

# CANSW

## NEWSLETTER

May 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 CANSW private screening of Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* and the *Odyssey* panel discussion. To book your seat at the private screening, [please click this Eventbrite link](#).

### Forthcoming Lectures

*Associate Professor Diana Burton — “Psychē kai eidōlon: Depicting Ghosts on Greek Vases.”*

Associate Professor Diana Burton (Victoria University of Wellington) is giving a public talk for the Canberra Friends of the AAIA on **Wednesday 17 June at 6.00pm**, Apollo Room, Hellenic Club, Woden (Canberra). For tickets and further information please contact E/Prof Elizabeth Minchin ([Elizabeth.minchin@anu.edu.au](mailto:Elizabeth.minchin@anu.edu.au)).

*Trevor Evans — “Perfect Frankness: A Personal Reminiscence of the Australian Latinist J. N. Adams CBE FBA (1943–2021).”*

At the third and final meeting of the Greek and Latin Research Group for this session, Trevor Evans will discuss his experience with James Adams, an Australian scholar who made extraordinary contributions to the study of Latin. **Macquarie University, 26 May, 5.00pm**, 01 Central Courtyard, Room 111. Hybrid format; attend in person or via Zoom: <https://macquarie.zoom.us/j/81142426377?pwd=cklRkzNEDGGHWl6V2oFs0jAtSnctsV.1>

## Other Forthcoming Events

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

Speakers: Dr Ben Brown, Dr Ben Ferris, Dr Elizabeth Stockdale, Dr Anthony Hooper, Dr Tamara Neal. **Friday 26 June, 6.00–8.00pm**, Gleebooks, Glebe. Tickets \$15 (includes drink on arrival).

### *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. **Ritz Cinema, Randwick — Thursday 23 July, 6.00pm** Tickets \$25 (students \$20). To book your seat at this event, [please click this Eventbrite link](#)

## Classical Languages

### *Associate Lecturer in Classics — ANU*

The Centre for Classical Studies at the Australian National University is calling for applications for a **0.5 FTE Associate Lecturer in Classics** (3-year Continuing Contingent-Funded). Details: <https://jobs.anu.edu.au/jobs/associate-lecturer-classics-canberra-act-act-australia>.

### *No Passive in Greek?*

Anne Brotherson’s Substack *In Common* is available [through this link](#). She also has a [podcast](#). Brotherson cites Rachel Aubrey, whose article on markers of the passive voice in Ancient Greek appears in [this book](#) (available in Fisher Library). For further reading, see Horrocks’ article: <https://journals.uni-lj.si/keria/article/view/9928>

### *Latin and Greek Recitation*

[CANSW](#) runs Latin and Greek competitions for Years 10–11; the [CLTA](#) runs a Year 9 Latin Reading Competition. Similar competitions occur internationally, e.g. the ARLT Latin Reading Competition (UK) ([Latin Reading Competition 2025 – results – ARLT](#)), and the New York Classical Club’s annual College Oral Reading Contest ([AWARDS AND CONTESTS — The New York Classical Club](#)).

### *Learning Latin*

How to learn Latin? It's inspiring to find out that people all around the world are thinking about how best to do this and how to promote the study of Latin. In Victoria, one of USyd's best Latin students, Mary Triantafyllou, is using a hybrid learning model to teach Latin across four Victorian campuses. The students sit at desks in their respective classrooms while learning together in an online classroom, with the teacher joining them remotely.

<https://www.haileybury.com.au/news/learning-without-limits-in-the-hybrid-classroom>

## 2026: The Year of the Trojan Horse

### *Upcoming Odyssey Events*

Two special *Odyssey*-themed events are coming up (as detailed above):

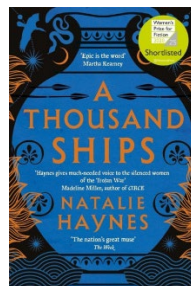
- Panel discussion: **Friday 26 June, 6.00–8.00pm**, Gleebooks, Glebe
- Private screening of *The Odyssey* with Dr Ben Ferris: **Thursday 23 July, 6.00pm**, Ritz Cinema, Randwick

### *Odysseus on Ithaka*

New evidence for the worship of Odysseus as a hero has emerged from excavations at “Homer’s School” on Ithaka, led by Thanasis Papadopoulos (University of Ioannina). For a brief report: [Archaeologists Unveil Sanctuary of Odysseus on Ithaca — Arkeonews](#).

### *Women in the Odyssey*

The female perspective in Homeric retellings is a burgeoning subgenre in contemporary women’s literature. Here are some examples.



### ***A Thousand Ships***

This book by Natalie Haynes has been shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction: [A Thousand Ships](#)

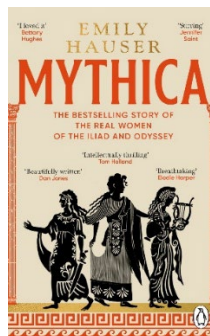
The book has been pictured in a 1000 piece a jigsaw puzzle too!

<https://bookgrocer.com/products/9781399601665-the-real-women-of-greek-myth-jigsaw-a-1-000-piece-jigsaw-puzzle-based-on-feminist-tales>



### ***Horses of Fire and Daughters of Bronze***

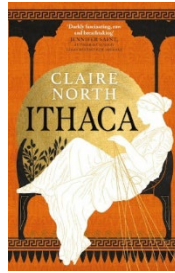
Novels by AD Rhine that give voice to the women of Troy. [Books — A.D. Rhine](#)



### ***Mythica***

‘A new history of Homer’s world, through the women written out of it.’ Dr Emily Hauser, Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter, is an award-winning classicist and historian, and the author of an acclaimed trilogy of novels retelling the stories of women of Greek myth

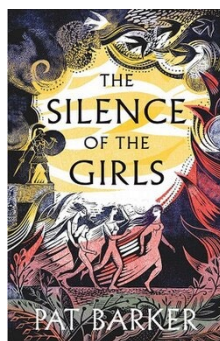
[Mythica by Emily Hauser - Penguin Books Australia](#)



### ***Ithaca***

A feminist retelling of the myth of Penelope by Claire North

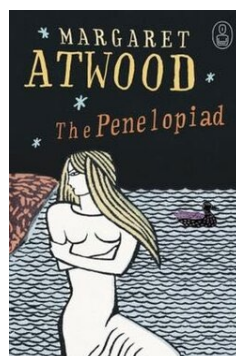
[Ithaca: The exquisite, gripping tale that breathes life into ancient myth by Claire North - Books - Hachette Australia](#)



### ***The Silence of the Girls***

In this novel, Pat Barker retells the story of the Iliad and the fall of Troy from the point of view of Briseis.

[The Silence of the Girls by Pat Barker - Penguin Books Australia](#)



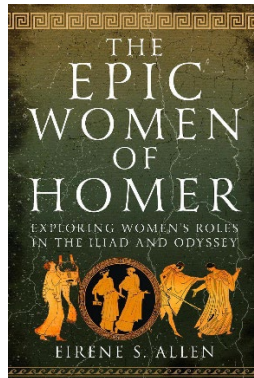
### ***The Penelopiad***

Margaret Atwood initiated the interest in retelling Greek myth from a female perspective (publication 2005). She also retells Penelope's story, interlacing Penelope's own narrative with choral commentary by the twelve maids. Written as a

stage play, *The Penelopiad* premiered with the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, in 2007.

[Penelopiad Faber Publications](#)

Also, non-fiction:

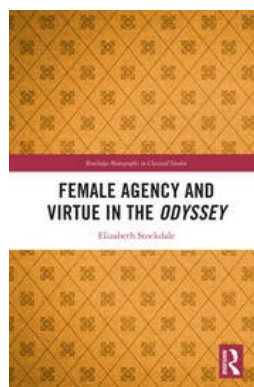


### ***The Women of Homer***

Eirene S. Allen demonstrates the importance of women and female gods in Homer's epics, addressing issues of community and belonging that go beyond the narrow hero's tale.

[The Women of Homer: Pen & Sword Books](#)

### ***Female Agency and Virtue in the Odyssey***



Dr Elizabeth Stockdale's new study is the first to offer a comprehensive examination of the actions and conduct of both mortal and immortal female figures in the *Odyssey*, and of the value accorded to them within the poem's moral world.

Drawing on feminist literary criticism and feminist virtue ethics, Elizabeth Stockdale explores the motivations, voices, and behaviours of all the *Odyssey*'s female

characters. <https://www.routledge.com/Female-Agency-and-Virtue-in-the-Odyssey/Stockdale/p/book/9781032982526>

### *An Iliad and Ben Brown on An Iliad*

David Wenham stars in this retelling at the Sydney Theatre Company, **20 April – 21 June 2026**, Wharf 1 Theatre. Tickets: <https://www.sydneytheatre.com.au/whats-on/2026/productions/an-iliad>

Background information on the playwrights, [Lisa Peterson](#) and [Denis O’Hare](#) and the production are : <https://www.courttheatre.org/about/blog/in-conversation-playwrights-lisa-peterson-and-denis-ohare/>

Dr Ben Brown offers his thoughts on this production in, ‘War, its costs and consequences: Homer’s ‘Iliad’ continues to speak to us. <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/war-cost-consequence-critique-homer-iliad-sydney-theatre-company/106610448>

### *The Iliad Out Loud — Four Winds*

Performance by William Zappa with Hamed Sadeghi and Sohrab Kolahdooz. **28 June 2026, 10.00am–6.00pm**, Windsong Pavilion, Barragga Bay.

### *Epic Hairstyles*

Will Nolan’s heroes be sporting a mullet? The Abantes, as mentioned in the *Iliad*, evidently liked the style.

τῷ δ’ ἄμ’ Ἄβαντες ἔποντο θοοὶ ὄπιθεν κομῶντες

αἰχμηταὶ μεμαῶτες ὀρεκτῆσιν μελίησι

θώρηκας ῥήξειν δηῖων ἀμφὶ στήθεσσι

...and they (the Abantes) swiftly followed him,

hair long behind them—spearmen who were eager

to smash the enemy’s breastplates with their weapons

of ash, held high and ready. (*Iliad* 2.542-4, trans. Emily Wilson)

For more on Homeric haircuts, see Boardman J. ‘Heroic Haircuts.’ *The Classical Quarterly* 1973;23(2):196-197. doi:10.1017/S0009838800036661

## Trending Classics

### *GER26 Gavagai*

This adaptation of Medea features in the [HSBC German Film Festival 2026](#)

Synopsis, from Palace Cinemas:

"On the set of a modern movie adaptation of Medea in Senegal, Maja (Eggert) seeks solace in a love affair with her co-star Nourou (Folly). Embodying Jason and Medea on-screen, off-screen they tussle with the film's anxious director (Nathalie Richard) on a shoot that is marked by conflicts and cultural misunderstandings.

Months later, Maja and Nourou meet again at the film's premiere in Berlin. Old feelings resurface, but an incident unsettles their reunion and tensions begin to rise. While the ancient tragedy plays out on screen, a contemporary drama unfolds.

Referring to a philosophical thought experiment about translation and cultural context, Gavagai is a politically relevant and thought-provoking study of identity, privilege, racial tensions, filmmaking and power dynamics."

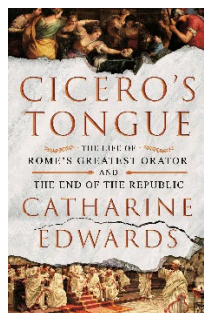
<https://www.palacecinemas.com.au/movies/ger26-gavagai>

## Publications

### *Aristotle: The first teacher* by Philip Freeman

This is advertised as the first modern biography of Aristotle. Publication is scheduled for September this year.

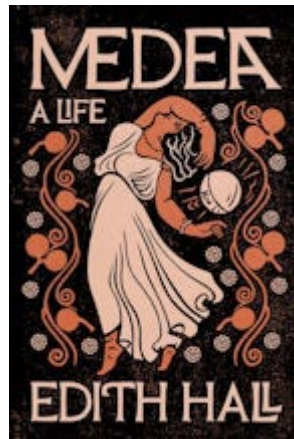
<https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300304343/aristotle/>



*Cicero's Tongue* by Catharine Edwards

A new biography of Cicero. Catherine Edwards is professor of Classics and Ancient History at Birkbeck, University of London.

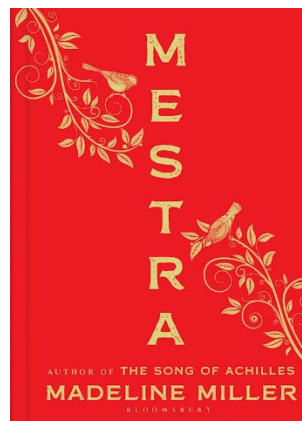
<https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250328465/cicerostongue/>



*Medea: A Life* by Edith Hall (Sept. 2026)

A revisionist biography of 'mythology's archetypal murderous mother,' in which Hall considers the possibility of a real life underpinning the myth.

<https://yalebooks.co.uk/book/9780300270723/medea/>



*Mestra* by Madeline Miller (Sept. 2026)

A short story (80 pages) in which Miller retells the story of Mestra, daughter of Erysichthon of Thessaly.

<https://www.bloomsbury.com/au/mestra-9781037206122/>

## ♪ CLASSICAL NOTES ♪

### *The Thucydides Trap*

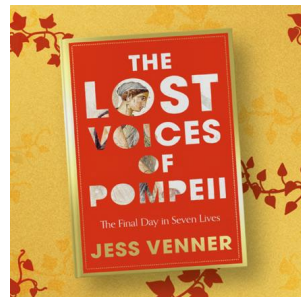
τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν, ἀφανεστάτην δὲ λόγῳ, τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἡγοῦμαι μεγάλους γιγνομένους καὶ φόβον παρέχοντας τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις ἀναγκάσαι ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν· (1.23.6)

The real cause (of the war) I consider to be the one which was formally most kept out of sight. The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable (Crawley).

Thucydides' observation on the real cause of the Peloponnesian War has been referred to by both US and Chinese scholars to label Western anxiety about the rise of China. It has made news around the world, when Chinese President Xi Jinping asked the U.S. President "Can China and the U.S. overcome the so-called 'Thucydides Trap' and create a new paradigm of major-country relations?" For the history of the use of this term, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thucydides\\_Trap](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thucydides_Trap)

### *Archaeologists Use AI to Reconstruct Pompeii Victim*

Reuters reports that archaeologists have used AI to resurrect the face of one of the victims from Pompeii: <https://www.reuters.com/science/archaeologists-use-ai-generate-image-pompeii-victim-2026-04-27/>



### *The Lost Voices of Pompeii*

Jess Venner (2026) blends storytelling with research to detail the last 24 hours experienced by seven of the inhabitants of Pompeii: <https://www.jessvenner.com/the-lost-voices-of-pompeii>



### *A’Roma Around the House*

Melbourne Museum’s new exhibition *ROME: Empire, Power, People* has inspired a striking artisan retail collection now available through Museums Victoria Store. Blending contemporary Australian design with Roman motifs, the range features exclusive collaborations with local artisans. The exhibition continues to 25<sup>th</sup> October 2026.”

[ROME: Empire, Power, People | What's on | Melbourne Museum](#)

On the retail creations to accompany the exhibition, [see here](#); the Museum [shop is here](#).

### *Ancient Artefacts Coming to Australia*

Greece will loan over 100 artefacts for the Brisbane Olympics cultural exhibition. This is double the number of artefacts loaned to Sydney for the 2000 Olympics.

<https://concreteplayground.com/sydney/arts-entertainment/this-just-in-greece-is-loaning-100-artefacts-to-brisbane-for-the-upcoming-olympics>

### *Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire*

Looking for maps of the Roman Empire? Look no further! <https://imperium.ahlfeldt.se/>

## *Antigone at USyd*

A tradition was established in 1868 with The University of Sydney's student production of Terence's *Phormio* and then, on the tragic side, with the landmark 1886 student production of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* in translation and in Greek with sung choral odes. The Gaius Gracchus Society and The Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Sydney revived this tradition with a new production of Sophocles' *Antigone*, which had not been staged in full on campus since 1957. It was also the first USyd production of tragedy in Greek this century. After six months of rehearsals, this *Antigone* featured a full dancing and singing chorus in Greek and with novel translations, likely the first of its kind in Australia, with music and choreography

also by students working with new advances in scholarship. The play was co-directed by Daisy Levell, Honours candidate and president of Gaius Gracchus, and Dr. James Collins, with original music written by Thomas Henderson, and choreographed by Lauren Cleary and Marcel Forrer.

All three performances took place in Nelson Meers Foundation Auditorium, Chau Chak Wing Museum, and were completely sold out!

Here is a piece on the production by Daisy Levell, president of Gaius Gracchus, also co-director of *Antigone*.

### *Director's Vision: The Surveillance of the Inevitable Rot*

Our production utilises a variety of ways to pay homage to the ancients, such as the focus on choral dance and song, and integrating Greek and English to synthesise the past into the future. We maintain elements of ambiguity for the audience, allowing the complex characters to speak for themselves, and hopefully allow viewers to weigh up their own personal judgement on the play, the characters, and the moral dilemmas and debates, just as a Greek audience would have done. Our show is atypical for a Greek tragedy due to stylistic choices – we don't use masks, and we approach the tragedy with elements of a realist melodramatic theatrical portrayal, indicated by the chorus's ability to devise their own personalities and perspectives on the dilemmas shown. Our *Antigone* stays true to the heart of the traditional while offering up something slightly different for a wide contemporary audience.

Rich, nuanced, ambiguous, and difficult to synthesise, I see our production of *Antigone* as embodying three key concepts: surveillance, the inevitable. and rot. All characters in *Antigone* are victims and also perpetrators of surveillance. Creon is a figure of imposing surveillance, however he is also by all accounts a victim of divine surveillance and that of his peers – the Theban Elders. The structure of the traditional Greek theatre also allowed the audience to act as a means of surveillance – the audience raised above the players, confining the events of the tragedy into a suspended civic space that demanded rumination. The chorus has always surveyed the events of the show, offering advice to Creon and portraying their own views and reactions to the unfolding chaos. We heighten immersion by having the chorus sitting front row in critical moments, such as asides and monologues, creating a feeling of surveillance for our characters; the chorus sings to Creon as they impose onto him their own watchful gaze. Greek theatre is directly tied to democratic tradition – the theatre was a civic space which brought the community together, allowing the *demos* to vote on which play was best, and, of course, the questions and problems posed

forced the *demos* to weigh up what was in front of them in the form of an impossible, ambiguous situation – thus, theatre was a spectacle of deliberation.

The “inevitable” is a blanket term for all themes expressed in the show. The concepts of characters being bound to fate, tortured by it, or even rejecting it, hang over concepts of family, state, honour and duty. The fate of our characters and the plot of our show is also bound by ideas of the inevitable, which spiral and spiral until they reach a crescendo. Antigone stands apart from this – does it have to be this way? Do we have to engage with the world this way? Antigone questions this idea. Antigone demands something different. Antigone demonstrates and deliberates the ineffectiveness and danger of how humans embody or reason with inevitability, which feeds into stasis and problems of inaction.

Polynices’ body hangs over the entire play, however he isn’t the only body left unburied, and he certainly isn’t the only corpse to haunt our characters. We are met with communal decay, the decay of the individual, the rot of the house of Oedipus, the court of Creon. Rot, when left unburied, unblessed or when brushed aside, spreads – we see our characters consumed by rot, physically and physiologically, displayed with both the emotional journey of the play, eerie soundscape and the minimalist single pillar set. The great tragedy of Antigone is that she stands above the decay, however simultaneously falls into it. We are reminded that tyranny breeds decay, however tyranny is also a product of decay. I believe the crux of *Antigone* can be summed up by a simple line – “the surveillance of the inevitable rot.”

The surveillance of the rot may be inevitable, but in these troubled times in which we live, *Antigone* reminds us it is crucial to be guided by your heart, mind and moral fibre, as opposed to simply the powers that be.

**Daisy Levell, Director**



### *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](mailto:t.neal@sydney.edu.au)).

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Classical Association of New South Wales

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