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Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Reflections on the Role of Ancient History in a Modern University

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## FORUM

### BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE: REFLECTIONS ON THE ROLE OF ANCIENT HISTORY IN A MODERN UNIVERSITY

#### Background

The reflections presented here were prompted by a rare and fascinating challenge. A classics and a history department of a major university—its name does not matter here—had tried to collaborate on an appointment of an ancient historian. The position was to be in one department but the interests and needs of the other were to be considered. The search eventually failed, primarily because members of the two departments had widely divergent views of the role and purpose of ancient history and, accordingly, of the role their new colleague was to play and the type of courses s/he was to teach. These views were based on assumptions and expectations about which they all felt quite strongly but which they had not articulated clearly and which they had not been able to explain to each other. As a result, the candidate ranked at the top by one department was considered unacceptable by the other and vice versa, and agreement on any other candidate proved impossible. Threatened by the loss of the position if a second search were to fail, the two departments made the unusual decision to invite a mediator or facilitator whose task it would be to help establish common ground and better conditions for the second search.

I had the honor and privilege of serving in this function. I met independently with both chairpersons and with groups of both faculties, listening to their concerns, trying to get a clearer picture of the problems at hand and to answer some of their questions. Later, at a well attended joint faculty meeting, I offered the thoughts presented here, followed by a question and answer period and then an open discussion. As it turned out, both departments were greatly interested in overcoming the impasse. Hence, what was needed most was an occasion to break the ice and get faculty on the two sides to talk and listen to each other, to voice their concerns and to hear those of the others.

To a large extent, then, the problems that became visible in this case were caused by a lack of communication, mutual understanding, and previous collaboration. Such problems, as I

found out, are rather common in American and European universities. Urged by others, I publish my comments here, in the form in which they were given, with only small revisions and minimal annotation; they are my personal thoughts, impressionistic and incomplete, based on my own experiences, on what I heard from others, and on a limited amount of reading.<sup>1</sup> My hope is that they might be helpful to others who are grappling with similar problems. I should be happy to receive any comments or suggestions on this paper, on the issues discussed here and related problems or experiences.

### Introduction

My qualification to discuss the problems at hand is not that of a theoretician or a specialist in didactics or pedagogy nor that of an academic politician, let alone a professional mediator or facilitator. It is simply that of a practitioner, of a scholar and teacher of ancient history who has experienced different settings and realities: ancient history in Europe and in the US, in a history department and in a classics department, in a university and in a research institute.<sup>2</sup> My task, I think, is primarily to offer some perspectives that may not have been considered so far, to help each department look at the problems we are trying to resolve through the lenses of the other and thus to enhance mutual understanding, to make a few suggestions about the value and interest of ancient history in a modern American university,<sup>3</sup> and perhaps to outline the potential for fruitful, even exciting collaboration between members of the two departments.

<sup>1</sup> I owe thanks to Erich Gruen, who read an earlier version and offered invaluable suggestions. He is, of course, not responsible for anything I say here.

<sup>2</sup> I studied classics and history and received a Ph.D. in ancient history at the University of Basel, Switzerland. I taught ancient languages in secondary school before accepting an assistant professorship in ancient history in the history department of the Free University in Berlin, Germany. I have been teaching at Brown University since 1978, holding a primary appointment in the classics department and, since 1981, a joint appointment in the history department. In concrete terms this means that my FTE is in Classics but I am also a voting member in History; my courses that require competence in the ancient languages (usually advanced reading courses or seminars on ancient historians) are listed only in Classics, all the others in both departments, so that students can count them for either a Classics or History major. From 1992 to 2000 I shared with my wife, Deborah Boedeker, the directorship of the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington D.C.

<sup>3</sup> Unless I say otherwise, by "ancient history" I mean here Graeco-Roman history.

## Context: Ancient History in American Universities

The first thing we all should be aware of is a simple fact: the difficulties we are confronted with are not unique to this university. In fact, they are very common, and departments and individuals are grappling with them all over this country—and far beyond: in the UK and in Germany quite similarly. A German colleague began a recent article on the state of our discipline with the remark, “Ancient History finds itself between two stools.”<sup>4</sup>

In preparation for this meeting, I contacted about forty ancient historians in colleges and universities throughout the US, and asked them about their experiences. My findings are unsurprising but not useless. I have quoted a few relevant statements in the appendix, edited to preserve anonymity; I trust they will prove illuminating.<sup>5</sup> I summarize the main points here very briefly.

As far as positions go, every possible variant is attested: some historians are in classics departments, others in history departments, some with, some without joint appointments in the other. Some joint appointments are genuine and mutually beneficial, others a mere formality and thus meaningless.

Second, with regard to teaching, the pattern is more consistent. Ancient historians in history departments usually do not teach courses in the languages, although some do; many expect competence in the ancient languages for graduate seminars, but not all do. The pattern of teaching, say, three out of four annual courses in translation and one in the ancient languages is not that rare. By contrast, ancient historians in classics departments usually do teach language courses, not infrequently on all levels; sometimes they are asked to offer myth and literature courses in addition to ancient civilization and other survey courses.

Third, the demands and expectations of the two departments differ substantially. In my little questionnaire, I asked my colleagues how they succeed in meeting such expectations. In a number of institutions, ancient historians in the two departments collaborate in a happy and amicable symbiosis, profiting from generous cross-listing policies and even interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs, usually with good results and satisfaction on all sides. This at least shows, for example, that history departments that trust their Classics colleagues to be sensible in their appointments usually find that no irreparable harm is done to their students, and vice versa. In many places, however, such symbiosis clearly is not possible. A deep gulf all too often separates the departments, and ancient historians have

<sup>4</sup> Gehrke 1995: 160 (my translation).

<sup>5</sup> I thank my colleagues for their useful comments and advice and for their permission to reprint some of their statements here.

to adjust to one or the other in order to survive, sacrificing part of their professional interests and potential in the process; some responses I received actually were quite sad in this respect. And, of course, there are institutions where history departments do not want to have anything to do with ancient history and leave this field entirely to Classics, beginning their own curriculum with the Middle Ages or even later.

### Two Different Perspectives

Let us now make an effort to look at each department from the perspective of the other. Generalizations are always dangerous but inevitable here, despite a great deal of variation within disciplines. What, then, should classicists be aware of when they look at or deal with a history department?

To begin with, they will see a discipline that has been diversifying rapidly. The geographical horizon has widened enormously: where even a generation ago European and American history dominated almost without challenge, there are now many histories competing for attention and positions: Near Eastern, South and East Asian, African, Latin American, the Pacific Rim, Atlantic Connections, and others. Then there are thematic histories few of which were even talked about half a century ago: women and gender, identities, mentalities, ethnicities, cities, labor movements, to name only a few. One of the results of such diversification is that European history has lost much of its predominance, and periods that took themselves for granted not very long ago now find themselves in a harder struggle to preserve their place in the curriculum. This is true not least for medieval and ancient history.

Of course, American history continues to play a very important role almost everywhere, and this is a discipline that covers a relatively short historical time-span; to most Americanists, the eighteenth century is already "ancient history." Hence members of history departments, which are often dominated by Americanists, sometimes find it difficult to understand the usefulness of a long-term historical perspective, let alone of really ancient history. Moreover, many modern historians work with methods and theories borrowed from other social sciences. Among these Sociology and Political Science are notorious for having largely abandoned historical perspectives.

With the exception of cultural and intellectual historians, most modern historians work more with archival materials than with literary texts, and if they use the latter, these are relatively easily accessible and understandable. Again with exceptions, such as

various Asian histories, most modern histories require knowledge of at most one foreign language. Many historians thus find it hard to appreciate fully the complexity of the training in languages, literatures, and technical disciplines that ancient historians need to undergo in order to be fully prepared for their professional careers. On the other hand, history departments rightly insist that ancient historians be well-trained historians, familiar with the issues, methodologies, and theories of their discipline. To fit the resulting multitude of requirements into the schedule of average history graduate programs poses great difficulties. Cuts and concessions are almost inevitable, especially in the languages and technical disciplines. Not surprisingly, classics departments often look with suspicion at those who come out of such programs, doubting whether they are really trained sufficiently to meet the broad demands of their discipline.

Now, let us turn around and ask what members of history departments should be aware of when they look at or deal with classics departments. First of all, classicists come in many shapes. Classics is a very old discipline, going back at least to the Renaissance. It is burdened with a tradition which for centuries saw it as the predominant part of an education that was limited to the ruling elites, focused on a circumscribed canon of texts, considering everything else subordinate and "auxiliary" to the primary purpose of teaching the languages in order to read and interpret these texts.<sup>6</sup> In this tradition, history provided context and was not taken seriously in its own right.

This, however, lies in the distant past. Ancient historians rarely fit the traditional mold anymore. Classics has become an area study that combines multiple disciplines and approaches to illuminate the richness and long-lasting impact of an era that encompassed many cultures and traditions, achieved remarkable heights of civilization, and remained in several respects unsurpassed well into the early modern era. Disciplines that for more recent cultures are distributed among several departments, are all part of the field of Classics, even if not all of them may actually be taught in each classics department. The discipline of Classics thus comprises the study of history and society, languages and linguistics, literature, religion, philosophy, science, art and archaeology, and more. All this, to some extent, is part of the training of every classicist, including ancient historians.

Moreover, Classics is not only interdisciplinary, it is also multi-ethnic, encompassing Greeks and Romans and increasingly, in many universities and colleges, Near Eastern and North African societies as well as societies "on the margins," from the Celts, Germans, and

<sup>6</sup> See, for the role of the classical education in this country, Reinhold 1984; Richard 1994.

Scythians in the north to India in the east. Problems of relations between different cultures, from violent clashes (for example between Jews and Greeks in Alexandria, between Romans and natives in Britain or Germany) to large-scale acculturation and integration, are a crucial part of what ancient historians are concerned with.<sup>7</sup>

All this is in many, perhaps most, cases the modern reality of Classics and of ancient history integrated in Classics—even if some classics departments are still dominated by philology and literature, especially poetry, and treat history and prose historians as marginal and auxiliary, and even if not all classics departments take full advantage of what historians have to offer them.

For reasons to which I will return, the training of ancient historians needs to focus heavily, more than in most (but certainly not all) other histories, on languages and a profound understanding of the nature of the sources, including the literatures. Understandably, therefore, when hiring ancient historians, classicists are concerned to make sure that candidates in this respect meet their expectations. Yet not all classics departments realize that an ancient historian must be much more than a philologist who happens to have written a dissertation on a historical or historiographical subject. Ancient historians trained in classics departments are still too often weak in general historical knowledge and not sufficiently familiar with the methodologies and theories underlying the modern discipline of History. The result is a tendency among historians, more frequent than one might think, to disqualify their ancient colleagues as classicists who at best can “pinch-hit” as historians.

For all these reasons, there all too easily emerges a large gap in assumptions, and occasionally it becomes very difficult to find common ground. Any attempt at bridging this gap, I believe, must begin with an effort to reach a better understanding—in several respects. First, we must find out what the other side’s perceptions and expectations are, respect these, and react to them positively and constructively. Second, we need to inform ourselves about the range of useful contributions ancient historians can offer to both departments, and about what we might reasonably expect (and not expect) of them. Third, we ought to try to establish points of collaboration. I have discussed the first point in this section and shall now turn to commenting on the other aspects.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Gruen 1993.

## Contributions of Ancient History

What, then, can ancient history offer? This is a big topic that I can only touch upon here.<sup>8</sup> One is tempted, of course, to emphasize the powerful continuities, especially but not only in the intellectual and religious spheres, that reach back to Greece and the Roman empire, and in many cases even farther to Mesopotamia, Israel, and Egypt. But the mere fact of such continuities does not necessarily give the history and culture of the Graeco-Roman world or of the ancient Near East priority over the study of early Arab, Indian, Chinese, African or American cultures. By stressing the factor of continuity and origins, we limit our perspective to the western and European traditions that currently are not taken for granted by, or easily acceptable to, increasing numbers of people with different backgrounds. Rather, I suggest, if it is our quest to preserve and recover the past as part of a continuous heritage of humankind, we should close ranks with the heirs of many other traditions. In a global and multicultural modern world, we should all contribute to preserving a multicultural past.

Moreover, in areas that are immediately important to historians, the claim of continuity is flawed. For example, frequent assertions to the contrary notwithstanding, modern democracy is not directly derived from Athenian democracy.<sup>9</sup> When the Founding Fathers of this country looked for models that could help them build a Federal State, they did study Polybius' work in which such states play major roles, but as much as their thinking profited from such information, the state they created was not an imitation of the Achaean League of the third and second centuries BCE.<sup>10</sup> Yet, even if our solutions differ from theirs, the ancients did think in pertinent ways about many issues that are still important today, and this is what gives their ideas, literatures, and histories timeless relevance.

This seems crucial to me. If we want to claim for ancient history real interest and validity, we should perhaps emphasize less the continuity of the western tradition than the timeless importance of much of the achievement of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and of the problems they were grappling with. The study of these ancient societies allows us, more easily than is the case with the infinitely more complex modern world, to study the efforts of human societies in coping with challenges and crises, to analyze the solutions introduced by them, to learn where and why they succeeded or

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Wells 1967; MacMullen 1989; Gehrke 1995; Burstein *et al.* 1997; Saller 1998; Morley 1999, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> See "Introduction" in Morris and Raaflaub 1998; Strauss 1998; Roberts 1994.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., Reinhold 1984: chap.3; Richard 1994: chap.3; Lehmann 1981, 1985. See also, generally, Rahe 1992.



failed, to observe possibilities, to pick up ideas and suggestions. By stimulating our thinking in many directions, history thus helps us become more critically aware of our own situation and problems.

One might emphasize that it is precisely the nature of the sources that have survived from classical antiquity that makes it easier than in many other cases of early societies to achieve this purpose. To my knowledge, the early Mesoamerican societies, despite their stunning achievements in other areas, have left no such texts. Ancient China, India, Mesopotamia, Israel, and Egypt did so to varying extents, but most of these texts are far less easily accessible (which means also: far less published in English translations and interpreted in scholarly studies aimed at non-specialized readerships) and embedded in a cultural context that itself is more "alien" and thus much more difficult to penetrate for most (though obviously not all) of our students. The ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern, not to speak of the early Chinese, concepts of justice, for example, though of great interest in themselves and enormously illuminating for purposes of cross-cultural comparison, are much farther removed from concepts familiar to most modern students than are their Greek and Roman counterparts.<sup>11</sup> The same is true for political theory, historical thought, and many other areas of intellectual endeavor.

Although I do not want to dwell on this here, it will suffice to illustrate my point if I mention Cicero, the Roman statesman, orator, and philosopher, who spent his whole life worrying and writing about the crisis of a republic that was being destroyed by its own greatness and success, and the historian Livy, who composed his definitive history of the Roman republic with the conditions and concerns of his own time in mind, when, as he writes in his preface, "we can neither endure our vices nor face the remedies needed to cure them." The fifth and fourth-century BCE Athenians were obsessed with the question of how to realize a just and good community, and with unprecedented political experiences and discoveries, including concepts such as liberty, equality, or progress, the variety and succession of constitutions (not least one they called democracy and developed to the very extremes of what their socio-political parameters allowed), the nature of and problems caused by power and imperialism, and the possibility to deal theoretically with all these issues.

No less importantly, ancient history as a discipline has developed immensely over the last decades. For those who make an effort to examine more closely what is going on, it would be difficult, I think, to sustain the prejudice, still voiced not infrequently, that this

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Assmann 1990; Irani and Silver 1995; Assmann *et al.* 1998; see also Lloyd 1990.

is less than “real history.” Let me illustrate this briefly with a few examples.<sup>12</sup>

Neville Morley’s book on key themes and approaches in ancient history, although somewhat superficial and impressionistic, still gives an idea of the themes ancient historians have been tackling in their research: it lists, besides all the traditional names and institutions, such issues as agriculture, city, class and status, crime and punishment, crisis, demography, disease, economy, environment, ethnicity, food and drink, gender and sexuality, household, housing, imperialism, industry, labor, literacy and orality, patronage, peasants, rationality, taxes, technology, transport and communication, and many more.<sup>13</sup>

Much of the scholarship that has been produced in the last decades in ancient history is very much informed by modern theories and methodological discussions, be they at home in history, anthropology, sociology, political science, or economy. Max Weber and, through Moses Finley and the “French School” of Jean-Pierre Vernant, modern economic and anthropological theories, have had an enormous impact on the field; my own work on the Greek concept of political freedom has grown out of the theory and methodology of conceptual history (“Begriffsgeschichte”) developed by Reinhart Koselleck and his colleagues in their massive dictionary on concepts in history, and ancient historians pay no less attention to what modern theoreticians say about truth and objectivity and the writing of history. If anything, our field is currently experiencing a mild bout of frustration with too much theory.<sup>14</sup>

Some of the most interesting recent work especially in social, economic, and administrative history is based on increasingly sophisticated evaluations of corpora of evidence that fit the modern label of “documentary evidence” as closely as is possible under the circumstances: inscriptions and papyri.<sup>15</sup> These are also the most prolific sources of new evidence, and some recent discoveries, such as a Greek poem, preserved on papyrus, that eulogizes the Greek victory over the Persians at Plataea, or Roman senatorial decrees from the time of Tiberius, recovered from buried bronze inscriptions, are nothing short of sensational in their evidential value.<sup>16</sup> This type of evidence has prompted, for example, an ever better

<sup>12</sup> More will be found in the bibliog. cited in n.8.

<sup>13</sup> Morley 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Gehrke 1995: 174-180; Raaflaub 1997: 32-34. On Max Weber and Finley, see, for example, Finley 1982: editors’ introduction and chap.1; Bruhns and Nippel 1987-89; on Anthropology and the Classics, Humphreys 1978: pt.1; Nippel 1990; on “Begriffsgeschichte,” see Brunner *et al.* 1972-93; Lehmann and Richter 1996; on “freedom,” Raaflaub 1985, 2003; on “truth,” for example, Woodman 1998.

<sup>15</sup> See recently Bagnall 1995; Bodel 2001; on coins, Howgego 1995.

<sup>16</sup> See Boedeker and Sider 2001; Eck *et al.* 1996; Rowe forthcoming.

understanding of the methods by which the Romans governed their immense empire, and provided insights into the living and working conditions of slaves and freedmen, marriage customs, the interaction among various religions and races in the provinces or the urban centers, the ways in which the emergence of democracy in Athens was connected with imperial power and expansion, or even the evolution of historical writing. Truly important recent work on ancient demography relies largely on epigraphical, archaeological, and papyrological sources and the sophisticated application of modern theories and methods.<sup>17</sup>

All this, however, has a flip side. And this leads me to the issue of what can and should reasonably be expected of an ancient historian, and how such expectations might be realized.

#### What is an Ancient Historian, and What can Reasonably be Expected of One?

Greek and Roman epigraphy, papyrology, numismatics, and archaeology have developed into highly sophisticated and specialized disciplines. Not every ancient historian is and needs to be such a specialist. But all must acquire at least a solid understanding of these disciplines in order to be able to make judicious use of what the specialists present to them.

All ancient historians must master the ancient Greek and Latin languages to a high level that enables them to work competently with the ancient texts and frees them from dependence on translations—for those who rely on a translation accept the translator's interpretations and errors. Moreover, ancient historians need to be able to communicate such knowledge to their doctoral students and to check what they do with the texts they use. This is no different from Latin American, Near Eastern, or East Asian historians who expect their pupils to work not with English translations but with Chinese, Arabic, or Portuguese sources. I might add here that, with the increasing inclusion of the Near Eastern world into the scope of ancient history, ancient language requirements will tend to become even more daunting.

In addition, like any self-respecting modern historian, ancient historians too insist that they need to consult the best scholarship on the issues they research. In American history the best scholarship is perhaps indeed usually written in English but the field of Classics, including ancient history, is broadly international, and relevant scholarship is produced as much in German, French, and Italian as in

<sup>17</sup> For details, I refer again to Burstein *et al.* 1997. Demography: Sallares 1991: pt.2; Scheidel 1996, 2001.

English—not to speak of Spanish, modern Greek, or Russian. Hence every English-speaking classicist needs to master the essentials of two, if not three, foreign languages, in addition to thorough familiarity with two (or more) ancient ones. The combination of these language requirements alone makes ancient history an extremely demanding discipline.

As if this were not enough, ancient historians not only need to be able to read their sources but also to understand their nature, that is, to know the conventions and expressed as well as unexpressed intentions of literary genres and authors. To put it simply, Herodotus, Thucydides, or Tacitus cannot be read or used like Ranke, Mommsen, Gibbon, or Grote, and even in these latter cases we need to familiarize ourselves with context and conventions within and against which those historians worked.

This is what classicists expect from their ancient historians, apart from the obvious, that they must know their special histories. Historians, on the other hand, have additional demands: as mentioned earlier, they want their colleague to be knowledgeable, at least to some extent, in their own subject matters and histories and familiar with the theories and methodologies of their field. And indeed, such knowledge is greatly useful because it prompts new questions that can be asked of long-known materials; it stimulates new approaches and facilitates crucial new insights and discoveries. Pathbreaking work in our field, like that of Moses Finley on the ancient economy, Christian Meier on the fall of the Roman republic, or Josiah Ober on the relations between leaders and masses in Athenian democracy, to name only a few, would not have been possible without this kind of background.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, historians rightly expect their ancient colleague to move on the same intellectual platform as they do, to be able to engage in productive discussion and perhaps even collaboration with them. Classicists need to respect this expectation.

It is obvious, then, that ancient historians, again not unlike representatives of a few other histories, need to be something of a hybrid, trained and competent in a great variety of disciplines. One question is how we might produce such hybrids, but for the moment I am concerned with what we do with them once we have produced and hired them. Would it not be counterproductive and wasteful if we did not allow them to derive the greatest benefits (for the good of their students and colleagues as well as their own) from their broad training, experience, and expertise?

Classics departments, I suggest, would waste tremendous potential if they insisted in using their historians in any other capacity than as the specialists they are. Of course, they should teach

<sup>18</sup> Finley 1973; Meier 1966; Ober 1989.

the “bread and butter courses” (surveys in ancient history and civilization), but, unless they are really interested in doing so, they should not be expected to teach introductory language or myth courses or courses with a strictly literary orientation. Rather they should be given as much freedom as possible to do what they do best: teach history on all kinds of topics and in all formats. As experience shows, history courses attract large numbers of students, including many who might not otherwise choose to take classics courses and who might go on to take more classics courses and even major in Classics.

History departments in turn should understand not only that it is necessary to insist that ancient historians be familiar with the technical aspects of the field and fully competent in the ancient languages, but also that it is a legitimate part of their professional activities to write publications on ancient historiography or to teach courses on epigraphy, papyrology, or numismatics, or in Greek or Latin, reading with their students the works of ancient historians in the original language. These historians are our daily bread; they are difficult, different, and intriguing; it is hard not to be enchanted and challenged by them. To use again, immodestly, my own example, I consider myself a “hard-core” historian; my preoccupation is with historical problems and issues, but I have by now written three major articles on Herodotus, and in my work on early Greek political thought I am dealing constantly with sources (including all kinds of poetry) that not all modern historians would consider historical. Ancient historians always grapple with the question of how and how far historical evidence can be extracted from such sources; I have asked it of Homer for more than twenty years and by now finally think I not only have an answer but also understand why.

### Conclusions

What, then, might we do as a result of all these considerations? The obvious conclusion is that close collaboration between all those representing, or interested in, ancient history at the same institution is crucial. Recommendations will differ, depending on the specific situation of the discipline in each institution and the issues it is facing there. Regardless of the specifics, however, it seems clear to me that close collaboration among faculty in both the classics and history departments will open up many possibilities that could not be envisaged by one department alone, both on the undergraduate and especially on the graduate level. By drawing on each other’s resources, both departments will not only be able to offer a greater variety of “bread and butter” and attractive special topics courses

and seminars on historical subjects, accommodating student interests in many directions, but also to provide the training both in historical methods and theories, and in the languages and technical disciplines, that majors and doctoral candidates require.

For example, between the two departments it might be possible to organize team-taught interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate seminars that illuminate certain crucial periods in ancient history from different perspectives and angles: history, literature, art. We tried this at Brown a while ago with a seminar on Augustus and his Principate—with great success.<sup>19</sup> One might also think of sequences of courses, dealing with the ancient manifestations of an historical phenomenon (such as slavery or democracy) in one semester and with its modern aspects in the other. Most importantly, pooling their resources, the two departments might be able to develop a joint Ph.D. program in ancient history that takes into account the needs and demands of both fields, draws on the expertise of many others, and trains young professionals who will be able to meet the hybrid expectations I outlined earlier. This is the way colleagues at several universities have gone recently: the University of Pennsylvania and Berkeley (and perhaps others) set early examples; Princeton, Harvard, Rutgers, and others have followed. It is an excellent, though not an easy solution.

At any rate, my point, I think, is valid: isolation and parochialism spell limitation, frustration, and, easily, disaster; mutual understanding and collaboration promise great opportunities, mutual enrichment, and, ultimately, success.

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#### Appendix: Statements by ancient historians

“When our history department ran a search for a Roman historian last year, they were keen to get a ‘real historian,’ not someone trained as a classicist who can ‘pinch hit’ (their word) in history.”

“I think it is better, on the whole, for the study of ancient history to be based in History. But we suffer from the fact that many of our History colleagues are not fully convinced that some of us are ‘real’ historians... No one should hire an ancient historian who is not very competent in the

<sup>19</sup> See Raaflaub and Toher 1990.

languages, *but* language teaching should not be his/her job in preference to" non-classics courses.

"The problem is (having lived in both worlds) that the academic cultures of Classics and History are very different, and so expectations on faculty are different too... My own take now is that probably a full appointment in Classics is the best way to go, though I say this with some regret, since I think that there is much lost in not being connected to the wider realm of what's going on in History as a discipline."

"It seems a waste of talent and opportunity to hire" an ancient history specialist "and then fill a notable part of their schedule with work unrelated to history... What's to be avoided at all costs is conflict/jealousy/bad blood/no-contact between an institution's classics department and ancient history colleagues in History... Ultimately (as with so many things in life) it can only be avoided by constructive attitudes on the part of individuals rather than by writing any set of 'rules', but it's just so important to try and prevent it."

During an external review of our classics department a few years ago, "someone complained that there were no 'real historians' in our department, and this complaint surfaced in the external review itself... This point is more than an annoyingly bitter one: it gets at a core dilemma... In our case, it is not even that our ancient historians are lacking strong historical interests (they *do* have such interests, for example, in social history). It seems to me rather that the complaint was based on the fact that none of the three of us 'ancient historians' emphasizes theory particularly."

At the time of my hire, "I was short-listed both for the ancient history position in the history department and the ancient history/historiography position in Classics. Classics moved faster... but I preferred the classics department anyway, because I like to teach important literary or epigraphical texts, at least occasionally, using the original language, and I like working with students who are grappling directly with the problems of interpretation posed by those ancient texts as originally written."

"Is it the case, or is it only my imagination that there are more good ancient historians on the Classics/APA side than on the History/AHA side? One thing that I personally believe is that anyone teaching history, ancient or otherwise, should have a broad historical culture and some knowledge of theories. I am conscious of benefiting enormously from my presence here in a history department, and I also share in the teaching each year of a seminar for History majors on historiography...." In Canada, I think, "the teaching of ancient history is entirely in the hands of Classics, and one of my Canadian colleagues thought that the only thing there was to Greek history was reading Herodotus and Thucydides."

"My own appointment is in History and most but not all ancient historians in my system are solely in History. The core problem lies in what history departments expect of ancient historians. For my colleagues Greek and Latin are research tools, not the subjects of a discipline in which I am involved. This does give a sort of schizophrenic character to the field, one best exemplified by" the area of "historiography. Except for some interested in 'theory,' most of my colleagues would not recognize as historiography much of what our classicist colleagues write on ancient historians; they would call it literary criticism."

"I would presume that most ancient historians being trained these days have some sort of theoretical sophistication and knowledge of historical fields—we probably wouldn't hire them if they didn't. Put it this way: I have known a lot of graduate students in different areas in our history department, and whether good or indifferent, I have never noticed that they were any more theoretically aware or historically well-rounded than our own ancient history students."

"I see a real danger in the pseudo-historicizing of Classics, i.e. classics faculties offering more and more ancient history classes (e.g. on slavery) for which they are poorly prepared (at least compared to people trained in history departments and associating with colleagues who teach these subjects in their own periods routinely). History methodologies do differ from literary methodologies."

"Of course, with all possible emphasis, and with whatever else they may properly do, an ancient historian should teach more advanced courses in the original languages. Theoretical approaches, social history and so on are perfectly fine..., but no history can be studied without command of the technical base on which it is built. That sounds very banal, but it adds point to say that a historian in any field should expect and be enabled to teach a subject to the same levels of professional exactness as he or she uses in researching it."

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