

1: 'Beware of Greeks bearing gifts' - the meaning and origin of this phrase

Greeks & Romans Bearing Gifts: How the Ancients Inspired the Founding Fathers proceeds to tell the story of the ancient world, from the Grecco-Persian War to the Roman Empire. Each chapter deals with a different period of history.

White nationalists and American Neo-Nazis want the rest of us to see them as legitimate social and political movements, rather than as the violent hate-groups and conspiracy theorists that they are. By refusing to condemn the white supremacist violence in Charlottesville, VA in August, President Donald Trump helped those groups move toward that goal. But among the most peculiar aspects of this desire to become mainstream is the way these groups have appropriated the history of Greece and Rome as part of their genealogy. This month classicist Denise McCoskey unpacks the relationship between the classical world and the world of white supremacy. The deadly violence that took place in Charlottesville, VA in August might seem a long way away from ancient Athens. From marble statuary employed by the white nationalist group Identity Evropa to the prominent display of the Parthenon on the website of the Neo-Nazi forum Stormfront, classical texts and classical artwork are being increasingly used as a shorthand for claims of white supremacy. At the same time, white supremacist groups have also been recruiting at unprecedented levels on college campuses. Even before Charlottesville, a number of classical scholars had already gotten involved in high profile confrontations with the alt-right. A tweet from classical scholar Mary Beard in response to criticism of a BBC cartoon on life in Roman Britain for its inclusion of a character with dark skin. A statue of the Athenian orator Isocrates in a garden in Versailles, France. The Romans, of course, would eventually assume control of the ancient Mediterranean, and their engagement with Greek culture remained both deep and, at times, conflicted. As the poet Horace famously intoned: An French engraving of the philosopher Aristotle tutoring Alexander the Great. For, among a broad range of ideas and practices, the Greeks and Romans have ostensibly taught Americans how to design our public architecture, how to conceive of arts and literature and, relatedly, how to define taste and beauty, how to conceptualize personal virtues like reason and self-restraint, and even how to organize our government politically: Not for nothing did sculptor Horatio Greenough portray George Washington, that most virtuous of Americans, dressed in a Roman toga. The importance of a classical education was not limited to white Americans. African Americans made their own use of the classical past. Frederick Douglass, for example, studied classical oratory closely. Responding to the attempts of anthropologists such as S. Given such a rich range of classical receptions in American life, how did the relationship with ancient Greece become conceived so one-dimensionally as a racial rather than cultural inheritance? How did it become a primal affiliation wielded by some Americans against others rather than a repository of ideas available to us all? Race before Whiteness Any equation of Greeks and Romans with whiteness ignores a basic fact: The explanation of what makes people different and so, also, superior or inferior was as complex in the ancient world as it is today. Still, it is clear from our sources that the Greeks certainly did not use skin color to define human variation. Although they used different words to denote a range of skin colors and depicted different skin tones in art, skin color is represented or mentioned in texts in ways that suggest it is being used primarily to describe physical appearance, without holding further connotations per se. While they did not consider human variation a product of biology in and of itself, the ancient Greeks did develop a theory that sought to explain human difference through geographic location or the environment. A highly contested drawing of a fresco in the tomb of Seti I. Historical events also combined with environmental theory to produce ways of thinking about difference that served more specific uses. Perhaps most notably, the Persian Wars B. According to these writers, the Greeks won because they were racially superior to the Persians. On that scale, some groups more closely resembled the Roman ideal while other groups were more removed. This enabled the Romans to conceptualize the social complexity they encountered across their vast empire. It allowed some groups to enter the empire peaceably while others were violently subjugated. The Whitening of the Classical World The field of classics itself bears significant responsibility for the whitewashing of classical antiquity. As a professional practice, classics emerged just as ideas about race were themselves changing. Seeking to account for historical phenomena like colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade, race, and

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especially skin color, was increasingly treated as a factor of human biology. It was during this same period that classical statuary itself began to take on new meaning. Greek and Roman statues now epitomized the physical perfection of the past. Such bias still haunts debates today over whether the Elgin Marbles should be returned to Greece. Figures from the East Pediment of the Parthenon from B. The Apollo Belvedere has been seen recently on posters for the white supremacist group Identity Evropa. Just as the concept of race was fueling new interpretations of science and art history, it was also becoming increasingly central to the writing of history itself. Thus, race increasingly served not simply as an object of historical examination, but as an explanation of historical progress. In this view race is the main engine of human development. Through this logic, it is not just that the Greeks were white, but that they were able to develop their impressive civilization because they were white. In the early part of the 20th century, many classical scholars also applied a new racial theory to their interpretations of antiquity: Eugenics had its own logical outcome in the Holocaust. A slide from a Hitler Youth presentation on the supposed origins of Jewish people left. In , Adolf Hitler went to great lengths to purchase Discobolus, a marble copy of a bronze work by the Greek sculptor Myron of Eleutherae from around B. In , classicist John Scott applied the lens of eugenics specifically to the Greek world of Homer. Race Roars Back in Classics Classicists were soon dramatically forced to confront the racist origins of their own field, however, when Martin Bernal began publishing the controversial multi-volume work Black Athena in In hindsight, the subject of Black Athena is deceptively straightforward; as Bernal wrote: Once again, the veil of culture had seemingly been lifted, and race was exposed underneath. Arguing for the blackness of ancient Egyptians sort of , Bernal became strongly associated with Afrocentrism in the public imagination, and the entire controversy landed on the cover of Newsweek in September under the headline:

2: Greeks Romans Bearing Gifts | Download eBook PDF/EPUB

Greeks & Romans Bearing Gifts: How the Ancients Inspired the Founding Fathers is a very succinct, well-written and entertaining history of the Ancient Greeks and the Romans with a little commentary at the end of each section about how these histories influenced the Founding Fathers.

3: Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes - Wikipedia

Greeks & Romans Bearing Gifts is essential reading for anyone interested in understanding the moral and intellectual sources that inspired the founders and helped define the ideals of American democracy.

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The Roman Poet Virgil eventually coined the phrase "Be wary of Greeks bearing gifts," putting it into the mouth of the character Laocoon in the Aeneid, an epic retelling of the legend of the Trojan War.

5: Beware of greeks bearing gifts | Define Beware of greeks bearing gifts at www.enganchecubano.com

Overview: This lively and engaging book is the only popular work to explore the profound impact of Ancient Greece and Rome on the Founding Fathers. The classical education they imbibed as young students inspired them to undertake the American Revolution and influenced their approach to a host of constitutional and practical issues crucial to the shaping of the new American republic.

6: Greeks and Romans Bearing Gifts: How the Ancients Inspired the Founding Fathers by Carl J. Richard

An allusion to the story of the wooden horse of Troy, used by the Greeks to trick their way into the city. It is recorded in Virgil's Aeneid, Book 2, 19 BC: "Do not trust the horse, Trojans.

7: Book Review: Greeks & Romans Bearing Gifts | Edge Induced Cohesion

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8: Greeks bearing gifts - Wikipedia

Greeks & Romans Bearing Gifts: How the Ancients Inspired the Founding Fathers is the book I wish I had read several years ago while in college. It is a very short and easy read, but shows the importance of ancient history to America's Founding Fathers.

9: ROUGH DRAFT: Reading Journal: "Greeks & Romans Bearing Gifts"

Carl J. Richard's new book, Greeks & Romans Bearing Gifts, does admirably what I tried to do in the first half of that course. In eight lively and thorough chapters, he provides a crash course in Greek and Roman history, and then briefly discusses some of the lessons that the American Founders drew from that history.

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