



NEWSLETTER

July 2026

In this issue we are delighted to share several upcoming events, along with a selection of notes and reflections on performances of Classical works, Classical languages, and the ancient world. In particular, please note the forthcoming Teaching Classical Languages Symposium and the CANISW private screening of Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey*.

Forthcoming Events

Christopher Nolan's The Odyssey — Private Screening with Dr Ben Ferris

This is a private screening of Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* for the Classical Association of NSW. Dr. Ben Ferris, film maker and co-founder of the Sydney Film School, will discuss the movie in a special pre-show lecture. Ben Ferris is a Sydney-based film director, academic, and producer at Breathless Films. He completed his PhD on Homer's *Odyssey* in the University of Sydney's Department of Classics and Ancient History in 2024. His film adaption of the *Odyssey*, *Penelope* (2009), was awarded Van Gogh Award for Best Fantasy Film at the Amsterdam Film Festival in 2010. **Ritz Cinema, Randwick — Thursday 23 July, 6.00pm** Tickets \$25 (students \$20). Tickets for this event are selling fast! There are only a few left. To book your seat at this event, [please click this Eventbrite link](#)

Teaching Classical Languages Symposium

The TCLS is hosted by Classics and Ancient History at the University of Sydney and proudly supported by the Classical Association of NSW. The Classical Languages Teachers Association (CLTA), The Kudos Foundation, and ANZUK education, provide further funding.

We are delighted to announce that this year's keynote speaker is Carla Hurt. Carla is a high-school Latin teacher and You-Tuber who has converted to input-based approaches. She is based in Melbourne. More about Carla can be found here:

<https://foundinantiquity.com/>

Date and venue: **14th August 2026, 9.00am-4.00pm, Vere Gordon Childe Centre,** University of Sydney. To register for TCLS2026 click [here](#).

For further information, please contact the convenors [Sarah Lawrence](#) and [Tamara Neal](#)

<https://classics.org.au/events/calendar/teaching-classical-languages-symposium-2026>

Further Forthcoming Events

Kids' program Chau Chak Wing Museum

The Chau Chak Wing Museum is again offering school holiday activities for the kids this July. for the upcoming holidays. Theme days include a journey back to ancient Rome, and an epic day, featuring the *Odyssey*. Book now! Dates for these activities span **July 6-20**.

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/museum/whats-on/kids-and-families.html>

Australasian Women in Ancient World Studies AGM

Dr Simona Mantorana will give the AGM address: "Turn around" ("Retourne-toi"): Looking back at Ovid's Orpheus in *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*.

23 July 2026, 5pm. See: <https://classics.org.au/events/calendar/awaws-agm>

Carriageworks: The Oresteia

Sydney Chamber Opera returns with a striking revival of Liza Lim's first opera, *The Oresteia*—a visceral, confrontational, and compelling reimagining of Aeschylus' cycle. Electra, Cassandra, Orestes, Clytemnestra, and Agamemnon are summoned once more to enact their tragic histories in this explosive, hour-long distillation of Greek drama.

Performed for the first time since its 1993 world premiere, the production brings together six of Australia's most adventurous singers with the ELISION Ensemble,

renowned interpreters of Lim's music. Directed by Imara Savage and conducted by Jack Symonds, the opera returns to the stage at a moment when Lim—winner of the 2026 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition—stands as one of Australia's most influential composers. With a libretto adapted by Barrie Kosky, this rare revival resonates with renewed force, showcasing the opera that first marked Lim as a leading voice of her generation.

24-31 July, Carriageworks 245 Wilson Street, Eveleigh

<https://carriageworks.com.au/events/the-oresteia/>

CANSW Latin and Greek Reading Competition

This competition for secondary schools (Years 10 and 11) is conducted each year in June and July. The trophy for the Year 10 Chorus is named in honour of the late Professor Kevin Lee. Further details may be obtained from the competition coordinator phillip.dupesovski@sydney.edu.au.

Monday 10th August: Level 2, F10 New Law Building, University of Sydney [Enter via Eastern Avenue]. Click [here](#) for map

[Classical Association of New South Wales — Latin and Greek Reading Competition](#)

An evening with Tristan Hughes

Tristan Hughes, presenter and producer at *History Hit* and host of *The Ancients* podcast, will appear live on stage across Australia and New Zealand for two myth-focused events exploring some of antiquity's most enduring stories.

In Canberra and Auckland, Tristan joins Jeremy Armstrong, Professor of Ancient History, to trace the legend of Romulus and Remus from its early narrative forms to its long afterlife in shaping ideas of Roman identity.

A second series of events in Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, and Melbourne sees Tristan in conversation with Alastair Blanshard, Professor of Classics and Ancient History, for an exploration of Heracles. Together they examine how the hero's extraordinary strength, suffering, and twelve labours have been retold from classical literature through to modern film and popular culture, and what historical realities may lie beneath the myth.

Further details, including ticketing information, are available online.

August 2026 (various dates): tickets [here](#)

See also: [Classical Association of New South Wales — An evening with Tristan Hughes](#)

An Evening with Mary Beard Talking Classics

In celebration of her latest book *Talking Classics: The Shock of the Old*, Dame Mary Beard will be appearing in conversation with some very special guest hosts. She invites you to ask your burning questions, noting that The Classics are best explored through talking. November 2026, in Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth. For tickets: [An Evening with Mary Beard tickets | Tours and Events | Ticketek Australia](#)

Annual Dinner Announcement: Professor Arlene Holmes-Henderson

We are delighted to let you know that the special guest speaker for the annual dinner will be **Arlene Holmes-Henderson**, Professor of Classics Education and Public Policy at Durham University. More details about the dinner will be released in due course.

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/staff/arlene-v-holmes-henderson/>

Recent Events

Panel Discussion — “Placing the Odyssey in the 21st Century”

Congratulations to our speakers: Dr Ben Brown, Dr Ben Ferris, Dr Elizabeth Stockdale, Dr Anthony Hooper, and Dr Tamara Neal for their contributions to this sellout event at Gleebooks, Glebe. The success of this event was very encouraging, and there are plans to follow up with further events at Gleebooks next year.

History Day at ANU

Students from Years 10–12 gathered on the ANU campus in June for a full day of *lectorials* exploring both ancient and modern historical themes. The program was a joint initiative of the ANU School of History, the ANU Centre for Classical Studies, and the History Teachers’ Association ACT. The event drew an enthusiastic response from participants, and ANU anticipates hosting History Day again next year.

Classical Languages

Reading Ancient Greek

Thomas Whichello has a YouTube channel devoted to reading works of literature aloud. He includes several works in ancient Greek (including Sappho, Homer, *Homeric Hymns*,

Euripides, Sophocles, Callimachus, Plato, the *New Testament*) along with Seneca in Latin.

<https://www.youtube.com/@ThomasWhichello/videos>

2026: The Year of the Trojan Horse



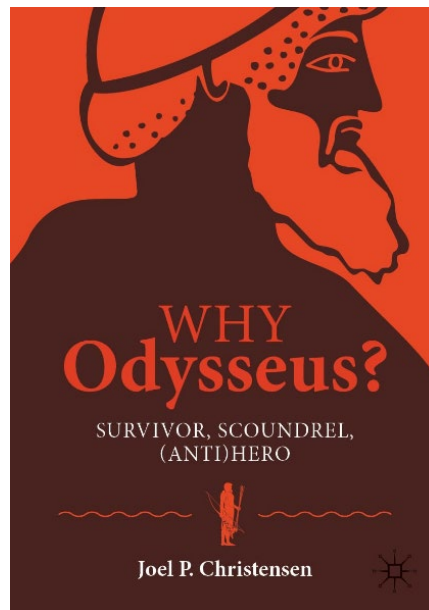
An AI-generated Michael Caine narrating Homer's 'Odyssey'

There is a new cinematic-style audio adaptation of *The Odyssey*, narrated not by Sir Michael Caine, but by an AI generated voice of Sir Michael Caine. Homer's epic remains one of the most enduring works of world literature: this is demonstrated in the 21st century with its retelling by a computer generated *rhapsodos*. AI has provided a new way to experience the epic, in what amounts to an AI 'recomposition'.

This production is an original audiobook by ElevenProductions, featuring an official (and licensed) AI Michael Caine replica alongside a full cast of character voices, original music and sound design created with ElevenLabs' audio models. *The Odyssey* is available free of charge exclusively on ElevenReader. Could Eleven Productions just as easily produce a version with 'Michael Caine' reading *The Odyssey* in ancient Greek? The platform currently supports 74 modern languages, so this is certainly feasible.

The free preview gives you a good taste of the character of this cinematic audiobook:

[The Odyssey | Audiobook with Michael Caine | ElevenReader](#)



Why Odysseus? Survivor, Scoundrel, (Anti)hero by Joel P. Christensen

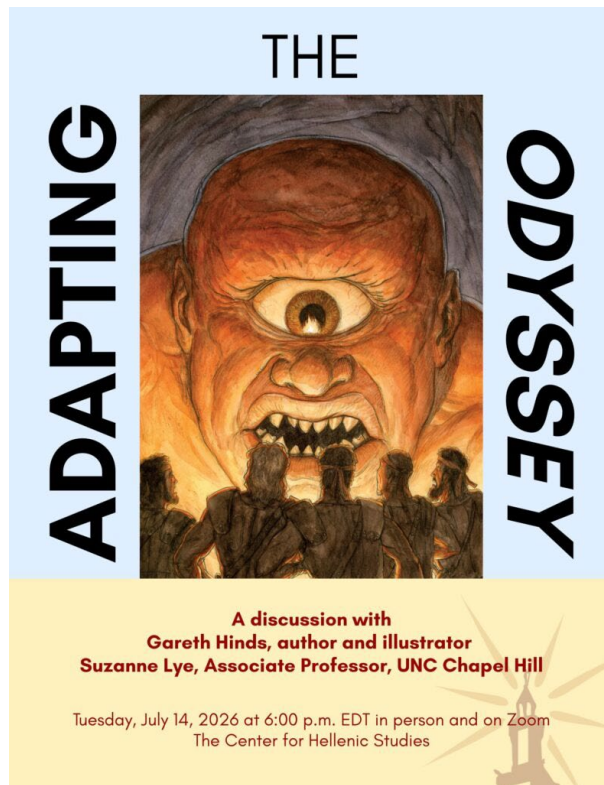
Published by Springer Nature, an imprint of Palgrave Macmillan, 10 July 2026.

Odysseus has always been a figure in motion—shifting, adapting, and re-emerging in forms that speak to the anxieties and aspirations of different eras. *Why Odysseus* traces this long arc of reception from Homer to the present, showing how the hero's indeterminacy and talent for reinvention have made him an enduring touchstone in literature and art. Beginning with the *Odyssey*'s own portrayal of a mutable, strategic, and often unsettling protagonist, the book follows his transformations through antiquity, his striking revival in twentieth-century poetry and fiction, and his continued flexibility in modern retellings. It closes by considering the challenges of translating such a fluid character across time. Throughout, *Why Odysseus* reveals how this “shifting signifier” has helped successive cultures explore what it means to survive—and occasionally flourish—in a world that resists heroic certainties. The preface is available through the publisher's website: [Why Odysseus? Survivor, Scoundrel, \(Anti\)hero | Springer Nature Link](#). Joel Christensen is a professor of Classics at the City University of New York.

Odysseus Movies: a full review

Dr John Burton reviews all previous Odysseus movies on YouTube, preparing us for Nolan's version. His broadcast includes an interview with Professor Joel P. Christensen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdeXPQB5p5Y>



Adapting the Odyssey

The *Odyssey* has long invited creative reimagining. That tradition is flourishing from contemporary novels and theatre to visual art and cinema, recent interpreters have illuminated the poem's engagement with the experience of war, the perspectives of its women, questions of colonialism, the workings of memory, and other resonant themes.

Gareth Hinds, creator of the acclaimed graphic-novel adaptation, will join Suzanne Lye (Associate Professor of Classics, UNC Chapel Hill) for a conversation about translating epic poetry into the language of modern comics and about why the *Odyssey* continues to speak powerfully to audiences today.

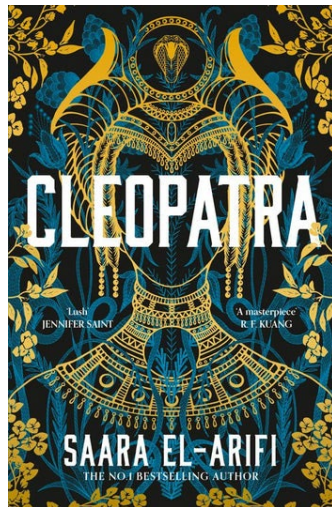
Date: **Tuesday, July 14, 2026**, Time: 6:00 p.m. EDT (USA)

Location: Center for Hellenic Studies, 3100 Whitehaven St. NW,

Washington, DC 20008 and via Zoom

Register for zoom by following this link: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

Publications



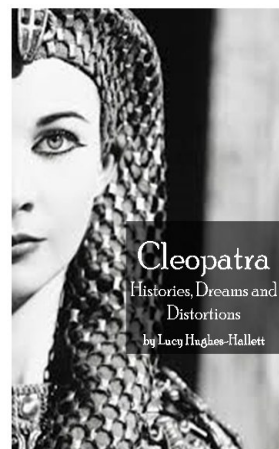
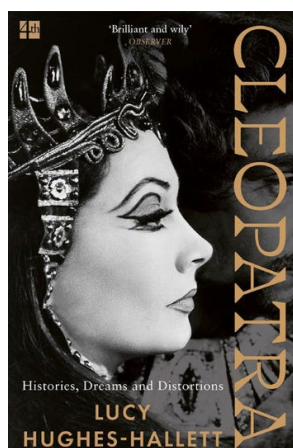
Cleopatra by Saara El-Arifi

Published by Harper Collins. February 26, 2026

“You know my name. But you do not know me. Your historians call me seductress, but I was ever in love's thrall.” Saara El-Arifi is a bestselling author of fantasy and historical fiction. Her latest novel offers a new take on Cleopatra. El-Arifi, as she tells us, uses her own life experience as a woman and mother to fill out the sources available. For her inspiration for this novel see her *Guardian* article:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2026/feb/27/scholar-seductress-alchemist-who-was-the-real-cleopatra>

For the author's own website, see <https://saaraelarifi.com/index.html>



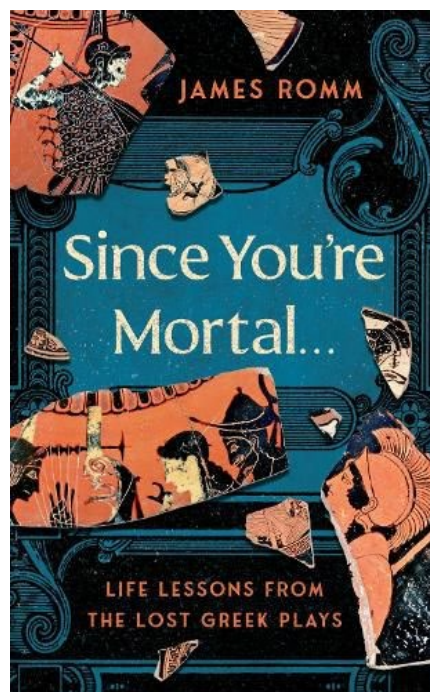
Cleopatra: Histories, Dreams and Distortions by Lucy Hughes-Hallett

Revised Edition, HarperCollins, February 26, 2026

This newly revised edition of Hughes-Hallett's acclaimed cultural history (winner of the Fawcett Prize and the Emily Toth Award), deftly interweaves the historical Cleopatra with the multitude of imagined Cleopatras who populate Western art and storytelling. In tracing these shifting portrayals, the book illuminates the sexual, racial and political messages encoded within them, revealing how Cleopatra has served as a mirror for the desires and anxieties of generations.

You may sample *Cleopatra: Histories, Dreams and Distortions* in Google Books here: [Cleopatra: Histories, Dreams and Distortions - Lucy Hughes-Hallett - Google Books](#)

For the author's own website, see: <https://www.lucyhughes-hallett.com>



Since you are mortal: life lessons from lost Greek plays by James Romm

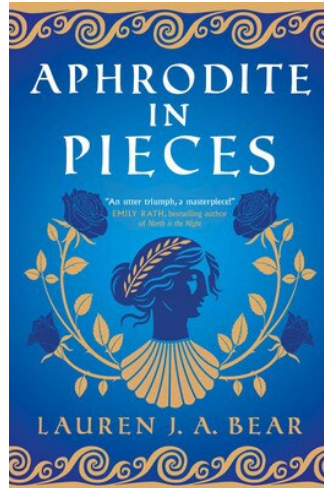
Published by WW Norton & Co, 5 May 2026

In the fifth century AD, the anthologist Stobaeus gathered hundreds of striking lines from Greek drama, pithy observations, moral reflections, flashes of wit, from playwrights such as Aeschylus, Sophocles and Menander. His purpose was practical and intimate: to offer his son a treasury of wisdom distilled from the stage. Among the memorable sayings he preserved are reminders that “the truly happy man ought to stay at home,” that “hunger, and lack of coin, put a stop to love,” and that “Hades, alone of the gods, does not enjoy bribes.”

In *Since You Are Mortal*, James Romm becomes the first to present these dramatic fragments in English as poetry, capturing their concision, humour and moral bite for

modern readers. The result is a vivid and elegant collection that brings to life the lost world of Greek tragedy and comedy, offering an ancient yet enduring guide to thoughtful and virtuous living.

<https://www.norton.com/books/9781324086093>



Aphrodite in Pieces by Lauren Bear

Published by Titan Books, April 2026

Author of *Mother of Rome* and *Medusa's Sisters*, Lauren Bear retells Aphrodite's famous (infamous) mythological stories in the voice of the goddess herself.

You may sample the book online: [Aphrodite in Pieces - Lauren J.A. Bear - Google Books](#)

For the author's own website, see: [The Author — Lauren J.A. Bear](#)

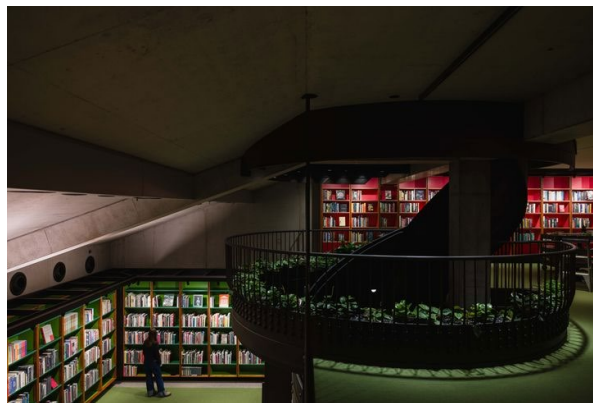
♪ CLASSICAL NOTES ♪



Heerlen curse tablet. Photo credit: Elke Fuchs, Institute for Papyrology, Heidelberg University

A Curse Tablet from Lower Germania: A Rare Greek Binding Spell Deciphered

Researchers at Heidelberg University have recently deciphered the inscription on an ancient curse tablet. The lead tablet, discovered during excavations in the Dutch municipality of Heerlen (Roman Lower Germania), offers a rare example of a Greek binding spell from the region. Dating to the second century AD, the artifact sheds new light on the spread of magical practices in the western provinces and the ways in which individuals sought supernatural means to influence personal conflicts.<https://phys.org/news/2026-06-ancient-curse-tablet-rare-greek.html>



Interior of Phrontisterion. Photo credit: Jesse Hunniford/MONA

Phrontisterion opens at Hobart's MONA

Hobart's MONA (Museum of Old and New Art) has opened the *Phrontisterion*, a striking new library conceived by architect Nonda Katsalidis. Nestled beneath the inverted-ziggurat forms of Anselm Kiefer's vast concrete amphitheatre, the library is reached via atmospheric sandstone tunnels that connect it to the existing museum, extending MONA's distinctive interplay of art, architecture, and landscape. The name of the library is, according to MONA, borrowed from the *Clouds*, the way the Aristophanes "ridicules the self-certainty of the educated" aligning well with Mona's philosophy.

<https://architectureau.com/articles/new-library-opens-at-hobarts-mona/>

Latin Beatles

Eddie O'Hara, who combined a career as a British Labour MP with decades of classics teaching, died in 2016. In the months that followed, his son shared a delightful trove of O'Hara's Latin translations of Beatles songs (and two Christmas carols), created in the 1960s as a playful teaching aid for his students.

https://www.openculture.com/2026/06/latin-teacher-translated-beatles-songs-into-latin-for-his-students.html#google_vignette



CANSW Membership

Now would be a good time for you to renew your membership. Please follow this link for the details:

<https://classics.org.au/association/membership>

Upcoming events

Events planned for CANSW will be posted on the Association's website.

<https://classics.org.au/>

If you want to be added to the mailing list for the University of Sydney Classics and Ancient History seminars, please contact Dr Tamara Neal (t.neal@sydney.edu.au).

CANSW

Classical Association of New South Wales

<https://classics.org.au/>