

Editorial

Welcome to Issue 17 of the Rosetta Journal.

This current issue really shows the breadth of study that falls under our remit. From close linguistic analyses of Greek texts, reconsideration of Egyptian ethnic groups, and first millennium Mediterranean seafaring, to interpreting the philosophy behind mosaics and an anthropological analysis of African mythological aetiology. The combination of archaeological, linguistic, anthropological, and statistical analysis also demonstrates how an awareness of other studies can assist research in our own respective fields, opening the way to new methods of understanding the past.

Alade provides us with a fascinating insight into the foundation myths of the Yoruba people and the development of narrative to explain the epistemology of Yoruba state formation. Alade comments on the difficulty in the distinction between myth and history in some cultures, as both “explain how the world got to be the way it is by telling some sort of story.” The article deftly demonstrates some difficulties anthropology faces in determining facts, and also the problems of a Western-centric viewpoint. As Alade states, “myth is a strange place indeed to discover “truth” – although not for African historians.”

Baker considers misconceptions around Nicander’s *Theriaca*, demonstrating the difficulty in appreciating a text that blends genres. Baker’s close reading of the work brings to light some overlooked features, demonstrating how a closer analysis can lead to greater appreciation.

Fragkaki, meanwhile, considers *The Great Rhetra*, a Spartan legislative and constitutional document. Fragkaki gives us a greater understanding of how Sparta was run by demonstrating some of the nuanced meaning of the terms used. The article shows how important the Rhetra is to Sparta’s position in the Archaic Period and led to it being considered “the most ‘democratic’ city in the Greek world.”

Mureddu reinterprets the mosaics from the House of the Faun in Pompeii, demonstrating a possible Herclitean or Hermetic philosophy that underpins the choice of art. Rethinking former interpretations of the mosaics, Mureddu convincingly suggests a highly developed system of opposites, potentially causing us to rethink the chronology of influence these philosophical schools had.

Quintana reconsiders Nubian A-Groups, discussing the designation of such groups, and demonstrating that 'disappearance' is more a case of redefinition. The use of textual and archaeology sources creates a convincing argument to reconsider this period of history while also hinting at the potential breakthroughs that further finds could yield.

Rodríguez-Álvarez uses statistical analysis to reconsider the current evolutionary model of Mediterranean seafaring in the first millennium. By utilising numerous methods to process and present the data, Rodríguez-Álvarez shows that our current model of the evolution of these sea vessels is misguided. Instead, change is driven out of militaristic necessity and economic stress. The prospect of further measurements to develop this theory demonstrates the necessity for further statistical analysis across all disciplines, and shows how modern analysis is able to make sense of the past.

In addition to these excellent articles, we have a wealth of reviews. The book reviews engage with academic publications creating an invaluable dialogue. As response pieces they allow other academics to determine where a specific publication excels, and where it falls down, stimulating debate in the meantime. With so much published each year it can also be difficult to keep up with the sheer volume and the efforts of book reviewers provide a wider awareness of the academic community.

Finally we have reviews that demonstrate how the classical world is still appreciated today. 'Exodus: Gods and Kings' made headlines and pushed Egyptology back to the forefront of public consciousness. While liberal with its historical accuracy at times, it is useful to raise awareness of the ancient world; hopefully this will generate the next generation of academics as previous portrayals have. Baddeley provides an insightful critique into many aspects of the film and the wider discussions around it. From international blockbuster for Egyptology to a small theatre reinterpreting Greek Tragedy, Starling provides effective dissection of the performance of *Stinkfoot*, a retelling of the *Philoctetes*. That directors are able to add a new spin onto ancient material shows how resonant the work is even today, though Starling gives us plenty of thought for how to walk the line between appealing to the modern audience and respecting the source material.

I must extend my sincerest thanks to the entire editorial board: Charlotte Booth for her continual and tireless work as Articles Editor; Frank Simons for his extensive communication with publishers and reviewers to allow this journal to publish with such volume; Edward Mushett Cole for a breadth of editorial and logistic assistance; our Copy Editors, specifically Ruth Leger for being startlingly fast and effective at editorial duties; and Jeff Lindsey for his technical expertise at getting this published.

I would also like to thank everybody who contributed to this latest issue, both in writing papers and reviews and providing their knowledge and wisdom as Specialist Editors. Every bit of input has allowed this Journal to truly stretch its influence through myriad cultures and ages, stimulating research and debate that is invaluable to the postgraduate community at large.

Best Wishes,

Guy Kirkham-Smith

General Editor