GC350 Greek and Roman Civilizations, Essay Project
2022-2023

Welcome back! We hope you had a relaxing holiday and that your exams / assignments went well this past January. Looking ahead to the spring semester, GC350 is a module in which you can concentrate on a topic of your own choice, given a list of designated topics related to modules studied in years 2 or 3. The essay topics are given in outline on this page, with further details (description, contexts, annotated bibliography) in the document below. Please read through these options and make a ranked list (on the "Essay Preference Form") of your preferred topics. We will make every effort to give you your first choice.

In the first weeks of the semester, one introductory lecture (given by the relevant lecturer) will introduce each topic, survey its implications, and overview the supplied bibliography which will guide your reading, research, and writing over the semester. With this guidance, you are then expected to work fairly independently through the course of semester. This module is worth 5 ECTS credits, which means that it carries a notional workload of about 100 hours. Your essay will be expected to reflect an input of time and effort of that order, with wide reading in primary sources and secondary literature. You can think of this essay as a piece of work to culminate your undergraduate studies of Classics in Maynooth.

Essay Topics

Dr Desmond — Discuss the character of Odysseus as he appears in Homer's *Iliad.*

Dr O'Brien — 'In Sappho we hear for the first time in the Western world the direct words of an individual woman' (Barnstone: 2009, page 249). Discuss the ways Sappho's 'direct words' speak to us about the lives of women in ancient Greece.

Dr Moloney — How should we explain the prominence of imperial women during the reigns of the Julio-Claudian emperors (i.e., Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero)?

Dr McGroarty — What does Aristophanes' *Frogs* tell us about political circumstances and cultural environment of Athens in 405 BC? How typical is this play in terms of Aristophanic engagement with contemporary issues?

Dr Cadau — Discuss how female heroines interact with public space and challenge male prerogatives, authority, and roles, in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon,* Sophocles' *Antigone* and Euripides' *Medea*.

N.B. Whichever topic you choose, remember the deadline and the required word-count:

Deadline: Monday, 5 May 2023, and word-count: c. 5,000 words.

- Please write your word count at the end of your essay;
- You should submit your completed essay on Turnitin on the GC350 Moodle page;
- Consult your Student Handbook for information on:
  - essay presentation
  - conventions for citations (footnotes, bibliography), and
  - regulations on late submission and plagiarism.

Dr William Desmond
Homer's *Iliad* (relates to GC225)

Discuss the character of Odysseus as he appears in Homer's *Iliad.*

The hero of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is also an important figure in the *Iliad* also, even though this epic revolves around Achilles, a very different kind of hero. Odysseus appears in many roles throughout the *Iliad*—as an advisor, king and proxy for Agamemnon, diplomat, warrior. His character is bound up with the story of the Trojan War more generally, as the "sacker of cities" by whose cunning scheme the city of Troy was finally taken: here the *Iliad* may make more indirect reference to Odysseus' role in events which it does not directly narrate and which are taken up more explicitly in the *Odyssey* (e.g. Trojan Horse). This question invites you to explore the figure of Odysseus in the *Iliad* and by extension its treatment of the Trojan War: what role does he play, and how significant is he in the poem? You should focus primarily on the *Iliad*, though supplementary references to the *Odyssey* are welcome.

You should address several of the following questions:

1. What are the prominent characteristics of Odysseus in the *Iliad*? Is he brave? A good fighter as in his *aristeia*? Or is he sometimes a coward, a shirker? Is he honest, honourable, noble? Or duplicitous, lying, dishonourable? Kingly? Plebeian? Is he the same as, or similar to the many-sided (*polytropos*) man that Homer portrays in the *Odyssey*? Or is he depicted in a different way?
2. How is Odysseus brought into juxtaposition with other figures—Achilles, Agamemnon, Diomedes, Thersites, for example? How do such juxtapositions affect our view of him? Here you would do well to concentrate on *one* such comparison (e.g. Diomedes and Odysseus): do not overextend yourself.
3. How significant is the relationship of Athena and Odysseus in the *Iliad*? Does Athena show the same favour to him as she does in the *Odyssey*? How do such divine epiphanies happen? Is Odysseus' relation to the gods similar to, or different from that of Achilles and Helen?
4. Are there any significant (but less obvious) comparisons that can be made with other characters, such as Helen, Andromache, or Priam? What is Odysseus' stance towards non-combatants (women, children, the elderly), if any? How does he view slaves, e.g. those captured in war?
5. What kinds of epithets and similes does Homer use to describe Odysseus? How many does he use? Are they significant in context, or do they tend to be formulaic? Are they the same as those used in the *Odyssey*?
6. What stories about Odysseus does Homer choose to tell, selecting them from the larger mythological tradition? How much is told about the "history" of Odysseus? His past and future lives in Ithaca? His involvement in the wooing of Helen, or the recruitment for the war? Would you argue that Homer had "an *Odyssey* in mind while composing the *Iliad*" (Scott).
7. What kind of language does Odysseus use? Is his manner of speaking peculiar to him (as Achilles' is special to *him*), and if so does it reinforce his more general characterization? What "classic" patterns and exemplars might later orators find in Odysseus' speeches (such as the Embassy speech in *Iliad* 9)? Does his rhetoric vary from context to context (e.g. Thersites in *Iliad* 2, Embassy in *Iliad* 9).

N.B. You won't be able to address all the questions here, so you should make a selection that *you* would like to pursue and build a coherent interpretation or argument around this.

Select bibliography

Your main "source" will be Homer's *Iliad*, and you should work primarily from this, using secondary works as secondary—for background, further discussion, corroborating or contrasting views, and further inspiration.

The most helpful place to begin would be the analytic index of names at the end of several translations, particularly that of Rieu (Penguin): these will help you to jump straight to passages relevant to your essay. Use this to your advantage, while not forgetting that individual passages need to be interpreted in their immediate contexts, and in the context of the epic as a whole. Here is Rieu's entry for "Odysseus"—for your convenience! He gives the book (e.g. 2) and starting line number (e.g. 173) in his references (e.g. 2.173). In citing line numbers yourself, if you are using a verse translation, give the translator's line numbers (e.g. Fagles 3.15-20); if using a prose translation, then make your best estimate given the lines that the translator cites on each page. You might note that Lattimore's verse translation follows the Greek original fairly closely, and the Loeb Classics translation (with facing Greek) is available on the Library website .

> "ATHENE: advised by ATHENE 2.173, 5.676; closeness to ATHENE 10.278; helped by ATHENE 2.279, 11.438, 23.770; offers spoils to ATHENE 10.460.
>
> "Battlefield: advises the army must eat before battle 19.155, 230; boasts over Socus 11.440; coward? 8.94; kills his man 4.498, 5.677, 6.30, 11.322, 335, 420, 422, 425, 426, 447; night attack on Trojans 10.273; rallies Greeks 2.284, 11.312; retreats 11.461; retreats, failing to hear Diomedes 8.97; stops Greek flight 2.182; troops 2.631; wounded 11.437.
>
> "Other: attacks Thersites 2.246; brings men to order 2.188; complimented by Diomedes 10.243; described by Priam and Helen 3.191; father of Telemachus 2.260, 4.354; foot-race 23.755; has prize threatened 1.138, 145; old 23.790; insulted by Agamemnon 4.338; leads expedition to Chryse 1.311, 430; lectures Agamemnon 19.182; proposed for embassy to Achilles 9.169; recruits for the Trojan War 11.767; reflects on heroic duty 11.408; speech to Achilles 9.225; volunteers to challenge Hector 7.168; wrestling 23.709."

The following are all in the Library, but depending on your choice of themes, you should search JSTOR and *L'Année Philologique* for relevant articles and books.

Allan, W. 2012. *Homer: The Iliad*. Good overview of the poem and approaches.

Broeniman, C. 1996. "Demodocus, Odysseus, and the Trojan War in *Odyssey* 8," *Classical World* 90.1: 3-13

Cairns, D.L. (ed.). 2001. *Oxford Readings in Homer's* Iliad (Oxford). Collection of classic articles. Most directly useful may be R.B. Rutherford's "From the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey*" (pp. 117-46)

Coleman-Norton, P.R. 1927. "Odysseus in the *Iliad*," *Classical Weekly*, 21.10: 73-78. Informative article offering an "exhaustive inquiry into the references to Odysseus in the *Iliad*," followed by some short suggestions: excellent as a starting point and guide.

Edwards, M. 1987. *Homer: Poet of the* Iliad (Johns Hopkins University Press). A survey of aspects of the *Iliad* and an excellent place to start. See, for example, Chapter 10, "Speeches, soliloquies, and characterization" (pp. 88-97).

Finkelberg, M. 1995. "Odysseus and the Genus Hero'," *Greece & Rome* 42.1: 1-14. Compares Homer's Odysseus and Achilles; helpful for Question #2 above.

Finley, M.I. [1954] 1972. *The World of Odysseus*. Interesting sociological overview of the world described by Homer.

Franko, G.F. 2005. The Trojan Horse at the Close of the *Iliad*," *Classical Journal* 101.2: 121-23. Short article how the sack of Troy is evoked in the *Iliad*.

Griffin, J. 1980. *Homer on Life and Death*. Classic study, well worth consultation.

_____. 1986. “Homeric Words and Speakers,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 106: 36-57
Haft, A.J. 1990a. “The City-Sacker Odysseus in *Iliad* 2 and 10,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 120: 37-56. Directly useful for this essay.
_____. 1990b. “Odysseus’ Wrath and Grief in the *Iliad*: Agamemnon, the Ithacan King, and the Sack of Troy in Books 2, 4, and 14,” *Classical Journal* 85.2: 97-114. Again, directly relevant for this essay.
Kirk, G.S. (ed.) 1991. *The* Iliad*: A Commentary*. Volumes I-VI (Cambridge). For consultation on individual passages.
March, J. 1998. *Cassell’s Dictionary of Classical Mythology*. Helpful summary of the main stories and attributes of mythological figures: useful for gaining a handle on the whole “history” of Odysseus, and the mass of stories from which Homer makes a selection.
Marks, J. 2005. “The Ongoing Neikos: Thersites, Odysseus, and Achilleus,” *American Journal of Philology* 126.1: 1-31. Focusses on Thersites and hence much here is of tangential interest, but does have good material on Odysseus in relation to the other two figures.
Martin, R.P. 1989. *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the* Iliad
Morford, M., R. Lenardon, & M. Sham. 2009 *Classical Mythology*
Nagy, G. 1989. *Best of the Achaeans*: *Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*. Influential book that in Part I draws upon the allusion to a “quarrel” between Achilles and Odysseus (*Od*. 8.72-82) to interpret aspects of *Iliad* 9.
Owen, E.T. 1988. *Story of the* Iliad. Offers summary and running commentary.
Postlethwaite, N. 1988. “Thersites in the *Iliad*,” *Greece & Rome* 35.2: 123-136
Pache, C.O. 2000. “War Games: Odysseus at Troy,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 100: 15-23. Highlights some curious aspects of Odysseus in the *Iliad*: uniquely, Odysseus does not weep, and he smiles at the enemy
Pucci, Pietro. 1987. *Odysseus Polutropos: Intertextual Readings in the* Odyssey *and the* Iliad. Theoretically complex, not for the faint of heart.
Rutherford, R.B. 1996. *Homer*. Excellent overview of themes and scholarship.
Schein, S. 1984. *The Mortal Hero: An Introduction to Homer’s* Iliad.
Scott, J.A. 1918. “Did Homer Have an *Odyssey* in Mind while Composing the *Iliad*,” *Classical Journal* 13.8: 607-615. An old article but useful as an introduction for issues around the “Homeric question,” whether one poet composed both epics, and their stylistic and thematic unity
Segal, C. 1994. *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the* Odyssey. Highly recommended, contains some material on the *Iliad* also.
Silk, M. *The Iliad*. 2004. A very concise overview, available online (MU library)
Stanford, W.B. *The Ulysses Theme*. Classic work on the character: see Chapters I-V, especially III (“The Favourite of Athena”).
Whitman, C.H. 1965. *Homer and the Homeric Tradition*. Classic work with many insightful discussions throughout: see esp. Chapter VIII (“Homeric Character and the Tradition”) with its claim that “The Odysseus of the *Iliad* is quite the same man in essence [as that in the *Odyssey*], but viewed differently” (p. 176).

I strongly recommend beginning with the following works (in the order given), and moving onto a selection of others, depending on the focus you eventually chose to take:

1. Coleman-Norton 1927
2. Haft, 1990a, 1990b
3. Pache 2000, Finkelberg 1995
4. Griffin 1980, Edwards 1987, Allan 2012 as good overviews of Homeric characterization, Homeric style and orality, heroic values.

5. Do not miss Stanford's classic study of the evolution of Odysseus as a literary character from the *Iliad* on.

6. Browse through some of the other items in this bibliography. Follow up their references, and see where it leads you! Going to the library and browsing through the stacks can be the best way to get new ideas, but this may not be possible in the near term given the pandemic restrictions. All the articles listed above are available on JSTOR, accessible through the Library website. I will provide links to a few of them, and will also post selections from books (e.g. Edwards 1987) that are not available online.

N.B. Please use the bibliography provided here, as your first resource. Do not rely on Google searches, as these can easily take you to random online essays, blogs, opinion pieces etc. which are often of lower quality, or written by non-classicists—none of which is appropriate for a research paper like this. You will be expected to show serious engagement with at least 5-6 scholarly works from relevant journals and books.

All of the above is either in the MU Library, available online through the MU Library or on JSTOR

The above bibliography will provide further bibliographies, which will provide further reference to the topic given. The areas touched on above are central to this essay, but they are not exhaustive of what you might include.

Dr Maeve O'Brien
(relates to GC215)

'In Sappho we hear for the first time in the Western world the direct words of an individual woman' (Barnstone: 2009, page 249). Discuss the ways Sappho's 'direct words' speak to us about the lives of women in ancient Greece.

How do I make a start?
Read the poems and decide what you think first. Consult the Bibliography below for texts of the poems (please do not use the internet), background information, and critical approaches. Keep in mind that literary representations of women may be viewed as male constructs appropriated by men for the purpose of speaking about male concerns rather than as simple reflections of social reality. When a woman, Sappho, uses lyric form she is a poet composing in a predominantly male tradition (see Eva Stehle: 1981), so how can her literary representations of women be viewed? How does her poetic voice gain purchase in such a tradition (see Wilson:1996)? In what ways is her poetry different from a male poet working according to the same poetic conventions? If she is not a 'historian documenting her own life' (see Winkler:2002), what can the performative contexts of her poetry (see Lardinois: 2001) and the social world they describe (see Parker:1993) tell us about the attitudes to, and the lives of women, including female poets, in ancient Greece?

Where can I read Sappho's poetry? On Sappho, see WLGR Document numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 6A. On other women writers and artists and intellectuals, Rhodopis, WLGR 228, compare 275E; Erinna WLGR 10, 11; Nossis, WLGR 16-21; Anyte WLGR 12-15; Praxilla, WLGR 9; Aristarete, WLGR 307; Hipparchia, WLGR 217, 218; Phintys, WLGR 208; Axiothea, WLGR 216. Online in the library database Loeb Classical Library https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL142/1982/volume.xml.

Barnard, Mary. 1986. *Sappho: A New Translation* Berkeley. University of California Press 888.01 SAP A little book, but a good translation of the poems. These hundred poems and fragments constitute virtually all of Sappho that survives and effectively bring to life the woman whom the Greeks consider to be their greatest lyric poet. There is a *Forward* by D. Fitts – the Latin quotation he uses at the start translates as 'Not all of me will die: a great part of me will avoid Death'. Note that Barnard uses her own system of numeration for the poems. You can also read Sappho's poetry in Barnstone, W. 2009. *Ancient Greek Lyrics* (second edition). Bloomington. Indiana University Press (Electronic resource). Read the forty or so full poems (as opposed to fragments) of Sappho's extant output, here. Also Barnstone, W. 1988. *Sappho and the Greek Lyric Poets*. Shocken Books. New York MAIN 884.01 BAR (very similar to Barnstone (2009) above, e.g. quotation in essay title is page 249 in the electronic copy). The story of the precarious transmission of Sappho's poetry is illustrated by Mulroy, D. 1992. *Early Greek Lyric Poetry Translated with an Introduction and Commentary* University of Michigan Press, pages 87-98 MAIN 884.01 MUL. Sappho's poetry can be read in Diane Rayor's book (details below), pages 51-81 and notes on pages 159-169; Chapter 5 of Margaret Williamson's book (see below for full details) has a selection of the poems with accompanying critical interpretations. If you are interested in women's poetry, not only Sappho's, read Jo Gill, Halliwell, M. & Mousley, A. 2007. *Women's Poetry* Edinburgh University Press. E-book, pages 51-55, and printed book page numbers pp.33-38.

What do others think? While all below are helpful, * marks texts that might be more helpful

Cantarella, E.1987. *Pandora's Daughters: The Role and Status of Women in Greek and Roman Antiquity*. Translated from 1981 Italian by M.B. Fant, with a foreword by M.R. Lefkowitz. Chapter 6 'Homosexuality and Love', 77-89. . MAIN 305.42 CAN This book gives some interesting background to the attitudes to 'love' and can be read along with Dover, K.J. 1984. 'Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour' 143-157, in J. Peradotto, & J.P. Sullivan (eds.), *Women in the Ancient World: the* Arethusa *Papers*. New York. 305.4094 PER Some interesting material here on the power and nature of *eros* and compare Wilson (see details below), Chapter 3 'A Woman's desire', pp.68-86.

duBois, Page. 1995. *Sappho is Burning*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press. 888.01 SAPc Chapter 1 'Fragmentary Introduction' 1-30 on the reactions of feminist critics, including herself, who encounter Sappho. To know all we know about Sappho is to know little (duBois). Her poetry, dating

from the seventh century B.C.E., comes to us in fragments, her biography as speculation. How is it then, Page duBois asks, that this poet has come to signify so much? *Sappho Is Burning* offers a new reading of Sappho that acknowledges the poet's distance and difference from us. She is named as the tenth muse, yet the nine books of her poetry survive only in fragments. She disorients, troubles, undoes many certitudes in the history of poetry, the history of philosophy, the history of sexuality. DuBois argues that we need to read Sappho again.

Greene, Ellen. 2002. 'Subjects, Objects, and Erotic Symmetry in Sappho's Fragments', 82-105, in Rabinowitz and Auanger (eds.) *Among Women: from the Homosocial to the Homoerotic in the Ancient World.* MAIN 305.489664 RAB New interpretations of the evidence offered by the literary works of Sappho are offered here by Greene.

Hauser, Emily. 2016. 'In her own words: the semantics of female authorship in ancient Greece, from Sappho to Nossis', *Ramus* 45 (2), 133–164 Downloaded fromhttps://www.cambridge.org/core. Maynooth University, on 18 Dec 2018 at 16:13:51.This interesting and lengthy paper looks at how Sappho, and Nossis in particular 'adopt the mask of a male poet to explore the connection between gender, authorship and voice.'

Katz, M.A. 'Sappho and her Sisters: Women in Ancient Greece', *Signs* 25.2.(Winter 2000), 505-531, and on approaches to Sappho especially pages 509-527.

Lanser, S. 1992. *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice,* Chapter 1 'Toward a Feminist Poetics of Narrative Voice', 3-24. e-book and book 823.0099287 LAN

*Lardinois, A. 'Keening Sappho: Female Speech Genres in Sappho's Poetry', Chapter 5 pages 75-92 in Lardinois, A. & L. McClure (eds.). 2001. *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society.* Princeton. DAY LOAN 880.9352 LAR This collection attempts to recover the voices of women in antiquity from a variety of perspectives: how they spoke, where they could be heard, and how their speech was adopted in literature and public discourse. Lardinois' essay maintains that Sappho modelled her poetry on women's public speech genres: i.e., prayers to goddesses, laments, praise of young brides.

*Lefkowitz, M.R. 1981. *Heroines and Hysterics,* Chapter 9 'Critical Stereotypes and the Poetry of Sappho' 59-68. London. MAIN 305.4093 LEF on the dangers of biographical criticism.

*Kivilo, Maarit. 2010. *Mnemosyne*, Supplements, Volume 322: *Early Greek Poets' Lives : The Shaping of the Tradition.* (Electronic resource). Chapter 7 'Sappho', pp.167-200, on how fictions about Sappho's life and loves impinge on criticism of the poetry.

*McIntosh Snyder, J. 1989. *The Woman and the Lyre: Women Writers in Classical Greece and Rome*, Bristol Classical Press and Illinois University Press. MAIN 870.9001 SNY Chapter 1 'Sappho of Lesbos', 1-37. Note map of where the poets lived. 'Faint though the voices of the women of Greek and Roman antiquity may be in some cases, their sound, if we listen carefully enough, can fill many of the gaps and silences of women's past', from the 'Conclusion'. The author studies the available fragments of Sappho, ranging from poems on mythological themes to traditional wedding songs and love poems, and demonstrates her considerable influence on Western thought and literature.

*Parker, H. 'Sappho Schoolmistress' *TAPA* 123 (1993), 309-351 (esp.305-331).

Rayor, Diane J. 1991. *Sappho's lyre: archaic lyric and women poets of ancient Greece,* translations, with introduction and notes; 'Foreword' ix-xix by W.R. Johnson. Berkeley: University of California Press 888.01 SAP. Sappho sang her poetry to the accompaniment of the lyre on the Greek island of Lesbos over 2500 years ago. This book has the complete surviving works of the ancient Greek women poets. Note especially here the 'Foreword', xvi-xix, and 'Sappho', i.e., poems on pages 51-81 with notes on pages 159-169. **Note the numeration here, No. 8 = Barnard's 39 = traditional LP 31**. Make clear from the start the numeration you are using.

Segal, C. 1998. *Aglaia: The Poetry of Alcman, Sappho, Pindar, Bacchylides, and Corinna.* Lanham, Md. Rowman & Littlefield 880.01 SEG, Chapter 3 'Eros and Incantation: Sappho and Oral Poetry', pages 43-61. In this book Segal provides close readings of the texts, and then studies the literary form and language of early Greek lyric, the poets' conception of their aims and their art, the use of mythical paradigms, and the relation of the poems to their social context.

Sorkin Rabinowitz, N.2002.Chapter 1 'Introduction' 1-33, in Auanger, L. & N. Sorkin Rabinowitz (eds.), *Among Women: From the Homosocial to the Homerotic in the Ancient World.* Austin. University of Texas Press MAIN 305.489664 RAB Complex but persevere.

Stehle, E.1981. 'Sappho's Private World', 45-61 in H. P. Foley (ed) *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* Routledge reprint 1994 MAIN 305.40938 FOL On Sappho's use of 'male' lyric tradition.

Williamson, Margaret. 1995. Sappho's Immortal daughters. Harvard University Press. 888.01 SAP *Read 'Poetry and Politics, pages 60-89. 'Legend' pages 5-33, is an account of Sappho's 'voice' in the ancient world from images of her on vase painting, fictions about her e.g., her obsessive love for Phaon to her appearance in Ovid's *Heroides* 15, where Ovid writes her imagined letter to Phaon.

*Wilson, Lyn H. 1996. *Sappho's Sweet-bitter Songs: Configurations of Female and Male in Ancient Greek Lyric***.** London; New York. Routledge.888.01 SAPc. Read 'Introduction' pp.1-20 This is a good overview of Sappho's work as a 'site of difference' (p.14) where distinctive 'feminine' values attain prominence. Of interest too is Chapter 1 'Aphrodite' pages 21-42. Late 20th-century theories of feminism, psychoanalysis and literary criticism are applied to Sappho's lyrics. In the 'Introduction' the author states that her investigation centres on sexual difference, and her method is to compare Sappho's poems/songs with the lyric poetry of other male authors composing songs between the seventh and the fifth centuries B.C.

*Winkler, J.J.2002.'Double consciousness in Sappho's Lyrics' Chapter 2, 39-75 in L. K McClure(ed.), *Sexuality and Gender in the Ancient World: Readings and Sources.* Oxford. ebook. Discusses what he sees as consciousness of both public and private in Sappho's poetry.

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All of the above is either in the MU Library, available online through the MU Library or on JSTOR

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Dr Eoghan Moloney
(relates to GC217)

How should we explain the prominence of imperial women during the reigns of the Julio-Claudian emperors (i.e., Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero)?

One remarkable aspect of the reigns of the Julio-Claudians is the prominent roles played by the women of the imperial family: that is, by the mothers, wives, and sisters of the various emperors. At least, this is the impression given by the sources – but you already know that these are often unreliable, whether because of their hostility to the very idea of an empire, or simply because of their interest in retelling the most salacious gossip. In preparing your answer to this question, then, you must first ask yourself whether or not it is actually true that women had so much influence in imperial politics. This means you will have to do some careful investigation of the sources. What exactly are these women shown to be doing? Are the claims about them plausible? That is, were Livia and Agrippina, for example, really so devoted to poisons and other schemes?

So one part of the answer may be that the importance and the influence of women has been overstated in our sources. If you think this, you will have to explain why and show me what the evidence is. But the likelihood is that, even if it is overstated, it will still be the case that imperial women under the Julio-Claudians had more power than we would normally expect. What was it, then, that brought about this situation? Why were women suddenly so prominent – so much so that they could be presented as the real power behind the throne? It won't be enough to say that they were influential because every man is influenced by his mother or by his wife. After all, Roman politicians had mothers and wives under the Republic, and we don't hear too much about the political influence of Caesar's mother or Cicero's wives. What is it that had changed between the Republic and the early empire to bring these women into prominence?

A lot of your reading will be based around biography and will deal with individuals and their personalities: this is true from Suetonius himself right down to Anthony Barrett's books on Livia and Agrippina. Don't get too distracted by this: the answer is unlikely to be that imperial women were so important in this period because they just happened to have exceptional personalities. Think instead in systematic terms: what is it that made women important under an empire which didn't matter so much in a republic?

READING:
Note: you should focus your answer (and choice of evidence) on the period covered by the GC217 *Power and the People* module: AD 14-180. Remember not to be drawn into just telling the story, which is a likely result of only reading the biographies of these women. Instead, move as quickly as you can on to the material which deals in *explanations*: as such, you should read at least three of the items listed under 'Specific Studies'. You also need to back up your argument with examples from the primary sources. Don't just take these on trust from the secondary sources you read: look up the relevant examples in the primary sources and quote them from (only) the translations recommended below.

Biographies of imperial women (for introduction and orientation only):
- A. Barrett, *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome* (New Haven, 2002).
- A. Barrett, *Agrippina: Sex, Power and Politics in the Early Empire* (New Haven, 1996).
- E. Fantham, *Julia Augusti: the Emperor's Daughter* (London, 2006).
- D. Shotter, 'Agrippina the Elder: a Woman in a Man's World', *Historia* 49 (2000) 341-57.

Specific Studies (read a range of these, and then make up your own mind):
- L. Allason-Jones, *Roman Woman* (London 2000)
- R.A. Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome* (London 1992) chs. 10-13 – basically a survey of the main events involving women, but not going deep into explanations.

- M. Corbier, 'Male power and legitimacy through women: the *domus Augusta* under the Julio-Claudians', in R. Hawley and B. Levick (eds) *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments* (London 1995) – examines the political reasons for women's power.
- S. Dixon, *Reading Roman Women: Sources, Genres and Real Life* (London 2001)
- G.G. Fagan, 'Messalina's Folly', *Classical Quarterly* 52 (2002) 566-79 – close analysis of a single episode, showing that women's power operated only within certain limits.
- S. Fischler, 'Social Stereotypes and Historical Analysis: the Case of the Imperial Women at Rome', in L.J. Archer et al (eds) *Women in Ancient Societies* (London 1994) 115-33 – obviously deals with stereotypes, in the sources and in Roman society generally.
- A. Freisenbruch, *The First Ladies of Rome. The Women Behind the Caesars* (London 2010)
- J. Ginsburg, *Representing Agrippina: Constructions of Female Power in the Early Roman Empire* (New York 2006) – contrasts the hostile image of Agrippina in Tacitus with the image put forward in official propaganda; a difficult but rewarding read.
- S.R. Joshel, 'Female Desire and the Discourse of Empire: Tacitus' Messalina' in J.P Hallett and M.B. Skinner (eds) *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton 1997) – gender theory.
- K. Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: Inventing Private Life* (Oxford 2005) – confine yourself to the epilogue on Nero.
- H. Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* (Cambridge 2011)
- S. Murnaghan & S.R. Joshel ed., *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture* (London 1998)
- S.B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York 1995)
- L.W. Rutland, 'Women as Makers of Kings in Tacitus' *Annals*', *Classical World* 72 (1978) 15-29 [via JSTOR only] – heavy on narrative and Latin but gives a detailed account of the moments at which Tacitus uses stereotypes in describing imperial women.
- F. Santoro L'Hoir, 'Tacitus and Women's Usurpation of Power', *Classical World* 88 (1994) 5-25 [via JSTOR only] – similarly focuses on the stereotyping of imperial women and argues that Tacitus saw their prominence as reflecting the end of 'proper' politics.

Primary Sources (use the secondary material to identify the relevant sections):

- Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius*, tr. D. Hurley in *The Caesars* (Indianapolis 2011); or tr. C. Edwards in *Lives of the Caesars* (Oxford 2000); or tr. R. Graves and revised by M. Grant in *The Twelve Caesars* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979). Various reprints of the latter exist, but you should cite 1979 as the original date of the revised text.
- Tacitus, *Annals* tr. J.C. Yardley in *The Annals: the Reigns of Tiberius, Claudius and Nero* (Oxford 2008); or tr. M. Grant in *The Annals of Imperial Rome* (Harmondsworth 1977). Again, various reprints exist; note, however, that the Penguin edition doesn't follow the usual division of the *Annals* into books and chapters, and so for citations it is probably best to use the Oxford edition.
- Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, tr. E. Cary in *Dio's Roman History* (9 vols, London: Loeb, 1914-27) – this translation is also available online at Lacus Curtius.

All of the above is either in the MU Library, available online through the MU Library or on JSTOR

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Dr Kieran McGroarty
(relates to GC224)

What does Aristophanes' *Frogs* tell us about political circumstances and cultural environment of Athens in 405 BC? How typical is this play in terms of Aristophanic engagement with contemporary issues?

In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Dionysus (the god of drama) goes down to the underworld to bring back a tragic poet who he hopes will 'save the city'. Most of the play is taken up with a contest between the dead tragic poets Aeschylus and Euripides: they compete, each trying to prove that he is the best. For this reason, the play has received much attention from those who are interested in literary criticism and the question of what makes a good tragedy. However, constantly hovering in the background of this contest, and the play as a whole, is the reason for Dionysus' trip: the city of Athens is in trouble and needs saving. In fact, this reflects the real situation of Athens in 405 BC, which is the date of this comedy's production. The city *was* in trouble; her internal political situation was in a volatile state and Sparta had troops camped just outside the walls. Aristophanes engages with this contemporary situation in his comedy and finds a means to offer the people of Athens advice through the words of his chorus and characters. Aristophanes' *Frogs* then, is potentially a rich source for contemporary attitudes to the political circumstances and cultural environment of Athens in 405 BC. *Frogs* is made even more attractive and valuable as a source by the lack of other evidence for historical events in precisely this period – Thucydides' history only tells of events up to 411 BC, and the other sources for this period (Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution*, Xenophon's *Hellenica*, and Diodorus Siculus) have their own problems, as you will discover. So seemingly, *Frogs* is a gift as evidence for assessing the historical period – yet the very thing that makes it so valuable, i.e., the lack of other evidence, also makes its use problematic; how can we judge the attitudes towards events when there is not much other evidence for what actually happened? Even more fundamentally, can we use a dramatic text as historical evidence? What are the potential problems with this? These are exactly the kinds of issues that you should be exploring in your essay.

This essay question invites you to work with *Frogs* closely and offer an analysis of what it can tell us as an historical source. You will need to read and re-read the text – familiarize yourself with it and then pick out specific lines or passages which you think are significant in relation to this question (i.e., those which appear to show engagement with contemporary issues) – you will find it helpful to use the notes in the back of the translation, which should explain references or allusion to contemporary affairs. Remember the question asks you about contemporary attitudes to the *political circumstances and cultural environment* – so be on the look-out for allusions to all aspects of Athenian society. Once you have identified these passages, then you should be ready to discuss them in depth in your essay – analyse what they tell us and the attitudes they reflect (or imply). What are the problems with trying to determine the attitudes revealed in certain passages? (i.e., what difference does it make that these appear in a comedy? Or in the mouth of a certain character?). You should also begin to identify trends – does Aristophanes always use the same technique for engaging with the contemporary in each of the passages, which you discuss?

Once you have looked at *Frogs* in depth, then the second half of the question invites you to branch out and consider *Frogs* in relation to Aristophanes' other comedies; in particular, it is the engagement with the contemporary that you should be comparing. You need to ask yourself whether the engagement that you have identified in *Frogs* is typical. How different is the method and mode of engagement in other plays compared to *Frogs*? You might pick one or two of the other plays to consider; in particular, you might find it helpful to think about *Acharnians*, *Knights*, or *Lysistrata*. Does Aristophanes use the same techniques for engaging with the contemporary in these plays? Does he always have the same purpose? Is there something special about the circumstances of *Frogs*, which makes this engagement different? *Frogs* is the only comedy to have apparently been re-staged – is this significant? What bearing might it have on the question on how far the engagement in *Frogs* is 'typical'?

READING:

Translation and commentary

- Aristophanes: *Frogs and Other Plays* (intro. S. Dutta, trans. D. Barrett), (London: Penguin, 2007) – **You should use this translation for the quotations in your essay.**
- Aristophanes *Frogs* edited by A.H. Sommerstein (Warminster: Aris & Philips, 1996). Read the introduction to this and you will find, in addition, that it has excellent notes in the back on specific lines.
- Aristophanes, *Frogs*, edited by K.J. Dover (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993). See especially pp. 24-37 of the introduction, and, in addition, the commentary (at the back) for notes on specific passages of the play.

Historical context – sources and scholarship

Sources

- Before looking at the sources, read about each author in **ch.1** of Buckley, T., *Aspects of Greek History 750-323 BC* (London: Routledge, 2010²). **Available Online through the Library**
- Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*, translated by H. Rackham (London, 1956)–read specific passages, chs. 29-35 (this will take you a little beyond 405 BC but gives a good idea of the political climate around the time of the production of *Frogs*).
- Xenophon, *Hellenica*, translated by R. Warner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978); read book 2.
- Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca* (*Library of History*), translated by C.H. Oldfather (London, 1936); read book 13, chs. 39-42, 49-51, 68-79, and 97-107.
- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, translation by R. Warner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954); read book 8 on the oligarchic coup. **You ought to possess a copy of this already**.

Discussions of the historical period

- Buckley, T., *Aspects of Greek History 750-323 BC* (London: Routledge, 2010²), ch. 23. **Available Online through the Library**
- Ehrenberg, V., *From Solon to Socrates*, (London, 2014), esp. pp. 309-332. **Available Online through the Library**

Scholarship on the Frogs

- Arnott, W.G., 'A lesson from the *Frogs*' *Greece and Rome*, 38 (1991), pp. 18-22. **Online at Jstor**
- Griffith, M., *Aristophanes' Frogs*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- MacDowell, D.M., *Aristophanes and Athens: an introduction to the plays* (Oxford: OUP, 1995). You will find the chapter on the *Frogs* in this a very helpful starting point. **There are 6 copies in the library, 2 on Day Loan**.
- Moorton, R., 'Aristophanes on Alcibiades', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 29 (1988), pp. 345-359. **Available Online through the Library**
- Sommerstein, A.H., 'Kleophon and the restaging of *Frogs*' in *Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis*, edited by Sommerstein *et al*. (Bari: Levante, 1993), pp. 461-476.
- Worthington, I., 'Aristophanes' *Frogs* and Arginusae' *Hermes*, 117 (1989), pp. 359-363. **Online at Jstor**

Religious element

- Kearns, E., 'Religious practice and belief' in *A Companion to the Classical Greek World* edited by K. Kinzl, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 311-326. **Available Online through the Library**
- Segal, C.P., 'The character and cults of Dionysus and the unity of the Frogs', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 65 (1961), 207-242. **Online at Jstor**

General discussions of Aristophanes and politics

- Cartledge, P., *Aristophanes and his Theatre of the Absurd* (Bristol: BCP, 1989). This is a very short book and will give you a good overview.

- De Ste Croix, G.E.M., 'The political outlook of Aristophanes', ch. 4 in *Oxford Readings in Aristophanes,* edited by E. Segal (Oxford: OUP, 1996), pp. 42-64.
- Dover, K.J., *Aristophanic Comedy* (Berkeley, 1972).
- Gomme, A.W., 'Aristophanes and Politics', ch. 3 in *Oxford Readings in Aristophanes*, edited by E. Segal (Oxford: OUP, 1996), pp. 29-41.
- Halliwell, S., 'Comic satire and freedom of speech in Classical Athens' *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 111 (1991), pp. 48-70. **Online at Jstor**
- Henderson, J., 'The demos and the comic competition', in *Nothing to do with Dionysos* edited by J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin (Princeton: PUP, 1990), pp. 271-313. This is useful on the relationship between comedy and politics in general. [Also available in E. Segal, *Oxford Readings in Aristophanes*]
- Hans-Joachim Newiger, 'War and peace in the comedy of Aristophanes' in *Aristophanes: Essays in Interpretation*, Yale Classical Studies Vol. xxvi, edited by J. Henderson, (Cambridge, 1996), 219-237. [Also available in E. Segal, *Oxford Readings in Aristophanes*] – this discussion focuses on *Peace*, *Lysistrata* and *Acharnians* – so will be helpful if you choose to discuss one of those plays. Be careful not to be side-tracked if you use this (stay focused on the question that you have been asked).
- Redfield, J., 'Comedy, Tragedy, and Politics in Aristophanes "Frogs", *Chicago Review*, Vol. 15, No. 4, (1962), pp. 107-121. **Online at Jstor**
- Segal, E., (ed.) *Oxford Readings in Aristophanes*, (Oxford: OUP, 1996).
- Sommerstein, A.H., 'Aristophanes and the Events of 411', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 97, (1977), pp. 112-126. **Online at Jstor**
- Sommerstein, A.H., *et al*. (eds), *Tragedy, Comedy and the* Polis, (Bari: Levante, 1993) – a collection of essays, you will find some helpful discussions in this.
- Vickers, M., *Pericles on Stage: Political Comedy in Aristophanes' Early Plays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997). This does not discuss the *Frogs*, but it will be helpful for when you are looking at the other Aristophanic plays.

All of the above is either in the MU Library, available online through the MU Library or on JSTOR

The above bibliography will provide further bibliographies, which will provide further reference to the topic given. The areas touched on above are central to this essay, but they are not exhaustive of what you might include.

Dr Cosetta Cadau
Greek Tragedy (relates to GC204)

Discuss how female heroines interact with public space and challenge male prerogatives, authority and roles, in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon,* Sophocles' *Antigone* and Euripides' *Medea*.

GUIDELINES

In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, a noble king is murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra, upon his victorious return home from the Trojan War. During his absence, the queen has taken over his role as ruler of Argos, together with her lover. Aegisthus, and has planned to kill Agamemnon, out of revenge and/or unwillingness to give up her power. Clytemnestra resorts to oratorical skills and guile to lead her unknowing husband to his death and employs the same weapons with the chorus and Cassandra, with different outcomes. Public speaking and *agon* (verbal battle), are also central to Sophocles' *Antigone*, where the protagonist challenges the laws (*nomoi*) of the *polis*, in the form of ruler's authority, while attempting to abide by private and religious customs (*oikos*) and bury the body of her rebel brother Polynices, defying Creon's edict not to do so. In the Euripidean play, Medea also recurs to craft and emerges as the better speaker in her several interactions with Creon, Aegeus, and Jason. Her story also creates tension points with rulership and religion, albeit in rather different ways from the other plays.

You are asked to discuss and compare these three tragedies, by focusing on how public speaking, rulership and agency in public space are presented and approached by Clytemnestra, Antigone and Medea.

A suggested approach to the task is to begin by carefully reading the plays in depth, making notes while keeping the points mentioned above in mind. Some key questions that may help you at this point are:

- What relationship do the three characters have with public space? Where do they act, enter, and exit from? Where did women traditionally live in the Greek world? Consider their location within the *oikos* and on stage.
- What attitude do the three characters have towards rulership and authority?
- Women had a profound and mysterious connection with the divine in the Greek world: is this reflected (and how?) in the three plays? Explore the interaction of human and divine laws.

It might be useful to consider and contrast the characters not only within the chronological succession of the plays, but also in terms of their shared familial roles (Clytemnestra and Medea are two mothers, Antigone is a daughter and a sister). This leads to further considerations about their duties from a legal and a religious perspective: their dilemmas (whether to kill a husband, whether to bury a brother, whether to kill the children) become the predicament of three women who are also subject to the laws of the gods. Consider, thus, different types of justice, and subordination of human laws to divine laws. How do the characters respond to these two forces? How do they make peace (if they do) with human requirements, and with divine duties? Their actions lead to acts that are questionable as they defy the laws, but they also challenge the audience as they pose serious moral issues: what is right and what is wrong? The answer is not always the same for human beings and gods.

This module is worth 5 ECTS credits, which means that it carries a notional workload of about **100 hours**. Your essay will be expected to reflect an input of time and effort of that order.

PRESCRIBED TEXTS

The **recommended translations** of the three plays which are **the essential texts** for this topic are:

- Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, tr. C. Collard (in Aeschylus: *Oresteia*; Oxford, 2003 [Oxford World's Classics]).
- Sophocles, *Antigone*, tr. H. D. F. Kitto (in Sophocles: *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King*, *Electra*, ed. E. Hall; Oxford, 1998 [Oxford World's Classics]).

- Euripides, *Medea*, tr. J. Davie, intro. R. Rutherford (in Euripides: *Medea and Other Plays*, revised edition; London: Penguin, 2003).

The Aeschylus and the Euripides translations are the ones prescribed for the Greek Tragedy module in 2020-2021. Copies of the Sophocles translation may be purchased from the University Bookshop, and are in any case widely available.
You should use these specific translations if at all possible. If you use a different translation, you must be sure to supply its bibliographic details in the bibliography at the end of your essay.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
All the items listed in this bibliography are either available on the Library bookshelves or accessible electronically through LibrarySearch or the traditional Library catalogue or via the 'eBooks and eJournals' link on the Library home page. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are those which seem to me especially helpful or important, but that is a very rough judgement call and you should **on no account** think that if an item is **not** asterisked it is therefore not worth reading. You are discouraged from limiting **your reading to material accessible electronically**; many useful items are available only in hard copy. Given the current circumstances and challenges posed to travelling to campus by Covid-19, please contact me if you need any of the items listed below that are not available in electronic format through the Library.
Using the index of a book is a very good way to track down further helpful material: try it in the case of Easterling (1997) or Hall (2010), for example.

Please do not under any circumstances be tempted to lift material from 'cheat sites' on the internet and pass it off as your own.
See the University's policy document on plagiarism, which may be found at https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document//MU%20Policy%20on%20Plagiarism%20%28December%202020%29.pdf).

Greek tragedy: general
P. E. Easterling (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1997)
S. Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1986).
E. Hall, *Greek Tragedy: Suffering under the Sun* (Oxford, 2010.
R. Scodel, *An Introduction to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, 2010).
I. C. Storey and A. Allan (eds.), *A Guide to Ancient Greek Drama* (Malden, MA and Oxford, 2005), esp. chs. 1-2 (pp. 1-155).
O. Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action* (London, 1978).

Aeschylus: *Oresteia*
*B. Goward, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (London, 2005).
*P. E. Easterling, 'Presentation of Character in Aeschylus', *Greece & Rome* 20 (1973), 3-19 [= I. McAuslan and P. Walcot (eds.), *Greek Tragedy* (Oxford, 1993), 12-28].
*S. Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1986), 1-56.
S. Goldhill, *Aeschylus: The Oresteia* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 2004).
A. Sommerstein, *Aeschylean Tragedy* (2nd edn., London, 2010), 121-212.
O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford, 1977), 276-415 (333-361 on *Libation Bearers*).
R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Studies in Aeschylus* (Cambridge, 1983), 132-153, esp. *132-145.

Sophocles: *Antigone*
*M. W. Blundell, *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies: A Study in Sophocles and Greek Ethics* (Cambridge, 1989), 149-183.
*S. Blundell, 'Women in drama' in *Women in Ancient Greece*, 172-80.
J. Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York 2000).
H. P. Foley, 'Sacrificial virgins: Antigone as moral agent' in *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton 2001), 172-200.

H. Foley and C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Assumptions and the creation of meaning: reading Sophocles' Antigone', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 109 (1989), 134-48.
*M. Griffith, *Sophocles. Antigone* (Cambridge, 1999), 1-68 and 25-66.
B. M. W. Knox, *The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1964), 1-61.
C. Segal, *Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1981), 249-291.
W. B. Tyrrell and Larry J. B., *Recapturing Sophocles' Antigone* (Lanham 1998).
F. Zeitlin, *Playing the Other* (Chicago, 1996), Chapter 4.

Euripides: *Medea*

*W. Allan, *Euripides, Medea* (London 2002), esp. 45-79.
*R. Blondel, Introduction to Medea in *Women on the Edge: Four Plays by Euripides* (New York and London 1999), 149-215.
H. P. Foley, 'Medea's divided self' in *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton 2001), 243-71.
E. Griffiths, *Medea* (London and New York 2006).
*C. A.E. Luschnig, *Granddaughter of the Sun: A Study of Euripides' Medea* (Leiden 2007).
D. J. Mastronarde, 'Introduction' in *Euripides, Medea* (Cambridge 2002), 1-57.
*C.M.J. Sicking, 'Jason's case' in *Distant Companions* (Leiden 1998), 63-76.
M. Williamson, 'A woman's place in Euripides' Medea' in Anton Powell, *Euripides, Women, and Sexuality* (London 1990), 16-31.

Cosetta Cadau
January 2023

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