

## SEMINAR IN CLASSICS AND ANCIENT HISTORY

*\*\*5.30 pm, Tuesday 21 October 2008\*\**

**PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE**

*A.D. Hope Building, rm G41*



**Peter Londey**

*Euripides, Thucydides, and Melos*

The Athenians destroyed the small Aegean island city of Melos in late 416, according to Thucydides who made the event the occasion for the bitterly cynical Melian Dialogue. A few months after the destruction Euripides presented the *Trojan Women* as the third play in his trilogy at the Great Dionysia of spring 415. At Melos, the Athenians had slaughtered the men and sold the women and children into slavery. In *Trojan Women*, the city is sacked, the men dead, and the women wait to be taken off into slavery.

Modern theatrical producers generally assume that *Trojan Women* was “about” Melos, not to mention Vietnam and Iraq. Classicists today are more cautious, though once many viewed the play both as criticism of Melos and a warning against the Sicilian expedition. I will discuss these issues, as well as the reasons why Thucydides may have chosen to highlight the case of Melos.

*All welcome*