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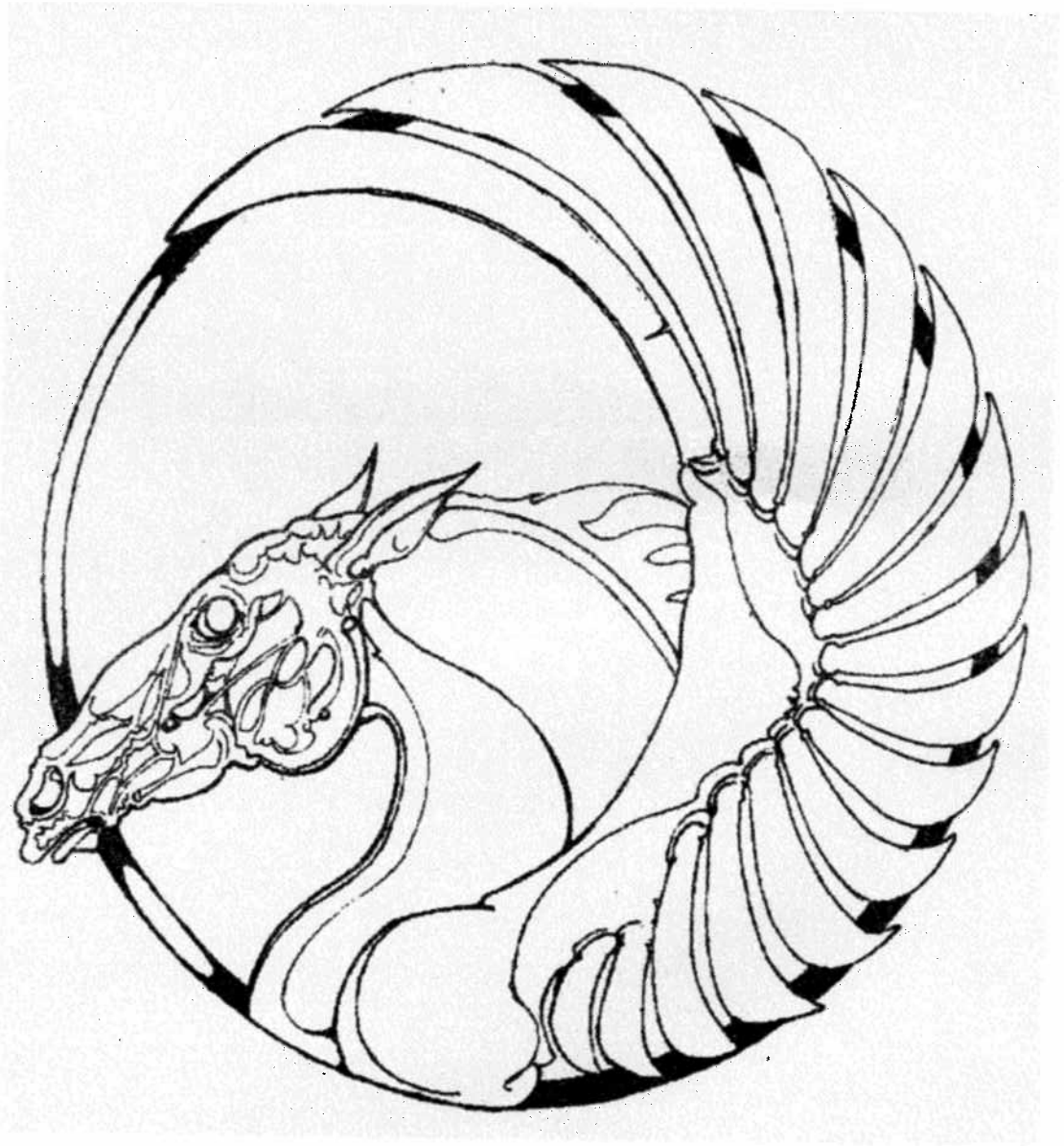
The Journal of the University of Exeter Department of Classics and Ancient History



Issue 43

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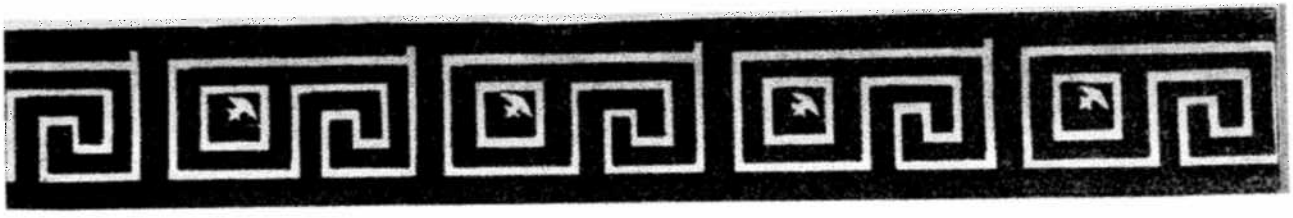
Correspondence for Subscriptions to:
Mr. Matthew Wright
c/o Dept. of Classics
and Ancient History
Queens Building
University of Exeter
Exeter EX4 4QH

Correspondence for *Res Gestae* to:
David Harvey
53 Thorton Hill
Exeter, EX4 4NR

Acknowledgements

We wish to extend a special 'Thank You' to Larry Shenfield, who retired this year from our 'Editorial Collective', for the significant contributions he has made to previous issues of the Journal. His insight and experience will be sorely missed. We should also like to thank Andy Thomas for the original cover illustration on the front of this year's edition.



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PEGASUS

ΠΗΓΑΣΟΣ

THE JOURNAL OF THE UNIVSRSITY OF EXETER
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND ANCIENT HISTORY

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Departmental News

Chris Gill

Conferences and Visiting Speakers

Three international conferences have taken place since the last issue of *Pegasus*. In July 1999, Richard Seaford and Lynette Mitchell organised a conference on *Money and Culture in Ancient Greece*, with speakers from Brazil, Israel, UK and USA. A special feature was a brilliant production of Aristophanes' *Wealth*, directed by Yana Zarifi, with a cast of young professional actors (and Richard Seaford!), held in the grounds of Reed Hall. This performance is to form the basis of a BBC TV programme. In January 2000, David Braund organised a conference on *Scythians and Greeks*, funded by the AHRB (Arts and Humanities Research Board). This conference brought together for the first time experts from right across the world to report on the latest research on the Black Sea area in Antiquity. Eleven speakers came from the former Soviet bloc (Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kiev) and six from Israel, Switzerland and the UK. A joint academic project is to be set up between the University of Exeter and the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.

A very special event for the Department was the conference on *Myth, History and Performance in Republican Rome*, held to mark the 60th birthday of Peter Wiseman, Professor of Classics at Exeter since 1977. Thirteen leading scholars of Roman history, literature, archaeology and religion from Italy, the UK and USA engaged with some of the main themes of Peter Wiseman's past and continuing research. A volume based on the conference is to be published by the University of Exeter Press, a press whose standing Peter has done much to enhance by his own publications.

Visitors to the Research Seminar or Classical Association this year included Ewen Bowie (Oxford), Lucilla Burn (British Museum), Gregory Dobrov (Michigan), John North (UCL), and Ian Storey (Trent, Canada). The Jackson Knight Memorial Lecture, held regularly to honour a former member of the Department, was given by Shadi Bartsch of Chicago on 'The Self as Audience: Paradoxes of Identity in Imperial Rome'.

Publications

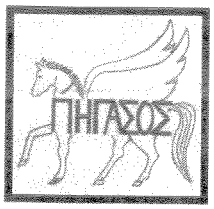
Emma Gee has published a book based on her PhD thesis, which won the Hare prize as the best Cambridge PhD of her year; the book, *Ovid, Aratus, and Augustus: Astronomy in Ovid's Fasti* is published by Cambridge University Press. Chris Gill has published a new translation of Plato's *Symposium* for Penguin Classics. Four volumes of essays, based on conferences organised by members of the Department, are now in press. These are: *Athenaeus and His World*, edd. David Braund and The Rivals of Aristophanes, edd. David Harvey and John Wilkins (Duckworth), *Pollution and the Ancient City*, edd. Val Hope and Eireann Marshall (Routledge), and *Hygieia: Good Health in Antiquity*, ed. Karen Stears (Routledge).

Other News

John Wilkins has been promoted to a Readership: his new book, *The Boastful Chefs: The Discourse of Food in Greek Comedy*, will be published by Oxford University Press during 2000. Peter Wiseman has been awarded a Research Fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust to enable him to spend the year working on a major new book on Roman Myth. His replacement has been Karl Woodgett, a former undergraduate and MA student in the Department who is presently completing an Oxford doctoral thesis on Roman Historiography. John Marr is also on study leave, writing a book on the 'Old Oligarch', an important source for fifth-century Athenian Political History. Richard Seaford is spending the second semester in Austin, Texas, as a Distinguished Visiting Professor. Sergei Saprykin from Moscow and Darejan Kacharava from Tbilisi are major scholars in their fields working with David Braund on the Black Sea History Project, with funding from the AHRB and the University of Exeter. Eireann Marshall, who is completing her doctoral thesis on Cyrenaica and teaching part-time, gave birth to her second son Gabriel in September 1999.

Undergraduate numbers remain buoyant, with nearly 70 students admitted this year. The most recent new Combined Honours, in History and Ancient History is proving attractive, and a further new programme, in Greek and Roman Studies and Theology, begins next year, cementing the relationship between the two Departments in the School of Classics, Ancient History and Theology. Student numbers in (traditional) Classics remain firm with 8-10 new entrants each year. The student Classical Society has been revitalised by a new committee, led by third-year undergraduate Alex Stovell. Two postgraduates, Arlene Allan and Eleanor Okell, are directing a production of Euripides' *Alkestis* with a cast drawn from students in the Department. Eleanor has also taken over as Meetings Secretary of the South West Branch of the Classical Association.

Since 1997, eight postgraduates have completed PhD theses in the Department, and four of them have obtained university lectureships: Kostas Niafas in Cyprus, Muzzafer Demir in Mugla, Turkey, Alex Nice in Witswatersrand, South Africa, and Alexei Zadorojnyi in Liverpool. The most recent thesis was that of Fiona McHardy, who has taught Greek for some years in this Department and more recently at Bristol University. A new addition to the postgraduate community is Matthew Wright, who comes with a BA and MSt from Oxford; he has been awarded a Graduate Teaching Assistantship while writing his PhD thesis on Euripides.



STAFF RESEARCH REPORTS

David Braund D.C.Braund@exeter.ac.uk

In addition to the Black Sea History Project, I am trying to complete *Greeks, Scythians and Amazons* for Routledge. With John Wilkins I shall be bringing out a large collection of papers on Athenaeus this year, published by University of Exeter Press as *Athenaeus and his World.*

Emma Gee E.R.G.Gee@exeter.ac.uk

My monograph, Ovid, Aratus and Augustus, has now appeared. During Michaelmas I spent a productive period of study-leave in Cambridge, Oxford and Rome, starting on two new projects, a commentary on Cicero's Aratea, and a book for the Routledge Sciences of Antiquity series on Greek and Roman science. I presented a paper on the Aratea to the Research seminar on the 15th of Feb. This showed the kinds of things I'm interested in in connection with the Aratea: its context within the Ciceronian oeuvre, and the broader Late Republican context of astronomical writings. I shall present further papers to the Classical Association at Bristol in April and to the Cambridge Literary seminar on the 3rd of May.

Chris Gill C.J.Gill@exeter.ac.uk

I am currently writing a book on later ancient ethics and psychology called *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought*, for publication by Oxford University Press.

David Harvey F.D.Harvey@exeter.ac.uk

I'm desperately trying to complete *The Rivals of Aristophanes* (essays on Greek comedy edited by John Wilkins & myself), and I'm still involved with the Exeter *Tragic Fragments* book (ed. Gentry & McHardy) and the OUP edition of David Hume's *Essays* (see *Pegasus* 1999). I now find that I am one of Geoffrey de Ste. Croix' three literary executors. We hope to bring out one volume of his unpublished essays on Judaeo-Christian topics (*Radical Conclusions*), and another on Greek history, which will contain his published articles together with a number of unpublished ones that have been circulating in typescript for decades.

Rebecca Langlands R.Langlands@exeter.ac.uk

I an currently finishing my PhD dissertation which is a study of ideas about gender and heroism and virtue in Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Deeds and Words*, a collection of exemplary tales from history probably written as an resource for Roman orators, and dedicated to the

collection of exemplary tales from history probably written as an resource for Roman orators, and dedicated to the emperor Tiberius

John Marr J.L.Marr@exeter.ac.uk

I am currently working on the 'Old Oligarch', or pseudo-Xenophon, *The Constitution of the Athenians*, with a view to producing an edition with introduction, text, translation and commentary.

Lynette Mitchell L.G.Mitchell@exeter.ac.uk

I am continuing my work on a book looking at Greek relations with non-Greeks and the development and implications of the ideology of the 'barbarian' from the archaic period to the death of Alexander (a book which will probably be called, not surprisingly, *Greeks and Barbarians*).

Norman Postlethwaite

N.Postlethwaite@exeter.ac.uk

'Between preparing interminable documentation for the Department's Teaching Quality Self Appraisal and, beyond that, Teaching Quality Appraisal in November 2000, I have continued my work on Gesture in Homer and the Bronze Age in the Aegean. In particular, I am looking at the way physical objects are used in the poems to adapt or enhance scenes, and also to what extent the iconography of Minoan-Mycenaean works of art can help in this exercise'.

Richard Seaford R.A.S.Seaford@exeter.ac.uk

I am continuing my project on the consequences of ancient Greece being the first monetised society in history, especially for philosophy and tragedy. This project requires numismatics, social history, philosophy, literature, religion, and psychology, and so will not come to fruition for some time!

John Wilkins J..M.Wilkins@exeter.ac.uk

Having completed my book *The Boasrful Chef: The Discourse of Food in Ancient Greek Comedy* (OUP), as well as co-editing *Athenaeus and his World* with David Braund (UEP) and *The Rivals of Aristophanes* with David Harvey (Duckworth) - all forthcoming this year, I am currently preparing Vol.55 of Bude Galen, *de alimentorum facultatibus.*

Peter Wiseman T.P.Wiseman@exeter.ac.uk

I'm getting going on what will eventually be a big book on the *Myths of Rome*: two chapters done so far. I've also written a chapter 'Roman History and the Ideologocal Vacuum' for a collection of essays on classical subjects by the British Academy.

Dionysus and the Hippie Convoy: ritual, myth and metaphor in the cult of Dionysus

John Gould

This is the text of the **18th Jackson Knight Memorial Lecture** given in 1988

Dionysus is on the move. In one sense, of course - the sense which may provide an explanation, if not an excuse, for my original rather flippant title - he always has been: I shall come back to that. But in another, the last few decades have seen a major re-examination of the god, his myth and his cult and in consequence the whole image of Dionysus has sharpened and shifted considerably, even if in a characteristically multiform way. This is a good moment, then, to take stock of our present sense of the power of Dionysus and of the way, or better ways, in which that power was perceived and mediated through language, imagery and ritual.

It is right that we should start with the work of Albert Henrichs who more than any other single individual has been responsible for this reassessment of Dionysus. In a whole series of articles beginning with his first study in 1969,[1] of two third-century Hellenistic inscriptions from Miletus, - the one the tombstone of a priestess, the other the record of a contract for the sale of a priesthood of Dionysus Bacchois.[2] Henrichs has insisted on a sharp distinction both between the cult of Dionysus and his myth and between the divergent roles of the two sexes in the worship of the god. The cult of Dionysus for men centres on the ritual drinking of wine (in which women never take part), while maenadic dancing in honour of the god is the exclusive preserve of women. The boundaries between these roles are never crossed nor the line of demarcation blurred. 'Wine-drinking maenads are as unheard of in real life and actual cult as male maenads.' The exception that proves the rule for Henrichs is the example of Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae:* Pentheus goes to the mountain to participate in Bacchic ritual as a 'maenadic transvestite' and his fate on the mountainside confirms 'the exclusive nature of maenadic rites'. Henrichs stresses the 'wide discrepancy between the mythic-conception of the maenad in literature and art as opposed to the ritual maenadism that emerges from historical authors and the epigraphical record'.

The article from which I have been quoting[3] is an elegant demolition of the widespread belief that two passages in *Bacchae* establish the existence of a 'single male celebrant' in Bacchic ritual - the male leader of the *thiasos,* identified with the god himself. Henrichs shows that the 'male celebrant' is a phantom created by misplaced and unnecessary textual emendation and that the mystic identification of god and worshipper is the product of the influence of Romanticism on nineteenth-century scholarship. He also reminds us that E.R. Dodds, earlier the most influential adherent of the view that Henrichs is attacking, abandoned his support for it in a brief addendum to his note on *Bacchae* 135 published in the 1960 second edition of his great commentary, though that change of mind has had almost no effect on subsequent discussion of Dionysiac ritual, which remains committed both to the 'male celebrant' and to the identity of god and worshipper.[4] That last point is worth a moment's pause. It should remind us that the question of Dionysus is one of those questions the answers to which have to satisfy requirements that go beyond and may even displace rational demands for adequacy of evidence and cogency of argument.

The conclusions of Henrichs' article[5] have to stand. They are certainly correct. But does the whole of Henrichs' re-interpretation of Dionysiac religion, despite its immensely detailed documentation and refinement of argument, have the same cogency? I have misgivings, in particular about whether the conclusions always follow from the evidence and about whether the tendency of his argument is not reductionist, if not in the inferences that he himself draws from it, then in those that seem to be drawn, almost as self-evident, by others.

For example, an important strand in Henrichs' re-interpretation of ritual maenadism is that it is not a matter of sudden, spontaneous and unpredictable seizure, leading to 'wild ecstasy and blood-thirsty violence' in which the maenads, 'oblivious of husbands, looms and all standards of decency', turn to 'unmitigated wantonness'. Rather it is a regular, biennial rite, incorporated into the rituals of the *polis,* in which women, organized into ordered companies *(thiasoi),* dance in the mountains: they are ordinary mortals who 'suffered from exhaustion,

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1 *ZPE* 4 [1969] 223-41

2 The two inscriptions are Wiegand, *Sitzungsbericht* Berlin 1905, 547; and Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure* (Paris, 1955), 48, on which see below, n. 10.

3 'Male Intruders among the Maenads: the so- called male celebrant', *Mnemai: Classical Studies in memory of Karl E. Hulley,* (ed. H.D. Evgen, Chico, Cal. 1984), 69-91

4 The fullest statement of Dodd's view of maenadic ritual remains *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951), 270-82

5 'Male intruders among the Maenads', 69-70

got stuck in snow-storms and were respectable enough to be honoured by their cities after their death.[6] The rhetoric is enjoyable, but the implied inference seems to be that a ritual so ordered, regular and 'every-day' in its manifestations simply excludes the perception of Dionysus as a power destructive of order and of his worshippers as enacting rebellion against a male-dominated society. That perception, Henrichs argues, is embodied in maenadic myth but quite alien to the realities of maenadic ritual. But the case is surely less clearcut than Henrichs would have us believe.

Partly this is precisely because what we are dealing with is a matter of 'perceptions', of collective representations, in which the perceived form of a cult may be more potent than the 'transcriptional' reality of the same act. I have argued this elsewhere[7] in the case of Herodotus' reports of oracular responses, as against the positivist account of such responses offered by Fontenrose.[8] We understand more of the ancient Greek perception of the nature of oracular knowledge and of human communication with divinity if we accept the 'reality' of Herodotus' stories than if we simply discard them as 'unhistorical', as Fontenrose would have us do.

But in any case the boundary between the cult act and its representation is perhaps less easily drawn than we might think. Where, for example - on which side of that boundary - do we locate the names and titles of Dionysus? If we call Dionysus 'Omestes', or 'Omadios' or 'Anthroporraistes', are we in the realm of 'maenadic myth' or is this an aspect of the reality of cult? [9] It would be excessive positivism to deny that such titles were part of the language of cult (and may have been part of the language of prayer) and yet these names seemingly attribute to the god actions which Henrichs has argued belong to his mythical persona and not to the realities of 'ritual maenadism'. In that realm the *omophagion* was handled, not eaten, by the god's worshippers - or so a unique and tantalizingly ambiguous phrase in the second of the inscriptions from Miletus seems to imply - in an act which Henrichs describes as 'hardly more than a token tribute to the ritualistic savagery of... myth'.[10]

Once again we are confronting the issue of collective representations. The question of what 'really' happened is not answerable except in terms of culturally determined perceptions. Moreover, in order to understand the perceived significance of Dionysiac ritual, we have to take account of the socially and culturally defined medium through which that perception is transmitted to us. Let us go back once more to the issue of maenadic ritual. Henrichs' account of it is based on 'historical authors and the epigraphical record'. Setting aside the issue of date (three of the five Greek inscriptions are Hellenistic; the other two Imperial), all five of the texts which constitute the 'epigraphical record' are public records, inscribed on stone, of the cult activity of individual maenads or of maenadic *thiasoi*. Not surprisingly, they convey, in wholly unemotional language, a sense of 'what really happened' which is entirely without resonance: this is a prosaically ordinary experience. However, in one of the most important, from Magnesia

on the Maeander, the account of 'what happened' is juxtaposed with the response of the Delphic oracle which was the warrant for what was done in Magnesia to acknowledge the power of Dionysus.[11] There is a striking difference in tone between the oracle and what is described as done 'in accordance with' it. We should

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6 'Changing Dionysiac Identities', *Self-Definition in the Greco-Roman World* (ed. B.F. Meyer and E.P. Sanders, London, 1982), 137-60: the quotation is from p. 143)

7 P.E. Easterling and J.V. Muir edd., *Greek Religion and Society*, Cambridge, 1985, 22-4 and 221 n. 17; see also Simon Price, ibid. 128-54, esp. 132-4; 141-5

8 *The Delphic Oracle* (Berkeley, 1978, passim.)

9 For a careful and sane discussion of the cults of Dionysus Omestes, Omadios and Anphroporraistes, see now Fritz Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, (Rome, 1985, 74-80

10 Sokolowski, *Lois Sacrées de l'Asie Mineure*, no.48. Interpretation of this inscription centres on the meaning of the phrase *omophagion emballein*, on which see most recently N. Robertson, *GRBS* 29 (1988), 220-2. Robertson reverts to the view of Wiegand, the first editor, that the 'thing to be eaten raw' was 'thrown into' an underground chamber, as with the pigs offered to Demeter, perhaps at the Skira. (For other views, see, for example, A.J. Festugiere, *Études de religion grecque et hellenistique*, (Paris, 1972), 110-13 and Robertson, loc. cit., 221, n.48). The beginning of the inscription is lost and in view of the fact that *omophagion* occurs only here in ancient Greek, interpretation must be more than usually hazardous: in particular it must be rash to base an understanding of maenadic ritual on this one phrase.

11 Kern *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander*, .no. 215.The inscription claims to publish the text of an 'old oracle' given by Apollo at Delphi in response to a consultation by the people of Magnesia. The consultation was occasioned by the omen of a plane tree brought down by the wind in the city. In the tree an 'image of Dionysus' was discovered and the enquiry concerned the meaning of this portent and the action which was to be taken as a result of it. Apollo's oracle notes that the founders of Magnesia had dedicated no temple to Dionysus and instructs the city to construct a temple, found a priesthood and to send to

not be surprised if in other social context the same witnesses gave a quite other account of the same actions, one which would have conveyed a sense of their behaviour which was altogether closer to 'myth' than to 'reality', in Henrichs' use of the two terms.

Let us look now at another piece of evidence, this time from a 'historical author', as to the nature of Dionysiac ritual. The passage is excluded from Henrichs' tally because the ritual of which Herodotus gives, in passing, an account is not, he asserts, 'maenadic'. He offers no argument but I take it that the reason is that there is no indication in Herodotus' text that the ritual concerned was biennial. (If it was, then that must have been in the past: given the ending on this occasion, it would be hardly surprising if it ceased to be so. The reason can hardly be, unless we are caught up in a circular argument, that the central figure in his narrative is male.)

In Book 4, chapters 78-80, Herodotus is offering evidence to support his assertion that the Scythians regard the adoption of alien customs as repugnant. He has cited the fate of Anacharsis, who was not only killed but whose memory was expunged from the community ('If anybody now speaks of Anacharsis, the Scythians say they have not heard of him'.) He now turns to his second example, the Scythian king Skyles. Skyles' mother was a Greek from Istria at the mouth of the Danube and he was brought up by his mother to speak and write Greek. After he became king, he used frequently to visit the Greek city of Olbia on the Dnieper, wear Greek dress and make offerings to 'the gods according to Greek custom'. He had a house built in the town and married a Greek woman in addition to his father's widow, whom he had married on his father's death. Finally he is seized by a desire to be initiated into the cult of Dionysus Baccheios. Lightning strikes the grounds of his house and the house is burnt down: the house itself became a sacred place, an *abaton*, because struck by lightning.[12]

In spite of this omen, Skyles is initiated.He takes part in the rituals of the *thiasos* and Herodotus reports of him that 'he celebrate[d] the Bacchic rites and [was] made mad by the god' *(baccheui te kai hupo tou theou mainetai:* Herodotus uses the word three times in his account of Skyles' initiation). His secret acts are revealed to the Scythians who rise up against him; he escapes into Thrace but is betrayed by the Thracian king to his brother and beheaded. Now if anything is clear from this passage it is that Skyles' behaviour is perceived by Herodotus on the model of [female] maenadism. It is irrelevant to that conclusion that 'it is not known whether or not women participated' in the Bacchic rites of Olbia.[13] That is to confuse perception with 'reality': Herodotus' perception is to be read from Herodotus' text, where the verb 'to be [driven] mad' occurs, as we have seen, three times in the chapters given to Skyles.

Herodotus' story of Skyles introduces a further significant motif into our discussion of the religion of Dionysus. The maenadic cult of the god polarized 'inside' and 'outside' in a way that is definitive, for Henrichs as for others, of its nature. One of the most interesting results of Henrichs' meticulous researches is to have established with a high degree of probability that the ritual cry 'to the mountain, to the mountain' *(eis oros, eis oros)* was a historical part of the liturgy of Dionysus. It was not only in 'myth' that the god's maenadic worshippers defined their cult acts by going 'outside', not merely 'outside the house, as in other cult acts in which women participated (Thesmophoria, Skira) but outside the city itself into the other world of the mountain.[14] It is one way among many in which the divine persona of Dionysus is marked as alien and 'other'.

Now the story of Skyles simply inverts the polarity of 'inside' and 'outside'. The Scythians were of course a nomadic people, shepherding livestock, whose nomadism, for Herodotus as for other Greeks, aligned them with what was 'outside' in cultural as well as spatial terms. Of all the peoples that Herodotus describes it is the Scythians towards whom he displays the greatest repugnance and that repugnance is due not merely to their customs but also to the fact that Scythian culture seemed to deny all that for the Greeks was definitive of the very idea of culture itself. They built nothing, created no cities and the landscape across which they moved unceasingly contained no trace of their existence. They left no mark, not even that essential mark of human culture, the 'works of men' *(erga anthropon* in the Homeric phrase), cultivated land. In the story of Skyles, that sense of the Scythians' total inversion of normality is itself expressed in the inversion of the Dionysiac polarity of 'inside' and

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Thebes for maenads from the family of Kadmos' daughters, Ino, who are to set up *thiasoi* of Bacchos and rituals in his honour. Three maenads, the inscription records, were sent from Thebes; they 'formed' (*sunegagon*) *thiasoi* and were given public burial in Magnesia when they died: their burial places are duly recorded. The inscription tells us no more. For the form of consultation Pomtow (*Jahrbüch für Klass. Philologie,* 1896) compared [Demosthenes] 43.66. Here too the consultation is promted by an omen and the oracle prescribes dances and other ritual acts in honour of a variety of gods and heroes. We can add Demosthenes 21.51-3 which offers a further parallel, including an instruction from the oracle of Zeus at Dodona to offer sacrifices and dances and to mix wine in honour of Dionysos.

[12] Walter Burkert, *Glossa*30, 1960, 209-12

[13] Henrichs, 'Male Intruders' ..., loc. cit.

[14] Richard Buxton, *Imaginary Greece: the Contexts of Mythology* (Cambridge 1994)

'outside': Skyles goes inside the Greek *polis* of Olbia to take part in the rituals of the god and in so doing passes outside the world of Scythian 'culture'. Dionysus remains an 'outsider', a power to be worshipped 'outside'.

Let us widen the argument by taking in a broader spectrum of recent work and a wider range of evidence. To quote Marcel Detienne[15]: 'Bacchus est dieu vivant, si Dionysus fait aujourd'hui quelque peu savant ('is playing something of a learned game'). Detienne belongs in one of two 'camps' in recent research, along with J.P. Vernant and to a degree Charles Segal: Henrichs perhaps has natural allies in T. Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery in Archaic Greek Art* (Oxford, 1988) and the article on Dionysus in the *Lexikon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zurich 1974- : hereafter *LIMC*) who follow a very similar line of interpretation.

Vernant stresses the 'frontality' of the god in visual imagery and speaks of falling 'under the eye of the god': the connection with masks is vitally important to this interpretation. 'Impossible', Vernant writes, 'de le regarder sans bomber du même coup sous le fascination de son regard qui vous arrache à vous même'.[16] We recognise the bold, dramatic rhetoric. Carpenter urges us to consider the (universally) frontal image of the Gorgon (to which, on the Francois vase, Vernant also draws our attention) in temple decoration: she does exist to deter and avert human eyes.[17] Detienne speaks of Dionysus as defined by leaping, spurting and by 'visiting', but the evidence is much less tidy than Detienne's model allows. As we have seen, Henrichs' model pits cult against myth (in cult men, but not women, worship through wine; women, but not men, through maenadism - which is ordered, regular, incorporated into the *polis* and 'respectable'). But women and wine do appear together on the Lenaia / Anthesteria vases (490-420 B.C.),[18] where we can also see a marked shift from 'Bacchic' (i.e maenadic) to 'austere' images, with reversions. And there is still Skyles. Carpenter adopts a somewhat simi - lar line to that of Henrichs in analysing Dionysiac imagery in the sixth century: 'what is not there (e.g. ivy, panthers, snakes, etc.) is not part of the Athenian perception of Dionysus'. Dionysus is simply 'god of wine' until much later, some time in the fifth century. But we should take seriously the possibility that even 'respectable' cult activities, recognized by the community, might dramatize opposition on the part of the socially excluded to the prevailing norms.[19] And what of the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus,* where we find ivy, a beardless god and a lion and other wild creatures on board the boat of which he has seized control? [20]

Moreover, is the Dionysus of the Peleus and Thetis wedding procession on the Francois vase presented full-face simply to 'make us smile'? And if so, what sort of smile? After all, there is the slightly alarming visual pun in the 'god of wine' staring unflinchingly at you from the wine jar as you mix the wine. We might also

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[15] *Dionysus à ciel ouvert,* (Paris 1986)

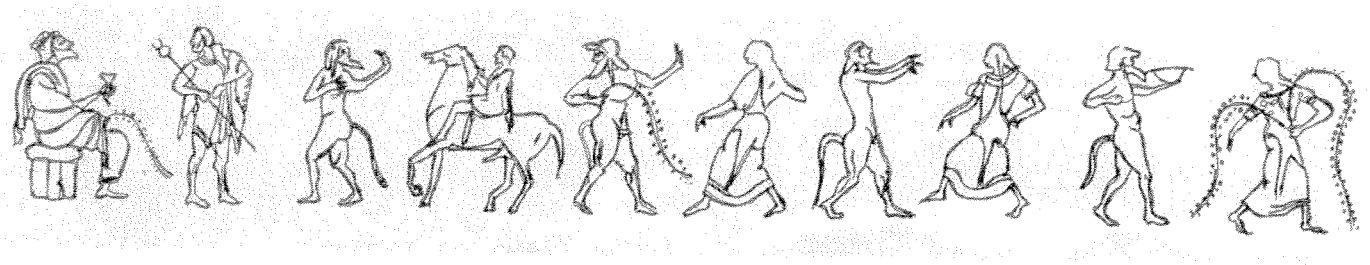
[16] *Mythe et Tragédie, Deux,* (Paris 1986) 39

[17] The evidence is collected by Carpenter and in *LIMC*

[18] See Pickard-Cambridge, *Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (2nd. edn., Oxford, 1968) 30-34 with Figs. 17-24; Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Eng. trans, Berkeley etc., 1983) 213-47.

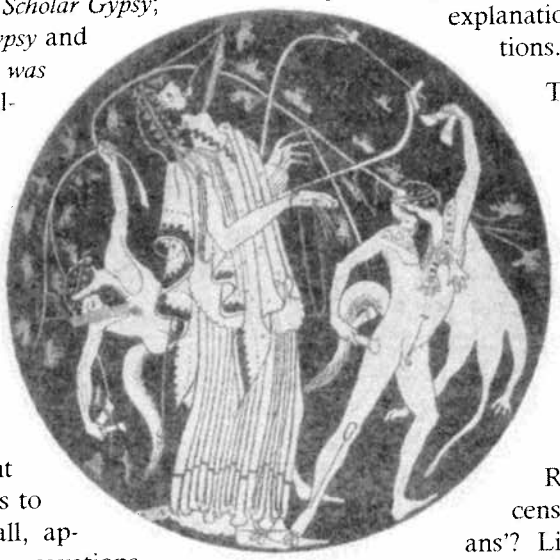
[19] See I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: an Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Harmondsworth 1971), 12 1, who suggests that explosive forms of ritual activity, however explosive, may still be regarded as a regular and ordered part of the community's social structure, and the perceptive remarks of Park McGinty *(Harvard Theological Review* 71 (1978), 89. McGinty writes of the possession cult of Dionysus as 'an oblique aggressive strategy on the part of persons who are socially marginal, i.e. prevented from playing the role in society that they feel is due to them. By opening themselves up to ecstatic possession, these persons *temporarily* (my italics) are able to break traditional role stereotypes'. As McGinty points out, the myths (such as *Bacchae)* of Dionysiac revenge on those who challenge his cult locate that revenge within a larger assertion of stratified power relationships: 'while it is true that the myths present the downfall of the powerful, this downfall occurs only at the hands of the *more* powerful, i.e. the gods. Although in terms of content the myths may represent the momentary triumph of the values of the dispossessed, in terms of formal relationships they are quite explicit in affirming that anyone who violates his rank in the social structure of gods and men is impudent, immoral and doomed. The myths, then, may have allowed for the temporary suspension of rules but only by legitimating that suspension in terms of more fundamental rules which upheld clearly defined power relationships' (ibid. 93). See also R.S. Kraemer, 'Ecstasy and Possession', *Harv. Theol. Rev.* 72 (1979), 55-80.

[20] Carpenter naturally dismisses the *Homeric Hymn* (ibid. p.68, n.58) by dating it down into the fifth century, possibly even later. But Nicholas Richardson seems to me far likelier to be right about the date of the poem: Homeric Hymn to Demeter (Oxford, 1974)



consider the close visual analogy offered by another 'outsider', John the Baptist, the Prodromos, with his long beard, unkempt hair, ragged clothing and barefoot appearance: we are not meant to smile at him.

The approach to understanding Dionysus which sees him as essentially a 'god on the move' (an approach, of course, which provided me with my original title at the height of media interest in 'Hippies' and their convoys of trucks in 1988) may direct us to a consideration of 'travellers' in general and the anxieties which surround them. These social anxieties are almost certain to include anxieties as to sexual behaviour and gender roles: we only have to recall Matthew Arnold's *Scholar Gypsy*; D.H. Lawrence's *The Virgin and the Gypsy* and Janacek's song cycle *Diary of One who was Lost.* With Dionysus we can start already with Aeschylus, fr. 61 Radt, from the *Lykourgeia,* where a speaker refers to him as 'woman' and asks 'where is he from?'.



If Dionysus is a 'god on the move', he seems also almost always to be a god 'from elsewhere'. But from where? From Phrygia or Lydia; from Thrace; even (later, after Alexander's conquests) from India - where unbelievably we find a Mount Meros (Thigh!).[21] Are these references to historical 'origins'? Dionysus, after all, appears in a Linear B tablet from Pylos; excavations at Ayia Irini on Keos (a sanctuary from the fifteenth century B. C.) have produced a kantharos apparently of around 760 B.C.[22]; and of course we are now well informed about the *thiasos* at Olbia and the cult there of Dionysus which combined elements of Dionysiac and Orphic, perhaps even Pythagorean, beliefs.[23]

Dionysus constantly 'arrives': he is 'brought in ', 'brought home'; processions escort him, but from where? From Eleutherae, of course (if that is what his title Eleuthereus implies: so Pausanias 1.2.5.; 1.29.2; 1.38.8; Schol. Ar. *Acharn.* 243; Suda s.v. *Melanaigida Dionuson*).[24] Moreover his procession includes a ship - so has he come by sea? Where from? If these questions continue to be treated as historical questions (where did he 'really' come from?), they become simply bewildering and ultimately unanswerable. And they embrace other gods also; Apollo, for example: he too is 'from elsewhere' but is that elsewhere in the far, far north, with the Hyperboreans, or the far, far east? Should we not then approach them rather as symbolic statements, as 'myth'? Christiane Sourvinoulnwood has done this recently with the 'previous owners' myth at Delphi and Fritz Graf with the Orpheus myth - and both have produced convincing explanations for otherwise baffling questions.[25]

There is something about 'travellers', those constantly on the move, which seems to trail such issues in its wake. Consider the 'problem' of Gypsies: do they come from Egypt, as those who named them must have thought? Or are they Indians, as some of the earliest traditions about Gypsies, as long ago as the sixteenth century, supposed; or Romanians (Romanies); or Saracens (Tziganes) or simply 'Bohemians'? Like Sourvinou-Inwood and Fritz Graf, Judith Okely has interesting and persuasive

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[21] For the various locations of Mt. Nysa, see Hesychius and Steph Byz.' s.v.: Dionysus' origins retreat east -wards, always further away as Greek power and influence themselves spread further to the east.

[22] For the cult at Ayia Irini, see M.E. Caskey, *Keos: Vol. ii, Part i: The Temple at Ayia Irini: The Statues* (Princeton, 1986), 37-43; J.L.Caskey 'Excavations in Keos', *Hesperia* 33 (1964), 332-4 with Plate 64 a, c, d; M.L. Caskey in *Sanctuaries and Cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (Proceedings of the First International Symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, Stockholm 1981), 127-35. For Dionysus on the Pylos tablets, see M. Gerard-Rousseau, *Les Mentions Religieuses dans les Tablettes Mycéniennes*, (Rome, 1968), 74-6

[23] M.L. West, 'The Orphics of Olbia', *ZPE* 5 (1982), 17-29.

[24] But does it? See now Robertson, loc. cit. 208-1 and most recently Robert Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History* (Oxford, 1996), 93-5

[25] In J.Bremmer, ed., *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (London, 1987). On the 'foreignness' of Dionysus see C. Kerenyi, *Dionysus* (London 1976) 137-88 and most recently, Graf, *Nordionische Kulte* (n. 8 above), 288-91 for a view closer to that taken in the text; on ship-car processions, Graf, op.cit. 386-7 and W. Burkert, 'Katagogia and Anagogia' in Robin Hagg, N. Marinatos and G. C. Nordquist, edd., *Early Greek Cult Practice* (Stockholm 1988), 81-7

things to say about 'exoticising' the traveller as a form of ideologically loaded, symbolic statement.[26] And we should remember that the opposition between 'dirt' and cleanliness is seen in reverse by the Gypsies themselves. The powerful part played by their sense of pollution shapes this mirror image of non-Gypsy culture: whereas non-Gypsy culture sees Gypsies as exemplyfing a particularly chaotic dirtiness, for the Gypsies themselves non-Gypsies reveal their own 'dirtiness' by their failure to maintain the boundary between the inside and the outside. One of the determining characteristics of Gypsy culture is the need to maintain an absolute boundary between washing anything that goes into you or is connected with anything that goes into you (that is to say, anything to do with food or its preparation) in the same bowl of water and in the same environment as washing anything to do with the outside of you. Thus the very idea that you might use the same sink to wash up and to wash your hands or your face in or alternatively that you might wash your face in a washing up bowl is utterly repugnant to Gypsy culture.[27]

I want to end this attempt to understand the ancient perception of Dionysus and his divine 'persona' by looking at evidence of a quite different kind: his association with vines and ivy and the implications of that association. Two things (contradictory, but why should we be surprised?) stand out: the first that vine and ivy are fixed and rooted 'in a very 'un-Dionysiac' way - they are very clearly not 'on the move'; the second that they are incapable of standing unsupported, and attach themselves to existing trees and walls as their supports. (That may remind us of Dionysus as 'pillargod' on the Lenaia / Anthesteria vases.) My first passage is a curiosity: it is

Pliny's *Naturalis Historia,* 16.144. 'It is said', Pliny writes, 'that ivy now grows in Asia Minor. Theophrastus in about 314B.C. had asserted that it did not grow there nor in India (except on Mt. Meros [sic!]), and indeed that Harpalus had tried every means to grow it in Media, without success; whereas Alexander, because of its rarity, had returned victorious from India with his entire army wearing wreaths of ivy 'in imitation of Liber Pater [i.e. Dionysus]; it is used to this day to decorate the *thyrsi,* helmets and shields at solemn rituals by the Thracian tribes, although it is destructive of trees and indeed of all crops, breaks apart tombs and walls and is very attractive to snakes because of their cold-bloodedness; so that it is astonishing that it receives any respect whatever.'

My other two pieces of evidence come from the very work which Pliny cites, Theophrastus, *De Causis Plantarum.* Theophrastus, in Book 2.18.1-3 of the *Caus. Plant.* is discussing 'collaboration' (i.e. symbiotic relationships) between plants: deciduous trees, for example, help evergreens by depositing their leaves to form compost. Other plants lean against trees and twine their way up them: Theophrastus cites vines (with their tendrils to help bind them to the host tree), bindweed, smilax and ivy, among others - but ivy differs from the rest by virtue of its rooting system which runs along its shoots. All these plants injure their hosts by choking and depriving them of light but ivy also extracts food from the tree by growing into it; it is moreover evergreen and strong-growing and takes food throughout the year from the entire trunk and branches until, when it reaches the top and fruits, the host tree withers and dies.

In Book 3.18.9-10[28] Theophrastus returns to the subject of ivy: the close roots of ivy become tangled together and black and the 'roughest and wildest forms' of the white ivy are so destructive that they are 'bad' plants to allow to grow against any tree: they starve their hosts of nourishment and you cannot kill them by cutting them away at the base. 'Such', Theophrastus concludes, 'are the facts about ivy': it is the ultimate parasite among plants.

In the imagery which accompanies Dionysus in the vase paintings of the sixth and fifth centuries, vine and ivy appear above all to burst from or from under or around the god so as finally to engulf many of the vases 'in the twining and swirling luxuriance and exuberance of their growth. Luxuriant growth is associated with Dionysus also in *Bacchae,* but I have argued elsewhere[29] that such exuberance of fertility is ambiguous in its

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[26] Okely, *The Traveller Gypsies* (Cambridge 1983) 1-4, 7-13 18-19

[27] Okely, op. cit., 77-87.

[28] see also 4.4. 1; 5.4.

[29] pp.above

associations, especially in the *Odyssey* and in the Homeric *Hymn*.

Dionysus is a god of shifting contradictions: always the 'outsider' but simultaneously a native Theban.[30] We have seen him in the wedding procession of Peleus and Thetis on the François vase: there he is grouped with Chiron, with Hestia (incongruiously), and with Demeter. On the Parthenon frieze, he is seated with Hermes, Demeter and Ares; 'in the 'Return of Hephaistos' procession he is opposed to Ares (violence fails but Hephaestus is often portrayed as clearly drunk - under Dionysus' influence); he is a god who co-operates with animal helpers in the fight against the Giants; above all he is paired with Aphrodite who herself is connected not just with islands but with islands (Cyprus, Cythera) not quite in the main stream. We cannot tidy him up, with Henrichs, simply as 'god of wine' for men and 'god of possession' (but in ordered, regular and respectable form outside the world of myth) for women; nor, with Detienne, as the god whose followers neatly trace the 'chemins de la deviance'. He remains irreducibly untidy.[31]

[30] A double-sidedness that associates him with Oedipus, who also belongs in Thebes but simultaneously is from somewhere else, whether Corinth or the mountain pastures.

[31] The fullest recent treatment of the problem of relating myth to ritual in the religion of Dionysus is Jan Bremmer, 'Greek Maenadism Reconsidered', in *ZPE 55* (1984), 267-86 (with full bibliography). It will be seen that my own discussion in this essay follows a rather different line of argument from Bremmer's but we have in common the aim of moving discussion of Dionysiac religion forward from the position marked out by Albert Henrichs.

Dissertations

1999

MA in Ancient Drama and Society

Richard Manchip - Outsiders in Greek Drama: Who are They and Why are They There?

MA in Homeric Studies

Debbie Cox - Homer's Odysseus: A Heroic Cultural Stereotype?

MA in Roman Myth and History

Ed Hopgood - From the Ides of March to Philippi: History and Myth

Pamela Lemmey - Romulus in Cornwall: the Cotehele Tapestries

Tanja Morson - Flora: the Festival and the Myths

Michelle Oskoui - Miracle Stories in Valerius Maximus

Rachel Tynan - The Two Faces of Janus: Allegory and Myth in a Historical Context

Sarah Waltho - The Legend of Spartacus

Sian Willbourne - Orosius in Early Rome

PhD

Muzzafer Demir - Economic and Political Aspects of Athenian Relations with the Black Sea

Simon Hall - The Reception of Lucan's *de Bello Ciuli* in the Nineteenth Century

Fiona McHardy - The Ideology of Revenge in Ancient Greek Culture

Alex Nice - Divination and Roman Historiography

Alexei Zadorojnyi - Plutarch's Literary *Paideia*

THE MAN WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MILLENNIUM: A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF DIONYSIUS EXIGUUS

John Mair

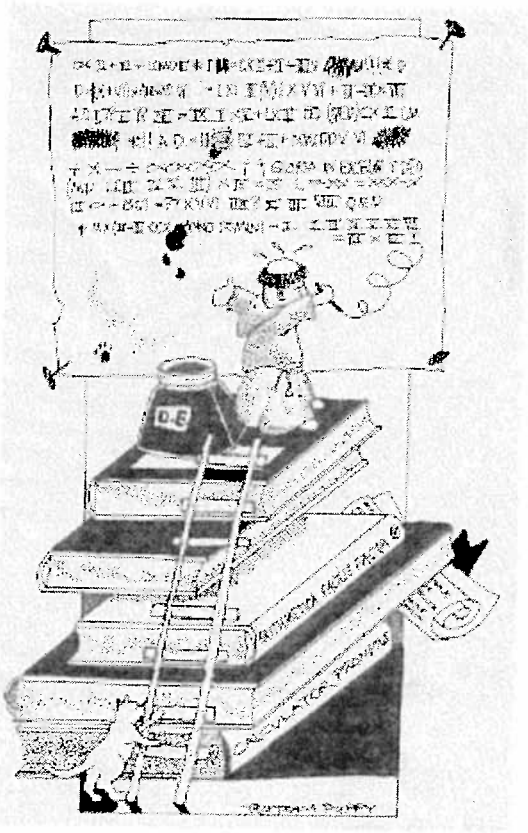
John Mair was a student in the Department of Classics at Exeter in the 1960s. In this article he takes us into a period that will be unfamiliar to many classicists, and introduces us to equally unfamiliar characters, in order to explain the origins of a familar convention. But it is salutary to be reminded that 'ancient history' did not stop with the death of Constantine - and it's a fascinating story. All dates are A.D. unless otherwise indicated.

In the ancient world, individual years were often identified by reference to events: 'In the year that King Uzziali died' (Isaiah 6.1), or to office holders: 'When Quirinius was Governor of Syria' (Luke 2.2), 'in the archonship of A', 'in the consulate of B and C'. This method was thoroughly unsatisfactory for the construction of chronologies, and from the fourth century B.C. onwards Greek historians used the first celebration of the Olympic Games (in our reckoning, 776 B.C.) as a base-line for counting years, whilst in the first century B.C. Varro provided a date (in our reckoning, 753 B.C.) for the foundation of Rome from which subsequent years could be numbered (*Ab urbe condita*, A.U.C.).

For most of its first millennium, the Christian Church had no single chronology of its own. The great ecclesiastical historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c.260-c.340) took as a reference point the supposed date of Abraham's birth, 2016 B.C. Later, the accession of the Emperor Diocletian in 284 came to be seen as the beginning of an era, but not until the sixth century was a more radical and logical scheme proposed, namely that of reckoning years from the birth of Jesus, the Incarnation, and of designating them *Anni Domini*, Years of the Lord. The person responsible for devising this scheme was a scholarly monk named Dionysius Exiguus - Denys the Small.

Dionysius, (born in about 480) came from Scythia Minor - the modern Dobruja, part of the Romaniain littoral to the west of the Black Sea. This remote area was the home of some Latin-speaking monks who were fierce in their allegiance to Rome, and to the theological definitions reached at the Council of Chalcedon (451). Combining vehemence with theological sophistication, some of the monks were to play a part in resolving a long-standing impasse (the Acacian schism) between the Eastern and Western divisions of the Empire.[1] This was in an age when high politics were inseparable from theology.

In or shortly before the year 500, Dionysius arrived in Rome, where he began to apply his linguistic skills. An appealing pen-picture of this diligent monk is provided by his (perhaps younger) contemporary Cassiodorus, a senior civil servant, who, upon his withdrawal from public life in the mid-sixth century, retired to his family estate in southern Italy. Here he had perhaps already founded the monastery called Vivarium (Fishpond), to be both a religious house and a centre for the collection, copying and study of Biblical, patristic and secular literary works. For the monks of Vivarium, Cassiodorus composed a two-part work, the *Institutione* [2], supplying both a guide to the study of the scriptures



[1] See V. Schurr, *Die Trinitätslehre des Boethius im Lichte der 'skythischen Kontroversen'* (Paderborn 1935), esp. 136 ff.; F. Loof *Nestorius and his Place in the History of Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge 1914); and W.H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge 1972), esp. 244-6. There is an excellent brief account in H. Chadwick, *The Early Church* (Harmondsworth [Penguin] 1967) 192-212 = revised edn. 1993, pp.192-212. The Council of Chalcedon and its political background are discussed by G.E.M. de Ste. Croix in his posthumous collection of essays *Radical Conclusions*, (forthcoming)

[2] *Cassiodori Senatoris Institutiones*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors, revised edition, Oxford 1963. References are to pages and line numbers of this edition, abbreviated to *Inst.*

and of the Fathers, and a compendium of the seven liberal arts, then considered as a *gradus ad Parnassum* to higher studies.

Cassiodorus had apparently studied logic (*ars dialectica*) with Dionysius, although whether as a pupil or as a fellow student is unclear (*mecum* [*Inst.* 62.17-18] is ambiguous). In the *Institutiones*, Cassiodorus enters a characteristically rapturous description of his late friend, who had died in about 540. Although a Scythian by birth, Dionysius had been in his ways thoroughly Roman, *Scytha natione sed moribus omnino Romanus* (*Inst.* 62.12-13); bilingual, and extremely learned in both Greek and Latin, *in utraque lingua valde doctissimus* (62.13); effortlessly fluent and scrupulously accurate in his translations, which he could, at sight, make so convincingly that one would have thought his spoken version to be from an original written text.[3] Yet he maintained a remarkable simplicity of life, combining humility with erudition and modesty with eloquence, and deferring to the lowliest servants when he could have held converse with kings.[4]

Notwithstanding the supposed, and probably overstated renaissance of Hellenism under the Ostrogoth king Theoderic,[5] knowledge of Greek remained quite limited in sixth-century Italy. Cassiodorus recruited for his monastery three resident translators: Mutianus, *vir disertissimus* (*Inst.* 29.13, 142.15); Bellator, *vir religiosus* (15.13, 27.13); and Epiphanius, another *vir disertissimus* (22.13 and frequently elsewhere). These specialists were industrious but inexpert. Their extant works, Courcelle observes, 'give a very feeble idea of their capacities: these experts did not know Greek as their mother tongue and understood it badly'.[6] Even the revered Boethius was not a flawless translator: Lorenzo Minio-Paluello notes that the authenticated translations 'suggest that Boethius' knowledge of Greek was by no means excellent'.[7] By comparison, the translations and other works of Dionysius[8] reveal a notably high level of competence.

Dionysius began by translating into Latin fifty of the 85 *Apostolic Canons*, which form the concluding chapter of the fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions*, and which concern themselves with the ordination, discipline and conduct of the clergy. With these he conjoined new translations of canons (here, official statements and rulings) approved by various Church Councils from Nicaea (325) to Chalcedon (451); and he added forty-one decretals, papal letters having the force of law, circulated during and between the papacies of Siricius (died 398/9) and Anastasius II (died 498). The resultant collection (the *Dionysiana collectio*), became a core element in Canon Law (here, ecclesiastical law relating to matters of faith and discipline) in the Middle Ages and beyond. Dionysius also translated certian hagiographical works, including a *History of the Discovery of the Head of St John the Baptist* and a *Life of St Pachomius*, the founder of coenobitic (communal) monasticism.

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Having been rebuffed in Constantinople, where they were regarded as a disturbing influence in an atmosphere of delicate theological negotiation and where there was strong support for Monophysitism, the teaching that after the Incarnation there was in the Son only a single, divine, nature,[9] some of Dionysius' Scythian religious confreres, under their leader John Maxentius, arrived in 519 at Rome. Here they advanced their Theopaschite proposition that one member of the Trinity had suffered in the flesh, *Unus ex trinitate carne passus*. This formula was intended to protect Chalcedonian orthodoxy by resisting Monophysite doctrine. The monks evidently considered that their proposition would also be a valuable safeguard against Nestorianism,[10] which (allegedly) laid such emphasis upon the distinctiveness of the two

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3 ... qui tanta latinitatis et graecitatis peritia fungebatur, ut quoscumque libros Graecos in, manibus acciperet, Latine sine offensione transcurreret, iterumque Latinos Attico sermone relegeret, ut crederes hoc esse conscriptum, quod os eius inoffensa velocitate fundebat (*Inst.*63.711).

4 Fuit enim in illo cum sapientia magna simplicitas, cum doctrina humilitas, cum facundia loquendi parcitas, ut in nullo se vel extremis famulis anteferret, cum dignus esset regum sine dubitatione colloquiis. (*ib.* 62. 21-24).

5 See e.g. H. Kirkby, 'The scholar and his public' in M.T. Gibson (ed.) *Boethius* (Oxford 1981) 44-69, esp. 56-9.

6 P.Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and their Greek Sources* (Cambridge, Mass.1969) 338[= translation by H.E. Wedeck of *Les Letters Grecques en Occident de Macrobe à Cassiodore*, 2nd edn., Paris 1948]).

7 L. Minio-Paluello, article 'Boethius' in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* vol. 2 (New York 1970) 230.

8 Most of Dionysius' extant works are printed in volume 67 (Paris 1865) of the standard collection of early Christian writings, J.P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, series Latina* (abbreviated as *PL*). 'The *Vita S.Pachomii* is to be found in vol. 73 of the same series.

9 For an admirably clear account of this complex story, see P. Charanis, *Church and State in the Later Roman Empire*, 2nd edn. (Thessalonica 1974), as well as the works cited in n.1.

10 In effect, the Scythian monks were seeking a middle course beween the divergent, although not quite symmetrical, errors of Monophysitism (or Eutychianism) and Nestorianism. These heresies should not be imputed implicitly to those whose names they bear. Heresies frequently differ from the actual teachings of their supposed authors. It is, for example, unlikely that the monk Pelagius taught what is known as Pelagianism. Difficulties are sometimes compounded by the deliberate destruction of the original writings of the heresiarchs.

Natures in the Son as virtually to endow him with two Persons, with the human predominating.

In Rome, the Scythian monks also received a cool welcome, at least in official circles, although Justinian, nephew and adviser of the Emperor Justin (and himself destined to be Emperor from 527 to 565), before long realised that the 'Theopaschite' formula might help to heal the Acacian schism, and so draw East and West closer together. At about this point, Dionysius intervened to provide collateral support for his compatriots. He translated into Latin for them some of the anti-Nestorian works of Cyril of Alexandria, who, as well as having been an implacable - and unscrupulous - opponent of Nestorius, remained *persona grata* in theological circles at Rome. Dionysius also added a covering letter of his own to a translation which he made (for the monks) of the *Tome to the Armenians*, written by Proclus, the (relatively eirenic) Patriarch of Constantinople from 434 to 446/7. This latter work elucidated the orthodox teaching concerning the two natures, and was directed against (without naming him) Theodore of Mopsuestia, mentor of Nestorius.

In a less controversial area, Dionysius produced a translation of Gregory of Nyssa's Περὶ κατασκευῆς ἀνθρώου (*De orificio hominis*), a speculative work on the constitution of the human being - that is, an 'anthropology', in the refined sense of that term. As had many writers before him, Dionysius expressed some concern (*PL* 67.345cd) about the capacity of the Latin language to express philosophical ideas with accuracy and elegance.[11]

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In the year 525, Pope John I asked Dionysius Exiguus to carry out some work on the dating of Easter. Now, the Western Church had (and has) never treated Easter as a fixed anniversary (such as Christmas), but considered that the feast should be aligned with the Jewish Passover. To (over)simplify, Easter was to be kept on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox, an event regarded (erroneously) at the time of the Council of Nicaea (325) as taking place on 21 March every year. Because of the drift of the lunar year in relation to the solar year, the dates of the full moons and of the true vernal equinox are not constants, and needed (and need) to be calculated individually for every year. This is what Dionysius set out to do.

He decided to discard the 84-year lunar cycle which had been traditionally used at Rome, and to adopt instead the Alexandrian (originally Anatolian) lunar cycle of 19 years. By reference to this cycle and to the age, or phase, of the moon (its 'epact') on the day following the vernal equinox, and to the incidence of the days of the week in relation to their numerical position in the month, Dionysius was able to calculate the First Day of Passover and Easter Day.[12] He set out his results, in tabular form (*PL* 67.495-8), for every year between 532 and 626 inclusive - that is, for five lunar cycles each of nineteen years, a total of 95 years. The first column in the tables bore the unfamiliar title *Anni Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* (*PL* 67.495), and for the first recorded time the years were listed (still in Roman numerals) according to a new system of time-reckoning: they ran from Dxxxii to DCxxvi.

In the course of identifying the dates of Easter (a process known as *computus*), Dionysius had decided to review the chronology, insofar as any system existed, of the Christian era. As noted above, the practice had developed in some circles of treating the accession of Diocletian to the principate as a base-line for counting years. Mainly under pressure from his Caesar, Galerius, Diocletian had initiated in 303 what was to be the last systematic persecution of Christians by the Roman state. Some deplored the 'Diocletianic Era' as a system of time-reckoning, on the grounds that it honoured an Emperor hostile to the Christian Church, whilst others embraced it as ushering in a new era of the martyrs.[13]

Dionysius took the first of these views. In his letter *De ratione Paschae*, addressed to the Bishop Petronius in 531, Dionysius says that he has no wish to perpetuate the memory of an unhallowed persecutor: his preference is to designate the years by reference to the Incarnation.[14] The starting point in his proposed new series was A.D.1, necessarily so, since the system of cardinal numbers then in use knew no term 'zero'.[15] Tantalisingly, Dionysius

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[11] This is the much discussed, and notorious, *patrii Sermonis egestas* (Lucretius 1.832), a pessimistic *locus communis* wonderfully controverted by Cicero. See e.g. his *De natura deorum* 1.4.8; *Tusculan Disputations* 2.15.35 and *De finibus* 1.3.10 and 3.2.5.

[12] For a recent fuller account of the processes involved, see David Ewing Duncan, *The Calendar* (London 1998) 96-101. This book provides a very good overview of systems of time-reckoning, even if a few of the biographical details of certain people in late antiquity need to be treated with caution.

[13] The Coptic and Ethiopian churches still continue to use the Diocletianic Era.

[14] ... nos a ducentesimo quadragesimo octavo anno ejusdem tyranni (= Diocletiani) potius quam principis inchoantes, noluimus circulis nostris memoriam impii et persecutoris innectere; sed magis elegimus ab Incarnatione Domini nostri Jesu Christi annorum tempora praenotare: quatenus exordium spei nostrae notius nobis existeret, et causa reparationis humanae, id est passio Redemptoris nostri, evidentius eluceret. (PL 67.20a)

[15] Duncan (n.12 above) 165-7. Zero did not come into use, as a number in Western Europe before the eleventh century (ibid.209). See also G.Flegg (ed.) *Numbers through the Ages* (London 1989)

does not record exactly how he reaches the year numbers of his own time, although he provides a formula for calculating them: the method is to multiply 34 by the number of years in an indiction, that is, by 15 (an indiction was a recurring period of 15 years, widely used for dating Roman financial and legal documents), to add 12 years (as being the *residual* number of years left in the particular indiction in which, according to Dionysius, Jesus was bom, after three years in that indiction), and was born after three years in that indication), and finally to add the number of years (e.g. three) which have elapsed in the *current* indiction.[16]

Though this method may sound complicated, it is clear enough - but it does not explain how Dionysius arrived at his starting-point, that is, how he calculated the date of the birth of Jesus. He does not tell us why he stipulated that there had been 34 previous complete indictions, preceded by a fractional indiction of 12 years. Nor does Dionysius indicate whether the idea of numbering *Anni Domini* was entirely his own, or whether it had another source. It would be in keeping with the modesty attributed to him by Cassiodorus not to lay claim to originality: Dionysius' soubriquet of Exiguus may denote lowliness of stature or his unassuming nature - or perhaps even both.

The - unavoidable - selection of the year number 1 for the beginning of the new era explains why the Millennium (or more correctly the Bi-millennium) proper will not be reached until the *end* of the year 2000. In any case the base-line date of A.D. I is almost certainly incorrect. Most ancient historians and theologians now place the birth of Jesus within the period 7 B.C. to 4 B.C.(and incline towards the latter end of the range).[17] If they are right, the Bi-millennium took place virtually unnoticed in the mid to late 1990s.

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16 ARGUMENTUM PRIMUM. De annis Christi. Si nosse vis quotus sit annus ab incarnatione Domini nostri Jesu Christi, computa quindecies XXXIV, fiunt DX; iis semper adde XII regulares, fiunt DXXII; adde etiam indictionem anni cujus volueris, ut puta, tertius, consulatu Probi junioris, Hunt simul anni DXXV. Isti sunt anni ab incarnatione Domini. (*PL* 67. 497a-499a)

17 For the brief but clear statement of the problems concerning the date of the birth of Christ see the entry Chronology, Biblical: (2) New Testament in F.L.Cross (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3rd edn. 1997) 340-1 with bibliography, to which should be added the classic discussion by E.Schurer, *The history of the Jewish people in the Age of Jesus Christ*, revised English version ed. G. Vermes & F.Millar, Vol.I (Edinburgh 1973) 399-427.

* * * * *

Dionysius' new system of time-reckoning gained acceptance only gradually. His loyal admirer Cassiodorus adopted it for the guidance note - the *Computus Paschalis* - which he prepared in 562 for determining Easter and other dates. Otherwise the system spread slowly in Italy, and slower still in most parts of Western Europe where it did not come into widespread use before the tenth century. Some outlying areas, including parts of Spain, waited until the fourteenth century. Curiously enough, Britain moved with uncharacteristic celerity. In the wake of the Synod of Whitby (664), called primarily to adjudicate between the Roman and Celtic systems of dating Easter, and deciding in favour of the former, the decision was taken to adopt the *Anni Domini* time-reckoning, which Bede then used in his many writings. A lone voice was that of Abbo of Fleury (945-1004), who proposed that the A.D. counting should begin one year earlier (and thus in effect begin at the year 0, although the number zero was still not yet available in the west). But Abbo was too far ahead of his time, too isolated, and this and other proposals which he put forward were ignored. What today seems the natural counterpart of the A.D. system, namely the B.C. retrospective counting, did not appear until the seventeenth century. Its first recorded use - by the French astronomer Denis Petau (another Dionysius!) - is dated to 1627.[18]

In his own lifetime, and for long afterwards, Dionysius' writings on and translations of canon law and theology were far more important and influential than his almost incidental invention of the *Anni Domini* chronology, which only slowly gained its present recognition. In deference to the etiquette of a multi-faith society, the familiar initials A.D. are gradually ceding to CE, 'Common Era',[19] whilst B.C. is being abandoned in favour of BCE, 'Before Common Era'. There appears, however, to be no desire or initiative to move away from the Dionysian numbering of years. Accordingly, this system seems likely to endure well into the next Millennium. In so doing, it will continue to provide an unspoken but signal tribute to the work of Dionysius Exiguus - Denys the Small.

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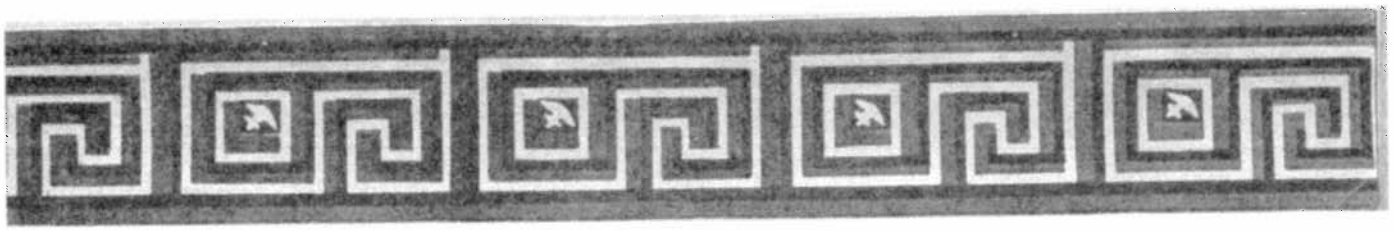
18 Duncan (n.12 above) ch.6 charts the extension of the A.D. system. The works of Bede, who not only wrote on chronological matters, but also adopted Dionysius' system in his *History*, were particularly influential. For Abbo see Duncan 194; for Denys Petau and the introduction of 'B.C.', *id.* 101-2.

19 This convention has another advantage: it avoids expressions such as 'the sixth century A.D.', literally and absurdly 'the sixth century in the year of the Lord'.



John Marr: *Plutarch: Themistocles*

(ed., with introduction, translation, and commentary).

Aris and Phillips, 1998. Pp. iv + 172.

By Christopher Pelling

It was never easy to know what to make of Themistocles. You could see him as the saviour of his country, far-sighted, courageous, and enterprising; he naturally found a place in the orators' saints-gallery of Athenian heroes, spinning in their graves at the antics of their successors. The nostalgia could go further: he could emblematise a time of national selflessness, when private wealth was small and people ascribed victories to the people as a whole rather than great individuals ([Dem.] 13.29, Dem. 23.198). But then you might remember what he actually did, and wonder if he was quite as selfless as all that; and remember what the Athenians did to him, and wonder if the times were quite so rosy. He could be an exemplar of natural wisdom, of an inborn intelligence which needed no teacher; but then, if one thought about teaching, you could wonder what he managed to teach the Athenians. Did he make them better people? Emphatically not, says Plato: he takes a large part of the blame for turning them into power-hungry democrats. Why, the only thing he managed to teach his own son was horsemanship (Plato again). So the boy's tutor Sicinnus may have been good for taking messages to Xerxes (so Herodotus), but was evidently not so good as a teacher: he spent all his time dancing, and that was where the 'sikinnos' dance got its name (Clement of Alexandria). How did Themistocles spend his own youth? If he was not learning his lessons, perhaps he was using his time more interestingly: so Athenaeus has a story of him riding a chariot into Athens pulled by four *hetairai*. He could be thought-provoking in more serious ways too, and the thoughts provoked could be broad ones about Athens and Greece and their great men, not just about Themistocles himself (Thucydides in Book 1). Even Herodotus' original account could be taken in lots of ways, with all those cunning plots and that self-serving deceit. Is Herodotus uncritically adopting a nasty version put around to discredit the noble patriot? Or is this a reflection of the respect Greek culture paid the cunning schemer, even or especially if he did well out of it himself? A proverbial phrase described people as 'cleverer and more wicked than Odysseus or Themistocles', and one suspects that that was not always unkindly meant.

Had John Marr been writing a commentary on Herodotus, he would not have found that presentation equivocal. For him the Herodotean stories are often 'flagrantly' or 'strongly anti-Themistocles'. Yet that is one of several features which show how much in tune he is with the author he has taken, for Plutarch felt much the same way. In his essay *On Herodotus' Malice* Plutarch is furious with Herodotus for representing the great triumph of liberty over tyranny as contrived by bribery and theft, and for making Themistocles steal Mnesiphilus' great idea about fighting at Salamis: the conscientious historical writer, Plutarch thought, owed his heroes much more benefit of the moral doubt. *Themistocles* offers a fascinating opportunity to see how Plutarch lived up to his own historical standards, and the answer is pretty well. If one goes through the various passages where he found fault with Herodotus in *Malice*, one can see how carefully and discreetly he amends Herodotus' account, and leaves us with something much more politically - and morally - correct.

Themistocles is now a very well-served *Life*, for Marr has produced a work on a very similar scale to the 1980 commentary of Frank Frost. The debt to that excellent work is clear, and fully acknowledged; many of the notes cover much the same ground, and it is pleasing that some of the more personal touches of Frost's commentary also survive in Marr's version - his yachtsmanship, for instance, or his occasional colourful vignette from the contemporary Greek world. I am sure Frost will, and should, take these borrowings as a compliment. Marr also acknowledges a debt to Ian Scott-Kilvert's Penguin translation; his own translation is a little more cautious and closer to the Greek, as is suitable for a commentary series, and will be found very useful by generations of students and scholars.

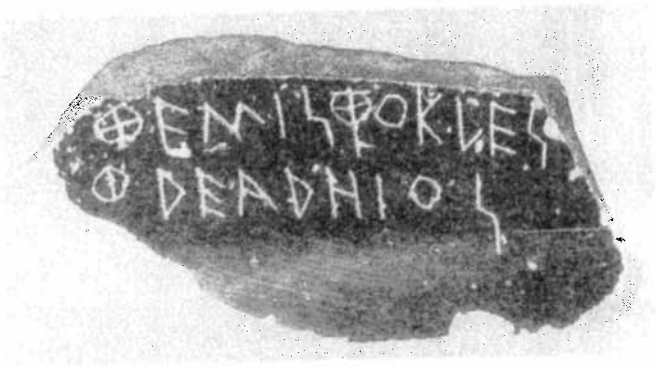
Marr's emphasis in the commentary is 'historical', and he goes out of his way in the introduction to emphasise and justify this: he is not hostile to more literary or ethical approaches, but he has simply preferred not to make those his preferred line of attack. And even flibbertigibbet literary types like the present reviewer

would be daft to complain. For we can only appreciate *the Lives* as literature if we take seriously Plutarch's desire to get his characters *right;* we can only trace what he has done to his material if we take seriously our own task to construct what originally happened, difficult though that often is. In fact, Marr is perfectly aware that one has to take into account Plutarch's literary techniques if we are to understand the history: thus he is often readier than Frost to identify manipulation of material for dramatic reasons (the chronological dislocation of the 'take to the ships' decision, for instance, at 7.1n., or the transfer of Adeimantus' stories to Eurybiades at 11.2n.) or to note the suppression of material which would not suit the *Life* (the anecdote of Themistocles saying 'may I never occupy any seat of judgement where friends will not do better than strangers', told at *Arist.* 2.5 and in *Precepts for Public Life* 807a but not here, 5.6n.); and he has a sensitive insight into Plutarch's strategies for developing scenes. It is true, though, that the passages where he expands on Frost are often on topics of 'history', especially political and military history, and those remarks are always interesting and almost always convincing: one is left with a much clearer idea of what really happened at Salamis after Marr than before.

If I have a quibble with Marr's approach, it is not that it is too 'historical', but rather that it interprets 'historical' in a way which is too exclusively political and military. Lots of stories of a mythical pattern have found their way into this *Life,* and there are other things to do with them than simply pointing to their historical implausibility. In particular, the whole pair *Themistocles-Camillus* is most interesting for its portrayal of religion. Take chapters 30-31, where Themistocles is already in exile. While travelling back from the court to the coast, he faces an attack on his life. The Mother of the Gods appears to him in a dream: 'Themistocles, avoid a lion's head if you do not wish to fall prey to a lion. In return, give me your daughter Mnesiptolema as my maidservant.' He duly avoids Leontocephalum; his assassins are foiled; Themistocles sets up a temple to Cybele in Magnesia, with Mnesiptolema as priestess. But then, at Sardis, with time on his hands, he saw in the temple of the Mother a statue of a girl, the so-called 'water-carrier': he had dedicated this himself in Athens, and Xerxes had presumably plundered it. He asked for it back; the satrap was outraged, Themistocles sensed the dangers of envy *(phthonos),* and used his wiles in an appropriately Persian way - in the harem, with money - to soothe the official's anger.

Neither Frost nor Marr is full on this sequence (Frost is explicit that 'there is little to say about this chapter' 30); both comment that it is odd to have Themistocles playing the leisured tourist at Sardis instead of rushing to give the Mother thanks; both find Themistocles' motive unlikely (would he not have been more grateful to Cybele than to ask this?); Marr wonders if the story was put about by Themistocles' relatives to win favour at Athens. (That sounds rather modern, as if this were a politician asking for the Parthenon marbles to be returned; but would fifth-century Athenians be so impressed by a failed request and a demonstration of lack of influence?)

There is more to say, particularly about the relation to the more elaborate similar stories in *Camillus:* the vow to the *Roman* Mater Matuta (56), Juno's approval of the taking of her statue from Veii (6), the Vestals moving the sacred objects away from the enemy attack (20-1), then their joyous return to the liberated city (30). This is not just a 'literary' comment: *the Camillus* sequence suggests different ways for the historian too to look at *the Themistocles* account. It need not be so ungrateful to suggest that the statue should be restored to Athens: it might indeed be a pious duty to return it to the place where it belonged once the great danger had passed, just as the Vestals return their sacred objects to Rome. The gift of Themistocles' live daughter as a servant to the goddess might naturally have been repaid by the stone equivalent: that sort of reciprocity could easily have been religiously correct - or so he might naturally think; but he swiftly decided he was wrong, when he might so easily have been right. These gods are difficult to read, and Themistocles, earlier so good at reading them and exploiting his insight for Greece's sake, is now quick to realise his mistake. He thus avoids reliving a version of his own Athenian past in Magnesia (a pattern which we find in other *Lives,* for instance in *Coriolanus, Alcibiades,* and *Demetrius),* and averts the envy which is looming. There are interesting patterns here, some of them inherent in the story and some teased out by Plutarch's own thematic structuring. None of this need be outside the commentator's brief: religious conceptualisation is part of history too.



My other quibble concerns the introduction: it suffers from an excess of modesty. Marr refers to some of the leading issues in contemporary scholarship, but leaves most of them unexplored. Thus he does not explain why the comparison with Camillus is important: he says more about this in his comment on 1.1, but could have been much fuller. He tells us where the *Life* comes in the normal printed order of the *Lives* (p.2), but has much less to say about where it comes in Plutarch's order of composition: somewhere in positions 6-9, it seems, and that is not without its interest. A surprising number of

the first *Parallel Lives* in the series dealt with cultured figures who were active in politics - Epaminondas, Scipio, Pelopidas, Philopoemen, Demosthenes, Cicero. Why now Themistocles? Is it an interest in how a *lack* of formal education can operate? Or should we rather point to the Roman *Lives,* noticing that *Numa* and *Romulus,* and perhaps *Roman Questions* too, seem to have been written at around the same time as *Themistocles Camillus?* In that case an interest in religion, and the contrast of Greek and Roman religious ideas, might indeed be expected to be central. Marr is interested, too, in the relation of the Themistocles story to other Athenian leaders, especially Aristides, Cimon, and Pericles, and finds some of its strands shaped in the propaganda exchanges centring around those figures. Did Plutarch himself envisage this series of *Lives* as interacting with one another and combining to produce a continuous history of (most of) Athens' classical past? All these are familiar questions to Marr, who knows his Plutarch and his Themistocles so well. I should have liked to know what he thinks.

* * * * *

Another version of this review appears in Ploutarchus, *the Journal of the International Plutarch Society. I am grateful to the editors for their permission to reuse this material here.*

Christopher Pelling, University College, Oxford

RESURRECTION SYMPHONY

It is generally believed that the distinguished composer Gustav Mahler died in New York in 1911. A recent photograph which has come into the hands of *Pegasus* suggests otherwise. Dr. Mahler, now aged 139, was unavailable for comment.

Dr. Mahler, Vienna 1907

Dr. Mahler, Exeter 1992

An Interview with Ian Storey

Arlene L. Allan

AA: I'd like to begin with what has become a traditional question in our interviews. How did you come to be involved in Classics?

ICS: When I was five, my mother, who was taking an evening course in Ancient Greek, taught me the Greek alphabet and the first few chapters of White's Greek textbook. Needless to say, this did not go over well with teachers in Grade 1. I guess I've always had a love of languages and in High School I was at a school in which Latin was compulsory to the end of Grade 12. Greek was available at 8 o'clock in the morning, and there were a few of us who did this. Four of us actually went on to do Grade 13 Greek, equivalent to A-level Greek in this country. So, I left High School with papers in Latin and Greek and English and also Maths and Science. The first six weeks of university I was enrolled in Math., Physics and Chemistry - loving Chemistry, tolerating Physics and totally unable to do Math. After six weeks I realized that there was going to be no future here and I was able, at the very last minute, to switch disciplines and into Latin and Greek at Trinity College in Toronto. And the rest, as they say, is history - ancient history.

AA: Of all the possible areas for specialisation in the discipline, how did you come to choose Ancient Comedy ?

ICS: In 1966 in the Greek Drama course, second-year Greek with Desmond Conacher (who remains one of the major figures in my academic life), the fourth play on the course was *Clouds* and I fell in love with comedy immediately. I loved the immediacy, I loved the 'in-your-face' tone, I loved the personal jokes, I loved the wit. I think it was the wit and intelligence behind Aristophanes that intrigued me. I mean, I did enjoy reading tragedy, but it was *Clouds* that I really loved and I remember saying in 1966, 'This is the poet for me.' And it's been that way ever since.

AA: You have also published several pieces on Euripidean drama. Why Euripides of the three tragedeans?

ICS: There is a humourous answer and a straight one. The straight answer is that he, like Aristophanes, is a poet of *sophia*, of wisdom, of cleverness, of the ability to shock. He's an immediate poet, which is something I don't think you get with Aiskhylos or Sophokles. This very 'in-your-face' drama, tragedy that makes you think. The humourous answer is that he's the easiest one to translate. I remember Judith Mossman, in the 'Great Debate' I heard at Merton College in 1990, when Oliver Taplin played Aiskhylos, Pat Easterling played Sophokles and Judith Mossman played Euripides, and they each had fifteen minutes to say why each of them should be resurrected from the Underworld in 'Frogs Revisited'. Judith Mossman began by saying you should be bring me back because I'm the only one you lot can translate. And also, of course, the relationship between the two poets - Kratinos coins a verb *'euripideiaristophanizzw'* (to write like Euripides and Aristophanes) - in other words to be clever, subtle, witty, avant-garde.

AA: It is my understanding that over the past ten years you have been involved with research on a rather less well known comic poet, Eupolis. Could you tell us a little about this undertaking.

ICS: Well, Eupolis was one of the 'Big Three'; there was a 'Big Three' of tragedy - Aiskhylos, Sophokles, Euripides - and there was a 'Big Three' of comedy, which the Alexandrian scholars established and that was Kratinos, Aristophanes and Eupolis. Whereas Kratinos has received some attention, with some interesting papyrus finds in the middle of the century, the overall study of Eupolis consists of a monograph in Polish (120pp in 1991), one chapter in Norwood in 1931 and a couple of dozen pages in Schmitt in 1946. Eupolis is the classicist's dream - a neglected author.

I came to Eupolis in a round-a-bout way when I went to Oxford in 1969 and Nigel Wilson suggested a possible BPh thesis topic would be to look at the fragments of *Demoi* which had been discovered in 1911. But when, two weeks later, news came that a doctoral thesis in Vienna was just about to be published, it was decided that this would not be a good idea. So I went on to other things, the study of prosopography and *komedoumenoi* (the making fun of people by name in comedy). But in the back of my mind was that someone needs to do some

something on Eupolis. And in the 1980s *very* little was done. So I published a tentative article in 1985, then a larger article in 1990.

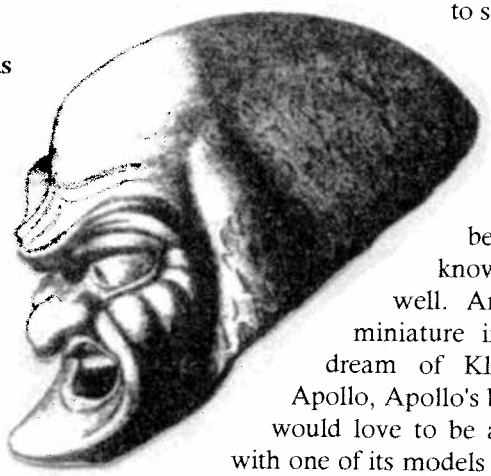
Eupolis is a rival of Aristophanes. He writes poetry, comedy, like Aristophanes, that is highly topical, highly political. He doesn't appear to have been as good as Aristophanes though; for instance, there's no *Lysistrata*, no large-scale parody of Euripides or other poets. He excelled in putting real people on the stage but it may be partly political but also social. *Kolakes,* (*Spongers*), for instance, is about Kallias, the richest man in Athens, newly come into his inheritance, and Kallias has walked off the pages of a P.G. Woodhouse novel - a feckless, young aristocrat, very short on brains but long on money. And Alkibiades has some role in *Baptai* (the title of which is mysterious still). We don't know what it was, but the play was famous for its obscenity, its lewdeness and overall daring. And then, of course, there's *Demoi* in which four Athenian leaders of the past, political leaders, are brought back from the Underworld (either by necromancy or whatever means) to put things right at Athens. The world dates the play to 412: I date it to 417.

AA: And this view, along with many others, will be more fully discussed in a forthcoming book?

ICS: I hope so. I've done a number of articles on Eupolis to the point where Oliver Taplin calls me 'Mr. Eupolis' and I hope the monograph which is now in its final stages of revision will bring this neglected third member of the comic triad to people's attention.

AA: You have a further interest that has aconnection with Classics but which move beyond the discipline. I'm thinking particularly of your work on C.S. Lewis.

ICS: I first 'met' C.S.Lewis in 1959 when my mother, who was the church librarian, gave me the *Chronicles of Narnia* and said 'read these.' I said, 'Why?' and her response was 'You'll find out'. I've always been very fond of Lewis. It was reading his first biography in the 1970s that revived my interest and since then I've tried to read everything he's written. I'm especially interested in his fiction, and in particular, his last and greatest work of fiction, *Till We Have Faces*, a retelling of the 'Cupid and Psyche' myth that we encounter in the *Metamorphosis* of Apuleius. It's a myth retold. One of the aspects of my second-year Myth course is 'Why tell myths?' Well, this asks another question: Why retell myths? What C. S. Lewis seems to be doing in *Till We Have Faces* is writing the story that Apuleius has bungled. It's a story about the contact between god and humanity in a time before the incarnation and it's very much the idea of 'through the glass darkly' that we get in the story. But it's a story about the encounter between the human and the divine which ends up for the benefit of the human element in it. It is also a historical fiction, a novel told in the first-person singular by a person at the end of her life, and that's a technique you get again and again in historical fiction. I've published one article on this and another one is currently with a journal - a study of Lewis' use of classical illusions to show he selects the myths purposely because they resonate with his own plot.



AA: Finally, another of our traditional questions:If there were a text that you wished had survived from the ancient world or that you would like to see discovered now, what would that text be and why?

ICS:I think I'll give you a short-list of three. The play that followed the *Prometheus*, by whomever - (I still think it's Aiskhylos, bit I think there are only three of us in the world left that still believe Aiskhylos wrote *Prometheus*) - I would still like to see *Prometheus Unbound.* Second is an Old Comedy by someone other than Aristophanes (it doesn't have to be Eupolis). In fact, I would like the *Korianno* by Pherekrates, which is a play about women which seemed to have been produced in the 420s, fifteen years before *Lysistrata*, and has women sitting around and drinking in some sort of domestic scene. I think I would love to see that just to be absolutely sure that Aristophanes is not necessarily typical of Old Comedy. And my third choice would be the *Oresteia* of Stesthichoros - the missing link between epic and drama - because it is clear that Aiskhylos knows Stesthichoros' *Oresteia* very well. And it is a poem, an epic in miniature in lyric metre and it has the dream of Klytemnestra, a snake, Furies, Apollo, Apollo's bow, Orestes at Delphi, and we would love to be able to look at *Libation Bearers* with one of its models in mind.

Ian Storey is Professor of Greek Language and Literature in the Department of Ancient History and Classics at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. Arlene Allan is in the second year of her doctoral studies in the Dept. of Classics and Ancient History at Exeter.

FREDERICK WILLIAM CLAYTON 1913 - 1999

Professor of Classics at the University of Exeter 1948-1975,
Dean of Arts 1962-65, Public Orator 1965-73

Friends and former pupils of Professor Clayton will have heard with regret of his death on 8 December 1999. We print here the tribute delivered at his funeral by his brother George, Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of Sheffield, followed by the obituary that Peter Wiseman contributed to the *Independent* (24 December 1999).

An earlier appreciation, 'Chair and Chairperson: Memories of Twenty-eight Years', written by Hugh Stubbs at the time of Fred's retirement and flavoured with a wealth of anecdotal detail, will be found in *Pegasus* 19 (1976), pp.2-10.

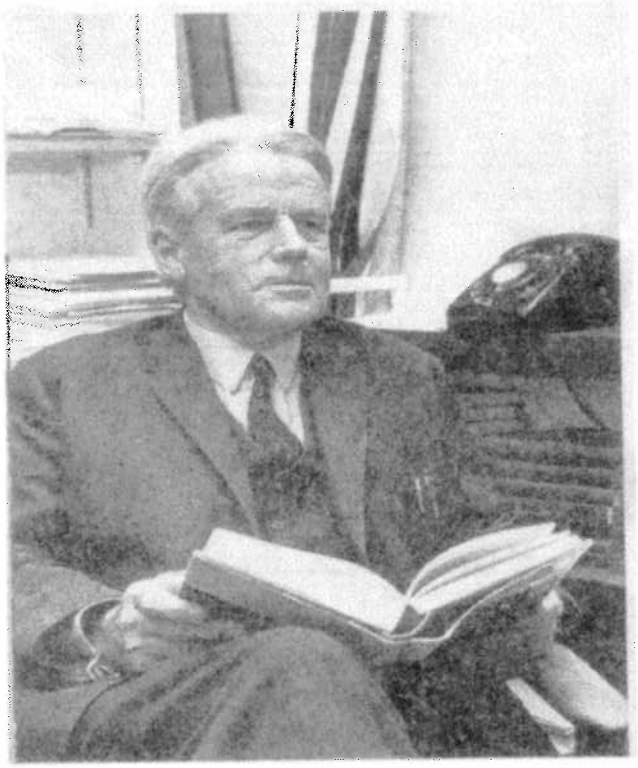
George Clayton writes:

It is a privilege and at the same time an awesome responsibility to try and encapsulate in a brief eulogy what a much loved and respected brother meant to me personally and what he meant to his immediate family, friends and colleagues.

The first and obvious, although not particularly illuminating, step in a celebration of his life is a factual account of his career. After winning a scholarship to the Liverpool Collegiate School, which along with the Liverpool Institute was Liverpool's answer to Manchester Grammar School, both vindictively closed by Militant Tendency in the later 1970s, he studied classics and was trained like a racehorse, as I was also eventually, to leap the fences in the path of Open Scholarships to Cambridge. In 1931 he gained entry to King's College by virtue of one of the few Open Scholarships not reserved for Etonians. Thus began a brilliant academic career in the course of which he was awarded the John Stewart of Rannoch Scholarship, the Porson Prize, the Sir William Browne Medal for Greek Epigram, the Craven Scholarship (the jewel in his crown), the Chancellor's Medal for English Verse and the Chancellor's Medal for Classics - a record of achievement which surpassed even that of Enoch Powell who was a year ahead of him. Not surprisingly this was crowned by a Prize Fellowship at King's in 1937, his thesis being a critique of Edward Gibbon.

Shortly afterwards, the war intervened and involved him in military service from 1940 until January 1946. He resumed his academic career in September 1946 when he was appointed Lecturer in Classics at Edinburgh University and in 1948 to the chair of Classics at Exeter at the age of 34. He served the University in this capacity for 31 years, during which time he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts and also a witty and erudite Public Orator.

A prosaic account of his life and his academic career fails completely to convey the true flavour of him as a human being. First and foremost - and I am speaking with care and precision - he possessed one of the finest minds with which I have been fortunate to come into contact. Alan Turing - the man who broke the Enigma code and gave birth to the computer - was a fellow scholar at King's and once said to me: 'Fred is the most



learned man I have ever met' - a tribute from an intellectual giant if ever there was one. Secondly, he was an extremely sensitive man and ever mindful of the needs of others less fortunate than himself. Thirdly, he was a devoted teacher whose impact on students was not as great as it might have been, for reasons which I shall discuss later. Fourthly, he was a devoted family man, too, who took intense pride - and with reason - in the achievements of his children and grandchildren. Because he became withdrawn and reclusive after his illness at the end of his service career, the world outside has not been privileged to appreciate sufficiently his manifest qualities.

I would be doing a grave disservice to his memory if I didn't meet head-on the mystery of why a man of such obvious brilliance did not produce a stream of scholarly publications after writing a novel during the war [*The Cloven Pine,* 1942]. It is difficult for me to provide an explanation which is not tinged with bitterness. My short answer is that he was a victim of the age in which he lived. Shortly after he was awarded his Fellowship, he went to Vienna to learn German and then spent a year teaching in Dresden. Already the 1930s had become

a turbulent period, gradually promoting extreme reactions with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and Italy's annexation of Abyssinia in 1936. My brother's generation had grown up with their fathers no longer silent but beginning to talk of the horrors of their war. 'Never again' was the common chorus, sung in many variations by men who had been through it all - pacifists now, Socialists or Communists distrusting old-type leaders. Students became ever more polarised, with the Oxford Union voting that they would not fight for King and Country and a substantial body of opinion in Cambridge inclined to turn to Communism as the sole safeguard of peace on earth. Fred, as a grammar school boy from a depressed area like Merseyside, was considered to be promising recruiting material for the Communists, but he reacted angrily to public school boys trying to lecture him on the sufferings of the British working class. On one occasion he gave Burgess very short shrift.

At this time he became editor of the *Cambridge Review* and waded in immediately with articles which were both provocative to student fellow-travellers and also to more orthodox dons who didn't seem to be aware of the strength of somewhat startling, very radical opinion among students. As a result he succeeded in offending both sides and ended his editorial tenure with a threatened libel action. It was at this stage that he accepted a teaching post at the Kreuzschule in Dresden and was fully exposed to the Nazi threat. From the outset he became obsessed by the failure of most Western politicians to understand the danger posed by Nazism and Fascism. Unlike most observers of the German political scene, he actually read *Mein Kampf* and found it a very disturbing, stupid work, and henceforth was convinced that war was inevitable.

Although it is difficult to conceive of anyone less suitable for the militaristic way of life, he joined the Royal Signal Corps in summer 1940, only to find himself whisked away to Bletchley Park, where he made an early mark by successfully decoding some Luftwaffe material. But that didn't prevent him becoming the victim of the military mind's perversity. Although he was completely fluent in German, the military talked Squadron Leader Clayton into agreeing to be posted to India and Burma, despite his total ignorance of Japanese. Subsequently he confessed to me that he accepted the posting because his war thus far had been a very soft one. The upshot was that he spent four and a half years in the India and Burma theatre of war, although it was generally accepted that exposure to such conditions for more than two years constituted a health risk. He did not return to the UK until six months after VJ day, and by then was seriously ill with a deep psychosis. The consultant psychiatrist urged me to pay frequent visits to promote his recovery, and fortunately he responded surprisingly quickly. When he was discharged she warned me that he would almost certainly suffer a relapse in twenty years. But the residual legacy was the sad and bitter one that his illness had done irreparable damage to his self-confidence. He was as much a casualty of war as if he had lost a leg or an arm. Hence his house is littered with a plethora of unpublished papers, the majority of which have never been submitted to a journal.

Whatever his inhibitions, he remained an ideas man to the end, with an abiding interest in the impact on English and European literature of the classics, and it is a tragedy that the outside world has had such little opportunity to savour his unique scholarship. The bitter irony is that British intelligence subsequently admitted that they had posted this man, who was one of the first of his generation to issue warnings about the Nazi threat, from the European theatre because he was too pro-German. That he didn't have a relapse in twenty years but took an active part in University life for over thirty can be attributed in my view to the happy chance that shortly after his recovery he re-established contact with the Büttner-Wobst family, who had been so hospitable during his Dresden years, and to our delight married Ricky, their youngest daughter, in 1948. She provided him with much-needed stability over 51 years and presented him with the children for which he craved.

It is difficult to comprehend that he is no longer with us. I hope that the following brief poem, which might have won the approval of the winner of the Chancellor's Medal for English verse, will capture for you all our overwhelming sense of loss.

Good men, dying, leave a shocked stillness
as though, plunging from a cliff path,
they had simply vanished. The lark
that soared as they left sings on,
bracken still waves in the wind,
the hedgerows seem unmoved.

But good men, living, have left, on us,
on all things, indelible marks
as they passed. We are shot through
with the colour of their having been.
A phrase remains, a way of looking,
some remembered gesture at table,
some unlooked-for generous act,
some insight which, at the time,
seemed modest enough, an item
in the conversation which flooded around it,
but which, like them, took root within us.

Good men, living, have leavened,
not in vain, the space around them.
What they changed cannot now be unchanged,
in us or in anything.

(I. Geralt Jones, adapted)

* * * * * * *

Peter Wiseman writes:

Fred Clayton was a precociously brilliant scholar. He knew more about Shakespeare's use of Latin authors than anyone else alive, and yet hardly anyone in the field of Shakespearian scholarship had ever heard of him. What explains that paradox is something peculiar to his generation - a life of three acts, of which the second and most formative was war.

Small, fair, and with piercing blue eyes, Frederick William Clayton was a scholarship boy at Liverpool Collegiate School, where he was 'trained like a race-horse', as his brother put it, for his Cambridge Open Scholarship. At King's he took the academic fences in his stride, and away from his books his success was no less meteoric. "Did I run into King's best period for friendly dons and fellow students?" he wondered many years later. "Did I conquer the place by being so novel - so naïve but potentially promising?" At any rate, Maynard Keynes took up the brilliant young Liverpudlian and made sure that he met such people as T.S.Eliot and E.M.Forster when they dined in college.

But Clayton was always acutely conscious of his background, suspicious of those who traded on style and social charm. In the intensely political world of mid-Thirties Cambridge he had no patience with Etonians like Guy Burgess pontificating about the English working class. Those who thought he would be naturally sympathetic to Communism found that he resisted their attempts to recruit him for the Party: "I didn't like their tactics. I didn't like being encircled."

King's gave him a Prize Fellowship in 1937, and he went to perfect his German in a teaching post at Dresden, where he saw Nazism at first hand. He and his King's contemporary Alan Turing were instrumental in getting two young Austrian refugees to safety just before war broke out, an episode used in fictional form in his novel *The Cloven Pine,* published under the pseudonym of 'Frank Clare' in 1942.

By then Act Two had begun. Clayton had joined the Royal Signals in 1940, and with his fluent German found himself decoding at Bletchley Park. But after the fall of Singapore code-breakers were urgently needed in the East, someone had to fill the gap until Japanese-speakers could be trained. Clayton agreed to go. Half a century later he remembered the journey: *'Poole, Shannon, Lisbon, Bathurst, Freetown, Lagos, Bangui, Stanleyville, Juba, Khartoum, Wadi Haifa, Cairo, Dead Sea, Habaniya, Basra, Bahrain, somewhere in Baluchistan, Karachi, Gwalior, then on the tenth day by train to Delhi, where no one knew who I was or what I was supposed to be doing.'* He had only one book in his pack - *the Corpus Poetarum Latinorum,* plain texts without benefit of commentary.

With no Japanese, only the verbal skills of a classicist, Squadron Leader Clayton (RAF Intelligence) was soon shuttling between Delhi and Barrackpore in Bengal, his services fought over by two rival colonels. "The war, one might say, made guessing my game, and not the imagination and logic of a verbal mind pushed to its limits." Pushed to its limits in other ways too, for when Clayton eventually returned to England early in 1946 it was with a serious mental breakdown. He recovered, and returned to academic life, but the war had marked him irreversibly.

Dresden was now in ruins, but Clayton made contact with the family he had stayed with a decade before, and in 1948 he married Friederike (Ricky), the youngest daughter. They had four children, and a family life that brought him the love and stability he needed. In the same year he was appointed Professor of Classics at the University College of the South-West, which in 1955 became the University of Exeter. That was stability too; he served as Dean of Arts (1962-65), and for eight years (1965-73) was Public Orator, long remembered for the erudition and elegance of his speeches.

But where was the brilliant boy? Fred Clayton's head was full of Latin poets, and English poets and novelists too, everything he had read to stave off boredom in 1942-46 was still there, along with his own traumas, preserved by a phenomenal memory ("I'm not blessed with a good obliterator') and inter-reacting in unexpected ways. "It was about 1950 when I first noticed in both Latin and English that there were curious apparent echoes of quotations, conscious or unconscious, inside a single author or between authors, based on associated ideas or words." Two particular areas came to fascinate him: Horace's use of astrology and Shakespeare's use of the Latin poets. The trouble was, the way his mind worked didn't suit academic conventions.

Clayton always felt bitter about those friends and colleagues who had stayed at Bletchley Park and been able to get on with academic work in their spare time. When one of them, at a seminar in Cambridge, dismissed his suggestions about Horace with open contempt, Clayton was so wounded that he never risked airing them in public again. He worked obsessively with concordances, trying to prove, in those pre-computer days, that the collocations of word and phrase that leaped out at him were not merely random. "If I ever publish a book", he said later, "I shall give it as sub-title *A Consideration of Coincidences."*

But there was no chance that he would ever publish a book. His mind was too three dimensional for that, the associations ramifying in all directions. The one published sample of his Shakespearian investigations, a public lecture on the sources of *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* is wonderful but at the same time impossible, mixing memoir, self-justification and virtuoso word-play in a performance that demands the work of a scholiast to pick out the key passages (in Claudian, Juvenal and elsewhere) on which the *argument depends.*

'Tragic, comic, beautiful, sacred and profane meet in a magic circle of imprisoning memories ... There is a rash leaping to conclusion over wide guys which any sane mind will reject. But suppose one's subconscious has been building solid bridges for years?' That was a rare, and unrepeated, venture into print. After an equally eye-opening lecture on *Love's Labour's Lost* a few years later, Clayton couldn't be persuaded even to let it go into the departmental journal. And now there are cupboards and drawers full of papers, a great but unrecognised scholarly endeavour. Buried in there is an unparalleled insight into Shakespeare's way of working - the Latin poems he knew, the other passages to which he was guided by the marginal annotations in his texts, the definitions and mis-definitions he found when he turned to Elyot's dictionary to look up a word.

Whether it can be rescued remains to be seen.

[Extracted by permission from the *Independent,* Obituaries, 24 December 1999. The lecture on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is available from the Department of Classics at £4 (including postage and packing); [the scholiast has been at work in *Pegasus* 26 (1983)25-28.]

SPECTACLE IN LUCAN THROUGH THE SPECTACLES OF LEIGH:

a review of Matthew Leigh, *Lucan: Spectacle and Engagement*
(pp. 366: Oxford University Press, 1997, £47.50. ISBN: 0 19 815067 9)

Giles Gilbert

Matthew Leigh taught in the Department of Classics at Exeter from 1993 to 1997. Giles Gilbert, who is working on a doctoral dissertation on Lucan under Su Braund at Royal Holloway College, writes:

Lucan's *Pharsalia* is a Latin epic which takes as its subject the Roman civil war between Caesar and Pompey. It breaks off in the tenth book when Caesar is besieged in Alexandria, after the death of Pompey but before the suicide of Cato. It is generally assumed that the poem is unfinished because the emperor Nero forced the poet Lucan to commit suicide before he could complete his epic (Tacitus *Annals* 15.70). The details of Lucan's life seem to account for the Republican voice of the narrator of the *Pharsalia.* 'The precociously talented poet becomes the "standard-bearer" of a conspiracy against Nero and dies by his own hand, the youthful victim of tyranny, declaiming, as a last act of defiance and assertion of liberty, lines from the *Pharsalia,* the poem that the jealous emperor had forbidden him to recite' (C. Martindale and S. A. Brown (edd.), *Lucan: The Civil War translated as Lucan's* Pharsalia *by Nicholas Rowe* [Everyman, 1998], xxv-xxvi). The voice of the narrator is the particular concern of Matthew Leigh's book *Lucan: Spectacle and Engagement.* The book comprises seven separate studies on the narrative techniques of the *Pharsalia.* Leigh is particularly interested in the ideological complexities of the poem.

The first chapter introduces the narrator of the poem with relation to ancient theories of vividness and visualisation. This is important because throughout the book Leigh will emphasize 'the tendency of the *Pharsalia* to highlight the idea of spectacle and the role of the viewer'. One of the focuses of the first chapter is to establish the complicity of Vergil's *Aeneid* in the Augustan myth and then to illustrate Lucan's protest against this in the *Pharsalia.*

Chapter two uses close linguistic analysis to investigate the role of the narrator as an agent in his own narrative of the Spanish campaign in book 4. For instance, Leigh's work on the use of tenses shows that the narrator uses the future tense in order to merge his own time with that in which the events of the civil war are happening. Although the narrator is looking back on events that happened over a hundred years before, he is also imagining that he is contemporary with them. Consequently a different ending to the war might be possible. The narrator hopes that the Republican side might be victorious and that the result of the civil war might not be the imposition of tyranny and the repression of *libertas.*

The idea of the narrator as a character is continued in chapter three, although the focus here is on book 7 of the *Pharsalia,* the narrative of the battle of Pharsalus. Leigh concentrates on a passage in which the narrator of the poem enters the action as a *dramatis persona.* The narrator not only holds up the action but also refuses to narrate it. Close linguistic analysis once again brings out the complexity of the narratorial voice. Leigh shows how Lucan again merges temporalities in order to indicate that the battle of Pharsalus has formed the state of the world in which Lucan is living.

In chapter four Leigh focuses on the passage in book 7 in which the reader perceives the battle of Pharsalus from the point of view of Pompey, who views the battle from a

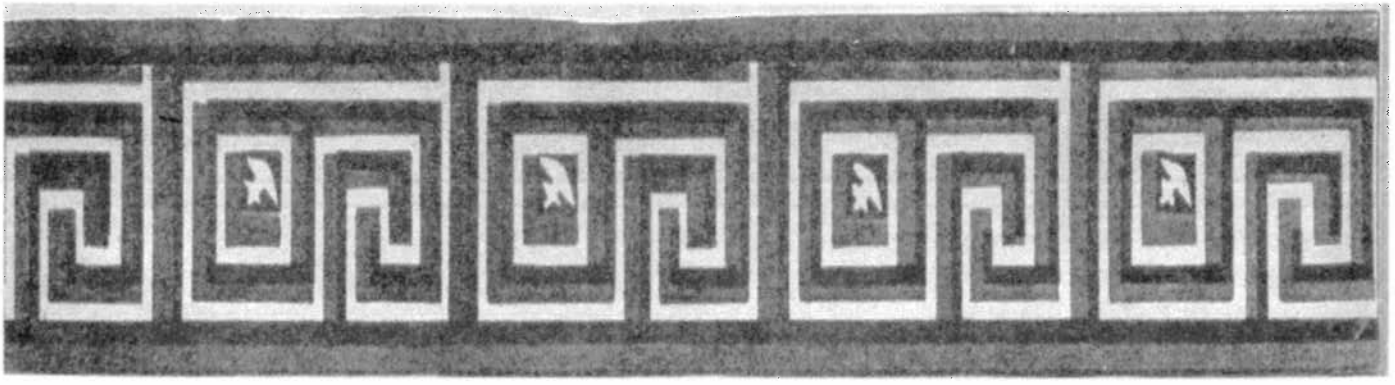
nearby hill (7.647-711). Leigh shows that the 'Republican' narrator surprisingly condemns Pompey's flight from the battle by portraying his departure as a 'botched' *devotio* (the heroic self-sacrifice of a leader in battle for the sake of his troops). He shows, too, how the historical and exemplary tradition dictated that Pompey ought to have died with his men in the defeat. But Leigh also demonstrates that it is problematic for the Republican narrator to give Pompey the status of the hero. Aeneas, the hero of the *Aeneid,* has been decribed by Philip Hardie as a 'synecdochic hero', an individual who stands for the totality of his people. The narrator cannot portray Pompey as a synecdochic hero because Pompey is meant to be defending the Republic against the monarchical Caesar. A synecdochic hero in a Republic would be incongruous. If Pompey is the hero of the epic, then Rome can choose only between rival monarchs. Lucan makes a sophisticated analysis of this problem, which involves the narrator putting a positive 'spin' on Pompey's flight. When Pompey leaves the battle, the narrator indicates that the real struggle is not between Caesar and Pompey, but between Caesar and 'freedom', represented by the Roman senate: '. . . rather the pair will be that which ever we have: Freedom and Caesar. With you put to flight, the Senate by dying shows that it fought for itself' (*sed par quod semper habemus, / libertas et Caesar erit; teque inde fugato/ostendit moriens sibi se pugnasse senatus,* 7.695-7).

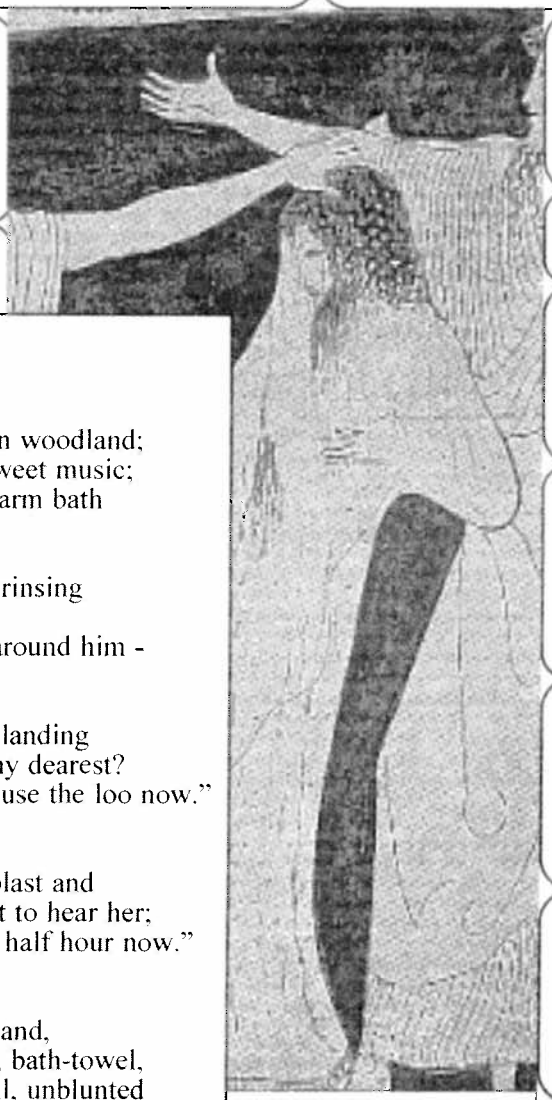
In chapter five Leigh discusses the hyperbolic *aristeia* of Scaeva in book 6. But unlike other discussions of the episode which emphasise the relationships with other epic texts, he places the Scaeva episode in the context of Roman exemplary stories - those used in rhetorical training and those collected in handbooks such as that of Valerius Maximus. Leigh shows that Scaeva appears in Valerius Maximus as one of many examples of Roman *virtus.* Lucan, by presenting Scaeva as a grotesque manifestation of perverted *virtus,* highlights the incongruity of placing a character from a civil war battle alongside heroes of the Roman republic.

In the sixth chapter Leigh examines Lucan's reflections on the theme of the deep loyalty to Caesar of the centurions in Caesar's *Commentaries.* He argues that the centurions in Lucan's poem form a closed community, united by its perversion of traditional military values. For instance, the traditional display of scars on the chest as evidence of devotion to the state becomes in Caesar's centurions a display of loyalty to Caesar, the enemy of the Roman state. The centurions display an insane willingness not only to kill fellow citizens for Caesar but also to be killed for him, a suicidal *amor mortis.* Leigh argues that the Roman reader would find the community of centurions bizarre. In this way Lucan uses a mode of narration which distances and alienates the reader.

Leigh continues the idea of the alienation of the reader in chapter seven. He argues that in certain episodes (the sea battle, the suicide of Vulteius and his men, the *aristeia* of Scaeva, and the episode of the snakes) Lucan encourages the reader to view violent death as if viewing amphitheatrical entertainment, a *naumachia,* a gladiatorial bout, or a *venatio.* Leigh justifies this approach by demonstrating the presence of gladiatorial terms and images and also the presence of what he calls 'terms of spectatorship'. He argues that Lucan subverts the conventions of epic pathos by creating a sense of wonder and alienation in the reader which is analogous to the emotions felt when attending the games.

It is important to note that this is not an introductory book to Lucan's *Pharsalia.* Leigh directs the reader to Ahl's *Lucan: An Introduction* for that purpose. Many of the important new readings the author proposes in the course of the book are backed up by substantial argument. Leigh's readings are extremely convincing, but the reader can often feel overwhelmed by the weight of argumentation supporting them. This is not a book to read from cover to cover. The monograph is full of many fascinating discussions: for instance, the sections on tragic history in chapter one, *clementia* in chapter two, *devotio* in chapter 4, the exemplary tradition in chapter five, and Roman interpretations of the amphitheatre in chapter seven. These discussions, absorbing in their own right, tend to detract from the central lines of argument. The seven separate studies are meant to be linked by the theme of spectatorship, but the prominence of this theme frequently fades. Nevertheless, there is a massive amount of information and analysis here, and the reader will be rewarded by a careful study of at least some of the chapters.





Agamemnon

Some say bliss is love, some a walk in woodland;
Some would say philosophy, some sweet music;
I prize more than chariots one long warm bath
Uninterrupted.

Agamemnon, home from his years of rinsing
Trojan gore away in the salt Aegean
Smiled at last as warm water lapped around him -
He was near purring.

Clytaemnestra called to him from the landing
"Can you make it quick as you can, my dearest?
There's a queue formed desperate to use the loo now."
"Just a bit longer."

Agamemnon turned on the taps full blast and
Rubbed his hair with foam, trying not to hear her;
"Don't be selfish, you've had a good half hour now."
"Woman, stop nagging."

Clytaemnestra burst in upon her husband,
Pinioned him in folds of a soft, thick, bath-towel,
Stabbed him thrice with villainous, fell, unblunted
Hair-dressing scissors.

Water's grey and clammy, and I lie naked,
Beached whale, shipwreck, flabby pink piece of jetsam
Doomed to rise and face the long day before me;
Pleasure is fleeting.

by Elizabeth Bullen

CLASSICS AT EXETER IN THE 1940s

Bryan Balsom

Some highly subjective memories of Exeter and the Classics Department in the 1940s - with help and promptings from Jack (alias Harry) and Mary (nee Vines) Lauder, Ken Walker and Hugh Stubbs. All errors and faulty memories are my own. The period covered by our memories includes the mid-war years 1941 and 1942, and the immediate post-war years from autumn 1945 onwards. Asterisks refer to the editors' note at the end.*

During the war the balance of the student population changed. Scientists were required for the war effort and were permitted to complete their courses, but male non-scientists could attend only if they could begin their courses before their eighteenth birthday, and were then allowed to complete only that year before they joined the Services. The Classics Department of the early 40s was restricted to women and younger men, and was therefore smaller than usual.

Even though the Department was small, it provided a very large number of courses:*

(a) Full Honours Classics courses, and Latin with subsidiary Greek and vice versa;

(b) Latin and Greek at a lower level as components of a General Degree which required three main subjects;

(c) teaching Latin to the London Intermediate level - a necessary precondition for a number of London University Degrees; and

(d) co-operation with other Departments - a contemporary English Department student reminds me that Jackson Knight, affectionately known as J.K., gave them occasional lectures on Greek Drama.

There was, as far as I can recall, no contact between the student body and the ClassicalAssociation. It almost certainly did not function during wartime, though I do seem to recall some staff attendance at Association meetings before I left, after the war.

Younger men on the University staff had also disappeared into the armed services and in 1941 and 1942 the brunt of the Classics teaching was undertaken by:

(i) G.V.M. Heap, on my arrival Head of Department. He was a serious and methodical lecturer. Jack Lauder recalls that he lectured on Aristotle's *Poetics*. He became more and more involved with administration, and in due course became Dean of Arts before eventually retiring to open an antiquarian bookshop in Wells.

(ii) W.F. Jackson Knight,* a brilliant Virgil scholar, very likeable, friendly and understanding (he was Jack Lauder's tutor). He also lectured on Homer and, I believe, the Greek dramatists. He tutored me for Greek Prose. His lecturing style took some time to get used to and some found it difficult to follow the speed of his mind, but most of us learned a great deal from him. We all have fond memories of J. K. and the hut in which he lectured on the Gandy Street site.*

Rev. C.B. Armstrong lectured on Philosophy and Ancient History until Hugh Stubbs joined the Department. Very thoughtful and thorough; some thought him a little pedantic. He was my personal tutor and I always found him very kind, helpful and patient. He led a very busy life and had already retired from the Headship of one of the best Public Schools 'in South Africa. In addition to lecturing us in his room on the top floor of Argyle House* in Gandy Street, he was a very conscientious Vicar of Clyst St. George, where he spent every Saturday and Sunday.

During the week he was the Officer in charge of the Exeter Control Centre of the Royal Observer Corp which monitored and recorded for the RAF and Civil Defence all enemy aircraft movement. (I know how onerous the post was, as my future father-in-law held a similar exacting position at the Cardiff Royal Observer Corps.) I have a very vivid memory of a morning in the spring of 1942 when I saw him in the immediate aftermath of one of the bombing raids viewing disconsolately the ruins of a building near Argyle House. He had just returned from a night on duty to find what had been his weekday home a smoking mess. He did not permit such a setback to interfere with his work. When he left Exeter I kept in touch with him at Worcester Cathedral where he became a Canon and took on the responsibility of training new priests. I visit Worcester Cathedral quite frequently and am pleased to see a memorial to him, in the form of a glass pane in the cloister.

The Principal, John Murray, was also a Classicist but had little to do with the Department, but we recall his annual 'Collections'* when each student had a brief interview with him. These seemed to stop at the end of the war.

In the Department itself there were a number of temporary lecturers - Messrs. Hose, Garrod and Chalk are names that I remember and Miss Dupre came later.

Hugh Stubbs arrived to join the Department in the year 1942/3 while we were away and was the only permanent addition to the Staff when we arrived back after the

the war. He took over the ground floor room in Argyle House when J. K. vacated it for his hutted room. We were all immediately impressed with Hugh Stubbs' phenomenal memory. His main field was Anclent History and the Greek and Roman historians. I particularly recall his Tacitus tutorials. I am sure his memory will be better than mine to recall the spread of work in the Department in the later 1940s.

As to student life in general there was a difference between the wartime years and the period immediately postwar. A feature common to both was the split between, on the one hand, Science Departments based on the Washington Singer Block with its adjacent University Library then based in the Roborough Building* and, on the other, the Arts and Law Faculties etc. in the city centre at Gandy Street. A Classicist needed to move between Hall, possibly down Pennsylvania Road, to Gandy Street and then to the Roborough. Cycles were most useful, otherwise buses. There was no petrol for private transport.

During the war lack of transport restricted sports fixtures. I recall playing for the Rugby XV against Exeter, the Royal Marines at Lympstone and other nearer teams. Many of us were members of the Senior (Officer) Training Corps which was led by Johnny Lloyd of the English Department who was also University Librarian. In fact the Classics Department was prominent in this with Jack Lauder as CSM and Ray Hutchings as CQMS. Others contributed to community support by providing fire watching teams at night to guard against fire bombing air raids.

We all managed a reasonable amount of social life despite the war. Much of this was centred on the Washington Singer building - weekly hops and other more formal dances; drama continued with productions at the 'Block', as we called it, and there was a lively music group under the leadership of Thurston Dart, then a Maths. Department student.*

My first year at Exeter flew by and at the end of it most of us left for various Service duties. A group from the Department - Jack Lauder, Ray Hutchings and Richard Harding of the English Department and myself - ended up, just before Christmas 1942, as cadets at the O.C.T.U. at Barmouth. We enjoyed a few months of fellowship between the coast and the hills before departing on our various Odysseys.

Fortunately they didn't last the ten years of the original, but at the time they seemed long enough. From the autumn of 1945 onwards just a trickle and then a flood of ex-service types resumed, distinguished by the bit of army/navy/air force uniform they tended to wear (all civilian clothing was strictly rationed). They were the ones habitually late for lectures! 'Some settled into civvy street better than others', as a contemporary wrote.

By early November 1945 Mervyn Morgans had disentangled himself from the Navy and myself from the

U.C.S.W.E.
Classics Department -- Spring/Summer 1947
Russell W. Andrews
Lyndon G. Jones Mervyn Morgans Mary R. Vine
John E.F. Lauder Olive J. Rabbits Kenneth C. Walker
Marjorie G.West D.Bryan Balsom Brian A.Owens Abdul M.Mashif
W.F.Jackson Knight FRSL. G.V.M.Heap MA. (Dean of Arts) H.W.Stubbs BA. MA,

Army to rejoin the Classics Department. Over the next year or two others returned or arrived as freshers until we had the Department as depicted in the photograph, taken in the Summer of 1947.

All the charming young ladies who had started as freshers with us were qualified and set on their careers, while we who had returned had to attempt to recall all that we had forgotten and remind ourselves that Finals were due in 18 months time.

The centre of Exeter still displayed much derelict bomb damage -- but we were back and it was a relief to find the familiar staff still there. Jack Lauder reminds me that many of us got involved in too many activities, not necessarily because of our expertise but because 'service life had given us the ability to organise things, to get things done'. Perhaps it had something of the feeling that at last we were back and free to pursue our own interests.

What is certain is that the Classics Department students were as much involved as any in student activities. In the short time we were back I know that Mervyn Morgans was for a couple of years on the Guild (Students' Union) Council, Jack Lauder became its Treasurer as well as playing squash for the University, enjoying the Riding Club and, as one of the Dramatic Society organisers, taking *Arms and the Man* to Leeds Inter-Varsity Competition. Mary Vines, as she was

then, played netball for the University and was President of Thomas Hall 1947-48.

In the 18 months I was back at Exeter before taking Finals I found myself on the Committee of the Debating Society, taking part (for the first time in my life) in two of the Drama Society's major productions - *French without Tears* and *Everyman* - and being Assistant Secretary of the Guild of Students, as well as helping to organise a couple of Rags.

I am sure the rest of the Department were equally involved but I have at hand the contribution of only three of us. One advantage of an involvement in Student Guild organisation was that the Guild's sole property as far as I can recall was a small office -- how different from contemporary Student Unions! - situated in the basement of the Classics Department in Argyle House. A useful *pied-à-terre* for Guild officials.

Despite wartime restrictions of transport and the post-war severe rationing - even of bread and beer - and the damaged state of Exeter, I don't think we felt restricted. We found rich opportunities and appreciated what we had.

I remember one day thinking I ought to do some revision and loaded some books on to my bike to enjoy lying back reading on some glorious cliff top - only to have to make a hasty retreat when I found that I had settled in the middle of an RAF firing range.

It's funny how cycles stick in the memory - Jack Lauder's memory is 'the sight of a student cycling down Streatham Drive in the rain with his books under his arm and holding up an umbrella'. Happy times!!

[Editors' note: We are most grateful to Mr Balsom for his recollections, especially as we know of no other published account of the Department during these years - apart, that is, from G. Wilson Knight's fascinating book about his brother, *Jackson Knight: a Biography* (Alden Press 1975: Parts Three and Four cover the years 1936 to 1952). But Wilson Knight was writing a personal memoir of a lecturer, whereas Mr Balsom gives us a student's-eye view. For the broader picture see Brian Clapp, *The University of Exeter: a History* (Exeter 1982), though naturally this says little about the Classics department. There is also a brief note on the college in wartime by John Lloyd in the *Exeter University College Club Bulletin* no.2 (typescript, March 1947).For the years that followed, see Hugh Stubbs, 'Chairs and Chairperson: Memories of Twenty-eight Years', *Pegasus* 19 (1976) 2-10.

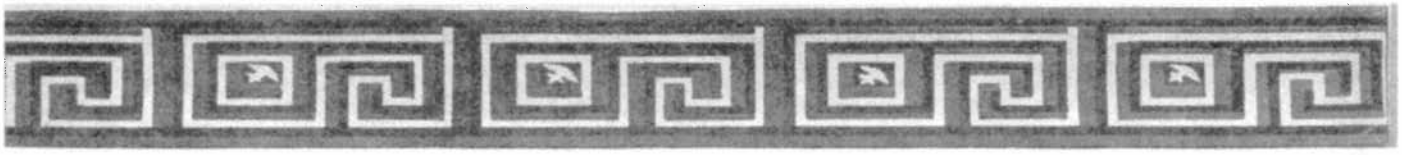
Queen's Building did not yet exist - it was opened in 1958 - and, as Mr Balsom explains, Arts subjects were taught in a cluster of buildings in the centre of the city. These comprised the large Edwardian building (1907-9) at the north end of Gandy Street, recently renamed The Phoenix, but better known to recent graduates as the (Exeter and Devon) Arts Centre, with two outposts: a group of huts between the main building and the Royal Albert Museum on one side, and Argyle House set back on the other. The huts, recently demolished, stood high above the present Phoenix car park and the stretch of the Roman city wall that divides this area from Northernhay Gardens.

The Roborough Building below QB (formerly the Roborough Library) should not be confused withthe Roborough Collection in the Old Library: it is now used by the Drama department.

Examinations in the 1940s were set by the University of London, since Exeter was still the University College of the South-West, and did not yet have full University status. This came with the granting of its charter in 1955.

'Collections' are a rather daunting end-of-term ceremony at Oxford at which students are summoned to hear their tutors give oral reports on their progress before the Head of their College. (Originally, it seems, tutors would then collect their fees: hence the name.) We imagine that it was John Murray, Principal of the University College from 1926 to 1951 and an Oxford man himself, who introduced the custom to Exeter.

Thurston Dart (1921-71) was to become a distinguished musicologist, conductor, harpsichordist and broadcaster. He was Professor of Music for two 'strife-ridden' years (1962-4) at Cambridge, and then, from 1964, at the University of London: see *The New Grove Dictionary of music and musicians* (1980) vol. 5 pp. 248-9.]



Unorthodox Readings

A selection of Russel Shone's 'Howlers'

Aristophanes' use of the words in italic font also give the audience a greater insight into her character.

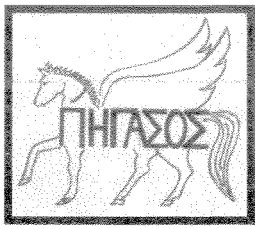
Juno seeks the aid of the furry Allecto, a creature of horror.

Nestor is a well experienced hero and most notable for his skill riding a charioteer.

Aelous, king of the Wind Bags...

Laughing Like a Drain:
The Scatological Humour of Old Comedy*

Eileen Tapsell



In his chapter on bawdy, Kenneth McLeish (1980:93) describes the comic hero as 'a licensed buffoon, a scapegoat who confronts and overcomes our taboos.' Buffoon maybe, but scapegoat never: the comic hero has the power to create his own fantastic destiny which includes the expulsion of his enemy. However, he certainly confronts our taboos not least in the region of anal activity, about which the Greeks of the fifth century seem to have been less inhibited than we are.[1] In Freudian terms, defecation gives pleasure to young children, who enjoy the exposure of their faeces(Freud 1955:72- 3).They are then taught that these are shameful unhealthy objects which should be hidden , and in medical terms it is certainly true that gross diseases follow if human waste is not separated from the people who produce it. Therefore for us an encounter with the scatological references in Old Comedy has the power to break through ego's defence system to release laughter, using the psychical energy normally absorbed by repression (Freud 1963:ch.6). On the other hand, if the reference is too strong or naked, the super-ego will double its defences to maintain its censorship against exposure. Then we reject the joke as disgusting, or distance it by calling it an alien sense of humour (Kline1993: 157). Let this then be a warning to twentieth-century readers of Old Comedy, that we must attempt to side-step our own value systems concerning the functions of the body it we are to plumb the depths of Greek anal humour. It is a curious fact that despite much overt scatological reference in Old Comedy, there is a shortage of historical evidence for the Classical period concerning the availability of sanitary facilities in Athens (Parker 1983:292; Owens 1983:44), which means that we lack a contemporary yardstick against which to measure comedy's jokes. To a large extent we must work the other way round, using Old Comedy as evidence of Athenian dung-collection practices. We know that at an earlier date Hesiod was concerned to keep bodily functions away from roads, and from springs, rivers or the sea, being more concerned with guarding the sacred from pollution than with human needs. But for urination, '*the godly man of sound sense does it squatting or/ going to the wall of the courtyard enclosure*' (*Works & Days* 731-2).[2] Similarly, Thucydides (4.97) mentions the offensive pollution of the sanctuary at Delium where Athenian soldiers had taken refuge against the Boeotians in 424 BC and were forced to '*do all the things there that men do in unconsecrated ground,*' from which we learn of normal practices too. Owens, in his article on the *koprologoi* of Athens (1983), lists a few laws that forbade the befouling of sacred places, such as the law of 485/4 BC forbidding the unlawful dumping of animal dung on the Acropolis of

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*[The Greek excretory vocabulary presents the translator with problems because it does not correspond with English levels of vulgarity. You will find more than you want to know about this topic in Henderson 1975:187-203, though he is more interested in the verb than the nouns.

The polite word is κόπρος (*koprós)* which is *excreta* if you are writing about comedy, but not if you are translating comedy: no-one says *excreta* in ordinary conversation, and it is too refined. In agricultural contexts this is *dung* or *manure*, and in medical ones *faeces* (an unlovely word). is a dung-heap and κοπρολόγοι *(koprologoi)* are the official city dung-collectors.

The coarse word is *σκῶρ (skôr*), whose irregular genitive σκατός *(skatós)* gives us our word 'scatological' (nearly always misspelt). This becomes *shit* or *crap* in English. *Crap* is, of course, the milder vulgarity, and more acceptable these days than a generation ago, so it is the best translation of σκῶρ if you do not wish to offend people. There is also μίνθος *(minthos*): this may be the oldest noun, since words with terminations in *-nth-* are generally thought to be pre-Greek in origin.

σπατίλη *(spatilê*) is the thin, liquid product characteristic of diarrhoea, and κάκκη *kakkê* is the childish word *pooh.*

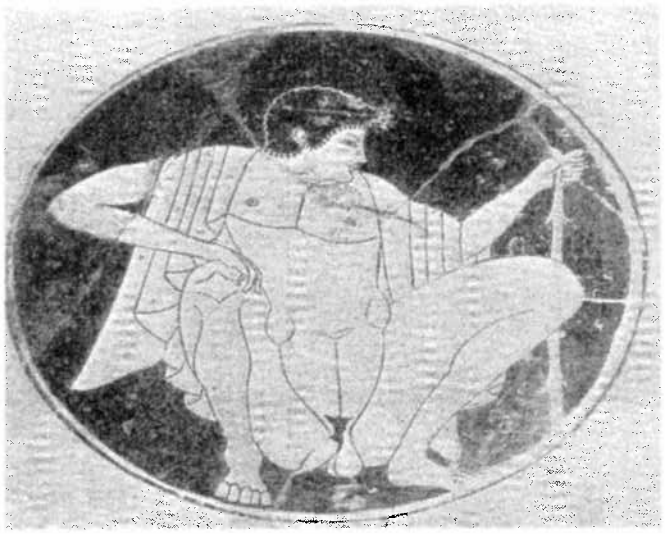
The verb to crap is χέζω (*chezô*); χεζητιῶ (*chezêtiô*) means 'I an desirous of having a shit' or 'Excuse me, can anyone tell me where I can find a bathroom?'. -- FDH]

[1] Male colleagues tell me this is a female evaluation. Boys' dormitories, rugby club celebrations, or a policeman's ball apparently demonstrate that the collective male psyche still responds with glee to defecatory humour, the more overt the joke the greater the regressive laughter. But this is outside my ken, and there is an important difference. These modern parallels are all private gatherings, but Old Comedy was a large-scale official performance before a mass audience – and in a religious context too.

There is a long-standing debate about whether women attended dramatic performances: the evidence is collected in Podlecki 1990 and discussed in e.g. Goldhill 1994 (with references to earlier literature). In my view, the audience was likely to have been all-male, and this may be a significant factor in reading the humour of Comedy in terms of gender. -- It is perhaps worth adding that jokes about defecation greatly outnumber those about urination. The reasons for this lie outside the scope of this present article.

[2] West notes in his Commentary on this passage (1978:724-59) that the superstitious tone of this section is more like the Vedic traditions of India than indigenous Greek attitudes, the important point being not to offend the eye of the gods.

Athens. The most holy temples and shrines at Delos, Epidauros and Paros were protected by similar laws. So when Procleon in *Wasps* promises Lycus, whose statue was outside the law-courts, that he will not '*piddle in the reeds around your shrine*' (394), should we read this as common practice of those caught short during lengthy trials? Or is this another joke at the expense of juries, as in *Knights* (897-8) where excessive farting by the jury is said to have caused the asphyxiation of its members? But perhaps this shrine, being sacred, should be protected as Hesiod prescribed. If so, Comedy here is taking its usual festive liberties with what is precious to Athens, mocking both its sacred shrines and the legal system, which takes considerable knocks in *Wasps*. Later in *Wasps* (1183-4), *koprologoi*, the dung-collectors of Athens, are attested (whom the Penguin translation euphemistically calls crossing sweepers). The same Greek word appears in



Peace (line 9), now translated as muck-shifters), but there it is directed at the audience (see Olson 1998:69). I will return to audience abuse later. Here Comedy seems to provide us with evidence that the streets were cleared by dung-collectors. The *koprologoi* in *Peace* (11-12) are asked to bring in the excreta of boy prostitutes because it has already been well pounded, but this may simply be one of the many anal intercourse jokes, pathic homosexuals being figures of derision in Old Comedy, where wide-arsedness is a common condition of politicians,[3] who frequently speak through their anus (*proktos*).

In Aristophanes fr.680 Kassel-Austin (=662 Kock), '*just take a basket and go dung-gathering* (*koprologei*)'[4] could be a reference to the refuse collection service again, or to the time- honoured agricultural practice of collecting animal droppings for crop manuring, perhaps an example of the intrusion of bucolic life into the city as is the wont of Old Comedy. The word *kopros* is certainly used by Xenophon *Oeconomicus* 16.12 to mean manure or soil fertiliser, but being green vegetable matter, it is what we would call compost rather than animal dung (Pomeroy 1994: 325-7). In the Aristotelian *Constitution of Athens* (50.2) the corresponding noun *koprologoi* is used for the official name of street cleaners, and *koprôn* (dung-heap) is the standard word for a latrine (e.g. Demosthenes 25.49: see n.22 below). So in using the word *kopros* Comedy is choosing a publicly acceptable everyday word rather than the equivalent of our slang terms. As we shall see, Greek laughter comes not from using expletives, but from the dissonant juxtaposition of excreta with Comedy's chosen targets.

In the fourth century BC there were ten officials chosen by lot called *astunomoi*, 'city controllers', who had the streets in their charge. One of their functions was to prevent the *koprologoi* from depositing dung within 10 stades (one and a quarter miles) of the city wall, (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 50.2 with Rhodes 1981:573-4 ad loc.), which presumably was beyond the reach of city noses. A later fourth- century law (*IG* ii2 380) forbids the throwing of rubbish and human waste into processional streets during festivals, which implies that it was normal practice on non-festive days, or in non-processional streets. Archaeological evidence tells us that there were occasional cess-pits in the streets of Athens, but no underground drainage systems (Owens 1983: 47, 49) so that waste was emptied directly into the streets.[5] This is confirmed by Dikaeopolis (*Acharnians* 616-7) who complains that those in debt like Lamachus are warned by friends to get away '*as if they were emptying their slops into the streets,*' which implies that they might have used a Greek equivalent of 'Gardyloo'.

In *Peace* (99-100) Trygaeus, in flight on the dung beetle, bids all Athenian men to leave no excreta around to attract the beetle back to earth: '*shut off with new brickwork / the privies* (*koprônas*) *and alleys*', which confirms that in classical Athens side-streets were used as what Sommerstein's note on line 99 calls 'informal public conveniences.' During these great festivities 17,000 bodily functions demanded attention.[6] The indications here are also that there were public privies. There being nowater flushing systems, these holes, like the streets themselves, must have emitted a fearsome stench, which explains how the proverb *eis koprôn thumiân* ('fumigate the loo with incense') came to mean a complete waste of time,

[3] *Acharnians* 716 etc.: see Henderson 1991:210-5 for a list of 42 such examples.

[4] The dung-basket (*kophinos koprophoros*) is also mentioned at Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.8.6

[5] I am grateful to John Marr for providing these references.

[6] Public hostility to our pop festivals centres on this very problem: the temporary portacabins being inadequate for such large numbers, the surrounding countryside becomes a vast latrine. The enclosed nature of the area in which the City Dionysia was celebrated must have intensified the problem, although Comedy does not complain about it.

or a useless occupation (Bishop Photius, cited by LSJ *s.v.* κοπρῶν.

In *Thesmophoriazusae*, a play whose humour runs on gender inversion, we find a female going out to the *koprôn* (485), claiming a need to relieve her gripes in the night. To attribute such public grossness to a citizen wife is unusual in Athens, but Comedy gets away with it because this is not really a wife but Mnesilochus in disguise. Part of the joke is of course that he is dressed up as a woman, but the biggest laughs come from his invented yarns, which are supposed to prove his femininity, but are couched in the raucous male language of Comedy: thus he is linguistically revealed. Apart from Old Comedy, we have very little eveidence of how a woman managed if caught short in public. However, in the two examples above we have a strong indication that there were some sort of privies outside houses, perhaps in courtyards, perhaps in the open streets.

There is evidence enough, then, that the Athenians could not put great physical distances between themselves and their waste products, and their humour therefore, includes, rather than excluding *excreta*. Nevertheless, as Hesiod and Thucydides attest, there was anxiety about the potential for pollution in human out-flowings, and it is interesting that Comedy's use of scatological humour takes place inside the theatre space which, like the Assembly, was purified with pig's blood by the *peristriarchoi* before the performance (Pickard-Cambridge 1988:67; Burkert 1992:81), a ritual which was perhaps in part prophylactic against drama's pollutions even if they were fictional constructs.

In *Assemblywomen* (311-73) there is a striking example: we see Blepyrus trying to defecate outside his house in public territory where his neighbours pause for a chat, and no-one seems surprised to find him doing it in the street. Is this for laughter's sake, or does it imply that it is normal practice? It is not clear. Although he seeks *'somewhere not too public'* (320), he is, in fact, in full view of thousands of Athenians, as well as the statue of Dionysos.[7] He is only acting as if, but we are glad that on this occasion he is constipated. Writing on what he called the Theatre of Cruelty in 1933, Antonin Artaud (1970:65-7) expressed his belief that theatre, if it is to be allowed its renewing power, should deal with raw, abrasive aspects of existence to exorcise the inertia of the past. He suggested that grotesque images such as those painted by Hieronymus Bosch express just such abrasiveness, and should be given life on stage. Blepyrusdefecating seems to be a good example of of this kind of raw image. But the action is not completed, so the renewing power cannot be returned to the men of Athens. The ugliness of t his scene serves the play's political dialectic, since it is a visual signifier of the low level to which male political vision has sunk in Comedy's Athens, compared with the nobility of purpose simultaneously being envisaged by Praxagora and her women supporters. In the Penguin translation the groaning Blepyrus observes that *'it is just like a scene from low comedy'* (371), but the important half of the sentence is missing. As Ussher's note on this line explains (1973:128), Blepyrus, desperate to ease his constipation, has no wish to be mocked *'as if he were himself an unemptied skoramis'* (chanberpot).[8] As Henderson (1991:102) points out, although Blepyrus prays to Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth, that he might not become a comical old shit-pot, that is exactly what he is. I would add that, by implication, so are all the male Athenians who have failed to run the city well, and that Aristophanes invented the word the better to insult them (Henderson 1991:191). In modern terms we as audience cannot sink lower than to watch a man defecating in the street as if he were an animal, and not only Blepyrus but the audience too is tainted by the complicity in shared laughter that the scene seems to invite. But it must be allowed that the sight of such an event was not so uncommon or shocking in fifth-century Athens, at least according to Strepsiades who used to take the child Pheidippides outside the house and hold him up in front of him so that he could shit (*Clouds* 1384-5). However, since children today are allowed such impromptu evacuations in the street, this is not so disturbing as Strepsiades wishing that his son would now do the same for his old father (1385-90).

Now the difference between Blepyrus' mimed action in sacred theatrical space and the army's offence to the

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[7] See Ussher 1973:121-2 ad loc. The passage is also discussed briefly by Dover 1972:40. Herodotus claims that the Egyptians, unlike other people (which will include Greeks), 'ease themselves indoors' (2.35.3): some indoor toilets have been excavated in Egypt, but most people must have used commodes. Both the Egyptian and the Greek evidence are discussed by Lloyd 1976:150.

[8] An *amis* was a piss-pot of the kind shown in our illustrations; a *skor-amis* is thus a shit-pot.

gods at Delium (p.30 above) is the festive context, again confirming that ritualized festive laughter gives permission to boundary-crossing abuses the better to shake off the shackles of everyday controls. But defecatory humour serves many other purposes. Again its roots can be seen in the *aischrologia* (foul language) of the Iambic poets (see in general Rosen 1988). Hipponax, for whom scatological obscenity was a speciality, describes a grotesque sexual encounter in a filthy passageway, where the stench of excreta attracted an army of dung-beetles (fr.92 West), no doubt Ionian literary cousins of the monster in Aristophanes' *Peace*. So abusive anal jokes have a long history that precedes fifth-century Comedy. As Henderson (1991:187) puts it, we can always laugh at man's dependence upon the most ignoble of bodily needs. But Henderson is here discussing Eubulus' *Cercopes* fr.52 Kassel-Austin (= 53 Kock), and sees only that the joke is based on everyone's need for relief. Edmonds (1959:105) suggests that fragment is part of a speech by Heracles about Thebes where '*...they dine all night / And by day as well, and every house in sight / Boasts it own privy* (*koprôn echei*)*: there's no greater boon to a man when he's full.*'[9]

If Edmonds is right, Henderson misses the Heraclean weight of the joke. We know of Heracles' mythical appetite,[10] but it is here totally grounded by its relationship with the opposite and inevitable need for a place of defecation. It levels the great hero: he is one of us after all, not entirely an Olympian. Presumably ambrosia and nectar obviate the need for Olympian privies even if that simple countryman Strepsiades does think that rain is Zeus '*pissing into a sieve*' (*Clouds* 373). In *Peace* (724) Hermes explains that the dung-beetle, being left behind on Olympus, is to feed on Ganymede's 'ambrosia' since the golden boy, being of mortal stock, is the only likely source of food for a hungry dung-beetle. Such logical distinctions are not always Comedy's concern, however, since Hermes gobbles up the meat-gift brought to him as a bribe by Trygaeus (*Peace* 192ff). Later the Chorus, afraid of Hermes' power to tell Zeus of their quest for Peace, begs Hermes to '*think of all that pork you ate / all from offerings of mine*' (386). And according to *Wealth* (1120-43), he never thinks of anything else: here Hermes is neglected, hungry and irritable. He rants of wine, cakes, honey, figs, ham, hot innards, wine mixed fifty-fifty, well-baked loaves, and a slice of meat from the sacrificial beast, all of which he used to get in the old days of unjust distribution before Wealth's eyesight was cured. So in Comedy some gods eat rather well even if in normal sacrificial terms they receive only the odour of burnt offerings so that defecatory needs are likely to follow.

In Eubulus fr.52 Heracles goes on to say that he who is caught short '*biting his lips/ he's a really funny sight*' so the Blepyrus syndrome seems to be a common source of derisive laughter for the Greeks, making public what we regard as private. In *Eubulus' Mysians* (fr.66 Kassel-Austin & Kock) someone speaking to Heracles claims that Thebes is where '*They beat the world at eating neck all day / and fill the privies nearby.*'[11] The fragment talks of a fictional Thebes, however. Zeitlin (1990, esp. 131) defines Tragedy's construction of Thebes as a negative model of Athens with regard to its notions of the proper management of city, society and self, and Comedy may here be playing with this concept of Thebes as an anti-Athens, inverting it through the motif of its loo-management. We know that Heracles made many visits to Thebes during his travels, and in these fourth-century mythological burlesques of Eubulus, he seems to be recalling with nostalgia their big eating habits and excellent household privies. Values are thus reversed to represent an Athens (bad city where no houses have private privies) as an anti-Thebes, (good city, privy-rich for gourmands). Would that we had the rest of Eubulus' plays so that we could check this possibility.

Mary Douglas, in her essay 'Jokes' (1975), discusses anthropology's interest in African joking relationships which are usually ritualised at public occasions such as

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[9] On this fragment see Hunter 1983:140. Jokes about excretion are common in Old Comedy, but (as Hunter points out) Eubulus frs. 52 and 66 are the only explicit references to it in the surviving fragments of Middle and New Comedy.

[10] In comedy Heracles is a 'foodie', as in *Birds* 1582-1692 where he never takes his attention off Peisetaerus' method of roasting birds while complicated political negotiation are going on all around him.

[11] The text is uncertain: see the notes in Kassel-Austin. The translation assumes that the end of the sentence is missing.

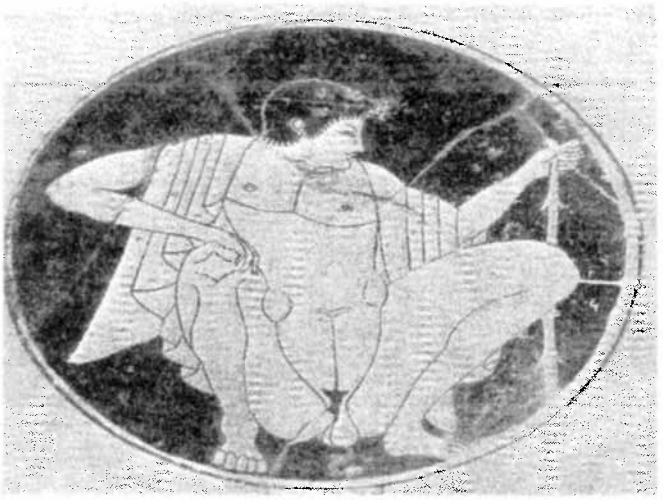
funerals and purifications. The Dogon tribe have joking partners who exchange gross insults involving the hurling of either actual excrement or verbal scatological insults at one another, which the assembled tribe finds hilarious. The partners are often relatives, like Strepsiades and Pheidippides in *Clouds*. Scatological obscenity is used in a combat between father and son in a way subversive to those who have temporarily gained power. Pheidippides has emerged from the Think Tank with his New Knowledge of how to argue that wrong is right, - for example, that it is right to beat parents: this is power indeed, and a moment for freedom for the Id that longs to destroy its controlling parents. The Sophists were interested in comparing animal and human states[12] and in demonstrating his new sophistic skills, Pheidippides seeks proof of parent-beating from Nature. He cites chickens who fight their fathers, which is not as absurd as it sounds, given that cock-fighting was common throughout Greece.[13] However, as Taplin (1986:73) puts it, Comedy cannot universalise for long without falling over a heap of dung, so father Strepsiades hurls filth in reply: '*Why don't you eat manure (kopron) and sleep in a hen-house?*' (1431), which debases not only the son, but also the New Knowledge which teaches such treacherous thinking. By association with such bestial habits as dung-eating the son is rendered sub-human, and this dehumanisation via excremental contact subverts the value of the whole sophistic training of the young men of Athens. It also allows the father to reclaim a little of his authority in this round of the contest at least.

The notion of excrement as corrective or punish- ment runs deeper than Comedy's boisterous need for abuse. In *Frogs* (146) Heracles directs Dionysos to Hades by way of the '*Great Muck Marsh and the Eternal River of Dung* (*skôr*)' in which flounder those who did evil things whilst alive, which bad news for Pheidippides includes those who beat their parents. Plato too asserts that there is some sort of mud in the Underworld into which the unjust or irreligious plunge after death (*Rep.* 363d; *Phaedo* 69c), but Comedy cannot resist adding *skôr* to the general muck.[14] Each to his own folk-myth:I would marginally prefer our own hell-fire to such a gruesome swim at the end a life's misdemeanours, although it would be a

[12]Dunbar (1995:468) notes on *Birds* 753-68 that arguments about human ethical questions based on the observed behaviour of animals would have been familiar to Aristophanes' audience.

[13]See Dunbar 1995:158, 330. Becker (1882:77) states that cock-fighting was a political institution of Athens, enjoyed as an example of brave fighting spirits. See also Plato *Laws* 8.789, which expresses a fear that some people go in for the sport more than they should

[14]Aristophanes fr.156.13 K-A (= fr.150 Kock) refers to 'the river of Diarrhoea' in Hades. Modern commentators disagree on whether this unsavoury feature of the Underworld is a genuine popular belief or comic invention.



pleasure indeed to hurl enemies into such a foul stream. It is this spirit of fantasy revenge that drives Aristophanes to place Cleon, recently dead at the battle of Amphipolis, in the stinking waters of Hades, where '*he's eating shit* (*spatilê*) *these days down among the dead men*' (*Peace* 48), once again recalling the images of Cleon's foul canine mouth which Comedy created to make a scapegoat of him. In Acharnians, Dikaeopolis claims that '*his mouth spewed out a torrent of sewage / nearly enough to drown me with lies*' (381-2). Since he has talked such garbage during his political life,[15] the bog of Hades is home from home.

If the human body serves as the great leveller, bringing such disparate figures as Blepyrus, Cleon, Hermes and Heracles together, made equal by their bodily needs, do the great gods fare any better? For Old Comedy the more absolute the power, the greater the joy of taboo-violation, and Zeus himself is not exempt from ridicule, although he is treated to a higher class of verbal wit. At *Peace* line 42, the monstrous beetle is thought to come from 'Zeus, the Lord of Thundercrap', as McLeish (1980:95) translates *skataibatou*. There was in fact a cult epithet of Zeus *kataibatos*, 'Zeus who descends' (in lightning and thunder), here modified by one letter to mean 'who treads in dung', a suitable epithet for the patron of a dung-beetle, and a splendidly wrought comic pun.[16] McLeish thinks the bawdy here is 'purely inconsequential, and exists solely to evoke laughter' (96). Whilst I agree that it is gloriously witty, the bringing down of the mighty to size by placing his divine feet firmly in the same muck-heap as our (Athenian) own should not be overlooked. It is one of Comedy's basic grounding

[15]The word translated as 'torrent of sewage' is *molynopragmonoumenos*, literally, 'embroiled in filth': a comic compound. Cf. *Knights*, where the Sausage-seller makes relentless use of excramental abuse to befoul the Paphlagonian slave.

[16] The extra S was added to one of the oldest manuscripts of the play (Ravennas 429). The pronunciation would be the same with or without it: see Olsen 1998:75-6.

devices and drives. Since the gods have pipped Comedy at the post in terms of their indulgence in sex, for which they have an enthusiastic appetite, defecation is the more effective bodily device with which to besmear divine status and power, their bowel movements not being a subject elsewhere in mythology.

We see this linguistic ploy again at *Frogs* 479. Dionysos, terrified by threats from Aeacus, the horrible door-keeper of Hades, cries: '*I've shat myself, call the god*,' a parody of the sacred formula for pouring libations, 'it is poured, call the god' (McLeish 96; Dover 1993:255 ad loc). So here not only does the pun give us a god besmirched and a sacred incantation ridiculed, but Dionysos is revealed as a frightened little body which cannot control its bowels under stress hardly god-like.[17] The verbal wit leads to a grotesque scene with Dionysos mopping up the mess with a sponge, and a slapstick routine with his slave to find his heart, which seems to have slipped to the region of what the Penguin translation (p.174) calls his lower intestines. Dover (1993:225) ignores this vulgarity, concentrating on the ancient Greek use of a cold sponge to cool the chest after shock, since the sponge had many uses in hygiene and medicine.[18] Like Zeus, Dionysos is here de-mystified and banalised or could we say analised by association with *excreta*.

The incongruous proximity of defecation and the gods has good laughter value for us now, produced by a cognitive dissonance of opposites, but even so, we should not overlook the fact that we do not share the Greek awe for these gods and their power to maintain or destroy the well-being of a city. If we were to stage a play at a Christian festival, with God Almighty treading in dung, or a Christ who shat himself, there would be a protest at the blasphemy, and would anyone laugh except in embarrassment?[19] So although we may seem to share Greek mirth at the besmirching of their gods, we are inevitably at a safe distance from these dangerous deities, and the effect on and response of the original audience remains elusive. Perhaps it is easier to decode in *Wealth*. By 388 BC Athens and her people were impoverished, and again at war with Sparta. The tone of this comedy is much harsher than those of the previous century, the wit cruder, the medical metaphor a sadder indication of Athens' sickness at heart. So Comedy pays a visit to the Temple of Asclepios to cure Wealth's blindness, the better to distribute wealth justly. What would normally have been a most holy, solemn and heartfelt occasion is rendered comic by a series of farts, always good for a laugh in comedy of any era,[20] culminating in Carion himself farting right into the face of the healing god Asclepios. But the god seems not to notice because '*he tastes shit for a living*' (*skatophagos*, 706). Henderson (1975:192)calls this a gratuitous insult, but I prefer the scholiast's idea, which Henderson rejects, that it is a parodistic reference to ancient (and indeed modern) diagnostic techniques of inspecting the stool of the sick: the Hippocratic medical texts are full of such analyses. The particular texture of excrement, for instance, will determine whether the patient has fever (*Epidemics* 1 case x, p.109),[21] consumption (id. 3.14, p.126), birth fever (*id.* 3.17 case xiv, p.137), dropsy (*Prognosis* 8, p.174), pleurisy or pneumonia (*Aphorisms* 6.16, p.228). Constipation can be a product of grief (*Epidem.* 3.17 case xv, p.213), or over-exposure to the North wind (*Aphor.* 3.5, p.213), or old age (*id.* 3.53, p.212), which may be Blepyrus' problem. *Aphorism* 6.32 (p.229) warns that 'peoplewho lisp are especially liable to prolonged diarrhoea' which may further explain the formidable dimensions of Alcibiades' backside (*Acharnians* 716). It is clear then that the reference to '*tasting shit for a living*' ridiculed the medical profession rather than Asclepios himself, and given that the whole play runs on the metaphor of Athens' need for an economic cure, the abuse can be read as an invigorating technique to shift stagnation by the abrasiveness of the grotesque, in the Artaudian sense discussed earlier (above, p.31)

The whole of the first half of Aristophanes' *Peace* functions through an image of an Athens so degraded by its involvement with war that it is covered in detritus. The all-enveloping nature of this foulness is an essential ingredient of the play's meaning: all we Athenians are besmirched by the war, having supported it, just as we shall all benefit if we can establish peace. We, the Demos, are buried in the dung resulting from our own decisions, and being totally implicated, there is good reason for the Athenian audience to be abused as *koprologoi*, as at lines 9-10, where the muck-shifters are asked to lend a hand to bring about peace. Now we do not know who the dung collectors were, but they were inevitably the lowest possible stratum, probably

[17]Defecation as a result of fear is very common on the Athenian comic stage: see Henderson 1975: 189-90.

[18]The third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* has no entry under 'sponge', but the curious reader will find references on all its uses in Richter's article 'Schwamm' in*Der Kleine Pauly* 5 (1975) 41-2. For the use of stones for this purpose see *Peace* 1230 with Olson 1998:302 ad loc.; cf. *Wealth* 817. According to the scholiast on the passage in *Peace*, three stones were sufficient.

[19] Chris Ofili's painting of a Black Madonna, which used elephant dung as well as more traditional materials and caused outrage in some circles, might be cited as a very rough modern parallel. But there are too many differences to allow us to draw any useful conclusions: the painting was not intended to be funny, it was not shown to a mass audience, and there are few similarities in the religious beliefs and sensibilities involved

[20]Page references are to the Penguin selections of *Hippocratic Writings* edited by G.E.R. Lloyd (1978).

[21]Cf. Dover 1972:41: 'The noisy explosion of gas from the bowels has as good a claim as anything in our experience to be absolutely and unconditionally funny.

slaves.[22] So the citizens of Athens are insulted as slaves and *koprologoi,* which raises doubts about Pseudo-Xenophon's notion that the Demos is never mocked in Comedy ('Old Oligarch' 2.18). It certainly is mocked, although compared with the relentless barrage of abuse with which the prominent figures of Athens are treated, the Demos gets off lightly.

* * * * * *

This investigation into the scatological humour of fifth-century Athenian Comedy has shown that the lowest of human substances is used to create the gross laughter which has roots going back at least as far as the traditions of abuse that we find in the Iambic poets. In spite of all the ordure, there is an over-riding cleansing quality. In the fifth century, ancient obscenity rituals have been re-contextualised in the open format of a democratic drama festival where all citizens and the city itself can benefit from the resulting cathartic laughter.

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[22] Owens (1983:49) quotes Demothenes 25.49, who disparages Athenian generals of the fourth century as not even fit to be *epistatai kopronon,* overseers of the dung-heaps

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* Translations have generally (but not always) been taken from the Penguin versions by David Barrett and Alan H Sommerstein.

This is a revised version of a chapter from Eileen Tapsell's dissertation 'Laughter and its Enemies in Old Comedy' for the MA in Ancient Drama and Society, 1996 at the University of Exeter. Eileen remained involved with the Department as seminar tutor in Greek and Roman Drama until the fall of 1999.

The Glory of Greece

Paul Scade and Duncan Howitt-Marshall

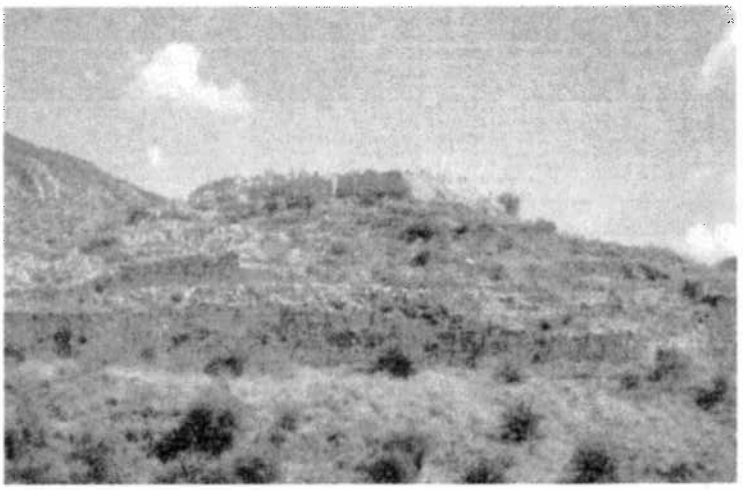
'The sense of wonder', said Socrates, 'is the mark of the philosopher'. A later commentator added that 'The wonder of Greece was that it shone so brightly for so long', and even now, casting our eyes over tumbled columns and empty sanctuaries, the awe and wonder one feels at the magnitude of the Greeks' achievements has dimmed only a little with the passing of more than two millennia.

On our travels across Greece, we visited the site at Olympia, on the western edge of the Peloponnesian peninsula. Two thousand seven hundred and seventy six years ago, the sanctuary here played host to the first Olympic Games. Although now lacking in grandeur when compared to the new facilities in Sydney, at the height of its significance the compound was filled with votive offerings, stored in the Treasuries of each city. The Athenian Treasury once held offerings of thanks for the victory at Marathon, and Miltiades' helmet can still be seen in the museum that shares the archeological site. Even the famed Sydney Opera House pales into insignificance as a landmark when set beside the Statue of Olympian Zeus that once held pride of place in the sanctuary's main temple. Sadly this Wonder of the Ancient World was pillaged by later visitors, and all that remains is the workshop in which it was built.

Our next major stop on our march east was at Mycenae, home of Agamemnon, leader of the Achaeans against Troy. The site holds an impressive position, dramatically outlined against the sky, looking watchfully across the plains of Argolis. On the road up to the ancient stronghold, we passed the site of the Beehive Tomb. This impressive structure was built, evidently, without the use of mortar, and seems to rely on one central keystone to ensure its integrity. On the main site, we passed underneath the famed Lion Gate, treading in the footsteps of Odysseus, Achilles, Diomedes et al. What is believed to have been the throne room is now open to the elements and the mind has to work hard to picture the court in full flow, yet despite this, the location and view provide ample compensation.

Feeling in the mood for some entertainment, we ventured onwards to the theatre at Epidaurus. It is true what they say, you really can hear a pin drop, even from the uppermost tiers. The remarkable acoustics that have been so well preserved, are countered by the relative paucity of interesting exhibits in the accompanying museum, and the dilapidated state of the sanctuary of Aesclepius. Our travels next took us to Korinthos, where there is nothing at all to see, and then ten miles further down the track to Archaia Korinthos, the ancient site. A village has apparently sprung up serving the tourist trade here, but despite this the site is still extremely pleasant to view, with many striking columns and an impressive Temple of Apollo. The owner of one local taverna was kind enough to extend us his hospitality, and we were able to sleep on his roof, directly overlooking the archaeological site. The image of 'rosy fingered dawn' caressing the Temple of Apollo less than twenty metres from where we had slept will certainly endure.

A long journey then took us northwards through Boeotia and into Phocis, where, we like many others, had come to listen to the wisdom of the Oracle at Delphi. Perhaps Apollo felt he had already graced us in Corinth, but for whatever reason the Oracle was silent. Despite this, the sheer reverence for the site that can be seen in the various structures and Treasuries over-awed us both. Without the benefit of modern transport the journey



to Delphi, perched amid the mountains overlooking the Gulf of Corinth, must have been both dangerous and difficult, and yet Delphi stayed at the very centre of Hellenic, and then later Roman, religious life for over a thousand years.

A museum full of grave stelae in Thebes was our last stop before Athens. After the beautiful mountains and the crisp clean air that came with them, Athens was a shock to the system. Perpetually wreathed in smog, the Acropolis dominates the sky-line, jutting out arrogantly as a reminder of what was. The Parthenon was covered in scaffolding during our visit, in desperate attempts to reverse the damage done by years of neglect. The new museum that sits beside the Parthenon was something of a disappointment, and we feel it would not provide an adequate home for the Elgin Marbles, as access appears to be a problem, with long queues and little apparent space. The National Archaeological Museum, on the other hand suffers from neither of these problems, and is an absolute Aladdin's Cave of artifacts and treasures spanning the entire period of Greek Ancient History. The Marbles would be in fine company here, if somewhat overwhelmed.

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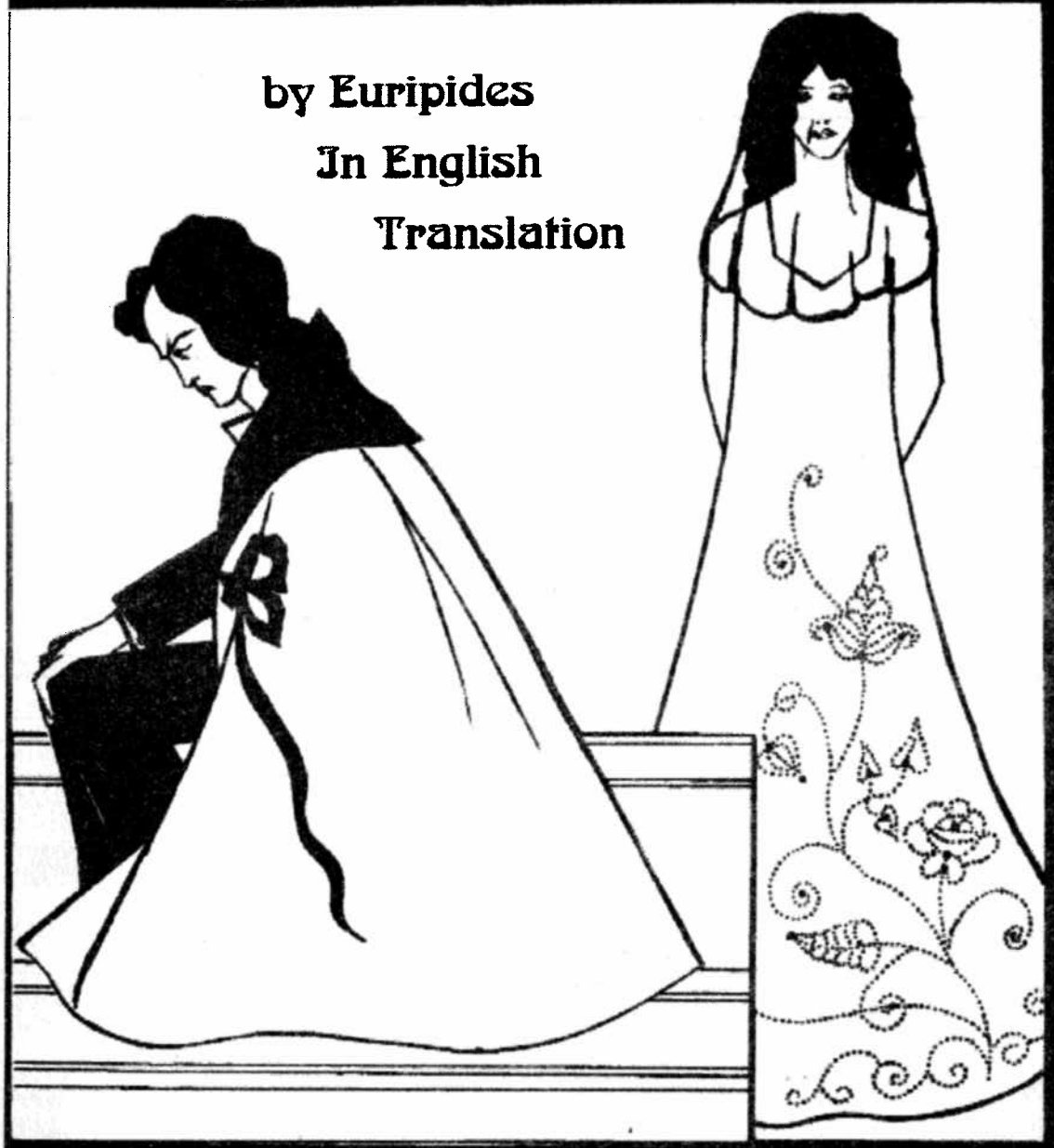
by Euripides

In English

Translation



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