



WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Professor Paul Cartledge Hon DLitt

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What will we leave for our descendants?

Instead of coins, will they dig up computer chips? Instead of frescos, will they find selfies - or worse still Donald Trump's Twitter feed? Will they excavate the best or the worst of our achievements? What, in short, will we mean to them?

As historians, we know how traces of a civilisation can sink beneath the surface or be blown away by the wind. We also know the importance of cherishing those traces and fragments that weather the passage of time.

Our honoured guest today has used those fragments to flesh out the lives of the ancient Greeks. His books are as compelling as they are forensic. And they appeal to a readership far beyond academia by highlighting the relevance the ancient world still has for the world we live in today.

Today, we welcome back to Warwick one of our former lecturers. Please welcome Professor Paul Cartledge to today's degree congregation.

Paul knew when he was eight that he wanted to be a historian. Growing up in London after the war, he was fascinated by Anglo-Saxon history and archaeology, and this evolved into a lifelong devotion to the study of ancient cultural history.

He studied at New College, Oxford in the '60s. Like any respectable student of the time, he could be found on picket lines, taking part in occupations. He demanded more rights and more power for students, and listened to the music of Bob Dylan.



It was in 1970, after completing his PhD, that he made the first of countless visits to archaeological sites in Greece. His pioneering research fused social history with political history, using a wide-ranging methodology to shed new light particularly on Spartan society (epitomised by Gerard Butler in his leather nappy in the celebrated film *300*) and more widely on Greek political thought, including most recently on the origins of democracy in ancient Athens.

Paul's work has transformed our understanding of those worlds, from the democratic culture of Athens to the military totalitarianism of Sparta, and brought them alive for new generations.

As an academic he has produced over 25 books in the field of ancient Greek history. He's inspired thousands of students while teaching here, and at the New University of Ulster, Trinity College Dublin and Cambridge.

Paul's impact has been widely recognised. Amongst many honours are those offered by Greece herself: he has been named an Honorary Citizen of modern Sparta. He holds the Gold Cross of the Order of Honour awarded by the President of the Hellenic Republic.

Many of his awards, however, are not simply for his academic insights, but also for his constant attention to ensuring the story of the ancient world is heard as far and as wide as possible. He's consulted on TV shows and major Hollywood movies (and written and edited incisive critiques on those same movies). His books on Spartan military tactics are on the US Marines reading list. He's appeared as an expert interviewee on TV and radio countless times. He corresponds about the ancient world with people who seek his



opinion from near and far (Phil Collins was in touch not long ago). And even more importantly, Paul is incredibly active in ensuring that the study of the ancient world be open to everyone. As honorary patron of the charity Classics for All, Paul promotes the study of the classics in state schools across the UK, including, for example, in Coventry's own Sidney Stringer Academy.

I have had the honour and pleasure of knowing Paul since I was an undergraduate. I have seen at first hand not only his towering academic ability, but his generosity in sharing his knowledge, his eagerness to support and encourage others, and his passion for ensuring the on-going study, understanding and relevance of the ancient world.

At Warwick, we revel in bringing history to life for everyone through in-depth, meaningful and impactful research. Paul is an inspiration to us all.

Chancellor, in the name of the Senate, I present for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, Professor Paul Cartledge.