

# Research Seminars and Public Lectures

**Discipline: Classics and Ancient History**

**Semester 1, 2021**



## Research Seminars and Public Lectures

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Research seminars will be held at 4pm (AEST, Brisbane time) on Fridays.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, talks 1 - 6 and 9 will be conducted entirely online (via zoom) in Semester 1, 2021.

The zoom link for the online seminars will remain unchanged for the whole semester, and will be emailed to our mailing list for events in Classics and Ancient History. To receive the zoom link and future event updates, please email [admin-hapi@uq.edu.au](mailto:admin-hapi@uq.edu.au).

### Semester 1, 2021 Program

Friday 19 March 2021, 4pm	1. Miles-Christian Maureira, The University of Queensland 'Bribery in the Roman Republic'
Friday 16 April 2021, 4pm	2. Mark Mather, The University of Queensland 'Caesar's Supply Lines: How They Worked and Why They Failed' 3. Rory Ardill-Walker, The University of Queensland 'Games and Gambling in Classical Athens: Pedagogy and Problems'
Friday 30 April 2021, 4pm	4. Professor Peter Wilson, The University of Sydney 'The Politics of Greece's Theatrical Revolution: From 500 to 300 BC'
Friday 7 May 2021, 4pm	5. Dr Anneka Rene, The University of Auckland 'Financing the Athenian Cavalry: The <i>Katastasis</i> and the Horse Insurance Scheme' 6. Dr David Evans (Macquarie University) 'Citizenship and Philanthropy in Athenagoras's <i>Legatio</i> '
Friday 21 May 2021, 4pm (In-person seminar)	7. Professor Tim Parkin, The University of Melbourne 'Did Ancient Greeks and Romans Practise Safe Sex?'
Wednesday 26 May 2021, 6pm (In-person public lecture, followed by reception with light refreshments)	8. Professor Tim Parkin, The University of Melbourne 'The Splendour and the Squalor of Living in Ancient Rome'
Friday 28 May 2021, 4pm	9. Emma Bremner, The University of Queensland 'Cultural Imagination, Ghosts and the Roman Dead'

#### In-person seminar and public lecture:

Registrations will be essential for our in-person events. Invitations and more information about our in-person events this semester will be sent to our mailing list for events in Classics and Ancient History.

#### Unable to join our seminars?

Talks 5 - 8 will be recorded for open-access podcasting.

#### For further details, please contact:

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## Titles and Abstracts

### 1. Miles-Christian Maureira, The University of Queensland

#### Bribery in the Roman Republic

This paper explores the development of bribery in the Roman republic and its effect on that system's collapse. It first outlines the scope and limitations of my MPhil thesis. The latter surveys bribery throughout the republic from its development in the early republic to its culmination as a destructive force in the late republic. This paper discusses the disparate definitions of bribery and corruption in Rome and the modern day. It is important to define bribery in order to understand the processes that are the focus of my thesis. Finally, my paper covers the planned argument of the thesis, how it intends to prove the impact of bribery on the republic's collapse and its value for the ever-evolving discussion on the end of the Roman Republic.

### 2. Mark Mather, The University of Queensland

#### Caesar's Supply Lines: How They Worked and Why They Failed

Studies of ancient warfare normally focus on the socio-political consequences of war, the moral character of commanders or the tactics employed in a single (usually dramatic) battle. Factors such as logistics, supply, strategy and scale are largely ignored. This paper will discuss a sorely underappreciated topic: the supply line of Caesar's army during the Gallic War. It will investigate how the line was organised, when it was employed, and why the Romans ultimately abandoned it in favour of having supplies requisitioned from allies and conquered Gallic tribes. Caesar's writing will be analysed in conjunction with archaeological evidence to explain how important this complex and underappreciated system of supply was, and how it successfully supported the Roman war-machine.

### 3. Rory Ardill-Walker, The University of Queensland

#### Games and Gambling in Classical Athens: Pedagogy and Problems

Elite male youths in classical Athens played a myriad of games from dicing and board games to cockfighting. Such games, and their associations with gambling, were viewed as both instructive to a youth's development and as avenues through which the vices of youth could fester and grow. Cockfights and battle-style board games could instil valuable civic and military virtues. Games with dice were one of the few ways a young man could display his blessings of fortune. They also provided him with the opportunity to hone his strategic thinking – a critical skill for a class of youth who would become the *stratēgoi* (generals) of the Athenian military. However, games with associations to gambling raised concerns that reckless young men were squandering their patrimony. Games could become distractions from other virtuous pursuits, such as education and athletics. It was also feared that young men were at risk of unleashing their base emotions when engrossed in such pursuits. The result of these views was a culture that valued games as didactic tools yet rebuked those who transgressed the strictly defined rules of play.

### 4. Professor Peter Wilson, The University of Sydney

#### The Politics of Greece's Theatrical Revolution: From 500 to 300 BC

Recent years have witnessed a shift away from the extreme Athenocentrism that has characterised the study of Greek theatre for centuries. The received account has always struggled with the contradiction of a classical theatre exclusively in, by and for Athens that was instantly replaced by an equally static vision of a hellenistic theatre that is ubiquitously Greek. The result has been that scholarship has remained largely oblivious to the regional, interurban and international festivals that competed with the Athenian festivals and ended up shaping them as much as Athens shaped theatre in Greece. In 2020, my colleague, Eric Csapo, and I published a volume that seeks to present and analyse the evidence for the spread of theatre from Athens, and for its independent appearance, in and beyond the Mediterranean over the course of the first two centuries of its existence: *Theatre Beyond Athens: A Social and Economic History of the Theatre to 300 BC: Volume 2* (Cambridge University Press). In this seminar, I build on the results of this research and ask what role, if any, politics played in this extraordinary expansion. Just how exclusively Athenian or democratic were the theatre and its genres? Drawing on the very full corpus of evidence we now have, it is possible to match the reception of theatre with constitutional regimes in Greece. This turns the question into one of reception: some insight can be gained from the choices communities made in the fifth and fourth century as the new medium spread throughout the Greek world. Some states eagerly adopted theatre, while others avoided it. Communities that did receive theatre similarly chose to accept or to avoid specific theatre genres and practices.

### 5. Dr Anneka Rene, The University of Auckland

#### Financing the Athenian Cavalry: The *Katastasis* and the Horse Insurance Scheme

The classical Athenian cavalry, often touted by historians as an irrelevant arm of the classical Athenian army, was considered important enough by Athenian democracy to warrant sizable contributions to its financial upkeep. Unique fiscal support for the cavalry of Athens during the fifth century BC came in two forms: a supposed insurance scheme for each cavalryman's mount, which is attested by over five hundred tablets found in the *agora* ('civic centre') and Ceramicus, and what is often called the *katastasis* ('establishment loan') to assist with the initial costs of joining the cavalry-corps. These two economic supports are often tied together in modern discussions as the same measure, with the assumption being that the lead tablets reflect the *katastasis* rather than a separate insurance scheme. I would instead put forward that these two measures are not only more plausibly separated, but that the sources indeed indicate this was the case in reality.



## Titles and Abstracts Cont.

### 6. David Evans, Macquarie University

#### Citizenship and Philanthropy in Athenagoras's *Legatio*

In AD 167, Aelius Aristides praised the Athenians for the philanthrōpia ('benevolence') that the city had demonstrated to all other peoples. Ten years later, from the same city, Athenagoras the apologist wrote his *Legatio* in defence of the Christians. The treatise responds to three common accusations, namely that the Christians were guilty of 'Atheism, Thyestean banquets and Oedipean unions' (*Leg.* 3.3), but ultimately drives at one point: the Christians 'are the most pious and righteous of all men in matters that concern both the divine and your kingdom' (*Leg.* 1.3). To highlight this point about the kingdom, Athenagoras draws a parallel between his addressees, the emperors, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, and the Christians. Just as the emperors are gentle, mild, peaceable and philanthropic (*Leg.* 1.2; 30.2), the Christian life is also gentle, philanthropic and kind (*Leg.* 12.1, 3). This paper will seek to elucidate Athenagoras's portrayal of the Christians as philanthropic citizens in light of the *Legatio*'s historical and literary context, his appeal to the emperors and his use of Jesus's teachings in the sermon on the mount.

### 7. Professor Tim Parkin, The University of Melbourne

#### Did Ancient Greeks and Romans Practise Safe Sex?

Sexual health is a topic of global concern for both specialists and the general public in the twenty-first century. Such open awareness and debate around topics such as contraception and sexually-transmitted diseases are usually seen as recent phenomena. However, the history of attitudes towards sexual health has a much longer history, and much of it is grounded in the classical world. Following the (alleged) arrival of syphilis from the 'new world', for example, medical writers and doctors of Europe were heavily influenced by much earlier Greek and Latin texts. But what of ancient times themselves? In this seminar I shall seek to explore knowledge of, and attitudes towards, as well as treatment of, sexually-transmitted diseases in antiquity. I shall also consider how classical discourse shaped subsequent understandings, attitudes and practices. How did the Greeks and the Romans think about their sexuality in terms of physical and mental health? How did perceived and real sexual health affect men and women's status in society? To what extent did the advent of Christianity change attitudes towards sexual health?

### 8. Professor Tim Parkin, The University of Melbourne

#### The Splendour and the Squalor of Living in Ancient Rome

We all know something about the splendour of ancient Rome – an image still fostered in part by the monuments that survive as well as by modern media representations. But what was it really like to live in the ancient city? This illustrated talk will attempt to evoke not only the wonder but also the reality of living in ancient Rome two millennia ago. Via a range of types of testimony, some only very recently discovered, it is possible to go beyond imagined ideals to recreate something of the at times grim and often smelly daily realities for an ordinary inhabitant of the Roman empire.

### 9. Emma Bremner, The University of Queensland

#### Cultural Imagination, Ghosts and the Roman Dead

The dead are pervasive characters in Latin literature. They appear in dreams, give prophecies, haunt people and places, and offer a view of what to expect in the afterlife. Their prevalence in literature may even rival their prevalence in the living world, where burials and commemorative practices mark both the physical and ritual landscapes. This paper will explore the concept of cultural imagination as a means to study the dead in Latin literature, focussing on 'ghost stories'. Cultural imagination, developed from memory studies and especially related to cultural memory, has been used in a number of different contexts with slightly different meanings. Here, it will refer to the ways people conceived of, talked about, and represented, a subject: the dead. The multiplicity of the concept allows for the exploration of various ways of imagining; ways that coexist, interact and sometimes contradict each other in the ancient material.

