
EDITORIAL

While the planets move around and human beings drive themselves in their humble condition –closely tied by their temporal, limited nature–, History seems to be a good place to sit down, avoid the stressful requirements of the fast life of our modern world, and look at what can we expect about our own days and the near future. Indeed, History can be just a way to justify the present reality, of course, and that is how our discipline has worked, for example, in the many discourses of cultural or national identity during the process of configuration of the Western modern states from during the nineteenth century on. However, now and then, historians have also been able to, time after time, take a critical look at their own days, and put into question what has been taken for granted as the expected, the ‘shall be’, and many other mandatory claims. Now and then, History is not just a brunch of things that happened in the past, but a quest for Hope, with the aim that things have not always been as they seemed to be (nor the way everything wants to press us and tell us that have been and will then still be). Bolds as love, historians, like poets, are requested to fulfil with ideas, questions, details, chances, and even dreams the conceptual scenario of the people surrounding us (friends and family, students and colleagues, citizens, comrades, general audiences, from closest to very distant people) think beyond the box, beyond present-day daylight (and night’s darkness). Better worlds are also key in our concern and how we think of (and imagine) our past realities.

Like many of you, I love reading, and from time to time, I like to revisit the beginning of the precious short novel *The Little Prince* by the adventurous, unforgettable Antoine de Saint-Exupery. My favourite passage is that of the scientist who discovered the tinny asteroid, named B 612. The astronomer, Turkish by origin, decided to go to a great scientific event, an International Conference on Astronomy, and explain his discovery. However, when he began his speech during the conference, his colleagues did not really listen to him, because of the custom he wore, a kind of traditional Turkish dress, that made the audience consider him rather a shabby blatherer than a real scientist. Deeply frustrated, our Turkish astronomer went back home, but he tried again at the next International Conference, although now he dressed himself ‘properly’ (*i.e.*, in a Western costume, in a suit) and everybody then admired his brilliant explanation. I love this episode, because there is so much useful information on it about how science works, and how many times knowledge and innovation has less to do with the success of reasoning than with appearance.

I have already told here one of my beloved Grandma’s best lessons for life. As an illiterate, rural woman (I usually say she was closer to Homer’s world than any of my colleagues in Scholarship), she has many sayings and proverbs, but there is one that more frequently comes to my mind than the rest: “things are not as they are, but as they appear to be”. Someday, this saying will welcome everyone entering in the Faculties of Classics and History worldwide. History, among many other disciplines in our challenging days’ Humanities, has to focus more on what things (in the past) wanted to

be like or appear, than what they truly were. This is, actually, a terrific question for a huge debate on our discipline, but by putting our focus on appearances can also unmask our own days' realities, and their distressing features. Doubt and questioning are our tools, and the huge catalogue of people that lived before us (*i.e.*, History, in the end), our colleagues, as well as our object of study too, for helping our audiences to guess what we are living through, how do we live, and how can we improve our reality, solving or rejecting the horrors and stressful pressures (exploitation, war, gender inequality, violence and aggression, racism, fascism, hunger, poverty, fundamentalisms...) that surrounds us.

Knowing the past, of course, is not a cure for avoiding repeating it. How much I wish this could be true! But we all know it is not. Like Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*'s main character Billy Pilgrim (what a poor fellow...), even if we could go back to the past maybe we could simply witness ourselves, but no changes could be introduced. Changes are issues for the present, and the future. However, let me be naive and think that knowing the past allows me to understand better my own days and everything happening around me. And I mean 'understand' to say that I feel able to think about, to seek information by myself, to contrast versions, to take a point, and to question myself and the rest, in order to answer uncertainties and, to some extent, to help others around me also to 'understand' it, by sharing tools, thoughts, and even starting actions later. Humanities, including History, Classics, and Archaeology, are our weapons against the uneasy challenge to be ourselves, freethinkers, involved in our worlds as part of them, being voices (like the poets) that offer words to explain how we feel concerning what happens around us. I know it is easy from such a point as a piece of paper like this one you are now reading, but I follow here the lessons of Rebecca Solnit when she defends that gestures, even small ones, can inspire others to move themselves, and to put things going round and round. And I feel our days need things to move and change.

So, from this simple fact of a piece of paper (or a text on a screen, in our digital days), a small fact, that of writing ancient (Macedonian, Greek, Hellenistic) History that changes many things, I am glad to see our journal is able to still claim the usefulness of questioning Antiquity. A brilliant (if you allow me to say it) handful of papers are gathered in this year's issue. In my (very) personal opinion, this issue is also an allegation in favour of the richness of our fieldwork, as far as many different methodologies and approaches can be observed in the papers collected in it. First, Diego Chapinal-Heras offers archaeological and historical approaches to Dion, a topic that links landscape, religion, and cultural identity. The eminent Richard Stoneman (a precious human being, and a wise good man) writes about Buddhism and the Greeks. Branko Van Oppen, my very dear friend (I am truly happy to see him published in *Karanos*, especially when his first paper in our journal is maybe the last one he will dedicate to the topic of the early-Hellenistic royal women, a theme he has worked so much during the so many years; I can feel the emotional imprint of it), offers a deep appreciation on Agathocles' affair. Ana Alexandra Alves de Sousa presents an interesting study on intertextuality, concerning some adventures of Jason in Apollonius' *Argonautica* and the historical remembrance of the kings of Macedonia. Raul Navas-Moreno goes deep in the review and study of the figures of the Frataraka, involving a revision of the whole scholarship on this question and a detailed approach to sources and related problems. Ernesto Damiani examines on the historiography about the death of Alexander by approaching the works of Émile Littré. As co-director of *Karanos*, I am glad to see the diversity of methodological approaches gathered in this issue, from epigraphy to literature, archaeology, history, numismatics, and

historiography, but also on the wide range of topics and geographies. Even the geographical origins of those authors are also a good symptom for our fieldwork, from Barcelona to Tampa, Lisboa, Madrid, Padova, the United Kingdom, and even the Antipodes: our place of honour in this issue is dedicated to the eminent Ian Worthington, with our usual interview (at the ‘Main Voices’ section) and the re-publishing (in the ‘Flashbacks’ section) of one challenging paper about the epigraphical source of the League of Corinth. I could not be prouder of the task and the efforts the team of in our journal (Mario Agudo, Marc Mendoza) has made this year, when we also published the first *Karanos Supplement*. A recent incorporation deserves to be mentioned: G. Taietti is now in charge of the secretary tasks in our journal. Welcome, dear Guen, and thank you for your dedication.

There is a deep responsibility in how we enunciate our words as Historians. Following Vonnegut again, through his shocking *Mother Night*’s character Howard J. Campbell, we shall be aware of how we like to be perceived, and what we like to defend, from our scholar positions. History has usually been understood as the eternal judge, but I doubt everyone who deserves historical trial will finally fall into the severe sentence of time and remembering. However, historians are so much like Vonnegut’s Howard J. Campbell, guilty of proposing some interpretations of the facts that help him to stay as an Allies’ spy in Nazi Germany, interpretations that simultaneously help fascism to justify unjustifiable ideas and facts. And maybe this is one of the points of being historians: we need to live among our people, and feed our interpretations by questioning the world to help others to understand it, re-imagine it, dream better, or simply enjoy life, knowledge, and Humanity. Somehow, when I try to guess why I am so deeply concerned with the past, I feel myself as Kirk Douglas in the film *Ulysses* by Mario Camerini (this film is probably one of the reasons I am now here, writing about ancient Greece), when he observes the eternally-changing sea while he is on the island of Phaeacia to seek the answer of who is he and where he comes from. Maybe all this, our task, is as simple and complex as that. As Camerini’s Ulysses, my simplest wish is to sit down in front of the sea, to get some time there to enjoy the fresh air, to think, to paint my nails in red (and maybe green), the sound of the beautiful music of Eleni Karaindrou for the score of the film *Eternity and a Day* (Μια αιωνιότητα και μια μέρα), while I try to figure out how to travel through the sea of time to the understand where we come from, with the hope to discover the way back home.

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