



Ancient Greek & Roman Libraries

GRESHAM LECTURE NOVEMBER 10TH 2021



Statue of Euripides with a list of some of his plays (in the Louvre) and a performance of *Acharnians*

THE ANCIENT LIBRARY OF QUMRAN

3rd Edition



Frank Moore Cross



Varro (116-27BCE), modern statue in Rieti

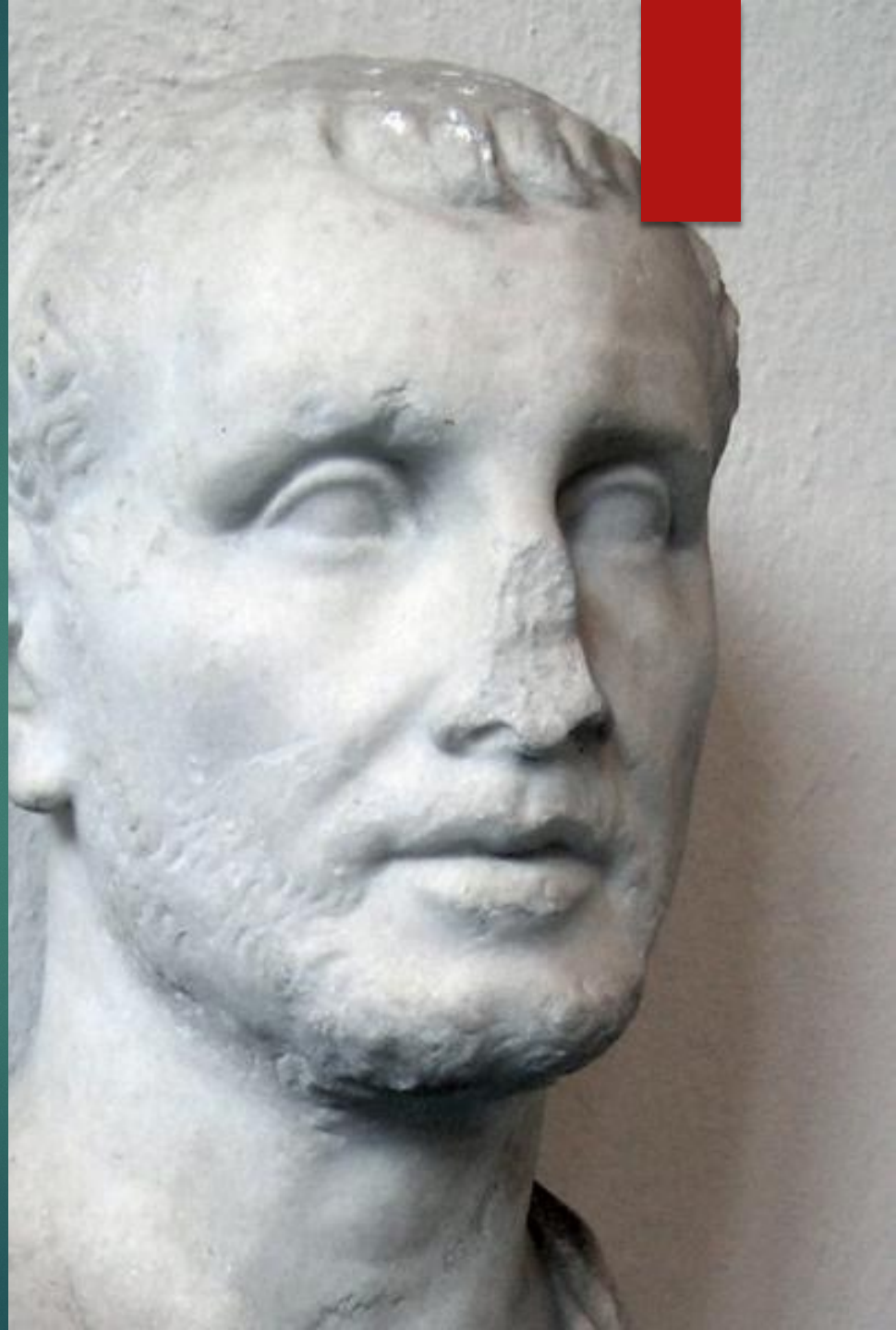
AUTHOR OF THREE-VOLUME
TREATISE DE BIBLIOTHECIS



Metroon (centre ↓ left with tiled roof)
in the Athenian agora,
where state papers were archived



Posidonius, the
great Stoic scholar
of the 2nd century
BCE, who
practised on the
island of Rhodes





'Villa of the papyri' at Herculaneum, owned by Calpurnius Piso (Julius Caesar's father-in-law), with a magnificent philosophical library superintended by Philodemus



Patron (or
author) and
actor with a
portable cista
or scrinium of
(theatrical?)
papyri at
Bardo (Tunis)

Sir James
Thornhill,
'Ptolemy giving
instructions to
Demetrius'





Caracalla and his Baths (c. 217CE)

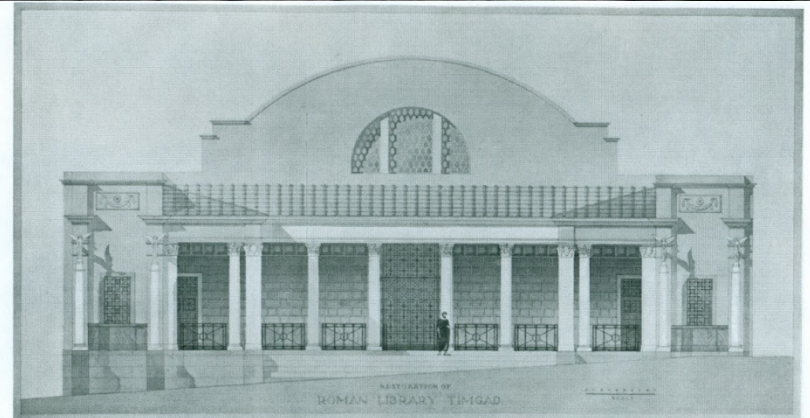
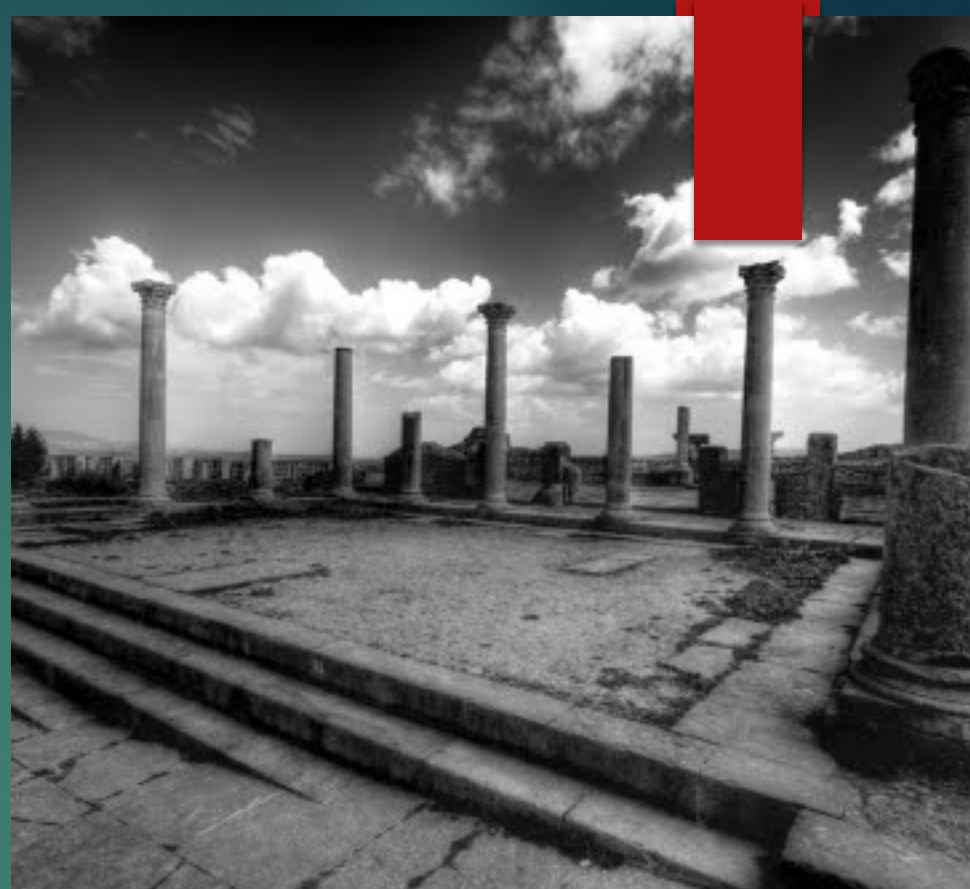


Tiberius Julius Celsus Polemaeanus,
and the 12,000-roll library his son built at
Ephesus in 135 AD to serve as his tomb



Pergamon Library; Antony gave Cleopatra (here their meeting is painted by Tiepolo) its entire collection

Timgad Library Ruins & Reconstruction



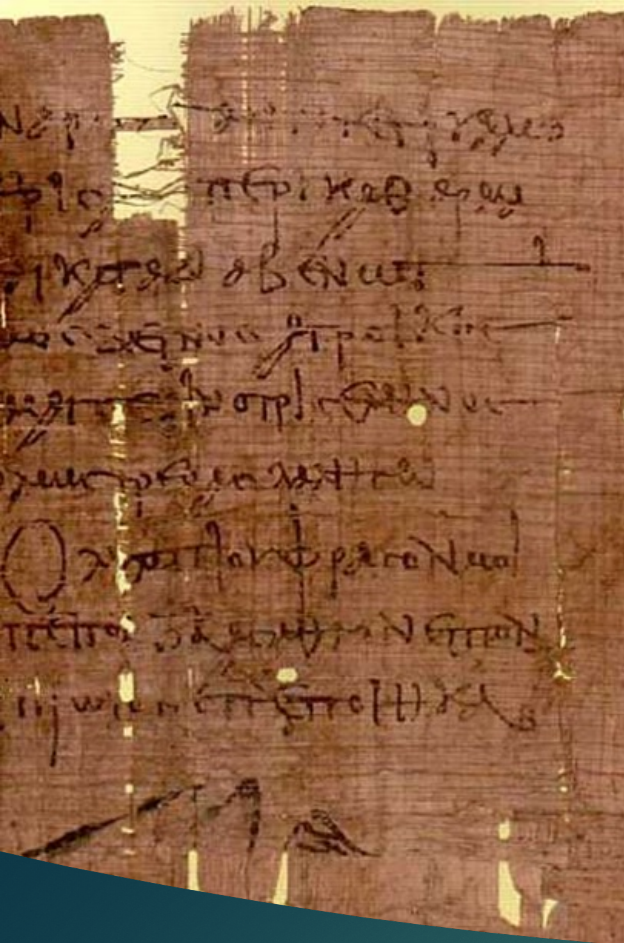
Restored Elevation of Library at Timgad.



Mme. Silvaine as Electra in the ruins of Timgad (1907)

A REPRESENTATION OF SOPHOCLES' "ELECTRA" AMONG THE RUINS OF TIMGAD.

Mme. Silvaine, who had such success at the Comédie Française a few months ago in Mr. Alfred Poizat's version of Sophocles' "Electra," recently played the part among the ruins of Timgad, the Roman station in Algeria. She chose for her stage the steps of a ruined colonnade. The effect of her declamation of the Sophoclean verse among such surroundings has been profoundly moving. (PROMANENT BY JOURNALIST.)



We have literary papyri from an exceptional private collection once owned by a citizen of Oxyrhynchus



Library at Alexandria/Serapeum
reconstructed in movie Agora (2009)



In Alejandro Amenábar's *Agora* (2009), Rachel Weisz as Hypatia tries to save the contents of the library as Alexandria burns in 415 CE

laughter. It was your
believe that you know

the speech, and the old
other door, with a some-
gering and looking back,

know, you have only to
y,
man disappeared, leaving

oking, his eyes fixed on
e things he had conned
not look up at that face,
his head. And yet the
n the face, the more he
t it was watching him;
ere, by that very know-
When would she speak?
first. It was her duty
... But still she kept
ntly from head to foot,
er hands folded together
hich lay upon her knee.
at her own daring, his

pense end? She was,
e. But some one must
n happens, the weaker
uck it, and broke the
lf apologetic—

atched you during my
were rude enough to
s one of mere youthful
ar countenance bespoke
the gods are usually
at I may now ascertain
correct, I ask you for

a godsend.—Now for



HYPATIA AND PHILAMMON

Charles Kingsley's *Hypatia* (1853)



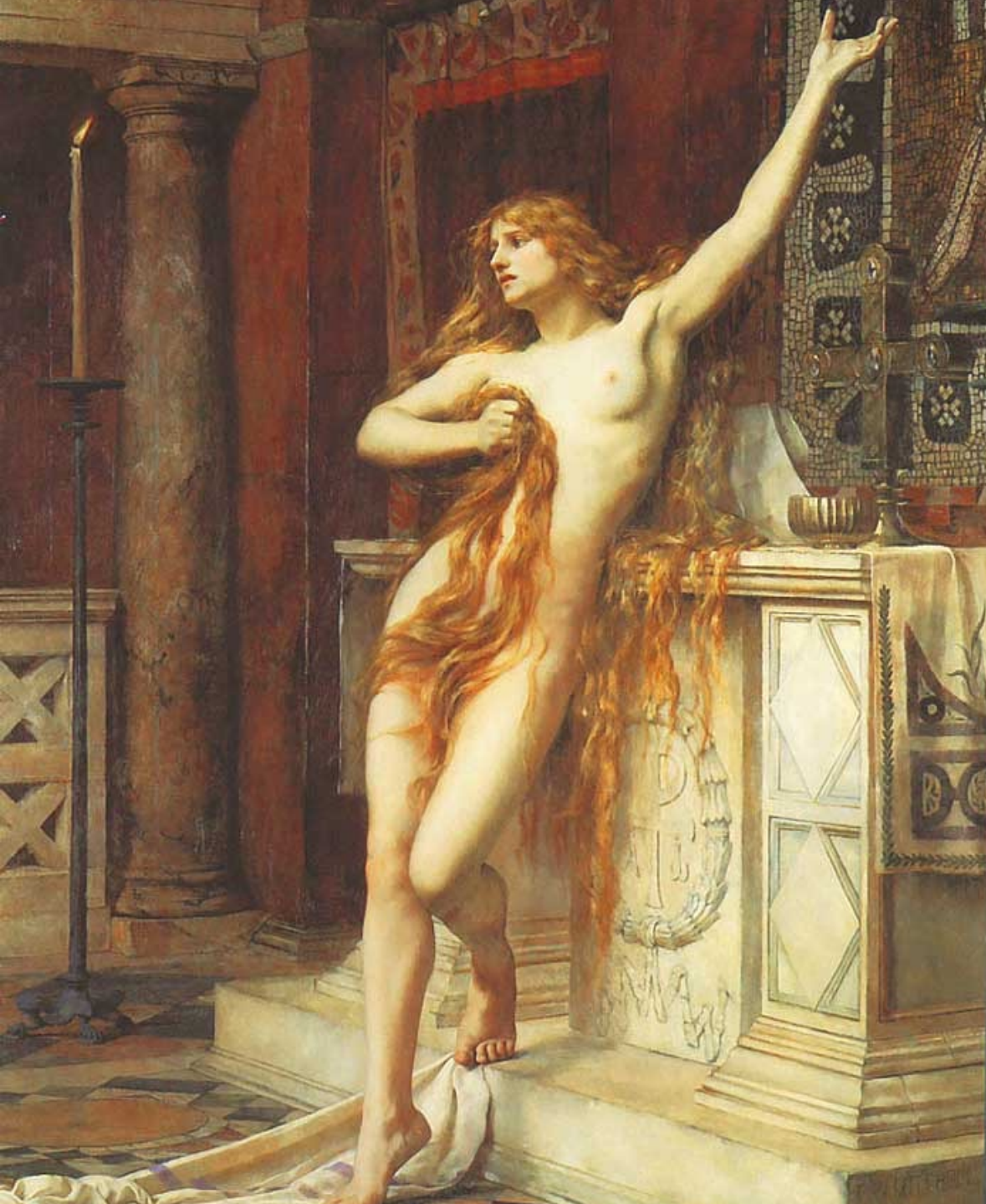
MISS NEILSON AS HYPATIA.

Photo by A. Ellis, 20, Upper...



HYPATIA—MISS JULIA NEILSON
PTOLEMY—MR. WALLER. ISSACHAR—MR.
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ALFRED ELLIS

Hypatia and her Library on the late Victorian stage



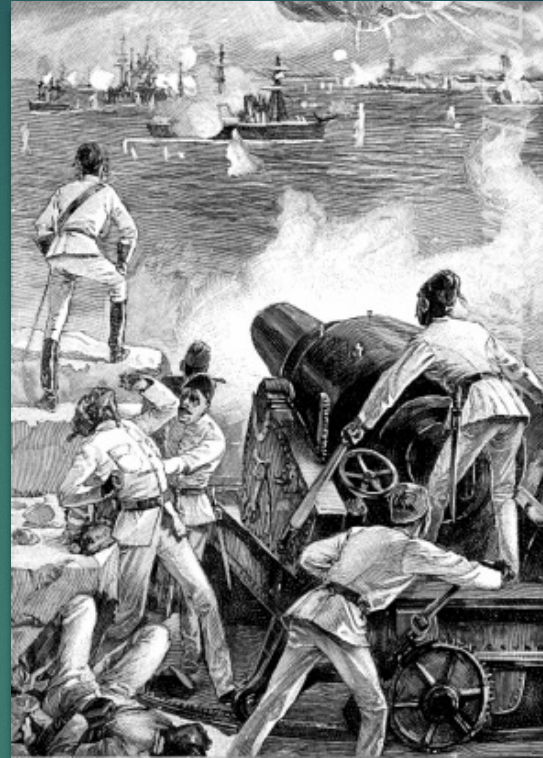
Soft-porn
martyrology:
'Hypatia'
(1885) by
Charles William
Mitchell, Laing
Art Gallery,
Newcastle
upon Tyne



Liber Pater with a lot of
liber (bark) on his thyrsus,
at Apulum in Dacia



Johnston
Forbes-
Robertson
(1906) and
William Fox
(date t.b.c.) as
Bernard
Shaw's Caesar



Alexandria burns in 47 BCE
and 1882 CE





Ovid's statue
today
dominates the
city square in
Constanta,
Romania
(=ancient
Tomi)





Johann
Heinrich
Schönfeld,
'Scythians at
the Tomb of
Ovid' (c.
1640)

Grave inscription of the Imperial Supreme Librarian, Tiberius Iulius Pappus

- ▶ Sacred] to the Shades.
- ▶ For Tiberius Iulius Pappus,
- ▶ son of Zoilus
- ▶ of the Fabian tribe, advisor
- ▶ of Tiberius Caesar Augustus,
- ▶ and also in charge of
- ▶ all the libraries
- ▶ of the emperors from
- ▶ Tiberius Caesar until
- ▶ Tiberius Claudius Caesar.
- ▶ [Erected by] Tiberius Iulius
- ▶ Nico, heir
- ▶ of one-fourth part, and by
- ▶ Iulia Fortunata.



Ion Theodorescu-Sion 'Ovidiu în exil' (1915). Not a library in sight. But might that make for a more eloquent poem?