

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



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Back in Spring, when we were on the verge of sending ARGO 11 to press, everything started to close. It quickly became apparent that we would have no means of distributing the magazine even if we were lucky enough to get it back from the printers in time. We therefore took the decision to produce the issue as a digital file and make it available to everyone to download and enjoy in the dark days of lockdown. I am pleased to report that this has brought a number of new readers to our pages.

Happily, nonetheless, Senate House has since reopened, enabling us to dispatch hard copies of your favourite Greek bi-annual. And what an issue this is. You'll have noticed it's twice as thick as normal. Some of the pages will also look familiar. Welcome to the first ever double edition of ARGO. Interleaved with brand new articles and reviews are the full contents of issue 11 so you can enjoy them in print.

This edition is all about technology. Almost every week there's another story in the press about the wonders of A.I. (artificial intelligence) and the ways it can enhance our experience of everything from music to transport. A new exhibition at the Science Museum even probes the use of A.I. in driverless cars. But is all this technology as cutting edge as it seems? Genevieve Liveley, in our cover story, pages 21–22, suggests not. The epics of Homer are full of wacky inventions, including robotic watchdogs, 'self-acting' tripods on wheels to serve the gods their suppers (see cover image) and –

almost a prototype for our smart cars – pre-programmed ships that appear to steer themselves to their intended destinations.

Jane Draycott investigates another kind of technology in her fascinating article on ancient prostheses (pages 19–20). How did the Greeks manage if they lost a limb or row of teeth? Their solutions are seldom crude.

Harry Mount, meanwhile, plays *Troy: A Total War Saga*, a new video game inspired by the *Iliad*, and wonders whether the latest graphics and computer effects can summon the spirit of Homer (pages 40–41). The Troy of the game, he observes in his lively piece, is grander than the reality. On pages 14–16 Greg Woolf gives a wonderful sense of what the ancient cities of Homer's time actually looked like.

Elsewhere in this issue, you'll be able to explore Athens through the eyes of a late 14th-century traveller in a scintillating article by John Mole (pages 34–37), rub shoulders with actors on the ancient stage with John Davie (pages 27–30) and explore how ancient plays can be revived for the modern stage with the veteran teacher and translator David Raeburn, who is interviewed by Caroline Mackenzie on pages 61–65. First up, meet the new President of the Hellenic Society, and long-time ARGO editorial board member, Professor Paul Cartledge (pages 4–6).

And don't miss our extended reviews section on a deliciously wide range of books on a Greek theme.

Enjoy the issue!

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