

ANU Ancient World Seminars, 2007

5:15 pm, Thursdays

Milgate Seminar Room, (Room 159), A.D. Hope Building

1 March	J.Mira Seo (University of Michigan) <i>Seneca's Oedipus: characterization and literary tradition</i>
8 March	Benjamin Kelly (History, ANU) <i>On Cucumber Thefts, Bad Debts, and Collapsing Houses. Resolving and Prolonging Disputes in Roman Egypt</i>
15 March	Elizabeth Minchin (Classics, ANU) <i>"And she went in a flash of speed down from the pinnacles of Olympos . . .": spatial memory and the composition of the Iliad</i>
22 March	David Pritchard (University of Sydney) <i>Democracy, War and Popular Culture in Classical Athens</i>
29 March	Graeme Clarke (History, ANU) <i>Excavating and Interpreting the Temple at Hellenistic Jebel Khalid</i>
Tues. 3 April 5pm	Nicholas Purcell (St. John's, Oxford) <i>Place of Pleasure: revisiting ancient Baiae</i>
Easter Teaching Break	
26 April	Sonia Dimitriadis (Classics, ANU) <i>The Modern Import of Classical Education</i>
3 May	Marta Kurpisz (University of Wrocław) <i>Records, Prices and Corruption in Ancient Sport</i>
10 May	Sara Saba (Classics, ANU) <i>Housing in Sympoliteia Agreements: the problem(s) of moving a city</i>
17 May	John Docker (Humanities Research Centre, ANU) <i>Genocide, and Questioning of Genocide, in the Classical Greek World: Herodotus and Thucydides (and a note on the death of Socrates)</i>
24 May	Eliezer Oren (Ben-Gurion University) <i>Anthropoid Coffins of Sea Peoples in Canaan?</i>
31 May	5.00-5.45 Chris Ransom (Classics, ANU) <i>The Sculpted Achilles: masculinity, identity and the body in Statius' Achilleid</i> 5:45-6:30 Tam Camden-Dunne (Classics, ANU) <i>The Epic Animal</i>

Abstracts

J.Mira Seo (University of Michigan) *Seneca's Oedipus: characterization and literary Tradition*

Although both plays cover roughly the same mythological events, the character of Seneca's Oedipus differs greatly from that of Sophocles in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Seneca's Oedipus fairly cringes with fear from the opening monologue, and his dread and foreboding persist until his ecstatic self-mutilation at the end of the play. This paper examines Oedipus' fear as a meta-literary awareness of Thebes as metonymic of tragedy, especially as defined by Ovid in book 3 of the *Metamorphoses*. This unusually cowardly Oedipus may therefore be understood through his location in a post-Ovidian Thebes. The Ovidian intertext is highlighted through contrasts with Oedipus' own Sophoclean past. Furthermore, this Ovidian construction of Thebes as a paradigmatic locus of tragedy for Roman literature is later confirmed in Statius' proem to the *Thebaid*.

J. Mira Seo holds a PhD from Princeton University. She has taught at Swarthmore College and Princeton University, and is currently an assistant professor in Classical Studies & Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan.

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Benjamin Kelly (History, ANU) *On Cucumber Thefts, Bad Debts, and Collapsing Houses. Resolving and Prolonging Disputes in Roman Egypt*

Some hundreds of petitions addressed to officials survive from Roman Egypt, written on papyri. They give us a valuable insight into how the inhabitants of this province used officials and legal processes to deal with interpersonal disputes. In this paper, I examine the aims of disputants who sent petitions and commencing litigation, and how “official” and “private” methods of dealing with disputes interacted with each other. It will be argued that often approaching the authorities of the province was not a last, desperate attempt to solve a dispute. Rather, some petitioners were involved in attempts to intimidate their opponents into a private resolution of the dispute. Others used petitions to strike fresh blows against enemies in long-standing feuds. A reading of these documents therefore suggests that many inhabitants of the province were capable of using the law to pursue quite subtle and sophisticated disputing strategies.

Benjamin Kelly holds a D.Phil. from Oxford University. He is presently a lecturer in the School of Social Sciences, ANU.

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Elizabeth Minchin (Classics, ANU) *“And she went in a flash of speed down from the pinnacles of Olympus . . .”: spatial memory and the composition of the Iliad*

Most scholars now accept Milman Parry's hypothesis that the Homeric epics are the work of an orally-trained poet. Acceptance of the hypothesis, however, raises a number of questions about the composition of these monumental songs. The first is, simply, how was it done? How could Homer, or any singer of traditional tales, compose in performance, relying for the most part (if not entirely) on memory?

In this paper I study the functions of the spatial system, one of the complementary systems that make up what we call memory, and its relationship with oral epic. This system encodes information about location, orientation, distance, and direction. We use spatial memory to locate sites we know, to find objects we need, and to assist in comprehending discourse of all kinds, set in familiar, unfamiliar, or imaginary locations.

One of the striking features of oral epic is that, as David Rubin observes, ‘epic heroes are always on the move’. I shall be exploring the implications of Rubin's claim for the composition of oral epic—Homer's epics, in particular. Psychologists have demonstrated that location is linked with memorability and that spatial information can cue the recall of associated material. It is possible that the ‘scene-

changes' we observe so frequently in oral song are significant as mnemonic cues of this spatial kind: organizing the song in the poet's memory and prompting his singing. As comparative evidence I introduce examples from living traditions of song in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Elizabeth Minchin is a Reader in the School of Language Studies, ANU. Her most recent book is Homeric Voices. Discourse, Memory, Gender (2007, Oxford)

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David Pritchard (University of Sydney) *War, Democracy and Popular Culture in Classical Athens*

Classical Athens is famous for creating what is arguably the world's first democracy and for its related cultural revolution that laid the foundations for the historiography, theatre, philosophy and visual arts of the antique and modern worlds. Little known (and certainly never hymned) is the city's contemporaneous military revolution. Athens of the fifth century intensified and transformed the waging of war, killed tens of thousands of fellow Greeks, and ignored some of the traditional customs of battle. By the time its democracy was fully elaborated, in the 450s, war had come to dominate the politics and popular culture of the city and the lives of its citizens. War consumed more money than any other public activity, was waged more frequently than ever before, and was the main topic of debate in the democratic council and assembly.

Certainly this military revolution was made possible by the unrivalled size of Attike and its citizen population and the unprecedented supply of money from the Athenian maritime empire. However, the practical innovations Athens made to the waging of war, the efficiency of its military operations, and the disturbing willingness of its non-elite citizens to fight and die in battle were direct consequences of the new practices of the democracy. To a large extent the twin revolutions of Athenian culture and warfare can be understood as flip sides of each other.

David Pritchard is Sesquicentenary Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Sydney. His is editor, with David J. Phillips, of Sport and Festival in the Ancient Greek World (2003, Swansea).

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Graeme Clarke (History, ANU) *Excavating and Interpreting the Temple at Hellenistic Jebel Khalid, North Syria*

Excavation at Jebel Khalid has revealed an amphiprostyle, Doric, east-facing temple, the construction of which appears to have commenced about the second quarter of the third century BCE. Whilst the outward appearance of the structure is undoubtedly Greek (although the Doric is somewhat modified), the internal layout and proportions of the cella of the temple conform more to a "quadratic" Mesopotamian formula, with tripartite adyton (sanctuary). This hybridity was no doubt deliberate and the statuary recovered in the course of excavation reflects a similar duality, ranging from heroic-sized Parian marble in Hellenistic style, through local but hellenizing limestone to crude local images. What does this imply about the ethnic identity/identities of the worshipping population? After the abandonment of the settlement of Jebel Khalid in the late 70s/early 60s BCE, the temple site continued to be visited as a sacred area at least until the end of the first century CE, a new temenos wall was constructed and 23 columnar incense altars were erected on the north, west and south sides of the temple. Does this imply a change in religious culture? The Jebel Khalid temple constitutes a very rare example of a Greek-style temple for the Seleucid period in the Levant (c.312-64 BCE) but it nevertheless reveals some very individual features.

Graeme Clarke is an emeritus Professor, in the School of Social Sciences, ANU. His books include The Octavius of Marcus Minucius Felix (1974, New York) and The letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage (1986, 4 Vols, New York).

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Nicholas Purcell (St. John's College, Oxford) *Place of pleasure: revisiting ancient Baiae*

Baiae is a by-word in studies of Roman culture. But it lurks on the fringes of discussions, labelled 'notorious resort', and is taken for granted. What is actually going on?

There is mainstream history to be done here: how do we make sense of the place and its history? Recent archaeological discoveries have transformed our understanding of the ancient evidence. But dovetailed with this, there is a cultural history which must deal with Baiae as symbol and representation, emblem and archetype - naturally in literature, but also in the subliterate world of inscriptions or graffiti. There is room for a comparative history of the categories 'spa' and 'resort'.

Baiae in reality and in imagination sheds light on Roman thought about landscape, luxury, and sex. This paper explores some of the possibilities of a subject which remains bizarrely neglected.

Nicholas Purcell is Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History, St. John's College, Oxford. He is author, with Peregrine Horden, of The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History (2000, Oxford).

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Sonia Dimitriadis (Classics, ANU) *The Modern Import of Classical Education*

This paper will examine various Classical notions of *paideia*. It will begin with the Homeric epics and their important influence on ancient education. It will then explore the famous fables of Aesop and the notions of moral conduct and shrewd behaviour that are contained in these stories. Thirdly, the paper will examine aspects of formal and informal education in ancient Athens up to the early fifth century, by contrasting more formalized aspects with the informal literary recitations, competitions and performances that were a feature of ancient symposia. Finally, it will introduce the systematized approaches to education, ethics and philosophy as developed by the philosophers Theophrastus and Aristotle at the Peripatetic school in Athens in the fourth century B.C. The paper will conclude with observations on the relevance of classical conceptions of education and human behaviour to the modern world.

Sonia Dimitriadis holds BA(Hons.) and LLB degrees from the ANU. She is a PhD candidate in the Classics Programme, School of Language Studies, ANU.

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Sara Saba (Classics, ANU) *Housing in sympoliteia agreements: the problems of moving a whole city*

The Hellenistic poleis of Asia Minor often signed sympoliteia treaties that were meant to initiate the voluntary - or even involuntary - unification of two communities. Such agreements called for measures apt to guarantee a smooth transition of these communities to the new status of one-city. This process could involve an en masse moving of citizens for which housing had to be provided. The study of housing clauses has revealed that these can be used as a sign of the nature and goals of the treaty as they show the will, or lack thereof, to welcome and add citizens of a partner community into the - often stronger - other polis. The analysis of housing clauses of two specific cases, i.e. the sympoliteiai treaties of Pidasia-Latmos/Herakleia-Miletus, serves as a practical proof of this observation, and foreshadows its historical ramifications.

Sara Saba holds a PhD from Duke University. She is an associate lecturer in the School of Language Studies, ANU.

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Chris Ransom (Classics, ANU) *The Sculpted Achilles: masculinity, identity and the body in Statius' Achilleid*

In contrast with the familiar 'epic' Achilles of Homer's *Iliad*, Statius' *Achilleid* presents us with an adolescent, cross-dressing draft-dodger. My research examines the way Statius shapes our perception of Achilles' conflicted gender identity, with emphasis on the presentation of Achilles' physicality, and the pervasive metaphor of the interplay of hardness and softness. I also examine the (literal) 'shaping' of the adolescent Achilles, and the opposing roles which the feminine and the masculine play in contributing to 'the Sculpted Achilles'.

Chris Ransom is a PhD candidate in the Classics Programme, School of Language Studies, ANU