

“Identity Theft in the Ancient Mediterranean”

Professor Erich Gruen,
University of California,
Berkeley

The lecture examines the prevalent notion that construction of a national identity requires distinguishing one's own nation or culture from that of the 'other' or the alien, an attitude that has spurred ethnic, racial and national stereotypes through the ages. The ancients had their share of this: Greeks scorned 'barbarians'; Jews denigrated Gentiles; Egyptians regarded all others as inferior and unworthy. But there is another side to this story. The lecture seeks to show that ancients could stress connections as much as differences. They often represented their own cultures in imaginative ways by embracing the legends and traditions of others, incorporating them as their own, fashioning fictive genealogies, fabricating kinship relations and appropriating the features of other civilizations for themselves - an ancient form of 'identity theft'.

Erich Gruen is the Gladys Rehard Wood Professor Emeritus of History and Classics at the University of California, Berkeley, where he taught full-time from 1966 until 2008. He also served as president of the American Philological Association in 1992. Among his copious publications are *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton, 2010), *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge MA, 2002) and the indispensable *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (Berkeley, 1974).



Wednesday, 7
September 2011
6:30pm

Carrillo Gantner Theatre
Basement
Sidney Myer Asia Centre
Swanston Street, The University
of Melbourne, Parkville.

Admission is free.
Online registration is required.

For further information and
registration: <http://alumni.online.unimelb.edu.au/erichgruen>

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