

CA PRIZE 2008

On Friday 28th March the prestigious Classical Association Prize will be awarded to Professor Peter Parsons in recognition of his contribution to Classics both through his ground breaking work on the Oxyrhynchus Papyri and by making the gems of this research accessible to the general public and academics alike via his acclaimed book *The City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish*.

Professor Parsons' career has been devoted to deciphering the unique evidence found in the discarded papyri of Oxyrhynchus, a Greek settlement in Egypt under Roman rule. The papyri have yielded invaluable information on fields as diverse as early Christianity, Greek Literature and political reform and span an equally varied time period, from the end of the reign of Alexander the Great to the Ottoman invasions. Professor Parsons was Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford from 1989 to 2003 and has been an invaluable contributor to the volumes of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, published annually, since 1960. His book *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish* combines a history of the study of Egyptology with his own career as a papyrologist in a way that is uniquely accessible to the general reader and specialist academic alike, and opens up a relatively small field of research. Tom Holland (winner of the CA Prize 2007) comments that 'so rich and so remarkable is the detail that a greed for more soon sets in' and *The Good Book Guide* agrees: 'Peter Parsons leads his readers on an adventure, peeling back the past and finding that the ancients were in many ways just like us.'

The prize, worth £5,000, aims to encourage all forms of promotion of Classics in the UK. At a time when the media has whetted the public's appetite for the Classics with the help of blockbusters such as *300* and the BBC's *Rome*, Professor Parson's book allows the general reader an insight into how our knowledge of the Classical World has been discovered and enhanced, and details the discoveries, both historical and modern that form the foundations of our current knowledge and understanding.

For more information about *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish*, visit <http://www.orionbooks.co.uk/HB-8906/City-of-the-Sharp-Nosed-Fish.htm>.