

CLASSics

SDU International Summer School 2026

#BraveNewClassics



C&C



classicsandclass.info

SIRKK-LIISA KONTTINEN

FILM - DISCUSSION - EXHIBITION

AMBERSIDE

BYKER

ANOTHER BEGINNING

16TH & 23RD NOVEMBER

15:00-18:00

BYKER COMMUNITY CENTRE

Amber Collective

[Play](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NS3Pae3_hmE)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NS3Pae3_hmE



Charlie Hardwick (2014)

- “The culture I grew up in was not historically important. The only thing that was historically important about Wallsend was Segedunum. You know, the Romans were important, but not what was happening. The big ships were important, but not the people who built them and the people who lived beside them, and the livelihoods of everybody on the highstreets, the whole community...”
- “But ... without this [casts eye to exhibition space], it’s just all gone [pfff] puff of smoke.”



'Dirty Dick': The Bard of Aberdaron
1810



'Helotage' by Henry Wallis
1857



'It's Rudimentary, My Dear Ruddiman'
1714



"Well, it's not exactly Greek choral metre!"
1871



A Communist Hercules in Interwar Germany
1920



A Good & Useful Citizen: John Passmore Edwards
1850



A Greek Slave at the Swansea Grand
1899



Albert Mansbridge: Classics and the Workers
1923



Alexander Bain: The Weaver Philosopher
1830



Alexander Christison: The Lamermuir Latinist
1800



Alexander Crummell, an Abolitionist Grecian
1833



Alexander Murray: The Shepherd Scholar
1808

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF CLASSICS

Class and Greco-Roman Antiquity in Britain and Ireland 1689 to 1939

Edith Hall and Henry Stead



A portrait of John Berger, a man with dark, wavy hair, wearing a light-colored shirt with a dark, geometric pattern. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a serious expression. The background is a solid blue color.

“Classical mythology was part of the specialised knowledge of the privileged minority.”

John Berger (1974)



'Dirty Dick': The Bard of Aberdaron
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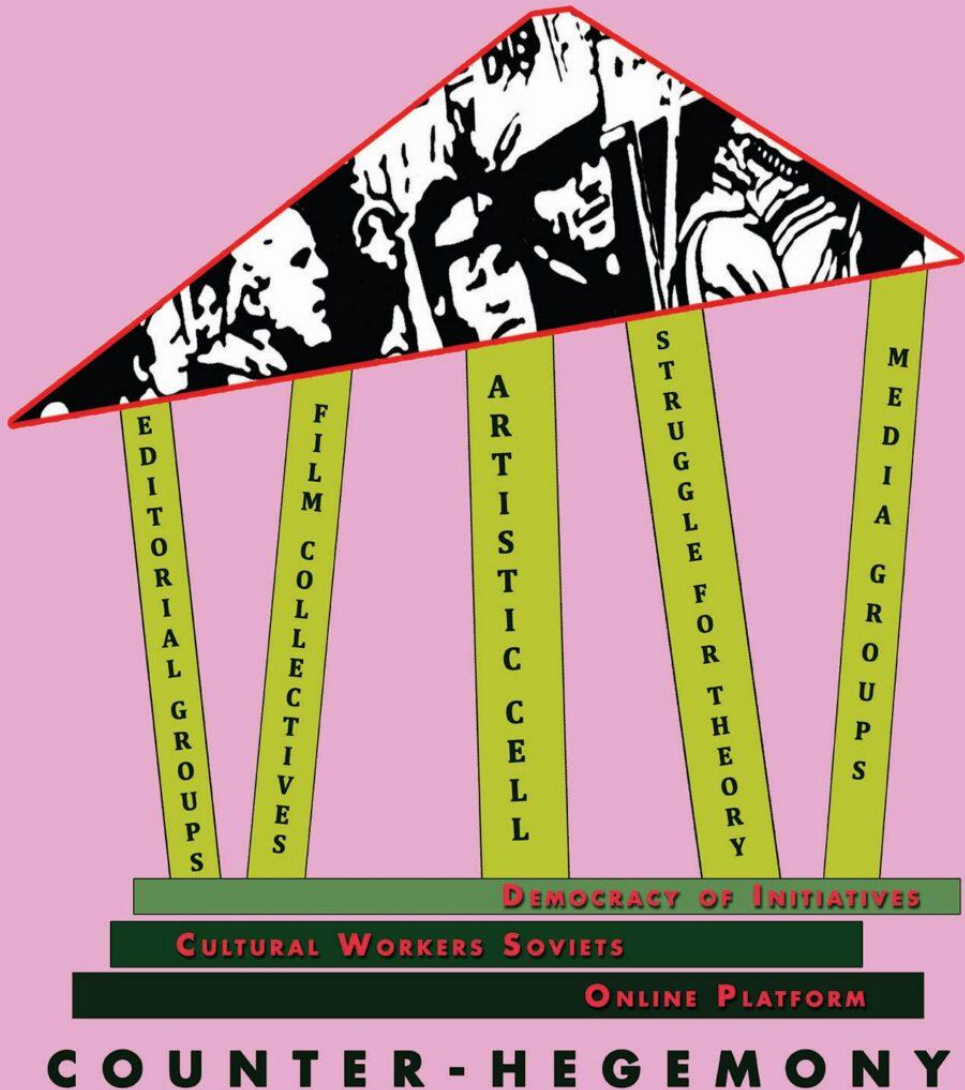
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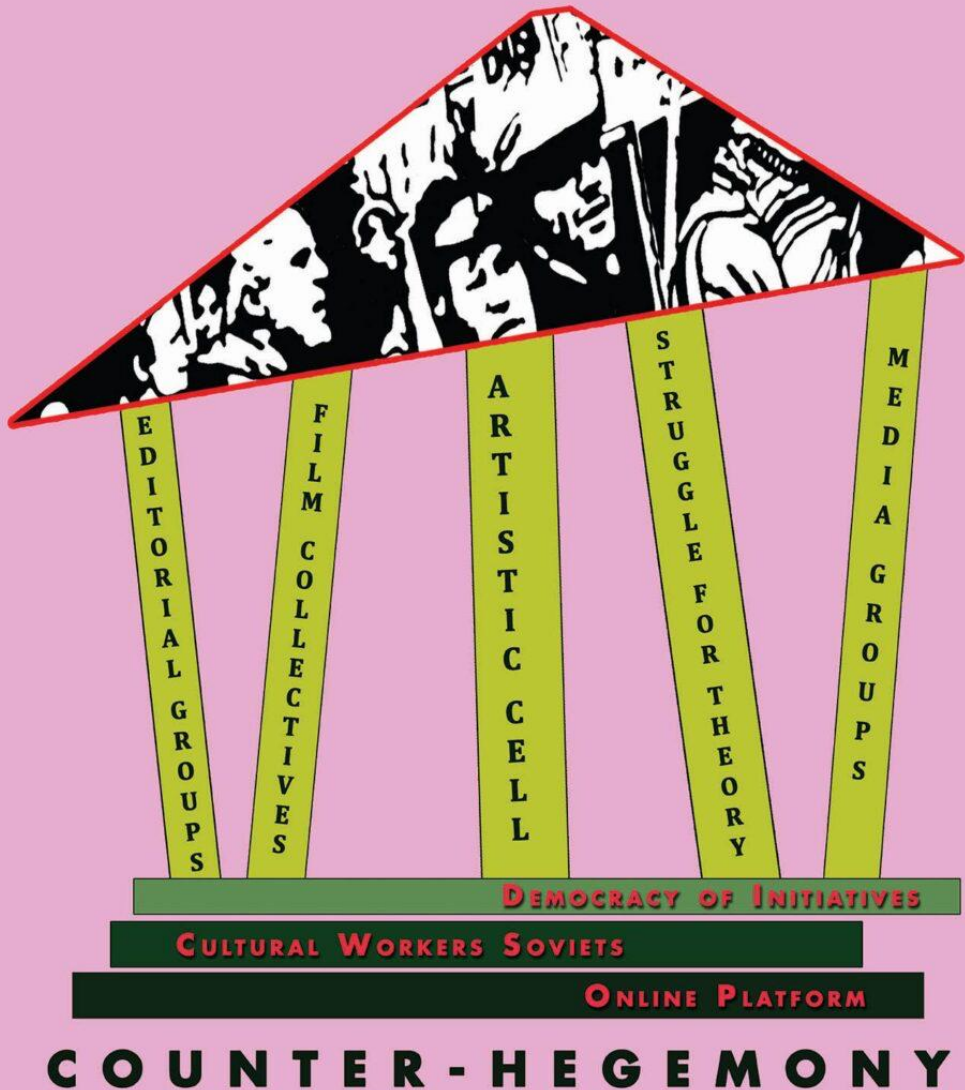
Edith Hall and Henry Stead





Intersections

- Socio-economic background
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Age
- Ethnicity
- other characteristics



An Alternative Classics?

- 1) most of the remains of classical antiquity are not inherently and irreconcilably elitist, misogynist, racist, imperialist and reactionary.
- 2) the classical tradition and the classical education in Europe and its colonies has been reactionary, elitist, imperialist, misogynist, racist, rightist and resistant to progressive social change.

* A radical classical tradition

Zeichmann (2025)

“When you think of Ancient Greece and Rome, what do you imagine? The Acropolis and the Colosseum? Perhaps the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, and the rule of the Caesars? This well-trodden history of great thinkers, military leaders and early state formation in the classical world enthralls us still, but it tells only half the story...”

RADICAL ANTIQUITY



*Free Love Zoroastrians, Farming
Pirates, and Ancient Uprisings*

CHRISTOPHER B.
ZEICHMANN

Zeichmann (2025)

“Radical Antiquity takes you on a journey in search of anarchy, statelessness, and social experimentation in the Graeco-Roman world. [...] This history from below brings the experiences of common and marginal people out of obscurity, and radically expands our understanding of social and political life in the classical world.”

RADICAL ANTIQUITY



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CHRISTOPHER B.
ZEICHMANN

Zeichmann (2025)

“The Essenes created their community as a place where social status played no role and any man was welcome to engage in philosophical reflection of the Jewish scriptures, learning together how one might live an ethical life.”

Zeichamann 2025. 64.

RADICAL ANTIQUITY



*Free Love Zoroastrians, Farming
Pirates, and Ancient Uprisings*

CHRISTOPHER B.
ZEICHMANN

Zeichmann (2025)

“The Essenes created a society where members could enjoy the benefits of literacy regardless of their social background. The Essenes’ approach was bold, since only about five percent of the Jewish population at the time qualified as “literate.” .”

Zeichamann 2025. 65.

RADICAL ANTIQUITY



*Free Love Zoroastrians, Farming
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CHRISTOPHER B.
ZEICHMANN

Saidya Hartman

- “critical fabulation”
- “a history written with and against the archive”
- Hartman 2008 11-12.



Zeichmann (2025)

“The attempts to create new gender relations echo strongly today. Whether intentionally or not, the Essenes and the Therapeutae invited queer people into their communities: men and women who did not find married life appealing. Like many queer people today, they abolished the family unit and built something new from its remains.”

Zeichamann 2025. 73.

RADICAL ANTIQUITY



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CHRISTOPHER B.
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Selective Tradition

“the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded. Even more crucially, some of these meanings and practices are reinterpreted, diluted, or put into forms which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture.”

-- Raymon Williams (1973)



V. Gordon Childe
(1892-1957)



Benjamin Farrington
(1891-1974)



George Thomson
(1903-1987)



Gordon Childe (1892-1957)

“Writing was, in fact, a profession, rather like metallurgy or weaving or war. But it was a profession that enjoyed a privileged position and offered prospects of advancement to office, power, and wealth. Literacy came thus to be valued not as a key to knowledge, but as a stepping-stone to prosperity and social rank.”

• -- *MMH* 1936 211.



Gordon Childe (1892-1957)

“An amusing group of Egyptian documents dating from the New Kingdom contrasts the prestige and privileges of a scribe with the hardships of a craftsman or a cultivator. They take the form of paternal admonitions, but embody sentiments that might be expressed to-day by a farmer or small shopkeeper writing to a son who has to choose between proceeding to higher education or entering industrial employment.” -- *MMH* 1936 211.

Instruction of Khety ("Satire on Trades")

- “Put writing in your heart that you may protect yourself from hard labour of any kind and be a magistrate of high repute. The scribe is released from manual tasks; it is he who commands. . . . Do you not hold the scribe’s palette? That is what makes the difference between you and the man who handles an oar.
- "I have seen the metal-worker at his task at the mouth of his furnace with fingers like a crocodile's. He stank worse than fish-spawn. Every workman who holds a chisel suffers more than the men who hack the ground; wood is his field and the chisel his mattock. At night when he is free, he toils more than his arms can do (? at overtime work) even at night he lights (his lamp to work by). The stone-cutter seeks work in every hard stone; when he has done the great part of his labour his arms are exhausted, he is tired out. . . The weaver in a workshop is worse off than a woman; (he squats) with his knees to his belly and does not taste (fresh) air. He must give loaves to the porters to see the light." -- Papyrus Sallier II, columns IV - VII



Gordon Childe (1892-1957)

- “... the general attitude towards clerical employments and theoretical science as contrasted to manual labour and applied sciences probably goes back to the earliest phases of urban life, and was the same in Sumer as in Egypt.”
- “The foregoing quotations accordingly recall the fact that the second revolution had produced or accentuated a division of society into classes. In practice kings, priests, nobles, and generals stand opposed to peasants, fishermen, artisans, and labourers. And in this class division the scribes belong to the former class; writing is a "respectable" profession.” -- *MMH* 1936 212.

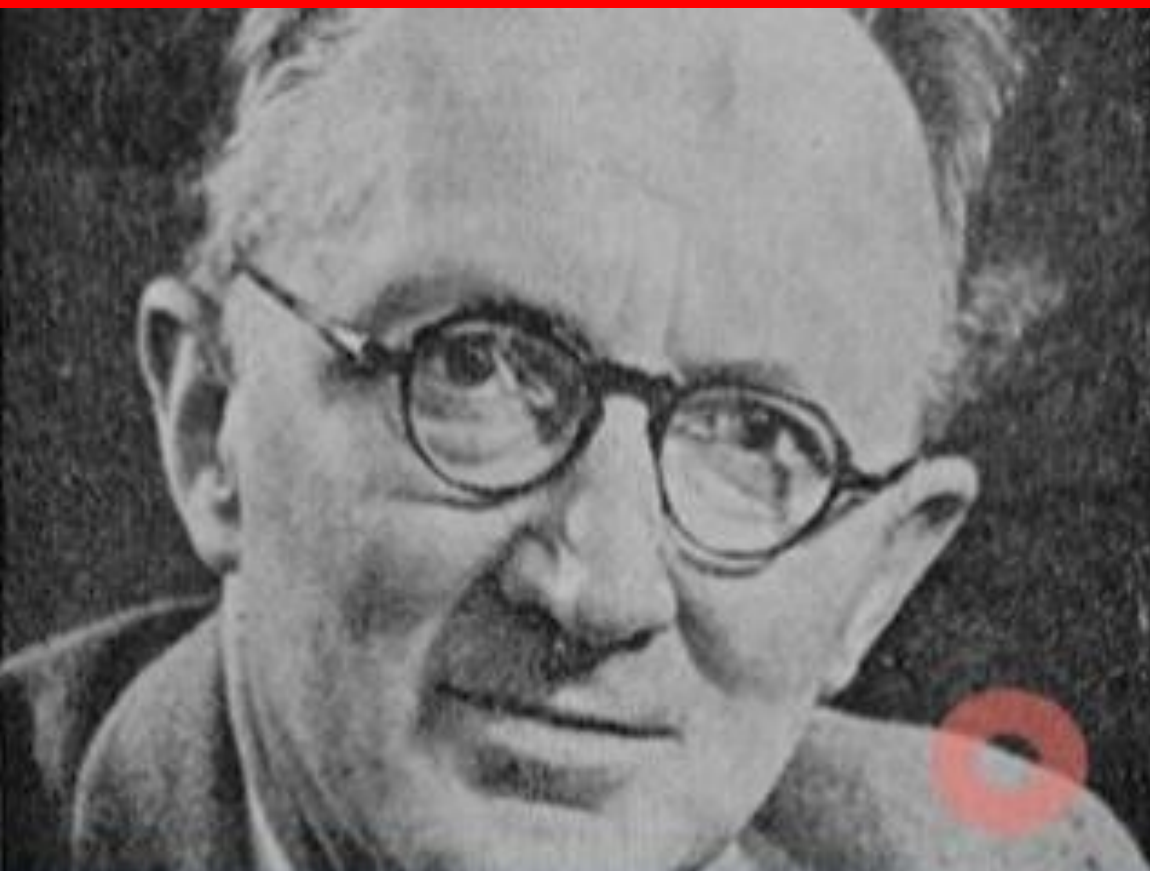
Instruction of Khety ("Satire on Trades")

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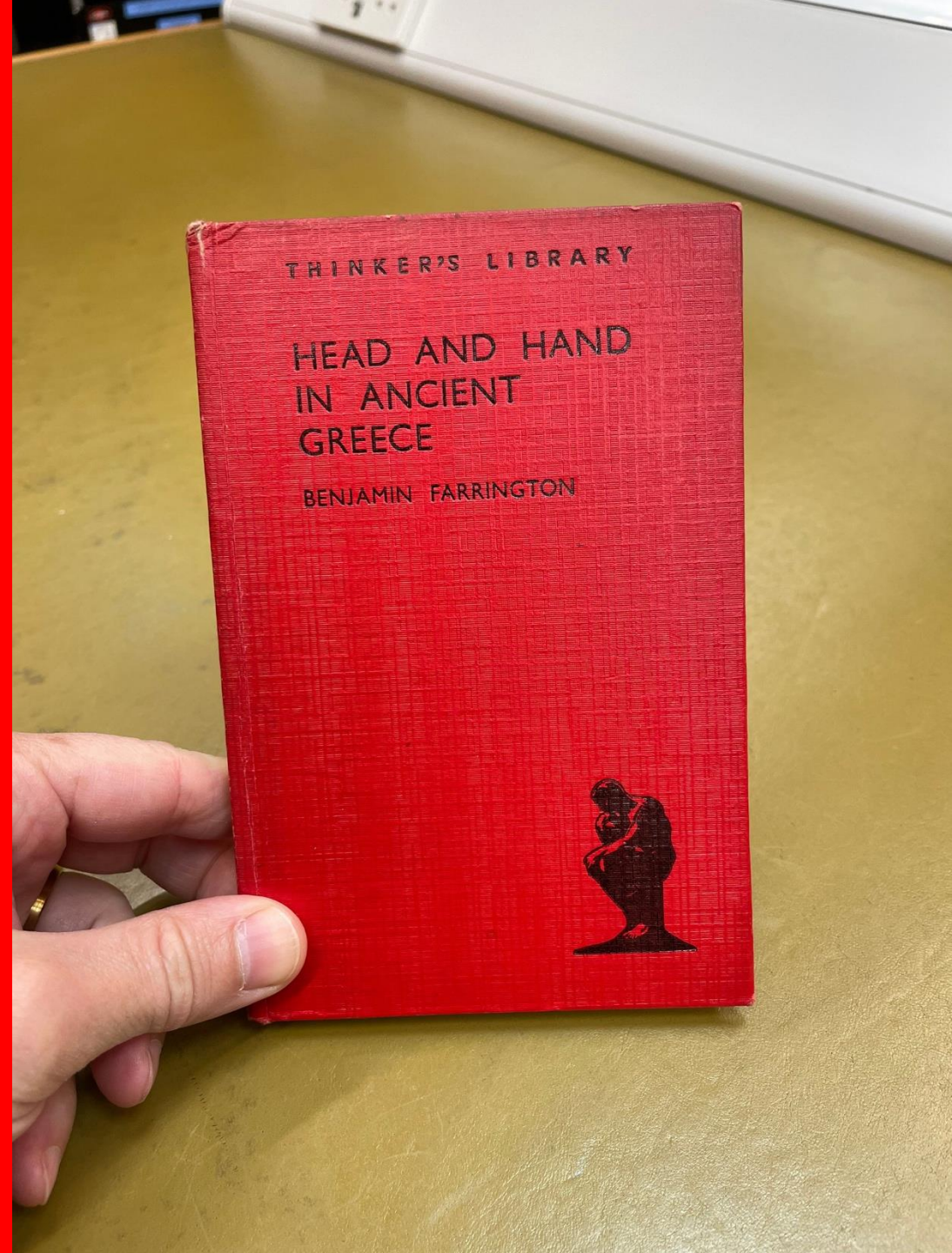


Gordon Childe (1892-1957)

- “In the class division of urban society scribes belong to the "upper classes," in contrast to the working artisans and farmers; writing is a respectable profession while farming, metallurgy, and carpentry are not. The practical applied sciences of botany, chemistry, and geology were not accordingly embraced in the literary tradition whose exponents looked down upon manual labour; craft lore was not reduced to writing nor handed on in book form.
- On the other hand, certain sciences and pseudosciences—mathematics, surgery, medicine, astrology, alchemy, haruspicy—were made the subjects of written treatises. They thus formed a body of learned sciences, accessible only to those who had been initiated into the mysteries of reading and writing. But by this very fact the disciplines in question were liable to be divorced from practical life. In entering the school the pupil turned his back on the plough and the bench; he had no desire to return to them.” -- *MMH* 1936 212-213



Benjamin Farrington (1891-1974)





Benjamin Farrington (1891-1974)

“In his treatise called *Oeconomicus*, Xenophon represents Socrates as delivering the following judgment on manual work and the manual worker. [...] "What are called the mechanical [banausic] arts," says Socrates, " carry a social stigma and are rightly dishonoured in our cities. For these arts damage the bodies of those who work at them or who have charge of them, by compelling the workers to a sedentary life and to an indoor life, by compelling them, indeed, in some cases to spend the whole day by the fire. This physical degeneration results also in deterioration of the soul. Furthermore, the workers at these trades simply have not got the time to perform the offices of friendship or of citizenship. Consequently they are looked [29] upon as bad friends and bad patriots. And in some cities, especially the warlike ones, it is not legal for a citizen to ply a mechanical trade."



Benjamin Farrington (1891-1974)

“Obviously a social division so deep as this, a cleavage which, when complete, made it impossible for the same man to be both worker and citizen, could not be without effect on the science and practice of medicine, which touch the life of every man. But the nature of this effect has, so far as my knowledge goes, been very inadequately explored.”



Benjamin Farrington (1891-1974)

“Roughly speaking, the working man was neglected in ancient medical practice, and the occupational disease ignored in medical science. This phenomenon is more important than the decline of anatomy and has been less noticed. It began to operate at a much earlier date, was more far-reaching in its effect, and has proved more difficult to overcome. The U.S.S.R. is the only country so far that has solved the problem of providing adequate medical attention for the whole of its working population.”



Benjamin Farrington (1891-1974)

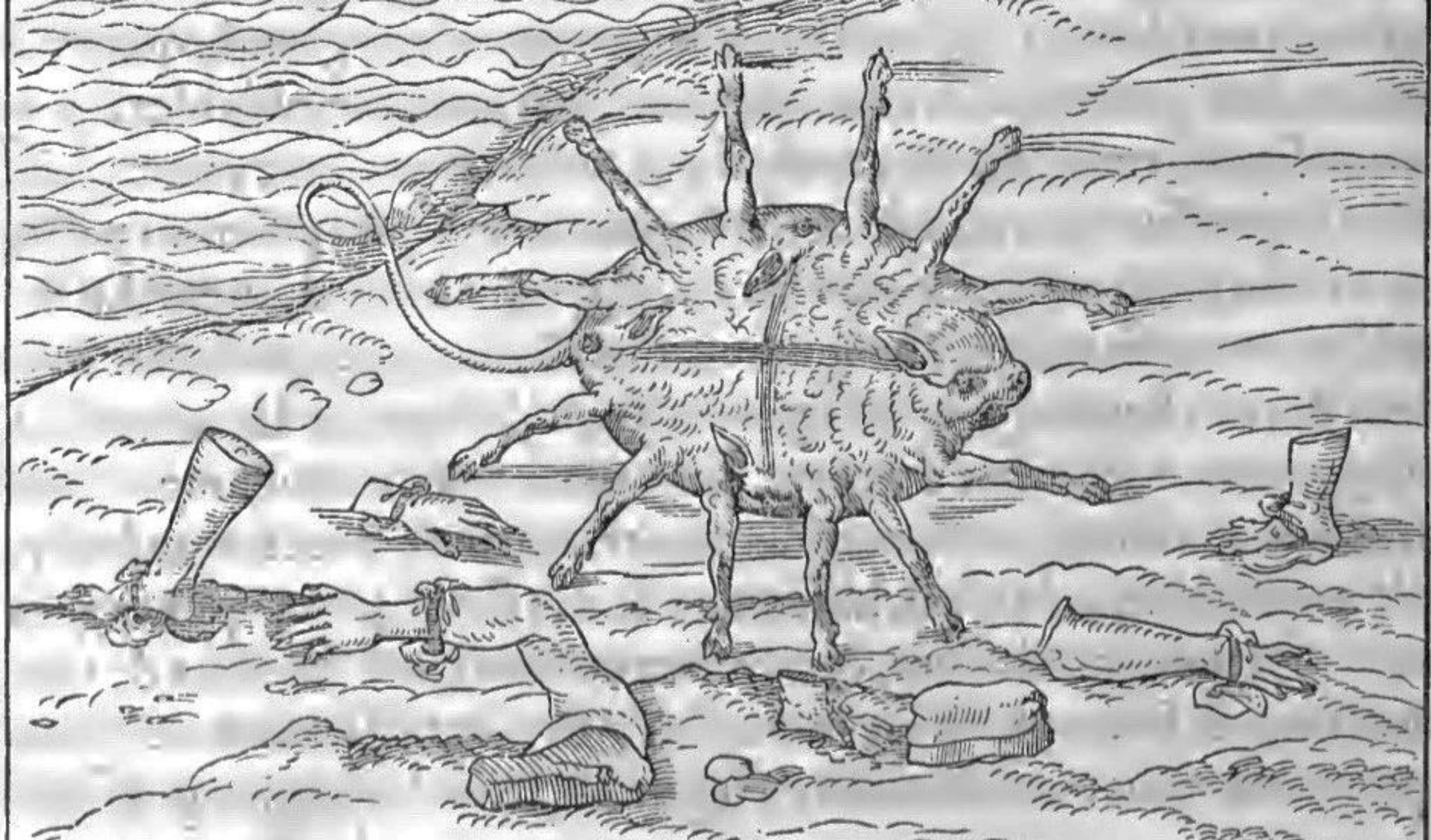
- "Henceforth the banausic associations of the oven, the soldering-iron, the bellows, and the potter's wheel reduce their influence in Greek thought in comparison with the more gentlemanly pursuit of theory of numbers and geometry." – *Greek Science: Its Meaning for Us* 1953, 49.



Benjamin Farrington (1891-1974)

“... the invasion of medical science by *a priori* philosophical concepts. In my view this is very germane to the subject of the hand in healing, for these *a priori* speculations emanated from medical amateurs who had continued to use their heads but had given up using their hands.

– H&H 1947, 30.





Benjamin Farrington (1891-1974)

“The creative historian gives us his own construction of events. The feeble author, incapable of dominating this material, may bore us by his ineptitude, but in his very incapacity better mirror some aspects of his time. So it is with Diodorus.”

– Farrington 1937 8

“Again and again there emerges from what he writes a criticism of the social conditions of his day, which he nowhere succeeds in developing systematically or in bringing to a point, but from which, apparently, he cannot long escape. It is as if he half consciously conveyed to us an element that pervaded the mental atmosphere of his day.”

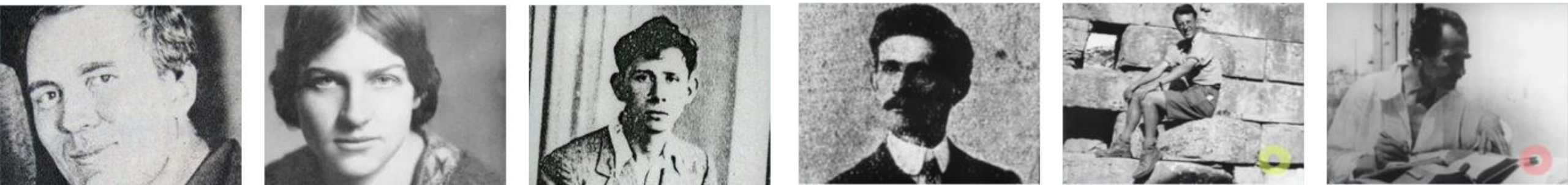
– Farrington 1937 8



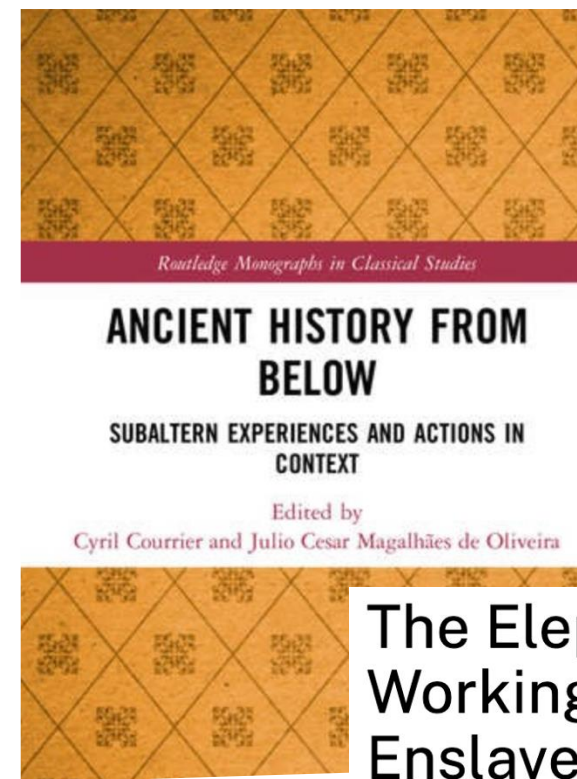
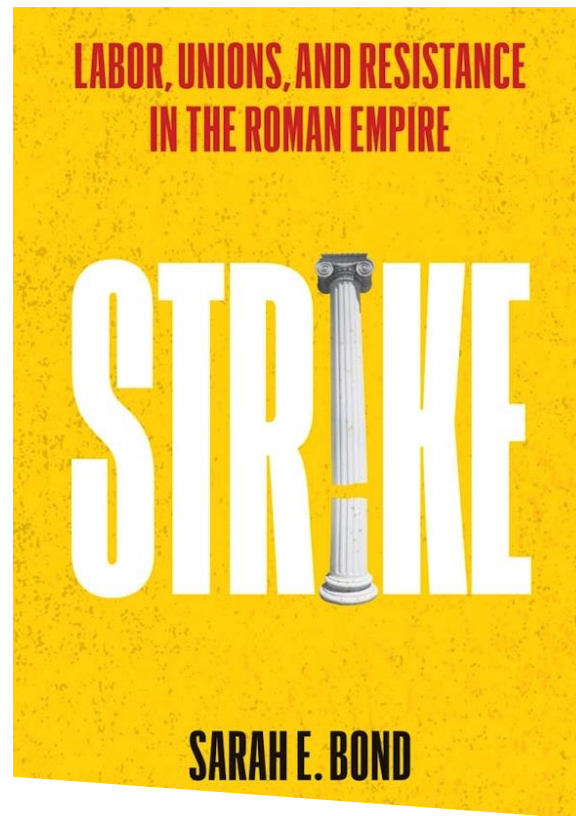
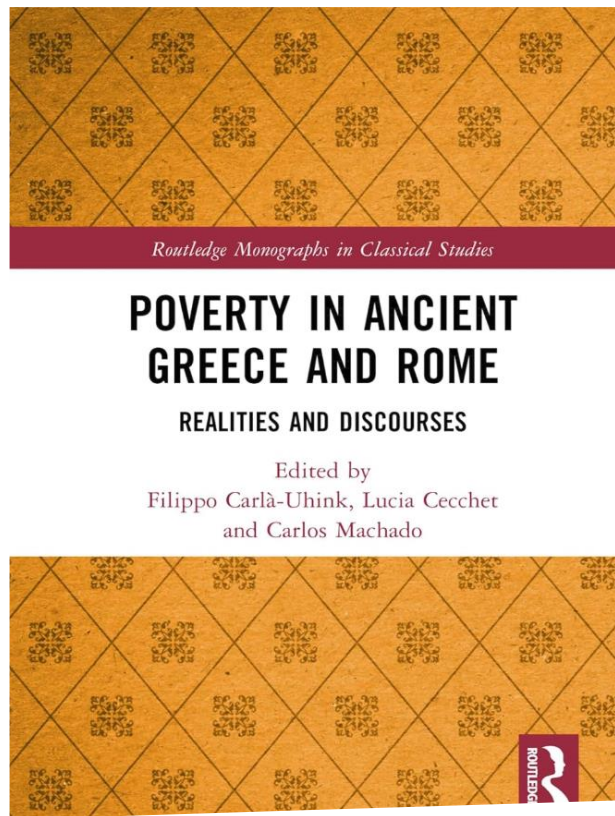
Benjamin Farrington (1891-1974)

“If [...] we are justified, as I believe we are, in seeing in these revolts [1st and 2nd Slave Wars] not merely the violent outbreak of desperate men, but at least in some degree a conscious effort to set up a new society, it would be of the greatest interest to know whether the new society had taken any definite shape in the minds of any thinkers in this epoch. Was there, we might ask, a revolutionary intelligentsia? And what expression, if any, did its ideas find? [...] Here, again, in his blundering way, Diodorus comes to our rescue.”

– Farrington 1937 25



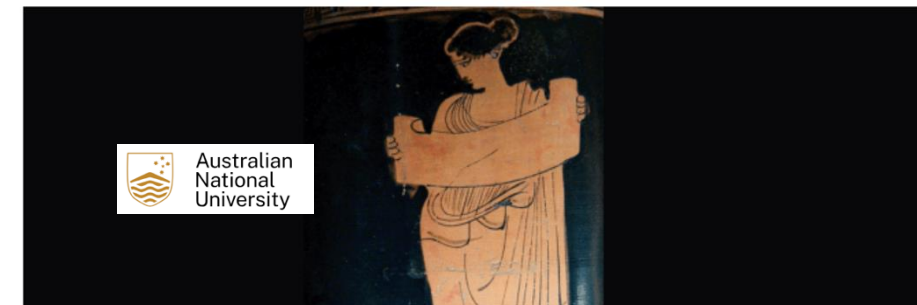
#BraveNewClassics



Class Struggle In Ancient Greek Democracy



The Elephant in the Study: Working Latin Literature for the Enslaved



“A[n Ancient] World to Win!”