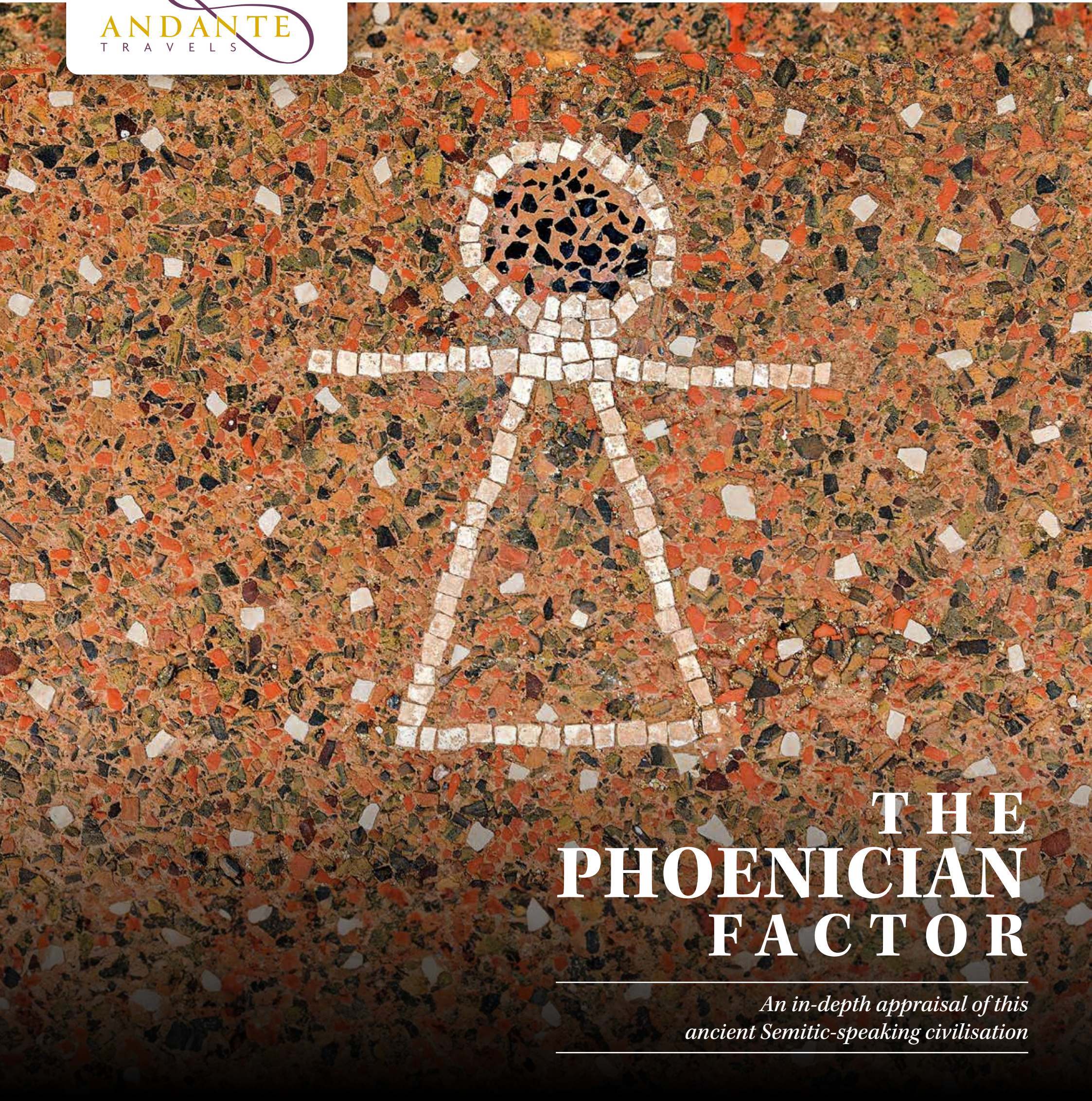


# UNCOVER

ISSUE 1



## THE PHOENICIAN FACTOR

*An in-depth appraisal of this  
ancient Semitic-speaking civilisation*



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# WELCOME

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first ever edition of Andantes' quarterly newsletter **UNCOVER**.

This is our opportunity to bring to you any latest news, interviews, features and articles focussed on the world of archaeology and history.

This first edition would not be possible without the help and support of members of the Andante Travels Team, Andante Guide Lecturers, academics and importantly you the Andante traveller, and on page 12 we are delighted that Sarah Dimmock, who has travelled with us for many years, has answered our questions in this first edition to learn more about her travels and what has inspired her interest in archaeology.

Our hope is that there is something for everyone in this first edition, but we welcome all feedback to help us shape and curate future editions, so please don't hesitate to contact us.

*Kate*

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## Latest Tour & Team News

### NEW TOURS

#### Egypt Encompassed

This new epic 19-day tour departs 29th November 2024 with Lucia Gahlin.

### EXTRA DEPARTURE DATES FOR 2024

#### Romans on the Bay of Naples

Join Dr Eireann Marshall leading this extra departure of our 8-day tour to Naples departing on 13th May 2024.

#### The Island of Sardinia

Join Dr Tertia Barnett leading this extra departure of our 9-day tour to Sardinia departing on 24th September 2024.

## Out Now...

### THE NEXT EDITION OF THE ANDANTE TRAVEL BROCHURE FOR 2024

Our main 2nd edition 2024 brochure is now available and our separate dedicated Cruise brochure will land a few weeks later.

Please visit our website to download a copy.



### WELCOME TO

We are delighted to welcome the following experts leading Andante Travels Tours.



#### Dr Bill Manley

Bill is a best-selling author, lecturer, curator and expert on the Ancient Egyptian language. His books include How To Read Egyptian Hieroglyphs, Egyptian Art and The Oldest Book in the World.



#### Robert Merkot FSA

Robert has worked for several UK Universities. A specialist in ancient North-East Africa, he has published academic papers, books, and more popular works on Libya, Egypt, and Sudan. He has considerable experience as a lecturer and guide on tours to those countries for forty years.

### CONTRIBUTORS

#### FEATURES, ARTICLES AND INTERVIEWS:

Dr Eireann Marshall, Oliver Gilkes, John Shepherd Mary Reynolds, Ray Laurence, Dr Jamie Sewell and Sarah Dimmock.

#### MARKETING AND DESIGN

Jon Woods and Alex Gale



# In the news...



## EXCAVATIONS UNDER THE PALAZZO DELLA ROVERE IN THE VATICAN

In what is perhaps the most exciting excavation in Rome in years, the dig underneath the Palazzo della Rovere (also known as the Palazzo dei Penitenzieri) near the Via della Conciliazione has brought to light extraordinary finds. The palazzo, commissioned by Domenico della Rovere according to the design of Baccio Pontelli, was constructed between 1480-90. The Palazzo is famed for its fresco cycle painted by Pinturicchio and his atelier which are in five halls of the piano nobile. Previously owned by the Penitentiary Fathers of St. Peter, it is today owned by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre who have let the palace to the Four Seasons hotel chain. In the course of the Palazzo renovations, new finds were discovered which led to the dig which began in 2020. The most important aspect of the excavation is that it provides wonderful stratigraphy from the 15th century to the 1st century BC, offering a glimpse of Rome as it changed over a millennium and a half.

In July 2023, it was announced that archaeologists had apparently discovered, in the courtyard of the palazzo, the remains of the Hortus of Agrippina, as well as Nero's theatre, which was previously only known from ancient sources, including Pliny the Elder and Suetonius. This was a private theatre which the emperor used in order to rehearse performances which would later be performed in larger theatres in the city centre, above all either the Theatre of Marcellus or the Theatre of Pompey. What was found were five columns made from different prized materials, including cipollino and African marbles, which had already been dismantled, something which fits with what we know about the theatre i.e. that it was torn down in the 2nd century AD. Also found were two buildings dated to the Julio Claudian period, on the basis of the brick stamps, which faced an open courtyard paved with an opus spicatum floor. The identification of one of these buildings with the cavea of the theatre seems sound in that it is semi circular and has the remains of cunei and stairs. The other building may have been used as a green room or to store equipment, scenery and

*“The remains of gilded plaster of the scaenae frons provides evidence of the level of opulence we would expect from Nero”*

costumes. The remains of gilded plaster of the scaenae frons provides evidence of the level of opulence we would expect from Nero. Indeed, the archaeologist Alessio De Cristofaro, who led the excavation team under the leadership of Renato Sebastiani, has argued that the size, beauty and the use of precious materials suggest the building was commissioned by someone from the imperial family.

Whilst the evidence from the Roman period is exciting, that from the 10th century is perhaps even more important, given the paucity of material from that century in Rome. Indeed, archaeologists found a number of precious artefacts from the mediaeval period linked to pilgrims who were going to the tomb of St. Peter. The artefacts include very rare glass-coloured goblets used for liturgical purposes, pottery, animal bones worked to make musical instruments as well as rosary beads and a small flagon shaped like St. Peter's rooster. Two pilgrim insignias have also been found, one depicting the Holy Face of Lucca and the other Our Lady of Rocamadour.

While the finds will be displayed in a museum, the theatre itself will be documented and then covered over again in time for the opening of the hotel in 2025.

Scan the QR to find out more on the excavations | ABCnews



## Scoreboard from Chichen Itza

Excavators in Chichen Itza have unearthed what appears to have been a scoreboard for pelota which is about 32 centimetres in diameter and 40 kilograms in weight. Found by the archaeologist Lizbeth Beatriz Perez in the well-preserved Casa Colorada, the relief depicts two players with a ball, surrounded by a complete text in Mayan glyphs. The players wear ornate headdresses, one of which is feathered and the other a snake turban which may also have been worn with protective headwear normally associated with pelota. Dating to the 9-10 centuries AD, the scoreboard is an exceptional find for its complete text. The script, too often called hieroglyphs, was first deciphered by Uri Knorozov and consisted of logograms combined with syllabic glyphs; it resembles Japanese scripts far more than Egyptian hieroglyphs. This new find has not yet been deciphered.

Pelota was a game played from the bronze age, in the 17th century BC throughout Mesoamerica and which varied greatly from place to place. It is related to the modern game of ulama in which the aim of the game is to keep the ball in play and which uses rubber balls similar to those used from the earliest of times. While it is often associated with ritual in modern imaginations, the game was frequently played recreationally by children and apparently even women.



Scan the QR to find out more on this discovery | Reuters





# In the news...



## EXCAVATIONS AT AUGUSTA EMERITA (MERIDA)

Various excavations have taken place at Augusta Emerita, the capital of Lusitania in Western Spain, more particularly Extremadura. The most spectacular is an extensive bath complex found in the suburban House of the Amphitheatre. Although the baths don't include a piscina, the state of preservation of the baths is impressive. These include underground structures and refined decorations on the walls and floor. Given the size and affluence of the House of the Amphitheatre, it is not surprising that it included baths, but it is the scale, which is noteworthy, such that the director of the excavations, Felix Palma, has suggested that the baths may have been shared with various residences. That said, as the bath complex is apparently self-contained in the house, it would make most sense if the baths weren't shared with other dwellings. As evidenced from the letters

of Pliny the Younger, elites could have extensive baths in their houses, particularly when they are suburban villas.

Archaeologists are also excavating the so-called Huerto de Otero in Merida, where they unearthed a domus with a very well-preserved mosaic depicting Medusa in the centre and four seasons on the sides, as well as a number of different birds and fish. While the excavators have suggested the owners of the house may have chosen to depict Medusa for her apotropaic qualities, the mythological character is frequently depicted because she is a lively image associated with Hellenic culture, which allowed the elites who lived in the house to show off their erudition. In the Huerto de Otero, excavators have also found a number of Muslim tombs, showing the site was occupied even after the Ummayyad conquest.

*"A very well-preserved mosaic depicting Medusa in the centre"*

## Regio IX Excavations in Pompeii



The Great Pompeii Project was initiated in 2012 with the intention of better conserving the archaeological site of Pompeii. A major threat to its security is the embankments of unexcavated areas that are next to those already excavated. Addressing the water damage and associated erosion of these has been identified as a priority in preserving the site and making as much of it as accessible as possible. The more usual restoration of already excavated houses, including their decoration, is included in the work of the project so that a greater number of buildings in the site of Pompeii are safe to be explored by the two million people who visit it each year. The Project's focus on Regio IX in recent years has brought to light exciting finds and at the same time shown how an interdisciplinary approach has given a new dimension to our understanding of life in Pompeii at the time of the eruption as well as of the eruption itself. Among these finds are three skeletons, whose manner of death is as gruesome as the initial evidence might suggest but in a surprising way; a domus from the Samnite period, repurposed into a bakery, which has shown us a small detail about how the Pompeians were experts at reusing and recycling materials; seismological evidence that confirms to modern volcanologists the accuracy of the account written by the eye-witness Pliny the Younger for his friend, the historian, Tacitus.

Scan the QR code to read more  
about the amazing discoveries



Scan the QR code to read more  
about Mérida's epic past



Scan the QR code to read the  
full blog about excavations in  
Pompeii





# In the news...



## A WANDERLUST WINNER

We were delighted to share the news earlier in the year that Andante Guide Lecturer John Shepherd with whom many of you will have travelled on a Andante tour, won the Wanderlust World Guide Award - History & Culture 2023.

John Shepherd has been working with us as an expert Guide Lecturer for over 20 years now and he first got into guiding because of his work for the Museum of London. His natural ability for providing engaging lectures, presentations and tours for members of the public there saw him move across into the guiding world, and he thoroughly enjoys it - and we know that our valued guests love touring the ancient world with him

thanks to the testimonials we are regularly sent from returning travellers.

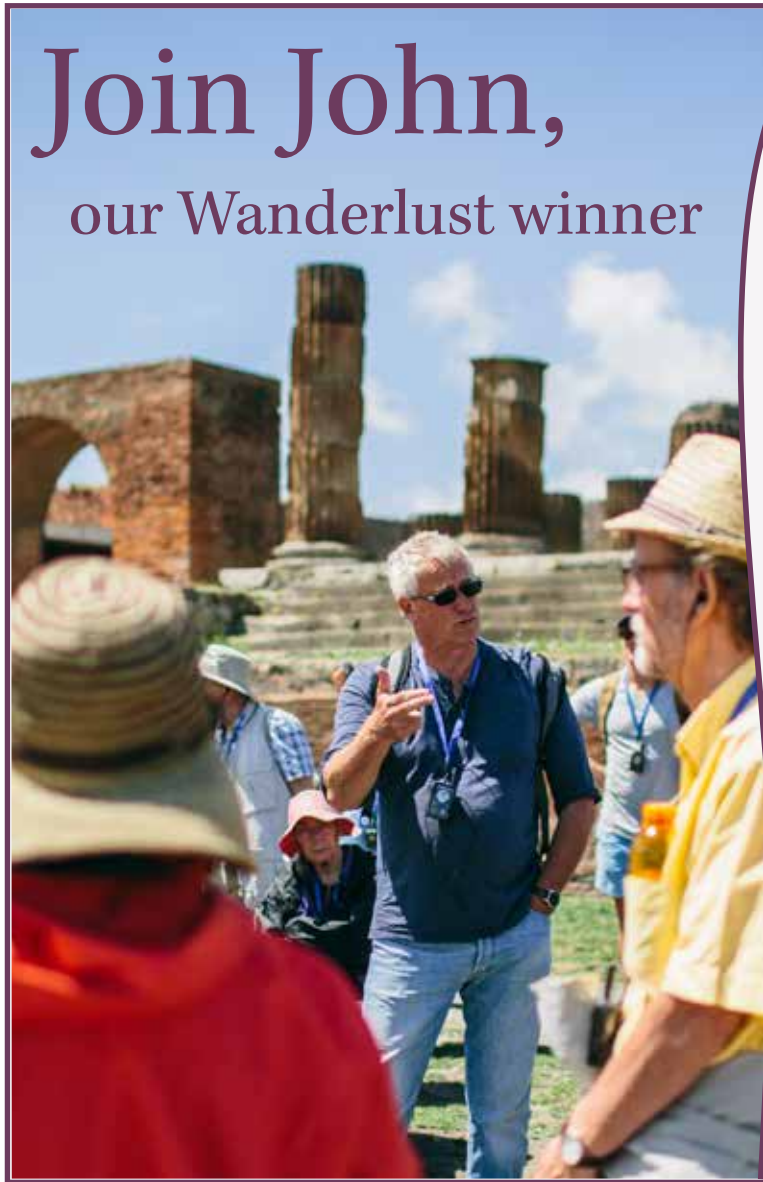
We interviewed John earlier this year to find out more about him, what first sparked his interest in Roman archaeology, his career and what he enjoys about leading tours exclusively for Andante.

Scan the QR to read the full interview with John



Working with John Shepherd by Pompeii Guide, Daniela Mantice

Working alongside John over the years has been a real pleasure as he is a very cultured person with immense knowledge. He offers explanations beyond what is directly visible on the sites, and which delve into ancient philosophical ideas and into everyday life in antiquity. For example, he offers a very interesting account of ancient concepts of time in the Pompeian macellum, based on the fresco found there. As he is very empathic, he is able to impart his narratives in an accessible way, judging whether guests are tired or whether they are following his thread. I have very fond memories of doing an exhaustive visit of the newly excavated houses in Regio V of Pompeii with him, something which is so rarely done. Being a witness to his guiding, it is not surprising to find that he has won a Wanderlust Award.



## Join John, our Wanderlust winner

John is leading the following tours including some of our cruises.

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### Cruising the Seine



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1st May 2024

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*Picking the brains of...*

# AN INTERVIEW WITH RAY LAURENCE

*Ray is Professor of Roman Archaeology at Macquarie University in Sydney, having done post-doctoral work with Andrew Wallace Hadrill at the University of Reading, a research fellowship at the University of Birmingham and holding a professorship at the University of Kent. He is the author of a number of works focused on Roman social history.*







### What has your research focused on?

My research has focused on Roman history and archaeology, on a variety of topics, including on growing up and growing old in Roman society, Pompeii and Roman cities, as well as Roman roads. My work on Pompeii Pompeii: Space and Society, which I wrote very early on in my career, is different because it is both written from the point of view of an urban planner and as an ancient

historian. Most recently, I edited a volume with Mary Harlow on shopping in the ancient world 'A Cultural History of Shopping: Antiquity' which looks at the cultural practices of buying, exploring things like how shopping was part of the democratic way of life in Athens. Socrates, for example, spent a lot of time philosophising at a cobbler's. As noticeable from Pompeii, Romans, from at least the 2nd century BC, designed cities to have streets of shops. There are so many shops in Roman towns that it raises lots of interesting questions like what they are selling.

### Who are some of the academics who have most influenced you?

Reading Keith Hopkins' 'Conquerors and Slaves' as an undergraduate was a complete eye-opener, showing that you can write in a different way and ask different kinds of questions of the evidence, rather than the rather stiff, traditional Roman political and military history which was so prevalent then. Another influence on my work is Mary Harlow, something which is really obvious from the huge number of works we collaborated on together, she has always offered me different perspectives and insights. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill was very influential in my career, particularly early on, when we taught students together, and I am proud of the faith he placed in me and grateful for his support over the years.

### What are some of the challenges which face ancient history and archaeology today?

There are big challenges around the way in which humanities subjects are underfunded and, I would say, undervalued in comparison to STEM subjects. The high cost of academic degrees is also challenging in that it leaves students wondering whether obtaining degrees is necessarily worth it. The casualization of university staff, in which post-doctoral candidates have to survive on a number of temporary posts, is also a problem. It is extremely difficult for young academics to get permanent posts and it is hard for them to survive on temporary jobs. It's a more acute problem now as established professors aren't retiring and there are more people with PhDs than ever. We are losing a lot of talent as ancient historians are going into university administrative jobs because of a dearth of jobs. However, in terms of the work that is being produced, it is an exciting time in that the areas being researched are innovative, such as chronic pain in antiquity, zoonosis (diseases spread from animals to humans) in the ancient world, for which there is a lot of information. We are a long way away from days in which academics mostly focused on great men and great events.

### What works have you published?

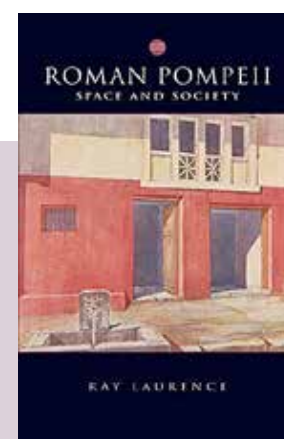
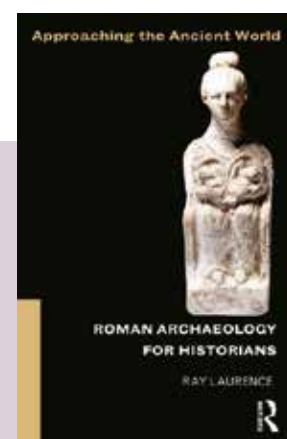
I have published a lot, a whole shelf of books. My first work on Pompeii was hard to write as it was approaching the city in a different way. Perhaps my favourite early work is the book on 'Roman Roads of Roman Italy: Mobility' and 'Cultural Change' partly because it was written in the pre internet era, and I had to go to each of these places. Incidentally, out of this book, I developed several tours for Andante Travels, including Rome to Ravenna and one in Latium – I was keen to do sites other than Pompeii for once! In recent years, I have been interested in topics revolving around life cycles, including childhood, ageing and health, as well as the way space is used in cities, such as traffic or shopping. I have also been working on a series of animated films with TedEd (scan QR code below to watch), which have had 11 million views on YouTube, which include A Glimpse of Teenage Life in Ancient Rome and, to make sure we covered boys as much as girls, Four Sisters in Ancient Rome. I am currently working on a number of new animated films lasting 1 minute on different aspects of Pompeii, such as streets of Pompeii, lararia, a sacrifice from the point of view of a bull, all of which start out with a real piece of evidence, such as the riot fresco from Pompeii. We also re-populate the Pompeii forum, including characters from the ancient world, such as a seller of dodgy portable sundials, based on frescoes from the Praedia of Julia Felix. They are very short films with lots of content, which I start out with a 140-word script. These have been developed with a view to helping students with revision, as animation has been shown to be a good way to grasp topics. I won a competition which has helped with funding, but we are always looking out for more patrons to keep this going.

### What are some of the proudest moments of your career?

It is hard to choose but I think maybe it was when the University of Kent was ranked 2nd in all of the UK universities in terms of research impact, despite being such a small department. It was a David and Goliath moment. It showed that what you do counts, rather than the resources at your disposal; we got things done and really did create an impact that mattered. It was also at this moment, when I was Professor of Roman History and Archaeology at Kent, that I started making animated films, so it was a great time for me. I was able to make changes within the university, like setting up a programme in which MA students went to Rome and were evaluated not by a written exam but by a walk through the city explaining what they were seeing, like trying to find Cicero in the forum.

### How in your view has the field of ancient history and/or archaeology changed?

I think ancient history and archaeology have become a lot more interesting in recent decades. When I first started, it seemed to be all about Roman military camps or political careers, rather than about the lives of ordinary Romans. The thing which I think is most interesting is that ancient historians and archaeologists have a much more sophisticated approach to the use of social space than other historical disciplines. This is because the study of space in Pompeii is much easier in that you are able to immerse yourself in it. When you stand in Pompeii, you are submerged in a three-dimensional reality. I think it would have been hard to understand the way in which Romans used their social space without Pompeii – in Rome we only have fragments of ancient buildings, which are mainly public. If you look for a similar approach in the mediaeval world, there are very few studies of the use of space in castles. Just thinking about the work I've done on Pompeii shows the richness of the possibilities still open for new research. To give a few examples, about a decade ago, I was thinking about my own work and realised that what was missing was an account of how children used the city and at what point in a child's life could they for example collect water from a water-fountain, serve a drink in a bar and so on. Thus, by measuring the height of features in Pompeii and looking at a projected growth curve for children – I could establish that from the age of seven nearly every aspect of Pompeii was accessible for children, including the world of work that could include water collection or serving in a bar. There is still an on-going and far from settled debate about the wheel ruts in Pompeii, some have seen these as evidence for a traffic system – but when we look at the rock used to pave the streets of Pompeii – it is quite different from the stone used in Rome. It's full of leucitic crystals and thus can easily be eroded by the wheels of wagons. This observation came up due to our difficulty in using portable X-ray fluorescence equipment to measure the geo-chemistry of the rocks in Pompeii to firmly establish that they were local. Another thing we also discovered was that the shoes of tourists left behind trace elements on the paving of zinc.





# SPOTLIGHT ON: TUNIS

With one foot in the Mediterranean and another in the Sahara, Tunisia's cultural heritage is inextricably bound with both southern Europe and the Maghreb. Walk the streets of Tunis and not only will you admire the wide, ram rod straight Avenue du Bourghiba with its Hausman style architecture, whimsical volutes and curlicued balconies but also, in stark contrast, the fortified and tangled labyrinth of the mini city of the medina where people have lived, worked and traded since the Middle Ages. Look more closely and you see the remnants of an ancient empire in the Roman columns which decorate the Zitouna mosque and travel a little further into the suburbs and you are amongst the ruins of not one but two of the most powerful and richest ancient cultures of the Mediterranean region.

As the Phoenician cities of Tyre, Byblos and Sidon became absorbed by the Assyrian and Persian Empires, Carthage became the 'new capital' of the West, at the head of its own trading empire. This fabled kingdom of Dido and her faithless lover Aeneas was the power that Rome sought to emulate and finally destroy in the third Punic War. After a two-year siege, Scipio Aemilianus set the city alight, and for several days his death squads ranged the streets clearing the city of those who had survived the blaze. When the city finally surrendered in 146BC, its centre was levelled, and thousands of citizens went into slavery. Carthage would not rise again.

Yet even the Romans could not entirely eradicate Carthage from history. High on the Byrsa Hill, now a wealthy suburb of Tunis with sweeping views out to sea, you find a tiny section of what once was – the ruins of Punic houses, parts of the street network and the necropolis. One block of Punic shops and houses has been excavated on the south side of Byrsa hill and this provides a good impression of what the city must have looked like. Most of the buildings were of sun-dried brick and stone, walls were faced with plaster, and floors decorated with simple mosaics or coloured cement. The shops opened onto the street, with access to the first-floor living-quarters via a small court. Beneath each building was a deep plaster-lined cistern, for rainwater collection.

Down on the shoreline, amongst the whitewashed and bougainvillea strewn villas of the Tunis well-to-do, the remains and outline of the Cothon, the ingenious circular port and dry dock, can clearly be seen. In this quiet spot where few tourists venture, you can see the remains of the slipways discovered by British archaeologists in 1980, and remnants of the dry dock facilities which once accommodated 220 vessels. And just a short stroll away is the Tophet of Salamambo, the sinister Sanctuary of Tanit, the patron goddess of Carthage. The site contained thousands of cinerary urns, some with dedicatory formulae showing that that these remains were the first-born children of distinguished Carthaginian families, aged between two and three. The Tanit symbol occurs everywhere.

Carthage was reborn a century later when in 46 BCE Julius Caesar instigated a rebuilding project. Much excavation and restoration was undertaken in the late 20th century as part of the UNESCO 'Save Carthage' campaign, but great quantities of Roman building material had long since been removed from the site. Many mosques and palaces in North Africa and Spain, including the Alhambra in Granada, were built from bits of Roman Carthage, while many of the best statues and mosaics now reside in museum collections, such as the Bardo and the Louvre. Despite this everywhere there are remnants of Rome: villas, temples, baths, theatres, cisterns and arenas.





The Baths of Antoninus are the grandest of the remaining monuments. Begun by Hadrian in AD 112, and developed by Antoninus Pius in AD 146, this huge bath complex, one of the largest outside Rome itself, is spread over nine acres running to the edge of the sea, a piece of prime land thankfully saved from modern developers. A huge granite column, one of eight that originally supported the roof, has been re-erected, and at nearly 60 feet to the top of its immense Corinthian capital, provides visitors with some idea of the original height of the vaulting. Whilst the upper storeys have now gone, you can wander among what was once the elaborate heating system where water was stored and channeled from cisterns to heat the pools.

Carrying water to the baths and beyond was the impressive Zaghouan Aqueduct which starts in the Djebel Zaghouan mountain range, 40 miles north of Carthage. The enormous cisterns which it kept supplied can be found on the north side of Tunis. Fallen into disrepair and used as makeshift stables until the 20th century, the cisterns are now cleared and in part restored so it is possible to explore one of the open sections and admire this impressive example of Roman engineering.

On the Odeon Hill at the Park of the Roman villas, we catch a glimpse of the life of the privileged. This flower filled, peaceful site contains several villas in ruinous state dating from the 2nd century AD but the House of the Aviary, named for its beautiful mosaic, has been restored. With its pink marble columns, and attractive courtyard and garden with fabulous views over the sea, it is not hard to imagine the lifestyle of the wealthy here.

And whilst the amphitheatre at El Djem, one of the largest and best preserved in the Roman Empire, is justifiably the most famous in Tunisia, in the capital we find the remains of the Carthage amphitheatre with its capacity for 30,000 spectators. It was here that Perpetua and Felicity were martyred in 203 AD, refusing to renounce their Christian faith. The remains of a chapel in the centre of the arena, built during the 19th century by the White Fathers, are a poignant reminder of the sufferings of the Christian martyrs.



After the fall of the Empire, Carthage was destroyed for a second time when Tunis became the capital city of the Arab Aghlabid dynasty in 698 BCE. The oldest parts of the medina date to this period but it was during the control of the Almohad and Hafsids dynasties (12th-16th centuries) that it really flourished and became one of the richest and grandest centres of commerce in the Islamic world. The medina is usually entered through the sea gate, the Bab el Bahr, which, bereft of its supporting walls, takes on the semblance of a triumphal arch. As you enter the maze of shaded alleyways, the city is compacted and concentrated to a high degree. Streets close in, houses sit tight with shops and Alladin caves of leather goods, brightly patterned ceramics and embroidered djellaba, and tiny workshops no bigger than cupboards where chechia are made and cobblers repair shoes. Everywhere there is noise, the buzz of mopeds, the clink of hammers and the shouts

of vendors. To the north and south of the Zitouna Mosque are the covered vaulted souqs– the Souq des Étoffes ( fabric), Souq El Berka (jewellery), and Souq de la Laine (wool) and at the junction between Rue Sidi Ben Arous and the Rue le Kasbah, you find the Souk des Chechias where the traditional Tunisian head gear is still made (not to be confused with the Fez beloved by Tommy Cooper, the chechia is a more dignified affair without a tassel). In the 17th century, one million chechias were produced here annually. Approximately 20,000 permanent people reside in the medina, primarily in the El Hafsia and Tourbet El Bey districts. Here you will find mosques and mausoleums dating to the Ottoman period as well as local hammams and some of the wonderful wooden doors of the medina, painted yellow, green and blue, and decorated with metal studs. Deeper in, you find the quieter streets where life goes on much as it has for a thousand years.

# Experience Tunis



## Tunisia – North & South

DEPARTURES

19th February 2024



## Carthage & Roman Tunisia

DEPARTURES

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18th April 2024

17th October 2024



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# WHAT HAVE THE PHOENICIANS EVER DONE FOR US?



## *Who are the Phoenicians?*

Phoenicians were a people who first appear in the archaeological record towards the end of the 4th millennium and who became a dominant trading power in the 12th century BC as a result of the power vacuum left with the collapse of the Bronze Age. A Semitic people, they appear to have been related to the Canaanites we hear about in the Old Testament, though just how they were is not established. The name we give them derives from the Greek word, *phoenike*, meaning red or purple and which may have been given to them because of their trade in dyes. The name they used for themselves isn't clear; indeed it isn't clear whether they had an overarching identity which encompassed all of the Phoenician cities. They were a collection of city states, rather than a united people and individuals would have primarily associated themselves with their cities. These urban centres, which were very competitive with one another, are in the Levant and include Tyre, Sidon and Byblos. Through the many colonies they founded throughout the Mediterranean, Phoenician culture lasted until late antiquity, when Augustine of Hippo referred to Punic sources preserving important ideas. That said, we only know about them through archaeological finds and through the accounts given about them from Jewish, Greek and Roman sources, since none of the Phoenician literary sources referred to by Eusebius have survived beyond the few quotations we have from many Roman agricultural sources.

## *Navigation*

Phoenicians were almost destined to become mariners and traders by virtue of their topography, in that they had a lot of timber and were hemmed in by mountains. The timber served both as a means to making ships, as well as a valuable resource to trade. As the pre-eminent trading peoples from the late bronze age and early iron age, Phoenicians produced ships over millennia and were able, through their experience, to revolutionise their ship building. They were the first to develop the keel and also the first to produce cutwaters which increased the speed of ships by reducing the drag in the hull. They introduced mortise and tenon joints which were to be used throughout antiquity and industrialised the production of ships to the extent that they had prefabricated parts, as evidenced by the Carthaginian Liburnian ship displayed in the Marsala Museum in Sicily. Phoenicians are credited with developing both the bireme and trireme, utilized by Greeks and Romans alike, who, like Phoenicians, painted eyes on their ships in order to scare their enemies. The Phoenicians were also the first to navigate through the middle of the Mediterranean, rather than hugging the coastline, something they could do with their advanced knowledge of constellations. This freed them to navigate beyond the confines of the Mediterranean and along the Atlantic coast, venturing as far apart as western Africa and Britain. Their affinity to ships can be seen in the practice which Valerius Maximus ascribes to them, namely the coating of ships with the blood of their captives in order to placate the gods.

## *Alphabet*

The most important thing Phoenicians have given us is the alphabet, which developed around 11th century BC, and which spread throughout the Mediterranean by the 8th century to the Greeks, Etruscans and from thence throughout the Italian peninsula by virtue of the Phoenicians' dominance in trade. It was a 22-letter abjad alphabet, meaning it included only consonants, which was written right to left. The letters of the Phoenician alphabet partially derived from the Proto-Canaanite alphabet, which, in turn, borrowed from Egyptian hieroglyphs. For example, the letter M got its shape from the hieroglyph for water, which in Phoenician was *mem*; so water=*mem*=M.

One of the most revolutionary things about the alphabet is that it was easy to use and easy to learn because each symbol stood for one sound. This is in marked contrast with Egyptian hieroglyphs and cuneiform scripts which were notoriously difficult to learn and were comprehensible only to very few. It was the simplicity of the Phoenician alphabet, which made it easy for other peoples to adopt and to adapt in order to suit different linguistic needs, for example by adding vowels, as well as changing the direction of the writing so that it went from left to right in the case of both the Ionic version of the script which developed into the Greek alphabet, as well as the Cumaeen which turned into the Latin alphabet (Etruscans and other Italic peoples like the Umbri kept the direction from right to left). It is interesting that the Phoenician alphabet changed much less than the alphabets of other peoples who borrowed their script. The ease with which people could learn the Phoenician alphabet also left a deep impact on the societies which adopted them, as literacy became more widespread amongst those involved in trade.





Tyrian Purple

Phoenicians are responsible for associating royalty with the colour purple. They were famed for their dyes, made from the mucus found in the hypobranchial gland of several different kinds of murex, which are carnivorous sea snails. First produced in the middle of the second millennium BC, murex dyes, which were dubbed Tyrian by outsiders, were much prized as the colours were fast, becoming yet more brilliant under the sun, rather than fading. Several colours were produced, including a kind of burgundy, a crimson as well as purple; a different kind of murex was also used in order to make a type of blue. The dye could be produced through the hugely labour-intensive process of making the snails produce the mucus responsible for making the pigment; the murex make this mucus to defend themselves and so ‘milking’ the snails entailed provoking them. Alternatively, the snails could be crushed, necessitating the destruction of many thousands of murexes in order to produce even the smallest amounts of dye. Another complication in the production of the dye is that the extraction of the it had to be done very soon after the snail harvesting for best results. Pliny the Elder says that the glands were extracted and soaked in brine for several days, after which the mixture was boiled for a number of days until the dye became uniform and the fabrics to be tinted added to the pot. As the production of the dye required thousands of sea snails and since the production was arduous, the dye was precious. It is for this reason that the purples and reds produced by the murex became associated with affluence and, ultimately, royalty. It was the colour used to make the broad purple stripes, the latus clavus, on senatorial togas, as it was also the colour used for the toga picta used in triumphs. By late antiquity, the dye, and by extension purple, was used exclusively by emperors, hence the association of the colour with royalty.

Not Tophets

What the Phoenicians have not given us are tophets, or cemeteries where the remains of sacrificed infants were interred. This was a practice known by Jews who gave us the name of tophet, though the practice became much more widespread in Western Phoenician colonies. The largest of these, today called the Salambo Tophet, is found in Carthage and is the locus of approximately 20,000 urns of children, mostly under the age of one, and animals sacrificed in their stead. Tophets, which are also found in Tharros in Sardinia, as well as Motya, seem unfathomable to Greek, Roman and Jewish writers who gave

variously lurid accounts of their practices. Bereft of Phoenician texts which would offer their viewpoint, we can only surmise that they offered their children to Ba’al, the sun god, and his consort, Tanit, because they were their most precious belongings.

Colonisation

The Phoenicians are responsible for founding a number of colonies all over the Mediterranean, from coasts as far afield as Sicily, Sardinia and North Africa to Spain. These were originally established as emporia or trading outposts which would give Phoenicians access to natural resources, and which would facilitate their movements. While some of their colonies remained small, others developed into huge urban centres which came to overshadow their mother cities, including Carthage founded in the 9th century in part of what is now Tunis, and Gadir, the bustling Spanish port today called Cadiz. The Cypriote site of Kition, which was also had Greek and Egyptian settlements, was inhabited by Tyrians from the 10th century BC. The Phoenician colonies of Palermo, Solus and Motya were founded along the northern and western coasts of Sicily in the 8th century and came under Carthaginian control after the Persian conquest of the Levant in the 6th century. The sheer number of Phoenician colonies not only helped to make Phoenicians a dominant force in the Mediterranean but enabled the Mediterranean to become more unified.



# Discover the Phoenicians



## Carthage & Roman Tunisia



DEPARTURES

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18th April 2024

17th October 2024

## Tunisia – North & South



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# GUEST INSIGHT

## FROM SARAH DIMMOCK



### *What led to your interest in archaeology?*

It was my father who got me interested in archaeology and ancient civilisation. My grandmother bought me a children's magazine called Finding Out, which featured articles about ancient peoples and myths and legends, the ancient stories often illustrated by Roger Lancelyn Green. His drawings of the gods and heroes were ethereal, and I was fascinated (I did not like the articles about the Aztecs, Maya and Inca, and civilisations like the Chinese, as I found them scary, and still have no interest today).

### *Where did you go first go on holiday without your family/parents?*

My first holiday was to Perros Guirec in Brittany, which is twinned with my home town of Teignmouth. My first trip to see archaeology was to Greece, on a coach tour of the Peloponnese and Athens. It was amazing!

### *Which time period or ancient civilisation fascinates you the most?*

I am most fascinated by the Roman Empire, particularly the Republic and early Empire, and the fact that remains can be seen in this country, but Greece comes a very close second, and I am interested in all the Mediterranean civilisations. We lived abroad for a while, and when I moved back to England, I decided to concentrate on the Mediterranean civilisations, as it is fairly easy to get to the sites around the Med.

### *Can you name a site that lived up to the hype?*

The site that most lived up to the hype is Gobekli Tepe. What an amazing place to visit. I went with Andante in 2014, sadly shortly after Klaus Schmidt had passed away, and just before the site closed for the installation of the new roof. I was so impressed with the site: the fact that the people built it so long ago, and it has altered the theories about nomadic tribes and the beginnings of cultivation

of the land. The whole South-East Turkey trip was memorable. I should love to go back.

### *Can you remember a site that failed to live up to the hype?*

Sadly, the most disappointing site was Piazza Armerina in Sicily in 2012. The site was having the old roof replaced with a new steel and glass one, and the mosaics were a bit neglected. I remember there being a lot of leaves on the mosaics, and a few drink cans and crisp packets. I should like to do the whole Andante Sicily trip again and see Piazza Armerina in all its glory. Professor Bill Manning was also a joy to travel with.

### *Who is the most interesting historical figure you have discovered on your travels?*

I always try to read about the sites and sights I am going to see on each tour, so I can't say I have 'discovered' anyone in particular. My favourite historical character is Julius Caesar, and when I am in Rome I always go to the Forum to see the site of his cremation, where a temple to the Divine Julius was erected. It is exciting to know that we will now be able to go into the Largo Argentina in Rome and see the place where Caesar was assassinated in the Curia of Pompey. I threw a coin in the Trevi Fountain when I was there on the Hidden Rome tour last year with Oliver Gilkes, so it is only a matter of time before I go back for the 8th time!

### *Do you have a favourite item you always take with you when you travel?*

I always take my little Canon camera, as I prefer to take photos on that because it is much easier to

load onto my iPad. My phone is an Android, so it won't 'talk' to my iPad! My phone has been useful, though, as museums will often allow you to take photos with your phone, but not a camera.

### *Can you tell us about one of your most memorable travel experiences?*

One of my most memorable experiences was on the Aegean Turkey trip, again with Professor Manning, in 2010. We visited a little site called Alinda, which is south-east of Kusadasi, in ancient Caria. We walked up to the ancient acropolis and saw the platform of the temple. There was a really magical atmosphere there and I wanted to stay longer. In (admittedly modern) novels, it sometimes says 'you could feel the presence of the god', in this case Artemis (I think), and I really could. I would love to go back there. On all my Andante tours, there has been one really impressive site, and I should like to hire a helicopter and visit them all again!

### *Where are you travelling to next?*

My next tour is Roman Algeria if I can get a visa! I hope to go to Israel & Palestine next year in the spring and The Dodecanese in the autumn. I know I won't be disappointed, as I have thoroughly enjoyed all my Andante Travels tours and Study Days.

One of the things I love most about visiting ancient sites is the connections to actual historical people and events, for example visiting the tomb at Verghina, and seeing the tomb of Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great. How amazing it is to be able to do that?!





# AN ANDANTE GUIDE LECTURER'S *favourites*

## Dr Jamie Sewell



### *Who are some of your academic or archaeological heroes?*

There are hugely important scholars who have been influential to me, including Prof. Ian Haynes who inspired me to become an archaeologist, Mary Beard for her ability to reach a larger audience and my PhD examiners Martin Millett and Tim Cornell whose works on Roman identity and the Roman republic are seminal. That said, I want to give credit to the unsung heroes of archaeology. Famously, Howard Carter “discovered” the tomb of Tutankhamun, but all the great archaeological discoveries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were facilitated by armies of local workers. It was they who did the back-breaking work and were probably the ones who actually made the discoveries. These days, the accreditation of finds to individual field-team members is generally done much more fairly, but we should never forget the contribution of the nameless workers of the past.

### *What are some of your favourite sites and/or museums and why?*

Cosa and Paestum will always be dear to me. Both founded as Latin colonies by the Romans in 273 BC, they were the first sites I studied intensively for my PhD thesis on Roman town-planning and architecture. I now guide at Paestum, and I would love to have the chance to guide at Cosa in southwestern Tuscany (hint, hint, Andante!). Delphi, simply due to the magic of the place. You can read all you like about it, but it is only when you are there, in its scenic, enchanting and charismatic setting, that it becomes easy to imagine why it was chosen as the centre of the ancient Greek world.

### *Which little known archaeological or historical site should be better known in your opinion?*

Fresh in my mind right now is Terracina, which I first guided on Andante's Along the Appian Way tour. The late Republican temple complex on the nearby Monte Sant'Angelo hogs the limelight, but I find the town itself more fascinating. It went into steep decline in the 15th century, meaning that there are hardly any structures dating to between 1400 and 1700. As so many medieval structures survive, it is a great showcase for understanding the process of transformation from a Roman to a medieval town.

### *What are some of the challenges facing ancient sites today?*

The wholesale illegal plundering of both terrestrial and marine sites has to be at the top of the list. It has always been going on, but in recent decades, in many places, it has reached a greater scale than ever before. Finding the balance between tourism and conservation is always difficult. Climate change is an increasing problem; for example, the lowering of the water table in the area of Hadrian's Wall is leading to the destruction of invaluable organic artefacts, previously preserved within anaerobic waterlogged deposits. In the countryside, modern deep ploughing is rendering field survey techniques redundant.

### *What are some of the best and worst moments in your guiding career?*

My Pompeii, Herculaneum and Classical Campania tour of May this year was a challenge due to the weather. We suffered almost unbroken, often heavy rain during the day in Pompeii! Hats off to the stalwart, indomitable spirit of the group, without which my (and the Tour Manager's) day would have been much more difficult. This same tour provided a high point. In the substructures of Pozzuoli's amphitheatre, I put a lot of effort in trying to reconstruct in people's minds, the alarming sights, sounds, smells, atmosphere and intense drama of the world beneath the arena immediately prior to an animal hunt (venatio). I was applauded by a Californian guest, who likened my description to the films of “Cecil B. De Mille!”

### *If you could invite any ancient character (either fictional or real) to dinner, whom would you invite and what would you eat?*

I would choose any of the most famous senators of the late Roman Republic before Augustus radically curtailed their power and influence. I don't think enough is made of the incredible skill sets Roman senators possessed. They all had all seen action, understood military strategy and tactics and how to supply, feed and administer vast armies on the move. They were multi-lingual and were expected to be experts in law, constantly giving advice on law to clients, who they represented in the courts. As politicians, senators needed to master public speaking. They proposed legislation and needed a deep understanding of foreign affairs. Senators were unfeasibly wealthy, but they were not the idle rich. In addition, some of them even had time to also become prolific authors, such as Cato the Elder, Cicero or Varro, writing philosophical works, or political and technical treatises. Eating? I make a great Thai curry, and I'd love to witness how their palate reacted to it.





# DID YOU KNOW?

## COSMETICS FROM AN UNLIKELY SOURCE

Vendors scraped the sweat from the bodies of prominent gladiators. It was then sold in vials to wealthy women who used it as face cream or perfume.



## HOW ROMAN IS THE ROMAN TOGA?

Togas were so hard to put on that it required a slave to wrap it around you. Yet Romans happily put up with such inconvenience as it was the symbol of *romanitas* par excellence, devised by Romulus himself, such that Romans called themselves the *gens togata*. Augustus, called on Romans to 'dress Roman.' In his *lex Julia theatralis* of 18 BC, Augustus required citizen males to wear togas every time they attended public events. One can only imagine how uncomfortable this would have been made by the toga. However, the difficulty of wearing the toga showed Roman qualities of self-control and discipline. Clearly those who most wanted to be associated with Rome, those freedmen with newly won citizenship, took Augustus' exhortation to heart, as can be seen by the thousands of tombs depicting freedmen bedecked in togas.

Togas also defined the status of Roman citizens. Togas defined one's gender: apart from prostitutes and adulterous women, only men wore togas. Upon entering adulthood, young men donned the *toga virilis*, while senators who had obtained *curule magistracies* distinguished themselves by wearing the *toga praetexta*.

The origins of togas are interesting, as they were first developed by Etruscans. Indeed, Roman authors believed that Tullus Hostilius, the Etruscan 3rd King of Rome, introduced the *toga praetexta*. The toga seems to have derived from the Etruscan *tebenna*, an example of which is depicted on the walls of the Tomb of the Leopard in Tarquinia.

Given the centrality of the toga to Roman identity, it is amusing that the symbol of Roman-ness was actually Etruscan.



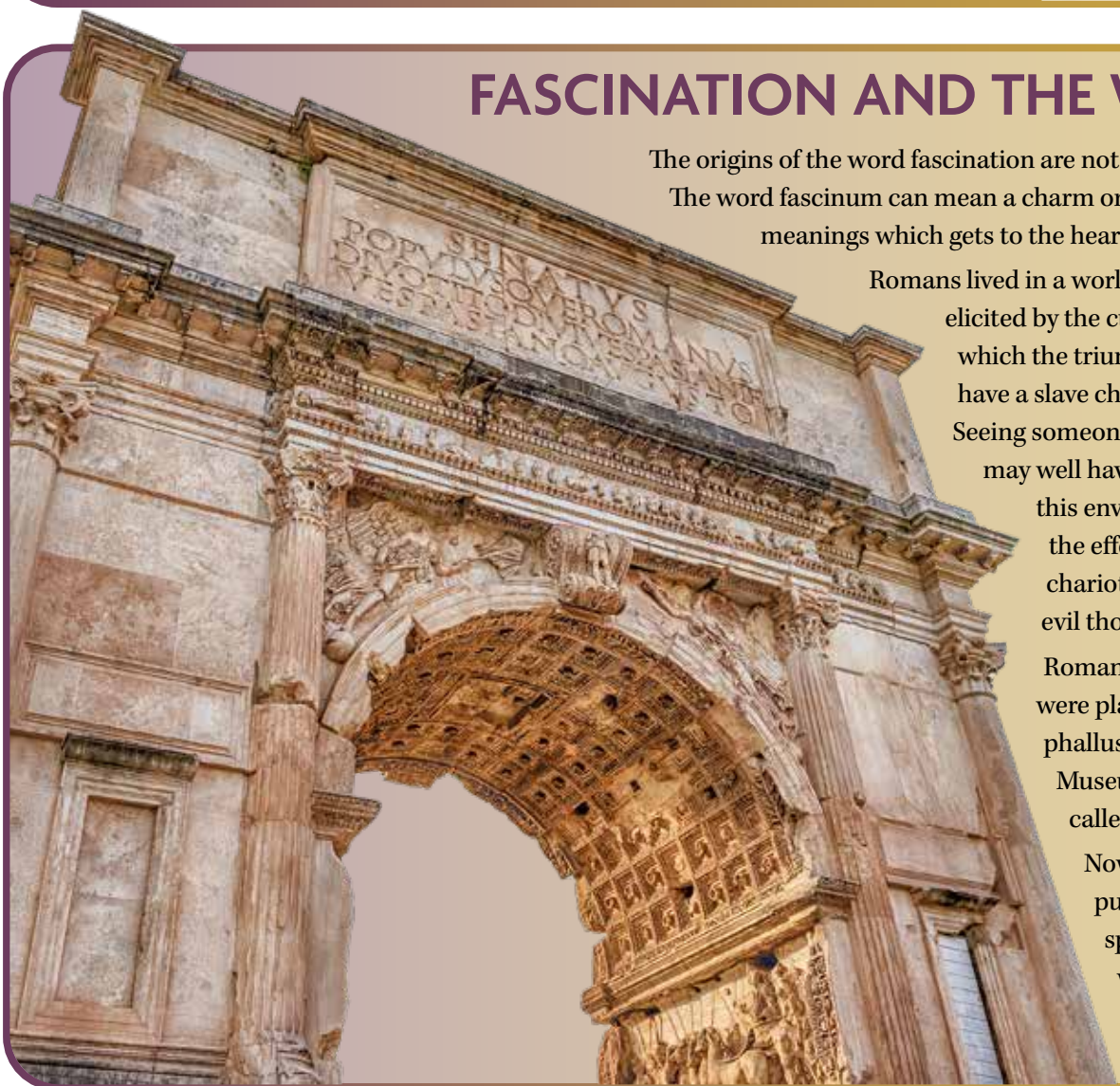
1. 2. Praetexta. 3. 4. Travelling-Costume. 5. Noble man. 6. 7. Sacrificial Assistant. 8. Priest of Jupiter. 9. High Priest. 10. Public Orator. 11. Senator. 12. Citizen of the later time. 13. Equestrian.

## FASCINATION AND THE WARDING OFF THE EVIL EYE

The origins of the word fascination are not only amusing but also indicative of Roman ways of looking at the world. The word *fascinum* can mean a charm or spell, as well as phallus and it is the very conflation of these different meanings which gets to the heart of how Romans perceived the phallus and the need for it.

Romans lived in a world where people were surrounded by menacing evil spirits who were often elicited by the curses of those who envied them. This is best exemplified by the triumph in which the triumphator, whose successes brought him so close to being a god, needed to have a slave chant *memento te esse mortalem* (remember you are mortal) into his ear. Seeing someone so close to that boundary between mortality and immortality, onlookers may well have wanted to bring this triumphant general down a peg or two. In Latin, this envy that people felt is called *invidia*, meaning to cast an evil eye. To counter the effect, Vestal Virgins placed a *fascinum* under the triumphant general's chariot, in the belief that the phallus could fascinate *invidia* i.e. cast spells over evil thoughts, thereby nullifying them. The *fascinum*, in this way, was a charm. Romans used *fascina* in their everyday lives. *Tintinnabula*, or wind chimes, were placed in doorways to ensure their good fortune. These often-represented phalluses in various inventive ways as seen in the Naples Archaeological Museum. They also enlisted *fascina* to protect their children, who wore amulets called *bullae*, which encased little *fascina*.

Nowadays fascinating people or events, or their charming equivalents, are purely interesting or captivating and envy doesn't entail actually casting spells. It's not just the meaning of fascination that has changed but the whole mindset that the phallus has such power. Romans might be amused or disappointed by fascinators worn at weddings or at Ascot and perplexed that they are just fancy feathers.





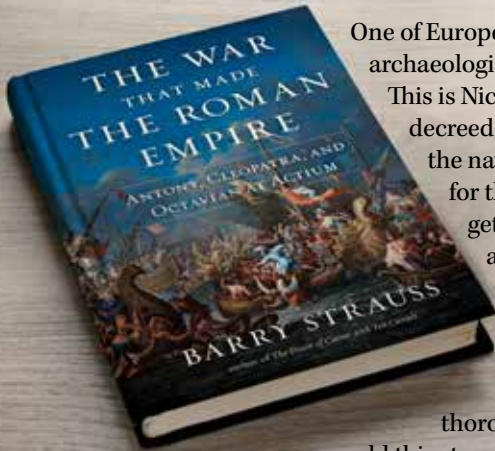
# ANDANTE RECOMMENDS

## A GREAT READ...

### The War that made the Roman Empire: Anthony, Cleopatra, and Octavian at Actium

AUTHOR: BARRY STRAUSS

*Chosen by Oliver Gilkes, Andante guide lecturer*



One of Europe’s least known but most intriguing classical archaeological sites lies on the north western coast of Greece. This is Nicopolis, the vast, and probably deeply regretted, city decreed by Octavian Augustus to celebrate his victory at the naval battle of Actium which gave him the mastery for the Roman world. The city, with its new museum, gets far too few visitors, though it lies at the heart of an extraordinary archaeological landscape. But how did it come to be? What was the story of Actium and the players involved there, Octavian, Cleopatra, Anthony, Agrippa?

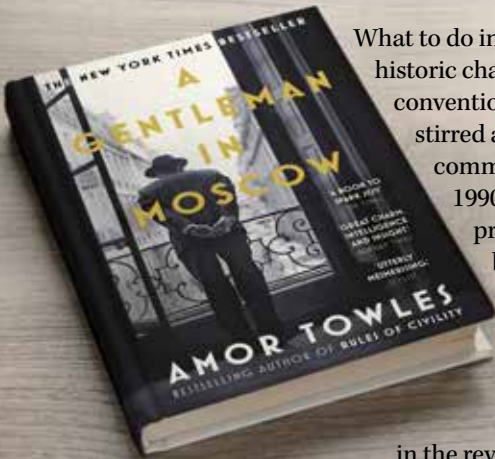
Barry Strauss’ book covers this matter in a thorough, scholarly but eminently readable way. How could this story of passion, strategy and military prowess be anything else? Strauss examines the origins of the conflict in the collapse of the late Roman Republic and the rise of various warlords. The complicated diplomacy and manoeuvring for position is well covered binging out some surprising points, the appearance of the supposedly humble and put upon Octavia, Octavian’s sister, married off to Anthony in an attempt to keep the peace, as a power in her own right. Of course Cleopatra is presented in her true position as a masterful ruler, desperately trying to steer her kingdom between the shoals of the great powers and Roman greed.

Finally, the battle itself is covered in an enthralling account. The main point that comes out here is how cleverly Agrippa prepared the ground, a prior attack on the supply base of Methone effectively lost Anthony the battle before it began, disrupting his supply lines and ensuring that the Antonian and Egyptian fleet and army would be scrabbling for supplies and susceptible to disease and desertion. In all a great account of a historic conflict and fine preparation for a visit to the place, which can indeed be seen on Andante’s new Ancient Epirus tour!

### A Gentleman in Moscow

AUTHOR: AMOR TOWLES

*Chosen by Oliver Gilkes, Andante guide lecturer*



What to do in a word turned upside down, where historic change has intervened, and politics and social conventions are discarded, remade and generally stirred around? I saw this myself in the collapse of communist regimes in the Balkans during the 1990s. For Count Alexander Ilych Rostov this problem comes in 1922. An aristocrat and by reputation a social liberal, the Count is condemned in 1922 for anti-Bolshevik activity and sentenced to house arrest. His house happens to be the grand Hotel Metropol in Moscow, a hive of pre-revolutionary privilege and status. But in the revolutionary atmosphere of the time the Count is ejected from his elegant suite and sent, with his unfeasibly large antique furniture, to an unused room on the servants floor under the eaves. From this eyrie the Count watches the changes and upheavals of the new era, civil war, purges, world war, and reconstruction while maintaining the perfect poise and civilised manners he was brought up to appreciate.

With his world reduced to the impressive but restricted confines of the hotel the Count creates a new one, getting to know the labyrinthine ways of the building, with the help of a skeleton key gifted to him by Nina, the young girl he befriends. Nina metamorphoses into an enthusiastic revolutionary, before vanishing into the maelstrom of the brave new world of Soviet Russia. So the hotel staff become his confidants, colleagues and ultimately friends as he strives to maintain the standards he expects of himself. Ultimately this challenge leads him to become head waiter. When the hotels fine wine cellar is ‘declassified’ by having all the labels removed, the Count continues to identify the correct bottles by touch. Studying the past is all about noting change, and Towles has produced a delightful story of one aspect, told with humour and intelligence. But not all is as it seems, for the final chapters reveal that the Count has a surprising secret. This is a wonderful romance about the perceptions of the past and their relationship with the now, the stuff of historians and archaeologists.

## A GREAT LISTEN...

### Empire

GOALHANGER PODCASTS | *Chosen by Mary Reynolds – Andante Travels*

Originally designed as a means of downloading radio broadcasts to an Ipod (hence podcast), podcasts have evolved at a rate that would annoy a giant panda. The ultimate mix of convenience and on demand entertainment coupled with the personal and intimate way information is delivered “liberating the listener from time and space’ as journalist Ben Hammersley put it in 2004 article, has seen a huge rise in listeners with millions of podcasts streaming every day.

One of our favourites is relatively new to the podcast fold: Empire



As co-host, William Dalrymple brings scholarly and story-telling clout. An award-winning travel writer and historian, he is skilled in reconstructing vanished worlds from detailed research among the archival sources. His presenting partner is journalist, TV and radio presenter, Anita Anand, with whom Dalrymple previously collaborated on the book Koh-i-Noor, The History of the World’s Infamous Diamond. Anita has presented ‘Any Answers’ on Radio 4 for many years and is adept at reigning in the jovial and effervescent Dalrymple when he occasionally dives into one too many rabbit holes. Particular favourite of the series so far is a neglected giant of western history: the Ottoman Empire a power that reached for thousands of miles and lasted for over half a millennium. In over 20 episodes, starting with the declining world of the of the Byzantines and the fall of Constantinople, and ending with the rise of Attaturk and the catastrophe of Smyrna in 1922, we learn more about the multi ethnic, multireligious empire comparable to that of the Romans. The history is chronological, the presentation is conversational, and the content is superb.







# Explore with us in 2024

Our programme for 2024 includes tours that can take you not only to the 'bucket list' archaeological sites, but also to those that might appeal to the adventurer within. Wander among the UNESCO-listed Roman site of Timgad in Algeria with its immaculate gridded plan, explore the extensive site of the Great Zimbabwe in the country of the same name, or discover the Inca fortress of Kuelap, built between 600 and 900 years before Machu Picchu, in Peru's lesser-visited north.

In addition to our perennial favourites such as our Pompeii tour and others across Italy, Europe and worldwide, we are particularly excited for 2024 to come around because we have a grand total of 19 brand new itineraries on offer, which can take you from the wild plains of Thrace to the Neolithic site of Çatal Hüyük, discovering everything from the history of the Samnites to the incredible caves in South Africa where the origins of humankind can be traced. All of the tours are led by expert Guide Lecturers, and we are delighted to be visiting some destinations that are new to our expanding portfolio including cruise itineraries featured in our dedicated cruise brochure. Our collection of cruises continues to increase as this way of travelling keeps growing in popularity.

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