W. F. JACKSON KNIGHT

It is with regret that we record the death, at the end of last term, of W. F. Jackson Knight. "JK", as he was known to all with affection, was a lecturer in Classics in the University from 1936 until 1961, and was Reader for the last nineteen years.

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We would like to thank Miss Bethel for her cover design, and Miss Longsdon for her help with typing and duplicating.

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER CLASSICAL SOCIETY

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Bernard Moss

CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION - SOUTH-WEST BRANCH

Programme for Remainder of Lent Term 1965

Friday, February 19th

Joint meeting with the University Classical Society

Professor S. SAMBURSKY on

SAVING THE PHENOMENA:

the concept of a scientific theory in ancient Greece

Professor Sambursky is Professor of the History of Science at the University of Jerusalem. He is the author of several books on ancient science, including "The Physical World of the Greeks".

Friday, March 5th

RUSSELL MEIGGS, F.B.A., on

PERICLES AND THE BUILDINGS OF ATHENS

Mr. Meiggs, the author of "Roman Ostia" and the reviser of Bury's History of Greece, is a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford.

The lecture will be illustrated with slides.

Friday, March 19th

H. W. STUBBS on

THE TRIALS OF A LEXICOGRAPHER

Mr. Stubbs, who is a Lecturer in Classics at the University of Exeter, is engaged in compiling the forthcoming Penguin Classical Dictionary.

POP GOES THE ....

An examination of the occasions when the weasel pops up in authors of antiquity shows that this creature held a position of considerable significance throughout Greek and Roman times. But first a few basic facts.

The Latin word for the weasel was 'mustela', whilst the Greeks had two words: a distinction seems to have been made between ἡ γαλῆ, the domestic weasel, and ἡ ἴκτις, the wild weasel (ἡ γαλῆ ἀγρίᾳ), which is occasionally translated as a ferret or a marten. We learn of this distinction from Pliny's Natural History.

Herodotus, in p.192 of Book IV, which contains his discourse on Libya, states:

εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ γαλαῖ τῷ σιλφίῳ γινόμεναι τῇσι Ταρτησσίῃσι ὁμοιόταται.

This indicates that the weasel was a native of Africa and Spain. Rawlinson, in the notes to his edition of Herodotus, says that the weasel appears on coins of Kyreae below a representation of the silphium country.

The earliest author in which reference to the weasel occurs is Homer. Two examples are to be found in Iliad X 335 and 458, and both refer to Dolon's headwear. Whilst preparing himself for his night enterprise,

ἕσσατο δ' ἕκτοσθεν ῥινὸν πολιοῖο λύκοιο,

κρατὶ δ' ἐπὶ κτιδέην κυνέην . . .

κτίδεος stands for ἰκτίδεος which is not found in use, and its derivation from ἴκτις need hardly be pointed out.

Aristotle in his History of Animals gives us a good deal of information about the weasel, some of which it would be indelicate of me to mention in this essay. The weasel is the enemy of the crow (609a 17), the snake (609b 28), and the mouse (612b 1). An interesting fact which emerges from 609b 28, and which is reiterated by Aelian (Nature of Animals IV, 14), is that when the weasel attacks the snake it chews some rue, which is abhorrent to snakes. Many of these facts are also to be discovered in Pliny's Natural History.

Having seen that the weasel chased mice gives us our first clue to the close affinity between the weasel of antiquity and the cat of modern times. The cat scarcely appears in antiquity. Mouse-catching was done by tame ferrets or weasels even down to the time of Petronius (v. Satyricon 46). The ancients seem to have made no pet of the cat. The Greek αἴλουρος is derived from its wavy tail.

Theocritus (Idylls XV, 27 ff.), in a delightful domestic situation, gives us a good impression of the place of the weasel in the homes of the time. Praxinoa sits gossiping with a friend and irritably chides her servant-girl, Eunoa:

Εὐνόα, αἶρε τὸ νῆμα, καὶ ἐς μέσον, αἰνόθρυπτε,
θὲς πάλιν. αἱ γαλέαι μαλακῶς χρῄζοντι καθεύδειν.

We today know well how cats love to play with balls of wool, but in this quotation we see this proclivity associated with weasels. In Greece and Rome the cat was

slow in gaining a footing, and Praxinoa has not succumbed to their charm even in Egypt. The line αἱ γαλέαι etc. might be purely proverbial and refer to the lethargy of servants in general and Eunoa in particular. But Eunoa is accused of carelessness rather than sleepiness, and the obvious interpretation is just as valid. Praxinoa would not want a smelly weasel in her wool-basket.

Yes, smelly. The malodorous quality of the weasel did not pass unmentioned by Aristophanes. In the Plutus (688 ff.) a rascally thief is almost discovered by an old woman who is lying in her bed. To frighten her he hisses like a snake:

τὸ γρᾴδιον δ' ὡς ἤσθετο δή μου τὸν ψόφον,
τὴν χεῖρ' ὑφῆκε κἄτα συρίξας ἐγὼ
ὁδὰξ ἐλαβόμην, ὡς παρείας ὢν ὄφις.
ἡ δ' εὐθέως τὴν χεῖρα πάλιν ἀνέσπασε,
κατέκειτο δ' αὐτην ἐντυλίξασ' ἡσυχῆ,
ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους βδέουσα δριμύτερον γαλῆς.

In the Acharnians (255), a mother addresses her daughter:

ὡς μακάριος ὅστις σ' ὀπύσει, κἀκποιήσεται γαλᾶς
σοῦ μηδὲν ἧττους βδεῖν, ἐπειδὰν ὄρθρος ᾖ.

I leave the reader to provide his own translations of these passages!

The appearance of the weasel is variously interpreted in ancient writers both as a good and a bad omen. Aristophanes (Eccl.792) makes a citizen say:

σεισμὸς εἰ γένοιτο πολλάκις,
ἢ πῦρ ἀπότροπον, ἢ διᾴξειεν γαλῆ,
παύσαιντ' ἂν εἰσφέροντες, ὤμβρον τητε σύ.

Here it is no doubt a bad omen.

But Plautus (Stichus 460) has Gelasimus say:

Auspicio hodie optumo exivi foras:
mustela murem abstulit praeter pedes;
cum strena obscaevavit; spectatum hoc mihist.
Nam ut illa vitam repperit hodie sibi,
item me spero facturum: augurium hac facit.

Quite a different point of view. A relevant sideline to this question is that Pliny states that on the island of Proselene weasels do not cross the roads.

Many other strange beliefs surround the weasel. Some of these are to be found in Aelian's Nature of Animals. In XV, 11 he states:

> "I have heard that the weasel was once a human being. It has also reached my ears that Weasel was its name then; that it was a dealer in spells and a sorcerer".

He goes on to talk about its abnormal sexual desires, and how the anger of the goddess Hecate transformed it into this evil, malicious creature. Certain

parts of the weasel were deemed to have magical powers to produce sterility in women, but here again my sense of delicacy will not permit me to go into details at this point.

In XI, 19, Aelian tells of the belief that when a house is on the verge of ruin mice and weasels forestall its collapse and emigrate. The story goes that at Helice in Achaia (in 373 B.C.) the people murdered delegates who came from Ionia to beg for a statue of Poseidon or a plan of his temple and altar. The town was destroyed in the same year by an earthquake. For five days before Helice disappeared all the mice, weasels, snakes, centipedes, beetles, etc. left the town en masse. The townsfolk were amazed but could not guess the reason for this phenomenon.

When discussing dogs in IX, 55, he says:

> "Here is another peculiarity of dogs. They will not bark if one approaches them holding the tail of a weasel. But after cutting off the tail of the captured weasel, one must let it go alive".

In VII, 8 the power to forecast the weather is even attributed to the weasel:

> "When weasels squeak and likewise mice, they are conjecturing that there will be a violent storm".

The fact that the weasels strike fear into mice and domestic fowl is stated in IX, 41, and V, 50 (i) respectively.

In V, 8, it is stated that according to Aristotle (see fr. 315 Rose Arist. pseudepigraphus p. 331) Rhenea is inhospitable to weasels just as Astypalaea is to snakes.

Certainly the most interesting legend surrounding the weasel is to be found in Ovid Met. IX, 275, of which I present a paraphrase.

Alcmena was in the process of giving birth to Hercules, whose birth Juno resolved to retard. She solicited the aid of Lucina, the goddess of childbirth, who immediately repaired to the house of Alcmena in the guise of an old woman. She sat near the door with her legs crossed and her fingers joined. In this posture she uttered some magical words which served to prolong the labours of Alcmena and render her state more miserable. Galanthis, Alcmena's servant-girl, began to suspect the jealousy of Juno and concluded that the old woman was the instrument of the goddess's anger. So she ran out of the house and informed the old woman that Alcmena had given birth. Lucina jumped up in astonishment, the spell was broken and Alcmena was readily able to give birth to her child. Galanthis laughed in the face of the goddess, who in anger changed her into a weasel, and condemned her to bring forth her young by the mouth, through which she had lied.

An interesting repercussion of this legend crops up in Aelian's Nature of Animals XII, 5:

> "The Egyptians incur the derision at any rate of most people for

worshipping and deifying various kinds of animals. But the inhabitants of Thebes, although Greeks, worship a weasel, so I hear, and allege that it was the nurse of Hercules, or if it was not the nurse, yet when Alcmena was in labour and unable to bring her child to birth, the weasel ran by her and loosed the bonds of her womb so that Hercules was delivered and at once began to crawl."

That weasels existed in Thebes is clear from Aristophanes Ach. 878 ff., when a Boeotian market-salesman says:

"Yes, and I'm bringing geese, hares, foxes, moles, hedgehogs, cats, easels, weasels, otters, and eels from Lake Copais."

To discover the explanation of the above legend and the source of the belief that weasels gave birth through the mouth, we must turn to Aristotle and his treatise on the Generation of Animals (756b 15):

"There are those who say that ravens and ibises unite by the mouth, and that one of the quadrupeds, the weasel, brings forth its young by the mouth. This is in fact alleged by Anaxagoras and some of the other physiologers - but their verdict is based on insufficient evidence and inadequate consideration of the matter."

In 756b 30 he refutes the theory on biological grounds and explains that "the idea is actually due to the fact that the weasel produces very small young ones ... and that it often carries them about in its mouth".

I pass finally now onto the significance of the weasel in the field of medicine. Chapter 14 of Aretaens' work on'The Cures of Chronic Diseases' deals with the cures for Epilepsy. He states:

"It is said that the brain of a vulture, and the heart of a raw cormorant, and the domestic weasel (αἱ κατοικίδιοι γαλέαι), when eaten remove the disease."

For κατοικίδιοι γαλέαι see Dioscorides II, 27.

Pliny's Natural History deals most fully with the healing powers of the weasel, and to enumerate them all would turn this part of my essay into a mere catalogue, so I have picked out just a few examples. Weasel is said to alleviate maladies of the eyes, of the liver, and of the head; to cure tumors, elephantiasis, arthritis, gout, and to cure the sufferings of spastics. Its blood was used to all manner of purposes by sorcerers.

So I have traced the appearance and significance of the weasel in many places and periods of Greek and Roman antiquity. The next time you come across a reference to this creature in some author, do not turn your nose up at him, smelly and vicious though he may be. There is more to him and his kind than the eye - or the nose - may at first detect.

R. A. E. LETT.

EPILOGUE TO "THE MOTHER-IN-LAW"

This play, "The Mother-in-Law", whose first appearance
Left her, by strange, disastrous interference,
Unseen, unknown, so utterly entrancing
To our third year appeared that, term advancing,
They gave the play a modern premiere.
The actors all had taken every care
To learn the secrets of the Thespian art;
And nearly all the third year played a part.
In Hope was their unique performance billed,
And all their hopes were certainly fulfilled.
The drama chosen for this rare occurrence
Was, as I said, the Hecyra of Terence,
A play translated newly by our Prof.; it
Turned out to be a venture that came off; it
Gave us a very entertaining night:
The play amused us, though the plot was slight.
The verse spoke well; the audience at times
Was captivated by the ingenious rhymes.
(But could the poet have avoided 'baby',
For which the rhyme, alas, was six times 'may be'?)
The parts were played throughout with verve and zest,
And it is hard to single out the best;
Parmeno, limping like an aged hoss,
Perhaps; the part was played by Bernard Moss.
We much enjoyed this lively comedy,
To which admission, like the verse, was free.
We now look forward to the happy date on
Which we shall see another play by Clayton.

CAST:

Prologue:	Pauline Grundy
Philotis:	Melanie Bates
Syra:	Brenda Bowles
Parmeno:	Bernard Moss
Laches:	Mike Bryant
Sostrata: / Nurse:	Mary Sheldon-Williams
Phidippus:	Peter Furber
Pamphilus:	Nigel Palmer
Myrrhina:	Thelma Wright
Sosia:	Alf Manning
Bacchis:	Clare McMillan

Anon.
Hope Hall, November 23rd, 1964.

BIBLIA A-BIBLIA

or

'Contrarie Opiniouns on a Matere in the last Editioun'

I here must nedes make replye unto that right and worthy clerk of Exeter, John Glucker. For though that much there be of sentence and solas in his wordes, I sey you trewely, in such greet disputisoun, I must my contree-felawes work conserve. And verraily I turned in my grave to here my felawes booke deemed thus: 'A tedious, 357-page collection of causeries'.

What meneth he? Knoweth he full well the purport of a booke? My swink shall be to bring forth here contrarie opiniouns of auctors of greet learninge.

And I wol first biginne with that worthy wight who writ full thryes a hondred yeer sith me - Thomas de Quincey. Seyth he nat this, that 'Books, we are told, propose to instruct or to amuse ... All that is literature seeks to communicate power; all that is not literature to communicate knowledge.'

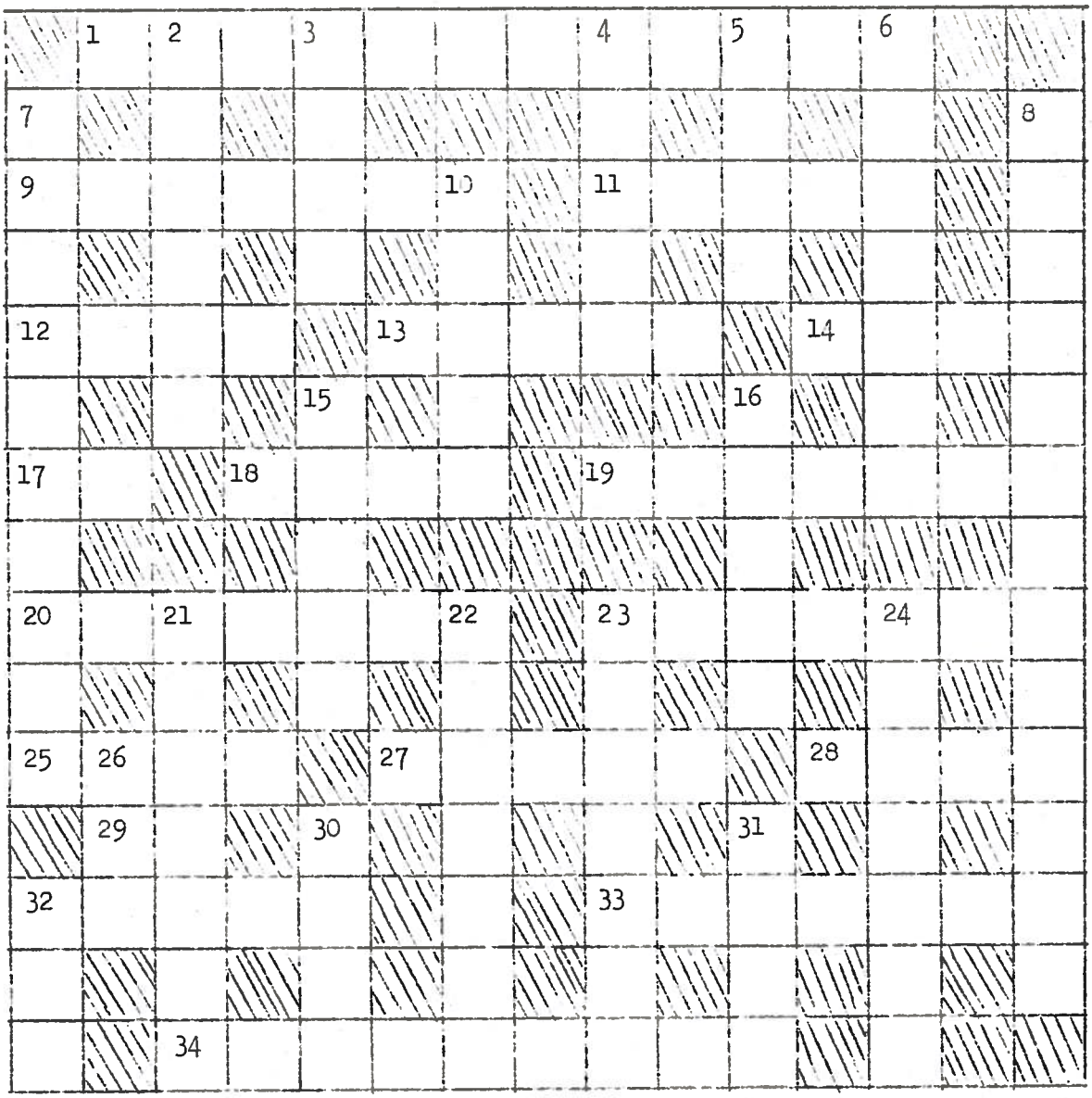
What wilt thou of a booke, my worthy clerk? Lerninge sholde been a delyt of its own selven. And yet now I am bithoght of the yonge Johnson:- 'Books that you may carry to the fire, and hold readily in your hand, are the most useful after all'. Much delyt there been in thy Aristotle, thy Plato and Catoun, but many a wight findeth pleasaunce in Proclus, and to some it be of solas to make an editioun, pardee. Myselven have seen many an editioun of mine own workes made by men of thy time, and take it in good herte.

Nay, when it benefit not thee to rede my worthy felawes 'lists upon lists etc. of errors', who indeed sholde it benefit more than my felawe whose worke it been? Trewely, as seyth old Maurus 'pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli,' that is - the fate of a booke dependeth on the jugement of its redere. But natheles it is the wight that writeth them that findeth plesaunce in his bookes.

The worthy Johnson seyth beside: 'A man will turn over half a library to make one book', and therein lieth my whole answere. Does a booke give solas to its auctor only and yet avaunce his lerninge, then its aim is good. And wolde the auctor desire himselven to be a 'proclologist', then it profiteth him greetly to make a booke such as this that our worthy clerk cannot approve. Let him greve nat that he findeth no plesaunce in this booke, the plesaunce been all for the auctor.

Now will I end, and leve this worthy, noble clerk with wordes of the gracious Francis Bacoun wherein he might espy some ernest, riche entente:- 'Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; some also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others.'

VIGORNIA
(Flaundres. 1444)



CLUES:

Across

1. A person axed, though not by Dr. Beeching! (12)
9. A daughter of Oceanus. (7)
11. Just as if Latin is the answer. (5)
12. Peius has lost a direction: descriptive of Venus' son. (4)
13. Aristotelian "Place". (5)
14. 10 Cents or a French glass of beer? It's the same confused. (4)
17. This possessive pronoun is irregular, evocative, and a fast road. (2)

18. St. Paul said of him "What could I not have made of you, if I had found you still alive?" (4)
19. Eager, rearranged and translated. (3-4)
20. They are chosen as the work of this poet. (7)
23. Singuli: trans. (3-4)
25. The nurser of the ... (with a Somerset implication!) (4)
27. Where the ... were accustomed to blow their tops? (5)
28. A hundred and one in one direction and a duck, I understand. (4)
29. You are this ancient city. (2)
32. —— pilus: the first of the triarii. (5)
33. Tin rice? Confused distributively, that's a lot. (7)
34. "Sit a Titan" as a high priestess. (9)

Down

2. This word has sinister implications. (6)
3. Answer this clue safely. (4)
4. From whom? Sounds like "from a horse". (5)
5. Quadrigae is a four-horse one. (4)
6. I dare an easy answer for this woman. (7)
7. An enactment of 55 B.C. de iudiciaria. (3-7)
8. "Lion, it is March" (anag.), so celebrate at the feast of this nobleman. (13)
10. O road! I implore you! (5)
15. I take hold of my partner for this dance. (5)
16. The Avenger's equus? (5)
21. What's wrong, Mac? Rail confused? Don't cry! (7)
22. A home of mysteries. (7)
23. The inhabitants of the extreme S.E. of Italy. (7)
24. The daughter of Electryon. (7)
26. Frantic urge also has the answer (and the question) at heart. (3)
30. Let there be a car. (4)
31. Crumbs! A mineral. (4)
32. Was this descriptive of Lavinia, too? (3)

BARRY D. PAGE

SPECIAL ATTRACTION !!

We have been very lucky in being able to invite Professor Owen from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, to speak to the Classical Society this term.

Professor Owen is an eminent scholar, and we hope a large number of people will come to hear him when he comes on

FRIDAY, MARCH 12th

Time, place and subject to be announced nearer to the date.

THE ORIGINS OF SAVOY OPERA

Living so many years after their first performance we are finding it increasingly difficult to understand and appreciate the operas of William Swank (?) Gilbert (1836-c.1910) and Arthur Sullivan (1842/3-1900). However, an appreciation of the origins is quite indispensable for students working on the Savoy Operas as their Literary Form.

First, what do we know of the lives of these two 19th century writers? Regrettably little is certain: we can date most of the extant works and many of the fragments but apart from the fact that they lived and worked in London - possibly also for a time in Japan and/or Venice - we can say nothing of our co-authors that has not been fiercely disputed. There is an early tradition that Sullivan was honoured at the court of Queen Victoria but repeated mention of his having 'lost a cord' suggests he fell into disfavour. Many scholars think the two quarrelled though the material left to us indicates nothing of the sort: both the lyrics (which are well preserved) and the music (such as we can decipher from the Worthing Band Collection which is sadly mutilated) are uniformly light and cheerful. The tradition that Gilbert died after jumping into a river to rescue a girl can be no more than an inference from Princess Ida in which Ida is saved from a river by Hilarion (246).*

The rest of our information must be gleaned from a close inspection of the texts which can be remarkably revealing. There definitely seems to be a certain basic pattern discernible more or less clearly beneath the variety of the plots. This schema can be summarised thus:-

1. Prologue - in the extant works only in Yeomen.
2. Entry of Chorus.
3. Conflict. This is the 'problem' of the play.
(4. Address to the audience - possibly not a genuine part of the pattern.)
5. Pnigos - spoken or sung in one breath.
6. Scenes exploiting aspects of the conflict.
7. Finale - usually involving a reversal, a wedding and feast. (The reversal most often takes the form of a recognition).

Applying this scheme to particular operas we may see how closely it fits them. The Mikado is an especially interesting - and well-preserved - example. There is no prologue but the chorus immediately set the scene.

'If you want to know who we are
We are gentlemen of Japan ... '

The entrance of Nanki-Poo, the Mikado's son dressed as a minstrel, gives us occasion to note the large number of disguises assumed by characters in the operas e.g. three young men dressed as undergraduettes in Ida (the possible ritual significance is interesting cf. Pentheus), Captain Corcoran in Pinafore (87), Fairfax

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* The text (referred to by page) is that published in St. Martin's Library.

through most of Yeomen posing as Leonard Meryll. Very often the whole plot turns on the undiscovered identity of a character (see below). The conflict in the Mikado centres on the love of Nanki-Poo for Yum-Yum who is betrothed to Ko-Ko. Complications arise when the Mikado demands an execution. The Lord High Executioner (Ko-Ko) searches eagerly for a victim and persuades Nanki-Poo - about to hang himself in despair of his love - to volunteer. As reward he has a month in which to marry Yum-Yum and live at state expense. Unfortunately it is discovered that the condemned man's wife must be buried alive on his death and the situation is made more difficult by the approach of the Mikado himself. Here we meet what can only be described as a faded Death and Resurrection the forms of which were much studied by scholars in the early Twentieth Century. Nanki-Poo is beheaded (off-stage, of course, according to the convention) and the whole thing re-enacted by Ko-Ko, Pitti-Sing and Pooh-Bah. Yet he is later resurrected having in the meantime married Yum-Yum. This and other occurences in Gilbert's writing have the advantage of concerning one man, whereas theories of Milbert Gurray and others seventy years ago were criticised since the character that died never seemed to be the same as the man who was resurrected.

Further proof is to be found in a fascinating fragment from the end of the Grand Duke (328):-

> ... Well, Julia, as it seems I shall come to life in about three minutes -
>
> Julia: My objection falls to the ground. Very well!
>
> Princess: And am I to understand that I was on the point of marrying a dead man without knowing it?

Yeomen presents an even better example. Fairfax is to be executed but escapes with two minutes to spare (407). However he is later reported shot in the head and

> Like a stone I saw him sinking -
> I should say a lump of lead.

Nonetheless, he revives in time to present himself to Elsie in the Finale as her husband.

The Mikado's peripeteia comes with the disclosure of the identy of Nanki-Poo. Recognition is often the means of 'unravelling' (as Aristotle says) the complication of the plot. More often than not the disguised person was hidden as a child and is identified only by information from an old nurse (cf. Gondoliers 156; Pinafore 92). To judge by the operas early betrothal was common in Gilbert's day: Ida was promised at the age of one and Casilda was married by proxy at six months. Even the reticent Patience confesses to a love affair when she was four (177).

Finally, after an abnormally long exodos Mikado ends with the marriages of Ko-Ko to Katisha, Pooh-Bah to Pitti-Sing and Nanki-Pooh to Yum-Yum. It appears that a gamos was essential to Savoy Opera since Gilbert never provided fewer than two weddings in an extant libretto; the maximum is in Iolanthe where all the fairies marry all the Lords. The feast was an original part of the ritual, in my opinion, although in Mikado it has been misplaced and comes before the wedding. (The Mikado proposes to take lunch before executing those responsible for his heir's death, 46.)

Reference to the text will no doubt convince students of the general application of the schema. The address to the audience is admittedly rare and may not constitute an original part of the form but Gondoliers (the latest of the extant plays, dated 1889, which some scholars think is nearest the original form,) probably supplies a genuine example (132). The satire originally reserved for this part of the performance seems to have become generally diffused in various songs, typically by people describing their careers or present employment (e.g. Judge in Trial 585). The pnigos occurs in Iolanthe (371) recited by the Chancellor and in Mikado (21): 'To sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock ...', in the Colonel's recipe for a Heavy Dragoon (Patience 168) and elsewhere.

Beside the structural basis of the plots there are one or two other important problems - notably the size of the chorus. Various theories have been advanced and none has been generally accepted. To look first at the text: it has often been noted that the chorus open Patience with the words 'Twenty love-sick maidens we ...' but, if this is taken to indicate the standard number of the female chorus, it conflicts with Fiametta's statement in the Gondoliers which says there are four-and-twenty maids in love with only two gondolieri. If the last number is accepted then in Pirates we may assume that General Stanley has twenty-four daughters matched by two dozen pirates. However, the policemen are sufficient each to stand over a pirate, which brings the total to 72 beside the principal characters (about 8) and the servants mentioned by Kate (451), who may or may not have appeared but certainly cannot have been fewer than twelve - one to each pair of daughters. This raises the total possible number to little short of one hundred! *

Excavations have taken place on the ancient site of a theatre in Exeter beneath a collapsed office building and Dr. T. J. Brentford in his report has reconstructed the stage (Roborough Publications M.F.L.93). The dimensions calculated by him prove that sixty would have been as many as the stage could accommodate and this corroborates literary evidence. We know that there was a famous production of Ida in this theatre in 1962 and from a programme preserved in Exeter Museum (just behind the stuffed giraffe) I reckon the cast was about 58/9. I have been able to do further research in my own collection of period programmes which reveal that in productions at Newbury in the 1950's there were choruses of 25 for Trial (11 of them jurymen plus a foreman - quite correctly), 38 in Pinafore, 47 in Mikado and no less than 57 in Ida (cf. the Exeter production of that opera with 44). But the text of none of these operas mentions an actual figure. Gondoliers at Tiverton (Devon) in 1962, although Fiametta sang of 24 admirers for Guiseppe and Marco, produced only 15 adoring ladies - a chorus of 22 in all. The following year in St. Luke's (or possibly St. George's) Hall the Exeter Amateur Dramatic Society found for Patience 'Twenty-two love-sick maidens ...' in the opening scene! It seems that the audience of the Twentieth Century was either too doltish or too polite to notice the number of the chorus. There was certainly no fixed number for the chorus generally observed and probably never had been since the operas were first performed.

The basic ritual is not easy to assess but noting the importance of the gamos in all likelihood it originally celebrated the ritual marriage of a queen, (the

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* It will be noticed that I have entirely disregarded the theory of Prof. Gurray that the pirates, coming to claim Gen. Stanley's daughters, prove there were fifty of them when they sing;

'We seek a penalty fifty-fold ...' (478).

society was matriarchal; note mention of Queen Victoria in Pirates 482), and possibly the death and resurrection is that of her consort (Elsie's Fairfax in Yeomen, Ida's Hilarion etc.) The strongly egalitarian nature of some of the plots - Gondoliers passim; Sir Joseph Porter's remark 'Love is a platform on which all ranks meet.' etc. - leads one to think that the reversals from high to low rank are a memory of the custom (perhaps on the wedding day or its eve) that the master should serve the servant.

It is at any rate heartening that so many years after the last theatre closed BBC 42 are serialising the operas in coloured stereophony next month.

B. J. HARTNELL

SAMMY

Sammy the clerk was a paragon
That everybody sat upon
Then he found out the facts of life
One day and peculated right and left
Writing entries after hours
And he ran away from his wife
Bought a Bentley and had some fun

Visited old ladies with flowers
And did a champagne party every week
Till the accountant found the leak
And the bogies took him to the station
Which ruined his perfect reputation
The girl friends ran away from him
And the judge tore him from limb to limb
And they took his Bentley and stopped his fun.

JAKOB.

A Creative Misinterpretation of Aristotle

German life and letters in the earlier 18th Century were dominated almost exclusively by French influences. The fragmentation of the German-speaking world within the clumsy and largely imaginary framework of the Holy Roman Empire, the appalling devastation of the Thirty Years War, and the consequent dearth of a living autochthonic cultural tradition had led German intellectuals to look to the impressive achievements of Versailles as the only alternative to barbarism. Leibniz, the greatest philosopher of the German Enlightenment, wrote in Latin and French; Gottsched, an ardent admirer of the Grand Siecle, translated Corneille and Racine, and urged imitation of their style upon his fellow-countrymen; Frederick the Great, whose indifferent French verse Voltaire had the irksome privilege of correcting, possessed at his palace of Sanssouci (itself an imitation of Versailles) a magnificent library which contained not a single work in German, and though he is said to have had an eloquent command of German expletives, spoke only French at court. Yet within twenty years or so of the treaty of Hubertusburg the Cinderalla of European cultures possessed in Wolfgang von Goethe Europe's greatest lyric poet whose books accompanied Napoleon on his campaigns, in Immanuel Kant a dynamic thinker who revolutionized Western philosophy, and in Friedrich Schiller a powerful and imaginative dramatist of the first order. The credit for this amazing reversal of fortunes, characteristic of the impulsive and sometimes disastrous suddenness which the course of German civilization has always taken, must go very largely to one man, whom Professor Garland goes so far as to call the founder of modern German literature: Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. [1.]

When Lessing was appointed resident critic of the new repertory theatre in Hamburg in 1767 he was faced with a formidable but exciting challenge. Two-thirds of the entire repertory consisted of translations of French originals (ten from Voltaire alone) and the rest was little more than a pale imitation of their worst features. By analysing these plays in a regular series of articles Lessing was able to re-educate the artistic taste of the German public at large.[2.] The ill-fated company did not last; Lessing's criticism did. With incomparable polemical skill Lessing pitched into the Francophile pundits of a moribund classicism, exposed mercilessly the dramaturgical shortcomings of Voltaire and his imitators, and extolled bravely, if uncritically, the English tradition as one less alien to the German temperament. Throughout this short but momentous campaign the keenest and most destructive weapon in his arsenal was Aristotle, for not only had the Stagirite's reputation emerged from the Middle Ages unscathed as a literary Euclid, but it was in the lip-service paid to his literary dogma by Classicism that Lessing found the most vulnerable spot in the French armour. He hit upon the ingenious idea of undermining the authority of French Classicism, ostensibly based on the tenets of Aristotle's Poetics, by re-interpreting him, and demonstrating the false premises of French dramatic theory.

After a number of preliminary skirmishes in which Lessing dismisses the slavish imitation of the celebrated Unities as a cultural anachronism, and at the same time defending his classical protégé against the (alas too well-founded!) charge of inconsistency [3.], this most bellicose of all German critics launches his frontal assault on the bastion of pseudo-classical taste by means of a new evaluation of the key

passage in Aristotle's Poetics. For convenience the passage is given below, several translations being included in the notes [4].

> ἔστιν οὖν τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας καὶ τελείας μέγεθος ἐχούσης, ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ χωρὶς ἑκάστῳ τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις, δρώντων καὶ οὐ δι' ἀπαγγελίας, δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν.
>
> (Arist. Poetics VI, ii. 1449b)

The discussion of this passage arises from Lessing's analysis of a deservedly forgotten play by C. F. Weisse on the subject of Richard III, in which the criminal-hero inspires the same kind of spine-chilling horror as Corneille's Cléopâtre or Prussias. Lessing claims that Aristotle would have rejected such characters on the grounds that they do not evoke what he understood by φόβος, and which, together with ἔλεος it was the proper function of tragic art to arouse and purify in the spectator. Despite the fact that Corneille uses the term 'crainte' rather than 'terreur' favoured by Dacier, or even the 'horror' adopted by Heinius [5], Lessing maintains he implies the horrified emotional reaction to cheap sensationalism. He likewise rejects the word 'Schrecken' used by most German critics (including, curiously enough, Lessing himself in his earlier writings), and defines this as 'a sudden fear which takes the spectator by surprise' [6]. The only valid translation is 'Furcht', and Lessing refers to Aristotle's categorical rejection of the out-and-out villain as a feasible dramatic type in tragedy:

> οὐδ' αὖ τὸν σφόδρα πονηρὸν ἐξ εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν μεταπίπτειν· τὸ μὲν γὰρ φιλάνθρωπον ἔχοι ἄν ἡ τοιαύτη σύστασις ἀλλ' οὔτε ἔλεον οὔτε φόβον, ὁ μὲν γὰρ περὶ τὸν ἀνάξιόν ἐστιν δυστυχοῦντα, ὁ δὲ περὶ τὸν ὅμοιον, ἔλεος μὲν περὶ τὸν ἀνάξιον, φόβος δὲ περὶ τὸν ὅμοιον, ὥστε οὔτε ἐλεεινὸν οὔτε φοβερὸν ἔσται τὸ συμβαῖνον.
>
> (XIII 6, 1453.a)

Lessing dismisses the objection that we <u>do</u> in fact fear for a villainous character on grounds of common humanity, and pity his downfall for the same reason. Fair enough, is Lessing's comment, but this is <u>not</u> what Aristotle meant by pity and fear, and should be classified as τὸ φιλάνθρωπον, (Philanthropie) i.e. a universal moral sense regardless of deserts, or 'fellow-feeling for humanity' [7].

Lessing was perhaps the first to insist that both in psychology and in drama Aristotle conceived φόβος and ἔλεος as correlative or even complementary terms. He cites the now familiar passages from the <u>Rhetoric</u> in support of his argument, combining and paraphrasing them as follows:

> "Everything is fearful (= φοβερὸν) that would arouse our pity if it were to happen to someone else; and we find everything deserving of pity (= ἐλεεινὸν) that we should fear if it were in store for us". [8]

Lessing's conclusion, revolutionary for the 18th Century, is that φόβος must be taken exclusively with the phrase περὶ τὸν ὅμοιον and represents an empathetic or vicarious fear for the sufferer, as for oneself. In full:

> 'It is the fear, which derives from our similarity with the suffering character, for ourselves; it is the fear that the misfortunes which we see brought upon him might befall us ourselves. In short this fear is pity related to ourselves'.
>
> (Hamburgische Dramaturgie, Chap. 75, my italics)

Modern scholarship has largely supported Lessing's findings on this score. Thus Butcher defines Aristotelian φόβος as 'the sympathetic shudder we feel for a hero whose character in its essentials resembles our own'; and Else says of ἔλεος : 'The whole sentiment of pity is based on a sense of kinship with the person who suffers', taking ὅμοιος to imply 'a normal representative human being'. [9.]

This interpretation, like that of κάθαρσις, relies on the basic assumption that, despite Brecht, Wilder, Claudel and Durrenmatt, the self-identification of the spectator with the tragic sufferer is not only psychologically healthy, but emotionally unavoidable, an inexplicable but vital function of dramatic art which is as germane to the witnessing of μίμησις as the empathetic antics of spectators at a boxing-match.

In emphasising the similarity of the sufferer with ourselves, however, Lessing undoubtedly had an axe to grind, even if his discreet suppression of any specific reference to it in this context obscures the fact. In a much earlier section Lessing discussed with admirable modesty his own play 'Miss Sara Sampson' in the following terms:

> "The names of princes and heroes may give a play pomp and majesty; but they contribute nothing to the emotional effect. The misfortune of those whose circumstances are closest to our own must of necessity touch us most keenly".
>
> (Chap. 14, my italics) [10.]

The relationship between the words italicized and Lessing's interpretation of φόβος is obvious. It is particularly interesting that in citing Aristotle's description of the heroic character he stops short before being unnecessarily embarrassed by the phrase ἐν μεγάλῃ δόξῃ καὶ εὐτυχίᾳ which would scarcely have provided Aristotelian support for 'Miss Sara Sampson'!

This sensational drama had first been staged twelve years before the Hamburg appointment came up, in 1755. It flouted most of the classical rules, and provided a practical challenge to the devotees of classicism, long before it received its theoretical vindication. It is a domestic tragedy following the tradition of Lillo and Moore, instead of Corneille and Racine. It defies, though not very obtrusively, the Unity of Place, and draws its characters from the same social range as the epistolary novels of Samuel Richardson, whose effusive and bombastic sentimentality also affects the stilted prose in which the dialogue is couched. The lachrymose verbosity and strained psychology of the piece have relegated it from the repertory of the modern theatre to the less discriminating set-book lists of modern universities, but it remains a fascinating and withal a revolutionary experiment in dramatic form.

Lessing was in fact already at work on its much more powerful successor even whilst writing the Hamburg criticism, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the re-appraisal of Aristotle is a disguised apologia for his new art-form. His new play, Emilia Galotti (1772), belongs to the really great dramas of Europe, though many have found fault with it as a tragedy. Lessing sets out to dramatize the Virginia legend, in which a Roman patrician saved his daughter from outrage at the hands of a lascivious Decemvir, by death. [11.] He transposes the scene, however, from 5th century Rome to 18th century Italy, and his contemporary audiences had embarrassingly little difficulty in identifying their own political and social scene in this thin Italienate disguise. The characters speak an unaffected prose, and their actions are, with the debatable exception of the tragic dénouement, those of 'one like ourselves'. There are no heroics, no attitudinizing, rhetoric or poetry; but there is pity and fear, and an awe-inspiring sense of the 'lacrimae rerum'. The actual plot is so closely knit that when it unfolds, it does so with the inexorability of Oedipus Rex, though without perhaps its tragic pathos. If not emotionally, it is at least intellectually satisfying, and it was the pioneer of high domestic tragedy, which was to inspire Schiller to write his 'Kabale und Liebe', Hebbel his Maria Magdalena, and ultimately Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov and Shaw to translate their conception of universal destiny into terms of a decaying middle-class world, where audience and action shared a common heritage, and where self-identification resulted sometimes in nausea, sometimes in blank dismay, but at its best in self-questioning, and self-awareness. By his phrase περὶ τὸν ὅμοιον Aristotle can have meant little more than what Else calls 'a normal representative human being', i.e. neither saint nor sinner. By angling his interpretation in such a way as to give support to his theory of domestic tragedy Lessing paves the way for the democratization of tragedy which attained its 'non plus ultra' amongst the starving, rebellious weavers of Hauptmann's proletarian masterpiece, and the lower depths of Gorky's doss-house dramaturgy. It has been doubted whether this is an altogether laudable tendency, but that Lessing's misconception of Aristotle that led to it was creative, is beyond dispute, for it fathered some of the greatest drama in the European repertoire. [12.]

Equally biased, provocative and productive is Lessing's interpretation of Aristotle's still much-debated κάθαρσις. Purification of what, for instance? In his Trois Discours Corneille had made it fairly obvious he took the phrase τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων to refer not to φόβος and ἔλεος , which it plainly does, but to the emotions demonstrated in the drama, and which we must learn to avoid by observing the error into which characters fall who display them. [13.] Lessing rightly rejects this didactic conception of catharsis, and insists on pity and fear as its proper objects. Modern scholarship is almost unanimously with him here, taking τοιούτων as more or less synonymous with τούτων , though Lessing goes on to qualify the reading by paraphrasing 'all forms of philanthropic stimulus' [14.]. He slyly suggests that Corneille's interpretation was a belated attempt to justify his own non-Aristotelian characters such as Polyeucts and Cléopâtre who arouse neither pity nor fear, let alone both together as Aristotle demands. In rejecting the traditional view Lessing undermines one of the most sacred concepts of the Enlightenment: that of the theatre as a moral institution where the spectators learn to avoid the sinful excesses of the hero whose misfortunes they have witnessed. But he replaces it by one which is infinitely more valuable.

Where most commentators had adopted a moral or religious view of catharsis, Lessing boldly comes out in favour of the medical or psychological view. He claims that tragedy should redress the balance of pity and fear within the personality of the spectator i.e. it acts as a medicinal corrective against errors in either direction [15]. Since Bernays Aristotelian criticism has more or less upheld this interpretation. [16] There is little doubt that catharsis is used as a medical term, and that it refers to a draining away, or a re-channelling of excess, though this will of necessity imply purification of the remainder. [17] This is almost certainly an 'ad hominem' argument to refute Plato, who had maintained that 'poetry feeds and waters the passions instead of starving them'. [18] This is surely the original form of the dispute which still rages over the purpose and achievement of art, even in its most popular guise. i.e. educationalists argue whether we sublimate or stimulate latent criminal tendencies by bringing 'Z-cars' and Perry Mason' within reach of every potential juvenile delinquent. Aristotle maintained that such passions as Plato feared <u>are</u> latent in the human soul, but that they can be sublimated successfully through art, and particularly through tragedy which makes us feel we are actually enduring vicariously the sufferings of greater mortals, and thus canalize the mawkish sentimentality and petty panic of real life into the sublime pity and fear of tragedy.

What Lessing could not, as a child of the Enlightenment, ever have grasped is that to the Greek mind pity and fear are in themselves unhealthy emotions which threaten to get out of hand and need the psychiatric corrective of tragedy to keep them under control. Although Lessing allows for the possibility of correcting an excess of either emotion, he is really thinking more of a deficiency. In a letter to his Jewish philosopher friend Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing states 'It is the function of tragedy simply to practice pity' and again 'Without doubt the finest character is he who has the greatest capacity for pity.' (1756) It is true that Lessing has enlarged his views on catharsis in the meantime, to embrace the concept of fear, but his final definition still smacks of the 'practice' theory:

> 'This purification consists in nothing other than the transmutation of the emotions into virtuous propensities.' (chap. 78) [19]

Thus Lessing has it both ways. He upholds the now current medical theory, but presents it in a moral form i.e. our aesthetic re-education through tragedy has a moral function after all, substantiating what Lessing had said earlier in his criticism that the theatre as a whole is 'die Schule der moralischen Welt' (chap. 2)

This is clearly not what Aristotle was trying to say, but it is by no means impossible that Aristotle would agree with its application to modern dramatic art nevertheless, for the end-result of his form of tragedy was the healthy functioning of the human personality - a form which would surely find a place in Plato's Utopia. And which Aristotelianism is more needed in modern art, Aristotle's or Lessing's? Despite the organized hysteria of Nazism, and the commercial emotionalism of the modern teenager, is <u>not</u> the most apparent threat to our culture a lack of spontaneous feeling, a blunting of our emotional awareness? Is there a surfeit or a dearth of just that instinctive compassion for the suffering of others, of just that fearful awe in the face of life's insoluble enigma? F. L. Lucas has said 'We go to tragedies not in the least to get rid of emotions, but to have them more abundantly; to banquet, not to purge.' [20]

Lessing certainly misinterpreted his Aristotle, whether wilfully or not is hard to say, but his misinterpretation was at least productive of great drama. Has not the modern theatre with the kitchen-sinks and dustbins that clutter its stage not substituted reflection (even in the distorting mirror of the Absurd) for inspiration, by reading τὸ μιαρὸν, as Lessing asserts of Corneille, instead of τὸ φοβεοὸν and τὸ ἔλεινὸν ? Has it not, by unconsciously accepting the more academically correct medical view of catharsis, offered us an emetic instead of an elixir?

K. A. DICKSON

Notes and references

1. H. B. Garland: Lessing, founder of modern German Literature, Cambridge, 1937.
2. Hamburgische Dramaturgie, 1767-9. The most useful edition is that of Otto Mann, Stuttgart 1958.
3. e.g. Aristotle's pronouncement on the best form of Peripeteia, (Ch.XIV) which conflicts with his statement that tragedy should end in misfortune. Lessing's argument that Aristotle is speaking of different parts of the tragic plot, is somewhat specious. (Sections 37-38) It is probable that our text of the Poetics is only a set of lecture-notes, in view of which it may well be wondered that Aristotle did not contradict himself more often!
4. Tragedy is, then, a representation of an action that is heroic and complete (in itself) and of a certain magnitude - by means of (a) language enriched with all kinds of ornament, each used separately in the different parts of the play; it represents men in action and does not use narrative, and through pity and fear it effects relief to these and similar emotions. (W. Hamilton Fyfe - Loeb Classical Library).
5. per misericordiam et horrorem eorundem expiationem affectuum inducit (1611)
6. 'eine plötzliche überraschende Furcht' (St.74, pp.cit.p.291)
7. Gerard F. Else, Aristotle's Poetics: the argument, Harvard U.P. 1957, p.369.
8. Rhet. II, 5; II, 8. (1382b; 1386a) Lessing refers particularly to the line ὡς δ' ἁπλως εἰπεῖν, φοβερά ἐστιν., ὅσα ἐφ'ἑτέρων γιγνόμενα ἢ μέλλοντα, ἐλεεινὰ ἐστιν and draws attention to a curious mistranslation by Aemilius Portus (1598) which reads 'denique ut simpliciter loquar, formidabilia sunt, quaecunque simulac in aliorum potestatem venerunt, vel ventura sunt, miseranda sunt' Lessing corrects the Latin to 'quaecunque simulac aliis evenerunt, vel eventura sunt.' Lessing's German version runs: Alles das ist uns fürchterlich, was, wenn es einem andern begegnet wäre, oder begegnen sollte, unser Mitleid erwecken würde: und alles das finden wir mitleidswürdig, was wir fürchten würden, wenn es uns selbst bevorstünde.'
9. S. H. Butcher, Aristotle's theory of poetry and fine art, London 1932, p.259 Else, op.cit., p.373, n.31.
10. 'Die Namen von Fürsten und Helden können einem Stücke Pomp und Majestät geben; aber zur Rührung tragen sie nichts bei. Das Unglück derjenigen, deren Umstände den unsrigen am nächsten kommen, muss natürlicherweise am tiefsten in unsere

Seele dringen; und wenn wir mit Königen Mitleiden haben, so haben wir es mit ihnen als mit Menschen, und nicht als mit Königen.' (ed.cit.p.57)

11. Livy Ab urbe condita, III, 44-54.

12. F. L. Lucas laments the passing of heroic tragedy in his admirable study Tragedy in relation to Aristotle's Poetics, London 1953, p.117.

13. cf. Curtius (1753) who translates the last part of the section on catharsis: 'vermittelst des Schreckens und Mitleidens von den Fehlern der vorgestellten Leidenschaften reiniget.' (by means of terror and pity purges (us) of the errors of the emotions demonstrated)

14. 'alle philanthropische Erregungen' (chap.77 ed. cit., p.304)

15. Oddly enough Lessing is here resuscitating a forgotten theory of the Italian Renaissance e.g. Minturno L'arte poetica, 1564. see Butcher p.247. Milton echoes this in his Preface to Samson Agonistes with the words "to temper and reduce them to just measure." Dacier (1692) also came very close to it in saying 'la tragédie est donc une véritable médecine, qui purge les passions' but went on to apply it in the Cornelian tradition by suggesting that an over-ambitious man would learn to overcome his ambition etc.

16. Bernays Zwei Abhandlungen über die Aristotelische Theorie des Drama 1857. So also Gomperz, Rostagni, Gudman, Butcher, Bywater, Lucas. see esp. Butcher, op.cit., p.245 ff., and Lucas op.cit., p.24. For a different modern approach, however, see Else, op.cit., pp.227, 425

17. Thus the derivative ἀποκαθήρεσθαι in the sense of 'to get rid of' (Tim.Locr. 104 B, Xen.Cyr.2.2.27); but there is also ἀποκαθαίρλειν in the sense of 'to refine (of metals, by smelting)' (Strabo 399)

18. τρέφει γὰρ ταῦτα ἁρδουσα, δέον αὐχμεῖν (Rep. X, 606 D)

19. 'die Verwandlung der Leidenschaften in tugendhafte Fertigkeiten'.

20. F. L. Lucas, op.cit., p.52.

DO YOU KNOW HORACE'S ODES BY HEART? EVEN IF YOU DON'T YOU CAN STILL FIND THE FAMOUS GREEK QUOTATION BELOW!

Here are eleven quotations from the Odes of Horace, each with one word missing. All you have to do is supply the missing words, then write down, in order, a Greek equivalent of each word (not necessarily the sense in the context). The initial letters of the words in this list will spell out a well-known quotation from a Greek author.

1. importunus enim transvolat aridas
quercus et refugit te, quia luridi
dentes, te quia rugae
turpant et ..... nives.

2. puer quis ex aula capillis
ad cyathum statuetur unctis,
doctus ..... tendere Sericas
arcu paterno?

3. inclinare meridiem
sentis ac, veluti stet volucris .....

4. nec Semeleius
cum Marte confundet Thyoneus
.....

5. saepius ..... agitur ingens
pinus et celsae graviore casu
decidunt turres

6. frigora metescunt Zephyris, ... proterit aestus
interitura

7. micat inter omnes
Iulium sidus velut inter ignes
..... minores.

8. frustra: nam gelidos inficiet tibi
rubro ..... rivos
lascivi suboles gregis.

9. quo die
portus Alexandrea .....
et vacuam patefecit aulam

10. non ..... neque aureum
mea renidet in domo lacunar

11. contracta ..... aequora sentiunt
iactis in altum molibus.

MARGARET MATTHEWS

CROSS-WORD SOLUTION

	1 C	2 L	Y	3 T	E	M	N	4 E	S	5 T	R	6 A		
7 L		A		U				C		E		R		8 T
9 E	L	E	C	T	R	10 A		11 Q	U	A	S	I		R
X		V		E		D		U		M		A		I
12 P	I	U	S		13 T	O	P	O	S		14 I	D	E	M
O		S		15 T		R				16 S		N		A
17 M	I		18 M	A	R	O		19 N	O	T	W	E	L	L
P				N						E				C
20 E	C	21 L	O	G	A	22 E		23 O	N	E	E	24 A	C	H
I		A		O		L		E		D		L		I
25 A	26 C	C	A		27 A	E	T	N	A		28 S	C	I	O
	29 U	R		30 F		U		O		31 M		M		N
32 P	R	I	M	I		S		33 T	R	I	C	E	N	I
I		M		A		I		R		C		N		S
A		34 A	N	T	I	S	T	I	T	A		E		

BARRY D. PAGE