From the Chair of the Faculty

My third and last Newsletter Introduction as Chair of the Faculty is upon me. Gerasko d’oei polla didaskomenos, though sometimes the aging is more apparent than the education. But I have indeed found out a great deal over the time I have spent as Chair – about the way the University works (better in some respects than others) – about the work that colleagues in parts of Classics further from my own are doing – and most recently, since my last Newsletter Introduction, about the gathering crisis in Higher Education and the beginnings of resistance to the worse effects with which Government policy looks likely to threaten the whole UK University sector, and the Humanities in particular.

It is this that I address in these remarks, saying in parenthesis that we have flourished over the year which I commemorate, in ways which you will find amply illustrated in the remainder of this Newsletter. The most uplifting event of the year was the recognition of the extraordinary scholarly career of Fergus Millar, with a Knighthood in the Birthday Honours last year. But while we continue to prosper in our teaching and our contributions to scholarship, out there hard calculations have been attempted. It has been estimated that the economic return from a University degree is divided about half and half between the individual and society as a whole. Even that estimation is debatable on the grounds that the value to society of specifically non-vocational education of the sort represented - for instance - by the Greats degree is impossible to quantify. The skills which continue – admirably – to be recognised by employers of all kinds, the ability to synthesize complex material rapidly and accurately, to discern multiple levels of relevance, and disentangle obfuscatory or illogical arguments and wordings, might be assessed in this way – but it is much harder to assess the value of understanding central parts of the immensely rich web of tradition and cultural allegiances and hostilities which shape the modern world – and of using this understanding as the base of a more sophisticated, imaginative, tolerant and humane citizenship (in a far more than

national sense). It is this that higher education in the Humanities offers society, and it is on this that a claim to support from government, out of general taxation, must ultimately rest.

We do what we can to support the promotion of the Public Understanding of History, or of Literature, or of Philosophy, or of Language, to keep up with our colleagues who aim to promote the public understanding of science. But it is, essentially, incumbent on you, if you felt you were formed to any significant extent as members of society by the degree which you studied, to join in the elaboration of this argument, drawing on your own experiences, and adding – in your hundreds – anecdote, conviction and reasoned persuasion to the national discussion of this subject.

This matter is becoming so serious and all-embracing a political issue as to make asking you for money seem bathetic. Donations to any or all our activities remain a life-line for everything from student support, above all for graduate degrees, to keeping the library collections comprehensive. On our website you’ll find a set of buttons which you can press according to the different areas which you could make donations to. If you fancy the ongoing Oxyrhynchus papyri project, or memories of George Forrest’s Greek epigraphy lectures stimulate you to give to the Centre for
the Study of Ancient Documents, or your memories of studying sculpture or vases prompt you to look at the materials of the Classical Art Research Centre, or you’d like to fund student travel through giving to the Oldham and Stevens Fund, or to continue our long endeavour to improve and expand our teaching of Greek and Latin, every year to more people who have never studied either language, these are all possibilities.

May I add one more piece of fund-raising news, for those of you who have (as is hardly uncommon after a degree of this kind) succeeded to the extent, shall we say, of achieving what would have been, in ancient Athens, membership of the highest property-class? One of the more imaginative initiatives of the University in the last months has been a new scheme to endow in perpetuity posts especially in the Humanities. You will know from the literature sent you by your Colleges that you can help endow College Fellowships in the Classical subjects, and many people have given generously to this end. But the snag has always been that Oxford appointments have to be joint between the University and a College (for the rationale, see my note on the Nature of the Faculty, below, p. 6) – and we are increasingly faced with a financial climate in which the University can’t afford its share, even if Colleges can. So the new scheme aims to encourage people to give to their old College for a post, and if the necessary sum is raised within a time limit of five years from now, the University will earmark a sufficient sum to endow its side of the post for ever, so it can be filled immediately in case of a vacancy. The sum a College needs is £1.2 million, and deals to do this are close to being finalised in the case of Classics for posts in Greek Language and Literature at Balliol, in Classical Languages and Literature generally at Christ Church, and in Ancient History at St John’s, in all of which extremely generous donors have come forward very quickly. We have been lucky enough to be able to set up schemes of this kind in addition for posts in Ancient History at New College, Classical Languages and Literature at Brasenose, Magdalen, St Anne’s, and Wadham, and Greek Art and Archaeology at Lincoln. All those Colleges are actively fund-raising to reach their share of the package before 2015. But there is every reason to hope that if you were to give on this scale to one of the other Colleges, a way would be found of setting up a similar arrangement. If you are a pentakosiomedimnos, then, or one of a group of such euergetai, please do consider this possibility!

A final thing that I have discovered – lots of people who naturally think first of the Colleges when they think of Oxford have only hazy ideas of what the Faculty might be, and I have even had a letter asking for this to be explained. So, in addition to this introductory piece, I have written a short note on the nature of the Faculty, to try to make it a little clearer to all our readers who we are and what we are up to.

And so back to other sorts of investigation, and farewell to the cathedra of the Board of the Faculty of Classics, wishing it, my successor, Angus Bowie, all my colleagues, you, our supporters across the world, and the study of the ancient world in general, a most prosperous future. Quod bonum faustum felix fortunatumque sit!

Nicholas Purcell

Outreach

I am now nearing the end of my contract, and have a chance to reflect on the rapidly evolving place of outreach in universities. Diversity and flexibility have characterised this year, as befits any outreach programme, and I frequently describe my role as a privilege and a joy for these very reasons. Increasing numbers of individuals and institutions are getting in touch and there’s a clear enthusiasm for all things Greco-Roman across the country. It’s been a remarkable year. We’ve held schools events, INSET and revision days, started a primary Greek club, supported schools across the country with the development of their Latin courses and seen interest in Ancient History and Classical Civilisation soar. My personal highlights have included taking 41 teenagers from nine schools to London for the day (escape and evasion games in the British Museum under the watchful eyes of some very tolerant museum staff), spending a whole day with 54 toga-clad primary children in Peterborough and watching the effervescent Chris Noon captivate a group of fifteen year-olds with some borrowed squeezes.

The Latin Teaching Scheme allowed 20 students from eight local state schools to take Latin GCSE last summer. Students spent their Saturday mornings ensconced in the bowels of the Ioannou School for two and a half years. Their commitment paid off, as they achieved a good crop of results.
and maintained enough enthusiasm to start agitating for A-Level to be provided. Both the local and national press were impressed by the students’ achievement and we welcomed the positive coverage. Two new groups started in February with one meeting in a host school (Chipping Norton), which demonstrates the willingness of schools, as well as parents and pupils, to support Latin. Now I hope to get a third cohort running, if the support in terms of teachers, space and resources can be found. As one way of supporting and seeding Latin in the state sector, this scheme has been a flagship project for the Faculty and we're keen to see it continue. People will take Latin if it’s offered, but the long-term prospects for its reintroduction and maintenance in the state sector remain a challenge to consider. The profile of Latin has remained high as Michael Gove's white paper put ancient languages alongside modern ones in the plans for the English Baccalaureate, and Chris Pelling and Llewelyn Morgan's report for Politeia generated media interest and a Politeia conference.

Another major focus of the year has been Marathon. What does the word ‘Marathon’ mean to us? A battle? A race? A chocolate bar? September 2011 is the 2500th anniversary of the battle, and from June 2010-September 2011 a whole series of international events have begun to commemorate it. It seemed only right for us to pay attention at Oxford. From primary school visits, to broadcasts of lectures by Paul Cartledge and Victor Davis Hanson, a great range of events have taken place here. We began with an exhibition opening and keynote lecture by Tim Rood, ‘Marathon: the battle and its legacy’. Over 90 members of the public visited the exhibition in one afternoon as part of Oxford Open Doors, with some even staying on for taster Greek classes. Imaginative competition entries from reconstructed spears and battle models to textbooks of the future were placed alongside information about the battle and the race, or literary and artistic works of reception from the past three hundred years. This juxtaposition of retrospective reflection and imaginative creation has been representative of all the events.

Two secondary school study days saw students from five schools come together to work on film criticism (there’s talk of a prequel to 300 called Marathon), considering the battle from both sides as we contemplated Bisitun and Darius alongside the Athenians. Tours of the Ashmolean themed around issues of war commemoration and classical reception proved sufficiently engaging for students to announce their intention to come back and wander around themselves, which bodes well for Humanities. Under the imaginative guidance of Helen Eastman we made events as dramatic as possible. We had 120 primary children here engaged in musical and dramatic representations of the battle, along with story-telling sessions from Stephe Harrop. Helen also commissioned a new live poetry show, which featured extracts by Wordsworth, Byron and Elizabeth Barrett Browning alongside short poems by authors old and new with occasional musical accompaniment. They held a twitter competition to submit haikus which were read out on the night, even inspiring one actor to compose his own poem on the day. My favourite remains the witty: ‘Pheidippides you were rubbish; not even in a Santa costume’.

These commemorations have explained events, unravelling and dispelling myths, but also allowed a broad spectrum of people to reflect both actively and passively on the nature of the Classical world and Classical reception. Widening participation and outreach are about more than just recruitment and these events have demonstrated that the Oxford Outreach Programme can both inspire teenagers to think about Classics in an academic context or as a degree, and engage broader audiences in the material – audiences who can then support those future applicants we’re trying to encourage.

Academics continue to be extremely generous with their time and guidance and I am very grateful for their support. As a new era of tuition fees dawns, outreach work will become ever more important. The nature of it is bound to change and I look forward to seeing what happens next.

CRESSIDA RYAN

Primary school children designing their own battle-themed vases
The last statues of antiquity

When Diocletian came to Rome to mark his twentieth anniversary of imperial rule in 303, a group of statues was set up on five huge columns at the speaker’s platform (rostra) in the forum in front of the senate house (curia). They represented Jupiter and Diocletian’s college of four co-emperors, the Tetrarchs. The monument is best seen on the Arch of Constantine (fig. 1): Constantine is giving a speech on the rostra behind which rise the five columns to his great predecessors (one of whom was his dad), and on the edges of the speaker’s platform, there are two seated statues from 150 years before, of Hadrian and M. Aurelius. Constantine is framed by the old order of the Antonine emperors and by the new order of Diocletian. Statues marked power, framed political life, and became part of public memory.

The cities of the Roman Empire, from Trier to Antioch, were full of statues of governors, emperors, office-holders, and local bigwigs. They negotiated the relationship between the powerful and their local communities. Our project, The Last Statues of Antiquity, is investigating the last, long and distinctive phase of this curious ancient statue ‘habit’, from the late third century to the early seventh century, when the practice ended abruptly. We are making a database that describes all of the surviving statues, disembodied heads, and inscribed bases of this period, across the whole empire. It currently contains more than 2,500 items, nearly double our original estimate. As so often in the classical world, there turns out to be a lot more of it than you would have thought. The numbers represent a huge continuing investment in useless figured symbols that was typical of classical city life.

This research will be made available in an online catalogue and used to investigate a lot of interesting aspects of late antique art and history. One aim is to trace changes in time across the empire. The deep impact made by Diocletian and Constantine’s new order, for example, can be measured in both the number and character of their statue honours. A recently discovered porphyry portrait head of Diocletian’s henchman, Galerius, from his Balkan retirement castle (fig. 2), is a good example of experiment and rupture in the imperial image. This was still a recognisably ‘classical’ world, but with big novel differences. On one level, we can chart how statue numbers declined rapidly through our period as city culture changed, but on another level, since most of the old statues of previous centuries were still around, it was really only the rate of increase that slowed down. All through our period, cities engaged in intense ‘heritage management’ of their back-catalogue of statuary (moving, repairing, recycling), alongside which the contemporary statue honours stood out as new – new in style, costume, and rhetoric.

Costumes were highly charged, as they were in life. Men of power often wear the new chlamys or thick, ankle-length cloak (fig. 3). Governors, who actually did no fighting, liked to wear this military, man-of-action costume. It had a similar charge to that of a twentieth-century great coat. Constantine on his arch breaches all protocol by standing in a quintessentially civilian context (the Roman forum) wearing this kind of cloak while he harangues the populus Romanus (fig. 1). At the same time, the design of the Roman toga was completely overhauled to represent higher senatorial and consular ranks. It became a ceremonial costume, rather like a pin-striped morning coat. In place of a cane and top hat, the toga suit of the late Roman consul included a baton and a foppish hankerchief (mappa) to be waved ostentatiously during circus games.
The last statues of antiquity

Portrait styles defined status and moral character. At one extreme was the elevated, ethereal ‘sacred face’ (*sacer vultus*) of the eternally youthful emperors, at the other the engaged, combative long-bearded portraits of fiery philosophers. Many portraits of the period have an intensified, staring expression, achieved by emphatic carving of the eyes, usually misinterpreted in the modern period as expressing a pervasive late antique ‘spirituality’. Public expressions of radical piety were of course much enjoyed in this period, but they belonged in other contexts. A superbly gaunt portrait from Ephesus, for example, looks to us so ‘spiritual’ that its well-documented identification as a local benefactor called Eutropius, someone quite other than a man of the spirit, has been wilfully denied (fig. 4). The inscribed base of the bust is preserved and tells us that Eutropius was honoured for repairing some of the city’s street paving. His portrait is concerned not with his religiosity, but with his self-denying exertion for the public good – the ‘sleepless toils’ of which his inscription speaks so grandly. The text and the portrait say something traditional in a new way.

The inscriptions on the bases present a superb corpus of lapidary rhetoric. The Latin texts in the west are usually prose itemisations of deeds and offices (useful for us, because they contain precise dating information). They are well-turned but tend to the pompous. A powerful office-holder of the later fourth century (Petronius Probus, consul in 371), for example, was hailed in Rome on his statue base, as follows:

>'To a pinnacle of the aristocracy, a beacon of literary eloquence, a paradigm of moral authority, a master of administrative foresight, a promoter of refined humanity, ...’

*Nobilitatis culmini / litterarum et eloquentiae lumini / auctoritatis exemplo / provisionum ac dispositionum magistro / humanitatis auctori, ...*

Such wordy grandiloquence characterises public pronouncements of the period. The Greek texts in the eastern empire achieve a lofty effect by writing in archaic-style verse, praising, for example, the justice and honesty of the governor. They are, however, infuriatingly vague about dates, occasions, and specific deeds. Aphrodisias has this short poem, for example, on a monument for a governor around 400:

>‘You who are full of (knowledge of) laws, who have blended the Italian Muse with the sweet-voiced honey of the Attic, Oecumenius, the famous governor, the friendly council of the Aphrodisians has set you up here. For what greater reward than that of being well remembered can the man find who is pure in mind and in hand?’

This is a way of saying not much more than the governor is a lawyer, knows Latin and Greek (Attic and the Italian Muse), and does not take bribes (‘pure in mind and in hand’). We have this governor’s full statue: it was set up outside the Council House at Aphrodisias, wearing the long chlamys (fig. 3). He has plump genial features, unlike the usually rather uncompromising images of other governors, and we know it was made by a Christian – the sculptor signed XMG covertly on top of the head. XMG is short in Greek for ‘Christ was born to Mary’ (*Christon Maria gennᾱ*). The public zone of city life, as opposed to the home, the church, or the imperial court, was not yet so interested in overt Christian display. It was in this public zone that statues continued to flourish in the fourth and fifth centuries.

By the time of Justinian, in the sixth century, the empire was a different, proto-‘Byzantine’ place, in which new statue honours played small part. One of the very last of our Last Statues was set up in the early seventh century, in 608, on a re-used column, still-standing in situ on its stepped base in the Roman forum, not far from Diocletian’s five-column monument mentioned above. It was a gilded figure (also no doubt re-used) in honour of the emperor Phocas, set up by his administrator in Italy (*exarchus Italiae*), one Smaragdus. By this date in Rome, the practice of honouring the powerful with statues had been dead for several generations.

Large quantities of public statues were a distinctive feature of Greek and Roman culture, from c. 600 BC to c. AD 600. Our project will bring hard-edged new data to bear on understanding their distinctive, often strange character in what turned out to be their last centuries. They have much to tell us about a fascinating period of ancient culture that has been properly colonised by classical studies only in recent years.

Fig. 3: Governor named Oecumenius wearing new-style long cloak, late antiquity’s version of the great coat, c. AD 400. (Aphrodisias Museum)
What is the Faculty?

The Last Statues of Antiquity Project is based in the Classics Faculty and is funded by the U.K. Arts and Humanities Research Council, for three years, 2009–2011.

Project team
Principle investigators: Prof. R.R.R. Smith (Classics), Dr. Bryan Ward-Perkins (History)
Researchers: Dr. Ulrich Gehn, Dr. Julia Lenaghan
Associate researcher: Carlos Machado, University of São Paulo
DPhil student: Silja Spranger

Collaborators
We have close collaborators and colleagues helping with parts of the database, in Cassino, Göttingen, Heidelberg, Helsinki, Paris, and Vienna.

Website: http://lsa.arch.ox.ac.uk
Username: lsa
Password: lsaguest

Bert Smith

Fig. 4: Not a medieval saint, not an ascetic religionist, but a local benefactor from Ephesos called Eutropius who repaired the city’s streets around AD 400. (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.)

What is the Faculty?

It is new. Everyone thinks that the Faculty of Classics should be among the most venerable institutions of an ancient University, but it isn’t. If you have been conscious that behind lectures and exams in the Classical subjects at Oxford, there was some sort of structure, you perhaps think of it as the body that had the real venerability, the old Faculty of Literae Humaniores. Like the Greats course, which it ran, this body embraced the three Sub–Faculties Philosophy, Ancient History, and Greek and Latin Languages and Literature. But as Philosophy became increasingly concerned with numerous other degree courses, it came to seem odd to the Philosophers that they were only a segment of a Faculty shaped by a syllabus which was no longer their principal focus. They asked to be a separate Faculty, their wish was granted, and with the new millennium, two new Faculties, Classics and Philosophy, emerged in place of Lit Hum, which survives only as the title of the Greats course.

As I say, lectures and examining are the two bits of the Faculty’s activities most visible to students: the University awards the degrees, so it has to do the examining on which they are based. But the University is also concerned (as its very name suggests) with the combination or concentration of the skills and talents of its members, above all for the pursuit of the deeper understanding of subjects of academic enquiry which underlies what is taught and how it is presented. That’s why so much of the work of the Classics Faculty, like the others’, is connected with research. It is involved with preserving resources for research, above all the great libraries, but also the museums, and handles funds for academic travel or other costs; and helps along applications for support for major research projects involving many different researchers or collaborations between subjects or between universities. Above all, all the taught and research-based postgraduate degrees are organised though the Faculty.

So individual tutors, who operate separately within the world of their College to admit undergraduates and teach them, have a collective identity within the University, shaped by sharing the same broad subject area. The same tutors whose undergraduate duties are collegiate, work as a Faculty when they lecture, examine, supervise doctoral theses, or research, whether individually or in major research projects. Classics inherited from the old Faculty of Lit Hum a very happy spirit of participation in collective decision-making, which is most clearly visible in the termly meetings of the Sub–faculties, which almost every member habitually attends, and where difficult issues (especially concerning syllabuses) are chewed over. But there is also a Faculty Board, a kind of cabinet for the collectivity, where more confidential issues can be discussed, and where financial planning also goes on. The University has devolved budget-management to Faculty level, so that the Board is responsible for a budget with an annual expenditure of around £5.5 million. Indeed, though in some areas sensible conformity between practice in all the Humanities faculties is promoted (by a University structure called the Humanities Division, which I’ll leave it to my successor to explain in a later Newsletter!), a great deal of policy-making is in the Faculty’s own hands, which is satisfying – but time-consuming!

To put it in a nutshell, then, the Faculty is the frame within which the people at Oxford who study the Greeks and Romans and their immediate neighbours in time and space come together in order to do it better – so that, with each others’ help, they can understand better, and in the process, teach better – both their own pupils and, more indirectly, all those who want to know. That co–operative vision is a one–subject microcosm of the original, and still the best, idea of what a University is.

Nicholas Purcell

Nicholas Purcell

CLASSICS AT OXFORD - 2011
Xenophon in America

In July 1856 Cornelius Conway Felton, Professor of Greek (and later President) at Harvard, found himself in the unusual position of presiding over a political meeting. The meeting had been called to ratify the nomination of John Charles Frémont as the first Presidential candidate for the Republican Party. Since the early 1840s, Frémont had cultivated a heroic persona as leader of several expeditions mapping and exploring routes into the American West: he was now one of the most famous men in the land, popularly pictured hunting grizzly bears or raising the Stars and Stripes on the highest peaks of the Rockies, and hailed as the conqueror of California thanks to his role in the war against Mexico. Felton’s speech in support of Frémont was duly reported in the Boston Daily Atlas the next day. The Greek professor had made a number of classical allusions, the paper reported. But it mentioned only one of these, ‘in regard to the Anabasis’ (Xenophon’s account of the march of the Ten Thousand up into Mesopotamia and back to the Black Sea). Frémont, Felton had said, ‘had wrote an Anabasis – California!’ and the audience had responded with ‘laughter and applause’.

Some of those in Felton’s audience may have themselves learnt Greek at school by marching along, parasang by parasang, with Xenophon and his band of Greek mercenaries. Widespread use of the Anabasis in American schools began in the 1840s, in the same decade as the victory over Mexico led to the spread of U.S. rule over the expanse of the continent, and Cornelius Felton himself had played a major role in promoting Xenophon’s claims. In the popular Greek Reader he edited for schools, he introduced a selection from Xenophon’s writings by praising the ‘illustrious writer’ for his military exploits: surmounting ‘innumerable’ difficulties ‘from the hostility of the natives, the want of provisions, and the occasional severity of the weather’, Xenophon had led a retreat that ‘has justly been considered one of the most memorable recorded in the annals of war’, and then written the Anabasis, ‘one of the finest specimens of military history’.

So when he alluded to the Anabasis at the meeting to ratify Frémont’s nomination in 1856, Felton was implying that the Republican candidate had conquered similar difficulties in his famed trips seeking routes across the Rocky Mountains.

I came across Felton’s speech while I was myself at Harvard during a sabbatical from my Oxford duties. I had been awarded a Fellowship for the year at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and was meant to be writing a general literary study of the Anabasis. But my work was starting to take a different direction. Earlier editions of this newsletter have featured accounts of some of the faculty’s ongoing research projects. Those large-scale projects have to be well-planned in advance. Individual research is a slightly different matter – or at least mine is. It is much easier for an individual to move into unexpected areas, and so it turned out with my American interlude. As the weeks passed, I succumbed more and more to the fascination of the distinctively American engagement with classical antiquity and with Xenophon’s Anabasis in particular. Why had Felton spoken of Frémont’s involvement in the conquest of California as a ‘written Anabasis’? This was just one of the questions that I set out to answer as I worked on the book that evolved into American Anabasis (2010). As I explored how the Anabasis was used in the conquest of the American West and in the Civil War, I became interested in the way this famous episode from antiquity had been first appropriated in the name of military expansion and then used to express conflicting responses to the most controversial campaign of the Civil War – Sherman’s March to the Sea.

At a time when study of the Humanities in general seems threatened, it is easy for Classicists to look back with nostalgia at the strange prominence of allusions to the ancient world during the nineteenth century. But this is a temptation that should be avoided. When the Boston Daily Atlas praised Felton’s strong stance,
The indispensable Etruscans

D.H. Lawrence’s last, posthumously-published travel book *Etruscan Places* has the following rollicking opening:

The Etruscans, as everyone knows, were the people who occupied the middle of Italy in early Roman days, and whom the Romans, in their usual neighbourly fashion, wiped out entirely in order to make room for Rome with a very big R. They couldn’t have wiped them all out, there were too many of them. But they did wipe out the Etruscan existence as a nation and a people. However, this seems to be the inevitable result of expansion with a big E, which is the sole raison d’être of people like the Romans . . . Myself, the first time I consciously saw Etruscan things, in the museum at Perugia, I was instinctively attracted to them. And it seems to be that way. Either there is instant sympathy, or instant contempt and indifference. Most people despise everything B.C. that isn’t Greek, for the good reason that it ought to be Greek if it isn’t, so Etruscan things are put down . . .

Lawrence loved the Etruscans because the images he saw on the walls of their tombs, and the supposed phaluses that he saw outside them, suggested to him a vital, life-loving people. Sigmund Freud was an enthusiast too. He once had a dream of entering a wooden house which looked exactly like an excavated Etruscan stone grave he had entered near Orvieto. The wooden house to Freud symbolized a coffin, but its resemblance to an Etruscan grave told him ‘if you must rest in a grave, let it be the Etruscan one’ (*Interpretation of Dreams*, 491–2).

Etruscan graves and grave-goods are indeed extraordinary. Extensive remains survive of huge cemeteries of rock-carved or dry stone walled underground tomb chambers, imitating the houses of the living and covered by large tumuli. Like the houses of the living, they were decorated with large scale wall paintings depicting lively scenes of life,
afterlife and mythology; in them might be found exquisite gold ornaments, rings, earrings, necklaces and fibulae shaped by complex techniques of embossing, granulation and filigree. But the Etruscans matter for much more than their graves and their goldwork. From the 9th century B.C. onwards the culture of the expanding Etruscan settlements in Central Italy, which eventually developed into powerful city states, was dominant in creating trade links with Phoenician and Greek sailors and prospectors in search of the rich mineral resources of Etruria and the islands of Elba and Sardinia. These early contacts with the Eastern Mediterranean led to complex and dynamic cultural and economic links of Etruscan aristocratic clans with Greek, Near Eastern and Egyptian interlocutors. Amongst the most seminal cultural acquisitions for Italy (and eventually Europe) was the adaptation of the Euboean Greek alphabet by the Etruscans for their own use and the dissemination of the art of writing to the rest of the surrounding Italic populations, including the Romans. Eventually, variations of this alphabet passed, via Venetic writing, across the Alps.

What the research of the last generation has made clear is that this efflorescence of complex social and cultural innovation was not a simple derivative of an early archaic Greece of Greek city–culture that a kind of parallel universe can provide, rather than (as earlier scholars thought) the more limited interest of another pale reflection of an original which is well understood. The famous Twelve Cities of Etruria are now well known archaeologically, though there are startling new finds every year – excavations outside Orvieto are currently exploring what seems very likely to be the Sanctuary of Voltumna, which served as a federal meeting-place for all Twelve. But in two ways they look quite different to modern scholars: we now know far more about the numerous smaller local communities which dotted the Etruscan heartlands, and hope in the future to understand more of the social and economic foundations of Etruscan prosperity; and the extension of Etruscan domination across the Appennines deep into the Po valley, and as far south as Capua and Salerno, is now revealed as a really significant part of the weave of the historical landscape of parts of the peninsula far from the Etruscan homeland.

The vast cultural, architectural and engineering contributions Etruria made to Rome (and thus indirectly to Europe) were obscured by the gradual subjugation of the Etruscan cities by the expanding Rome and their absorption by the conqueror with the ensuing loss of the Etruscan language. That was another important origin for that ‘putting down’ of the
The indispensable Etruscans

Etruscans of which Lawrence spoke. Greek and Latin became the object of academic study and formed the basis of archaeological research in the Anglo-Saxon world, side-lining Etruscan completely. At Oxford and elsewhere in Britain, as well as in North America, Etruscan studies were regarded as a sideline to Greek and Roman archaeology.

Now, however, it is clear that early Greece can only be understood in a pan-Mediterranean setting, and that the growth of Roman power is inseparable from the histories of the other peoples of the Italian peninsula. As a leading centre for ancient Mediterranean archaeology, and one of the largest communities of ancient historians anywhere, Oxford now intends to respond to the challenges of these new insights by founding a University lectureship devoted to the rich and influential material cultures of Etruria and pre-Roman Italy. This will create something new and unique in a UK university, and bring an important west-Mediterranean perspective to the archaeology of the first Millennium B.C. A trust fund for this purpose was established by a donation made by Dr. Sybille Haynes to the Faculty of Classics, University of Oxford, and a further pledge of £500,000 has been received towards the goal of £2.5 million. Another major contribution has been made by Somerville College, which has generously agreed to fund a very substantial contribution to the costs of the post in perpetuity from its own Woolley Fund. As a result, the new Lecturer, should the remainder of the endowment be forthcoming, will be a Fellow of Somerville and organize the teaching of Classical Archaeology there.

It is hoped by the donors and the University that others might also make gifts to the fund to make it possible to take this innovative step. In hard times, it is more than ever important not to be driven back to concentrate exclusively on entrenched core activities. We are lucky enough – to the surprise of many – to work in a field where the evidential base is being constantly enriched. While the Faculty’s traditional endeavours continue to be vital in more ways than one, this is the moment to respond to novel information and a rapidly altering picture of the ancient world with innovative initiatives. By creating a new lectureship in Etruscan and Italic archaeology, Oxford aims at a fresh perspective on the classical world in which the historical and cultural development of pre-Roman Italy will take its proper place beside that of the great civilisations of Greece and Rome that have hitherto dominated the field of Classics exclusively. Please help if you can!

Robert Parker, Nicholas Purcell and Bert Smith

Helmeted bronze warrior, with spear, separately added shield, wearing short trunks, from Brolio, mid-sixth century BC.
Many readers of the Newsletter will remember with great affection Tom Braun (1935-2008) who was Dean and Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History at Merton College. Throughout his life Tom, who died in 2008 following a horrific road crash, entertained his wide circle of friends with a stream of poems and parodies, public speeches and private letters. In response to popular demand, Tim Heald (Balliol 1962-1965) and Tom's brother Christopher have now produced Tomfoolery, an anthology of Tom's occasional writings. This eclectic treasure trove contains irreverent views of history and literature from the Old Testament to Tarzan, wry comments on politics, sensitive translations of poetry as well as some of Tom's own Latin and Greek verses, and plenty of puns. Here are some specimens:

Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice in the style and metre of Longfellow's Hiawatha

'Tis a truth by all acknowledged
That a brave of single status
For a squaw is surely seeking.

'Have you heard', cried Mrs Bennet
To her husband, Mr Bennet,
'That a brave of single status
Near our home has pitched his wigwam?
What a chance for our five daughters!

'Does he mean to wed them all, then?'
'Nay, but he may come to love one;
You must pay a speedy visit.'

Mr Bennet paid his visit:
Soon that brave woo'd Jane, his eldest.
But his second daughter, Lizzie,
Spurned the brave's companion, Darcy.
Only later did she wed him.

Get the book to see how Jane Austen treated Hiawatha

Moderating

Tom had published a poem in Greek iambics 'Praise of Last Year's Chairman of Moderators' (Michael Winterbottom, or in his rendering Χειμωνόπρωκτος) in the Oxford Magazine, and Richard Dawkins wrote to complain that he had failed to specify which of the more than forty Chairmen of Moderators serving that year he was referring to, as though only one really counted. This is Tom's response:

Sir - How small we both appear and mean
To him who wrote The Selfish Gene!
You, says this man of fame refugent,
'Indulged' my being 'self-indulgent'
By printing at the end of term
My lines of Greek, which made him squirm
Because their caption, as he thought,
Was so provocatively short.
I, trying hard to save you space, meant

Byzantine Studies at Oxford

To judge from the large audiences at the many seminars and special lectures held every week during termtime, Byzantine studies in Oxford is enjoying a boom. The new Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research (OCBR, www.ocbr.ox.ac.uk) was founded in 2010 to complement the very successful Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity (OCLA), and one of the events on the programme for April 2011 is a joint workshop on the topic of periodization – when does ‘late antiquity’ become Byzantium, or (at least for the early centuries) are they just two different names for the same civilization? Some Byzantinists set the beginning of their period at AD 330, the inauguration of the city of Constantinople. Others would say that Byzantium proper only began sometime in the seventh century, when the Arabs overran the prosperous eastern provinces of the late Roman empire; yet other dates have also been proposed. The current liveliness of this debate is striking, raising as it does questions about Byzantium’s place in the origins of Europe and its relations with the Islamic world.

Byzantinists in Oxford are uniquely fortunate, in that they can call on colleagues in nearly all the many languages and cultures relevant to Byzantium, from Georgian, Armenian, Coptic, Syriac and Arabic to Slavonic and of course Latin. Medieval history, theology and archaeology and art history are also essential, and the extraordinarily rich manuscripts held by the Bodleian Library and some colleges, with the important Byzantine collections in the Ashmolean, make Oxford a privileged place indeed. Three important archaeological archives, those of the French archaeologist Georges Tchalenko, the late Professor R.M. Harrison, and Dr John Hayes, are also held in Oxford. Against that, Byzantine studies in Oxford is spread (it can seem awkwardly so), over several faculties and disciplines. The Bywater and Sotheby chair of Byzantine and Modern Greek Language and Literature, founded in 1908, is held in the Faculty of Modern Languages, and there is a University Lectureship in Byzantine History in the History Faculty; two other University Lectureships are in Archaeology and Theology and have been filled in recent years by short-term appointments which are now coming to an end. Luckily one of the great strengths of Humanities in Oxford is the collegiality that exists between colleagues in different Faculties and which often crosses disciplinary boundaries. Many Oxford D Phil students working on Byzantine subjects are enrolled in Classics, with others in Archaeology, History, Oriental Studies and Theology, and all may and do attend seminars together; in 2010–11 seventeen new graduate students began their courses. Oxford is also home to an exceptionally large number of retired and independent Byzantinists and scholars in related subjects, of whom no less than thirteen are Fellows of the British Academy.

Byzantine history has been taught for over forty years in the undergraduate history syllabus, and Byzantine theology in the Theology syllabus. But what’s in a name? A striking development in recent years has been the eagerness of ancient historians to embrace subjects unheard of when I read Greats, such as language use in the early medieval Mediterranean, or the development of Islam in its social, economic and religious context. At the same time a new and large ERC-funded research project in Theology will study Christian debates in the early Byzantine period, and a ‘global middle ages’ initiative in the History Faculty already links Byzantinists with other specialists in explicitly interdisciplinary discussions. Byzantium is also at the very heart of such current topics as the history of the Mediterranean, the relation of east and west, the interaction with Islam, and the comparative analysis of empires, all of them the subjects of intense research and debate in Oxford.

The Ioannou School for Classical and Byzantine Studies in St Giles is a very
Greece and Rome at the Ashmolean

The Ashmolean's new building has been open for a year. Well over a million visitors have come to see the new museum, which won the popular (if not, regrettably, the judges’) votes for the Art Fund and the Stirling Prizes. The displays have been organised within an overarching concept: Crossing Cultures, Crossing Time. The ingeniously designed building, its galleries of differing heights linked by bridges around an atrium, works well with the concept to give to the collections a momentum not experienced in museums organised by culture, theme or time alone. Overall, the installation creates a sense of historic connection between the cultures represented in the Ashmolean, which largely derive from Europe, Asia and northern Africa. The cross-cultural galleries are on the lower ground floor, with key displays of money, reading, writing and counting, textiles, human image, the story of the Ashmolean, exploring the past (with an emphasis on materials) and conservation. Most of these galleries include important Greek and Roman material amongst a range of objects from all departments of the museum. Particularly striking are the exploding Greek pot in the Conservation Gallery, a painted cast of the statue of Augustus from Prima Porta in the Human Image gallery, and the hoard of third-century AD Roman coins from Chalgrove, Oxfordshire, among them one of only two known portraits of the short-lived emperor Domitianus.

From the Ground Floor upwards, the museum is arranged in time-slots, moving from the ancient world on the ground floor to modern art at the top, inspired by archaeological stratigraphy. Each gallery within the sequence remains culturally distinct, but links through to its neighbour; each floor is introduced by an orientation gallery leading off the stairs or lift of the atrium. Thus the visitor moves eastwards from the Rome Gallery into Bactria, Gandhara, and early India, followed by Han China, early Korea and Japan. There are also vertical links, for example between ancient and medieval Cyprus. Very significantly, a direct link has been created to the Cast Gallery from Rome, allowing both a physical passage from east to west across the north side of the Ashmolean between the Ioannou Centre and Pusey Lane, and the addition of monumental architectural sculpture to the Roman display. The interlocking design of the new building allows some displays to be enjoyed from unexpected vantage points.

Averil Cameron was Warden of Keble College from 1994 to 2010 and holds the University title of Professor of Late Antique and Byzantine History. She is the chair of the Oxford Centre of Byzantine Research, whose Director is Dr Peter Frankopan.

Important focus for Byzantinists as the home of the weekly seminar and many special lectures; it also provides precious space for Byzantinists and their research, including a major research project on law, society and literature in eleventh-century Byzantium, a key period in Byzantine history, which will hold its third international workshop in May 2011. The new Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research takes advantage of the richness of expertise in Oxford to promote research and hold conferences and workshops and other events on Byzantium and related fields. This is an exciting moment for the study of Byzantium, and Byzantine studies at Oxford is an enormous success story, and a shining example of what can be achieved by cooperation. However in terms of dedicated posts it is an example of success on a shoestring, and as Byzantinists we are not alone in wondering what the future will be.

AVERIL CAMERON

Averil Cameron was Warden of Keble College from 1994 to 2010 and holds the University title of Professor of Late Antique and Byzantine History. She is the chair of the Oxford Centre of Byzantine Research, whose Director is Dr Peter Frankopan.

Portrait of Arthur Evans, archival material, and one of his reconstructions of a fresco from the "Palace of Minos" at Knossos
A Yank at Oxford

I arrived at Oxford (I can't say I "came up"; I came straight from the boat) in time for Michaelmas term 1956, and stayed through Summer term, 1958. I was 21 years old when I arrived, and in every way marginal - I was an American, I was already married (and therefore could not live in College), and I was a graduate student at a time where there were hardly any. I was admitted to New College as an "advanced student", a no-longer-existent status. It meant that I wore a gown slightly longer than a commoner's, with real sleeves, and that instead of a tutor I had a supervisor. He turned out to be Antony Andrewes; as he would not see me unless I had a newly composed paper in my hand, and as it took me a term to write one, I didn't see him very often. Nevertheless we somehow managed to become lifelong friends.

I have never been particularly sociable, and the Oxford men of that era were not especially outgoing, particularly to foreigners; it soon became clear to me that unless I made some heroic efforts I was never going to meet any undergraduates. My moral tutor (I did get one of those) was Geoffrey de Ste. Croix; he told me I was supposed to get his permission any time I went ten miles from Carfax, gave me his blanket permission, and said I didn't need to see him again.

I didn't much mind being marginal, as a graduate student in the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought I was used to it. I did the usual Oxford things; punted on the Cherwell (I rather fancied myself with a punt pole), went to debates at the Union, attended talks, and the like. Some of these were thronged - particularly Isaiah Berlin at the Examination Schools - and others were like evensong "where two or three were gathered together". In fact a particular memory comes back: at that time the government was just beginning to put public money into Oxbridge, and the device they had chosen, as I understood, was to pay the dons to give lectures; furthermore there as a rule that if less than two people...
attended any given lecture the rest of the series need not be given. Once a South African and I found ourselves the whole audience of a second lecture, and we agreed to attend the whole course together. I have no memory of what these lectures were about; I only remember the evil pleasure we took in tormenting the lecturer, who looked at us bitterly each time he came in the room, and then read his text.

Some lecturers I found very helpful, particularly Andrewes and de Ste. Croix; others I found nearly unintelligible, for instance, Russell Meiggs, whose lectures seemed to consist of murmured footnotes: “I think you’ll find something about that in Diodorus 14”. Gilbert Ryle’s lectures on Plato I found mostly irritating; I have been brooding on that irritation for half a century. Oxford was important to me intellectually because I discovered there the limits of my previous education. I had spent my whole life – from nursery school onward, actually – in one very good university with a particular tradition, and I had assumed that everyone thought like us, or aspired to. Out there in the wider world, it turned out, some very different ways were active. I think I really spent the whole two years adjusting to that fact.

I took two classes with E. R. Dodds; he seemed to be the only person around who was offering something that looked to an American like a course. He was editing the Gorgias at the time, and he taught me everything I know about textual criticism. He also delighted me by the sense of wonder with which he approached the ancients, as people very different from us. “What would it be like,” he asked himself in his soft Irish voice, “to think that a heap of stones was sacred?” – and stayed not for an answer.

I learned from Dodds, and even more from Andrewes; he taught me a great deal with great economy of means. His comments on my papers always went straight for the jugular, and often were only a sentence or two. “I always think the best kind of polemic is just to do something better yourself.” “What do all these things have in common, except that they’re by you? Well, perhaps that’s enough.”

In terms of “contact hours” I had very little teaching at Oxford; the lectures were keyed to the undergraduate curriculum, and I wasn’t doing that. I wasn’t “reading” anything. Probably I should have felt the lack, but I didn’t. Mostly I worked on my own. New College library was unheated, and I acquired the habit of going into the lavatory every twenty minutes or so to soak my hands in hot water, thus fending off hypothermia.

I got to England just in time for Suez, which the Sunday papers told me was the last act – or perhaps the epilogue – of the British Empire. Obviously something was stirring; I saw the original production of Look Back in Anger at the Royal Court. The future Beatles were messing about with skiffle; Bill Haley and the Comets were causing occasional riots. But as an American what struck me most about England was her compact coyness. It seemed that everybody who was anybody knew everybody worth knowing. It was about this time that the expression “the establishment” came into use: the billboards proclaimed “top people read the Times”. By the time I got there the previous Labour government had flooded Oxford with grammar–school boys, but Oxford as far as I could see remained unchanged. It seems to me the idea was to make admission to the establishment a matter of merit, but to leave the class structure itself unchanged. I saw notices for a charity for “distressed gentlefolk”, who were evidently people who were poor but weren’t supposed to be. At Oxford, conversely, people from rather modest families were making their way toward the top: a good Second would secure a civil–service job in London, complete with bowler hat and tightly rolled umbrella. Naturally a good part of their energies went to mastering the tastes and manners of their prospective condition. Coming from Chicago I found Oxford puzzlingly unintellectual. (I would have been less puzzled if I had come from, say, Princeton.) Oxford seemed immersed in the world. Graduates could go straight from University journalism into Fleet Street, from University dramatics to the West End, from the Union into Parliament.

This difference in atmosphere was largely the effect – or perhaps the cause – of the absence of graduate students. Oxford was focused on teaching, not research. Greats was a stable course of texts and topics; the dons argued the fine points among themselves, and students who got a really top First could immediately receive tenure and start in teaching the very course they had just completed. The whole thing was a closed system, of which analytic philosophy, with which I could never get comfortable, seemed to be the only cutting edge.

Returning to Oxford I of course notice enormous differences. One obviously is graduate students, along with middle common rooms and the rise of the faculties at the expense of the colleges. The other is women. In my two years I did not meet a single female undergraduate – I did have one old friend from Chicago at one of the women’s colleges, so I heard stories. Their numbers, of course, were small, and I suspect they tended to maintain a rather low profile; I do remember that the Union was like an Orthodox synagogue, with the women confined to the balcony. In the half century since then Oxford has become very like an American university. This is not a loss to the University or to the world; American universities at their best are among the best anywhere, and are not such a bad model. However I feel privileged to have seen something of an older Oxford; it was an exotic experience. It is a little like being an anthropologist who returns to the village to find it equipped with electricity, running water, paved streets, sewers, and television; he is glad that these people prospered, but is a little sad to see that the odd culture he found so exhilarating is passing away.

James Redfield
Edward Olson Distinguished Service Professor in the University of Chicago

CLASSICS AT OXFORD – 2011

A Yank at Oxford
Cicero as Evidence
A Historian’s Companion
Andrew Lintott
A guide to reading Cicero as historian, leading readers through his writings, and showing how they can be exploited and enjoyed.
978-0-19-959972-1 | Paperback
480 pp | 2010 | £30.00

The Making of the Iliad
Disquisition and Analytical Commentary
M. L. West
A commentary on the making of the Iliad, distinguishing the different stages of the poet’s workings.
978-0-19-959007-0 | Hardback
456 pp | 2011 | £85.00

Aegina: Contexts for Choral Lyric Poetry
Myth, History, and Identity in the Fifth Century BC
Edited by David Fearn
A collection of essays dealing with different aspects of the fifth-century BC history and culture of the Greek island of Aegina.
978-0-19-954651-0 | Hardback
528 pp | 2010 | £85.00

A Commentary on Ovid’s Fasti, Book 2
Matthew Robinson
This commentary on Book 2 - the first detailed commentary in English - guides the reader towards a fuller appreciation of the poem.
978-0-19-958939-5 | Hardback
592 pp | 2010 | £95.00

A Commentary on Propertius Book 3
S. J. Heyworth and J. H. W. Morwood
An edition of the most wide-ranging and entertaining of the books of the Latin love poet Propertius.
978-0-19-957149-9 | Paperback
392 pp | 2010 | £29.50
978-0-19-957148-2 | Hardback
392 pp | 2010 | £75.00

Musa Pedestris
Metre and Meaning in Roman Verse
Llewelyn Morgan
An accessible account of some of the most common metres in Roman poetry.
978-0-19-955418-8 | Hardback
424 pp | 2010 | £70.00

Ancient Drama in Music for the Modern Stage
Edited by Peter Brown and Suzana Ograjenšek
Provides an exceptionally wide-ranging and detailed overview of the relationship between music and drama.
978-0-19-955855-1 | Hardback
480 pp | 2010 | £85.00

The Ancient Dancer in the Modern World
Responses to Greek and Roman Dance
Edited by Fiona Macintosh
The first systematic study of the impact of ideas about ancient Greek and Roman dance on modern theatrical and choreographic practices.
978-0-19-954810-1 | Hardback
536 pp | 2010 | £90.00

A Commentary on Ovid’s Tristia, Book 2’
Jennifer Ingleheart
A detailed commentary on Tristia 2, Ovid’s verse letter addressed from exile to the emperor Augustus.
978-0-19-959042-1 | Hardback
536 pp | 2010 | £90.00

The Pronomos Vase and its Context
Edited by Oliver Taplin and Rosie Wyles
A comprehensive and fully illustrated collection of essays on the Pronomos Vase.
978-0-19-958259-4 | Hardback
304 pp | 2010 | £85.00