassandra is a rule-proving exception.)

Granted, the consequences may be problematic, even catastrophic sometimes. Orpheus himself does not have a happy ending. Perhaps the point is that even if you “cross the Styx” in a “conscious” way, you can never be sure what you will find there. This reader cannot help wondering: did Drabble’s distress, on completing her novel, really derive from the fact that she did *not* find her mother, or a language in which to describe her? Or that, in fact, she did?

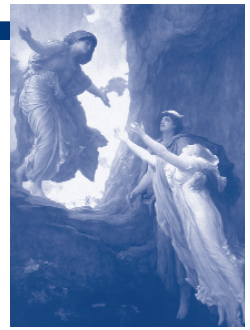


Fig. 18. Frederic Leighton's (1830-1896) painting portrays Persephone's return to her mother. Image source: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FredericLeighton-TheReturnofPerspephone\(1891\).jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FredericLeighton-TheReturnofPerspephone(1891).jpg).



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