EDITIO

Westminster's official Classics Review | First Edition

Emperor Caligula:
Was he really mad?

Ancient Greece:
A sexually liberated paradise?

It's Greek to Me...
Test your knowledge with these
Classics-themed games!

With many thanks to Classics Society and all the contributors
Editors: Claire Zhao and Veronica Corielli

Psyche entering Cupid's Garden (c. 1903), John William Waterhouse

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Editors' note

Thank you for taking the time to read the inaugural edition of *Editio*, Westminster's new Classics Review. We would like to announce that the title was suggested by Dominic O'Malley (Lower Shell, Ashburnham) as part of the title competition that we held at the launch of the Review. Thank you to everyone who took part!

The writers for this edition have explored the breadth of what Classics has to offer, with articles exploring periods of time ranging from Dilmun, in the 4th millennium BC, to the Byzantine Empire of the Middle Ages, covering disciplines including History, Literature, Philosophy and Art. We hope that everyone (who gets past the contents page) will see that Classics offers so much more than cramming 'Germanicus et Piso' the night before an exam or trying to spot the differences between the Perfect Subjunctive and the Future Perfect Indicative (hint- there aren't many). *Editio* is a chance for classicists to explore their interests in a non-judgmental safe space. Made by classicists, for (almost) everyone.

Thank you to all those who submitted articles. *Editio* would not exist without you. Special thanks to Mr Mylne and Mr Ireland for supporting the *Editio* and Ella Pfeffer for offering to design a website for the review (which will be made available soon up Intranet and the Classics Firefly).

This will be the only edition of *Editio* this academic year. However, we will be back again next term. Please feel free to send in articles any time; we will post them on the website and publish them in the next edition.

We look forward to hearing what you think about the review.

Regards,
Vero and Claire

Was Herodotus the "Father of History" or the "Father of Lies"?

Melinda Zhu

Herodotus, the author of Histories, hailed as "the first masterpiece of European prose," (John M. Marincola, 1996) relates the absorbing history of the Persian War and its origins, through the observation of numerous Pan-Hellenic groups, and their respective ethnographies. The work was popular at the time of release, though faced the criticism of numerous contemporaries, many of whom called Herodotus a "fable-monger" [logopoios] (Photios). The analysis of Herodotus' text and its interpretations cause yet more fascinating questions to arise – the role of the historian, the nature of truth, and the interpretations of history, all of which reveal the importance of Herodotus' work, and affirms the fact that he is indeed the 'father of History.' This essay will also investigate the form and structure of Histories, as a valuable indicator of the early times Herodotus was writing in, thus enforcing the idea that he was a true innovator.

The intrinsic relationship between history and truth suggests the importance of research and inquiry, both of which Herodotus was the pioneering figure in the historical genre. History is a pursuit of truth, of understanding the past in its own context, and transferring its teachings into modern situations. This leads us to understand that Herodotus is the father of 'Truth' or the father of 'Lies.' It becomes apparent through this paradox, that the pursuit of truth is an incredibly complex endeavour.

Truth can be seen as the analysis of facts, and of events, yet the omission of certain facts leads to different versions of truth. Herodotus states a story, 'has to be reported, too, since it is told' (III.9). Hence, truth is a multi-faceted concept, and it is not possible to attain the complete and absolute truth. Truth is too large, too intangible a notion, for one to understand all things with complete truth.

Indeed, this is reflected in the origins of history, in the Greek word 'historia' meaning 'investigation' or 'inquiry.' Such is the reality of truth. It is not a 'known' but instead an understanding. This highlights the importance of taking different viewpoints through study, meaning a more holistic understanding is sought, which brings us closer to the truth. Herodotus was the first to combine inquiry with an inter-disciplinary approach, discussing similar themes from contemporary epic poetry, though with an emphasis on truth, through systematic investigation. Herodotus' methods has three components, which account for the

basis of modern study into Herodotus' 'historical method,' known as 'meta-historiē' (Luraghi, 2006). These three methods are not valued equally, with oral research – 'akoē' – most important, followed by 'opsis' (visual observation), and thirdly the reasoning of the historian, 'gnōmē.' Throughout Histories, a complex relationship is traced between the three methods, which aid the fundamental task of 'research' - 'historiē.' The use of opsis and gnōmē, and their subsequent findings are taken as truthful due to the nature of the two methods. They are more powerful than akoē, which is vulnerable to falsehood, though more limited in extent. Therefore, all three means were necessary. Research is the key to learning and finding truth and such rational, methodical practices differentiated Herodotus from his contemporaries, allowing him to present such a

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breath of material in a focused and engaging way. In Book I (50 – 51), the reference to the goods given to the oracle at Delphi from Croesus, King of Lydia, contains such specificity and detail that it simultaneously creates an intriguing narrative, whilst displaying the quality of Herodotus' research and integrity:

He also caused the image of a lion to be made of refined gold weighing approximately a hundred and forty-two pounds […] and lies today in the Corinthian treasury.

Such detail is prolific in Histories, and this will be further discussed with regards to Herodotus' narrative style. In the current respect, the details illustrate a more complete truth. Herodotus presents much evidence, with modern historians commenting that Herodotus' accounts have greater accuracy and are more reliable than his many critics.

Thus, Herodotus finds the truth in history, through inquiry. This is one of Herodotus' enduring contributions to history – his methodology and approach to finding truth, constructing the very origins of our modern 'historia.'

The medium through which history is presented must also be taken into account, particularly when Herodotus was writing in a predominantly oral culture with limited literacy. This major difference to our modern understanding of history must be analysed, to assess Herodotus' contribution to the historical genre. Histories would have been recited through public performances, as opposed to being read. Due to this, Herodotus' narrative includes comments such as "the Persians say" or, "the Greeks have a different story," lending to the medium through which it would have been conveyed, and crucially, must not be misinterpreted as specific source references as would be used in modern historical writing. It can be argued that such comments contributed to the eventual use of citations, though this was not the original intent. The use of the first person also aids the listener, increasing the clarity of the narrative, especially since delineation of events is not chronological. This differs from the impersonal third person address of modern essay writing and texts. Herodotus' use of first person due to the contemporary oral culture, means that the authorial presence in the text is at the fore, perhaps intrusive even, to modern readers, yet one must remember that modern history has evolved from this earlier form.

Public presentations would have been the norm of the time, with other writers also giving recitals of their works, from topics ranging from philosophy to medicine. These recitals would have led to debate among the audience, promoting discussion. Perhaps this is one of the advantages of oral culture that the modern world has diminished. The open discourse regarding texts leads to further development through the challenging of ideas. This would not have been unique to Herodotus, but the cultural context within which he was writing, along with his contemporaries. What is suggested here is that the written Histories one reads today, lacks the immediate rebuttals and questioning it would have received upon its original performances. Therefore the written text comes across more as a narrative, a story, than a historical written work. This has proven inevitable due to the Greek oral culture, with the dramatic details and various digressions from the main plot then having

developed into the literary historical accounts of today.

One values both the historian and the history itself, and either must not be assessed in isolation, therefore Herodotus' motives must be investigated, as well as the context for his work. The importance of history cannot be doubted, though must be treated with caution due to human nature itself. As well as investigating truth, writers and historians alike are responsible for portraying the events of the past and immortalising them. Herodotus puts great emphasis on this, speaking of "great and marvellous deeds" [erga megala te kai thomasta] as well as his role "to preserve human achievements" [ta genomena ex anthropon]. These statements reveal the inherently good and noble aims towards which Herodotus was striving.

However, when dealing with historical accounts, one must not take the mere superficial level of meaning; those told by a trusted historian, or a first-hand account, bears greater weight than apocryphal tales. Due to the nature of history and truth, it cannot be helped that a historian's view may colour the account. Readers may value such views, with new interpretations providing a new layer of understanding. Yet it must be acknowledged that certain views can infiltrate dangerous ideas, or even worse, silence the views of others. The famous saying that 'history is written by the victors,' a statement attributed to Winston Churchill, demonstrates that there is often a lack of viewpoints to history, due to oppression, a lack of means, or other unfortunate circumstances, hence the truth lacks completeness and thorough understanding. This is dangerous and divisive; the power of words and messages can transcend temporal restraints. History (referring to events of the past), has proven that people have been made to believe propaganda and lies. Unfortunately, this still

occurs today. The pursuit of control over peoples entails the precarious presentation of history and truth, and there are many examples of the manipulation of history (and thus truth) as a means of control. The motivations of sources must always be questioned, whether of historical texts or indeed any form of information or intelligence. Herodotus demonstrates that the role of a historian as a curator of history, can be used to do good instead of harm. The idea that the historian can present evidence that they themselves do not believe in, though important nonetheless, is truly invaluable. This allows the reader (or listener) to decide, and mitigates the omission of truth. Herodotus makes this very clear in Histories (VII.152):

As for myself, I am bound to tell what is told, but I am absolutely not bound to believe it, and let it be understood that this statement applies to every story I report.
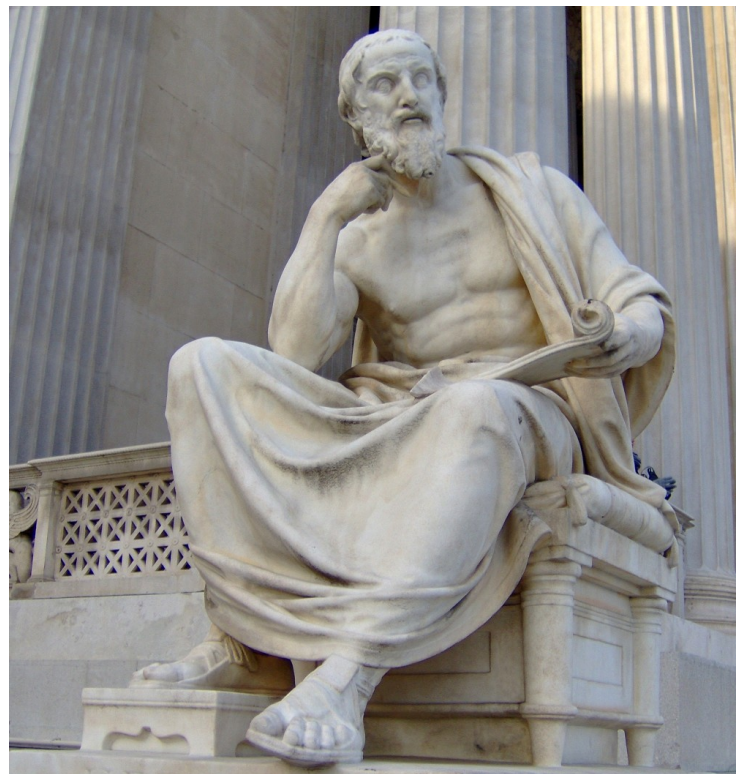
The clarity of message and the sense of obligation he is 'bound' or 'not bound' to obeying, suggests the moral awareness and bearing of responsibility in his text. The authorial presence acts as a guide to the reader; the importance is for the reader to

Statue of Herodotus, Theophil Hansen (Vienna, Austria)

address the motivation of the writer, to account for different views that may lead to a certain viewpoint. The danger is of becoming ignorant of views percolating accounts. Herodotus' Histories does much to resist this. Herodotus did not only address his own findings from various groups of peoples, but presented them in such a way, as to let the reader assess each account's importance; something all historians should strive to do.

The form and structure of Herodotus' narrative, draws upon the existing work of the time, coupled with innovative methods and matter. Histories is the first prose work of such length, differing from epic poetry of the time. Comparisons have been drawn between Herodotus' work and Homer's, with parallels between the Iliad and the Odyssey. As J. Marincola in his introduction to Histories, Herodotus did "in prose what Homer had done in poetry." This has resulted in a structure differing from what one is familiar with, when reading modern history. Histories is not a linear narrative, nor a chronological one. Structural motifs are prevalent instead, with recurring themes being the threads that run through the book and bind the narrative into a complex yet intricate work of prose. The detail of the plot and sub-plots (aforementioned in this essay), encapsulates the vividness and action of the past. The distinct difference in terms of language, is that the ancient Greek Herodotus used, called 'lexis eiromenē' by Aristotle (Bakker, 2006), did not have defined sentences, but was a 'strung-on way of speaking.'This makes the effect of the text difficult to replicate in translation, and it can be

hard to appreciate the originality of the structure with the originality of the content. The use of parataxis ('the placing of clauses are after another, without words to indicate coordination or subordination' - (Oxford English Dictionary)), as oppose to hypotaxis ('the subordination of one clause to another' - (Oxford English Dictionary)), means Herodotus' writing in terms of grammar, is dramatically different from modern history. Digressions are ended when the main plot is returned to; this is known as 'ring composition' (Otterlo, 1944). This results in a more discursive or even verbose argument. However Herodotus' literary venture, meant the most significant shift, the transition from poetry to prose, occurred, which in itself signifies the origins of the historical genre in a form a modern audience would recognise today.

The argument that Herodotus is 'the father of Lies' rests on the suspicion that he may not have conducted all the research he pledges to have conducted, that he was not well-travelled and that all the evidence he had supposedly obtained was just a work of fiction stemming from his imagination. And on some aspects, one may not know if Herodotus' words are the truth or not – how are details verified or lies differentiated from the truth in our modern world?

One must have a certain degree of faith, or more crudely, gullibility. However, this essay and the supporting evidence, has dismissed this view and presented a stronger counter-argument. The breadth of material, the methods of extrapolating the truth, the use of prose, have all been attributed to both Herodotus and modern history. Even if some details in the Histories continue to be disputed, Herodotus' absolute contribution to history and truth is not founded purely on the individual tales. Therefore, it is possible to be both sceptical and come to the conclusion that Herodotus is 'the father of History.'

Reconstruction of a Herodotus World Map (c.450 BC)

Was Caligula Really Mad?

Ellen Pepper

Gaius Caesar, nicknamed Caligula, is one of the most infamous Roman Emperors, often depicted as an insane tyrant. His reign is commonly mythologised and dramatized, and his mad behaviour is well-known. The popular view of Caligula focuses on his depraved actions while emperor, including making his horse a consul, waging war on Neptune, and believing that he was Jupiter himself. But how do we know these things truly happened? How far can we trust the credibility of this caricature? While some parts of his story are likely true, many others are probably false or exaggerated.

Caligula became emperor in AD 37 after the death of Tiberius, his adoptive grandfather. It is often thought that in the early part of his reign, Caligula ruled in a dignified way, but later on he became cruel, sadistic, and even sexually depraved. He often came into conflict with the senate, possibly because they were not used to ruling with an emperor, since Tiberius, had left Rome for Capri in 26 AD and therefore had given the senate a greater degree of control.

The historiography surrounding Caligula is much more complicated than it appears. We have very few remaining contemporary sources of his reign; Other classical sources were written many years after his death. In addition, we must always consider possible political motivations behind our remaining sources. These motivations could include an exaggerated account of his depravity to justify his assassination only four years after he became emperor; an overly flattering description to win Caligula's favour; or an embellished narrative by the Roman elite to perpetuate the view that Caligula was an example of a 'bad emperor.' In addition to this, modern interpretations and portrayals often skew the view of Caligula, by presenting disputed myths and stories as facts or dramatising them for the benefit of entertainment.

While it is likely that there were many contemporary sources written on Caligula's reign, many have been lost over time. As a result, there are only two main contemporary sources remaining: Philo of Alexandria and Seneca. Philo of Alexandria was a Jewish philosopher, so his remaining descriptions of Caligula revolve around his mission to ask Caligula to secure the rights of the suffering Alexandrian Jews. Seneca only gives a few stories of Caligula's personality.

However, there are some secondary or tertiary sources on Caligula; most of our knowledge comes from Suetonius (written 80 years after his death) and Cassius Dio (180 years after his death). Suetonius was a Roman Historian who wrote *De Vita Caesarum* 'The Life of the Caesars,' more commonly known as *The Twelve Caesars.*

Caligula Depositing the Ashes of his Mother and Brother in the Tomb of his Ancestors (c.1647) Eustache Le Sueur,

The text depicts Caligula's popularity in the early part of his reign and concentrates on his insanity and depravity later on. Suetonius recounts that when Caligula became emperor, despite the state of mourning for Tiberius, the people were overjoyed. This supports the view that he was initially very popular, and the early part of his reign was successful and noble.

super fausta nomina "sidus" et "pullum" et "pupum" et "alumnum" appellantium. (De Vita Caesarum, 4.13)

"who called him besides other propitious names their "star," their "chick," their "babe," and their "nursling."

Suetonius goes on to provide many details of his insanity, He mentions Caligula's incest with his sisters (for which there is no or little evidence), his extreme brutality and weakness of character stemming from the combination of his arrogance and timidity.

Hactenus quasi de principe, reliqua ut de monstro narranda sunt. (De Vita Caesarum, 4.22)

"So much for Caligula as emperor; we must now tell of his career as a monster"

But can we trust these secondary and tertiary accounts? It is likely that aspects of these secondary or tertiary historical sources were based on scathing (and possibly biased) contemporary historians whose work is now lost.

These included Fabius Rusticus, whose reliability has been questioned by modern historians, and Cluvius Rufus, a senator involved in the assassination of Caligula. Both these men condemned Caligula in their accounts. A senator who assassinated an emperor would clearly wish to exaggerate his insanity to justify his murder, so Cluvius's descriptions of the reign could be heavily biased. As a result, it can be difficult to determine how far can we trust ancient sources on famous figures, if there would always be political motivation or bias, either in the account itself or in its evidence.

One of the sources that would have been extremely useful for determining the truth behind the myths of Caligula is the lost part of Tacitus's Annals. Tacitus proclaimed his own impartiality and reliability and is seen as one of the greatest historians to have existed. There are several gaps in Tacitus's most famous work, and although there are some descriptions of Caligula under Tiberius's reign, one of the lost sections of his work was a detailed history of Caligula's reign. However, it may be possible to interpret Tacitus's view of Caligula from his earlier descriptions, which may hint at what was to come.

"Gaius Caesar [Caligula], barely out of his boyhood, ignorant of all things or nurtured amid the worst"

"to Caligula, who in some casual conversation was deriding Lucius Sulla, he made the prophecy that he would have all the vices of Sulla with none of the Sullan virtues"

These passing comments in Tacitus's earlier book on Tiberius could foreshadow the insanity that was to come, by already suggesting the presence of instability or weaknesses in his character.

While we cannot trust the surviving sources such as Suetonius's account completely, we also cannot

Death of Germanicus (c. 1627), Nicolas Poussin

ignore their accounts altogether. Although some of the incidents reported may have been exaggerated or elaborated for effect, the basis of Caligula's character is a common depiction in almost all of our remaining sources. His cruelty, barbarism, erratic behaviour, and lavish lifestyle is corroborated in several sources and so is likely true. But was he truly 'mad'? Some modern interpretations have been that after his illness six months into his reign, he became acutely aware of his own mortality, and suffered from mental illnesses or even a personality disorder.

Another theory is that these are the actions of a young man who has been given more money, power and responsibility than anyone else in the empire or even the world. Many of his political manoeuvres were ill-advised and failed, adding to his assumed insanity. The rumours of his sexual depravity was something often associated with a bad leader in Rome. It is also possible that he had suffered from a traumatic past and acted out against the senate who he despised.

There are many myths surrounding Caligula, some of which are now disputed by modern classicists. With the evidence we now have of the Empire, such as coins and statues, we can uncover the truth to some extent. For example, the charge of incest that is briefly mentioned in Suetonius's account, is likely hugely exaggerated, or lacking sufficient evidence. We know that Caligula placed his sisters in a more prominent position than would have been expected. He commissioned statues of them, and put all three of them on a coin on the other side to his bust. Although this may have been unusual, there were statues of many other Augustan women, and it is thought that part of the reasoning behind this prominent position could have been to emphasise the fact that Caligula and his sisters were descendants of Augustus, and therefore make his rule more secure.

Another myth about Caligula is his continuous efforts to become a living god, and be worshipped in the same way as the gods. From 40 AD he began to refer to himself as a god, appearing as Jupiter in public, and even replacing the heads on statues of gods with his own. He also wanted his sister Drusilla, to be deified in the same way.

"Let there be one Lord, one King" (Caligula famously quoted this line from Homer's Iliad, recorded in Suetonius's account)

Some modern theories for this include the idea that he was trying to replicate the same deification of living men as had been seen in Hellenistic Greece, which was a political mistake as the Roman people did not accept this. Other Emperors had been deified after death, but not while alive, and this only added to the idea of his insanity and arrogance.

One of the most famous myths of Caligula's madness is when he made his horse a consul. However, this likely didn't happen, and even in

A coin from Caligula's reign, (c. 37-38AD) depicting his sisters Agrippina, Livia and Drusilla on the back

the sources we have, this action only remains a promise. This example emphasises how important the specific wording of these accounts are. Modern interpretations of this consider that this may have been an example of Caligula trying to undermine the senate further, by promoting the idea that a horse could do a better job than they could.

"One of the horses, which he named Incitatus, he used to invite to dinner. . . even promised to appoint him consul, a promise that he would certainly have carried out if he had lived longer"

Furthermore, the modern depictions and adaptations of Caligula's story greatly skew our perceptions of him.

The Netflix series *the Roman Empire,* presented as a docuseries with historians providing commentary, creates the perception that it is all fact backed with evidence. Whereas in reality, there are aspects that have been made up or exaggerated for the benefit of an exciting television series. For example, the series shows Caligula as being in a coma for 3 months, when it is very unlikely that people in a coma at this time would survive, without the modern technology we have today. Caligula's sisters plot against him in the series creates intrigue and drama, but there is little ancient evidence for the Plot of the Three Daggers, and it is thought that Suetonius doubted whether it happened at all. It may have just been Caligula's excuse to exile his sisters. Popular adaptations increase knowledge of classical

events and people, but sometimes the increased fiction around them presents incorrect evidence that changes public perceptions. There have been other modern adaptations of Caligula's story, such as the film Caligula in 1979, which greatly added to the exaggerations and myths about Caligula's depravity by showing dramatic scenes of his madness.

Caligula's story is an extreme example of how exaggerated sources and dramatic modern interpretations can greatly affect the validity of the popular view of a famous figure from history. While there may always be two sides to the story, sometimes only one side survives for us to see, and the possible bias in some written sources exemplifies how important multiple sources of evidence or archaeological remains are for how we view the past.

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Caligula's Palace and Bridge (c. 1831), J.M.W Turner

What Aesop's fables can teach us about Greek GCSE

Nathaniel Read

The similarities between Aesop, creator of the famous fables in 6th century BCE Greece, and a modern student of Greek GCSE, are immeasurable. In the same way Greek students are made to memorise seemingly never-ending vocab lists, Aesop too was made to work for a man named Xanthon, to whom Herodotus says he was enslaved. In the same way many people think that the chance of getting full marks on a Greek translation does not exist, many people think that Aesop did not actually exist. Yet today, with the exception of Dr McCombie being slightly less tough on students then the Greeks were on their slaves, Greek students today have one advantage over him. For before Aesop came into the world, there was no such thing as exam technique.

Now, many very distinguished classicists claim that Aesop's aims were to teach us morals. But one doesn't have to read that carefully to realise that Aesop's ultimate aim all along was to prepare children for Greek GCSE. Here are only a few examples of where this is the case.

The Bundle of Sticks: Classics teachers at Westminster are united in stressing the importance of breaking words down when we can't translate them. They sometimes say it so confidently that one might think they invented the idea. They did not. In the fable called 'The Bundle of Sticks', Aesop describes how six sons fight about how to build something from a huge pile of sticks. After they try desperately to break up the pile in one go, their mother explains to them that it would be a lot easier to break each stick individually. The sons soon realise the importance of taking things step by step, and soon win the building competition. What other purpose can this have served, than to explain to students how to approach translating a word? Rather than going straight into translating it,

gradually make sure that you have got the mood, gender, number, voice and person all correct.

The Fox and the Crow: Mr Mylne has often said that the greatest enemy to a high mark in Greek is complacency. But every idea has an inventor, and unfortunately it was not Mr Mylne. In Aesop's 'The Fox and the Crow', the fox is really desperate for the crow's cheese, so sets about trying to trick the crow to drop it. Persuading the crow doesn't work, and he doesn't fall for tricks either, but finally the fox tries to flatter the crow and says he wants to hear it sing. The crow falls for this and drops the cheese. In this sea of metaphors, the crow is us feeling complacent about a Greek paper, which of course is the cheese. The fox can only be the mark scheme. The clear conclusion we can therefore draw is that we shouldn't be lulled into a false sense of security just because we think we vaguely understand the Greek. Always be alert for tricks.

The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs: Once more Aesop shows us the way with his fable about a goose which laid golden eggs. In this fable, a farmer is in poverty and is starving, something one may well in a Greek test where you don't know the vocabulary. The one goose which he has

left by chance lays a golden egg. The farmer then sells this egg and makes lots of money. When the goose lays more golden eggs, the farmer, like most of us would, gets a bit too excited and decides, sadly with no prior knowledge of biology, that he can get all the golden eggs if he cuts open the goose's stomach. Unfortunately, this doesn't work and quickly the farmer is poor again. What other purpose could this possibly serve than to tell people not to try and be too clever or quick when translating?

The Hare and the Tortoise: There is a reason this is Aesop's most famous fable, and that is because it covers arguably the toughest part of Greek GCSE: revision. Sure, it can be relatively easy to learn the vocab once you get the hang of it on Quizlet, but the indirect constructions can all too easily go in one ear and out the other. In the fable, the tortoise beats the hare when the latter stops for a rest, because 'Slow and steady wins the race': In the same way,if you keep practising the syntax and don't depend on last-minute cramming, you will probably get a high mark. This is the real origin to Dr McCombie's 'Frequent intense bursts to lock the learning in', a strategy particularly useful for vocab tests: frequency, rather than one panicked session the night before, is the way to understand Greek.

Other messages of Aesop's are a bit more mysterious. Where he was going with the Boy who cried Wolf, for example, I am not quite sure. But if you ever need any help with Greek GCSE, forget Ms Hewes, Mr Gravell or Mr Ireland; Aesop is the person to go to.

P.S. This all applies to Latin too.

View of the Flower of Greece (c. 1836), August Wilhelm Julius Ahlborn (after Schinkel)

Did Ancient elections express the will of the people?

Claire Zhao

In many large, representative democracies of the modern era, elections are a prerequisite of a democratic constitution. They are often seen as one of the essential methods of ensuring that governmental decisions reflect, in some way and to some extent, the concept of the 'will of the people', by ensuring that 'the people' decide who will be entitled to make those decisions and have the ability to remove them from office. Further constitutional safeguards are layered on top of elections in an attempt to ensure that the "will of the people" can be expressed, understood and implemented – this includes rules around electoral processes, rules around freedom of speech, rule of law and right to peaceful protest. All of these are needed because the concept of "the will of the people" is a problematic one that political theorists have long grappled with. Whose "will" is being referred to? Does it include slaves, prisoners, children, women? And is the "will" the will of a majority of voters? Or do we need some concept of essential protections for minorities, even if a majority vote against it? And what happens if the "people" are misled in an election, or change their mind?

These are very modern ways of looking at democratic institutions, but very relevant to how we can assess the extent to which elections in ancient societies did in fact, or were ever intended to, reflect the will of the people.

In this essay, I have assessed what I consider to be essential elements of what it is to express the will of the people: (i) the extent of suffrage across the citizen and resident population, (ii) the extent to which the 'will of the people' is even a relevant concept that was considered important (iii) how free and fair the elections were, (iv) how open the elections were to fraud and manipulation, and (v) the extent to which the system allowed for the will of the majority to prevail. As elections classify the 'will of the people' into discrete categories represented by individual candidates, there is an inherent degree of limitation to expressing the 'will of the people'. Despite this, these five components can greatly affect whether elections express the will of the people. Through the lens of these features, I have considered two particular historical contexts: the 2 major electoral processes in classical (5th century) Athens and the episcopal elections of the later (Christian) Roman Empire and have assessed the extent to which the elections in these contexts expressed the will of the people.

Voting in classical Athens was limited to male citizens over the age of 20; women, freedmen, slaves, men under 20 and metics had limited citizenship and no suffrage. However, we cannot conclude that elections in classical Athens did little to express the will of the people simply because less than 30% of the adult population had the vote; we must assess the purpose and ideas surrounding 'the people' as well.

Citizenship in classical Athens was considered a full-time responsibility. Whilst most Athenians did not have access to education, the system was based on the notion that citizens needed time and experience to make educated political decisions. 'The people', as a strictly political community,

Pericles's Funeral Oration (c. 1852), Philipp Foltz

therefore, excluded women and slaves on the basis that were busy with completing domestic tasks, and metics on the basis of their unfamiliarity with Athenian custom. Therefore, the lack of suffrage for the majority of residents is more revealing of the prejudices of society prohibiting the education of women, slaves, freedmen and metics than how much the will of the people was expressed. Athenian democracy was implemented in a wider socio-political context and reflected pre-existing limitations. Therefore, Athenian elections did not limit the 'will of the people' in terms of suffrage; instead, pre-existing prejudices limited inhabitants from becoming part of 'the people'.

One type of election in classical Athens the elections of financial officers and the 10 strategoi (generals). These 100 officials were the only ones elected; the other 900 officials were chosen by lot. Elections were open votes, demonstrated by a show of hands in open air.4 This means that elections were less free, given that each vote was subject to public pressure. Athenian democracy also emphasised the equality of all free men before the law, and therefore all votes held equal weight. Therefore, the results of an election expressed the votes in equal measure.

Whilst the openness of election meant that election fraud was uncommon, election result can still be affected by manipulation. The will of the people is also obscured when voting in an election as the concepts of 'personal approval' and 'political ability' influence voters in different directions. As Demosthenes argues, 'those who aspired to elective offices' were 'slaves of the approval which bestowed their votes'. Candidates are subject to public scrutiny of their personal matters. Factors such as charisma and personal support, which are unrelated to the political will of the people influence election decisions. Characteristics more likely to lead to political success, such as manipulation, flattery and invective, are the ones that the people would least want to be their ruler. For example, an old soldier running for strategoi could be seen 'uncovering his breast and displaying his scars'. Pathetic devices rather than rational reasoning are significantly more influential in an election and therefore can obscure the will of the people.

However, the classical Athenian democratic system was ultimately a system designed for the will of their definition of 'the people' to prevail. As elections were held regularly, once a year, the system facilitated the changing of elected officials in line with the changing opinion of the people. All votes were equal, and the majority vote was implemented. Therefore, elections in classical Athens expressed the will of the people to a great extent.

Elections in classical Athens also take place in the form of ostracism, which elects any citizen for exile from the state for 10 years. As the decision to hold an ostracism was made each year by a majority assembly vote, ostracism would only take place if the people wanted it to. Whilst the system, in theory, was one of anonymous voting, the high proportion of illiterate citizens whose ostrakon - a shard of pottery bearing the name of the ostracism candidate - was written by scribes meant that citizens were still subject to public pressure. Ostracisms were therefore not as free in practice as they were in principle. Secret voting meant that ostracisms were more open to

electoral abuse. For example, 190 ostraka from the same type of drinking glassware found near the acropolis of Athens, all bearing the name of Themistocles written by 14 hands.10 Whilst this could be a result of someone selling ready-made ostrakon, 11 the evidence also suggests instances of systematic election fraud. The higher stakes also mean that ostracism is more prone to be affected by public opinion. For example, Plutarch recounts an instance where an assembly member voted against Astrides for his epithet of being 'the Just'.12 Whilst Plutarch was writing in the Roman Empire several centuries after this instance, this still reveals the eminent danger of population in ostracisms.
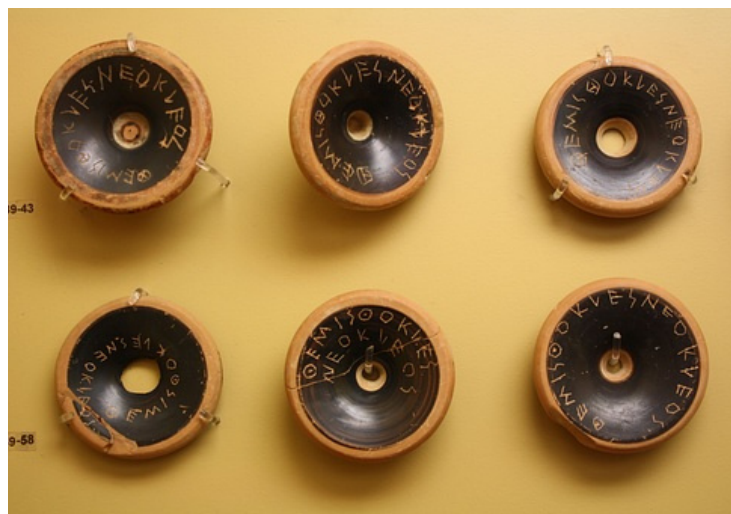
190 ostraka, found near the acropolis of Athens, all bearing the the name of Themistocles written by few hands

In addition, ostracism did not require a majority vote, but merely the largest group and at least 6000 out of an estimated 30,000 votes to pass.13 Therefore, the views of the factionalised majority were commonly not expressed. This is because the system of ostracism was created for the protection of the city-state from tyranny rather than an affirmation of democracy. Whilst Athenian elections of financial and military officers were considered oligarchic, they were still held with a view of expressing the will of the people. Ostracism, on the other hand, was created to prevent democracy from being torn down, rather than to actively uphold it.

As the predecessor of modern-day papal elections, episcopal elections in the Roman Empire differ from classical Athenian elections in the sense that 'the people' are not political members of a city-state, but members of a marginalised religious community. Whilst the bishops of Roms claimed legitimacy as successors of St Peter, who, according to tradition, arrived at Rome in 42AD, evidence of episcopal succession is sparse until the Didache, written in the 2nd century AD. The text instructed the Christian community to 'Elect for yourselves bishops and deacons, men who are worthy of the lord'. The word 'Χειροτονήσατε' (literally 'you must elect') is particularly strong, showing the duty that electing a bishop was considered. It is likely that 'the people' were what the Didache called 'men who are worthy of the lord.' The idea of 'the people' was therefore not one of political engagement, but moral virtue. Evidence concerning suffrage is sparse; however, it seems that the people were designated with a sense of autonomy.

Episcopal elections were a meeting point between Christian leaders and the local Christian community, as a forum where the competing demands of authority were discussed. However, in reality, the will of the local Christian community may have only been expressed to a small extent and may have been weighted towards Christian leaders. For example, during the power struggle behind Cornelius and Novation's candidacies in 251, Cornelius was supported by Cyprian and most African and Eastern bishops whilst Novatian's power base lay in the clergy and laymen of Rome. Cornelius's subsequent success, however, expressed the will of powerful bishops rather than the people. Cyprian described the situation as Cornelius being made bishop 'by the choice of God and His Christ'. It was clear that Christian powers considered the choice of God to lie with leading bishops, not the people.

Elections were further undermined by superstition and luck. A likely fabricated tale by Eusebius describes Fabian's election in 236 in this way: 'Fabian, who was there, came into nobody's mind. But all of a sudden, they relate, a dove flew down from above and settled on his head, in clear imitation of the descent of the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove upon the Saviour; whereupon the whole people, as if moved by one divine inspiration, with all eagerness and with one soul cried out "worthy," and without more ado took him and placed him on the episcopal throne.' This suggests the lack of 'real' power that the people had in these elections. Perhaps Eusebius was also insinuating that the will of the people was only expressed if it followed Divine Will.

The lack of popular input in episcopal elections was further exacerbated by the fact that bishops held their position for life. Their powers and autonomy were therefore more similar to a monarch than that of an official standing in a representative democracy. There was no incentive to oblige to the will of the people and the concept of episcopal infallibility and Divine Will could override the will of the people. The elections were therefore probably more effective as an illusion to hold together a prosecuted community and to give them a sense of legitimacy over the official Roman state religion of the pre-Constantine Roman Empire

In general, ancient elections expressed the will of the people less closely than in our current democratic way of thinking – suffrage was narrower, elections were less free and fair and more open to fraud and there were fewer institutional assurances that majority will would prevail. However, this does not imply that in their historical contexts these deficiencies (by reference to modern standards) would have been seen as weaknesses as they attached less importance to them than we might do today.

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Sylvester I and Constantine (c. 13th century)

What happened to the Garden of Eden?

Flora Prideaux

The Christian creation story wasn't always about the Christian God, or a Jewish One, or indeed a monotheistic God at that. It is generally accepted to be descended from the ancient Sumerian creation story, a tale of a perfect paradise, free from pain and suffering, a luscious land of the Gods. But this wasn't just some far-fetched mythical paradise, it represented the very real kingdom of Dilmun – heaven on earth.

Dilmun is a largely unknown civilisation which is rarely spoken about; most people are unaware of its existence. Despite this, Dilmun was a very influential dynasty, lasting nearly 3000 years, which has had lasting impacts on the global society and culture.

The oldest known written record of Dilmun and the trade of goods with Medopotamia, a gift to Ur Nanabe, King of Lagesh

Dilmun was an ancient civilisation in the Persian Gulf, a Semitic speaking nation in Arabia with roots that can be found in as early as the 4th millennium BC. Dilmun lay on the trade route between Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley; it was close to the sea, and full of artesian springs. It covers what is now modern-day Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and eastern Saudi Arabia. It was first mentioned in a Sumerian cuneiform clay tablet, found in a temple to the goddess Ianna in Uruk, dated to the late 4th or early 3rd millennium. The civilisation was full of great Dilmunite settlements and early cities like Umm an-Nussi and Umm ar-Ramadh inland, and Tarout on the Coast. Its capital was Qal'at al-Bahrain, in translation from Arabic meaning "the twin waters".

Dilmun was a great trading power, exchanging timbers, ivory, lapis lazuli, gold, pearls and shell and bone inlays for tin, silver, olive oil, grains and woollen textiles, across the cradle of civilisation. An ancient Sumerian text noted Dilmun as "blessed, prosperous land dotted with great dwellings", that "all countries known to the Sumerians brought their goods to Dilmun". It held a monopoly on copper mining and smelting, shipping copper from the mines of Oman to Mesopotamia.

However, Dilmun wasn't just a successful trading power; it was so key to ancient civilisations that it retained huge cultural and religious influences, as part of the ancient Sumerian creation story. The Sumerian Epic, of Enki and Ninhursag, describes Dilmun as the site where creation occurs. The later Babylonian creation story tells that the site of creation is the place where the saltwater (Tiamet) mingled with the fresh waters of Abzu – Bahrain. In a further Sumerian creation story, the Sumerian hero of the great flood, Utnapishtim, was taken by the Gods to live forever in Dilmun, a precursor to the Christian story of Noah's ark. It was known as "the land of the living", and "the land of the Gods". A place where the divine water sources mingled to create a magical garden, where mother goddess Ninhursag watered the sacred plants to create an Eden so perfect that all the Gods chose to live there.

Dilmun was even referenced in the famous Epic of Gilgamesh, where Gilgamesh had to pass through Mount Mashu to reach Dilmun, "the land where the sun rises". These legends of Eden were likely

due to the abundance of natural springs and wetter climate, which turned Dilmun into a lush green land, in the middle of the desert. The Garden of Eden theory was revived once again when in 1922, archaeologist Eduard Glaser proposed that the garden of Eden was located at Dilmun. Scholar Juris Zarins seconded this opinion, believing the Garden to be at the head of the Persian Gulf, where the great Tigris and Euphrates rivers ran into the sea, exactly where Dilmun was located.

Dilmun was a prosperous society at its peak in 2700 BC, a rich land full of creativity and invention. They built the oldest sea tower in the world, the first lighthouse to sponsor their maritime trading. They built huge burial mounds for their Kings, had extensive plumbing systems, restaurants, houses, shops and temples. Dilmun handcrafted seals were found as far as Gujarat in India and in Mesopotamia indicating the strength and expanse of the trading system. They wrote in Sumerian Cuneiform, spoke an Akkadian dialect and worshipped many deities, all of which are strong signifiers of a successful civilisation.

So, what happened to this garden of Eden? From 1720 BC decline was visible, and in 1500 BC it came under the rule of the Sealand Dynasty, from there it passed into Assyrian sovereignty sometime between 707-681 BC. It had lost all independence and ability to stand as an independent nation, instead subjugated to politics and affairs beyond its control. In 567 BC it was overtaken by the Neo-Babylonian empire, and after the collapse of this empire in 538 BC, Dilmun turned to ruin.

Despite its early collapse, The influence of this early civilisation is still incredibly obvious today, its power of perfection stretching to create the Christian creation story which 2.1 billion people still believe in. It is an example of the strength of

early civilisations, the expanse of the first trading systems, and the extent of their power. What is all the more interesting, however, is how the modern world has been created, history destroyed and reshaped by the belief in the stories of an ancient world, which we no longer have any attachment to, without anyone realising.

Burial Chambers at Saar, Bahrain from the Dilmun period

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Democracy: the good, the bad, and the ugly

Veronica Corielli

Democracy is widely considered one of the greatest triumphs of humankind. It transpires erudition and liberty, more than any other form of government.

The cultural relevance of democracy in western countries is indisputable. According to the United Nations' website, democracy "*provides an environment that respects human rights and in which the freely expressed will of the people is exercised*".[1] During their schooling, citizens of western countries learn to consider democracy the only modern and positive form of government, either directly, through democratic citizenship and human rights classes, or indirectly. Indirect conditioning implies being taught to classify and order all forms of government based on how democratic they are so as to reinforce the idea of democracy as the purest and most superior, creating an internalised archetype.

Despite how idolised democracy is or how deeply it is embedded as the apotheosis of government in Western culture it remains a highly contested concept and one that has been debated many times throughout history. There are many drawbacks to democracy, and some seem to completely cancel out all that is "good" with it. One of these, possibly the most relevant, is the thesis that democracy allows the rule of the ignorant. This controversial aspect of democracy is more relevant now than ever, as pre-electoral polls in democracies around the world manifest rapidly increasing political ignorance. However, this thesis has been in the frontline of criticism on democracy since its first organised institutional application in Athens, Greece. Its most famous classical exponent was the Greek philosopher

Plato, who discusses the nuances of various forms of government in his *Republic*.[2]

Plato draws up a tripartite division between the citizens, which he believes is created by the liberty, equality and freedom guaranteed by democracy. Those that do not belong to the well-educated noble aristocracy and seek gain, however, do not reach significant importance, belong to the first category. The most successful of these, or the capitalists, "the most orderly and thrifty natures" who have obtained the most riches, form the second. The "people", the unsuspecting *demos* that can easily be manipulated by shrewd demagogues looking for personal advantage, make up the third and largest

He then demonstrates how, whilst in an oligarchy, discussed before democracy in the *Republic,* capitalists "because [they are] not held in honour, [but are] kept out of office, [are] not exercised and [do not] grow vigorous", in a democracy they quickly come to form the dominating class, despite not being the numerical majority. Economic power arms them with the means to protect and appease the *demos,* and as Plato states "[it is] plain [...] that when a tyrant arises he sprouts from a protectorate root and from nothing else", as "[it is] always the way of a *demos*

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1 https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/democracy/index.html UN website on democracy

2 https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1497/1497-h/1497-h.htm Plato's Republic

to put forward one man as its special champion and protector and cherish and magnify him". However, power obtained through pleasing can only be maintained by pleasing.

The demos are unlikely to have any kind of political foresight or look past their personal needs to protect the polis. In a democracy, leaders inevitably become the reflection of the people they lord over. And when these people are an uncultured and need-led mass, democracy could have catastrophic effects. The leaders will undoubtedly be those who are most cunning in their persuasion of the demos. Political decisions will not be based on their expertise and judgement, but on their popularity and polled popular consensus. This is why democracy and the consequent political importance of the uneducated are destined for failure, at least according to the *Republic*.

Plato also describes the form of government which he believes most just as the rule of philosopher-kings. He argues that philosophers, men of extraordinary wiseness and knowledge, would guarantee that every choice made would be for the sake of the polis and not to satisfy unnecessary needs.

There is no doubt that Plato's words proved to be true in the case of the Athenian Democracy. The rise and decline of the *poleis* only took about two hundred years, during which democracy was often overthrown by a series of tyrannical (e.g Peisistrates) and oligarchical (e.g the Thirty Tyrants) governments.[3]

Modern democracies face the same difficulties. Political ignorance is practically the rule, and citizens are easily swayed by persuasive and ruthless politicians. Describing the majority of the voters around the world as ignorant, though, would be dismissive and hardly helpful. Political ignorance does not stem from the unavailability of information, nor from lack of interest: it is but the end result of a paradoxically anti-democratic approach to democracy.

There is a growing sense of political alienation: voters feel like neither their vote nor political opinion matter, and often accuse higher powers of being the reason for their political discontent. Democratic governments are surprisingly elitist, and politics has begun to feel like a bad movie one can watch but never alter. This not only amplifies public disinterest but makes it even harder for interested citizens to obtain all of the information they need. Voters are only considered numbers in a poll, not decision-makers.

Perhaps as a consequence of this, the general public seems to prefer other distractions to politics. This laziness is in part due to the fact that in democratic countries democracy is hardly considered anything more than the expected form of government in a "civilised" country. There is no need to fight for it, so it is taken for granted. In addition, democratic governments are now on such a large scale that it is understandable why voters would feel unrepresented or useless.

3 https://www.nationalgeo-graphic.org/encyclopedia/democracy-ancient-greece/

Joseph Schumpeter, a 19th-century Austrian political economist described the modern approach to politics with the following words: "The typical citizens drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He argues and analyses in a way which he would readily recognise as infantile within the sphere of his real interests. He becomes primitive again."[4] Of course, it is likely that some citizens, maybe even a vast majority, will simply not be interested in politics.

Widespread political ignorance, too, is not only the public's fault. World politics are so complicated, that in order for voters to be appropriately informed on all topics one would have to spend hours every day analysing world news. A democracy should not rely on its citizens' given education so much, but rather on their willingness to receive one. Educating voters on the issues they will be voting for should be considered part of a democratic government's mission. Then again, there is yet another problem: if the best option to fight voter ignorance and misinformation is selecting the most important topics and offering education on these, it has to be guaranteed that the selection and representation of topics will in no way be partial or biased. Conscientious voting does not mean voting for a specific side, it means understanding and being able to weigh the arguments of all the sides before finally making a decision. Partisan politics is an example of a phenomenon fuelled by such biased sources: voter ignorance is exploited to create close-minded followers with no global view. Public dullness should not be allowed to influence politics to such an extent.

Democracy does indeed allow the rule of ignorance. However, this does not necessarily make it less worthy as a form of government.

Democracy is not a straightforward concept to translate into reality. It is also not absolute. According to a paper written for the Asian Barometer Conference of Democracy and Citizen Politics in East Asia titled *Understanding Democracy in East Asia*, democracy is considered a fundamental expression of freedom all around the world, not just in the West.

Professors Yun-Han Chu, Min-Hua Huang, and Jie Lu write "A large majority of people, i.e., more than 65 percent, in authoritarian societies like China, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Singapore are quite satisfied with the practice of democracy in their countries".[5] The writers acknowledge that readers may think that "survey results from non-democracies cannot be trusted", however "[other survey results suggest] that political wariness cannot be the key factor that drives the findings". While this must be kept in mind when discussing democracy, I believe it is safe to say that, were the citizens of these countries to have been born and brought up in countries with US modelled democracies, they would not be of the same opinion. What one has been exposed to throughout their life certainly leads to the acceptance of varying degrees of freedom.

Democracy, as defined by Western scholars, should guarantee liberty and equality to all

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4 http://www.asianbarometer.org/publications/1a532dd8f8bf64e6524d507178060230.pdf

5 https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/01/08/is-democracy-a- western-idea/ Is Democracy A Western Idea? Diego Von Vacano

citizens, not only the ruling class. These are intrinsically positive values that depend on the ideology and background of the place in which they take root in order to have positive results,[6] which is why there are countries where, at present, democracy could never function properly. These values have however laid deep roots in Western moral. Liberty, for example, is mentioned on the first page of the constitutions of most Western countries. Were democracy to be abolished or limited, it is likely citizens, even those who didn't fully exercise their rights while democracy was enforced, would rebel against the political authorities as they would have no means over than revolution to change the state of their country, as said by officer Angus Campbell in his book "The American Voter".

In a well-structured democracy, political discontent takes the form of criticism towards political representatives, who can't however rationally take the blame for all of the citizens' toils. This is because voters, despite how critical they may be, know that the voting population is partially in charge of the state of things. However, the fewer citizens are involved in their country's politics, even if this involvement isn't educated, the more likely they will be to resort to uprising and violence as a manifestation of criticism. It also becomes increasingly likely, in this case, that they would consider, now rationally, political authorities responsible for their situation. Their exasperation would lead them to see leaders as tyrants who must be removed for the sake of their country.

This raises the question of what can be defined as good when discussing politics and forms of government. The perception of goodness on the citizens' part is, as previously analysed, very malleable. However, there is no reason why

anyone, including the wisest philosopher-kings, should be allowed to dictate the morality of political decisions. The only way to decide on the superiority of a form of government is to discuss all of its singularities and decide what aspects will be considered most important.

For example, from an ontological point of view, despite often allowing the rule of ignorance, democracy is the only form of government that allows for what most distinguishes the human race from other species of animals to shine through: being ruled by equality, and not simply by the rule of the jungle whereby the strongest lord over the weak. The importance of equality does, however, greatly depend on the culture of a place and forcing all cultures to conform to western ideals of democracy would be unjustified and oppressive. Moreover, democracy is not superior from a developmental point of view, as it allows for individual development but dulls that of the collective7, as there is no longer need for consultation of the public or political debate.

To conclude, democracy is a nuanced and controversial concept. Democratic governments rarely allow ideal democracy. This is due to a lack of political interest and knowledge in current voting generations fuelled by the elitist approach to politics observed in most countries. There is not a single way to define democracy and its traits as positive or negative. It does allow the rule of the ignorant, but is that objectively bad?

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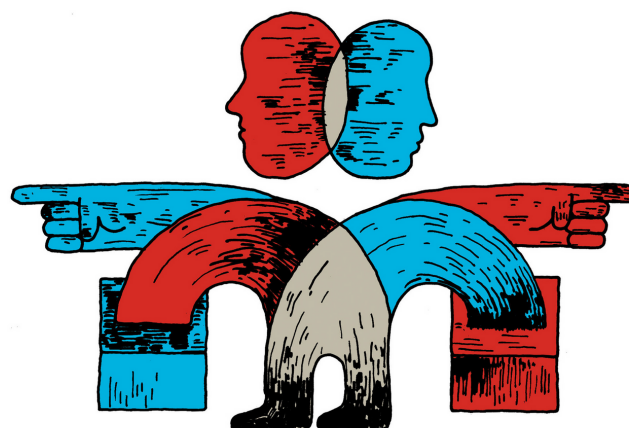
6 Ilya Simin, "Voter Ignorance and the Democratic Ideal", *Harvard Critical Review Vol. 12, No. 4* (July, 2017)

Are Aristotelian Virtue Ethics Relevant In the 21st Century?

Andrew Alam-Nist

Following a general disappearance from Anglo-American philosophy during the 19th Century, virtue ethics have experienced a broad re-emergence within Western philosophy in the last fifty years. Whilst most modern ethical theories focus upon the morality of specific actions, virtue ethics, in the words of philosopher Julias Annas, is 'agent focused.' This focus upon agents traces its origins to ancient Athens, where it was conceptualised by Aristotle and implemented in the Ancient Athenian polis.

Aristotle was born in 384 B.C. in Stagira, a region of Northern Greece. At the age of seventeen, he was sent to Athens, where he enrolled in Plato's Academy. Over the next twenty or so years, he was both a student and teacher there, emerging with a great deal of respect and recognition. Following Plato's death, Aristotle

moved on from the Academy. He acted as a tutor to Alexander the Great in subsequent years and then founded the Lyceum, a great fortress of Greek philosophy of similar proportions to the Academy. Cicero is noted to have said that 'If Plato's prose was silver, Aristotle's was a flowing river of gold.' Tragically, this flowing river of gold appears to be lost to history forever.

It is thought that what does survive might merely be lecture notes. Yet despite the loss of many of his writings, the surviving works of Aristotle remain wildly influential on modern philosophy.

Aristotle believed that the purpose, or telos, of humanity, was to cultivate virtue to live the good life – or achieve the fullness of human potential and flourishing. For him, virtue is best described as taking the appropriate attitude towards pain and pleasure, finding a balance between excess and deficiency of a particular attribute. For instance, if we act overly brave, we will act rashly and irresponsibly. However, if we do not act bravely enough, we will be cowardly, which is equally undesirable. To him, virtue is finding the 'golden mean' of these personal attributes.

He believed that virtue within ourselves is cultivated when we actively practice it. Just as the experienced flute player with a lifetime of practice will be better at playing the flute than a novice, the person who actively spends time using and practising his moral intuitions will build up his moral sensibilities like a muscle. Aristotle additionally believed that, just as a practised flute player can teach novices how to play the flute, a person practised in civic virtue will be able to share it with others. He thus calls upon 'magnanimous old men' to aid juniors in their process of cultivation.

Aristotle's philosophy is tied very closely to the remarkable form of direct democracy within ancient Athens. In Athens, nearly all citizens participated in the political process. To Aristotle, this was of the ultimate importance as he thought that the best way to practice virtue was through civic involvement. To him, all citizens should actively engage in politics so that they can live out the good life. Politics could help to develop 'practical wisdom' and 'civic virtue': two of the most desirable attributes in any citizen.

Despite this, Aristotelian ideas have some

limitations as a moral roadmap for modern society. While other ethical schools of thought such as utilitarianism or deontology actively prescribe which actions are the most moral, virtue ethics merely states that agents should cultivate virtue and prescribes some vague favourable moral traits. This leads to a general ambiguity and subjectivity which can at times lead to individuals being misloaded and taking a morally incorrect action.

Furthermore, Aristotelian virtue ethics are especially prone to devolution into general self-serving ends. The subjectivity of interpretation of a statement such as 'be temperate,' or 'be courageous' means that an individual is far more able to choose an interpretation of morality, either consciously or subconsciously, which serves their own interests than in competing ethical schools.

Additionally, virtue ethics' lack of a grounding in objective first principles means that it cannot combat incorrect moral tenets of a misguided society. Taking an admittedly extreme example, within Nazi Germany, participation within the political process and cultivation looking to others might develop hate, bigotry, and antisemitism within an individual under the guise of 'Virtue.' Virtue ethics does not give the tools to differentiate between a just and unjust society.

Both criticisms highlight the potential limitations of virtue ethics. However, they do not necessitate a complete exclusion of virtue ethics from modern society. Virtue ethics simultaneously have some strong benefits which allow it to circumvent the problems faced by other moral frameworks.

Traditional modern moral theories, most notably consequentialism and deontology, in pursuit of clearly defined moral laws, define their first

principles very narrowly. This in turn limits their ethics to the following of a certain principle, which limits their implementation of morality to a universally applicable baseline. Aristotelian virtue ethics, by contrast, allows greater flexibility and for us to reach the situational 'supererogatory heights' of morality.

Moreover, the mechanism of cultivation quite substantially facilitates the following of the moral law. An issue facing nearly all non-virtue-based modern schools of ethics is they prescribe a moral course of action without giving a straightforward way to follow this. Aristotelian virtue ethics, conversely, does provide the mechanism of cultivation to ensure that people do follow what they believe is moral and just, therefore mitigating this issue.

Thus, we are left with a conception of virtue ethics with some clear strengths and clear limitations within modern society. To add to previous limitations, Aristotle only applied his system of virtue to men. This is deeply sexist and needs to change. We also need a mechanism for cultivation other than politics, as few individuals can get actively involved within the political decision-making process. Virtue ethics additionally probably needs to be anchored by some other form(s) of moral reasoning, as doing so would resolve the most acute issues with the concept of Aristotelian virtue ethics. However, the key idea within Aristotle's virtue ethics about the cultivation of certain issues within the individual through practice and looking to the advice of other cultivated individuals for guidance is as relevant now as it has ever been.

# Aeschylus and the concept of Liberty

Alexandre Guilloteau

At the beginning of his Reith Lectures, Lord Sumption, a former Supreme Court judge, quoted Aeschylus from The Eumenides:

"Let no man live uncurbed by law or curbed by tyranny" [1]

In that play, Aeschylus tells the story of Athena establishing a court of law on the Areopagus ("Hill of Ares") to dispassionately judge the case of Orestes, who is pursued and tormented by the Furies, agents of retributive 'justice', for the murder of his mother, in turn for her murder of his father. Lord Sumption said that the quotation was a very precise definition of the function of law: a principle that also sheds some light on ideas of liberty that have become prominent in this pandemic.

J.S. Mill famously argued that legal coercion against the individual can only be justified if their actions cause harm to others and that there should be no victimless crimes. [2] This idea should be uncontroversial; one might even view it as synonymous with liberty itself. But it can hardly provide a useful analytical framework to judge the validity of restrictions of our individual freedom. Tobacco smoking, for example, primarily harms the lungs of the inhaler but also places a burden on the National Health Service which is funded by taxpayers. In fact, the harm principle could validate most restrictions on personal liberty. Nevertheless, Mill did not claim to define the boundaries within which freedom is desirable, simply where it ought to be axiomatic. Some freedoms inevitably harm others and yet are worthy of respect. Freedom of speech may offend some, but it is judged that the benefits to

society of a 'marketplace of ideas' outweighs this pastoral concern. We hopefully judge that one should not be held for long without trial, even though he may well be a criminal, if we are not to imperil the basic dignity of the person before the law. Yet anything that affects others, under this loose framework, could be validly regulated. It is a balancing of needs of the individual and the community, that is required; this is where resorting to Aeschylus' phrase and play can be so enlightening.
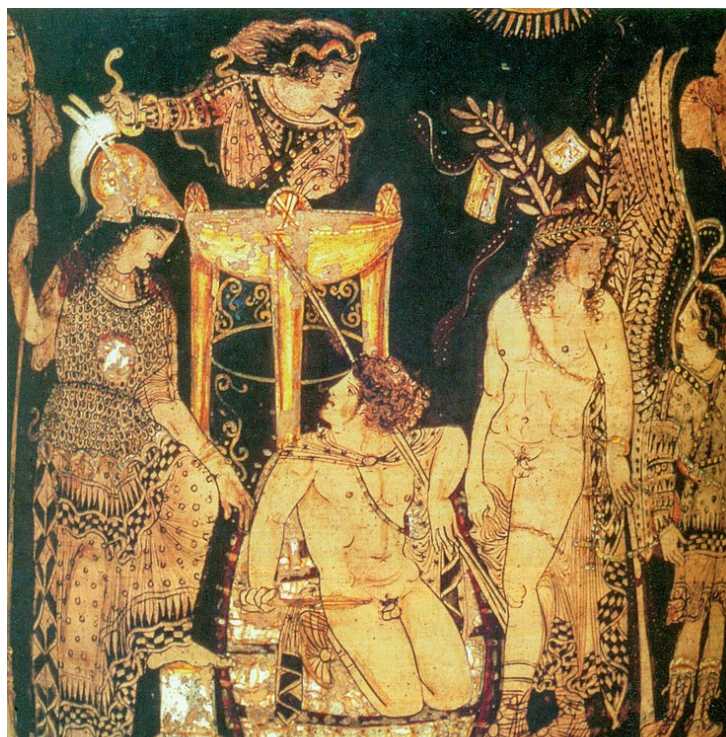
It is intellectually easy to view the right of the individual as superior to the safety of the community. Despite this, it is emotionally easy to view the needs of the populace as superior to the freedom of the person, especially if the person is on the fringes of society, as the targets of the law so often are. Both miss the point. For each is dependent on the other; a balancing of priorities is essential. Whilst the idea that the health of society is obtained by trammelling individualism was influentially dismissed by George Orwell, Athena in *The Eumenides* was restricting, in a sense, the right of the individual in ending the cycle of vengeance and establishing the rule of law.

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1 It is worth noting that his preferred translation (from which this is taken) is the verse translation by Victorian Wykehamist classics master E.D.A. Morshead.

2 See *On Liberty*

Theatre scene on a vase (4th century BC), Python

in ending the cycle of vengeance and establishing the rule of law. Prohibition of murder, whilst an essential moral principle, restricts the right of the individual. But what Athena understood, and Aeschylus so well expressed, is that man is not free unless his freedom is restricted. A 'society in which men recognise no check on their freedom becomes a society1 is the possession of a savage few' – the 'tyranny' [3] which Athena wished to protect people from. The law exists to set up a forum in which disputes can be peacefully resolved on strength of claim, with all abiding by the judgment. It is only by establishing a peaceful and, hopefully, tolerant and respectful society that the freedom on which humanity's creative and innovative capacity – to serve oneself and advance society – depends can be secured. The current Chief Justice of the United States once remarked as an advocate before the Supreme Court that the most powerful

government in the world would stop in its tracks if five elderly lawyers, who have no physical means to enforce their judgments, told it to. This is the miracle of Athena's creation.

This is why Aeschylus' plays are such a useful corrective for people (including myself) who could possibly be too keen on individual liberty, not least during this pandemic. He serves as a reminder that the issues are not as simple as we should like. To protect the greater freedom of all – to 'let [no man] live curbed by tyranny', we must curb the greatest liberty of some – 'let no man live uncurbed by law'. It seems that Aeschylus was the first persuasively to demonstrate that the ends can justify the means. Dangerous as this idea is, and flinch as I may at it, perhaps it is worth bearing in mind going forward, particularly in societies such as America which place such an emphasis on individualism.

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3 Learned Hand, *Spirit of Liberty* speech

Lady Justice Statue on Palace of Justice in Rome, Italy

Ancient Greece: A sexually liberated paradise?

Veronica Corielli and Claire Zhao

Ancient Greece is commonly thought of as the land of romantic and sexual freedom. With Sappho's poetry and the legend of Achilles and Patroclus amongst the myriad of Greek cultural relics that have entered the Western canon, it is easy to be drawn to that sense of escapism and rejection of the stigmas of our contemporary world. Whilst it is true that the Greeks did not consider sexual desires towards any gender as part of one's social identity, it would be wrong to say that Ancient Greece was the epitome of a sexually liberated and fluid society. Ancient Greek ideals of sexual and emotional relations were not based on biological sex, but on gender roles and 'perception' which limited sexual freedom. For example, relationships between a boy and a man, known as pederasty, were not considered improper as long one of the two partaking in the relationship took one an active 'masculine' role, and the other one a passive 'feminine' role. Due to ancient Greek attitudes towards gender, stigma only surrounded the one taking on the effeminate passive role. However, whilst ancient Greece may not be the LGBTQ+ utopia it seems to be, there are many elements of ancient Greek attitudes towards gender and sexuality worth celebrating.

A good representation of Ancient Greek ideas on the natural diversity of romantic orientations can be found in 'Aristophanes' Theory of Love' in Plato's Symposium written in the 4th century BC. Within this philosophical text, Aristophanes gives a speech on the myth he calls the 'origin of love'. He explains that 'Primaeval man was round, his back and sides forming a circle; and he had four hands and four feet, one head with two faces, looking opposite ways, set on a round neck and precisely alike'. These primaeval humans had three sexes: some were male in both parts, some were female in both parts, and some were half male and half female. The last were known as the 'androgynous.' Aristophanes claims that these beings were so powerful and power-hungry that they became a threat to the gods. Because of this Zeus decreed that humanity needed to be humbled and did this by splitting these beings into two halves. Now, in the present age of split selves, humans roam around the earth searching for their soulmate- male searching for male, female searching for female, male and female searching each other. That, he concludes, is love. Plato, through Aristophanes, then provides revolutionary critique on contemporary views of homosexuality, stating that gay couples are the bravest of all, supporting this by the fact that only they grow up to be politicians and philosophers. This tale ends on a cautionary note, with Aristophanes arguing that this state of wholeness can only be achieved if a human works in accordance with the god of Love.

Bisexual and homosexual love was also often included a military or political element. All readers of Cassandra Clare's Shadowhunters ought to be familiar with the term parabatai, pairs of warriors that fight together spurned by deep lifelong bonds. Parabatai comes from the Greek for sidemen; the concept of a pair of life

partners fighting together and protecting each other was derived from the military uses of homosexuality in Ancient Greece. The most famous of these was called the Theban Sacred Band. This was composed of a series of homosexual couples in order to guarantee stronger cohesion between the members of an army and encourage the soldiers to not only fight for their city, but for their lover as well. It is hard to say if this practice, which then became common outside of Thebes too, was considered socially acceptable. Whilst the Theban Sacred Band faced criticism, the disapproval seemed to be about the limitations of choosing only homosexual soldiers rather than the system of coupling men itself. The Greeks fully understood the presence in nature of different sexual and romantic orientations, and accepted them, though with quite a dismissive approach. Even in Sacred Band couplings, there had to be a 'beloved' and a 'lover'. In more modern terms, this active-passive rule could be considered the Ancient Greek equivalent of 'if you wear socks it's not gay.'

It is in this context that we should consider, paiderastia (pederasty), the most common form of male same-sex relationships in ancient Greece. The principle was that the older man, the erastes, would protect, educate and pursue the younger boy, the eromenos, who would reward him with beauty and youth. The erastes could only use certain gifts for wooing; dried fish and fighting cocks were the conventions. The eromenos, in return, could not seem too eager. If he seemed too keen, the couple would be the subject of social ridicule. Pederasty was viewed as a primarily educational practice, not as a completely sexual or romantic relationship. The age of consent for pederasty was twelve; the eromenos was typically between the ages of twelve and twenty-one. Even though we cannot judge the ancient Greeks by modern notions of consent (girls of that age were often married to

men many years their senior), the age disparities of pederastic relationships undeniably display an unstable power dynamic, and therefore a slightly restrictive view of homosexuality. Whilst sexual orientation in ancient Greece was not the social identifier it is today, pederastic relationships were concerned with the gender role of both participants. In a pederastic relationship, the role of the erastes would be associated with dominance, high social standing, and masculinity, whilst the role of the eromenos would be associated with submission, low social standing and femininity. Therefore, whilst ancient Greek society was indeed more open about homosexual relationships, the vast majority of ancient Greek mindsets were still rooted in the idea of gender binary and heteronormativity.

A notable subversion of these stereotypes is the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus. Whilst Homer never explicitly portrays Achilles and Patroclus as lovers, Homer never rules out such an interpretation. There is certainly strong evidence in the Iliad that Achilles and Patroclus were lovers. After Patroclus's death, both the depth of his grief and his grieving show the extent of emotional devastation which he

Attic *kylix,* (c. 5th century BC)

experiences. This devastation seems to go far beyond the loss of a friend. Achilles refuses to burn Patroclus's body; instead, he keeps the corpse in his tent, constantly weeping and embracing it, showing the extent of intimacy between these two men. In Book 23, Patroclus returns as a ghost and, as a final plea to Achilles, says 'Never bury my bones apart from yours, Achilles, let them lie together.' Despite later dismissals of this interpretation, the notion of Achilles and Patroclus as lovers was widespread in Classical Greece. Many Greek writers wrote about Achilles and Patroclus in a romantic way, including a fragment from Aeschylus, describing their 'frequent kisses'. Whilst they also interpreted their relationship as pederastic, there was common debate amongst Classical Greeks about who was the erastes and who was the eromenos. Whilst Achilles was younger and more beautiful than Patroclus, he was also more

Sappho embracing her Lyre (c. 19th century), Jules-Elie Delaunay

killed in battle and of higher social status. It is most likely that Classical Greeks were simply trying to project their culture onto a story of another, more archaic, 'Greek' culture (see Autochthony in Ancient Greece, James Roy), and Achilles and Patroclus' relationship was not of pederastic nature at all.

While public tolerance of male homo-bisexual relations was indeed widespread, the aptitude towards female homo-bisexual relationships was very different. First of all, it is important to underline that women had little to no importance in Greek society. Of course, this meant that male sexuality was more publicly embraced, just as it often is in our own world. This led to men having more socially acceptable sexual freedom, but also to them being less free to do as they pleased due to always being under the social stigma spotlight. It was known that women could love romantically, and be sexually attracted to, other women; however, their relationships were rarely highlighted or represented in Greek culture and society. The majority of homoeroticism in Ancient Greek mythology, for example, is between men. One outstanding representative of female queerness in Ancient Greece is perhaps the greatest female poet of all time Sappho, from whom we derive the words lesbian and sapphic. Sappho inhabited the isle of Lesbos and was the headmistress of a school for noble and nubile young ladies destined for prominent marriages. A great part of the fragments of her work that have reached us is loved poems dedicated to students or acquaintances she fell in love with. Sappho's voice echoed through eternity, both poetically and romantically.

Although Ancient Greece might not have been the gay utopia that pop culture portrays it as, the Greeks certainly had open-minded outlooks on sexuality and love. Instead of suppressing the diversity of romantic and sexual orientations

that other cultures have done, the Greeks have embraced it through their literature, mythology, and philosophy. Whilst almost all sexualities were pressured to conform to heteronormative standards, the sexual and romantic freedoms in ancient Greece were still remarkable compared to other Western outlooks throughout history. The sexual fluidity the Greeks ardently embraced is one that even the most sexually liberated cultures today have trouble introducing and accepting. There are still many things we can learn from the Greeks about their approach to sexuality, the most important of all being this nonchalant approach to sexuality as a nuanced and natural part of human existence.

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Achilles lamenting the Death of Patroclus (c. 1760), Gavin Hamilton

Dirty Plates and Dirtier Emperors:

A Review of the 'History of Byzantium' Podcast

Mr Gravell

I moved flat in the summer, and to my dismay, my new place didn't have a dishwasher or any space to install one. With countless hours of saucepan scouring and spoon scrubbing awaiting me, I decided to invest the time in a long history podcast. As a Classics teacher working with the most widely read texts, we rarely get to study anything beyond the 2nd century AD, so I was drawn to the period of Late Antiquity and after a bit of googling I came upon the 'History of Byzantium'.

The show's creator, Robin Pierson, was inspired by an earlier podcast called 'The History of Rome' which ended with the fall of the Western Roman Empire. He decided to take up the story in the year 457 AD, when Leo I is the first Emperor to be crowned by the Patriarch in Constantinople, a moment often seen as representing a shift from the customs of ancient Rome to more embedded Christian traditions. It is important to say though that there is no clear dividing line between the Roman and Byzantine Empires; even the idea of a 'Byzantine Empire' is an invention of historians. For those living at the time, even though they spoke Greek and lived in the East, they continued to be Romans, living in the Roman Empire, under a Roman Emperor. There's even a story that Greek soldiers freeing Lemnos from Ottoman occupation in 1912 came upon some Greek-speaking children who claimed to be Romans rather than Greeks.

The creator eventually plans to take the show all the way up to 1453 AD, the fall of Byzantium to the Ottomans, but is currently in the middle of the 12th century and an amazing 225 (!) episodes in. The show is not for those without staying power or lots of dishes to wash – I'm currently on episode 131...

In general, the show runs through the narrative of 100 years and then pauses for a few episodes to survey the century thematically, looking at, for example, economics, politics, society or military changes. While it does sometimes get bogged down in military details, the narrative is really gripping and incredibly well researched. The number of twists and turns, of coups and murders, of family dynasties and pretenders to the throne, is reminiscent of Game of Thrones. I've also learnt a huge amount about debates in early Christian thought (usually about power more than ideology), about the Franks, the Venetians, the slow split between Eastern and Western churches, the rise of the Bulgurs and the Rus, and about the rise of Islam in the East.

The show is brought to life by figures such as the Emperor Basil, the muscly stable hand who secured the affections (need I say more...) of the emperor Michael by winning a wrestling match against a stocky Bulgurian. On being made co-Emperor he then had Michael assassinated. However, Basil's wife was a renowned mistress of Michael, calling the paternity of Basil's sons into doubt even after his death. Another great

figure is the Empress Irene who originally ruled on behalf of her young son Constantine. When he starts moving to take full power, she has his eyes gouged out and imprisons him. It is because of Irene's rule that the Pope crowns Charlemagne as the true Emperor of the Romans in 800AD, claiming that a woman could not rule, so the throne was actually vacant. While the creator's slightly monotone voice does sometimes detract from the excitement of the stories, usually the drama is able to shine through. It also takes a while to really appreciate his sense of humour - I got there probably around episode 50...

All in all, I would definitely recommend the podcast if you have a spare few hundred hours. If you don't, but are still interested, then perhaps get a copy of Tom Holland's 'In the Shadow of the Sword' (focusing on the Rise of Islam) or John Julius Norwich's 'A Short History of Byzantium'.

Mosaic of Theodora, Basilica of San Vitale (built A.D. 547), Italy

Amazons: The Real Warrior Women of the Ancient World

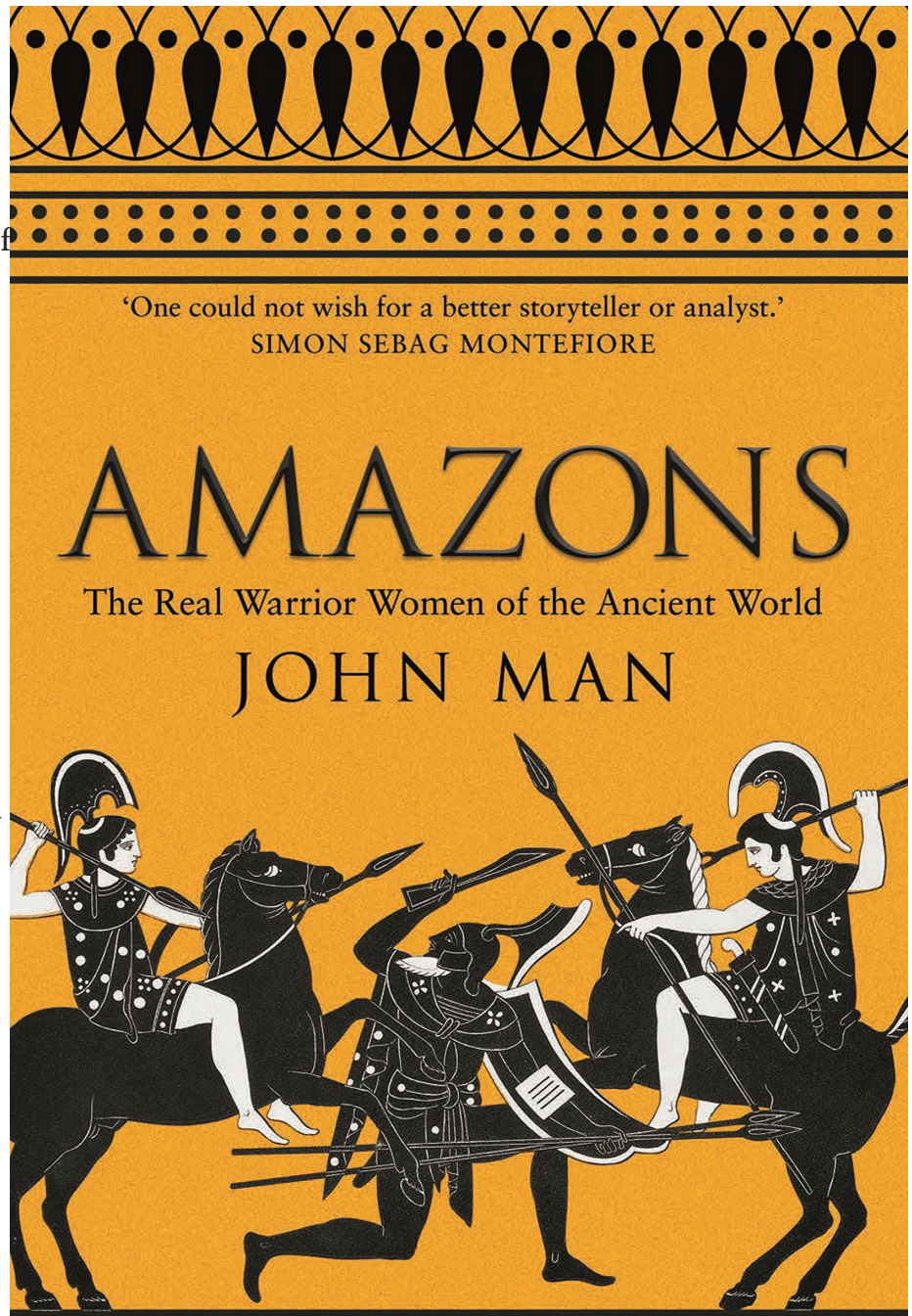BOOK BY JOHN MAN
REVIEW BY VERONICA CORIELLI

ABOUT THE BOOK:

John Man's Amazons: The Real Warrior Women Of The Ancient World is a fascinating journey through the origins of an extraordinary myth. The author analyses legend, history, art, and literature related to real-life Amazons and explains why the myth had such a great cultural impact in both the Ancient and Modern world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

John Man studied German and French at Keble College, Oxford, and then pursued two postgraduate courses, one in History and Philosophy, the other in Mongolian. He is most known for his study on the history of China, Mongolia, and written communication.
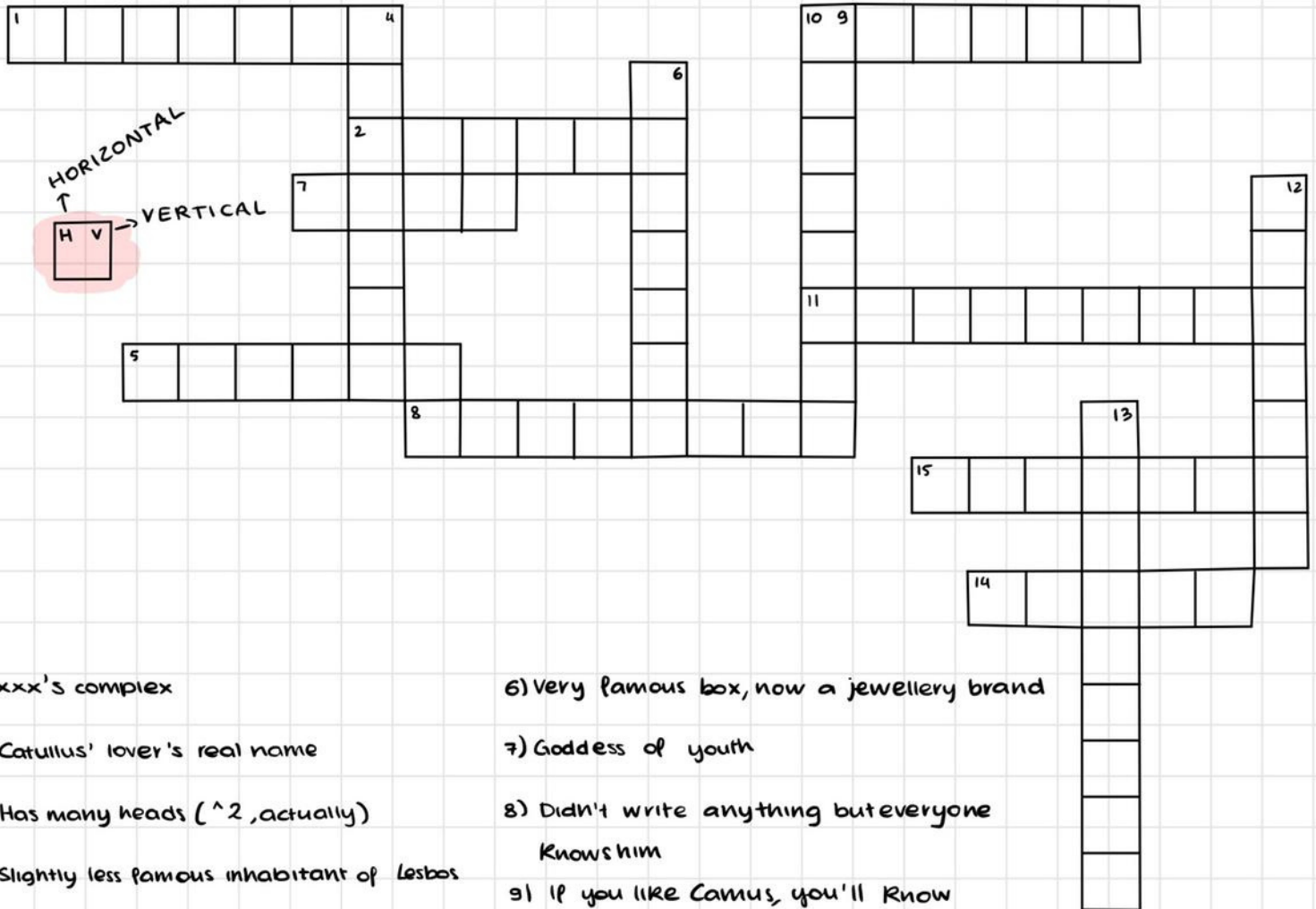
MY RATING:

Loved it, very interesting and in depth. Almost excessively, considering its length. Quite niche too which is cool. But then again everything classics related is niche isn't it.

'One could not wish for a better storyteller or analyst.'
SIMON SEBAG MONTEFIORE

AMAZONS
The Real Warrior Women of the Ancient World
JOHN MAN

Plautus' cauldron

it's greek to me

classics-based games to play instead of revising latin

HORIZONTAL

↑

H V → VERTICAL

1) xxx's complex

2) Catullus' lover's real name

3) Has many heads (^2, actually)

4) Slightly less famous inhabitant of Lesbos

5) Ssssnakes

6) Very famous box, now a jewellery brand

7) Goddess of youth

8) Didn't write anything but everyone knows him

9) If you like Camus, you'll know

10) Likes lethal riddles

11) Epic metre

12) In vino xxx

13) "Father of history"

14) O tempora, O xxx

15) Carthago xxx est

classics memes are cringey? Noooooo

SEEMS LEGIT
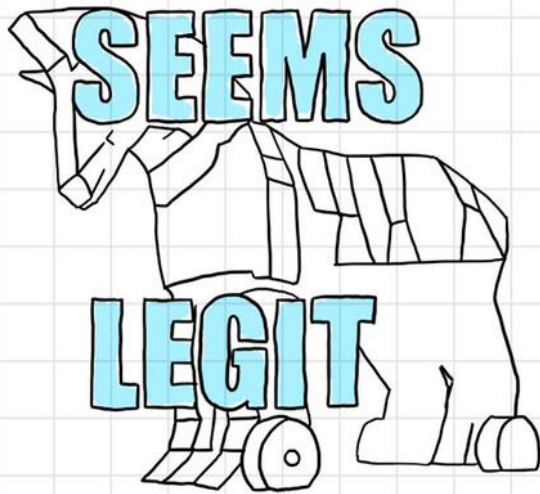
odysseus: we now set out on our odyssey.

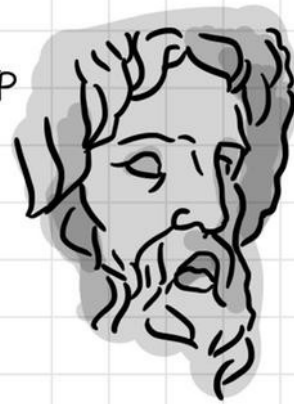sailor: [raising hand] what's an odyssey?

odysseus: a long journey named after the only survivor.

sailor: oh ok-wait what

An ancient Greek walks into his tailor's shop with a pair of torn pants.

"Euripides?" says the tailor.

"Yeah, Eumenides?" replies the man.

uscongress

im about to get so tan you guys

≈ adambloghart

- Icarus's last words

ancient riddles

Ancient Sumerian Riddle: a house based on a foundation like the skies. A house one has covered with a veil like a secret box. A house set on a base like a goose. One enters it blind but leaves it seeing

Homer's fatal plight (it is said that Homer visited the Island of Ios and came upon a group of fishermen who recited the following riddle to him. He'd then spend the rest of his life trying to figure out the answer. Enjoy!): Homer asks "How is your day? And the fishermen reply with "What we caught, we threw away; what we didn't catch, we kept. What did we keep?

A wise man's quandary (a riddle from one of the seven wise men of 570 b.c Greece): who is the father who has twice six sons? These sons have thirty daughters apiece, particolored, having one cheek white and the other black. They never see each other's face nor live more than twenty four hours each.

Which classical hero are you? Find out with this exciting quiz!

How do you like your eggs?
A) Fried
B) RAW
C) I'm a vegan
D) Poached

Would you rather:
A) Have wings but not be able to fly
B) Have hair but no one can see it
C) Have a beautiful empty house which you can't fill
D) Have nothing but a dictionary in an ancient language of your choice

Favourite pastime out of these:
A) Chess
B) Sport
C) Arguing
D) Books

Choose an A-level combo:
A) Latin, a Science, Maths, and English
B) Maths, Bio, Chem, Physics
C) Greek, English, Art History, Philosophy
D) English, Philosophy, History, Maths

test results

count the frequency of each letter in your answers, the most frequent letter is your hero.

A) Perseus. You like to play wl fire.

B) Hercules. A bit overdone, but still cool.

C) Aeneas. Meh. OK I guess.

D) Odisseus. Smart, pious, and especially a model - husband.

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WORD LIMIT 2000 WORDS. ARTICLES MUST BE EMAILED TO VERONICA.CORIELLI@WESTMINSTER.ORG.UK OR CLAIRE.ZHAO@WESTMINSTER.ORG.UK

end of this *editio*(n)