



EVENT PROGRAM: Symposium 2021

CLASSICAL WISDOM'S ONLINE SYMPOSIUM 2021

End of Empires & Fall of Nations

August 21-22, 2021



-- (All times Eastern Daylight/ New York Time) --

Saturday August 21, 2021

- 10:30am **Edith Hall** | Ozymandias in the 21st century
- 11:30am **Paul Cartledge** | Thebes: the forgotten city of ancient Greece
- 1:00pm **Victor Davis Hanson** | Why did the Free City State Disappear?
- 2:00pm **Niall Ferguson** | DOOM: The Politics of Catastrophe in the Ancient and Modern Worlds.
- 3:30pm **Angie Hobbs** | Decline and Fall: Plato on the Collapse of Empires and States.
- 4:30pm **Aaron Smith** | Philosophic Ideals and the Fate of a Nation
- 5:30pm **LIVE: Wine Tasting** | Bonner Private Wine Club
- 6:00pm **LIVE PANEL: Do States and Empires Die Differently? And what can their deaths teach us today?** | *Niall Ferguson, Angie Hobbs and James Hankins*

Sunday August 22, 2021

- 10:30am **Stephan Dando-Collins** | Cyrus the Great and the Persian Empire
- 11:30am **Donald Robertson** | Stoicism and the Imperial Rule of Marcus Aurelius
- 1:00pm **Mary Naples** | Cleopatra: Twilight of an Empire
- 2:00pm **Helene Foley** | The Evolution of the Divine Empire
- 3:30pm **Barry Strauss** | How Caesar Ruined a Republic and Started an Empire
- 4:30pm **Michael Fontaine** | Decline and Last Call: Drinking in the End of Days
- 5:30pm **LIVE: Wine Tasting** | Bonner Private Wine Club
- 6pm **LIVE PANEL: What control do we have over the End of Empires? And how can we prepare for their inevitable fall?** | *A.A. Long, Donald Robertson and William B Irvine*

**Schedule may be subject to change*



Saturday August 21, 2021

10:30am Edith Hall | Ozymandias in the 21st century

Professor of Classics at King's College London, Edith has published more than thirty books on the ancient Greeks and Romans.

Resounding throughout contemporary poetry, art, film, and graphic novels, Percy Shelly's 19th-century poem Ozymandias, the Greek name for Rameses II, explored the fate of history and the ravages of time. But since the Cold War, it has come to symbolize a sense of our own fragility in the face of environmental catastrophe, global capitalism, and moral decay. Edith will explore the origins of the poem and how and why pop culture has retranslated its meaning.

11:30am Paul Cartledge | Thebes: the forgotten city of ancient Greece

A.G. Leventis Senior Research Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge and author, co-author, editor or co-editor of 30 books, most recently *Thebes: the Forgotten City of Ancient Greece*.

Myth surrounds the once powerful city of Thebes, birthplace of Hercules and Greece's most renowned philosophers. Yet the history of this once important city has been largely overshadowed by Athens and Sparta. Why was the legacy of Thebes' ultimately forgotten? And how does exploring this city's historical underpinnings help us better understand today's culture?

1:00pm Victor Davis Hanson | Why did the Free City State Disappear?

Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and chair of the Military History Working Group; Victor is a scholar of ancient and modern warfare and the author of many books. He is a professor emeritus of classics at California State University, Fresno, and the annual Wayne and Marcia Buske Distinguished Visiting Fellow in History at Hillsdale College since 2004. Hanson was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush, and was a recipient of the Bradley Prize in 2008.

Why did a system of over 1,500 autonomous city-states that had resisted a massive invasion descending into Greece in 480 BC, lost their independent statuses to Macedon 150 years later when they were far richer and more powerful?

2:00pm Niall Ferguson | DOOM: The Politics of Catastrophe in the Ancient & Modern Worlds



Milbank Family Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and a senior faculty fellow of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University. Niall is the author of *Doom: The Politics of Catastrophe*.

Although we understand pandemics, wars, and natural disasters from a scientific perspective, we still struggle with how to cope with them. Niall will reflect on how our Greek and Roman ancestors handled disasters, and what tips they may provide on how to process tragedy.

3:30pm Angie Hobbs | Decline and Fall: Plato on the Collapse of Empires and States

Professor of the Public Understanding of Philosophy at the University of Sheffield, Angie has published widely in ancient philosophy and literature, including [Plato and the Hero \(C.U.P.\)](#) and most recently, [Plato's Republic: a Ladybird Expert Book](#). Angie also contributes to radio and TV programs, has spoken at the World Economic Forum at Davos, the Houses of Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, and at Westminster Abbey. She was a judge of the Man Booker International Prize 2019 and was on the World Economic Forum Global Future Council 2018-9 for Values, Ethics, and Innovation.

Plato's fascination with how states are destroyed - by natural disasters as well as by human failings - and how they can be rebuilt is explored in other dialogues, such as the Statesman and the Laws. In his depiction of the legendary city of Atlantis in the Timaeus and Critias - a legend almost entirely invented by Plato - he also turns his attention to empires, examining the moral degeneration which underlies the defeat of the mighty Atlantaeon empire by the much smaller, poorer but morally superior pre-historic Athens.

4:30pm Aaron Smith | Philosophic Ideals and the Fate of a Nation

Fellow and Instructor at the Ayn Rand Institute. He received his PhD in philosophy from Johns Hopkins University, focusing on Aristotle's theory of knowledge. Prior to joining the Ayn Rand Institute in 2013, he was a visiting assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where he taught ancient Greek philosophy, moral theory, and epistemology.

Many today acknowledge that America is not in a healthy condition. For some, America was once great but is declining and must find a way back to its former greatness. For others, America is founded on pervasive social injustices that must be uprooted if the nation is to become great.

But if America was once great, what made it so — what ideals must we fight for to restore its greatness? If America is rooted in injustice, what ideals must be enshrined for it to become a just society? This talk explores Ayn Rand's perspective on the role of philosophic ideals in shaping the fate of a nation, and what happens when a nation lacks ideals – or its professed ideals are hollow.



5:30pm LIVE: Wine Tasting | Bonner Private Wine Club

What's a Symposium without wine? *Simply a meeting...*

This being a true Symposium (or as close as we could make it), the Bonner Private Wine Partnership has partnered with Classical Wisdom to provide a selection of the finest wines for you to enjoy.

6:00pm LIVE PANEL: Do States and Empires Die Differently? And what can their deaths teach us today? | Niall Ferguson, Angie Hobbs and James Hankins (tbc)

Sunday August 22, 2021

10:30am Stephan Dando-Collins | Cyrus the Great and the Persian Empire

Stephen Dando-Collins is the multi-award-winning Australian-born author of 45 books, mostly historical nonfiction, published around the world in numerous languages. The majority of his works deal with Roman, Greek and Persian history. His *Cyrus the Great, the biography of the founder of the Persian Empire*, won the Silver Award for Biography in the 2020 Indie Awards in the US. His latest book, published in the US in July by Turner, is *Conquering Jerusalem: The Roman Campaign to Crush the Jewish Revolt of AD 66-73*, which will be followed in November by *Constantine at the Bridge: How the Battle of the Milvian Bridge Created Christian Rome*.

11:30am Donald Robertson | Stoicism and the Imperial Rule of Marcus Aurelius

A psychotherapist, Don is an expert on the relationship between modern cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and classical Greek and Roman philosophy. He is also the founder of Modern Stoicism and the author of *How to Think Like a Roman Emperor*.



Describing the life and philosophy of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Don will provide a guide to Stoicism as a path to achieving fulfillment and emotional resilience during the end of empires and the fall of nations.

1:00pm Mary Naples | Cleopatra: Twilight of an Empire

Contributing writer, Classical Wisdom. With an emphasis in Women's Studies, Mary Naples earned a Master of Arts in Humanities from Dominican University of California in 2013. Presently, she is working on a Book about feminine consciousness in ancient Greece.

Throughout ancient Greece, women celebrated the Thesmophoria, a fertility cult and festival, in which men were expressly forbidden--sometimes to the point of death--from attending. Mary will explore why a women's festival in patriarchal ancient Greece was given such prominence.

2:00pm Helene Foley | The Evolution of the Divine Empire

Professor of Classics and Ancient Studies at Barnard College, Columbia University, Helene is the author of *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* and *Reimagining Greek Tragedy on the American Stage*.

Human empires fall, divine empires in Greek myth do not. The universe, as we see in Hesiod's Theogony, emerges from chaos and conflict and is finally stabilized by the Greek Olympian god Zeus. Yet even afterwards, conflicts arise among the immortal gods. The divine empire then evolves to accommodate and resolve them in a fashion that also improves human life. This lecture, after a brief summary of divine evolution in Hesiod, will turn to the goddess of grain Demeter's challenge to the divine and human world over the unwilling abduction of her daughter Persephone by the god of the underworld Hades. Her evolution involves a modification of divine marriage among the gods and the promise of a better life and afterlife for humans.

3:30pm Barry Strauss | How Caesar Ruined a Republic and Started an Empire

Professor of History and Classics, Professor in Humanistic Studies at Cornell University, as well as a military and naval historian, Barry is the author of numerous books on ancient history, including *Ten Caesars* and *The Death of Caesar*.

Description to come

4:30pm Michael Fontaine | Decline and Last Call: Drinking in the End of Days



Professor of Classics, Cornell University. Michael is author of many books, including "How to Drink" and most recently, "How to Tell a Joke: An Ancient Guide to the Art of Humor", which was published by Princeton this past March.

In 16th-century Germany, Vincent Obsopoeus was so alarmed by the birth of a new culture of bingeing, hazing, peer pressure, and competitive drinking, he wrote a how-to manual for drinking with pleasure. Arguing for moderation, not abstinence, Michael will describe how Obsopoeus guided his readers on how to manage drinking, win friends at social gatherings, and give a proper toast.

5:30pm LIVE: Wine Tasting | Bonner Private Wine Club

The Ancients knew that there are certain times when a small amount of wine can open your mind and elevate your thinking, allowing you to see the world in entirely new ways. It was once an essential part of any Symposium.

These finely crafted wines are the perfect accompaniment to the ideas and problems we will be discussing...

6pm LIVE PANEL: What control do we have over the End of Empires? And how can we prepare for their inevitable fall? | A.A. Long, Donald Robertson and William B. Irvine