

Departmental News



This has been an eventful year for the department. Gerard O'Daly took early retirement in September. He is succeeded as Professor of Latin by Maria Wyke, who will join us in September 2005. Maria comes to us from the Department of Classics at Reading. She made her name through her research into Roman love elegy but her more recent work on reception, in particular her work on cinematic depiction of Rome, is the subject of her book *Projecting the Past: Ancient Rome, Cinema and History* (Routledge, New York, 1997). As well as adding to the array of undergraduate courses available, Maria will also be developing new graduate courses to be introduced in the near future.

Other good news was the promotion of Rhiannon Ash to Senior Lecturer. Rhiannon has contributed not only to the department (where she has been Admissions Tutor and undertaken a whole range of other duties as well as being an outstanding teacher and researcher) but also to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and to UCL more generally.

We are also joined by a new Research Fellow in Latin and Reception Studies, Luke Houghton. Luke is about to submit his PhD on death in Roman love elegy. He has also published on reception of Virgil. Luke too will be joining us in the autumn and will work with Maria in developing new MA programmes and research projects.

This year also saw the first Housman public lecture on 14 June in the Gustave Tuck Theatre. The lecture, *Ancient Plays for Modern Minds*, was given by Pat Easterling, formerly Professor of Greek at UCL and at Cambridge. We hope that the Housman lecture will become an annual event.

Colleagues leaving us this year are Cornelia Roemer and Alan Griffiths. Cornelia leaves us to become director of the Papyrological Museum at the Austrian National Library in Vienna. She will be sorely missed. However, papyrology remains a core activity at UCL and we are about to announce the appointment of a new Reader in Papyrology. Alan is taking early retirement. He has been for so many years such a vital member of the department that it is difficult to imagine life without him. Retirement gives him the opportunity to devote more time to his Herodotus project and also to accept the invitations to lecture around the world which have been stacking up. We will be making an appointment in Greek literature next year.

Chris Carey
Head of Department of Greek and Latin

A Classicist Teaching English



Who would have thought that after spending three years learning Latin and Greek, I'd end up in Taiwan, working for an American company that teaches English through mass media? Not me! But here I've been working, for almost six years, as Assistant Editor of *Studio Classroom* (circulation: 210,000), Taiwan's most popular English-teaching magazine since the 1960s.

Among my American colleagues, I'm considered an English grammar expert, simply because I've studied two ancient languages and am British! (I think it's ironic, because some of these colleagues have Master's degrees in TOEFL.) However, they have gradually realised that if they ask me a grammar question, they'll have to be ready for an etymology lesson as well. They say I'm endearing, but I know that they just think I'm crazy – one colleague once called me 'the funny little Brit'.

I'm still trying to convince my editors to let me write an article about Greek and Latin etymology, but so far to no avail. The closest I came was a short piece on the etymology of 'O.K.'

My Taiwanese friends are all rather impressed but also confused by my degree. When I say I studied Classics, they immediately think of English classic novels, thinking that I studied English literature. So now, I don't even mention the word 'Classics', but instead just say 'ancient Greek and Latin literature'. Unfortunately, since the degree is rarely studied in Taiwan, the usual reply is, 'Why on earth would you pick such a degree subject?'

So if you're ever in Southeast Asia, do drop by Taiwan and visit. I would appreciate some backing from a fellow classicist.

Melissa Tan,
Greek and Latin, 1998

Julius Caesar in Western Culture

Since the initiation of the war in Iraq, heated analogies between the empires of America and Rome have been filling newspapers and the pages of books by politicians and political commentators. The use of this historical analogy for political criticism can be traced back more than one hundred years to the first public concerns expressed about American expansionism. With it has also returned a debate about the accruing of extraordinary powers to the presidency and their potential abuse. Is Bush becoming Caesar? This most recent and urgent usage is just one example of the extraordinary presence of Julius Caesar in modern culture.

Associated with a sharp turning-point in the history of western civilisation, Caesar quickly took on monumental, quasi-mythic proportions. Whether as founder or destroyer, over the centuries Caesar's image has become a site for the exploration of concerns about warfare and politics and been utilised in the formation of many national identities. From a different perspective, Caesar has also been used to construct or interrogate personal identity – including uniqueness, leadership, even divinity, wisdom, morality and masculine virtue, but also their opposites, including excessive arrogance, ambition, avarice, lust, cruelty and deceit. Caesar has had an impact not just on nations, monarchs, generals and statesmen, but also on individuals. He is a model for risk-taking (have you crossed *your* Rubicon yet?) and for extravagant consumption (you are invited to go and *be* Caesar for a day at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas).

Thanks to the award of a research fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust from 2000-2003, I am currently completing study of this rich and diverse reception of Julius Caesar in Western culture. My aim is to use Caesar's reception as a case study in order to formulate a new conception of the classical tradition that recognises the diversity of its receptions.

interlinking popular culture (such as detective fiction, film, television series, Las Vegas casinos, and computer games) with other more familiar receptions of Caesar (in classical scholarship, the writings of statesmen and generals like the two Napoleons, opera and theatre, as well as on the battlefield and in political debates).

Along the way, I ran a conference in March 2003 in Rome (sadly not during the Ides) that explored the reception history of Caesar from antiquity to the present. The conference papers are currently being prepared for publication by Blackwell in 2005 (provisionally as *Julius Caesar in Western Culture*). Ranging over the fields of history (religious and military, as well as political), archaeology, architecture, and urban planning, and literary, film, theatre and cultural studies, the papers examine the Caesars of Italy, France, Germany, Britain and the United States. The objects of analysis vary from Caesar's own self-presentation to the contemporary critique of George Bush as a modern Caesar.

The collection opens with an investigation of those early writings of Caesar's life that stamped him with historical importance and came to dominate all his subsequent reception. In contrast to his own confident self-presentation, the historiography of a Plutarch or a Suetonius turns Caesar into a dramatic moral problem: Is such a life the right one to live?; Should such a life be terminated? It then explores Caesar's reception from the Middle Ages to the High Renaissance and the materiality of the memory of Caesar. It investigates the importance of place in the original affirmation of Caesar's power, the perpetuation of the memory of Caesar's monuments and the monumentality of his person, and the ritual re-enactments of Caesarean triumphalism through the urban landscape in order to authorise and celebrate the power of both emperors and popes.

The central section of the collection moves on to analyse Caesar's crucial function in discourses of nationalism and empire. Caesar's twin receptions here come to the fore – as both model and anti-model. Reproduction of his excessive ambition will drive nations to civil unrest or damaging imperialism. Reproduction of his strong leadership and thirst for conquest will render nations firm, powerful and glorious.

The volume next investigates the ambivalent politics of Shakespeare's hugely influential play and moves on to consider more controversial stagings of Caesar as a Superman or political and military genius. It explores the performance history of Caesar as progressively interlocked with the discourses of monarchism, republicanism, colonialism and fascism. Finally, we consider the pragmatics of being Caesar for the modern general or statesman. From the late sixteenth century, to be Caesar on the battlefield required not the direct adoption of his military strategy and tactics but only the more abstract imitation of his extraordinary courage and ingenuity. While, in the political domain of later centuries, the writings of Caesar could be used to legitimate recourse to revolution. Thus *The Caesar Papers* explore the strikingly direct impact of Caesar on the modern history of western culture.

Meanwhile I am continuing my own 'metabiography' of Caesar that will survey the most important resonances of his life in western culture and preparing a more detailed study of his presence in the popular culture of the United States of America.

So if any readers of this piece know of any unusual examples of the use of Caesar in later, especially modern, culture, I would be most grateful to hear from you.

Maria Wyke, Professor of Latin from September 2005

Rollicking

Some say that in our technological era Classics has gone out of fashion, that Greece and Rome no longer attract the imagination and the interest of people and that the humanities face one of the worst periods ever. The message was completely the opposite at the Classical Association Annual Conference which took place last year at the University of Reading.

The conference included more than 40 different, parallel panels organised in five or six venues in the friendly atmosphere of Palmer Building and its internationality made an



impression since it gathered people not only from England but also from the USA, Italy, Ireland, Germany, France, Greece, Cyprus, Finland and many other countries.

UCL was represented by a number of scholars such as Jason Davies (A Respectable Craft?

Reading

Some Latin historians on the medical art'), Hans van Wees ('Aristocrats and middling men: who is who in archaic Greece?') and Simon Hornblower ('The priest who slew the slayer/and shall himself be slain: or, spotting what is coming next in academic ancient (Greek) history') together with several graduate students from the Greek and Latin Department who attended the conference.

Dr Antony Makrinos (pictured), Teacher, Greek and Latin

Aristophanes Meets David Brent



This year's UCL Classical Society production was a modern adaptation of Aristophanes' *Knights*. The four months of auditions, rehearsals, script re-writes (and further re-writes), set design and general arm-twisting were at times wearing, but most of all rewarding. The added stress of putting on a new interpretation of a relatively underperformed play was more than a challenge. As the first night approached nerves, and friendships, were getting strained. However the work paid off.

Knights has long been our favourite Aristophanes play, not only because it was one of his first productions, but also because its

themes of institutional corruption and the lack of any moral purpose in the political process as politicians bribe the electorate with ever more elaborate and improbable promises, were strikingly relevant to a modern audience, especially in an election year. The main drama revolves around two rivals' desire to win favour of the people, the personified *demos*, in this production a pampered, greedy and cantankerous female, in the original an affable, old codger. What other satirist except Aristophanes would be as audacious as to present his fellow citizens thus?

Our main aim throughout the production process was to make the play accessible to a

modern audience – both classicists and those new to Old Comedy – which is why we played on the original allegory, changing a Greek household into a contemporary office. While certain liberties were taken with the original, to keep within the spirit of Aristophanes was one of our main priorities. Would he have approved? We hesitate to presume. However, when we asked a friend, who had no knowledge of Greek drama but plenty on sci-fi, if he had enjoyed it, his response was illuminating: 'Brilliant! But where were all the spaceships?'

Graham Kirby and Reema Selhi,
(Co-Directors)

Euripides in London

The Greek and Latin Department's Classical Society organised a trip to see Kneehigh Theatre's production of Euripides' *Bacchae* at the Lyric Hammersmith. The production itself was a daring tragi-comic interpretation of the Greek original. Despite a highly camp Graeme Norton look-alike Dionysus, comic sing-alongs and constant references to underwear, the closing scenes lacked not at all in dramatic pathos. The vision of a bare-breasted Agave at the front of stage, drenched in the blood of her newly murdered son, swept away in an instant the light-heartedness of the earlier scenes, conveying to the audience both the omnipotence and twofold nature of the god –

the inducer of free and ecstatic behaviour, and the vengeful force which compels a mother to commit filicide. This was only the first event in a season which saw the Classical Society bolstered by an enthusiastic fresher group and keen to team up with the Ancient History society and the Classical Societies of the other London colleges.

Other UCL classicists went to see Vanessa Redgrave in the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *Hecuba* at London's Albery Theatre. As in the *Bacchae*, there was no shortage of blood and violence, but this time no modern gimmicks distracted (though some

sections of the press complained at Agamemnon's American accent and the use of 'coalition' to describe the Greek forces at Troy). An excellent chorus both sang and danced, as Greek choruses should, and Vanessa Redgrave (now 68) was powerfully pathetic. The appearance of the ghost of Polydorus at the beginning of the play was particularly eerie, as the spotlight fell on a nebulous figure covered from head-to-toe in white powder, probably flour.

Alan Ross and Stephen Instone,
Greek and Latin

UCL Classicist and the PM

'Would you like to come to a poster launch tomorrow morning with some very senior members of the Government?', asked the person on the phone. So began my family's 15 minutes of fame, a novel experience which included our being featured in most of the national newspapers, Radio 4 and Five Live, TV news programmes and a documentary, numerous blogs, the BBC website, the cover story on the Guardian's G2 and an invitation to appear on Richard and Judy! But I have started in the middle.

Three-and-a-half years ago, our MP, Oona King, had helped us with a problem with our local council. Thus, when a questionnaire came through the door at the beginning of this year asking what we thought of her we were happy to give a good report. Her office then called us



to ask us to be in her promotional DVD. To our surprise, my wife, a teacher, featured heavily as she spoke about the local schools. And our names got through to someone at Millbank...

Our only meetings with Her Majesty's Prime Minister and the Chancellor were at two poster launches. Rachel (my wife) took Theo (3) and Albany (1) to the first where she got five

minutes chatting with them. As both Gordon and Tony (as the children now call them) have small children they were very good with ours. Gordon and Theo talked football and Thomas the Tank Engine. At the second launch we only shook hands, though I've since had a very nice letter from the PM. Someone at the Daily Mail noticed that we'd been to two poster launches and suddenly, we were NEWS!

Apart from that, all we've got out of it has been a few croissants. And our MP is now Gorgeous George Galloway. (See <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/election/story/0,15803,1458963,00.html> for the Guardian interview)

Benjamin Virgo,
Student, Greek and Latin

New Papyrology Colloquium

Eric Turner was a distinguished papyrologist at UCL (1948–1978) and first Director of the Institute of Classical Studies of London University (1953–1963). In his honour a colloquium was held at the Institute in 2004, culminating in the first Eric Turner Memorial Lecture.

UCL Classicists and ex-UCL Classicists were there and spoke on a variety of papyrological themes. Herwig Maehler, Professor of Papyrology at UCL after Turner, opened the colloquium with a wide-ranging look at Greek scripts focusing in particular on two questions, why cursive (joined-up) scripts did not develop until the third century BC (500 years after Greek writing began), and why there were no spaces between words. In answer, he plausibly suggested that fast communication was done orally so for a long time there was no need for a fast-written script, and that writing followed the practice of epigraphy and liked to keep letters in columns without the eyesore of spaces. 'Aesthetics prevailed over expediency'.

Richard Janko, former Chair of Greek at UCL and now at Ann Arbor, Michigan, ended the day with the Memorial Lecture on 'Reconstructing the Strasbourg Papyri of Empedocles'. Empedocles was a scientist, mystic and guru, and the new parts of his poem recently discovered on papyrus reinforce

what a fine poet he was and how much Lucretius owed to him for putting philosophy into verse. But where previous editors of the papyri thought Empedocles was a precursor of Virgil and Dante and referred the words 'Meadow of Sin with shrieks and cries' to the tormented guilty, Janko's re-interpretation of the papyri showed that in fact at that point in the poem the poet was talking about birds being born with shrieks and cries.



Research students were prominent too: Emmanuela Bakola (pictured left) spoke on the

Dionysalexandros of the Old Comedy playwright Cratinus, interpreting a papyrus *hypothesis* (or ancient introduction) to the play as saying that in the parabasis Cratinus satirised Pericles for his attempts to legitimise his bastard son by Aspasia; Anastasia Maravela-Solbakk on a papyrus list of names and their imagined numerical values, which could be a game (or possibly a magician's handbook); and Richard Rawles on cicadas in Simonides and Callimachus, conjecturing that Callimachus slurs his critics in the *Aetia* by taking a cue from Simonides and calling them a 'thorny tribe'.

Cornelia Roemer, Professor of Papyrology at UCL in succession to Herwig Maehler, considered the scholia on the Louvre papyrus of Alcman's *First Partheneion*. She distinguished the writing of four different scholiasts, one of whom was no more than a 'Schmierfink' or 'scrawler', and noted how the scholiasts themselves raised the much-debated question of whether and how the song was sung and performed by a divided chorus; Alanna Nobbs from Macquarie University, Sydney, wondered if she had found a papyrus and parchment archive belonging to a certain Sotas; Chris Carey, current Chair of Greek discussed papyrus fragments of a speech, perhaps by Lysias or Isaeus, in defense of citizen-status; and Eric Handley, another former Chair of Greek at UCL and colleague of Eric Turner, considered fragments of dramatic texts about a betrothal, which possibly say at one point 'I give to you my daughter for the ploughing of legitimate children'.

The event is now well established, and at the Second Turner Colloquium in May 2005 Chris Carey and Cornelia Roemer reappeared together with other UCL papyrologists and the former Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford University, Peter Parsons.

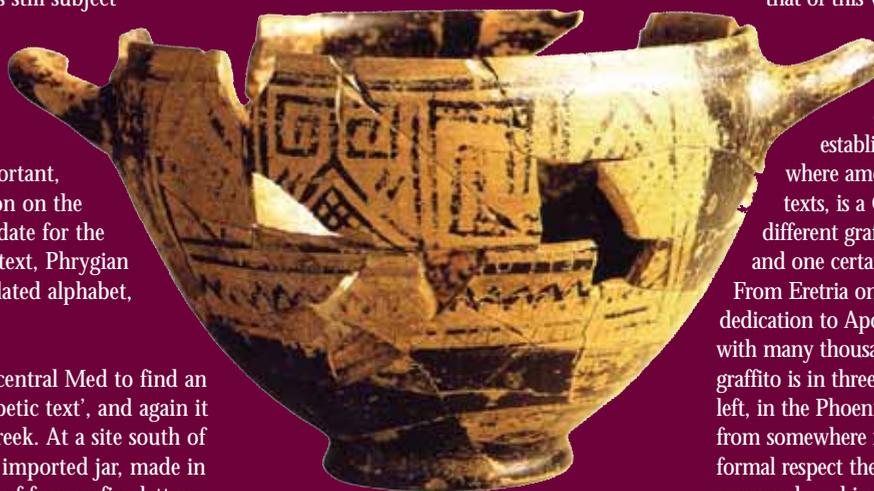
**Stephen Instone,
Greek and Latin**

New Finds in Old Writing

I present here six texts which I believe, as of the time of writing, encapsulate the probable history of the earliest Greek writing, even if not all are Greek. Calendar dating at this period will only be possible through tree-ring dating, which currently is still subject to the enormous problem of lack of suitable wood in much of the Mediterranean area; but what it has contributed so far is important, since results from Gordion on the Anatolian plateau give a date for the context of one inscribed text, Phrygian but in the local Greek-related alphabet, of around 800 BC.

One has to travel to the central Med to find an alternative 'earliest alphabetic text', and again it is by no means clearly Greek. At a site south of Rome, ancient Gabii, an imported jar, made in south Italy, has a graffito of four or five letters; it should date on all available evidence to around 775 BC. It clearly reflects the early western alphabet, for it contains vowels, an invention found universally in all Mediterranean alphabets as opposed to the 'mother' set of signs borrowed from the Levantine 'alphabet' of Phoenician and Aramaic speakers.

If this text is not Greek we have to look a little later again, though the material available now begins to have a remarkable unity to it – around the island of Euboea and its outposts. From Eretria, we have, just now published, an



incredible number of some 60 alphabetic texts on pottery from archaeologically datable levels of between 770 and 700 BC; most are the normal short incised graffiti, but a few are painted in white, dipinti, in a poor state of preservation; how many have been totally worn away? Even one of these is another cuckoo in the nest – cut on a local pot, but in fact written in the

Phoenician alphabet, whether in Phoenician or Aramaic language. It demonstrates not only the presence of these elusive people in Greece at this early date, but also that the contemporary Greek script had already advanced some way beyond that of this visitor's writing. Around 740

we find something similar a long way from Eretria, but still in a very Euboean context – Pithekoussai, the post established on Ischia by Euboeans, where among some 45 eighth century texts, is a Greek style amphora with five different graffiti – two certainly Phoenician and one certainly Greek; a jar with a history!

From Eretria one of the painted texts is a dedication to Apollo, our earliest now known with many thousands to follow, while a final graffito is in three lines of verse written right to left, in the Phoenician style, on a cup imported from somewhere in Ionia. The text is in every formal respect the same as the far better preserved, and in terms of Greek archaeology, long known 'cup of Nestor' (pictured) deposited in a child's grave at distant Pithekoussai, a demonstration of the perhaps habitual use of Homeric-style witticisms in the context of the symposium by the later eighth century.

Alan Johnston, Reader, Archaeology