News from The Classical Studies Department at Brandeis University
Winter/Spring 2007 -- Volume III, Number 2

Notabilia


- On January 8, 2007, **Professor Patricia A. Johnston** gave a presentation on *Evander and St. Omobono* at the annual meeting of the American Philological Association in San Diego, California. This year she will again direct a Symposium at Cumae (June 20-23, 2007), on the topic *Vergil's Goddesses, Heroines and Peoples: Authenticating the Early Goddesses and establishing the Roman Common Identity*. The symposia are co-sponsored by *Brandeis* and the Vergilian Society.

- **Cheryl L. Walker** will be on a long-deserved sabbatical leave this fall, during which time she plans to research some episodes of early Roman history (Livy), particularly the three Romans who resist Lars Porsenna (Horatius Cocles, Mucius Scaevola, and Cloelia).

- For a November 4, 2006 concert on Orpheus by the *Brandeis University Chorus and Chamber Choir*, Professor Leonard C. Muellner declaimed selections in Latin from Vergil's *Georgics* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and provided an introductory essay. On November 17, 2006, he delivered a paper on Greek at a panel of the International Unicode Conference in Washington, D.C.: "Historic and Minority Scripts in Unicode: New Developments and Requirements." He reports that "both events were a lot of fun!"

- We are delighted to welcome **Gayle M. McElvain '06** back to the department in her new capacity as Teaching Assistant to Professors **Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow** (CLAS) and **Robert B. Meyer** (PHYS) in the exciting new topics course on *Roman Technology and Art* (CLAS 145, Topics in Greek and Roman Art and Archaeology). In addition to her teaching assistant duties, Gayle is
completing a post-baccalaureate program at Brandeis in computer science and linguistics. Next stop: graduate school.

• The 2007/08 Eunice M. Lebowitz Cohen Fellowship competition has begun! Designed to give up to four Classics majors (or occasionally, minors) a year-long opportunity to work with a Brandeis faculty classicist on a Classics project of their own design, the annual Fellowship is the latest bequest from our most generous donor. The competition is open to rising juniors or seniors. Selected Fellows for the 2007/08 program will be announced in mid-April. Applications and complete information about the program are available on our Research Classics page. You may download pdf-formatted files below. Carpe diem: this year’s deadline is Friday, 30 March 2007.

- Lebowitz Cohen Fellowship Application 2007/08
- Lebowitz Cohen Fellowship Information Sheet 2007/08
- Lebowitz Cohen Fellowship Recommender/Mentor Form 2007/08

Introducing The Graduate Certificate in Ancient Greek and Roman Studies

Last spring, the University Curriculum Committee gave the go-ahead for Classical Studies’ new five-course graduate certificate program in Ancient Greek and Roman Studies. In fall, our first student, Lana Holman, commenced studying toward her certificate. The program, which is for students with a bachelor’s degree in any field, permits students who have taken RSEM 161 (“The Examined Life”) at the Rabb School of Continuing Education and other practicing professionals in the area to continue their professional education, to gain professional development points, and to advance their school careers.

Designed to combine class experience and scholarship with experiential learning, the program allows students to make trips to various museum exhibitions, work in our Classical Artifact Research Center, learn to improve verbal and written skills, understand aesthetic creativity within the ancient world, consider the problems of historical and archaeological preservation, gain insight into archival documentation of antiquity, learn digital technologies, and gain expertise in visual media related to the ancient world (slides, digital databases, internet resources).

Greek Studies graduate Lana Holman determined to continue her Classical Studies on a trip to Greece and Italy in 2006. She is pictured here at Olympia -- ancient site of the Olympics -- at the starting gate of the foot stadium -- an apt photographic metaphor for her start in the new graduate certificate program. When asked what the program means to her, she told us: "My experience with the Brandeis professors during my participation in Greek Studies in the Schools is what first attracted me to the certificate program. I appreciated their willingness to work with educators of all levels (elementary included), and found their passion for and knowledge of their subject matter evident in lectures and discussions. Under their influence, my own teaching was enhanced. So, to have further access to their knowledge, passion, and encouragement was an opportunity I could not pass up. It has been a natural next step to take in my professional development; one that has challenged me, influenced my teaching, and touched my fourth grade students and myself in so many ways. I tell the parents of my students at back-to-school night that my first passion is teaching, and it has recently collided in a very positive way with my new passion for Greek and Roman Studies. You know it is worthwhile when one of your ten-year-old students goes home and tells mom and dad that they want to be a Classics major when they grow up."

To become more acquainted with the Graduate Certificate Program see our new website page: http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/classics/GradCertificate.html, or contact Classical Studies Chair Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow at aoko@brandeis.edu.

Upcoming Events

**Wednesday, March 14, 2007, 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.**
The Jennifer Eastman Lecture Series
Carol Dougherty, Professor of Classical Studies and Chair, Department of Classical Studies
Wellesley College
*Just Visiting: The Mobile World of Classical Athens*
(Following the lecture, a reception will be held 6:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.)
Location: Shiffman 201

**Thursday, March 15, 2007, 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**
Meet the Majors
Classical Studies Faculty and Undergraduate Departmental Representatives
Location: Olin-Sang 212
Dr. Scott F. Johnson of the Harvard University Society of Fellows presented the Fall 2006 Martin Weiner Lecture to a packed house in Pollack Auditorium last October 26. Introduced by Professor Muellner as "a rising star in late antiquity," Dr. Johnson began his talk on East and Further East: Syriac Christianity at the End of the Ancient World by highlighting the significance of Syriac for students of the Classical world.

Although he was initially drawn to study the Syriac language because of the script's aesthetic appeal, over time Dr. Johnson felt himself drawn deeper into a remarkable culture. He came to realize that the Syriac Christians were "a Mediterranean civilization that was highly Hellenized in character and well connected intellectually to the broader Christian and philosophical oikoumene of late antiquity." Indeed, although the Near East had already been heavily influenced by Hellenic culture, Dr. Johnson detailed how the Syriac Christians brought a strong Aristotelian tradition to Persia.

Historians may still struggle with the accurate placement of the "temporal end of the ancient world," but Dr. Johnson argues that the answers may lie beyond the physical borders of Mediterranean culture. He notes that after Rome banned pagan schools, the last generation of the Platonic Academy fled in 532 C.E. from Athens to the East, ultimately finding safety in the Sasanian court. Over time, the school adopted the Syriac language and become known as the Sabians.

A dazzling consequence to this cultural graft was to ensue. Dr. Johnson revealed that as Syriac Christians carried their faith east, missionaries and traders alike brought not only their religion, but also their Hellenic traditions and language throughout India, Central Asia, and eventually as far east as China. This momentous occasion of Hellenic culture "leaking" out of the Mediterranean basin was memorialized in stone. Dr. Johnson presented images of the "Nestorian Monument" (pictured, right), a Chinese and Syriac bilingual stele, which describes the arrival of the East-Syriac bishop, Alopen, to Xi'an in C.E. 635.

In an age when Islam began to flourish and the so-called "Dark Ages" settled upon Rome's last remnant, the Eastern Roman Empire, Syriac played a role in the continued eastward push of Greek culture and learning. In doing so, they provided a link from Classical civilizations through late antiquity worthy of scholarly attention and eloquently introduced to a new audience by Dr. Johnson.

--- Christopher A. Farrell '07 is writing his senior thesis on Xenophon and Athens. One of our three UDRs this year, Chris is majoring in the Classical Archaeology and Ancient History track.
The Jennifer Eastman Lecture, Fall 2006
Professor Michael C. J. Putnam on Virgil and History

The fall term Jennifer Eastman Lecture brought to campus the dynamic Professor Michael C. J. Putnam, MacMillan Professor of Classics at Brown University, to discuss the many connections between Virgil's texts and ancient Greek and Roman history.

Professor Putnam skilfully carried the audience through sections of Virgil's Aeneid, highlighting the similarities and repeated themes that drove his presentation. Throughout, his talk moved between "the ideal and real in human affairs," offering a contrast between the "double futures" of the Roman people. This idea links the conclusion of Virgil's epic and the end of the civil wars of Augustus -- not even a generation past and certainly on Virgil's mind as he wrote.

In the triumph of Aeneas over uncertainty and strife, the poet's verses implicitly liken his epic hero to Augustus.

To draw his audience to this conclusion, Virgil presents several oracular images, Professor Putnam asserted, including Anchises in the Underworld and the shield of Aeneas. Anchises' survey of future Romans' shades from his place in the Underworld predicts Augustus' extension and pacification of the Roman state. And while the images on the shield presented to Aeneas by his mother, Venus, are replete with saviors of the republic, the last of them depicted is Augustus. The shield is itself both the representation of the triumphs of Rome and the instrument of Aeneas' and Rome's victory.

The lecture then turned from the idealized images of the Aeneid to its "darker side." Professor Putnam examined the realism of war and civil strife present in the work, using as his focus the dual nature of the images already discussed. Virgil's irony, he argued, is evident in his accounts of future Roman history. In Anchises' descriptions of major figures, for example, the poet adds a twist that was sure to be understood by his ancient audience. Thus, the particularly vivid image used to describe Caesar and Pompey -- their pre-birth shades are described as conordes, harmonious -- contrasts with the great civil war the two of them started. Virgil's ironies and ethical comments do not ignore Augustus, but assail him as well, Professor Putnam maintained, noting that the pride that drove Aeneas on to his final victory sullied the noble victory of the people who were soon to be the Romans. Professor Putnam demonstrated how a close reading of the death of Turnus, the anti-hero of Latium's indigenous people, reflects the response of those who had fallen under the reign of Roman arms. The verb indignor, to resent, appears in the final line of the poem, rendered thus in Putnam's own translation: "with a groan his life flees resentful under the shades" [Book 12, line 952]. The ensuing peace seems almost absurd in the face of the bloodletting needed to effect it.

Professor Putnam then delved deeper into Virgil's depiction of the hero's humanity. He noted the underpinnings of emotion and passion that affect the characters of the Aeneid. The events themselves, of course, lead to the glorious conclusion, but it is the internal, personal factors that appear to drive Virgil's characters. Professor Putnam concluded that it is in this perspective on the epic that we find Virgil's idea of history -- we learn about ourselves from history. It is in this discovery that we can find insight into any time period.

-- Michael P. Mello '07 is a Classical Studies major, both in Classics and in Classical Archaeology and Ancient History. Our Latin tutor and the Eunice M. Lebowitz Cohen Scholar for 2006-07, he is currently hard at work on his senior thesis: The Influence of Epicurean Philosophy on St. Augustine’s Confessions.

The Classical Colloquium Series, Fall 2006
Dr. Yumna Khan on The Mythical Mystery Tour of Dionysius of Alexandria

On November 30, 2006, Visiting Lecturer Dr. Yumna Z. N. Khan spoke to students and faculty about Dionysius of Alexandria, on whom she wrote her dissertation, soon to be published by Cambridge University Press. In her lecture, The Mythical Mystery Tour of Dionysius of Alexandria, Dr. Khan provided an illuminating overview of the Greek writer, an author most students have never studied.

The Periegesis, a poem with some 1,200 lines in dactylic hexameter, offers a description of the inhabited world. It is a poem with hidden depths and mysteries. Built into it are two acrostics that reveal all that we know of Dionysius' life. The first of these can be translated "Of Dionysius of the (people living) on this side of Pharos," and the next, "the god Hermes under Hadrian." The first acrostic alludes to the lighthouse of Pharos, thus identifying Dionysius with the city of Alexandria, while the second could date the poem to the reign of the emperor Hadrian. There are only two historical events referenced in the poem, and it is not known when during Hadrian's reign the Guide might have been written.

Dionysius' work is part of a long-established tradition of geographical writing, and Dionysius appears to use more than one geographical source for his Guide. At the same time, he does not claim that his Guide is based on scientific study; indeed, throughout the poem, he alludes to his poetic sources and references various myths. Nevertheless, despite inaccuracies in location, incongruous geographical features, and the like, the world he describes does seem believable.

Although he states that Italy is in the center of Europe, with the Apennines at its center, Dionysius' outlook on the world is firmly Hellenocentric; for example, when writing of Italy, he confines himself chiefly to the Hellenic areas of southern Italy. This Greek bias is present not only in the geographical descriptions, but also in the mythical discussions: Roman myths are ignored while Greek myths are frequently cited.

Dr. Khan also traced Dionysius' writings about mainland Greece. It is striking how cursory his treatment of Athens is, but then, throughout his writings, Dionysius avoids any discussion of the politics of the various places, choosing instead to highlight natural characteristics and the mythologies they evoke.
Throughout her lecture, Dr. Khan discussed parallels between Dionysius and other ancient authors such as Homer, Hesiod, Callimachus, and Aratus. All in all, Dr. Khan's lecture was highly informative and a welcome introduction to a writer most members of the audience were not otherwise likely to encounter. [For more information about Professor Khan, see her home page: http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/classics/faculty/khan.html.]

-- Kevin Goscinak '08 is a Classical Studies major on the Classics track and a Eunice M. Lebowitz Cohen Fellow for 2006-07. His fellowship work investigates primary sources for the Peloponnesian War.

The Ongoing Classical Film Series: Roman Gladiators and the Power of Love

This term, the Classical Studies Film Series features some vintage and contemporary cinema about gladiators, including Stanley Kubrick's Spartacus, the first film to defy Hollywood's blacklist, and Gladiator, which won an Oscar for "Best Picture." We round out the year with the 1913 silent film The Last Days of Pompeii, about the repercussions of administering a 'love potion' -- and for lighter fare, the 1999 Woody Allen comedy Mighty Aphrodite, for which Mira Sorvino won an Oscar. Don't miss this great series of films. All are welcome at our Sunday evening screenings in Schiffman 201. Please check our online Colloquia page for changes to the schedules, or contact Janet Barry at jbarry@brandeis.edu.

Sunday, January 28, 2007, 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
The Classical Studies Film Series
Stanley Kubrick's Spartacus (1960)
Kirk Douglas, Charles Laughton, John Gavin, John Ireland, Charles McGraw, Woody Strode, Laurence Olivier, Peter Ustinov, Tony Curtis
Location: Schiffman 201

Sunday, March 11, 2007, 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
The Classical Studies Film Series
Gladiator (2000)
Russell Crowe, Joaquin Phoenix, Connie Nielsen, Oliver Reed, Derek Jacobi, Djimon Hounsou, Richard Harris
Location: Schiffman 201

Sunday, March 18, 2007, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
The Classical Studies Film Series
The Last Days of Pompeii (1913)
Fernanda Negri Pouget, Eugenia Tettoni Fior, Ubaldo Stefani, Antonio Grisanti, Cesare Gani Carini
Location: Schiffman 201

Sunday, March 25, 2007, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
The Classical Studies Film Series
Mighty Aphrodite (1995)
F. Murray Abraham, Woody Allen, Claire Bloom, Helena Bonham Carter, Olympia Dukakis, Michael Rapaport, Mira Sorvino, David Ogden Stiers, Jack Warden, Peter Weller
Location: Schiffman 201

Photo Gallery: The Fall Lecture Series and Other Gatherings

Our fall colloquium series generated a wealth of lecture-goers, while the monthly gatherings of this year's Eunice M. Lebowitz Cohen Fellows and Mentors created a more intimate backdrop for discussing Fellows' projects and enjoying Thai food.
Row One (above): At the Weiner Lecture given by Harvard’s Dr. Scott F. Johnson, from left to right: 1) Classics Chair Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow and speaker Dr. Scott F. Johnson, before the talk in Pollack Auditorium; 2) Classics students Justin Matthews, Susan Byali, and Emrys Bell-Schlatter at the post-lecture reception.

Row Two (above): 3) Professor Lenny Muellner at the event; 4) Seniors Nate Ralston and Chris Farrell at the Reception; 5) Professor Cheryl Walker, flanked by Nate Ralston ’07 and Chris Farrell ’07.
Row Three (above): At one of the monthly gatherings of Eunice M. Lebowitz Cohen Fellows and Mentors, 1) Matt Brown ’08 with Professors Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow and Leonard C. Muellner; 2) Kevin Goscinak ’08 with Professor Cheryl L. Walker; 3) Lining up for take out Thai food -- Lenny Muellner, Cheryl Walker, Kevin Goscinak ’08, and Matt Brown ’08.

Row Four (above): On November 16, 2006, the Department hosted two great events: a talk for undergraduates contemplating graduate school and the Fall 2006 Jennifer Eastman Lecture, from left to right: 1) Professor Ruth Scodel, D. R. Shackleton Bailey Collegiate Professor of Greek and Latin at the University of Michigan, met with Classics majors to talk about the Michigan graduate program; 2) Professor Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow and Eastman speaker Michael Putnam of Brown University.
Row Five (above): 3) The Eastman Lecture audience assembles in Pollack Fine Arts Auditorium; 4) Professor Putnam lecturing;

Row Six (above): 5) and 6) Post-lecture reception food and festivities;
Call for Submissions

Nuntius has been designed not only to bring news to you, but also to serve as a vehicle through which to receive and pass on your input and ideas. Our intention is to reach and to reflect the entire Brandeis Classics community: faculty, students, alumni, donors, and lovers of Classical Studies. To that end, please let us know what you think about the publication and the kinds of news included in this issue. We are most receptive to your ideas: cartoons, brief essays or discussion topics, Classical anecdotes from your Brandeis days, department photos from way-back-when, etc. Consider us for your artwork with a Classical theme: photography, poetry, translation, sketch, watercolor, etc. Please contact Janet Barry at jbarry@brandeis.edu with your news, ideas, and submissions. Thank you!

Nota Bene

The title illustration on this e-newsletter, Pastoral Frieze, is a detail from a 1st century C.E. wall frieze, in the House of Livia, Prima Porta, now at Museo Massimo, Rome (Photographic Credit: Ann Raia, 1999), by courtesy of the VRoma Project: http://www.vroma.org/images/raia_images/pastorfrieze2.jpg.

Unless otherwise noted, photographs are by Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow. Photo of the Nestorian Monument provided by Dr. Scott F. Johnson. The photo of Michael Putnam that accompanies our article is from the Brown University website (http://research.brown.edu/research/profile.php?id=10042). The photo of Yumna Khan was taken by William Broadhead, 2006. Other photographic credits: Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow and Scott Johnson by Lenny Muellner; Matt Brown, Ann Koloski-Ostrow, and Lenny Muellner by Kevin Goscinak; Eastman Lecture crowd with Ann Koloski Ostrow and Ann Koloski-Ostrow with Michael Putnam, both taken by Ken Gaulin.

The quotation following our title is taken from Eunuchus, by 2nd century B.C.E. Roman playwright Publius Terentius Afer (Terence).

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