

Greek and Roman Civilization
Module GC307 (Autumn repeat 2019)
Strange Creatures: Anthropology in Antiquity

Deadline for submissions: **Friday, 9 August 2019 by 5pm**

TWO COPIES of each essay are to be submitted **with cover sheets** to the
Department Office

NOTE: This module will be assessed by *two* pieces of written work.
N.B. there will be *no exam*.

FIRST WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

Length: c. 2,000 words (40% of marks for the module):

Survey the types of noble savages found in ancient sources. What are their distinctive characteristics, and how would they have resonated with an ancient audience?

Source material: A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, chapter 11, 'The Noble Savage in Antiquity', sources quoted in the lecture notes, and any other relevant ancient sources (sculpture, vase paintings etc.).

Suggested Bibliography

Works highlighted in bold are the most accessible or directly useful.

Almagor, E., and Skinner, J., (eds.), 2013, *Ancient Ethnography: New Approaches*, London, Bloomsbury.

An interesting but fairly mixed collection of essays on ancient ethnography. See esp. Greg Woolf, 'Ethnography and the Gods in Tacitus' *Germania*',

Gruen, E., 2010, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*, Princeton.

On how the old 'description of the Other by contrasts' tradition of scholarship needs to be updated to 'description by contrasts and parallels'.

Hartog, F., 2001, *Memories of Odysseus: Frontier Tales from Ancient Greece*, Chicago, (esp., 'The Invention of the Barbarian', and 'The Limits of Arcadia').

A useful collection of essays by Hartog. An easier read than *The Mirror of Herodotus*.

Murphy, T, 2004, *Pliny the Elder's Natural History: the Empire in the Encyclopedia*, Oxford. Esp. pp. 77-128 on the ethnographic tradition.

Romm, J. S., 1992, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

A very accessible and stimulating book on how everything weird and wonderful ends up at the edges of the ancient world, or, rather, how the margins create weirdness.

Skinner, J., 2012, *The Invention of Greek Ethnography: from Homer to Herodotus*, Oxford.

On the early tradition of Greek ethnography before the Persian Wars.

SECOND WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

Deadline: Friday, 9 August 2019 at 5pm

TWO COPIES of each essay are to be submitted **with cover sheets** to the Department Office

Length: c. 3,000 words (60% of marks for the module):

Either

'For Lucretius, cities were simply a mistake in human cultural evolution.' To what degree, if at all, do you agree with this judgement of Lucretius' attitude in his account of prehistory in book 5 of *On the Nature of the Universe*?

Or

'Good morality is more effective in Germany than good laws are elsewhere.' (Tacitus, *Germania*, 19). Discuss the ways in which Tacitus' concerns about Roman society colour his account of the Germans in the *Germania*.

p.t.o

Or

Discuss whether the Tupinamba are more than simply noble savage stereotypes in Jean De Léry's *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*.

Suggested Bibliographies

Works highlighted in bold are the most accessible or directly useful.

Lucretius

Brown, E., 2009, 'Politics and Society', in J. Warren (ed.), 2009, *The Cambridge Companion to Epicurus*, Cambridge, 179-96.

A good survey of Epicurean attitudes.

Campbell, G. L., 2002, 'Lucretius 5.1011-27: The Origins of Justice and the Prisoner's Dilemma', *Leeds International Classical Studies* 1.3 (2002), 1-12.

A speculative paper using game theory to understand the basis of Epicurean justice. Focuses mainly on the first village societies in 5.1011-27.

——— 2003, *Lucretius on Creation and Evolution: a Commentary on De rerum natura 5.772-1104*, Oxford.

A detailed line by line commentary on the first part of Lucretius' prehistory, with introductions to each section.

——— **2006, *Strange Creatures: Anthropology in Antiquity*, London. ch. 3. 'Ancient Theories of Prehistory and the Evolution of Society'.**

A survey chapter including a section on Lucretius' prehistory.

Farrell J., 1994, 'The Structure of Lucretius' "Anthropology"', *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici* 33 (1994), 81-95.

Furley, D. J., 1978, 'Lucretius the Epicurean on the History of Man', in *Fondation Hardt Entretiens* 24 (Geneva, 1978), 1-27.

A classic study of Lucretius' prehistory. Also in M. R. Gale (ed.), 2007, *Oxford Readings in Lucretius*, Oxford, 158-81.

Holmes, B., 2014, 'The Poetics of Anthropogony; Men, Women, and Children in Lucretius, book five', *Eugesta: Journal on Gender Studies in Antiquity* 4 (2014).

[Mainly on the first village societies in Lucretius \(5.1011-27\), and the role of women and children in human cultural evolution.](https://eugesta-revue.univ-lille3.fr/pdf/2014/Holmes-4_2014.pdf)
https://eugesta-revue.univ-lille3.fr/pdf/2014/Holmes-4_2014.pdf

O'Connell, S., 2012, 'Lucretius on Civil Strife', *Phoenix* 66.1/2 (2012), 97-121.

Argues that Lucretius' account of the rise of cities is orthodox Epicurean doctrine and need not be read as referencing contemporary Roman events or history. An interesting view but based on very little evidence.

Schiesaro, A., 2007, 'Lucretius and Roman Politics and History', in Gillespie, S. and P. Hardie, *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*, Cambridge, 41-58.

An interesting take on Roman influences in Lucretius' account of the rise of cities in book five. Differs from me in seeing early kingship as an Epicurean political ideal, where I see it as the first step on the slippery slope to moral and societal disaster.

Tacitus

Campbell, G. L., 2006, *Strange Creatures: Anthropology in Antiquity*, London, esp. chapter 5, 'The Scythians and Other Noble (and Ignoble) Savages'.

O'Gorman, E. 2012, 'There's No Place Like Rome: Identity and Difference in the *Germania* of Tacitus', in Rhiannon Ash (ed.), 2012, *Oxford Readings in Tacitus*, Oxford, OUP.

Riggsby, A. M., 2006, *Caesar in Gaul and Rome: War in Words*, Austin, Tx.

Especially chapter 2, 'The "Other" and the other "Other"', on the ethnographic tradition and Caesar's portrayal of the Gauls and Germans, and chapter 4, 'Alien Nation'.

Rives, J. B. (ed. & trans.), 1998, *Tacitus' Germania* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998).

Translation with very good introduction and detailed commentary on the *Germania*. Strongly recommended.

Romm, J. S., 1992, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, esp. chapter 4, 'Ultima Thule and Beyond'.

A very accessible and stimulating book on how everything weird and wonderful ends up at the edges of the ancient world, or, rather, how the margins create weirdness.

Schadee, H., 2008, 'Caesar's Construction of Northern Europe: Inquiry, Contact and Corruption in *De Bello Gallico*', *Classical Quarterly* 58.1 (2008), 158-180.

Woolf, G., 2011, *Tales of the Barbarians: Ethnography and Empire in the Roman West*, Chichester.

On the interaction of ethnography and politics and of how characterization of barbarians aids the imperial project.

De Léry

Greenblatt, S., 1991, *Marvelous Possessions. The Wonder of the New World*, Oxford.

A stimulating study of renaissance responses to the New World.

Knecht, R., 'France's Fiasco in Brazil', *History Today* 58.12 (2008), 34-39.

On the realities of the disastrous French colony set up by Villegagnon and its collapse.

Lestringant, F., 1991, 'The Philosopher's Breviary: Jean de Léry in the Enlightenment', *Representations* 33, Special Issue: The New World (Winter, 1991), 200-211.

On the influence of de Léry on contemporary and later anthropology.

——— 1997, *Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne*, Berkeley.

A stimulating survey of responses to cannibalism in literature. How to explain the civility of peoples who commit this most uncivil of acts?

Magnone, S. 'Bien Manger, Bien Mangé: Edible Reciprocity in Jean de Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 14.3 (2014) 107-135.

Whatley, J., 1984, 'Food and the Limits of Civility: The Testimony of Jean de Léry', *Sixteenth Century Journal*. 15.4 (1984), 387-400.

An interesting study of food in de Léry's account. Should their practice of cannibalism be included under the heading of food in a study of the Tupinamba? Is eating people wrong? Not necessarily.

——— 1989, 'Impression and Initiation: Jean de Léry's Brazil Voyage', *Modern Language Studies* 19.3 (1989), 15-25.

A useful brief essay, explaining the background to the expedition and looking at how de Léry's account rises above the more usual imprinting of European ideas onto the 'tabula rasa' of New World peoples.

——— (ed. and trans. with commentary), 1990, Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, Berkeley.

A very useful edition with translation, a good introduction to De Léry, the expedition, the cultural background, and a useful commentary.

