

Classics Cambridge

Tramping the Campagna



The Faculty is actively involved in a series of archaeological field projects. 'Field' can mean literally that: the exploration of debris brought to the surface in recently ploughed land. This technique of 'field survey' has been successfully applied by Cambridge archaeological missions in various parts of the Mediterranean area: in recent decades, for example, projects such as Anthony Snodgrass' survey in Boeotia have explored the distribution of ancient settlement in the landscape, addressing fundamental problems of changes in demography and agricultural practice. Martin Millett, the current Professor of Classical Archaeology at Cambridge, continues the tradition.

Our project has deployed a variety of surface survey techniques to explore the topography of Roman urban sites in the Tiber valley. This work has combined conventional field walking techniques with the use of geophysical and computer based topographic surveying to explore urban sites on a grand scale. For instance, at Portus (near Ostia – now in vibrating distance of Rome's Leonardo da Vinci airport) we have mapped most of the ancient harbour complex, covering an area of about 180 hectares, and providing substantial new information about the imperial (Claudian and Trajanic) building programmes.

The Tiber valley survey has also dealt with a variety of smaller urban sites, providing entirely new plans of key sites like Capena and Falerii Novi. Each of the urban sites is different and this provides one of the challenges to the field archaeologist – as well as making the sites good training for students. Perhaps the most difficult site we have examined is Otriculum (Otricoli) – shown in the accompanying pictures. Here some major structures investigated in the eighteenth century are partly surrounded by woodland and are scattered in an apparently unplanned manner across a ridge where the via Flaminia crossed the Tiber. The early excavators

uncovered a series of major sculptures – now displayed in the Vatican museums.

Combining detailed topographical survey with geophysical prospection – which includes using a magnetometer to detect structures below the topsoil – we have been able to reconstruct the ancient topography of the site and understand more about the context of the eighteenth century discoveries. We can now see how the settlement developed and how the natural topography was modified in major engineering work in order to create an impression of *urbanitas* for those approaching up the Flaminia. The fieldwork has also enabled us to appreciate the results published in the eighteenth century far more clearly, in the process identifying what was probably a shrine to the imperial cult beside the forum.

Such work provides a good training for our students as well as carrying forward research projects. In addition to survey we are also engaged in several excavations. Henry Hurst has been continuing his work in the Forum at Rome, and Laura Preston is about to start excavating with Anatolian Bronze Age specialist Nicholas Postgate in southern Turkey. Roman Britain is not neglected, with Martin Millett continuing exploration of a site in East Yorkshire; and Nigel Spivey is embarking upon a joint Anglo-Italian project in north-west Sardinia.



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The long-term benefits of recycling

Pat Easterling and Eric Handley describe the pleasures of the palimpsest

Nearly eight centuries ago a couple of Greek scribes made a copy of a prayer book, using – as scribes quite often did – recycled parchment from several older manuscripts, with the original writing sponged or scraped off and the original folios folded in two to make a smaller format. There is a long story to be pieced together about what happened to this seemingly unprepossessing book in the intervening centuries. The most dramatic stage in its history until recently was the discovery by the Danish scholar J.L. Heiberg that part of it was made up of leaves carrying tenth-century copies of works of Archimedes, at least one of them not known from any other source. Heiberg made brilliant use of the new text for his Teubner edition (1910–15), but he was working with natural light, too early for the use of electronic aids.

When Heiberg saw the Archimedes palimpsest it was in a library in Constantinople, but for a long time in the twentieth century it was in private hands in France and suffered badly from the effects of damp, as well as acquiring some forged Byzantine miniatures which covered up a few pages of text. In 1998 things took a decisive turn for the better. The book was put up for auction at Christie's in New York, and soon afterwards its new owner deposited it for conservation and study at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, with Will Noel – Cambridge postgraduate, now Curator of Manuscripts and Rare Books at the Walters – in charge. Since then the owner has funded intensive rescue work on the Archimedes texts, in a programme combining a range of new imaging techniques with the skills of palaeographers and textual scholars.

The special interest for the Classical Faculty is that two of the experts involved in this constantly surprising project are recent Cambridge PhDs: Reviel Netz, now at Stanford, who is editing the Archimedes with the Oxford scholar Nigel Wilson, and Natalie Tchernetska, who studied Greek palimpsests for her doctorate and as a research fellow at Trinity.

When the book was put up for sale Nigel Wilson wrote a magisterial piece on its history and contents, describing it as 'the most substantial and significant Greek palimpsest known, arguably the most important scientific codex ever offered at auction'. But there was more to be discovered, and lost texts from other authors have gradually become detectable on some of the leaves of the prayer book. Last July, the Faculty and Trinity College sponsored an event, including an exhibition at the Wren Library, at which Will Noel gave a talk about the scientific work that has underpinned the conservation and imaging, and Natalie Tchernetska gave the first public presentation of her new find: part of a lost speech by the orator Hyperides, a famous contemporary of Demosthenes whose works were thought to have been lost before the end of antiquity. Even more recently, Nigel Wilson has found traces of what looks like an unknown late philosophical commentary. The palimpsest has more to reveal, if only we can read it.

Several members of the Faculty have been working closely with Will Noel and his colleague Roger Easton from the Rochester Institute of Technology NY, who is in charge of imaging, to help co-ordinate two groups of researchers, one to decipher and interpret the Hyperides leaves and the other the philosophical text. A meeting at the British Academy in February set up two networks who will share findings through the website and link Allegheny, Belfast, Budapest, Cambridge, London, Manchester, Oxford, Paris, Patras, Riga and Stanford in this extraordinary enterprise.

To be continued ...

- Search on Google ('Archimedes Palimpsest') for several sites giving more information and images.

From the Chair

Best news first. I am absolutely delighted to report that one of our major fund-raising goals has been met. Thanks to a very generous donation (amounting altogether to over half a million pounds and to be known as the "Shore Fund"), we have been able to secure the future of our Senior Language Teaching Officer post. This post – currently held by Rosanna Omitowoju – plays a key role in the planning and coordination of Faculty language teaching and had only been funded for a limited period. This marvellous benefaction ensures a permanent language post at this senior level and makes a major contribution to the future of Latin and Greek teaching in Cambridge.

Also good news – coming from the unexpected source of the Research Assessment Exercise. Although the demands of this exercise lay heavy burdens on the Faculty in administrative and other ways, there has been a benefit. The University is very keen that all Faculties are up to strength to meet the demands and so have 'unfrozen' the University Lectureship left vacant when Ian DuQuesnay left many years ago now, and have allowed us to appoint new colleagues 'proleptically' in advance of expected retirements. So we currently have three lectureships advertised (in Classical Literature, Roman History and, more unusually, 'in any field of Classics') and we hope to have appointed by the early summer. The new appointments will be announced on the Faculty Website when they are made. We shall also shortly be advertising the Kennedy Chair of Latin, in anticipation of the retirement of our longest serving professor, Michael Reeve.

But the not so good news is that we shall, over the next few years, have to raise money to support these posts (we are not so much getting a free gift from the university, as something more like a mortgage). One of my favourite ideas is that we should go all out to refurbish the Kennedy Chair, whose endowment currently produces little more than £4000 per year. Professorial salaries may be inadequate, but not this low... so we are left to make up the considerable difference. The Chair was founded by the friends of B. H. Kennedy, who had been headmaster of Shrewsbury School and was Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge in the late nineteenth century. Kennedy was one of the most engaging of Classical scholars: a stalwart supporter of women's education, author of the famous *Primer* and memorably pictured in the *Molesworth* books as "leading the gerund into captivity". If any alumnus/a has any bright idea about whom we might approach – or of course would like to contribute themselves – please do get in touch with me, Mary Beard at Chair@Classics.cam.ac.uk.

Putting the past before us



As the Victorians liked to see the Classical world:
'A Favourite Custom', by Lawrence Alma-Tadema
(Tate Gallery)

Announcing a new research project

The Cambridge Classics Faculty has always been at the forefront of the contemporary boom in the study of the reception of Classics – and in particular on how the 19th and 20th centuries have responded to the Classical tradition. In recent years this topic has been offered as a Part II Tripos option. Now it becomes part of the Faculty's postgraduate research profile, as Simon Goldhill (Professor of Greek) and Mary Beard (Professor of Classics, and currently Chairman of the Classics Faculty) with their colleagues Peter Mandler (from History), Jim Secord (from History of Science) and Clare Pettitt (from Newnham College, and Department of English, King's College London) have just won a Leverhulme Programme Grant with their proposal "Abandoning the Past in Victorian Britain".

The Leverhulme Programme Grants arise from a competition for which the Leverhulme Trust sets the title (in this case "Abandoning the Past"), and universities are invited to apply for what is the biggest grant of its type in the humanities. 57 universities applied, and we were delighted that a project located in the Cambridge Classics Faculty came out on top. The grant lasts for five years, and

it will enable us to appoint six post-doctoral research fellows and three graduate students to work with the five members of the team. This will mean there will be 14 of us before our friends and colleagues join any seminar – tantamount to a small department of Victorian studies. We Classicists always pride ourselves on studying the ancient world as a cultural whole, looking at the art, philosophy, literature, language, history, science and so forth in Greek and Roman societies. But it is surprisingly hard in the modern University to do the same with the Victorian period, where literature tends to be studied in English departments, history in History departments and so forth. So this will be a fully multi-disciplinary project – though we are sure that Classics will play a major role, and hope this will take Cambridge Victorian studies to a new integrated level.

There will be many guest speakers, seminars and conferences to help the project along. But the core will be the team looking hard at the different ways that the Victorians thought about the past: from Egyptology to geology, from evolution to nationalism, from theology to Classics. You can follow along by consulting the website of the Cambridge Victorian Studies Group which will shortly be in operation. This is a new and exciting venture for the Classics Faculty, which brings its work in close contact with other departments – and lets us understand our own past as a discipline too.

From Calvary to Constantinople

Christopher Kelly, University Lecturer in Classics and Fellow of Corpus Christi, has been awarded a Leverhulme grant to pursue a two-year research project – on the topic he outlines below:

In AD 312, before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge on the outskirts of Rome, the emperor Constantine, following a vision of a blazing cross in the noonday sky, entrusted himself to the Christian God who promised victory in this civil war. Constantine's support of Christianity (however his own conversion might be imagined) marks one of the greatest revolutions in the history of the Roman Empire. It not only changed the present, it fundamentally transformed the past. Roman emperors could no longer be portrayed as persecuting madman, the Roman Empire could no longer be argued to be a dismal interlude between the incarnation of Christ – that more famous contemporary of the first Roman emperor, Augustus – and the Apocalypse.

My research, leading to a monograph to be published by Harvard University Press, explores

the ways in which the Classical (and defiantly non-Christian) past was understood in a newly Christian Roman Empire. In Rome, the Arch of Constantine, which still stands by the Colosseum, was built from sculpture taken from much earlier monuments. It offered the viewer a carefully constructed past of good emperors linked seamlessly to Constantine whose distinctive features were superimposed on the re-cut panels once celebrating Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius and Trajan. Here the Classical past is made comprehensible by its relationship with the present. Constantine and his victory at the Milvian Bridge are presented as the culmination of Roman imperial history.

At the same time, the historian and bishop, Eusebius of Caesarea, offered a radically new vision of the past. In his *Chronological Tables* he constructed a universal synchronic world history

which simultaneously displayed in six parallel columns both notable events and comparative chronology. The results were sometimes surprising: the destruction of the Philistine temple by Samson happened within a decade of the fall of Troy; the Labours of Hercules could be securely dated; Homer and Solomon lived at the same time. For Eusebius, the Classical past was encompassed by the concerns of a Christian present. It mattered that Christ and Augustus were contemporaries.

My project explores a broad range of such startling juxtapositions: in history-writing, in sculpture, in panegyrics, in poetry, in the planning of Constantine's new imperial capital, Constantinople. Crucial to the success of Christianity in the Roman Empire was its remarkable ability to salvage the past and give it new meanings. I aim to trace the way in which canonical Classical models were dismantled and reconstructed to produce innovative and distinctively original cultural forms. In this revision of the Roman world not only would the present be steadily and triumphantly transformed by Christianity, but the past – at least properly reconstructed – could be successfully converted as well.

In memoriam: Guy Lee

We record the deaths, during the past year, of several long-serving (and remarkably long-lived) Faculty and college stalwarts of Cambridge Classics: Alison Duke (Girton), Frank Stubbings (Emmanuel), and Guy Lee (St John's). We are grateful to one of our alumni, the novelist Frederic Raphael (St John's 1950), for contributing a memoir of the latter, who died on 31 July 2005.

Guy Lee's scholarly qualities, on a technical level, are not for me assess. That he was rumoured to be the only Fellow of St John's not to have been required to take Part Two, on account of the manifest distinction of his Part One results, speaks clearly enough for his reputation, especially in Latin verses, which he composed with ingenious wit and translated in a variety of modes. He was my (very young) supervisor at a time when, I confess, I had small remaining appetite for the Classics, in which I was, putatively, a Major Scholar. It was a pretty title, of which I remain proud, but the award prompted me to nothing like the dedication required to honour it. I soon deviated to Moral Sciences and to the frivolities of the Footlights, but neither Guy nor the college chided me for my secession. I remember that in those days I had the antique habit of calling dons "Sir". Guy winced at my deference and proposed that I call him Guy, which I did not do easily until, almost a quarter of a century later, I contacted him over the versions of Catullus on which Kenneth McLeish and I were working.

My admiration for Guy's "free" version of Ovid's *Amores* prompted the approach. Our Catullus had, I liked to think, something of the same freedom, though Guy detected an element of what, in conversation with Kenneth, he called "vulgarity", which – probably quite rightly – he attributed to my influence.

He was entirely without prudishness, but he never gave himself the license to "improve" the poets whom he translated. As time went by, and the number of Classicists dwindled, with the result that knowing glosses on the original were rarely intelligible to the reader, he abandoned the allusive brevities that distinguished his *Amores* and cleaved closely to the meaning and, where possible, to the metre of the original. His Tibullus was mid-way to the later rigour which made his versions of both the *Eclogues* and of Horace's *Odes*, and finally of Catullus, less "poetic".

Aesthetic arguments about translation have no place here. What strikes me about Guy's change of tack is that it was a function of the quality that distinguished him: his sense of honour. Integrity is an easy term and a difficult discipline. Guy's scholarship and his personal manner, and manners, were of a piece. He combined authority with modesty, and confidence with caution. He realised that, in the field of translation in particular, it had become too easy to con the reading public: even the sophisticated reader who had no Greek or Latin could be "snowed" into believing that he or she was reading a genuine version of a poet when, in fact, either wilfulness or caprice had altered his sense.

During the last thirty years, Guy "supervised" a large number of translations, from Greek and Latin, composed by Raphael and McLeish. He always emphasized that both languages were much more difficult, and obscure, than commonly assumed. His general rule was that we should be wary of jumping to conclusions about the equivalence even of the simplest terms: Catullus' use of *amicitia* is an obvious instance. On the other hand, Guy combined scholarly fastidiousness with generosity of response. He returned our texts with a minimum of marks. One tick signified approval and the rare use of two admiration; one little query suggested doubt, two pain.

Whatever his change of aesthetic tack, Guy regarded translation as an art. I hope that I am not breaching a confidence when I say that, when he sent me a copy of his Horace *Odes*, I found that he had by mistake left tucked in it the rough copy of a letter which he had drafted to send to John Sullivan, who had been at St John's with me (and whose excellence had deterred me from competing with him). John was a professor at Santa Barbara and was dying of oesophageal cancer. With Roman fortitude he continued to teach (especially Martial, whom he had promoted to 'Classic' status) until he could endure no more. Guy's letter was quite short and

faced the fact of John's imminent death without pretence. He declared his admiration for John's scholarship and told him that it was evidence of a life worth living. He ended, after a few sentences, with "*Ave atque vale, Guy.*"

After Kenneth McLeish died, I undertook a version of the *Satyricon* myself, for the Folio Society. I relied on Guy to save me from flagrant howlers or undue flashiness. I shall always treasure the manuscript as he returned it, nicely larded with, in lieu of the desired ticks, a selection of Latin adverbs in its margin: *bene, lepide, optime* and so on. Guy's praise was, I suspect, gently inflated with generosity, but I like to think that it was not factitious.

We became friends in the light of the Classics. I remarked once, when I was having tea with him and Helen in the little house in Carlyle Road where they had lived for as long as I knew them, that I wished that I had worked harder at Latin and Greek. I might have been a proper scholar. "Oh I shouldn't worry about that, Freddie: we've got plenty of third-rate academics, and not enough second-rate novelists". I always sent him and Helen my books and looked forward to the elegant (and terse) handwritten appreciation which greeted even those which were not to his (or more often her) taste. He always extracted a phrase which he could savour and which, he let it be thought, stood for others he admired no less.

Guy Lee typifies for me the don who was fulfilled by scholarship and by the modest security early preferment offered. He was, I am sure, offered professorial posts elsewhere, but he remained Mr Lee, a man of immaculate attention to detail, entirely without, as they used to say, "side"; neither aggressively opinionated nor falsely diffident. If I had to keep it as simple as Guy himself might wish, I should say of him: he held the line.

Ave atque vale, Guy.

Donations

Classics at Cambridge flourishes thanks to the generosity of its many supporters past and present. If you would like to contribute to the cause, please contact the Administrator, Faculty of Classics, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9DA (email: administrator@classics.cam.ac.uk).