

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



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A street in Corfu. 22

This November, Troy will come to London in the shape of the British Museum's autumn blockbuster, *TROY: Myth and Reality*. Treasures excavated by the controversial Prussian businessman Heinrich Schliemann at the site of Hisarlık will be on show in this country for the first time since 1881. The exhibition is sure to be a box-office hit.

One of its curators, Victoria Donnellan, describes on pages 13–15 of this issue what we can expect from the display. I'm envisaging already a splendid contrast between the brutality of the Trojan War and the beauty of the woman at its centre. Helen, who graces our cover, has mesmerized artists and writers down the centuries, as the exhibition will demonstrate. Her appeal, much like Homer's, lies partly in her enigma. Just what did the most beautiful woman look like? What did it take to bring the Trojans to their knees?

These are questions I've grappled with myself over the past year or so. On page 16 I describe the challenge I faced in writing an 'everything you should know' guide to Homer. Angie Hobbs, on the opposite page, recounts how she approached writing an equally concise guide to Plato's *Republic*. There are 24 books to Homer's *Iliad* and 24 books to the *Odyssey*. Our 'Ladybird Expert' books? Just 24 pages. Lucky, lucky Homer.

From Trojans on their knees to Trojans – and Greeks – taken by the ankles. On pages 11–12 Susan Woodford traces an unusual ankle-

related theme in Greek art inspired by the myths surrounding Troy. We've heard of Achilles' heel, but what about poor Astyanax, son of Hector and Andromache, who is grasped by his ankle and used as a weapon in one of the vase paintings Woodford explores?


Elsewhere in this issue we turn to the East, and specifically to Xunzi, the Chinese philosopher, and the parallels between his thought and that of Aristotle. In her richly dynamic article, Jingyi Jenny Zhao (pages 7–10) explores the blurred line between the moral and the rational in the works of the two brilliant philosophers. Armand D'Angour, meanwhile, takes us back to another of philosophy's greats, Socrates, and paints a vivid portrait of his youth (pages 4–6). This issue boasts some fascinating articles on the influence that Greece has had upon artists and writers – from Shakespeare to Lawrence Durrell, from Tony Harrison to Victoria Hislop – and a wide-ranging portrait of Greece itself by its modern biographer, Roderick Beaton (pages 31–33).

Finally, don't miss our features on the inside workings of two of the most popular and successful Greek summer schools: 'Bryanston', as everyone knows it best, and the newer 'Summer School in Homer'. When you visit TROY this autumn and winter, you can rest assured that Homer's spirit is as alive in the classroom as it is on the page.


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Plato's Republic



Angie Hobbs



A Ladybird Expert Book

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