



SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF HELLENIC STUDIES

selections: μία επιλογή



EVENTS

Wednesday June 26

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR ERIC HANDLEY

Institute of Archaeology, Gordon Square, London, 2.30-7pm.

UCL are honouring the memory of Prof Eric Handley (1926-2013) with a programme of lectures and reminiscences, followed by a wine reception.

July 4-6

CONFERENCE: THE GREEK SUPERPOWER

Sparta in the Self-Definitions of Athenians.

Room G.21, Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge

Interested scholars and students are welcome to apply to attend. There is no registration fee, but visitors must make their own arrangements for meals and accommodation.

For registration and details:

Paul Cartledge:

pac1001@cam.ac.uk

Anton Powell:

powellanton@btopenworld.com

July 31 to August 2

CONFERENCE: GREEK MYTHS ON THE MAP

Goldney Hall, University of Bristol

This conference will examine the various practical and conceptual roles Greek mythology played in attempts to describe, represent and explain the physical and human geography of the ancient world.

Academic organizers, Greta Hawes and Jessica Priestley:

clasmyth-conference@bristol.ac.uk.

Prof. Chris Carey

2012 And All That



The Olympics come to London on average once every 64 years. It will be some time before they come back. So we had a rare opportunity last summer to showcase the classical background of a modern international phenomenon. We worked with the British Museum to put together a consortium of cultural and academic bodies in the capital to pool activities

The end result was a remarkably rich programme. We had exhibitions (Sir John Soane's Museum on Stadia, The Petrie Museum at UCL on *Fit Bodies*, the charioteer from Motya in Sicily at the British Museum). We had conferences. The blockbuster was a two day conference at the BM on *Sport and Competition in the Ancient World*, which included not just Greek and Roman sport but also Etruscan and Chinese; but there were also conferences on *Representing Victory* at Kings College London and *Athletic Foundations: Identity, Heritage and Sport* at the Open University. As well as academic conferences we also had lectures aimed at a wider public, including sports historian Martin Polley and Mary Beard (herself a prizewinner at the Much Wenlock Olympics as a young girl) on the British Olympic tradition; it is not always realized that Britain has a long tradition of games called Olympics which goes back deep into the nineteenth century, far beyond the re-founding of the modern games; this tradition played a major role in inspiring the modern Olympic movement. There were also public lectures by Nigel Spivey and Michael Scott on the modern rediscovery

and excavations of the festival sites at Olympia and Delphi and a panel debate chaired by Paul Cartledge which included Edith Hall, Michael Scott and Margaret Mountford. The British Academy hosted a research day on ancient athletics-related papyri followed by an evening of public lectures.

London though the home of the games was not of course the only place in Britain to host and organize events centred on the ancient background to the modern Olympics. The Universities of Leeds, Reading, Edinburgh, Cambridge, St Andrews and others offered lectures, public events and exhibitions (altogether the equivalent of about one cultural event for every two days of Olympic/ Paralympic athletics) and we used the website of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies as information centre for this national activity through an online calendar of events.

The games are now over. But we have tried to capture some of the richness of the programme which we put in place. The lectures were all filmed and many can be found on the SPHS website at <http://www.youtube.com/user/HellenicSociety1879>. And study information drawing on video clips from the events, texts, artefacts and essays can be found at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/engagement/the_ancient_olympics.

Robin Lane Fox

AGM Lecture



Robin Lane Fox (Extraordinary Lecturer in Ancient History; Garden Fellow; Reader in Ancient History at New College Oxford) gave a

barnstorming lecture on 'Alexander and the Gods - and the Early Successors' at the Annual General Meeting on June 15. Relive it (perhaps for the first time) at <http://youtu.be/pBY6antXpPw>



Dr Michael Scott

Who Were the Greeks?

For the members of this society, I have no doubt, there is little need to justify a television series about the strange and wonderful world of the ancient Greeks. But ancient Greece has in reality often lagged behind its Roman counterpart in air-time in recent years both in the UK and in the US.



One of the main reasons for this is, I think, that it has been hard for the public to get beyond the archetypal Renaissance-inspired image of the ancient Greeks as a group of men sitting around talking philosophy – just think of Raphael's School of Athens (above) and you get the picture. Whereas there is a general sense that we 'get' the Romans – in full and often bloody technicolour – and because they touched Britain in a way the Greeks never did, the ancient Greeks can often seem far removed, lofty, un-real. Though movies like *300*, *Alexander*, and even more light-touch films like *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* and *Clash of the Titans*, have offered a much more violent and brutal image of the ancient Greek world, there is little sense that people know how these two polar opposites sat together in the same culture.

The challenge set for me by the BBC TWO commissioner, Janice Hadlow, as a result, was this. How do you break that paradigm and show us a 'real' ancient Greek world, one that people can connect up, and connect to? How can you explain the fact that a society, which was in many ways so alien to ours, also produced some of the things we hold most dear? How should we understand the creation of the legacy of ancient Greece? And what value does it continue to hold for us today?

These were the driving questions behind *Who were the Greeks?* In Episode 1,

we focus on giving a complete picture of life in ancient Greece (with due weight given to the hugely variant picture that grouping itself demands!). We try to drill down to the key tenets of the Greek psyche that made them warriors and philosophers, democrats and slave owners. And in Episode 2, we take apart some of ancient Greece's key legacies and show how the ancient reality was very different from what we like to think it was, and how every generation between us and them has been implicit in re-formulating the legacies of ancient Greece for their own use.

Have we succeeded in breaking the paradigm? Only time will tell!



WHO WERE THE GREEKS?

Episode 1 'Life' is on BBC TWO on Thursday 27th June at 9pm. Episode 2 'Legacy' is on Thursday 4th July at 9pm.

Dr Michael Scott will be live tweeting, answering questions and providing further information on his programmes during their broadcast. Follow #WWTG to send in your questions and comments.

Forthcoming Books

The Ancient World and Silent Cinema

ISBN:9781107016101 £75 \$110

Society Members Pantelis Michelakis (Bristol) and Maria Wyke (UCL) have co-edited a volume examining the influence of the ancient world on the development of cinema and concepts of modernity. Using archival research, the volume lies at the intersection of film studies, classics, Bible studies and modern cultural history. Available August 2013 from CUP.

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<http://www.hellenicsociety.org.uk>

Contributions should include a title, 300-500 words of text, plus image(s) and references. Note that contributions are likely to be edited.

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