

Postgraduate Colloquium

University of Warwick

Department of Classics and Ancient History

Wednesday 25th of May

Online (Teams) and on campus (Room OC 1.04)

Co-organisers: Danchen Zhang and Nathalia Breintoft Kristensen



View of the Interior of the Colosseum by C.W. Eckersberg (1783-1853) in 1816

Programme

10.15-10.30: **Arrival, preparation and opening remarks**

10.30-12.00: **Panel 1 – Material Culture**

Chair: **Matthew Evans**

Jacqui Butler: The sacrifice of Iphigenia and the viewing experience in the House of the Tragic Poet

Richard Allard-Meldrum: Reconstructing an empress: (Egnatia) Mariniana

Susan Walker: Votive deposition at Uley: Ditches & pools (Context 255 & Feature F264)

12.00-13.00: **Lunch Break**

13.00-14.30: **Panel 2 – Numismatics**

Chair: **Giles Penman**

Abby Wall: The butterfly and the crab: An analysis of the aureus of M. Durmius

Nathalia Breintoft Kristensen: The coins of Caesarea Maritima: Preliminary examinations of the monetary systems in Palmyra and Caesarea Maritima

Campbell Orchard: Setting the stage: Tarsus in the landscape of Cilicia

14.30-14.45: **Break**

14.45.-16.15: **Panel 3 – Ancient literature and philosophy**

Chair: **Xavier Buxton**

Lucy Felmingham-Coburn: Partition of the soul in Xenophon's *Peri Hippikes*: Interaction with the chariot allegory of Plato's *Phaedrus*

Danchen Zhang: Ambiguity and conspicuousness: The reported dust storm in Sophocles' *Antigone*

Lucrezia Sperindio: Rethinking Horace's sympotic space as Bacchic: *Ode 2.3*

16.30: **Reception at the department**

Abstracts of Colloquium papers

Panel 1: Material Culture

Jacqui Butler – The sacrifice of Iphigenia and the viewing experience in the House of the Tragic Poet

Although the character of Iphigenia appears consistently in Campanian wall paintings, her depiction is mainly in the guise of a priestess in Tauris, usually accompanied by Orestes and Pylades. The painting which originally appeared in the House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii, instead provides a visual image of the narrative of Iphigenia's sacrifice which takes place at Aulis. This part of the narrative does not appear widely in Campania, with limited representations, and this specific composition is unique in portraying her being carried to the altar. Whilst the painting now resides in the Museo Archeologico di Napoli, it originally appeared as a standalone mythological image in the peristyle garden area of the house.

This paper aims to present a re-evaluation of the painting, via close visual analysis, firstly by assessing the extent to which it can be understood as a copy of a famous fourth century BCE Greek original by Timanthes of Kythnos. I will then focus on an evaluation of the viewer experience of the painting, exploring the viewer's potential sensory visual reaction to it, and interaction with it. Alongside this, I will consider the viewer experience in terms of the painting's spatial location and how the painting functioned alongside the other thematically connected paintings in the house, as well as exploring the potential voyeurism which the painting may have provoked in the viewer.

Richard Allard-Meldrum – Reconstructing an empress: (Egnatia) Mariniana

The Soldier Empresses were an important group of empresses who reigned between 235 CE and 285 CE. Although these empresses are represented by large amounts of numismatic and epigraphic evidence, they have been largely understudied compared with the more famous empresses who reigned before them, especially the Severan women of the early third century. This paper seeks to provide a brief introduction to the Soldier Empresses: who they were and what made them unique. This paper will examine how these women were represented by the ancient historians, their perceived role within the imperial household, and the reasons why they have been neglected by modern scholarship, despite the increased interest in the imperial women of Rome in recent years.

To focus these themes, a case study of (Egnatia) Mariniana will be used to demonstrate how the limited evidence available can be utilised to maximise our understanding of a woman obscured by time. By scrutinising how Mariniana has been interpreted and reinterpreted by modern scholars, we can discuss how the evidence has been built upon by hypothesis which may or may not bring us closer to the real Mariniana. This analysis of Mariniana demonstrates how reconstructing an empress can be approached by utilising less literary-centric methods; such an undertaking is not only possible but worth pursuing.

Susan Walker – Votive deposition at Uley: Ditches & pools (Context 255 & Feature F264)

It has long been recognized in Iron Age and Roman Archaeology, that the act of deliberately discarding coins in specifically constructed features such as pits or pools, and natural features such as fen lands and bogs, without intending to recover them, conveys a symbolic dimension. Despite the high number of coins from temple sites, few studies have examined the purpose of depositing coins within specific features at sanctuaries. The exceptional artefact assemblage from Uley presents a unique opportunity to explore patterns of deposition within an archeologically rich landscape that seen ritual use since the early Neolithic.

Deliberately placed “special deposits”, within the sanctuary, indicate the continuing importance of pre-historic habits in the Roman period; but also, the adoption of new votive practices involving the deposition of coins and fibulae. These rituals, although part of a wider grammar of ritual behaviour, had their roots, in specific local practices. This paper presents a detailed analysis of the artefactual assemblages from two distinct features, context 255, and F264, providing a snapshot of ritual practices on west Hill, framed against the backdrop of a community actively negotiating, and renegotiating, their identity in the period immediately leading up to the Roman conquest, and into the second century AD.

While traditional numismatic methodologies make large assemblages manageable, in analysing coins only as aggregated assemblages, the coins become divorced from their contexts. This paper aims to analyse coins and their function as part of their archaeological context through integrating coin data with artefact and stratigraphic information.

Panel 2: Numismatics

Abby Wall – The butterfly and the crab: An analysis of the Aureus of M. Durmius

In c.19 BC, the moneyer M. Durmius issued an aureus bearing the unique image of a crab holding an open-winged butterfly between its raised claws. Whilst this reverse appears to be personal to Durmius, its inscription identifying him as the responsible *triumvir monetalis* in accordance with Republican convention, the obverse type (an oak-wreathed head of Augustus) is undeniably imperial. The juxtaposition of tradition and innovation, along with the captivating composition of the reverse scene and its lack of direct parallels in other forms of ancient art, has led to multiple interpretations of the iconography and the coin as a whole. This paper aims to re-examine these theories and challenge some of the conclusions that have been drawn regarding the purpose of the crab and butterfly motif. It begins by situating the coin within its remarkable historical and numismatic context as part of the first series struck at Rome since the closure of the mint in c.40 BC. The paper then compares the distinctive iconography with other depictions of crabs and butterflies in art and literature as well as on earlier coins; acknowledging the possible symbolic significance of these species and their combination. It builds upon the reading of the coin as a visual pun on the moneyer's name, matching the more obvious flower canting type of L. Aquillius Florus. This case-study is part of my larger PhD project exploring the role of 'natural imagery' in representing or identifying individuals, communities, and places on Roman coinage.

Nathalia Breintoft Kristensen – The coins of Caesarea Maritima: Preliminary examinations of the monetary systems in Palmyra and Caesarea Maritima

The city of Caesarea Maritima situated in the Roman province of Syria Palaestina (former Judea), like Palmyra, flourished in the Roman period. Caesarea due to its large harbor complex built by Herod the Great and Palmyra because it became an important stop for the caravans travelling from the east to the west with luxury goods. In both cities small bronze or copper alloy coins have been found, the so-called 'minute' coins or minimis. In both instances these issues have received little to no scholarly attention. However, while Palmyra only struck the 'minute' coins and otherwise relied on larger denominations from other cities as well as the imperial provincial SC coins of Antioch, Caesarea also struck larger provincial issues that that circulated alongside the 'minute' coins and civic issues from other cities.

This paper will examine the composition of coins from Caesarea Maritima and present preliminary thoughts and analysis to the following questions: Which types of coins were found in Caesarea and where were they minted? If and where did the coins struck in Caesarea circulate? And finally how do these results compare with the evidence from Palmyra and what does it mean for the circulation of small change in Roman Syria?

Campbell Orchard – Setting the stage: Tarsus in the landscape of Cilicia

Tarsus was once one of the most important cities within Roman Anatolia, serving as the provincial capital of Cilicia and controlling the important land route across the Taurus Mountains, connecting Cilicia and Syria with the Anatolian plateau. However, despite once having been a great city, very little outside of the Tarsus' coinage output (over 600 types under Rome) remains today.

Konrad Kraft's milestone 1970 study, built upon recently by George Watson (2018), illustrated the existence of itinerant workshops of die engravers responsible for coin striking in Asia Minor. These workshops often reused obverse dies in the different cities they travelled to, creating die links between cities.

However, before the production of Tarsus' coinage and its potential connectivity within Cilicia can be discussed in-depth, it is important to establish the setting of the city. This paper seeks to describe Cilicia, and Tarsus' position within it. This will include an overview of the region, the complex provincial history of the city, as well as a description of Tarsus' archaeological remains. The paper will conclude with some examples of Tarsian coinage and the presentation of one currently known intercity die link, which will reinforce the importance of establishing an in-depth knowledge of the region.

Panel 3: Ancient Literature and Philosophy

Lucy Felmingham-Coburn – Partition of the soul in Xenophon's *Peri Hippikes*:
Interaction with the chariot allegory of Plato's *Phaedrus*

Xenophon's *Peri Hippikes* ostensibly instructs on the selection, care and training of the cavalry horse. My thesis explores how the way in which Xenophon presents his horsemanship advice – in terms of lexical choices and imagery – affords him the opportunity also to explore topics of socio-political debate, such as rulership, pederasty and the education of citizens. This paper represents the movement towards an investigation of how Xenophon makes extended interaction with one specific text in order to develop his own theories on a certain subject.

The working example is how Xenophon's choices of words and imagery constitute a direct interaction with the Chariot Allegory of Plato's *Phaedrus*, affording Xenophon opportunity to develop his own exploration of the soul, especially in view of Plato's theory of the tripartite soul. Additionally, the way in which the components of the tripartite soul work with one another is used by Plato to explore the way in which different elements of the ideal society might interact. By interacting also with this element of Plato's theory of the tripartite soul, Xenophon can develop his own theories of the soul as representative of different societal elements in his own explorations of socio-political questions.

Danchen Zhang – Ambiguity and conspicuousness: The reported dust storm in Sophocles' *Antigone*

In the second messenger speech in Sophocles' *Antigone*, the guards discover Antigone burying Polyneices' body after a peculiar storm wind (417-21). This paper takes a close look at this storm scene and explores its significance in the play. First, by examining different ways to interpret several key terms in the messenger's description, I present the scholarly attempts to imagine the storm as well as the impossibility to clarify its origin, movement and elements. Second, drawing on other wind images in the choral odes throughout the play, I try to approach the understanding of the wind scene through its general image of disturbance and chaos, relating it to the theme of destruction and νόσος, as well as the omnipresence of Dionysus in the play. Third, relating this passage to scenes of storm and ἀήρ in Homer, I discuss their similarities in terms of how winds affect the characters and function as narrative devices. In this passage, the wind is more than a dramatic necessity or convenience to hide Antigone as she approaches the corpse; rather, Sophocles draws our attention to this specific wind, which is blinding for the guards, dismissed by the messenger, ignored by Creon, but manifest to the spectator. Involving different levels of audience in different ways, the dust storm can also be read as a metaphor of poetic language that is murky and lucid at the same time.

Lucrezia Sperindio – Rethinking Horace's sympotic space as Bacchic: *Ode 2.3*

This paper explores the sympotic frame of *Ode 2.3*. This poem, the third in the opening triad of Odes II, invites the addressee and political figure Dellius to a relaxed drinking party in a conventionally Horatian *locus amoenus*. Scholarship has discussed the link between the ode's opening ethical advice and the landscape in which the symposium is about to take place: in line with the poet's existential reflection on the brevity of life, the natural elements, while constructing a serene haven, also remind the addressee and the reader of the swift and irrecoverable flow of time.

I will propose a close reading of this sympotic *locus amoenus* in order to suggest that the underlying agitation of the landscape is further inscribing in this serene atmosphere Horace's previous lyric renditions of civil war and, in particular, the Bacchic frenzy and drunkenness that figure as a metaphor for the uncontrolled violence that characterised those years. Dellius' problematic past as part of the entourage of Antony and Cleopatra, and as 'a "vaulter" of the civil wars' (Sen. *Suas.* 1.7, transl. Winterbottom 1974) suggests the possibility of an alternative reading of this serene sympotic space. The use of specific vocabulary originally belonging to civil war poems, and of Bacchic terminology allows for an interpretation of this symposium as a Bacchic space, doubling the occasion for merriment and enjoyment of the present into one of painful remembrance of the violent past, and enacting the ambiguous duality of Bacchus.