

CHRONICLE

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Historical Association, Swansea Branch

Promoting History in South West Wales

From the Editor

**Ab actu ad posse valet illation.
From the past one can infer the future.**

Let's hope that's true and that historians writing in Chronicle can influence in some way how future readers may predict the coming years. Oh, dear, I seem to be getting ahead of myself, we have only just celebrated our first year of publication, but thanks to the generous people who have sponsored us, we are set for many more editions.

There were not so many popular quotes from the

"A society grows great, when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in."

Ancient Egyptians, but lots of interesting facts. Herophilus of Alexandria, born in 300 BC, is known to have counted a person's pulse to check their health and this in a time when the gods were thought to transport illnesses and people would then need spells for a cure. Papyri and clay tablets written by Egyptians, Greeks and Romans have given modern historians a wealth of facts about ancient medicines and practices used by magicians and physicians.

The Egyptians probably gave us the first remedy to cure a bald head:

"Fat of lion, fat of hippo, fat of cat, fat of crocodile, fat of ibex, fat of serpent, are mixed together and the head of the bald person is anointed with them". Don't try this at home, caveat, beware.



Unfortunately, it was only later, in Greek and Roman times that the general practice of bathing was introduced. Romans in particular, believed that keeping clean

and taking exercise led to a healthy life. The fee for entering a public bath was minimal so that every person, however poor could afford to keep clean... and catch up with all the gossip. Of course, private baths were something else, sumptuous and extravagant with gold or silver taps and waterfalls; but it took the City of Swansea to introduce a wave machine in a public bathing pool.

Personally, I don't agree with everything that the Ancient Romans said, especially not with Terence who suggested 'moderation in all things'. But, as Protagoras, said 'There are two sides to every question' a sentiment with which I agree. I prefer the saying that was emblazoned on a pair of my glitzy shoes, 'Too much is not enough'. And as Liberace said 'Too much of a good thing is wonderful'. Horace wisely believed 'There is harmony in discord'. Must stop writing now, how tempus does fugit, as Pericles might have thought.

*'I know one thing, that I know nothing'.
Socrates from Plato's Apology.*

Margaret McCloy

Contents

From the Editor	2	Margam Stones, M. Humphries	14
Egyptian Daily Life, Karmen Thomas	3	Olympic Games, Maria Stanley	16
Bes, a Friendly Demon, C. Brown-Thomas	6	White Rock, John Ashley	18
Dreams & Nightmares, K Szpakowska	8	Etcetera	19
Cunning Greeks, Evelien Braque	10	Branch Programme and Membership	20
Up the Greek, Peter Read	12		

Cover: A Graeco-Roman (332 BC - AD 395) gilt mask. This would have been placed over the head of the mummy. The gold colour would help ensure that the deceased was reborn to become one of the golden blessed dead.

An Insight into Ancient Egyptian Daily Life from the decoration in the Tombs of the Elite

The development of tomb decoration during the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties resulted in a consistent design of several strips, which depicted the many different trades and labouring jobs in agriculture and workshops that were necessary to maintain the complex society of Dynastic Egypt. Many of the labouring tasks were repetitive and physically demanding, and to lessen the burden the ancient Egyptian workers developed techniques such as working to a rhythm.

This is illustrated in a vineyard scene in the tomb of Sennedjem where an image of men crushing grapes in a vat to the accompaniment of rhythmical beating of resmunt sticks.

In the Sixth Dynasty tombs of Ty and Mereraka at Saqqara harvesters are shown working in rhythm to a singer who is accompanied by a flautist, the songs being documented in the text. These

scenes are full of figures detailing the work carried out not only in farming but also in many other industries, such as fishing, fowling, crafts and transportation.

Amongst the more formal views of people working in the fields and in the workshops, there are glimpses of personal interaction between people. The tenderness shown by an adult for a child, the playfulness between children and the quarrels and disputes between labourers and craftsmen are all depicted. Workers showing signs of old age and signs of disabilities are represented, which suggests that an individual worked until they physically could not manage. A vivid depiction of an aged worker is to be found in the mid Eighteenth Dynasty tomb of Paheri. Here an

elderly man is shown using a plough, his age indicated by his wispy hair and his paunch.

To ascertain whether the tomb decorations were idealised and biased images or true depictions of society is extremely difficult to assess. It is argued by some archaeologists that the depictions are in fact an idealised view and are biased towards the life of the tomb-owner. This bias would make it very difficult to see the reality of the lives of the working people represented in the art. Yet there are glimpses of personal social situations of the poorer classes.

There is evidence of inter-action between children, as the tender scene in the Eighteenth Dynasty tomb of Menna shows, which is of a girl pulling a thorn from her companion's foot.

The motive behind adding these detailed scenes of daily life in the tomb was to ensure that the life and needs of the deceased tomb owner would continue on in the afterlife.

The affection between adults and children is evident in the tomb of Menna which depicts an agricultural scene where in the background a woman with a child in her lap sits picking fruit under a tree, while the child reaches up to play with the adult's ear.

Khaemhet's tomb painting depicts a young boy scattering seed, while the painting in Userhet's tomb has images of young children gathering ears of corn into sacks.

The scenes depicting the role of women in the daily life paintings are very few, and when women are represented they tend to be depicted in groups, rather than individuals in clearly defined roles. One exception is the depiction of women weaving in the Middle Kingdom tomb painting of Khnumhotep II, where individual women are clearly shown engaging in the different stages of the manufacture of cloth. The generic examples of women in tomb paintings are shown in the many paintings of dancers that accompany the scenes of celebrations, religious services and funeral rites, and also dancing for their own personal enjoyment.



The tomb of Rekhmire contains scenes of women playing musical instruments such as the harp, lute and tambourine.

There is pictorial evidence of the personal independence of merchants from scenes in a number of Theban tombs where the landing place for trading boats doubled as a local market place, which encouraged the potential for private enterprise. This is evident in the tomb of Qenamun, a mayor of Thebes that depicts three traders and their stalls in a scene

of commodities of cattle, wine or oil, and metal vessels being unloaded from merchant ships from Asia.

The pictorial depictions of the stages of the manufacture of goods illustrate the change of production over the Dynasties, from the cottage style industry of individual craftsmen to the collective production of numerous craftsmen at main workshops. Craftsmen would have then become employees of the royalty, priesthood or the aristocracy and therefore they would lose their original independent status.

A further innovation from the Fifth Dynasty was the addition of short pieces of texts which simulated the conversations of the workers. This reproduced dialogue between the workers could vary from being straightforward, humorous and even insulting, with songs and exclamations sometimes added. 'Let us work. Look at us. Do not fear the fields, they are in splendid condition'. 'The year is good, free from difficulties, all crops flourish and the calves are better than anything'. These two examples of texts, which accompanied paintings of rural life in the Eighteenth Dynasty tomb of the mayor, Paheri at Elka are typical of the portrayal of daily life of the ancient Egyptians.

Images, which are far from depicting the ideal, are also included, such as the block of relief detailing the apprehension of a young thief in a market place in the Fifth Dynasty tomb of Tepemankh at Saqqara.

Other Old Kingdom tomb paintings have scenes that illustrate market bartering between people, the original and the oldest form of trade.

The theme of workers quarrelling over petty disputes was used during the Old Kingdom, maybe for the entertainment and amusement

of the tomb owner. An example can be found in the tomb of Merymery at Saqqara, where there is a typical portrayal of hard working agricultural workers, yet in the top right of the painting two donkey drivers are arguing and one exclaims; 'I'm going to get myself four jars of beer quickly'. Depictions of dishonesty and unseemly behaviour might have been included for their humorous element, but they do illuminate intriguing aspects of ancient Egyptian society.

The generic aspect of the representations of the peasantry are no more obvious than in the long processions of men and women representing the various villages that belonged to the deceased, as depicted in the tomb of Ty.

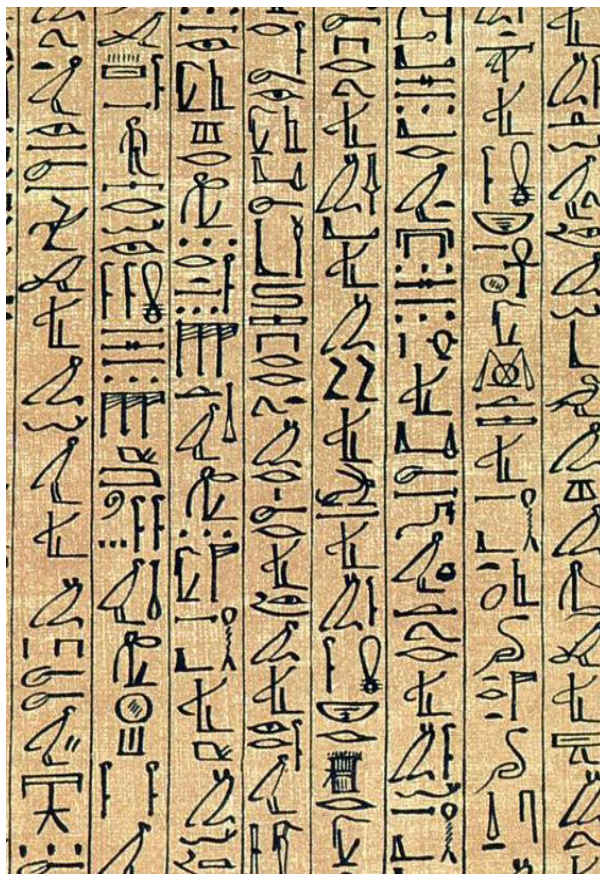
Though some of the depictions of long processions of workers have a specific and personal note to them, as in Khnumhotep II's tomb, where the procession of male and female offering bearers bear their various titles associated with their role in the running of an estate. Nefer added a very personal touch to the daily life paintings in his tomb, and had the names of all his estate workers from the fishermen and gardeners to the household staff recorded in the texts for eternity. The daily life scenes in the tombs portray a fascinating insight



into the collective organization of these stable communities and the commerce that existed between them. And importantly, the paintings themselves are evidence of highly skilled artisans who were responsive to the society that they lived in.

Karmen Thomas

To the left is a section of the Papyrus of Ani showing cursive hieroglyphs



Champollion announced his general decipherment of the system of Egyptian hieroglyphics in 1822 with the aid of the Rosetta Stone.

Boys in ancient Egypt went to school, but girls did not.

Egyptian writings show that there were over 200 gods.

Bes, a Good Daemon

The Egypt Centre has several little figures showing a dwarf with bandy legs, a sticking out tongue and lion-mane, tail and ears. This is the daemon Bes. The word 'daemon' originates from the use of the word in Greek which generally means good spirits or demi-gods. In Egyptology, the word daemon/demon, or sometimes genii, is used as a catch-all term to encompass those living beings who are not easily categorised as humans, nor animals, nor gods with cult centres. It is not a word ever used by the ancient Egyptians themselves.



Daemons are often shown as liminal creatures, that is a combination of animals and/or humans, sometimes even objects. Often the way they look symbolised their characteristics and otherness. So what did Bes do? A look at three objects in the Egypt Centre helps elucidate his roles.

One of the objects we have is a tiny blue amulet showing Bes dancing and playing a round drum. He is facing left, has one leg in front of the other and is beating a drum with his right hand. This dates to around 1300BC and was probably found on the royal site of Amarna, a city built by the so-called 'heretic pharaoh' Akhenaten sometimes called 'the heretic pharaoh' because he established a new god, the Aten, (the sun's disc), in opposition to the traditional gods. He is sometimes said to be the first monotheist, but this is incorrect. Archaeological evidence

also shows us that many of the traditional gods, such as Hathor, continued to be revered. There were also over 500 amulets of Bes on this site.

Bes is frequently shown playing a musical instrument; as well as a round drum, he is depicted with a double flute. He is perhaps associated with music as dwarves in particular were associated with music and dance in ancient Egypt. Music had several roles. In the religious sphere it was an offering to the gods and used to please them. It has also been suggested that, as in more recent societies, loud percussion music could have been used to frighten away evil entities.

The amulet is made out of faïence, a kind of glassy ceramic. It has a suspension hole at the top and could thus have been worn around the neck. Whilst, many of the amulets in the Egypt Centre were found on mummies, these were probably worn in life.



Another item associating Bes with music, and also made from faïence, dates from much later in Egyptian history, around 747-30 BC, a period which encompasses the reign of Alexander the Great. It is a little bell and shows the head of Bes wearing a crown of feathers.

Since this object is made from faïence, we can guess that it would be votive or amuletic. Vigorous shaking may well have broken it. Unfortunately, we do not know where in Egypt it was found. Moreover, we know of no provenanced examples for Bes-headed bells, so

whether they were domestic charms or perhaps votive offerings placed in temples or tombs is not certain.

However, plain bronze bells have been found in burials. At one site, two bronze bells were found in burials. One was found in the grave of a child and the other was

found on a chain around the neck of a woman. A possible third bell, much corroded, was found on the chest of the woman.

The Egyptologist Flinders Petrie describes plain bronze bells, mainly in children's burials, the earliest appear to date to c.800-700BC.

How much more suitable would a Bes-shaped bell be for the protection of children and women? The face of Bes, plus the noise of the bell, may have been perfect for chasing of any evil entities.



While Bes was a protector of children generally, he was also a

particular protector of the child-god Horus the Child. Thus, on this object in the Egypt Centre, a protective stela, you can just about make out the head of Bes (unluckily damaged), shown above the naked figure of Horus the Child.



Finally, we have a wooden bed leg and painted on it in blue is a figure of Bes. Unfortunately his head is missing but his lion tail can be seen from between his bandy legs. Bes is one of the few Egyptian deities to be shown frontally.

This is one of a pair of bed legs. The other shows another daemon, Taweret, who takes the form of a hippopotamus. Both legs also show snakes.

Bes and Taweret are often found together on items celebrating the birth of kings and commoners.

What better bed to have than one decorated with protective deities such as Bes and Taweret. Thus, we believe that this bed leg may have been part of a 'woman's bed' for the purpose of giving birth.

However, for the ancient Egyptians rebirth in the afterlife in many ways paralleled the birth of children. And so, items used in everyday life and associated with childbirth might well be placed in tombs.

**Dr Carolyn Graves-Brown,
Curator Egypt Centre**

You can see all of these objects, plus other items associated with Bes at the Egypt Centre, Swansea University. Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 4pm and admission is free.

www.egypt.swan.ac.uk/index.php/collection/48-bes

"To face a real daemon, you must first look inwards and conquer your own darkness." Luis Marques

Dreams and Nightmares in Ancient Egypt

*All people, both modern and ancient—
including Ancient Egyptians—dream.*

Dreams

However, to understand what dreams meant to the Ancient Egyptians we must rely on the scant pieces of evidence that have survived thousands of years. And just as our own perception of dreams has changed over time (just consider what a difference Freud made!) so too did that of the Egyptians. Bearing that in mind, it is still possible to catch a glimpse of Ancient Egyptian dreams and nightmares through their words written on stone and papyrus, as well as the personal objects they left behind.

The most common word used for “dream” throughout Ancient Egyptian history was “resut” which means literally “awakening.” Egyptian words are usually written as a combination of phonetic signs, plus a sign or “determinative” at the end, indicating the category of the word. Thus, words having related to dogs or being dog-like have the sign of a dog behind them. Interestingly, resut is most often determined by an open eye, which is also used for words related to visual perception (such as “to see,” “to be vigilant.”). Also worth noting is the fact that the Ancient Egyptians did not have a specific verb for dreaming—only a noun. In their terminology, one could see something “in a dream,” or see “a dream.” In other words, a dream was the object of a verb of visual perception—it was something seen, not done. It was thus perceived as an uncontrollable visible phenomenon external to the dreamer, and this is an important point to bear in mind.

In contrast to modern understandings of the dream, the Egyptians did not think of it arising

from within the dreamer, nor as a psychological phenomenon, nor was it an activity performed by an individual.

Rather, it had an objective existence outside the will of the passive dreamer. The dream was perceived as a threshold space whose boundaries lay somewhere between the world of the living and the world beyond that allowed contact between the dreamer and those who inhabited the afterlife: gods, demons, the dead, and the damned.

Ancient Egyptian authors realized that the dream can function as a powerful literary device in poems, song and fictional narratives. Just as today, dreams were used as metaphors to accentuate that which is insubstantial, ephemeral, or uncontrollable. In *The Teachings of Ptahhotep*, the author warned the reader against abusing friendship by approaching the women of the friend’s household because “a split second, the likeness of a dream, and death is reached on account of knowing her.” Here, the more negative aspects of a dream as insubstantial and untrustworthy inspired its use as an analogy for improper behavior.

The dream appeared in the fictional *Tale of Sinuhe*, a popular tale of the adventures of a man who fled Egypt upon hearing of the untimely death of the pharaoh. He attempted to explain his unjustified flight by claiming that “I don’t know what separated me from my place. It was like the unfolding of a dream—like a man from the North seeing himself in the South, a man of the marshlands in Nubia.” The dream was used to emphasize and excuse the irrationality of the hero’s behavior, and the

Life is but a dream

"...as for a lifetime done on earth, it is but the time of a dream..."

dreamer portrayed as a passive viewer of a scenario which unfolds before him, and over which he has no control.

The Egyptians were the first to coin the now popular phrase "life is but a dream." Over 3000 years ago the sentiment was recorded as part of a harper's song inscribed on the walls of two tombs "... as for a lifetime done on earth, it is but the time of a dream..."

The recording of actual dreams was very rare. Prior to 750 BC, only a handful of examples have survived. The earliest is part of a letter that a man wrote to his dead father, wherein he asks that his father prevent his dead servant from watching the man in a dream. Four royal pharaohs also recorded dreams in which they communicated with powerful gods. The most famous of these can still be seen today inscribed on a large stele between the paws of the Great Sphinx of Giza. Prior to the Greek period only two non-royal individuals are known to have recorded their dreams and both dreams featured the beautiful goddess Hathor.

The Ancient Egyptians practiced dream interpretation, though not as much as is generally assumed. Only a few dream manuals exist, organized as lists of dreams and their meanings. These show that punning was a key feature linking the dream and its interpretation. The individuals responsible for interpreting dreams were likely priests, rather than specialist diviners.



Nightmares

But perhaps the largest number of references to dreams in Ancient Egypt was to bad dreams or nightmares. Attested largely in magico-medical texts, as well as indirectly via objects used in rituals, bad dreams were treated as hostile entities that assault the vulnerable sleeper. The cause of nightmares was not ascribed to any particular demon, but rather to the hosts of hostile dead and demons who had to be fought and driven out. The continuing need to protect the vulnerable sleeper from nightmares is reflected in the fashioning of bedposts, headboards, and headrests decorated with spells and images of weapon-wielding protective guardian demons.

Modern research focusing on the biological nature of sleep and dreams has questioned the boundaries between waking and dreaming, suggesting a more fluid relationship that might have sounded familiar to an Ancient Egyptian. Throughout Ancient Egypt's history, a dream was mostly a rather frightening phenomenon, arising not from within, but from outside the dreamer. It was a threshold zone between worlds; a spontaneously generated phenomenon that could be seen but not manipulated or invoked. Its function varied through time, but in Ancient Egypt, dreams were sometimes terrifying, sometimes awe-inspiring, but always disturbing.

Kasia Szpakowska

Cunning Plans Among the Ancient Greeks

The Greeks saw cunning as an effective survival mode, both in their daily lives and in myth – but a cunning person also knows how to bide his or her time.

When Zeus became king of the gods, he did not immediately take Hera as his consort, but married the goddess Metis. When she became pregnant, Zeus' grandmother, the goddess Gaia ("Earth"), foretold that Metis' son would try to overthrow him. Zeus' solution? He swallowed the mother along with her pregnant child, and gave birth to his daughter, Athena, himself from his head, when Hephaestus cracked open his skull because he was suffering the most dreadful migraine.

This bizarre myth, first recounted in Hesiod's *Theogony* (c.700BC), explains Zeus' main characteristic: 'cunning'. For the name Metis means exactly that: 'cunning intelligence'. (Fill in Blackadder quote of your choice...) Zeus swallowing Metis equates the god internalising this intelligence and making it his own. Metis was indeed not only a goddess but also the concept of 'cunning intelligence': not only Zeus but other gods and mortals could possess it too. Metis, however, is not just any type of intelligence. The Greeks defined this in a very specific way and it is this definition I would like to address.

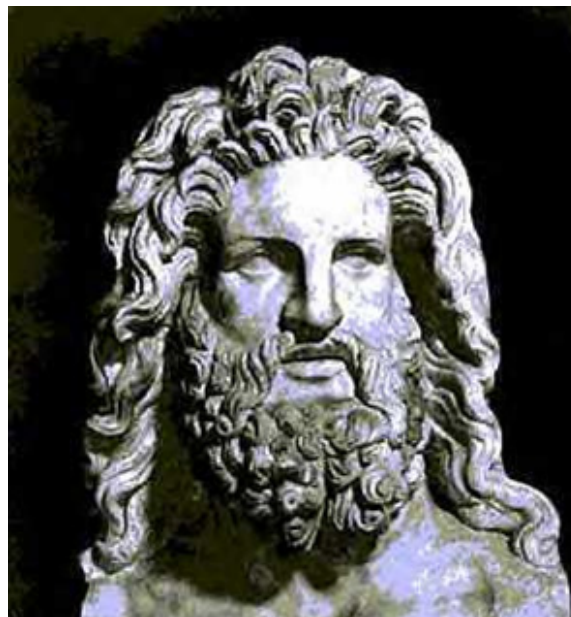
Let us start with a few examples. The most famous hero who possessed Metis was Odysseus: one of the heroes of the Trojan War, he was known for his trickery and cunning. After ten years of a futile war at the gates of Troy,

he was the one who managed to capture the city, not through a direct attack but through deceit. Everyone is familiar with the story of the Trojan horse, but few people realise it is one of the finest examples of Metis from antiquity. Odysseus did not use a direct approach (an attack of the walls and gates which had failed), but an indirect approach, using his enemy's weaknesses to his advantage. Physically, Troy's weakness was its gates; psychologically, its

arrogance. And so Odysseus persuaded the Trojans to open their gates themselves in the delusion that they had won and were receiving a gift from the Greeks. The hero used disguise and deception: men were presented as a horse, a deadly trap as a gift, and war as peace.

Metis is not restricted to the human realm, however. Animals can possess it too. The fox is an obvious example, but the Greeks also

considered the cuttlefish to be a 'cunning' animal. Of the same family as the octopus, the cuttlefish's can change its colour to blend in with its surroundings, enabling it not only to dupe predators but also to lure potential prey into a false sense of security. By means of its ink secretion, it creates darkness and not only confuses its prey, but also potential predators, allowing it time to escape from the darkness it has created. To outwit this 'cunning' fish,



Zeus, King of the Gods

fishermen had to deploy superior tricks. By using as bait a female cuttlefish which the males grasp so tightly that nothing but death could make them let go, fishermen were able to defeat the cuttlefish at its own game of deception and trickery. (I know – how did they capture the female cuttlefish?)

From these brief examples, a definition of Metis can be extracted. First of all, while its outcome is usually violent, it entails an indirect approach to attack, deploying trickery, deceit, lying, and treachery. It can transform itself and makes full use of its enemy's weaknesses. It is clear that this was an inherent trait: one cannot learn Metis. You either have it or you don't: among the gods for example Zeus, Athena,

Hephaestus, and Hermes had it; among mortals Odysseus, Nestor, Penelope, and Clytaemnestra. Animals also, as we have discussed may practice Metis. Certain human pursuits were also inherently connected with Metis: politicians, fisherman, hunters, and sailors, were also



Head of Odysseus

considered cunning folk.

But what if you met another wielder of Metis? Let's return to Zeus. Having (quite literally!) incorporated Metis, he met another god of his generation with a claim to the throne, Prometheus. Prometheus' name means 'he who knows beforehand' and in the *meth part of his name you can see part of the word Met-is. Prometheus tried to trick Zeus twice. First, he covered the bones of sacrificial meat in fat so they looked appetizing, but covered the actual meat in hide so it

didn't. Prometheus then tried to steal fire from the gods in a stalk. The result was the famous punishment which saw Prometheus having his liver eaten by Zeus' eagle each day.

The Greeks saw cunning as an effective survival mode, both in their daily lives and in myth – but a cunning person also knows how to bide his or her time. Lying in wait is a trait of Metis I haven't touched upon yet, but it was clearly one which Prometheus lacked: otherwise he might have thought twice before he decided to take on the king of cunning.

Dr Evelien Braque

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Up the Greek

What we owe Greek Philosophy



Apollo

*As far as he was concerned the earth was a solid object,
probably a cylindrical drum hanging in space*

In early Greek thought we see the elements of philosophy evolving slowly, as if through a fog. Everyone is having a stab at explaining the world. Surely there must be one unifying, superior force or idea which holds everything together?

Thales (620-540BC) decided that the world must consist of main element which was water. Planet earth was surrounded by the stuff and floated on an unseen, underlying sea. Every human being, every plant, every flower, every animal, needed water so he concluded it must be the base from which all life emanates.

Anaximander (610BC-546BC) took over Thales's school of philosophy but disagreed with his predecessor. If we were saying water was vital what about air, earth and fire? The planet must be a four character show not a solo act. Besides, if the earth was supported by the sea who or what supported the sea? Anaximander launched the Greeks and us into one of those open ended dead ends of never ending questions. As far as he was concerned the earth was a solid object, probably a cylindrical drum hanging in space.

Heraclitus took the debate back to one element being responsible for everything and plumped for fire. Observing its flashes and flames led him to believe the world was in a constant state of flux. Unity in the world comes from opposites clashing and creating constantly changing situations. He believed the only constant is change.

After all these colourful and unconvincing attempts to explain the world, Parmenides (510-450BC) was the first Greek thinker to realise the importance of deductive reasoning. It was not enough to plump for a solution and then run on and away with the idea and say hey presto (or the Greek equivalent) we've solved the problem of the cosmos. Parmenides was the first to see the need for deduction, a form of inference in which the conclusion follows from the premise.

Even heavy weight thinkers such as Kant, Hume and Hegel, although all being aware there must be a fault in Zeno's logic have not been able to demonstrate it conclusively. Great philosophers have since seen the value of Zeno. Bertrand Russell claimed his arguments were the basis for

almost all theories of all space and time.

Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides and Zeno, were the warm up act for the big hitters. Known as the Pre Socratic thinkers they paved the way for Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Rather than worry about cosmology, in Cicero's words, Socrates was the first to call down philosophy from the heavens. His concerns were practical. For him the process of pursuing definitions with others was vital. As far as he was concerned this was the examined life and the unexamined life was not worth living.

Plato (427-347BC), who recorded the writings of Socrates, believed that somewhere out there, there must be the perfect, 'universal' dog, cat, table, chair and even perfect embodiments of virtues such as beauty and truth. What we see is the 'particular' cat, dog, table, chair, which all differ but in some way reflect the perfect embodiment. This Theory of Forms paved the way for centuries of philosophical debate on the essence of items such as colour, and emotions such as love.

Just when it seemed the riddle of thought was sorted and Parmenides's solution would keep Sherlock Holmes and countless generations of future TV detectives happy and busy, along came Zeno of Elea (490-425BC). Through his Forty Paradoxes he proved that there are many times when someone puts forward an

argument, which although it appears sound and based on logical premises, it can lead to a conclusion that others feel sure must be false.

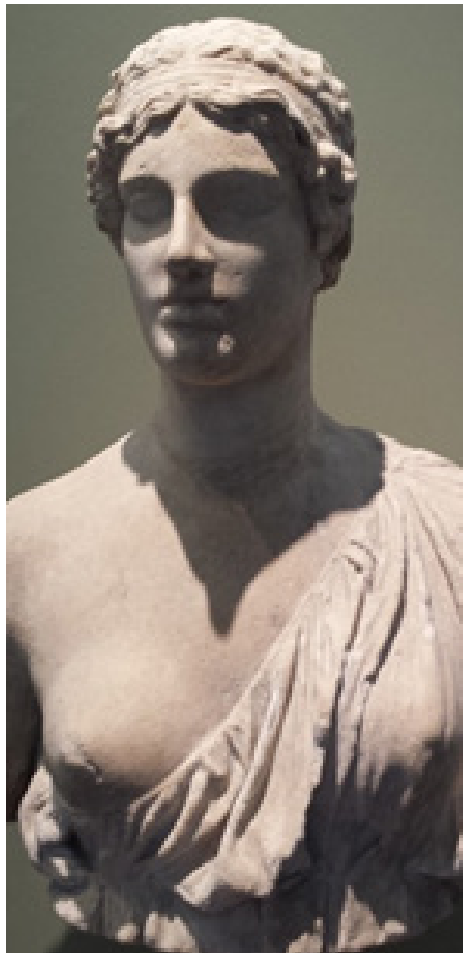
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Aristotle (384-322BC) was the great thinker to realise that, despite what Plato and Pre Socratic thinkers had taught and thought, it was impossible to devise a single universal philosophical principle. His view of Empiricism which claimed that often the way we understand objects is influenced by our emotions and sensual responses rather than a rational response, established

the battle ground for centuries of philosophical in-fighting.

It is so good to know that all these thinkers, and many more, that lack of space forbids mentioning, grappled in the fog to help us think more clearly. Greece has given us so much more than feta cheese, olives, yoghurts and lovely holidays.

Peter Read



Sappho Greek lyric poet from Lesbos

"Wisdom begins in wonder" Socrates

The Margam Stones Museum

and Wales after the Romans



Disc-headed slab cross

Tucked away behind the impressive pile of Margam Castle stands an unprepossessing old school building that houses one of the most impressive collections of early medieval monuments in Britain: the Margam Stones Museum. Among its collection are a number that date from the period after the end of Roman rule in Britain. They shed intriguing light on the history of the south Wales region at the dawn of the Middle Ages.

The history of Britain more generally in this period is associated with the departure of the Roman administration shortly after AD 400, after which there seem to have been a few generations in which the island was effectively self-governing. Then, in the second half of the fifth century we have the arrival in eastern parts of England of the first Anglo-Saxons from the Continent. Given the opaque nature of written

sources and the ambiguity of archaeological evidence, the immediate impact of the Anglo-Saxons is difficult to judge. Even so, a few features seem reasonably clear: in those areas that came under Anglo-Saxon control, many vestiges of Roman civilization disappeared, most notably Christianity, which had been introduced to Britain under the Romans; indeed, those parts of Britain that the Anglo-Saxons took over saw such a precipitous collapse of Christianity that they had to be re-converted in the missions sent by Pope Gregory the Great (590-604).

What of the western reaches of Britain? The collection in the Margam Stones Museum bears witness to important continuities with the Roman past, not least in terms of the continued vitality of Christianity and the use of Latin in grave inscriptions.

One of the earliest stones is a 1st century Roman milestone naming the emperor Maximinus Augustus (310-313).

In the 6th century, the stone was reused as a grave marker. It was turned upside down for this purpose, and a new inscription was added on the opposite side from the milestone text. This new text, running vertically from top to bottom, reads: HIC IACIT CANTVSVS PATER PAVLINVS. This means either 'Here lies Cantusus, [his] father [was] Paulinus' or 'Here lies Cantusus, the father of Paulinus'.

The inscription displays several interesting features. It uses a customary Christian grave formula, 'here lies', but does so in form that deviates from correct Latin grammar (which would be *hic iacet*). Another grammatical oddity, which explains why we do not know whether Paulinus was the father of Cantusus or vice versa, is that the text only uses one Latin case (the nominative). As for the name Cantusus, this is likely a local, Brittonic one. While these features might suggest a breakdown of Roman

culture, others suggest that some elements of Romanness persisted: not only is the text Christian, inscribed in Latin and in monumental letters, but the name Paulinus is a thoroughly Roman one.

Other early medieval stones at Margam display similar features. One standing immediately beside the Cantusus stone also dates from the 6th century and bears a Latin inscription; again the text is inscribed vertically and reads PVMPEIVS CARANTORIVS. Once more, the names mix the Brittonic, Carantorius, and Roman, Pompeius

(a variation on the name Pompey).

But the really striking feature of this stone is that along its vertical edges is another inscription in the Irish script known as ogham,

which indicated letters by means of notches and strokes. The text is quite worn, but part of it seems to mention Pumpieus again, in an Irish form (Popias or Pampes, depending on the reading).

The presence of an Irish script on the stone is a telling reminder that the history of Britain in the early Middle Ages is not one solely of the influx of the Anglo-Saxons from the east. In the

west, contacts across the Irish Sea seem to have increased in the late Roman and early medieval periods. Roman fortifications at Cardiff and Holyhead perhaps reflect insecurities in the face of Irish seaborne attacks on western Britain.

The story of St Patrick's abduction from Britain by Irish raiders is a famous instance of this relationship (indeed, the village of Banwen in the Dulais Valley claims to be Patrick's home!). Contacts continued into the early medieval centuries: according to some versions of his biography, Moreover, the Pompeius Carantorius

stone at Margam is one of very many early medieval Welsh monuments inscribed in ogham, and which are found

particularly in coastal areas of south and north Wales. Such stones, like the ones at Margam, shed light on the so-called 'Dark Ages' in Wales, opening up before our eyes a world that clung to elements of Roman and Christian identity, but which was also influenced by contacts with Ireland.

Mark Humphries

... according to some versions of his biography, St David was baptised by the Irishman Ailbhe (hilariously rendered into English as Elvis).

On Friday 9 May 2014, as part of its mission to promote history in south-west Wales, the HA's Swansea branch held what is intended to be the first of an annual series of lectures at the Lampeter Campus, University of Wales Trinity St David. The speaker was Professor Janet Burton, her subject, 'Monastic Wales'. She displayed clear expertise to an attentive audience of people from a wide area: Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion. Janet, a first class speaker, afterwards answered questions. Following the most stimulating, talk, a fine buffet was laid on by the University, during which time there was ample opportunity to get to know one other. The event was a shining example of the promotion of history in south-west Wales.

Colin James

The Olympic Games

The most widely accepted start date for the Ancient Olympics is 776 BC. This date is based on inscriptions, found at Olympia, listing the champions of a footrace held every four years starting in 776 BC. The games were hosted in Olympia, Greece and were held in honour of Zeus regarded as 'Father of Gods and men'. According to legend, it was Heracles, son of Zeus who first called the Games "Olympic" and established the custom of holding them every four years. The myth continues that after Heracles completed his twelve labours he built the Olympic Stadium to honour his father. Following its completion, he walked in a straight line for 200 steps and called this distance a "stadion" (Greek: στάδιον, Latin: stadium, "stage"), which later became a recognised unit of length.

The Ancient Games featured running events over various distances, a pentathlon (consisting of a jumping event, discus and javelin throws, a foot race, and wrestling), boxing, wrestling, pankration (a combination of boxing & wrestling) and equestrian events. Tradition has it that Coroebus, a cook from the city of Elis, was the first Olympic champion. Partly because of the great heat and partly because of their admiration of the human form the athletes usually competed nude. Because of this, married women were forbidden to watch the Olympics under penalty of death.

To compete the athletes had to prove they were freeborn Greek men, and as long as this important criteria was satisfied athletes from any of the city-states (and Macedon) were allowed to participate. During the games, an Olympic Truce was enacted to allow participants

to travel from their countries to the games in safety.

The games remained sited in Olympia rather than travelling to different city state locations as is the tradition with the modern Olympic Games. The victors were garlanded with olive wreaths or crowns and their feats celebrated in poetry and chronicled for future generations.



Discobolus

This celebration of sporting endeavour and excellence quickly became a political tool used by city-states to assert dominance over their rivals and politicians would use the occasion of the games to announce political alliances and canvas for popular support. The occasion of the Olympics also allowed for religious and cultural celebrations. Artists too benefited and sculptors, artists, poets and other craftsmen would congregate each Olympiad to display their works of art to would-be patrons

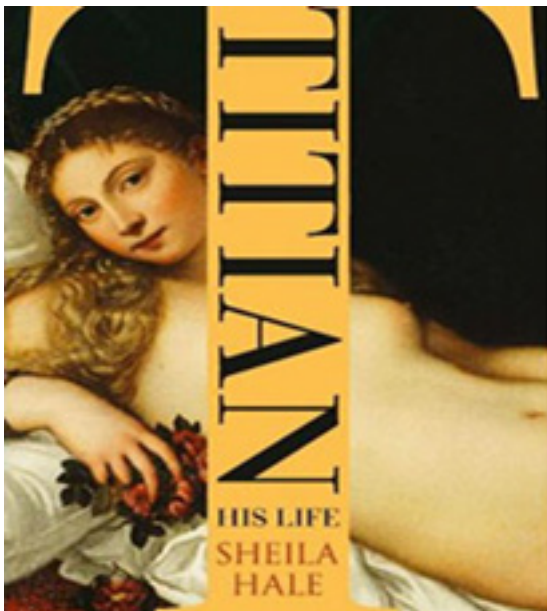
s continued. The most commonly held date for their cessation is 393 AD when the emperor Theodosius I decreed that all pagan cults and practices be suppressed as part of a campaign to impose Christianity.

Maria Stanley

Titian

On 9th May, in the James Callaghan Lecture Theatre at Swansea University, Lady Sheila Hale spoke on 'Titian: His Life and the Splendour of Venice'. This event was sponsored by the College of Arts and Humanities (Swansea University), the Friends of the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, and the Swansea Branch of the Historical Association. The lecture followed on the publication of the speaker's widely acclaimed Titian, His Life and the Golden Age of Venice (HarperCollins, 2012).

Sheila Hale gave a wonderful talk of the life of Tiziano Vecelli, or as he is known in Britain, Titian. The artist was a prominent member of the 16th century school of Venetian painting, and helped put that school 'on the map', at the time and for later generations of artists, collectors, Grand Tourists and art lovers. Sheila told her audience about the background of this High Renaissance painter. He was born around 1490 in Pieve di Cadore, a small town north of Venice, within Venetian frontiers; the landscape he was brought up in inspired the backgrounds to his earlier work. At only twelve years old he was sent as an apprentice to Venice, to one of the leading workshops in the city, run by the Bellini family.



The lecture was accompanied with many illustrations of his greatest works of art. He was, we were told, the only artist to have painted a pope, Paul 111, an emperor, Charles V, a sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent and a king, Philip 11. He was famous as a portrait painter, but now he is perhaps better known for his paintings of erotic nudes and themes drawn from classical mythology.

Even though his studio was full of beautiful models, he led a life devoted to his wife, Cecilia. His erotic paintings

he said 'were for the rich and powerful to enjoy in private'. Italy at this time produced three other great artists of the High Renaissance- Leonardo, Raphael and Michelangelo -who continually strove to surpass one another. Titian, an exponent of 'colour' as opposed to 'design' kept to himself, and we were told by the lecturer that he met Michelangelo only once.

Titian was an astute businessman, and lived a long and very productive life. In old age ' he was stooped, toothless, deaf and half blind, shuffling through the stifling empty rooms' as the plague swept through Venice; he died of a fever in 1576. His beloved son, Orazio- who had been one of his assistants- died shortly afterwards of the plague.

After her lecture, Sheila Hale answered many questions from a delighted audience who had thoroughly enjoyed her learned and well illustrated lecture, on a great artist whose considerable output went on to influence later generations. She signed copies of her book; signed copies can still be obtained from the more discerning of Swansea's bookshops.

Sheila Hale said afterwards that she had met one of her best audiences ever. This, and the event itself, has encouraged the Branch to plan further collaborations with the Friends of the Glynn Vivian and Swansea University, on the History of Art. In the near future, the National Museums of Scotland are holding a major exhibition on Titian in Edinburgh over the summer.

Margaret McCloy

White Rock

The first phase of the project under the Connected Communities All Our Stories HLF scheme is complete. The White Rock Ferry booklet by Tudor and Janet Price has gone into a second printing – there are a few copies left at Swansea Museum.

The new oral histories are on the White Rock web site and deposited with West Glamorgan Archives Service. The interviews are mainly with descendants of the ferry families, but also cover life in Swansea (dancing anyone?) and in the merchant navy. Transcriptions have been made for most of the interviews so you can read along as you listen.

Members of the team discovered White Rock's original lease from 1736 in the Richard Burton Archives. Two of our history students, Dominic Williams and Stacey Tunmore, transcribed the two large pages of the lease. Full size copies of the lease side by side with the transcription are a highlight of our exhibitions.



Swansea Museum

Rosemary Crahart's schools pack has seen its first outing in Hafod schools. A splendid (and heavy) copper slag block retrieved from the canal is on display in the Collections Centre. The White Rock 'mini-conference' in June was a great success. The project itself is the subject of a PhD study by Sarah Rojon from Lyon, '... to explore how people come together to share historical tales and produce memories, to relate to the former industrial landscape and link the past with their aspirations.'

The Trails app is now on Google Play Store in beta release. The app was developed jointly with Aberystwyth and Swansea Universities. Two teams of Swansea University Computer Science MEng students worked on the app in 2013/2014, with their work now being followed up two more post graduates. If you have an android phone or tablet and would like to join in the trials email john@globespinner.net. You will be able to build your own walks or cycle rides as well as follow walks in the library, and join in the usability study over the summer.

Rob Hulme continues to research the history of the site and has produced enough material for another book – to be HA Swansea's third publication. John Ashley has led walks up Kilvey Hill, discovering the site of the first engine house (hauling trucks of waste up the hill from White Rock to be dumped). The next target is Smith's Canal, of which a surprising amount survives.

We are now compiling a bid for more funds to restore White Rock to its status as an Industrial Heritage Park as well as continue the existing work. As ever, new volunteers are most welcome.

www.whiterocktrails.org

John Ashley

Etcetera

A Summer Party has been arranged at Sketty Hall

Wednesday August 13th 5-7pm

Buffet supper and a complimentary glass of wine

£10 for members and £15 for non-members (membership available at door)

Tickets must be purchased in advance (by 10th August please)

Contact John Law law.easton.John@gmail.com

Raffle, a bookstall and a chance for members to meet, free parking

Does anyone have **books that we could sell at the Book Fair** later in the year to help raise funds for the Branch? Or prizes for the raffle. Thanks everyone.



Does anyone know where this art deco elephant can be found?

Dear Mark Williams,

The plaque to Ann Frank is on a wall over by the Dylan Thomas Museum.

The Editor



The **Autumn issue of Chronicle** will be priced at £1 to members and £2 for non-members

Articles on travels and exploring would be welcomed by the editor for the next issue

Email Margaret.mccloy@sky.com deadline beginning September 2014.

Officers and Committee

John Law (Chair), John Ashley (Vice Chair), Ray Savage (Treasurer), Colin James (Executive Secretary), Claire Vivian (Membership Secretary), David Coley, Rosemary Crahart, Caroline Franklin, Royston Kneath, Elizabeth McCloy, Karmen Thomas, Sean McGrevey, Anne Thomas. Representative members: Sid Kidwell (Citizen Historian), Margaret McCloy (Chronicle editor), Brenig Davies (Friends of Carmarthen County Museum), Irene Thomas (Neath Antiquarian Society), Peter Stgopp (Laugharne & District History Society), Francesca Tate (Swansea University History Society).

HA Swansea Branch Programme 2014

Saturdays at 11.00, National Waterfront Museum

16 August

Dr Simon John

**A History of Cricket
during the Great War**



20 September

Presidential lecture
Professor Ralph Griffiths

The Enigma of Richard III

18 October *Local History . . . Live!*

The fourth *LHL!* presents

Local History Groups
Aberdulais Choir
Crane Drivin' Music (folk with a local theme)

The ever-popular **60 Second Show and Tell**
Bring your objects to mystify the curators!

All Day - Free

18 October **The Anniversary Event**

A lecture, film show and exhibition
presented by Arnold Rosen

introduced by Trevor Fishlock, TV presenter and journalist

Stalin, Hitler and Mr Jones



Membership Form

Name

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Individual membership: £10.
Concessionary membership: £5.
Family (household) membership: £15.
Student (to 30 September 2014): £3

Cheques to *Historical Association Swansea Branch*:

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Morrleston
Swansea SA6 6JQ

www.haswansea.org.uk