



Cornell University

IRIS

NEWS FROM THE
CORNELL
DEPARTMENT
OF CLASSICS



“... *cras ingens iterabimus aequor.*”

These words with which Teucer stirs up the spirits of his comrades before setting sail from Salamina in search of a new home (Horace, Odes 1.7) echoed in my heart as I left Rome and headed for Ithaca. A year later, I am convinced that the destination is much vaster than the sea I crossed to get here: a university teeming with ideas and innovation. It is precisely this Cornelian spirit, I believe, that persuaded my colleagues to incorporate oral and written skills into the Latin curriculum of this world-class Department.

Even I could not have imagined that it would take less than a year before students would start giving presentations on topics ranging from fencing and basketball to the stock market and cookie baking, from Paul Cézanne and Morton Feldman to the passive aorist and the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle – all in grammatically sound, comprehensible Latin. And why not? The Western world had been doing it for centuries.

And yet why? Why should we speak about such sundry topics in Latin today? I remember trying to articulate reasons to my fellow rookies during orientation to the College of Arts and Sciences last fall. I knew those reasons but found it difficult to convince others of them, especially if they had reservations about the value of the classics in the first place.

Now I don't have to articulate reasons. I simply point to my students. Here's one who struggled with the sequence of tenses for years and now can deal with them in Plautus, Cicero, and Livy precisely because she has used them *actively*. There's another who tripped over ablative absolutes again and again until he not only *had* to use them himself but had to decide when it was *appropriate* to use them. Others have come to my classes who for years had never succeeded in “memorizing” vocabulary, and now they never forget a word because *they* have had to use it to express their *own* thoughts, feelings, and desires.

In other words, students at Cornell are achieving a mastery of Latin inconceivable before they started to assimilate the language by actively speaking and writing it. This is precisely the point of spoken Latin, and it works. The ideas of Terrence, Ovid, Virgil, Boccaccio, Petrarch, Newton, and countless others jump off the page when you can anticipate not only what they are about to say but *how* they will say it.

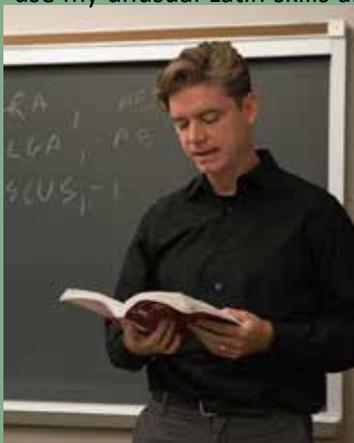
My first year at this university could not have been more exciting. The Cornellians I had taught in Rome and elsewhere before coming to Ithaca are just like the Cornellians I have had the pleasure to teach this year: inquisitive, daring, intelligent, and caring. They *want* to know Latin inside and out, they *humble* themselves to learn it, they are encouraged to discover that it takes *average* intelligence at most, and they care about history, literature, philosophy, and humanity more deeply because they have experienced it first-hand by speaking in the language in which much of it is embodied.

I thank my colleagues in the Department of Classics and the College of Arts and Sciences not only for allowing me to embark on this journey but joining me on it. Before coming to Cornell, I did not have the slightest idea if and how I could use my unusual Latin skills anywhere but in the “Salamina” I had left behind: the halls of the Vatican where I wrote and spoke in Latin every day. Others believed (and still believe) that spoken Latin is a gimmick and a waste of time. Hearing the confidence with which my students blaze through a passage from Tacitus or savor a line of Catullus tells me otherwise. *The ability to speak Latin enhances the ability to read Latin at least four- or fivefold.* The students who want to speak Latin are serious scholars with serious plans to make a lasting contribution not only to the academy but to society. It's an exciting time to be in the Department of Classics at Cornell.

I wish to thank the members of the Kanders family for making this excitement possible. The great experiment in spoken Latin at Cornell would never had happened had it not been for the generosity of Ralph, Jeanne, and their children. Having gotten to know these proud Cornellians has made me a proud Cornellian too. *Iterabimus aequor!*

--Daniel Gallagher, Ralph and Jeanne Kanders Associate Professor of the Practice in Latin

See the *Cornell Alumni Magazine* Vol. 120, No 04 for more about spoken Latin.



Marzuolo Archaeological Project (MAP): 2017 Excavation Season

In summer 2017 five Cornell students – three undergraduates, one MA student in Archaeology and one PhD student in Classics – joined Astrid Van Oyen for the second excavation season of the international Marzuolo Archaeological Project, a collaboration with the universities of Arkansas and Melbourne, and with the Soprintendenza Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio and the town of Cinigiano.

Marzuolo is a Roman-period site in southern Tuscany (Italy). Its landscape of rolling Tuscan hills speaks to the imagination today, but in Roman times this was a ‘backwater’ area, inhabited and cultivated by small farmers. Yet despite its remote location and its rural nature, Marzuolo was a center for innovation, where craftsmen experimented with the production of so-called *terra sigillata* pottery – the Roman empire’s shiny red pottery that adorned many a table across the Roman empire. The Marzuolo Archaeological Project seeks to understand this process of innovation and its role in the rural economy of Roman Italy. In the process, we are debunking a few stereotypes about modern innovation and rural communities as well!

Our 2017 excavation season yielded spectacular results, including a large, purpose-built multi-craft area dating to the 1st century AD where potters, blacksmiths, and other craftsmen would share infrastructure, resources and probably also skills – in other words, the traces of a buzzing, innovative community! The 2018 excavation season will return to this same area.

Students of all levels participated and learnt or refined key excavation and recording techniques, spatial analysis, artefact study, and much more. But just as importantly, they learnt about the riches and challenges of a small, rural community in Tuscany (Cinigiano), which has been our generous host for several years. This even included a discussion evening with a local writer about the refugee crisis. MAP wishes to thank the following funding sources: Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, President’s Council for Cornell Women, Archaeological Institute of America, and last but not least our very own Department of Classics.



Figure 1: The Marzuolo team on a rare rainy day



Figure 2: Dani Vander Horst, Olivia Angsten (Cornell), Morgaan Blazina (Melbourne) and Caitlin Yoakum (Arkansas)

Figure 3: John Souza (Cornell) in a large ceramic water basin which he excavated



Figure 4: Kathleen Garland, Astrid Van Oyen (Cornell), and Tom Keep (Melbourne) excavating the blacksmith’s workshop

Figure 5: Tools from the blacksmith’s workshop



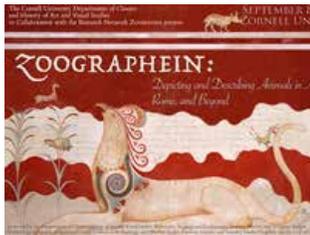
Figure 6: Cornell participants Kathleen Garland, John Souza, Astrid Van Oyen and Dani Vander Horst in a (once) waterproof tank

Figure 7: Clay sampling at the estates of Castello Banfi to identify the sources of the clays used at Marzuolo. Edyta Marzec (Fitch Lab, BSA), Ines Tescione (Roma Tre), Evangelia Kiriatzki (Fitch Lab, BSA) and Gijs Tol (Melbourne)



Figure 8: Aerial photograph of craft production area. Near the bottom of the photo, notice traces of the fire that burnt down the building. (Photo: Paolo Nannini)

Faculty Notes

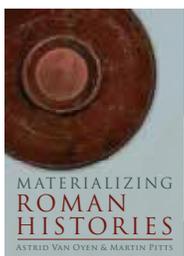


From September 8-10, 2017 Profs. **Annetta Alexandridis** and **Athena Kirk** co-hosted an international conference on *Zoographein: Depicting and Describing Animals in Ancient Greece, Rome, and Beyond*.

Over two and half days classical philologists, archaeologists, historians and art historians from all over Europe and the United States discussed how depictions and descriptions of animals worked as methods of inquiry in and of themselves, rather than illustrations of knowledge. Panels dealt, for example, with “Observing and Creating Nature,” “The Aesthetics of Animal Anatomy” or “Zoological Fantasies.” Prof. Courtney Roby gave a keynote lecture on “The Animal Body Multiple: Organs to Swarms.”

The event was organized in collaboration with the international research network Zoomathia and co-sponsored by Classics, History of Art, Philosophy and many other Cornell departments.

In 2017-8, **Mike Fontaine** accepted an appointment in the central administration as Associate Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education. He'll spend the next few years trying to improve waitlists and pedagogy in the university's biggest courses. In the fall, he taught Introduction to Ancient Rome and a graduate course on “The Refugee Problem in Latin Literature.” (Virgil, Juvenal, Lucian, and Ammianus Marcellinus were the major authors for that second one.) In the spring, he co-taught Wine Culture for the second time. That gave him a chance to debut some translations of Nonnus and Silius Italicus. He published a bunch of papers, gave some talks, and is looking forward to seeing *Quasi Labor Intus: Ambiguity in the Latin Language* at last appear. It will be the very first volume in a new imprint of the Paideia Institute Press. Alyssa is still thriving as general counsel of Tompkins Financial, Ava won her school's “CHES Champ” award twice, and Jake is having a blast in kindergarten.



Aside from directing the second excavation season of the Marzuolo Archaeological Project (see further in this newsletter), a highlight this past academic year for **Astrid Van Oyen** was the publication of *Materialising Roman Histories*, a volume which she co-edited with Martin Pitts (University of Exeter) to explore and rethink how objects are used to construct

answers to some of the big historical questions concerning the Roman world. She also published an article in *Antiquity* on ‘Agents and commodities’ and contributed to volumes on the Diversity of Classical Archaeology, on Mobility and Pottery Production, and others. Her year was packed with conferences and invited lectures, including at Oxford, Beijing, Bonn, Buffalo, and beyond.

Congratulations Class of 2017



Future Plans

Christopher Erdman is a PhD student at UC Santa Barbara.

Emma Ianni is a PhD student in Classics at Columbia University.

Niels Kuehlert is at Harvard for graduate school in Linguistics.

Derek Li is working as a research consultant at NYC Department of Education.

James Officer is attending Boston University School of Law.

Classics Minors

We would also like to congratulate our Classics minors for 2017.

John Hall, George Henkel, and Deborah Modlin.

New Material Culture Lab opens in Goldwin Smith Hall

On May 2, the Material Culture Lab opened in the former Temple of Zeus. The Material Culture Lab expands Cornell's facilities for object-based research and teaching, which tend to require both space and time, and often take place off-campus (including through Cornell's many archaeological fieldwork projects). By bringing such experiences to campus and making them more accessible, the Material Culture Lab complements the Department of Classics' Active Learning Initiative.



Cornell Classics in Cyprus



Cornell Classics students including Rebecca Gerdes, Angelica LaPasta, Francesca LaPasta and Mikaela Hamilton, along with other Cornell students, postdoc Georgia Andreou, and Prof. Sturt Manning took part in the summer 2017 season of the Kalavassos and Maroni Built Environments (KAMBE) Project in southern Cyprus. Field work concentrated on the excavation and investigation of a massive wall dated to the later second millennium BC. This monumental structure was first recognized in 2016 (after geophysics and then a small test excavation) and is now shown to be an important feature already traced for over 20m. It seems likely to be a fortification wall. Such an impressive structure was entirely unexpected at the site, and is the first of its kind for this period and area on the island, and tracing its overall extent via geophysics will now be a focus of the 2018 season.

As part of the KAMBE season, students from Cornell University and the Cyprus Institute participated in a seminar on Dendrochronology and Architectural History held on June 14th at the UNESCO listed Church of the Holy Cross in the village of Pelendri. Led by Cornell Professor Sturt Manning and Cyl Assoc. Professor Nikolas Bakirtzis, this full-day seminar introduced students to the method of Dendrochronology and its great research potential in the context of the church building's complex structural history.

Dendrochronology or tree-ring dating has been available as a recognized scientific technique since the early 1900s. Simply stated, many species of trees in temperate zones (and some in tropical zones) grow one visible ring per calendar year. For the entire period of a tree's life, a year-by-year record or ring pattern is formed that in some way reflects the climatic and environmental conditions in which the tree grew. These patterns can be compared and matched ring for ring with trees especially of the same species growing in the same geographical zone and under similar climatic conditions. In sum, dendrochronology measures, compares and matches tree-ring growth offering invaluable information on the age of the wood used by builders and artists thus helping to date buildings, wooden objects and works of art such as icons. The tree-ring records can also inform us about past climate and environment.

Cornell Classics in Cyprus continued

The seminar was organized in the context of the ongoing collaboration between STARC and the Cornell Tree Ring Laboratory of the Department of Classics and the Cyprus Department of Antiquities aiming to develop a specialized dendrochronology lab in Cyprus and to further pursue tree-ring dating for art and architecture in Cyprus and the broader region. This event marks the expanding collaboration between Cornell University and the Cyprus Institute which includes, in addition to dendrochronology, collaboration in the fields of bioarchaeology and sub surface imaging.

Graduate Students News



Liana Brent is a two-year pre-doctoral Rome Prize fellow at the American Academy in Rome, where she will complete her dissertation about reopened and reused graves in Roman cemeteries. In her first year in Rome, she has written and revised several chapters of her dissertation and presented papers in Boston, Rome and Edinburgh. Throughout the year,

Liana has enjoyed hikes along the Via Appia and around the Aurelian Walls, as well as visits to various columbaria, catacombs and funerary monuments.

This summer, she will be the assistant for the Academy's Classical Summer School, a course for graduate students and high school Latin teachers that will explore the archaeology and history of Rome. Liana will also conduct a geophysical survey of the Bass Garden at the American Academy, where a Roman burial was discovered in 1999 that may be part of a larger cemetery.



Katie Jarriel completed her PhD in Classical Archaeology in December 2017. Her dissertation, supervised by Sturt Manning, is titled "Small Worlds After All? Landscape and Community Interaction in the Cycladic Bronze Age." In the upcoming academic year, she will join Purdue University as a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow

in the interdisciplinary Honors College. This position is especially meaningful since Katie completed her BA in the Honors College at the University of South Carolina in 2010. She also has a forthcoming article in the June 2018 issue of the *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* entitled "Across the Surface of the Sea: Maritime Interaction in the Cycladic Early Bronze Age."

Congratulations

The Department of Classics is delighted that the College of Arts & Sciences recently announced that **David Mankin**, long-time faculty member, until his retirement in 2017, has been appointed to emeritus status.