



St Hilda's College
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

June 2025

Preparatory Reading for Classical Archaeology and Ancient History

Congratulations on your offer of a place to read Classical Archaeology and Ancient History at St Hilda's College! Although October may seem a long way off, there are various issues that I would like you to start thinking about in preparation for the autumn.

Let me say a word firstly about the **language options**. We have in recent years devised a set of language papers specifically for students of Classical Archaeology and Ancient History. These are intended to provide gradual but rigorous language-learning with a view to equipping you to use ancient evidence in the original languages, as well as for its own sake! For those with some Latin or Greek already, more advanced language options are also available.

For beginning and intermediate languages, courses will be taught by Faculty classes, for three hours per week during Michaelmas and Hilary Terms; advanced languages will be taught by a combination of college and faculty resources.

The person responsible for the organisation of these classes is the Grocyn Lecturer, Ms Juliane Kerkhecker (juliane.kerkhecker@classics.ox.ac.uk), and you should contact her directly if you are interested in taking a language option. Please also let me know. I would be happy to help, if you need further information about any aspect of language-learning. I am enclosing for your information a document which sets out the various language levels and options available to students of CAAH.

Let me be clear that, although learning a Classical language is an *option* in this degree, it is by no means compulsory! It might help you in decision-making to know how the first year of CAAH maps out. In the first term you will take a Greek core class, which is centrally taught within the university. In the second term you will take an equivalent Roman core class. But running alongside these two core classes and also in the third term, you choose two other papers – one historical, one archaeological (or one of these can be replaced by a language paper, as above). The historical and archaeological options are:

- (i) *Aristophanes Political Comedy*
- (ii) *Thucydides and the West*
- (iii) *Cicero and Catiline*
- (iv) *Tacitus and Tiberius*
- (v) *Homeric Archaeology*
- (vi) *Greek Vases*
- (vii) *Greek Sculpture*
- (viii) *Roman Architecture*

It would be very helpful to me to know, if you are not intending to take a language, which of the four historical papers (i to iv above) you would like to take (I teach Cicero and Tacitus myself; but if you choose one of the Greek History papers I would obviously find someone else to teach you). Please let me know as soon as possible and **in any event by July 28th**, so that I can arrange teaching and suggest some preparatory reading on your first option paper, which will be studied in your first two terms.

Secondly, below are some ideas for reading, regardless of options, that you would be well-advised to embark upon in order to make the most of the opportunities the course will offer in your first few terms.

General introductions

M. Beard and J. Henderson, *Classics. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 1995)

P. G. Bahn, *Archaeology. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000)

Three superb and highly recommended general narratives of ancient history are

S. Price and P. Thonemann, *The Birth of Classical Europe* (London, 2010)

R. Lane Fox, *The Classical World. An Epic History from Homer to Hadrian* (Allen Lane, 2005)

J. Quinn, *How the World Made the West: A 4,000-Year History* (Bloomsbury, 2024)

Greece

Why not start getting to know the *Histories* of Herodotus, who will be an important source for your first term's work?

O. Murray, *Early Greece* (Collins, Fontana History of the Ancient World, 1993)

R.G. Osborne, *Greece in the Making 1200-479 BC* (Routledge, 1996)

J. Hall *A History of the Archaic World, ca. 1200-479 BCE* (Blackwell/Wiley, 2013)

R. Lane Fox *Travelling Heroes* (2008)

Rome

M. Beard and M. Crawford, *Rome in the Late Republic* (Duckworth, 1985)

H.I. Flower ed., *Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic* (2004)

K. Galinsky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge, 2005)

B. M. Levick, *Augustus. Image and Substance* (2010)

Some archaeological approaches

S. Alcock, *Graecia Capta. The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (1993)

P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Michigan, 1988)

Key Themes in Ancient History Series:

S. Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge, 1999)

R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1992)

Approaching the Ancient World Series:

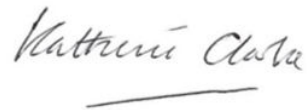
C. Pelling, *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian* (Routledge, 2000)

C. Howgego, *Ancient History from Coins* (Routledge, 1995)

Any of these would be potentially useful. I have put plenty here not because I expect you to go out and buy (or read) them all, but simply to give you a wide choice - some things might not be readily available in any case.

I hope that you will enjoy making a start on your university work, and that you will let me know if you would like any further advice about any aspect of the course or college. We very much look forward to having you at St Hilda's for the next three years.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Katherine Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Professor Katherine Clarke FBA
Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History

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