

# It's Greek to us

Thanks to legal professionals the world around, the 'dead' language of Latin remains happily alive. Thus the befuddlement of 'normal people' each time they are hurled terms like suo motu, sub judice and habeas corpus. But quite unwittingly, judges — especially judges of the Supreme Court of India — remind us of words in the language of the people whom the ancient Romans, genuine speakers of Latin, held up as role models: the Greeks. When we heard that Supreme Court judges have finally 'voluntarily' put the details of their wealth up on the apex court's website, the first word that came to our classical heads was 'ouroboros'. Let us explain.

It was Plato who first described a self-eating, immortal and perfect creature called the ouroboros, a snake that swallows its own tail to form a closed protective circuit. The Supreme Court had serious reservations about breaking its protective circle that made details of their assets a club secret. There are, of course, malevolent creatures out there ready to destroy the reputation of the members of the land's highest judiciary body. But finally, the mythical beast has deigned to take its tail out of its mouth and make its judges wealth public. (Well, one judge is still holding out.)

So is this a tremendously brave move? Well, considering that no one can do anything about the information posted on [www.supremecourtfindia.nic.in/assets.htm](http://www.supremecourtfindia.nic.in/assets.htm) (ask questions about the posted assets, for instance), it's a touching gesture that's not quite revolutionary. Also, considering that the judges are tax-payers like the rest of us, the matter of their assets being in the 'public domain' should have been a given anyway. So, effectively, the ouroboros-like apex court has just perpetuated another Greek word: anti-klimax.

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