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Herculaneum in the 21st Century: Why Care?

A talk delivered by Robert Fowler at the colloquium Otium et Negotium at The British Academy, 5 August 2013

In speaking today to this audience about why we need to know about Herculaneum, I suspect I am preaching to the converted. There is little doubt that we all care about Herculaneum, as our presence here today suggests. We have heard a wonderful series of talks which will have reinforced our sense of the interest and value of the place; it has certainly reinforced mine. So let me put the question in a stronger form, and see how we respond: why should we care about Herculaneum instead of, say, Florence or Venice, to name only two of the other 48 World Heritage Sites found in Italy alone? Why should we care more than about a rain forest or an endangered species? More than any amount of human hardship which cries out for our charitable attention?

Put that way, I imagine most of us would not put Herculaneum ahead of all of these things. Most people would instinctively feel that human suffering creates a stonger moral obligation to act than a threat to cultural heritage. To be sure, once you try to justify such instinctive feelings, you soon need philosophical equipment exceeding that which most people possess; at least I know it exceeds mine. For instance, what does one say in response to the argument that —to state the point in its extreme form, which often is the most effective way to expose the issue at hand-we could exhaust all of our resources attempting to deal with human misery, yet succeed in alleviating only a fraction of the suffering, and that only in the short term, at the cost of our own ruination? If we think such a degree of sacrifice is unreasonable, or are simply unwilling to imitate those saints of various religious traditions who do make such sacrifices, then we are implicitly agreeing that room has to be made for quality of life as well as basic subsistence, and that some of that quality belongs to us by right, even if others must suffer for it. Yet that sounds selfish, and most people I believe would flinch from subscribing to a statement in that form. We usually don't have to make such stark choices, and as individuals we may think our choices have very limited impact. But putting such questions may lead us to think a little harder about what imperative there is about Herculaneum that would make it a higher priority than other causes. If we confine ourselves simply to World Heritage Sites, whether in Italy or closer to home, it is by definition true that each of them is unique in some way. They all cost money to maintain, and money is scarce everywhere. After the collapse of the House of the Gladiators the world's press castigated the Italian government for its neglect of Pompeii. There was some justice to this; less bureaucracy and infighting in government would have allowed the Soprintendenza to spend more of the cash generated by the massive gate receipts at Pompeii, a luxury most places can only dream of. More transparency would allow us to know where the true blame lies for inaction. Yet one must remember just how many cultural sites there are in Italy, not just World Heritage Sites, that clamour for

attention. The Italians cannot do it by themselves. The change of law in 2004 enabling outside agencies, philanthrophic or commercial, to form partnerships for investment in Italian heritage sites was a decisive step forward which has already achieved major results. Yet there is still much to do and little money to do it with. So why Herculaneum?

There are, I think, three arguments. The first derives from the fascination of the place itself. This will not distinguish Herculaneum from hundreds of other sites, but one can argue that its appeal is at least as strong as any. The second argument derives from its importance in the Western cultural tradition. The third derives from an immediate threat to its safety. Together I believe these arguments suffice to put Herculaneum very near the top of the list. Let us explore them briefly in turn.

The allure of Herculaneum is one felt by every visitor. I first went to the Bay of Naples in 1988. Like many people I had learned about Pompeii at school, reading the younger Pliny's letters. The story of the volcano has a powerful grip on the imagination. There is first of all the nightmarish image of a ghastly death and total destruction; my Bristol colleague Shelley Hales has well described Pompeii as the 'archetypal ground zero'. But combined with this terrifying image is the romantic notion of a time capsule that permits direct access to ancient life. The volcano both destroyed and preserved. The attraction was irresistible from the start and the result is what the Blue Guide describes as the supreme example in the world of large-scale archaeological excavation. No one should miss Pompeii, beyond question. But someone had told me that I should not overlook Herculaneum; so I took a day to visit there too, and like so many other visitors was instantly entranced. The time capsule here had upper stories and furniture, gardens and sea-views. It was cooler, and easier to get about; and there were far fewer tourists. Discovering Herculaneum was like being admitted to an exclusive club. Here one can gain a sense of what ancient life was like with greater immediacy than in any other Greco-Roman site. It is quite magical; and this I think is always worth restating.

The second argument is about the western cultural heritage. Here too Herculaneum has many places to compete with. It would be absurd to argue that this little town plays as important a role in that great story as Athens, Rome, Florence or Jerusalem. Yet its importance is not negligible. I am a Greek scholar myself, yet I find myself in Italy far more often than in Greece (please don't tell my Greek friends). One reason is that one gains a richer and perhaps truer sense of Greece as a concept, a force, an inspiration, from its reception in Rome than from the Greek sources themselves. To know Greece one must know Rome. But to know Rome one must know Italy, for Roman history is Italian history. At Herculaneum, all

three come together. Once again one can name other places where this is true, places far grander than little Herculaneum. But this very ordinariness and humility is in fact a strength in this context. I say humility, even if the luxury sea-side villas of the rich dominate our image of Herculaneum; in fact it has its share of ordinary houses and inhabitants, as we know even from the sea-side quarter that has been excavated. The great centres tell us only one side of antiquity, and are so heavily represented in the literary sources, both ancient and modern, that we cannot view these sites without their strong influence in mind. Rich though the literary heritage is, the antiquity one constructs from it is an abstraction. To revivify the texts one most go to the sites. When one does go, one receives many shocks, and correctives to one's understanding. The challenge to understanding is, I believe, greater in those places which are the less represented in literature. A random discovery like Herculaneum reveals much about ordinary life that we would otherwise never know.

Archaeologically too it is a perfect laboratory. The last two decades alone have seen decisive advances in archaeological technique and knowledge as a result of work at Herculaneum, about domestic architecture of all kinds, metalwork, trade goods, diet, sanitation, seismology, visual culture, preservation. Practical advances have assisted clearer thinking about the interpretation of material culture separate from and alongside the literary sources. There can be few if any sites from Classical antiquity that have given us so much, Pompeii included.

I spoke earlier of the confluence at Herculaneum of Greek, Roman and native Italian. The story of Herculaneum as a meetingplace continues long after antiquity. We know it was explored by underground tunnelers in the middle ages, but the region comes back to life with the large-scale discoveries of the eighteenth century which put it on the map of the Grand Tour. From this point on, Campania becomes a cultural and sometimes a literal battlefield involving players from all the major European powers and the greatest names in European art and literature. If one wishes to understand how the ancient world has shaped the modern, and shaped the consciousness of the modern world, Campania is indispensable. From many points of view Pompeii is as important as Herculaneum in this respect, particularly because it was brought to light so much earlier, owing to the greater ease of excavation. But since the twentieth century the advantages of Herculaneum have become apparent, because the modern town still exists alongside the ancient, or rather on top of it. Portici was the summer residence of the kings of Naples, and the Golden Mile of Ercolano is still lined with wonderful early modern villas. Here you have a true palimpsest of Western culture where the layers have deeply organic links, and can be studied simultaneously. There is great potential for development here, and what one would like to see is the Soprintendenza, the Comune and the Ministry coming together to realise it. We have heard recently of a major new initiative funded by the Packard Foundation to build a new museum and visitor centre for the ancient excavations. One hopes that at the same time steps can be taken to improve the access to and understanding of the medieval, early modern and modern parts of Ercolano. Perhaps the Packard initiative will be a catalyst for such development. The ancient theatre should be re-opened, for instance, and incorporated into a touristic itinerary that takes one through the different quarters of the town, with vantage points and sources of information. Attention would need to be paid to traffic

control and an ideal configuration would require expropriation of property, politically never easy and always costly, as are the other measures required. But this vision has already been articulated by the Soprintendenza and may one day be a reality.

We are still with our second argument about cultural heritage. I have spoken of Herculaneum as a place largely unrepresented in the literary sources. But it is of course a place spectacularly represented by literary sources. I mean of course the papyri. After the inspiring presentations this morning I need say little about them now. No other site has anything like them. If there are degrees of uniqueness, this is as unique as it gets. The papyri are stunning not only for their contents. They can be studied as part of the material culture, that is as part of the physical environment and everyday life of antiquity; they have taught us much in this regard too since the Villa itself was triumphantly revealed to the world in the 1990s. Moreover, as stimuli to scientific progress the papyri have made major contributions to scanning techniques. These have many applications, but to confine ourselves only to literary documents, the potential of multispectral imaging to force palimpsests to yield their secrets is enormous. A recent, miraculous example is the Archimedes palimpsest, published in 2011 by Nigel Wilson and colleagues, containing works by the great mathematician, a previously unknown commentary on Aristotle's Categories and part of a speech by Hypereides. Western libraries have large numbers of manuscripts whose lower layers are illegible to the naked eye and remain to be identified. I firmly believe we are on the edge of a whole new age of discovery comparable to that brought about by the advent of the papyri themselves in the late nineteenth century. Mummy cartonnage is another source, from which a new poem of Sappho emerged only a few years ago. For cartonnage and unrolled papyri, such as those at Herculaneum, the new technique of scanning through layers without physical contact will one day before long unlock their secrets too. If you had to say why we should care about Herculaneum in one word, that word would be papyri.

And so to our third and final argument. There is an immediate threat to the safety of Herculaneum, a threat indeed of total destruction. I refer of course to Vesuvius. It is overdue for a major eruption, which could bury the site all over again. For the buildings above ground this is a threat against which there is no defence, and the only hope is that we will learn as much as we possibly can from them before this happens. For the unexcavated buildings one could say, and it has been said, that this is not a worry; they have slept in peace for 2,000 years through several eruptions, and another one will do them no harm. But should the volcano erupt, it might take decades to heal the human damage and restore normalcy to this populous region, during which time one can expect that few resources would be diverted to excavation. Herculaneum would then have to fight its corner all over again, and the digging would be more difficult than it is now. It might never happen.

In my view, the bulk of the ancient library is still to be found in the Villa, in the part of the atrium quarter not reached by Weber in the 18th century, which is right beside the part where he found most of the scrolls we now have. Even if this proves to be a false hope, so long as there is any chance we owe it to posterity to seize the opportunity we now have. Imagine if we were speaking of hitherto unknown plays by Shakespeare

buried in a crypt. However difficult or expensive of access such a place might be, however slim the chance that the plays were actually there, the clamour would be so insistent, and so intolerant of excuses, that the excavation would get underway at once. In significance the Herculaneum library could dwarf any such find.

These arguments together, it seems to me, suffice to put Herculaneum near the top of the table. Perhaps you have more—if so I should be very happy to steal them! This is a superb site, which all of us here care about; we need now to convince others.

Otium et Negotium in Vesuvius' Shadow: latest research trends on economy and culture of Roman Villas

Report by Roger Macfarlane

Otium et Negotium in Vesuvius' Shadow: latest research trends on economy and culture of Roman villas was a colloquium hosted by Brigham Young University at the British Academy on 5 August 2013. Purposefully coinciding with the British Museum's Life and Death: Pompeii and Herculaneum, this one-day colloquium offered updates on hows and whys pertaining to the study of life in classical Pompeii, Herculaneum, and other sites in the bay of Naples. It was designed to enhance public education and to make new friends both for BYU and the Friends of Herculaneum. The audience included many Friends who came together for the day. Among the presenters were new and familiar Friends, as well.

Roger Macfarlane, board member of the American Friends and colloquium organizer, opened the day with a brief report of papers on Herculaneum Papyri delivered at the International Congress of Papyrology in Warsaw the week before, including the paper of Friends' studentship-holder Sarah Hendriks. In his own talk entitled "If Horace had heard a lecture at the Villa of the Papyri, should we care?" Roger reviewed activities which have sprung from BYU's multi-spectral imaging project in the decade since its inception.

Gianluca Del Mastro, Università Federico II di Napoli, shared his perspective of Herculaneum Papyrology now. In "The most recent updates and anticipated gains regarding the Herculaneum Papyri", Gianluca identified some of the landmark publications and looked into the discipline's bright future.

Richard Janko, Friends Trustee, provided in "Deciphering the Indecipherable: the fascination of Herculanean Papyrology" an extraordinary illustrated primer on the painstaking task of studying and editing a Herculaneum papyrus.

Robyn Veal, fellow at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge, spoke on "Provisioning the Roman villa: management of land resources to support urban and country

villas." The research is part of her ongoing research into Roman forest exploitation and sustainability in imperial Rome, central Italy, and southern Romano-Britain.

Annalisa Marzano, University of Reading, expanded upon her research on Roman villas of Central Italy and focused primarily on classical maritime villas of Campania as centers of conspicuous consumption. Of particular interest was the illustrated discussion of pisciculture within the imperial economy.

Girolamo F. De Simone, St John's College, took the audience "Beyond Pompeii and Herculaneum" and explained archaeological developments on Vesuvius' "dark side". His discussion updated the audience regarding the Apolline Project, which he directs, but also introduced other archaeological activities he is currently undertaking on the north side of the volcano.

Shelley Hales, University of Bristol, presented innovative research into computer-generated reconstructions of the Crystal Palace and other evidence of Victorian-age reception of classical Campania in "From Vesuvius to the Crystal Palace: inhabiting Pompeian houses in 19th-century Europe."

The day concluded with Bob Fowler, Friends founder and Trustee, answering why a 21st-century British audience needs to know and care about Herculaneum. Bob encouraged audience members to learn about and promote the cause of Herculaneum by joining the Friends and enjoying its educational offerings.

Generous funding from BYU's College of Humanities and its Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship provided the colloquium. Friends of Herculaneum may have been those most immediately benefitted.



Impluvium at the House of the Wooden Partition

The Getty Villa celebrates its 40th anniversary

Kenneth Lapatin Department of Antiquities, The J. Paul Getty Museum



The Getty Villa, a 1:1 scale replica of the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum, will mark the fortieth anniversary of its opening to the public on January 16, 2014. The American oil tycoon J. Paul Getty built the villa on his 64-acre "ranch" in Malibu, California (today actually within the city of Los Angeles), believing that such a building--with atrium, fountains, and peristyle colonnades--would provide the best context for the exhibition of his collection of Greek and Roman art (as well as his Old Master paintings and French decorative arts, which were initially displayed on the upper storey). The J. Paul Getty Museum had first opened in 1954 within a Spanish-style "Ranch House" on the same property, and, despite expansion, that building proved too small for Getty's growing collections. So in the late 1960s he decided to construct a new museum. He rejected plans in Spanish, Renaissance, and Modern styles, opting to reconstruct the Roman luxury villa just outside Herculaneum widely thought to have belonged to Lucius Calpurneus Piso buried by the eruption of AD 79. The idea to rebuild the Villa dei Papiri must have long been in Getty's mind. Although he was not able to visit the ancient building buried deep under volcanic debris, he knew the site well, as he did Pompeii and the finds from all of the Vesuvian cities in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. He also owned two early modern villas on the Italian coast, both built over imperial Roman remains: one at Palo, near Rome's Fiumicino airport; the other at Posilippo, just northwest of Naples. To ensure the accuracy of his reconstruction, Getty hired architectural historian Norman Neuerberg, who guided a team of architects that followed the eighteenth-century plan of the ancient villa drawn by the Swiss architect, Karl Weber, who conducted excavations for Charles III, the Bourbon King of Naples. This served as the ground plan of the new building (although necessary adjustments were made to conform to the topography of the Malibu site and modern building codes). The elevations were adapted from other ancient buildings in Herculaneum, Pompeii, Stabiae, and Rome. Colored marbles were imported from Italy and other Mediterranean countries; Roman-style frescoes adorned the walls; and replicas of the bronze statues found in the original villa, cast by the Chiurazzi foundry after originals in the Museo Nazionale, were placed throughout the lush gardens of the Malibu site. Ironically, although Getty closely monitored the construction of his villa long-distance from his home at Sutton Place in Surrey, he never saw it. But following his death at age 83, two years after the Malibu villa opened on January 16, 1974, his body was returned to California and interred there. In the late 1990s the Getty Center was built in the Brentwood area of Los Angeles to house the museum's post-antique collections, and the Getty Villa closed for renovation. It reopened in early 2006, now devoted entirely to the display, conservation, and study of the arts and cultures of the ancient world.

Bronze Tiberius from Herculaneum returns to display at the Getty Villa

David Saunders - Assistant Curator of Antiquities, J. Paul Getty Museum



Fig I Statue of Tiberius (following conservation), Roman, A.D. 37, Bronze, 96 7/8 in. (246 cm) high. Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Laboratorio



Fig 2
Statue of Tiberius, 1771, engraving by F. Morghen after a drawing by V. Campana in Delle antichità di Ercolano (Naples, Nella Regia stamperia, 1757–1792), vol. 6, pl. 313. The Getty Research Institute, 84-B21058

The Tiberius was found at Herculaneum, and an associated inscription indicates that the statue had been set up right at the end of the emperor's life in A.D. 37 (or even after his death). It would have been standing for a little over 40 years when Herculaneum was buried by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in A.D. 79. The findspot has long been published as the Theater, and that has been widely accepted: a number of the other large portrait bronzes from Herculaneum were found there, and it would not be unusual to find an imperial statue in a Roman theater. However, over the last few decades scholars have discerned that at the time of Tiberius's discovery, excavations were not taking place in the area of the Theater. Rather, activity seems to have been focused on the building known today as the Porticus which raises the possibility that the portrait of Tiberius would have been one of a suite of imperial images on display in this prominent civic space.

Ancient bronzes of such a scale as the Tiberius are only rarely preserved. For the most part, those that survive today are the result of the unexpected, be it shipwrecks or, as in the case of the bronzes from Pompeii and Herculaneum, volcanic eruption. It was, therefore, extremely productive for us to be able to spend a year studying how the portrait had been manufactured. We expected to find that it was fashioned using the lost-wax casting technique, and that the wax model would have been divided into parts to facilitate the process. What was surprising, though, was to find that the figure was made up of some sixty individual pieces. These allowed the bronzeworkers to assemble the complex folds of drapery on the emperor's toga and tunic. In many cases, they also adopted an economical method, welding the parts together at key weight-bearing points, rather than fusing them along their entire length.

The statue's modern biography is somewhat longer than its ancient one. It was discovered 272 years ago, on August 30, 1741, but its first depiction — to our knowledge — comes thirty years later, in volume six of the sumptuous Delle antichità di Ercolano. In this engraving, the statue appears to be in perfect condition, but given the damage it must have sustained during the eruption of Vesuvius, that's hard to believe.

Indeed, archival sources indicate that the statue underwent restoration at the Royal Foundry at Portici, which was typical for the time. There is in fact a note from 1760 that records that the restoration was complete and all that remained was to repatinate the figure. Such a process would have served to obscure all of the restorers' interventions. Using x-radiography, UV photography and close autopsy, we have been able to reveal the areas that were restored, and the techniques used conform well to those identified by Edilberto Formigli and Götz Lahusen in their important study of the portrait bronzes from Herculaneum and Pompeii - such as the pouring of molten bronze to fill missing areas, and the use of bolts to secure the additions in place.

Fig 3

Missing areas of the statue that were restored in the eighteenth century. Image courtesy of the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei - Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Laboratorio di Conservazione e Restauro





 $\label{eq:Fig.4} Fig. 4$ The new aluminium support that is installed within the bronze statue

Beyond studying the statue and cleaning the surface (more information about which can be found on our blog, http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/rediscovering-tiberius/), the year-long project at the Getty sought to develop a new structural support for the figure. As noted above, the statue had been off view for some time owing to weakness in some of the ancient joins. This had developed following the portrait's burial in antiquity, and had been further compounded by the connection of the statue to a base in the eighteenth century. In order to rectify these issues, Getty conservators developed a new internal support for the figure. This reinforces the connection of the different sections to one another, and more evenly distributes the substantial weight of the statue - some 1050 pounds of bronze. The aluminium support is entirely mechanical and reversible, and will ensure the secure and safe display of the figure for the future.

With the statue returned to the public eye, it stands at the heart of a focused exhibition at the Getty Villa that runs until March 3rd 2014. Titled Tiberius: Portrait of an Emperor, it offers the chance to reconsider Tiberius's rather grim reputation – timely, given that next year will be the two thousandth anniversary of his accession as Emperor.

Tiberius: Portrait of an Emperor was organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei—Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Laboratorio di Conservazione e Restauro. It celebrates 2013 as the Year of Italian Culture in the United States, an initiative of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, realized under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Italy. The exhibition was co-curated by David Saunders, assistant curator of antiquities, and Erik Risser, associate conservator of antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum. For more information, see http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/tiberius/

Dicaearchus in Herculaneum A work in progress report from Gertjan Verhasselt, 2013 Friends of Herculaneum Bursary holder

Most ancient historians and philosophers only survive today in so-called fragments. These generally concern citations in later writers. This holds true for nearly the entire school of Aristotle (the Peripatos). The only (partial) exceptions are Theophrastus and Aristoxenus. However, most of their works, if not entirely lost, only survive in citations (e.g. Theophrastus' On Piety and Aristoxenus' biographies of Pythagoras and Plato). The same fate befell the Peripatetic Dicaearchus. Like Aristoxenus, he was a prolific writer: he wrote on the soul, lives of philosophers (the Seven Sages, Pythagoras and Plato), cultural history, politics, literature and geography. The large number of fragments (about 120 in total, cited by some fifty different writers) show his popularity in antiquity.

I am currently preparing an edition with an English translation and a commentary of the historical fragments of Dicaearchus for Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker Continued. Felix Jacoby's Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker is the standard work of reference for fragmentary Greek historiography. This magnum opus was cut short, however, by the author's death in 1959. In the late 1980s, the idea was conceived to continue the unfinished work. Volume IV of the continuation project covers biography and antiquarian literature (coordinated by Stefan Schorn) and Volume V geography (coordinated by Hans-Joachim Gehrke).

An important writer to cite Dicaearchus is Philodemus, whose works survive in Herculaneum papyri. Previous editors of Dicaearchus relied on out-dated or controversial editions of these texts. Therefore, it is important to re-examine the Herculanean material. Since technology has greatly progressed over the past two decades, new readings are likely to be found. Any modern edition of Herculanean papyri needs to use the following material (if extant): (1) the multispectral images produced by Brigham Young University, (2) the Oxford and Neapolitan disegni (made in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) and (3) the original papyri preserved in the 'Officina dei Papiri' of the Biblioteca Nazionale in Naples.

The most substantial citation of Dicaearchus is found in the first columns of Philodemus' History of the Academy. This work (probably part of his Collection of Philosophers) is preserved in two versions: a draft (PHerc. 1021) and an extremely fragmentary final version (PHerc. 164). The draft is chronologically structured (starting with Plato and running up until Metrodorus of Cyzicus); within the biography of one philosopher, the information is given by source. In the biography of Plato, Philodemus successively cites Dicaearchus, the Atthidographer Philochorus, Neanthes of Cyzicus and finally the historian Timaeus. Recently, Del Mastro (CErc 42 [2012]: 277-292) has identified a new fragment (PHerc. 1691 pezzo 2) as part of the beginning of PHerc. 1021, i.e. the section citing Dicaearchus. The papyrus fragment deals among others with Plato's acquisition of Pythagorean books.

My edition of Dicaearchus also includes col.Y of PHerc. 1021. This text was written on the back of the papyrus. In compiling his draft, Philodemus wrote additions to his main text on the verso. Col.Y deals with the progress of mathematics under Plato and life in the Academy. Despite modern scepticism, Dicaearchus is probably the source of this column as well. An indirect citation of Dicaearchus is found in a section on the tyrant Chaeron, a pupil of Plato. This section is a long excerpt from the Hellenistic biographer Hermippus (a pupil of Callimachus).

Another citation of Dicaearchus is found in a section of Philodemus' On Music reporting the opinion of the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon that music can make people virtuous. From Dicaearchus Diogenes adopted the example of the singer left to guard Clytaemnestra in Agamemnon's absence. Finally, a small, obscure fragment of Dicaearchus is found in Philodemus' On the Stoics. By studying the original papyri of Philodemus, I hope to make an up-to-date, reliable edition of these fragments. Especially for papyri of which the original is still extant a re-examination is necessary.

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