

CANISW

Newsletter

March 2026

In this issue we are delighted to share several upcoming events, along with a selection of notes and reflections on Classical languages and the ancient world. Below are key dates to mark in your diary, including the AGM.

1. FORTHCOMING TALKS

i. CANSW AGM

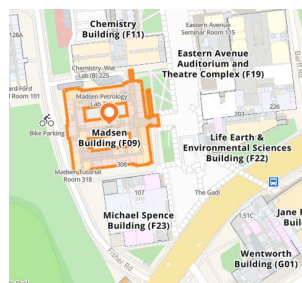
Speaker: The invited speaker for the AGM is **Professor Alanna Nobbs** (AM).

Alanna will lead a discussion on the topic, 'Engaged not Endangered: Ideas for the future of NSW Classics.' Everyone is welcome. Please come along and join the discussion on this particularly important subject.

Date and venue: the AGM will be held on the 27th of March at 5.30pm in the Boardroom of the *Vere Gordon Childe Centre*, Level 4, Madsen Building, University of Sydney.

Vere Gordon Childe Centre

Click the map to take you to the full campus map:



Online participation

If you would like to join us online, here is the URL: <https://uni-sydney.zoom.us/j/87283569985>

ii. University of Sydney Seminars

Classics and Ancient History at the University of Sydney offer a series of research seminars in the Boardroom of the *Vere Gordon Childe Centre*.

Papers this semester will normally be presented on campus and live streamed via Zoom. Details of each Zoom session will be posted out approximately one week prior to the presentation date. For further contact by email: vgc.centre@sydney.edu.au or t.neal@sydney.edu.au.

Grace Gunning (University of Cambridge): ‘Rethinking Choruses and Community in Sophocles.’

March 30th, 12.15pm

Ryan Strickler (University of Newcastle): ‘*Pecunia non olet*: Images of Power in the Coinage of Vespasian.’

April 13th, 12.15pm

Rosie Sykes (University of Sydney): ‘*Geographika Hypomnemata*: performance, deixis and Strabo's sense of humour.’

April 20th, 12.15pm

iii. University of Sydney, Special Public Lecture

Professor Stefan Pfeiffer (Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg): ‘Cleopatra – A “Fatal Monster” in Ancient Predictions of the Future?’

April 29th 5.30 pm, Boardroom, Vere Gordon Childe Centre.

This is a hybrid event. Places to attend in-person are limited, but a zoom link will be sent ahead of the event for those who miss out on a place.

[Subscribe here](#) to receive notifications about this and other events and to receive the Zoom link.

iv. Australian National University Public Lectures

CANSW members are warmly invited to attend public lectures offered at the ANU in Canberra.

Rosemary Selth (Macquarie University): ‘Local Myth on the Panhellenic Stage: Political Monuments at Delphi.’

Wednesday, April 1st, 3.15 pm, AD Hope Building Conference Room (1.28)

Professor Edward Watts (University of California, San Diego): ‘Why the Roman State Lasted for 2000 Years—and What We can Learn from it.’

Wednesday, April 22nd, 6.15pm, RSSS Building Auditorium

Public Lecture presented in association with the Friends of the ANU Classics Museum

Emeritus Professor Elizabeth Minchin (ANU): ‘The Scar, the Bow, and the Bed: Embodied Engagements in—and with—Key Moments of the Odyssey.’

Wednesday, April 29th, 3.15 pm, AD Hope Building Conference Room (1.28)

v. University of Queensland Research Seminars

Research Seminars in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Queensland, convened by Associate Professor David M. Pritchard, are available online by zoom.

The online link for all seminars in 2026 is: <https://uqz.zoom.us/j/89902662962>.

Kyla Duffy (The University of Queensland): ‘Against the Grain: Children’s Wooden Toys, Social Status and Identity in Ancient Rome’

Friday 24th April, 4pm

Professor Stephanie McCarter (The University of the South, Sewanee):

‘Translating Catullus’

Friday 8th May 2026, 4pm.

David has also made recordings of previous seminars available as podcasts. For the links to these podcasts, go to David’s UQ page:

<https://uq.academia.edu/DavidPritchard/Talks%20Organised%20by%20David%20M.%20Pritchard>

2. MUSEUMS and COLLECTIONS

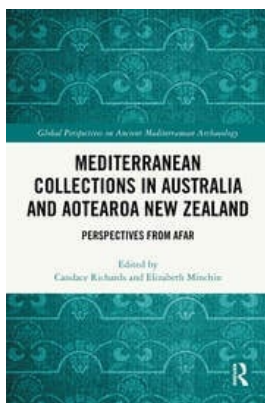
i. Chau Chak Wing Museum

The CCWM offers a school holiday program in April (suitable for children aged 7-12). This program is part of the 2026 Greek Festival of Sydney. *The theme of the upcoming program is Mythos: Exploring Ancient Greek Myths.* A children’s workshop on ancient Greek myths.

Click here to [Book now](#)

For more details, see <https://www.sydney.edu.au/museum/whats-on/talks-and-events/greek-myth-school-holiday-workshop-2026.html>

ii. Recent Publication



There is a recent publication that would be of great interest to all classicists in Australia: *Mediterranean collections in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand: perspectives from afar*, edited by Candace Richards (Assistant Curator, Nicholson Collection) and Elizabeth Minchin (Australian National University). Published by Routledge, London (2025), it has been reviewed in *BMCR* by Anne Mackay (University of Auckland). *BMCR* 2026.03.10
<https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2026/2026.03.10/>

3. CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

i. Ancient Greek HSC

NESA's policy on the discontinuation of low-enrolment courses places Classical Greek continuers and extension at ongoing risk. Under this policy, a course may be discontinued if enrolments fall below 15 students for three consecutive years. While Classical Greek did not meet this threshold last year, enrolments have improved slightly this year and may remain above the minimum in the year ahead. We understand that working parties are currently reviewing the prescriptions for Classical Languages, with targeted consultation expected to follow. Even so, the future of Classical Greek remains precarious.

ii. Gregory Crane: ‘Towards corpus-based learning: exercises with Ancient Greek.’

Professor Gregory Cane of Tufts University has been working on a corpus-based learning strategy for ancient language. Follow the link to hear more about his project.

<https://sites.tufts.edu/perseusupdates/2026/03/10/towards-corpus-based-learning-exercises-with-ancient-greek/>

iii. Teaching Symposium

There will be a Symposium on Teaching Classical Languages again this year. So put Friday 14th August at the Vere Gordon Childe Centre into your diary.

The keynote speaker is Carla Hurt, a Latin high school teacher and YouTuber. For more about her work see <https://foundinantiquity.com/>. Further details will be circulated nearer the date. If you are after more information and can’t wait, please contact one of the convenors: Dr Tamara Neal (t.neal@sydney.edu.au) or Dr Sarah Lawrence (sarah.lawrence@une.edu.au).

iv. *The Patrologist* on the Value of Podcasts

Seumas Macdonald always has some good advice for learning Greek on *The Patrologist* blog. Here he discusses comprehensible input and listening to ancient Greek podcasts to acquire it. [The Patrologist](#) .

v. The Origin of Ancient Greek Verbs

An animated video of Greek verbs! This will take you from Greek principal parts to Sanskrit and Proto-Indo-European forms.

<https://youtu.be/m-qr4a-m8CM?si=J4jT-erootWB2qp8>

4. WHY STUDY CLASSICS?

i. Catullus

Rachel DeWoskin has written a thought-provoking article entitled, ‘What Happens When Gen Z Encounters Catullus’s Filthiest Poem?’

The article discusses teenagers reading Catullus at school. ‘Reading wakes us up to love, culture, grief, war, a range of possibilities too vast to name, and also to great discomfort.’ DeWoskin asks, ‘Is there anything so useful and intimate as a

conversation with your teenager about scandalous language, vocabulary which any sane parent knows their kid knows, and which, because Catullus has formalized it in lovely hendecasyllables, becomes fodder for frank discussion?’

The article is published online: *Literary Hub*, December 10, 2025.

<https://lithub.com/what-happens-when-gen-z-encounters-catulluss-filthiest-poem/>

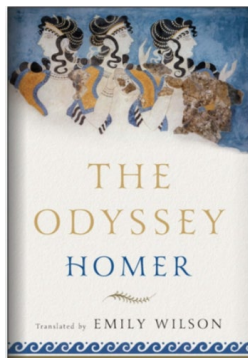
5. TRENDING CLASSICS

i. *Antigone in May*

The Gaius Gracchus Society is performing *Antigone!* The dates are May 1st and 2nd; the event will take place in the Chau Chak Wing Museum. Details on how to book will be disseminated shortly.

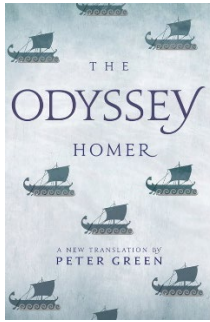
ii. **2026: The Year of the Trojan Horse**

Continuing our focus on the *Odyssey* this year, Dr Tamara Neal offers reflections on several recent (and not so recent) English translations, each illuminating Homer’s poem in distinct ways.



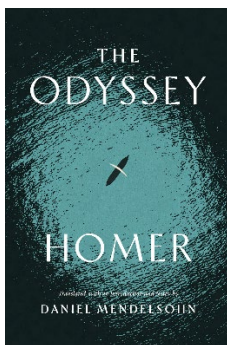
Emily Wilson (2017): The first woman to translate the *Odyssey* into English, Wilson brings a lively iambic pentameter and a crisp contemporary idiom to the poem. Her now-famous rendering of πολύτροπος as ‘complicated’ has sparked much discussion (distinct, of course, from Odysseus’ other epithet, πολύμητις, which she translates contextually as ‘scheming,’ ‘lying,’ and more). It is worth remembering that the first woman to translate the *Odyssey* into any modern language was Anne Dacier (née Lefèvre), whose French version appeared in 1708. Dacier’s translation is available on the *Internet Archive* (along with a number of her other works): [L'Odyssee d'Homere, traduite en françois.](#)

Emily Wilson, *The Odyssey*. W.W. Norton, 2018.



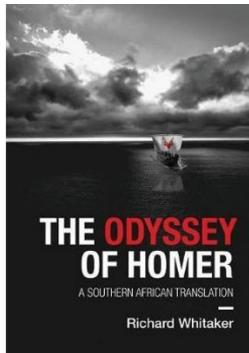
Peter Green (2019): Green's translation, cast in what he calls 'flexible hexameter,' aims to echo the rhythms of the Greek. Wilson has described his line as 'a lumbering sometimes hexameter,' though many readers appreciate his attempt to retain something of the poem's original cadence.

Peter Green, *The Odyssey: A New Translation*. University of California Press, 2018.



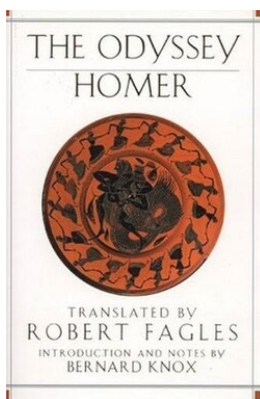
Daniel Mendelsohn (2025): Mendelsohn is a superb writer. His memoir, *An Odyssey: A Father, a Son, and an Epic* (2017), remains a delight, but his translation of the poem has divided readers. Although he adopts a six-beat line, his effort to evoke what he calls the poem's 'archaic grandeur' sometimes leads to awkward phrasing; his rendering of πολύτροπος as 'who had so many roundabout ways' is one example. That said, the edition's extensive notes and commentary, 'the fullest apparatus of any modern Odyssey,' as he describes it, are a genuine strength.

Daniel Mendelsohn, *The Odyssey, Translated, with an Introduction and Notes*. University of Chicago Press, 2025.



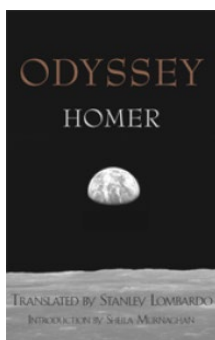
Richard Whitaker (2017): Whitaker’s free verse translation incorporates South African dialect, giving the poem a distinctive local texture. Readers will encounter terms such as bywoner, melkbalie, knobkier, and kloof, which lend the work a striking regional flavour.

Richard Whitaker, *The Odyssey of Homer: A Southern African Translation*. Cape Town: African Sun Press, 2017.



Robert Fagles (1996) Though no longer recent, Fagles’ free verse translation remains, for many, one of the finest modern renderings. It is vigorous, musical, and still feels contemporary—an interpretation that truly sings.

Robert Fagles, *The Odyssey*. Viking Press, 1996.



Stanley Lombardo (2000): Lombardo's version, also in free verse, was notably fresh at the time of publication, incorporating colloquial American speech and occasional slang. It remains an engaging and accessible entry point for new readers.

For Lombardo reading his translation:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/ks92xxPdvGw?si=hvbTAIVmE2EFztpV>

Stanley Lombardo, *Odyssey*. Hackett, 2000.

iii. ♪ CLASSICAL NOTES ♪

i **'How China Learned to Love the Classics'**

In its Annals of Education section for March 8th, 2026, the *The New Yorker* has an article by Chang Che on how the Chinese Communist Party has embraced the study of Greek and Latin.

Do note, however, that the *The New Yorker* has a pay wall.

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/annals-of-education/how-china-learned-to-love-the-classics>

v. **Eleusis and drugs**

What were they *really* doing in Eleusis? One theory has it that they were getting high on an ergot derivative. Rachel Nuwer discusses the research on the *Science* website: [Did ancient Greek priestesses brew a mind-bending potion drunk by Cicero and Marcus Aurelius? | Science | AAAS](#). The Hellenic Museum discusses use of drugs in Ancient Greek ritual too: [Ritual & Religious Drug Use in Ancient Greece](#)

vi. **Philogelos: An Ancient Greek Jokers.**

This collection of around 265 jokes is characterised as the world's oldest joke book. Linda Thompson at the National Museum of Language has created cartoons to accompany the jokes, plus a video with the jokes in Greek: [Philogelos: The First Joke Book – The National Museum of Language](#) .

vii. **Paul Cartledge: 'A Guide to Screening the Ancient World'**

An erudite and entertaining guide to the ancient world on film, courtesy of Paul Cartledge.

<https://engelsbergideas.com/notebook/a-guide-to-screening-the-ancient-world/>



i. CANSW Membership

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

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

ii. 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/>