
Rosetta

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Late, but in earnest, it is my pleasure to present the 29th issue of *Rosetta*. It has been a big year for the journal. Our later-than-usual publication of the 2023–24 issue has been a consequence of a significant overhaul of our website, which has been undertaken with an eye toward updating the look and accessibility of our content as well as future-proofing the journal to ensure that we can continue to maintain a platform for the presentation of ongoing postgraduate research. I would like to thank Laura Brown, Jonathan Laidlow, and Alex Fenlon from the University of Birmingham, who have assisted us at various stages with the construction of this new website, as well as Cannon Fairbairn and Reuben Hutchinson-Wong for their diligence and dedication at moving our content to the new website.

While this project has been going on, our postgraduate community has been hard at work conducting high-quality research, the outcome of parts of which has been synthesised in this journal. It has also been a joy to see the range of submissions from postgraduate students across the UK and internationally – for a publication which originated as a platform for students at the University of Birmingham to present their work, it is incredible to see the network of postgraduate students and alumni from across the world who are involved in the authoring and reviewing of this scholarship.

The diversity of our authors and reviewers is matched by the broad range of subjects covered in this issue. Our first two articles, by Nermine S. Ahmed and Don Kristt, examine the continuities and changes of social practices in the Mediterranean and ancient Near East. Ahmed discusses the common features and underlying challenges of water availability and management in Graeco-Roman Egypt, showing how the institutionalisation of water supply developed in each culture and eventually unified under Ptolemaic rule. In doing so, Ahmed highlights the increasing cultural links which developed throughout the Mediterranean world, as evident in the legal practices surrounding water use. Kristt's article offers a comparative study of the medical practices of three ancient civilisations – Egypt, Mesopotamia, and biblical Israel – to present some of the continuities and adaptations across the ancient Near East. These societies, although unique in many aspects, undertook many similar practices regarding medicine as a result of the balance between spiritual considerations and practical medical treatment. Kristt's examination of these practices deepens our understanding of the development of medical practices in the ancient world.

The next three articles consider various manifestations of political power. Konstantinos Kakatsidas considers the use and abuse of the memory of former emperors as part of Roman imperial propaganda. In particular, the way that an incumbent emperor represented his predecessor reflected the concerns and challenges of the transfer of political power in the Roman Empire, which in turn raises questions about the representation of political legacy in the ancient world. Jacopo Napoli returns us to Egypt with an analysis of Egyptian interactions with the Roman state through the political theory of soft power. In doing so, Napoli highlights the strength of Rome's empire which derived from the ability of its political actors to cultivate relationships with the ruling classes of other societies, in a contrast to the more traditionally discussed idea of military power. Claudia Posani shifts our focus to the Near East with a discussion of multilingualism as a means of self-presentation among the political elite of Assyria and Syro-Anatolia. By reading epigraphic evidence in the context of the physical location of their monument, Posani argues that the 'learned viziers' of these societies fashioned an image of power for themselves through their erudition and connection to various cultures.

Our final three articles offer novel approaches to literary works from the ancient world. Marina Galetaki brings us into the world of Greek literature, with a fresh interpretation of Jocasta's character in Euripides' *Phoenissae* informed by Judith Butler's theory of gender performance. Galetaki's discussion highlights the tensions present in the performance of gender throughout the play, which encourage the ancient and modern audience alike to reflect on contemporary sexual and gender norms. Christopher Parkinson then introduces us to Roman literature through a philosophical analysis of the Judgment of Paris in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. Parkinson argues that, if the moral judgments and literary allusions presented throughout Apuleius' work are read in the context of the author's experience of Platonic philosophy, they prepare the reader for the tonal shift which occurs toward the end of the book, which expresses Apuleius' outrage about contemporary Roman society, its education, and its legal system. Finally, Lars Sheppard-Larsen presents a further philosophical reading of a literary work, with an analysis of the late Antique author Ammianus Marcellinus' portrayal of the Emperor Julian. Sheppard-Larsen reads this work alongside works of Neoplatonic authors to show that Ammianus Marcellinus deliberately crafted his image of Julian as one which

could stand as a model for imperial behaviour, as inspired by the maxims of Neoplatonic teachings.

In addition to our articles, we are fortunate to have a pair of book reviews by Beren-Dain Delbrooke-Jones and Lluís Jerez Bertolin, which reinforce the important contributions being made in the fields of classical reception and ancient economic studies, respectively. Moreover, we have a series of poems by Peter Mullen inspired by the Pre-Socratic philosophers, which is sure to offer a very enjoyable and light-hearted break from the rigorous academia present in the rest of this issue.

As a final word, I would like to give my thanks to the many people involved in the publication of Issue 29, who are so integral to the operation of this journal. I would like to thank our articles editor, Reuben Hutchinson-Wong, who, in addition to helping with the preparation of our new website, has done an excellent job of communicating with our authors, reviewers, and copy editors to facilitate the publication of so many articles. I would like to thank our book reviews editor, Naomi Tasker, for her work in arranging for review copies of books to be sent out and for working closely with our reviewers. Cannon Fairbairn also deserves special thanks for her assistance throughout the year, both with the website and her advice on matters of general editing, which has been invaluable as we have worked to put together Issue 29 as well as her Special Issue on the *From the Breast* seminars. Finally, I would like to thank our team of peer reviewers and copy editors, who maintain the quality of submissions and publications every year. In particular, I would like to thank Mary Faradikis, Martine Diepenbroek, Elizabeth Lamle, Ellie Bennett, Zeyu Jiang, Panagiotis Androulakis, Alex MacFarlane, Antonios Savva, Sofia Belioti, Mary Fragkaki, Anthofili Kallergi, Lars Sheppard-Larsen, Vasileios Dimoglidis, Emily Whitehead, Matt Watts, Alessia Attanasio, Daan Nijssen, Valentina Santini, Bethan Downs, Lluís Jerez Bertolín, Kirsty Harrod, Diana Dellantonio, Georgie Rowe, Valentino Gargano, Cannon Fairbairn, Agni Papamichael, and Rachael McLaughlin.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue, and look forward to seeing the continued successes of postgraduate research that this journal publishes in the future.

Tyler Broome
General Editor