News from the Cornell Department of Classics 2018/2019

Sadly the end of the 2018-19 academic year was marked for the Department of Classics by the passing of our recently retired colleague, David Mankin. A noted Latinist, Dave joined Cornell in 1985 and was known especially for his iconic and very popular Greek Mythology course as well as his dedication to Latin prose and poetry. He won a Clarke Distinguished Teaching Award in 1991 and influenced the lives of many students with his distinctive and humorous style. He published two books: *Horace, Epodes* (1995), and *Cicero, De Oratore Book III* (2011), both with Cambridge University Press. The Department is planning a memorial event for the 2019-20 academic year.

In a year full of accomplishments, it is possible here to note only a few. The following pages highlight our graduates from last summer, the Roman painting traveling seminar led by Verity Platt, the Department’s Active Learning Initiative, the performance of Seneca’s *Troades* in Latin led by Daniel Gallagher and by his co-director, graduating senior Nathan Chazan, and includes accounts of the Department’s current archaeological field projects at Pompeii and Marzuolo in Italy and the Kalavasos and Maroni Built Environments Project in Cyprus, as well of the research and adventures of faculty and current and recent students. Among other Department events, I also note from November 2018 that Cornell’s Ancient Theater Performance Group put on a terrific *Iphigeneia in Aulis* in the Black Box Theatre at the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts directed by Fred Ahl.

The undoubted stand-out success of the year was “Odyssey in Ithaca” led by Athena Kirk. This all-day (8am-8pm) public reading of Homer’s *Odyssey* in its entirety in the Groos Atrium of Klarman Hall captured hearts and minds across the university, and drew the participation of not only students and faculty of our Department, but many colleagues and even the College Dean, Ray Jayawardhana, the Cornell Provost, Mike Kotlikoff, and NY State Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton. The Department has been fortunate to have the wonderful office team of Keeley Boerman, Linda Brown and Jessica Smith to support it again this year. Thank you. I step down as chair of the Department this summer, and thank students, staff, and faculty for making this a terrific department to be part of. Éric Rebillard will serve as Interim Chair next year, after which Verity Platt will become Chair in summer 2020. --Sturt Manning, Goldwin Smith Professor of Classical Archaeology and Chair

Greetings from the Chair --

Cast and Crew of Iphigeneia

Summer Language Fellowship winner Isis Encinas

Caplan Travel Fellowship winner Gaela LaPasta

Caplan Travel Fellowship winner Cesca LaPasta
Summer 2018 saw the first season of the Casa della Regina Carolina (CRC) Project, a new archaeological field project at Pompeii co-directed by Profs. Caitie Barrett (Cornell), Kathryn Gleason (Cornell), and Annalisa Marzano (Reading). This project focuses on the mapping and excavation of the so-called Casa della Regina Carolina, a large, elite house that was only partially excavated in the 19th century.

Pompeii is arguably the most famous excavated ancient city, and one of the key sources for what we think we know about Roman daily life – but much of its archaeological record comes from early excavations whose practices fell far short of modern standards. The CRC project combines innovative archaeological field methods with a rigorous approach to legacy data, applying new detection and recording techniques while also salvaging and synthesizing information from early excavations. We seek to reconsider traditional, top-down narratives about the relationship between “macro-scale” history (for example, the political or military events privileged in traditional historical narratives) and the “micro-scale” of daily domestic experience.

The Parco Archeologico di Pompei has given us a three-year permit to excavate in the garden area, where the 19th-century excavators dug down to the 79 CE garden surface but not below. Our first field season, in 2018, involved ground-penetrating radar (GPR) mapping of underground features; LiDAR recording of standing architecture; and the excavation of several test units. The most exciting finding was the discovery of earlier structures below the garden. These earlier structures appear to come from a house of the 2nd or 1st century BCE – providing us with an exciting opportunity to explore change and continuity in domestic life during a turbulent period of Pompeian history. Before it was conquered by Rome in 89 BCE, Pompeii was inhabited and governed by the Samnite people. Because its first occupation phase may date to the Samnite period and its final occupation phase dates to the Roman imperial period, the Casa della Regina Carolina provides a valuable opportunity to investigate the relationships between domestic material culture, social performance, and historical change. In what ways did the material culture of the household comment on recent social and political developments? Alternatively, how might domestic material culture have affected developments in larger regional, national, or imperial arenas? Beyond asking how domestic material culture reflected ancient behaviors and attitudes, we are also asking how these objects might have helped shape behavior and attitudes.

The CRC Project is an interdisciplinary, international project that engages faculty and students at all levels from multiple Cornell colleges (Arts and Sciences, CALS, Engineering) and departments or programs (Classics, Archaeology, History of Art, Landscape Architecture, and Earth and Atmospheric Sciences). Our collaborators and team members hail from Italy, England, Iran, Pakistan, Israel, Algeria, and Canada.

We are very grateful for generous support from the following sources: the Rust Family Foundation, Cornell Institute for Archaeological and Material Studies (CIAMS), Cornell Society for the Humanities, the Affinito-Stewart Grants program of the President’s Council of Cornell Women, and of course the Cornell Department of Classics!
Future Plans

Lyubov (Luby) Kiriakidi (Classics and College Scholar) is a 2018-2019 Rome Fellow with The Paideia Institute, learning Italian, studying Latin, exploring the Eternal City, and eventually leading Classical Tours for high school students and getting some teaching experience. The following year she will do a yearlong Masters program in Classics at Durham University in England.

Ksenia (Xenia) Ludtseva (Classics) is a graduate student in Archaeology at the University of Virginia.

Maura Noone (Classics) is attending Law School at Boston College.

Scott Rodeo (Classics) is attending Yale Divinity School.

Austin Wahl (Classics) is aiding his father and his partner in setting up a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) which they hope will be operating around January 2020. He is planning on taking the LSAT this summer and applying to law schools in the fall. Lastly, he is playing baseball at CSU Monterey Bay for his final season of eligibility and is talking with several professional teams and hopes to be drafted come June.

Erchen (Erial) Zheng (Classics) is working as a software engineer at PAX Technology.

We would also like to congratulate our Classics minors for 2018

Olivia Angsten, Shivani Bahl, Robert Berry, Ross Clarke, Troy Sherman, and Laura Watson

Ph.D. Recognition

Natasha Binek received both her B.A. and her M.A. in Classics from the University of Toronto. She began her Ph.D. program at Cornell in 2011. Her dissertation examines the reception in the *Aeneid* of the figuring of Aphrodite and Eros in the Greek poetic tradition, with a focus on elements marked by an ambivalent or dark coloring. She has taken up her appointment as a Classics Fellow at Marlboro College in Vermont.

Micaela (Micky) Carignano received her B.A. in Classics and Archaeology from Washington University in Saint Louis in 2011. She defended her dissertation in May of 2017. Her doctorate work has focused on Minoan Crete and the archaeology of food and feasting. Micky analyzed ceramics and architecture from Minoan domestic sites to research how people of different social classes cooked and ate meals in their houses and how they participated in palace feasts. While at Cornell she participated in excavations on Cyprus and Crete. Micky is a Faculty and Circulation Services Assistant at Cornell Law Library.

Theodore (Theo) Harwood received his B.A. in Latin from Hillsdale College in 2011. He entered the Ph.D. program at Cornell that fall but went on leave in the 2014-15 year to teach at a Classical school in Louisville, Kentucky. His work at Cornell has focused on Platonic philosophy and its integration in early and medieval Christianity, and his dissertation offers a systematic account of St. Augustine’s theory of interpretation for the Christian Scriptures. In the fall he began as an Assistant Professor of Classics at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Steubenville, Ohio.

Katherine (Katie) Jarriel completed her BA in Anthropology from the Honors College at the University of South Carolina in 2010. She defended her dissertation, *Small Worlds After All? Landscape and Community Interaction in the Cycladic Bronze Age*, at Cornell in August 2017. Katie’s research uses digital modeling to explore how people in the Bronze Age Aegean moved throughout their land- and seascapes and created communities based on a shared sense of place. While her main area of interest is Greece, she has also done fieldwork in Spain, Israel, and Cyprus. In fall 2018 Katie joined the Honors College at Purdue University as a Clinical Assistant Professor.
Retracing the Via Appia

In March 2019, Liana Brent traced the route of the ancient Via Appia on foot from Brindisi back to Rome. Over a period of three weeks and a distance of 350 miles, she explored the ancient road as a monument that no longer survives as a discrete, connected entity. Her journey shed light on the often-invisible borders between regions, questions of how topography affected ancient settlement locations, and how the ancient road continues to act as a boundary for modern property divisions. She visited Roman colonies at Capua, Minturnae, Formia, and other sites that Horace wrote about after his own adventure on the Appian Way.

In addition to rest stops, settlements, and cities were various types of mortuary landscapes that inform Liana’s research. Since 2010, Liana has excavated the Vagnari Cemetery near Gravina in Puglia, a mere 400 m away from the Via Appia, and she was able to explore how the road connected Vagnari to nearby sites and how far people from surrounding communities might have traveled to bury and commemorate their dead. In larger Roman cities like Venosa, Benevento and Terracina, Liana documented different ways that sculpture and inscriptions from Roman tombs were reused in Late Antique and Medieval building projects. Closer to Rome in the Via Appia Archaeological Park, Liana explored how tombs were an important part of the extramural landscape, where the living and the dead interacted with great regularity.

This experience took Liana through isolated and unruly parts of the Italy that have a rich archaeological heritage but uneven site accessibility and preservation strategies. It challenged her to think of ancient roads not only as part of a network that facilitated the movement of people, objects and ideas between central and southern Italy, but as an archaeological, historical, and literary journey.
In summer 2018 two Cornell undergraduates and one PhD student joined Astrid Van Oyen (Cornell) for the third excavation season of the Marzuolo Archaeological Project (MAP), which excavates a rural Roman craft production site in Tuscany. MAP is a collaboration with the universities of Arkansas and Melbourne, and with the Soprintendenza Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio and the town of Cinigiano.

The Roman countryside was long thought of as a world of large elite estates (‘villas’). But recent research shows that small farmers continued to be present as well. As a rural craft site in between a landscape of villas and small farmers, Marzuolo throws into relief interactions between these different historical actors. Marzuolo produced terra sigillata pottery — the Romans’ favorite shiny red table ware — but also had a blacksmith who repaired the local farmers’ ploughs and cartwheels. This summer we excavated complete stacks of pottery and finished excavating the blacksmith’s workshop, which was destroyed in a fire, exceptionally preserving a complete toolset. A team supervised by Classics PhD student Kathleen Garland explored other rooms of the same building, which contained production installations such as waterproofed cylindrical tanks that attest to the presence of other, as yet unidentified crafts. To be continued!

Mikaela Hamilton, a senior majoring in Archaeology and Classics, is interested in ‘forgotten’ communities in the Roman world, such as our craftspersons and farmers, and with a class on osteology under her belt, she took particular care of our bone finds. Natalia Zeller-MacLean, a sophomore in Engineering excited about the ancient world was a perfect match for our study of craft and innovation in the Roman world. Natalia also helped us with all kinds of calculations on site. During weekends, students explored the beauty and history of Tuscany, and we were treated to a wine-tasting by our friends and neighbors at Castello Banfi.
Tree-Ring Lab Expands Horizons

The Cornell Tree-Ring Laboratory and members of the Cornell Classics community hosted a dendrochronology workshop for 7th-8th grade girls for the fourth straight year as part of the Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) conference held at Cornell on April 27th. EYH is a one-day, student-led conference for middle school girls that stimulates participants’ interest in math and science through hands-on workshops, provides them with female scientist role models, and fosters awareness of opportunities in science-related careers. Participants in the dendrochronology-themed “Tree-Ring Time Detectives” workshop learned how to date wooden paintings and historical wooden objects with tree-rings; examined wood samples from the Cornell Lab’s collections to reconstruct their environmental histories; and even excavated and sampled wood charcoal from a mini archaeological site (“Tel Tupperware”).

This year’s workshop leaders were Tree-Ring Lab researchers Brita Lorentzen and Carol Griggs; graduate students Rebecca Gerdes (Classics PhD), Annapaola Passerini (Anthropology PhD), and Alice Wolff (Medieval Studies PhD); and undergraduate Abby Bezrutczyk (Environmental Sciences and Sustainability ‘20).
Faculty Notes

In the fall Benjamin Anderson was a Member (on the Hetty Goldman Membership Fund) of the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton; and this spring he is an Ailsa Mellon Bruce Senior Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, DC. Both fellowships have provided an opportunity to pursue ongoing research about oracular images in the Byzantine Empire.

Caitie Barrett has just published her second monograph, Domesticating Empire: Egyptian Landscapes in Pompeian Gardens (Oxford University Press, 2019). This book takes a contextual approach to “Egyptian” imagery in Roman households, revealing the importance of material culture in transforming household space into a microcosm of empire. She also co-directed the first season of a new archaeological field project in Pompeii, the Casa della Regina Carolina Project (see further in this newsletter). Together with PhD candidate Jennifer Carrington, she is co-editing the proceedings of last year’s international conference, Households in Context: Dwelling in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. Professor Barrett is currently on sabbatical doing research for a new book project, The Materiality of Ancient Greek Domestic Religion. She has been awarded a Fulbright grant and a Franklin Research Grant to travel to Greece for this project in fall 2019.

In other news, Caitie Barrett and her husband Dave Zarzycki recently welcomed new baby Liam Benjamin Zarzycki Barrett! As of this writing (mid-March), Liam is now almost 7 months old, enjoying the exciting new world of solid foods, experimenting with proto-crawling, and blowing lots of happy little raspberries.

In August 2018, Mike Fontaine led a Cornell Adult University cruise from Athens to Venice. It included a stop in Ithaki, the original Ithaca, so Mike made sure to wear his favorite t-shirt. He’s pointing to the word Ἰθάκηνδε (“to Ithaca!”), a quotation from Odyssey 11.361 (see the picture). He was also delighted to finish work on two new books. The first, for Princeton University Press, is titled How to Drink: A Classical Guide to the Art of Imbibing. The second, for The Paideia Institute Press, is titled The Pig War. Both include a critical Latin text and translation of two incredible Renaissance poems from Germany in the 1530s, and both should be out by December 2019. The first explores the birth of binge and bro culture in Renaissance Germany, and the second brings to life a poem that probably influenced George Orwell’s Animal Farm. Mike also gave some talks and published some papers, the most exciting being one he gave in Würzburg titled Camerarius Camelarius. It announces a new manuscript source he discovered of Plautus’ comedies. Otherwise, he carries on as Associate Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, continues teaching Intro to Ancient Rome, and is happy to report Alyssa, Ava, and Jake are as happy and healthy as ever.

In October, Dan Gallagher delivered the keynote address at the annual Institute of the Classical Association of the Empire State and a lecture on sapientia at Northeast Catholic College. In December, he taught at the Living Latin in Paris course, and in February at the Living Latin in New York conference, both offered by the Paideia Institute. At the latter he gave a presentation on body language in ancient Rome. In March, he held a webinar on conversational Latin at the invitation of Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers. His chapter “The Principles of Equality and Non-Discrimination” appeared in Equality and Non-Discrimination (eds. Jane Adolphe, Robert L. Fastiggi, and Michael A. Vacca: Pickwick Publications, 2019) in April. He also co-directed a production of Seneca’s Troades together with Nathan Chazan (’19). This summer, he will participate in the Faculty Seminar in Writing Instruction sponsored by the John S. Knight Institute.

Nicole Giannella has spent the year focusing on some new projects, the first of which she had the opportunity to present at a conference on ancient inequalities at the University of Buenos Aires this spring. The paper, “Who Ululates at the Temple of Bacchus? Inequality and Legal Status in the Roman Empire,” examines levels of inequality before the law depending on legal status (i.e., slave, freed, free). She is looking forward to giving the second of these papers at a conference on people’s experience of migration and travel at the University of Paris 8. This paper, “Misdirection and Middlemen: From Insecurity to Trust on a...

Sturt Manning was pleased to see the publication of Catherine Kearns & Sturt W. Manning (eds.), New Direction in Cypriot Archaeology from Cornell University Press in spring 2019, stemming from a conference at Cornell in 2014 supported by the Classics Department. Sturt steps down as chair of the Department this summer, and wishes to record that it has been (nearly always) a pleasure and privilege to serve in this role and to see the terrific and wide-ranging achievements of colleagues and students in the Department over the past 5 years.

Verity Platt has enjoyed this year’s teaching no end – from encouraging students to write their own descriptions of objects in the Johnson Museum in her seminar on Ekphrasis to leading a Traveling Seminar of intrepid seniors and graduates to Italy to look at Roman frescoes. Co-teaching a new course on Statues and Public Life with Stephen Sansom as part of the department’s Active Learning Initiative has been inspiring, fun, and absolutely revelatory; they explored everything from the Colossus of Memnon to Confederate Monuments, by way of Ezra Cornell and A. D. White, learning much about the complex politics of monumentality along the way. Verity has also been chairing CIVIC, the provost’s “radical collaboration initiative” in the Arts and Humanities, and has just helped to launch a new Humanities Scholars Program for undergraduates, which will provide support for majors and minors interested in research. Meanwhile she co-edited a special issue of the journal Art History, on The Embodied Object in Classical Antiquity, which came out in June 2018, and published articles on Pliny the Elder, unfinished paintings, beeswax in ancient art, color in ritual and religion, epiphanies of the Dioscuri, and poets’ tombs. This summer, she is looking forward to visiting Greece for the first time in many years, and actually sailing to the original Ithaca! She hopes that no unexpected encounters blow her off course...

Eric Rebillard just finished writing a book on the Acts of Christian martyrs: Neither Authentic Accounts Nor Forgeries: A New Approach to Martyr Narratives. This monograph completes his research project on these texts that are so crucial for understanding early Christianity and complements the collection of texts he published with Oxford University Press in 2017 (Greek and Latin Narratives about the Ancient Martyrs). His next project is a redescription of the triumph of Christianity. Otherwise, he braces himself up for serving as Interim Chair in 2019-2020!

In March Barry Strauss published a new book, Ten Caesars: Roman Emperors from Augustus to Constantine (Simon & Schuster). Hailed as “a superb summation of four centuries of history, a masterpiece of compression” by the Wall Street Journal and “enlightening” by the New York Times, the book chronicles the ruthless pragmatism that allowed Rome’s leaders to cope with change. With its vivid narrative line, it offers food for thought for our own era of innovation and revolution.

Astrid Van Oyen spent the 2018–2019 academic year as a fellow at the Stanford Humanities Centre in order to work on her next book on Roman storage. “In today’s world of one-click online orders, we take storage for granted, but in the ancient world, with uncertain harvests, unreliable transport, and no fridges, storage was a central preoccupation. My book examines the social, economic, and often moral challenges of storage in the Roman empire.” In 2019 Astrid also published a couple of articles, including a brief summary of material agency in archaeology – how scholars have grappled with the idea that objects contribute in some way to action and historical process. And she continued fieldwork and research at the Roman site of Marzuolo (Tuscany, Italy), highlighted elsewhere in this newsletter.
Active Learning Initiative

Design a statue hack. Bathe the Statue of Liberty in pink light for Breast Cancer Awareness; let Charlottesville’s Robert E. Lee and his horse take a knee; get Herakles in Ithaca decked out in Cornell hockey gear. Turn to a neighbor. Tell them why you did it, chose this statue, designed this way. Report your thinking to the class, that light is a constraint, modification a testament to communities new and old, that Herakles is a warrior—and we want to win. Hear the feedback, reflect, refine the concepts, and try again.

These are real examples of active learning that Prof. Verity Platt and I have employed this semester in the newly created course, Statues and Public Life. This year, the Department of Classics joined Cornell’s Active Learning Initiative (ALI), a campus-wide effort to apply active, evidence-based learning practices in the classroom. This competitive grant has enabled the department to experiment with new technologies such as online polling as well as to fund my position as a Postdoctoral Associate and ALI fellow. As a postdoc, I work with instructors in Classics to create and renew courses that incorporate active learning techniques. Studies show that students perform better when they are given ample opportunity to practice, fail, reflect, and redo conceptual understanding. In-class activities, such as paired discussions, allow students to debate positions, estimate alternatives, and make decisions with increasing expertise that instructors can observe and adapt. Such practices not only improve essay and test scores. Well-designed activities create inclusive spaces that afford every student the opportunity to engage with course-content and each other.

In the upcoming years, new and renewed active learning courses will join the Department’s roster. Greek Mythology, co-taught with Todd Clary, will explore ways for students to relate Greek myths to local legends from their hometowns. In the future, the department also plans to offer a course on ancient athletics that reimagines the student-athlete of today according to the ancient Olympics, Greek gymnasium, and Roman gladiator. Several other courses have or will employ active learning, including Prof. Athena Kirk’s Initiation to Greek Culture last semester and Prof. Astrid Van Oyen’s Ancient Economics next spring. It is a thrilling time to teach and learn in the Department of Classics. Stay tuned! -- Stephen Sansom

Troades - in the original Latin

Reflection by Daniel Gallagher

The long tradition of staging ancient plays at Cornell continued with a production of Seneca’s Troades (April 21st and 24th). It was an immense pleasure working with such talented students. A highlight of the show was Ellie Cherry’s (‘19) original composition, Mors, Votum Meum, sung by her sister, Abi (‘20). We were also delighted to have two students from Ithaca High School join us. In addition to the dramatic aims, the play is a key component of the department’s living-Latin initiative and, thanks to a generous grant from the Language Resource Center, studies the ways in which the theatre enhances ancient-language fluency.

The play reflected an unusually sympathetic characterization of several main personae. Ulysses (Christopher Chandra, ‘22) is truly moved by Andromache’s (Annabelle Combs, ‘22) plea for mercy, Andromache is genuinely torn between love for her husband and her son Astyanax (Haoran Jiang, ‘19), and Helena (Evelyn Kennedy Jaffe, ’19) removes her façade momentarily to weep for Polyxena (Carmen Uwaydah, ’19).

I owe a very special thanks to my Co-Director, Nathan Chazan (’19), whose knowledge of and passion for the stage brought this production to a level I never would have dreamed possible.

Reflection by Faith Chen, ’22

It was really inspiring to see students from so many disciplines — classics, theater, biology, you name it — come together over their excitement and love for Latin. It can be easy to think of Latin as something locked away in the past, something that we only see in textbooks and monumental architecture, but Latin really is a living and dynamic entity, just like any modern language out there. It was pretty powerful to see so many students putting hours and hours in to bring out the subtleties of the spoken language and make this play come alive, especially since we often see Latin associated with older generations.

I think this play really exemplifies the time- and border-transcending powers of language. Nearly 2000 years have passed since Troades was written, and Ithaca, NY is certainly a long way from Troy, but the tragedy, power, and elegance of Seneca’s Latin still shine through now just as much as I imagine they once did in Ancient Rome.
Professor Verity Platt guided nine lucky students through the Eternal City and the Bay of Naples in pursuit of Roman wall painting during spring break. This year’s traveling seminar sought to enliven conventional interpretations of Roman fresco with first-hand inspection of the remains. The itinerary, commendably organized by Professor Platt, led students across archaeological sites and museum collections in Rome, Naples, Pompeii, and Herculaneum, among others. The group also stopped by Cornell in Rome, where participants met other university students and alumni from the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning. In fact, staff from the College played a vital role in helping to plan the seminar’s trip, and even invited us to their wonderful palazzo in the center of town for a film-screening and reception.

Rome was experienced in full color this spring. During the visit, the city’s arts and culture scene was in the midst of experimenting with augmented reality technologies, designed to reproduce simulations of the original colors of ancient frescoes for contemporary viewers. Partially-preserved sections of the wall paintings in the houses of Livia and Augustus on the Palatine were enhanced with animated beams of light, to assist spectators in imagining the initial character of the compositions. Similarly, while standing in front of the Ara Pacis Augustae, Professor Platt and the students viewed the monument through binocular headsets that virtually projected replications of the former colors of the altar onto its now pale facades. With the same devices, they had the chance to experience the glittering splendor of Nero’s Domus Aurea, as the dark, earthy, subterranean walls of the archaeological site were transformed before their eyes into the dazzling, sun-drenched frescoes that once adorned the palatial complex. So immersive and impactful was this equipment upon their senses, that students were reluctant to remove the headsets and leave behind the idyllic reconstruction of the emperor’s urban retreat.

The class enjoyed privileged access to seldom-seen or little-known sites. In fact, outfitted with bright, yellow hard-hats, they ducked into the pyramid of Gaius Cestius with its white-ground tomb chamber in Rome. In addition to Pompeii and Herculaneum, the seaside town of Positano on the Amalfi Coast held in store its own array of unexpected discoveries. Beneath the modern-day church of Santa Maria Assunta lie the remains of a recently excavated Roman villa, the so-called Villa d’Ozio. Its impressive triclinium, opened to the public just last year, boasts highly saturated and idiosyncratic frescoes that challenged many of the students’ preconceptions of Roman wall painting, and raised meaningful questions regarding local craftsmanship and production techniques.

The group led by Professor Platt was comprised of six graduate students and three undergraduates, all of whom reinvigorated familiar debates with their fresh observations and insightful responses to the scholarly tradition surveyed in class. Graduates represented the Classics Department, as well as the History of Art, Medieval Studies, and Engineering Departments. The diversity of student perspectives and acquaintance with the subject matter made for lively discussion and analysis at every juncture along the way. As they complete their term papers, the memories of their expedition will provide outstanding material for very colorful final presentations indeed, not to mention promising points of departure for future explorations. They extend their sincerest gratitude to Jessica and Linda for making the trip possible. Finally, they thank their admirable instructor for coordinating such a successful endeavor with matchless insight, heartfelt thoughtfulness, and unwavering poise! -- Mary Danisi
A group of undergraduate and graduate students from the Cornell Classics Department joined Brown University PhD student Emily Booker, Cornell postdoc Brita Lorentzen, and Sturt Manning in Cyprus in summer 2018 for work on both (i) a major Late Bronze Age (ca. 1700-1200 BCE) site in southern Cyprus at Maroni Vournes, and (ii) building up a dendrochronological (tree-ring) record for Ottoman to Byzantine Cyprus.

The archaeology focused on further excavation (Figure 1) and geophysical investigation (Figure 2) of what is proving to be a monumental fortification wall of likely Late Bronze Age date – confirming and refining this date is a prime aim of the up-coming 2019 season. This wall, which just keeps getting more and more monumental, was wholly unexpected until its discovery by our Cornell team, and is starting to substantially change how we will assess the nature of this large urban site and the form of hierarchy and power (and the display of this) practiced in Late Bronze Age Cyprus. The previous idea of unfortified elite buildings, not really separated from the rest of the urban center, is having to be radically re-thought. Use of a drone towards the end of the season shows the overall scale of the wall now revealed for the first time in more than 3000 years (Figure 3).

The dendrochronology focused especially on the Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios Mansion in the Old City of Nicosia (Figure 4). We took samples from some of the primary construction elements (Figure 5). These turned out to be Austrian or Black Pine (*Pinus nigra*) from the mountains (so specially brought in to this high-prestige site), and we so far have been able to construct a tree-ring chronology running from 1593-1785 CE. We will work there again this year to test other parts of the building. – Sturt Manning
The Odyssey in Ithaca

On Friday April 26th, many department faculty, students, alumni and friends participated in “The Odyssey in Ithaca,” a day-long reading of the Odyssey in Emily Wilson’s new translation. The event was sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences in collaboration with the department and included over fifty readers from the Cornell and Ithaca community. The poem came to life through their voices in the Groos Family Atrium of Klarman Hall, where listeners came and went throughout the day, some staying for several hours and even the whole story! Highlights of the day included a collective Greek reading of the invocation to the muse, and readings by Dean Ray Jayawardhana, Provost Mike Kotlikoff, and NY State Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton. We hope to make the community reading of ancient epics a regular occurrence! --Athena Kirk

Prof. Alan Nussbaum adds his voice to the Odyssey.

Gaela LaPasta reading from Book 24 of the Odyssey.

Touchdown, the Big Red Bear mascot, reads the Odyssey.

Chief of Police David Honan adds his voice to the Odyssey.

Dean Ray Jayawardhana participating in “The Odyssey in Ithaca.”