A letter from the Chair

Welcome to the new Wax Tablet. It has been a year of some momentous changes in Classics. With the retirement of our dear colleague Silvia Montiglio, Greek chair for 13 years, and Ginnette Miller, our departmental administrator for 26 years, it has felt like the end of an era. We were delighted to welcome recently our new administrator, Alexandre Labat. A new student club has formed (for more on this, read on…). And our new departmental newsletter has been launched. Congratulations and thanks to Martin Michalek and contributors for their creative energies in building The Wax Tablet, reconnecting (as we discovered) with an old but dormant departmental tradition. Exciting further developments are on the horizon for the coming year as we are joined by a new post-doctoral fellow, Dr. Christopher Londa (who works on labor in Latin literature) and a new visiting assistant professor, Dr. Maria Gerolemou (working on ancient science). Three conferences are planned, a new work-in-progress seminar, new undergraduate-events… All to be captured in the fresh wax of the departmental deltoi. Lector intende: lactatheris!

Ave atque vale

At the end of the Spring 2022 semester, magistra nostra Prof. Silvia Montiglio retired with a triumphant fête. Prof. Montiglio has held the Basil L. Gildersleeve Professorship since 2010. To accompany her departure, Prof. Joshua Smith recited his departure, Prof. Joshua Smith recited his

Salvete omnes!

A letter from the editor.

Before your eyes is a newsletter whose simple aim is a happy one: to strengthen the ties our Classics department from undergraduates and faculty to graduate workers and alumni.

Pursuant to that purpose, you will find here a myriad of exciting goings on: undergraduates abroad, the genesis of the Ancient Civilizations Club, Res Gestae of our department, triumphs of freshly graduated scholars, and even some ludus and poemata. No doubt, the bees of Johns Hopkins Classics are hard at work, gathering pollen and assembling the honey for our tablet.

Perhaps you are scratching your chin, asking, “Why a wax tablet?” They are, after all, tools of impermanence, upon which ancient authors practiced rather than published. Consider, though, how any university department is by nature cyclical. Students come in, students go out. Ideas are put forward—pressed into the wax, as it were—and when students are graduated the wax is wiped afresh. It is ephemeral, sure, but as the Freudians among us know, there is nevertheless something monumental in a wax tablet. In the 1960s, long after Callimachus first put the wax tablet on his knee and Apollo spoke to him (Aet. fr. 1.200), children played with “mystic writing pads.” In them, Freud saw an apt metaphor for how we retain experiences:

If we lift the entire covering-sheet—both the celluloid and the waxed paper—off the wax slab, the writing vanishes… The surface of the Mystic Pad is clear of writing and once more capable of receiving impressions. But it is easy to discover that the permanent trace of what was written is retained upon the wax slab itself and is legible in suitable lights. Thus the Pad provides not only a receptive surface that can be used over and over again […] but also permanent traces of what has been written… (SE XIX:230).

It is our hope that The Wax Tablet helps preserve the important scholarship and exciting agenda of our Classics Department.

A final note: Before Covid-19 shuttered Gilman Hall, our department had Clavikta, a feature for recently graduated undergraduates. When we began working on this newsletter, we thought a paper yoking together the broader Hopkins Classics community was a novel one. How wrong we were! Dr. Mackenzie S. Zalin—our sterling librarian—brought to our attention an archive of precursor newsletters for our department, stretching back to 1878. In each forthcoming issue, we will highlight a portion of these archives from yesteryear. "Eppeoth!

—Martin Michalek, editor.
Si fueris Romae, Romano vivito more!
A Blue Jay goes abroad and sends litterae back of her exploits.

I am Amy Kronenberg, a Junior majoring in Classics, and currently studying abroad at the Centro: The Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome. This program has been amazing for many reasons. However, my favorite thing is being able to personally visit sites such as the Ara Pacis and Domus Aurea, seeing in-person sites which I originally learned about in Prof. Roller’s Roman Empire class back in Baltimore. While at the Centro, I am taking three classes: The Ancient City, Advanced Latin and Beginning Italian. In the Ancient City class, we take field trips 3 times a week to learn the topography of the Roman Empire at the sites. One favorite fieldtrip was to the Roman Forum to see the Arch of Titus, an amazing monument. As with every trip we take, it was incredible to learn about the Arch of Titus while looking at it in real life. However, my favorite field trip so far was to see the latrines at Ostia.

For the Ancient City class, every student gives a report of a specific site. Mine was at the Latrine Terme del Foro at Ostia.

I really enjoyed researching and putting together information about latrines in the Roman world and it was amazing to see one of the best-preserved latrines from the Roman Empire. Learning about bathrooms in ancient Rome has been so interesting and I have learned so much about Roman customs related to privacy, religious worship and sanitation through this assignment.

In Latin class, we are reading Circuloid by Plautus. The class is focused on learning more about society and people of different statuses through Roman comedy and I have found it very valuable learning more about Roman civilization while refreshing my Latin skills. Every week in class we read different articles and plays.

My favorite article that we have read thus far is “Harlots, Tarts, and Hussies? A problem of Terminology for Sex Labor in Roman Comedy” by Serena S Witzke, in which she examines how best to translate words for different jobs in Roman sex labor to fully encapsulate the meaning of the Latin.

In addition, I am slowly learning some Italian and can now introduce myself, conjugate present tense verbs, and order coffee (the most important thing to know how to do.) Beyond the classroom, Rome is an amazing city to explore and the food is so good. I do not know how I will ever eat pizza in the United States again! Overall, this has been such a fulfilling and rewarding experience for my Classics education and I’m having a blast.

Latrine Queen: Amy reports among the Roman ruins.

A post-gradual picture worth a thousand words: Prof. Greenwood poses with a number of our graduates.

The Poultney Presses On

Mariana Pini (21’ year), Sam Yang (22’ year), and Tashi Treadway (3’ year) invited Prof. Emily Greenwood (Harvard University) to be our 36th James Poultney Memorial Lecturer. The series is named after Prof. James Poultney, a Classics professor and avid bird enthusiast of Johns Hopkins University from the 1930s to 70s.

Before the evening lecture, the graduate students had lunch discussion with Prof. Greenwood about the best ways we can prepare ourselves for the job market and in what ways the university can support us in our careers. We received lots of excellent and encouraging advice, and good laughs were shared in the seminar room over Eddie’s sandwiches. We had a fantastic turnout in Hobson to hear Prof. Greenwood speak about the “The Fruitful Paradoxes of Postimperial Classics.” Through an analysis of language in ancient texts such as Ovid’s Tristia and modern receptions such as Dionne Brand’s The Blue Clerk: Ars Poetica in 59 Versos, Prof. Greenwood threads our relationship with the Classics and its possible future in our field. To quote from Dionne Brand, Verso 32.1:

“Plato was a slaveholder, I cannot get past this. I am a / barbarian. That is the way it is. People say that is the way it / was. Yes, that is exactly the way it was.”

Post-lecture, we went to the Greek restaurant Cypriana. The dinner between the students and Prof. Greenwood brought the day to a perfect end.

—Tashi Treadway

Join the Club!
A word from the co-founder of the Ancient Civilizations Club.

Hello! My name is Willa Farrell and I am the Vice President of the new Ancient Civilizations Club (ACC). I, along with my cofounders Aidan Althea and Khloe Katz, sought to form an organization that unites students interested in ancient studies by bringing together the Classics, Near Eastern Studies, and Archaeology departments while also welcoming students from all other fields. Our goal is to foster an appreciation for ancient civilizations and the ways in which they have influenced our modern world and to build a community that shares a love for learning about antiquity.

We host trivia nights and have also started a lecture series highlighting JHU’s wonderful graduate students and their research. We undergraduates are thrilled to learn more about the interests and scholarship taking place within our departments. We greatly appreciate the support of the Classics department, and we look forward to continuing to grow the club together. This semester has been a very exciting step in establishing the ACC as a new organization, and we cannot wait to welcome new members to the many events already in the works for next year!

—Willa Farrell
Philology Transfigured
A study day in retrospect.

Horace Ode 1.9.
Translated by Martin Michalek

Romeward Bound
Hopkins Classics sends two more students to the Eternal City.

Doctores Tres
In May, 3 PhD candidates have become Doctors of Philosophy. Giacomo Loi (right) successfully defended his dissertation, “Our quarrel is of old: Classical reception in Modern Hebrew literature,” to a Tudor and Stuart room filled beyond seating capacity. Dr. Loi now moves to the Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at Haifa University, assuming a prestigious postdoctoral fellowship from the Azrieli Foundation. Ryan Warwick (left) was next, successfully defending his dissertation (at the early hour of 9:30 a.m.) titled “Alone with Cicero: Authorship and community in an ancient letter collection.” This fall, Dr. Warwick will join faculty at Haverford University as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Last, certainly not least, to defend was Juan Dopico (center). His dissertation is titled “The reception of Marcus Iunius Brutus in Roman imperial literature: Roman exemplarity and collective memory throughout the ages.” This summer, Dr. Dopico will teach Intensive Latin and a Blast course on Roman conspiracy, followed by teaching at UMBC in the fall.
The Grad Who Cried Friedrich August Wolf

A study into the origins of modern philology takes Hopkins to Halle.

This spring, with the support of the Classics Department and the Singleton Center, I conducted research for my dissertation at libraries in Berlin, Halle and Weimar, Germany. My primary focus was on the papers, library, and editions of German classical philologist Friedrich August Wolf (1759-1824). Wolf is most famous today for his Prolegomena ad Homerum, a landmark work in the history of the so-called Homeric Question: Wolf’s work led to widespread acceptance among scholars of the multiple, pre-literate authorship of the Iliad and Odyssey.

My interest in Wolf, however, lies not in his contribution to Homeric scholarship, but in his lasting influence on classical studies as practiced in the later 19th century and even today. Wolf was acknowledged by later German philologists as the inaugurator of their scientific traditions—legend has it that he was the first German student to declare himself a studiosus philologiae rather than a studiosus theologiae, a declaration of intellectual independence that Friedrich Nietzsche would call the “birthday” of philology as he and his contemporaries knew it.

Further, his written work and activity as an educator helped to shape the field of classical studies into the form we recognize today.

— Connor Sedlacek

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The answer key can be found at the end of this issue.
RES GESTAE
The deeds of the Department of Classics for the past and upcoming year.

Publications


“Pontifex Maximus and Pontifices (Pontifical College). Database of Religious History*. September 2020


“Cult of Isis (Mysteries of Isis).” *Database of Religious History*. August 2020


Interviews and Podcasts

Giacomo Loi will appear in the documentary movie *The Last Chapter of A.B. Yehoshua*, by Yair Qedar (Israel, 2022)

Nandini Pandey:


2. “Special Release: Johns Hopkins University Student Discussion,” an episode of The Ozymandias Project featuring my Fall 2022 Race before Race seminar at Hopkins, produced by Lexie Henning and Dan Maday, 8 February 2023.


(For more, visit www.nandinipandey.com)

Speaking Engagements


Nandini Pandey — “Forgetting and the Power of Race,” for a conference on Forgetting and Power in Greek and Latin Literature organized by Christoph Pieper and Verena Schulz, Eichstätt, 5-8 July 2023

— Title TBA, “Virgil and the Roman Republic,” Symposium Curamam, 27 June-1 July 2023
— “Roman Diversity, Embodied Identity, and Revoicing the Classics,” University of Leeds, 9 May 2023
— Walsh Lecture and workshop for grad students, Department of Classics, University of Chicago, 21 April 2023
— “Why, how, and for whom do we study classics?” as the Global Fellow in Classics at the University of St Andrews, 7 April 2023

— “Of Mice and Men,” The Little Things, organized by Tom Biggs, University of St Andrews, 24 March 2023
 — Land, Laager, and the Undercommons in Vergil’s First Georgic,” for a conference on Vergil and the Land organized by Stephen Harrison and Grant Parker, Stellenbosch University, 24 February 2023
— “The everyday politics of classics: Toward a deconstruction of whiteness,” for Onwards, upwards into the past? Classics in the political discourse [Methods, Disciplines, Case Studies, organized by Christopher Krebs and Christine Walde, Mainz, 15-17 December 2022
— “Putting the color back into classics: Ancient diversity and modern narrative reparations,” University of Ghana, Accra, 8 December 2022
— “Theviolence of diversity: from the Roman amphitheater to the field of classics,” University of Pennsylvania, 3 November 2022
— “Gladiatorial corpora and the Roman body politic,” for a conference on Bodies and Cultural Production in the Ancient Mediterranean, organized by Catlin Hines and Calloway Scott, University of Cincinnati, 7-9 October 2022

Matthew Roller — “The curious case of Manius Curius: a contested will, a trial, and competitive oratory in the Roman Republic.” McKibben Lecture, Grinnell College, 4/20/23.

 — “Court cases and legal proceedings in Valerius Maximus 7.7-8.6: a mise-en-scène of ‘reading for the moral.’” For a conference entitled “Exemplary Representation(s) of the past: New Readings of Valerius Maximus’ Facta et dicta memorabilia,” University of Fribourg (Switzerland), 12/17/22
— “The Atreus and Thyestes dramas in the Roman empire: reflections on tyranny, familial strife, poetics, and cannibalism,” Classical Association of the Atlantic States meeting, 10/7/22; Society for Classical Studies annual meeting, 1/6/22.

Charissa Skoutelas — co-presenting “Out with the Old, In with the Young? Youth and Old Age in Vergil’s Eclogues and Georgics” (CANE, March 17-18, 2023).

Kathryn H. Stutz — “The View from Hector’s Tomb is Splendid: Early Victorian Tourism in Homer’s Heroic Tumuli,” (Victorian Resurrections, University of Vienna, Sept. 22-24, 2022).

— “Your Sons are Safe upon the Sea: Shaping Impossible Spaces through Victorian Sappho,” (SCS 2023, New Orleans, January 5-8).
— “Neither Land Nor Sea Nor Air: Concealed Arctic Seashores from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century,” (Haunted Shores 2023, April 7-8).

Tashi Treadway — “One Health and One Doctor: Veterinary Medicine in Vergil’s Georgics,” (University of Exeter, UK, July 5-6, 2023).

Recent and Upcoming Courses

Shane Butler (co-taught with Jane Bennett) — Ovid and Metamorphoses: Figures of Change and Ovidian Myth as Theory (Spring 2023)

Juan Dopico — Insurrection & Conspiracy: America & Ancient Rome (Blast Course, Summer 2023)

Giacomo Loi — An (Ancient) Clash of Civilizations? The Jews in the Greco-Roman World (Deans Teaching Fellowship, Spring 2023)

Martin Michalek — Nature Poetry (Blast Course, Summer 2023)

— Charged Words: How to Read a Poem Critically (SOUL Course, Fall 2022)

Nandini Pandey — FYS on “Race before Race” (Fall 2023) and Latin Survey (Fall 2023)

Ryan Warwick — Broken Threads: the Labyrinth from Crete to Creepypasta (SOUL Course, Fall 2022)

Yanneck Wiegers — “Ancient Genetics” (Dean’s Teaching Fellowship)
Et Cetera (awards, fellowships, appointments, events)

Giacomo Loi: Columbia University’s New Perspectives in Jewish Studies Award; Azrieli International postdoctoral fellowship at the Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at the University of Haifa, under the supervision of Prof. Vered Lev Kenaan.

Keisuke “Jima” Nakajima: Jima is currently cycling from Baltimore to San Francisco to raise money for cancer treatment. He has currently raised over $5,378! Jima set off for Ithaka (err, San Francisco) on 4 June and by the morning of the fifth was in Gettysburg, PA—just to give one a sense of the pace at which Jima rockets toward the Pacific Ocean. To donate, please visit https://impact.ulmanfoundation.org/fundraiser/4495310.

Nandini Pandey: Global Fellowship at the University of St Andrews and Plumer Fellowship at St Anne’s College, Oxford University, Spring 2023; Editorial supervision of Masks, by Ted Gellar-Goad, for Tangent Press (2023); With Del Maticic and Jinyu Liu, co-organized a panel on “Ovid in the Global Village,” for the SCS Annual Meeting in New Orleans (2023); co-organized a screening of the opera Poppaea with and by Michael Hersch of the Peabody Institute, including a panel of discussants afterwards (October 2022).

Matthew Roller: President of the Society for Classical Studies, Jan. 2023-Jan. 2024; Faculty Fellow, Alexander Grass Humanities Institute, for academic year 2023-24.

Connor Sedlacek: Singleton Center recipient for graduate research in Germany, Spring 2023.

Kathryn H. Stutz: Resident Instructor, Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies (ICCS), Rome, Italy, for 2023-2024.

Ryan Warwick’s museum exhibition Intimate Objects: Martial’s Roman Party Favors is now open in the Johns Hopkins Archeological Museum. An effort that took three years to complete, the show takes viewers through the fascinating history of Martial’s Apophoreta, a book of poems about Saturnalia gifts. Ryan will be leaving Hopkins to serve as Visiting Assistant Professor of Classics at Haverford College. He won’t be too far, though, since he will be commuting back to Baltimore to spend weekends with his spouse, Ezra, and teacup Chihuahua, Lula.

Crossword Puzzle Answer Key

G E M I N A

E I O A E S S E

S S U P E R A R E E N

T E E E T N U

I R R U R B E S I

S O D I V O S U S

I S

I D E N T I D E N M

I O T I O

A U D I T L

S N T O R P E T N

P A R A T S O

E M I H I T C

X U U T

I L L E N I M I U M Q U E