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TABULAE

Newsletter of the Department of Classics
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
2009

Letter from the Chairman

The other day I was having a very pretentious conversation with a friend of mine about great opening sentences in novels. All the usual suspects came up: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" and "All happy families resemble one another, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." My favorite, at least that day, was from the opening of A Tale of Two Cities: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Thinking about the conversation later, I wondered why I had argued so vehemently for that one. It is not really, in my opinion, the best opening sentence of a novel. The opening of Lampedusa's Il Gattopardo, as long as we are being pretentious, is certainly better. It soon dawned on me, however, that I liked the Dickens passage because it so clearly summed up my two years as chairman (or the last academic year – I was on leave in Rome for the fall). The first year there was lots of money for faculty raises, we hired three new faculty members and admitted four new graduate students with funding, and I was able to give courses to some of the very capable people around here who occasionally teach for us as adjuncts. This year has been the opposite. There will surely be no raises, the university has put a freeze on new hires, we were able to offer only one new graduate stipend and that was only because we had the Reckford Fellowship, and I had to severely limit the number of adjuncts whom we could hire. And this newsletter will have to be an abbreviated version of what we normally send out.

I have been taking measures to deal with the crisis. I have had to cancel some classes and have increased the enrollment limit in others, and I have asked a few colleagues to teach overloads. But I think that we are all right for the next couple of years. I worry, however, about what will happen after that. For next year, because of budget constraints, we admitted, as I noted above, only one new graduate student with funding, but if we do that too long the Department will not survive. Let's hope that the economy will be much improved in two years.

The Department had a good 2008-2009 in spite of the financial difficulties facing the University. Seven years ago a third of our department retired at the same time, and we have been struggling for years with insufficient staff. Because of the University's very generous willingness to let us replace the professors who retired, however, we are now back up to speed. We hired three good people two years ago, Owen Goslin, from UCLA, who works on Greek tragedy, Bob Babcock, one of Francis Newton's students from Duke, who does Medieval Latin, and Lidewijde De Jong, a Dutch woman with a degree from Stanford, who works on the archaeology of the Roman empire. (They will introduce themselves later in this letter.) Last year we also managed to retain two members of the Department who were on the verge of being lured away by other universities (Michigan and the University of Göttingen in Germany). Again, the administration was very helpful and supportive in our efforts to retain them.

Two members of the Department won very prestigious fellowships for this year. James Rives is a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, one of the most prestigious awards to be given to a senior faculty member, and Emily Baragwanath is a fellow at Harvard's Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, one of the most prestigious awards that can be given to a junior

scholar in Greek. (Werner Riess had one of these fellowships two years ago.)

Students also won awards. Elizabeth Robinson won the Olivia James Travel Fellowship from the Archaeological Institute of America and also a Fulbright. She is working in Italy this year. John Henkel is also in Italy, teaching at the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome. Chris Polt won a dissertation fellowship from the University. Elizabeth Thill won a Humane Studies Fellowship, and Beth Greene won an Off Campus Dissertation Fellowship. Ted Gellar-Goad won the Presidential Award for the Outstanding Graduate Student Paper at the meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. (Chris Polt won this award the previous year.) Four graduate students had publications appear in print, and thirteen delivered papers at professional meetings. This means that over 50% of our graduate students have delivered papers at professional meetings during the last year.

Our undergraduate majors have also done well. David Pell and Henry Spelman were both inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, Spelman during his junior year. Spelman also delivered a paper at the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, one of the very few undergraduates to do so. Caitlin Hanna won a Witten Travel Award to excavate in Romania. Tristram Thomas graduated with highest honors in Classics.

We also appointed our first Reckford Fellow. His name is Zack Ryder. He grew up in Burlington, Iowa and attended Grinnell College, where he established a remarkable record, being one of only four students elected to Phi Beta Kappa his junior year. Although he had had a lot of Greek, Latin, and German at Grinnell, he chose to do a year of post-bac work here before applying to graduate school and impressed everyone who taught him. He is a worthy recipient of the first Reckford Fellowship.

And last, but by no means least, we continue to have an absolutely wonderful office staff. Cinnamon, Kim, and Rhonda do an amazing job of running this department. (All that I do is sign papers.) We are extremely lucky to have them.

So, I suppose that it really hasn't been such a bad time after all! Every cloud has silver linings; this cloud seems to have lots of them. I hope that for you there have been nothing but silver linings.

– Cecil Wooten

Bob Babcock

I was attracted to ancient artifacts as a child and excited by romantic accounts of the excavations of Schliemann (and other grave-robbers of his day), so it seems to me, in retrospect, natural that I became interested in medieval manuscripts while studying Latin as an undergraduate. The greatest attraction of manuscript studies – and the thing that first drew me to the field – is the physicality of it: the pleasure of handling and interpreting concrete objects from the ancient and medieval worlds. This passion leads many scholars to pursue archaeology, and might have led me in that direction as well. I had the good fortune to learn Latin at Louisiana State University from William Clark (UNC, PhD, 1972) and Latin paleography from Betty Branch (Duke, PhD, 1974); and they convinced me that the Triangle was the only place for graduate studies, and Latin paleography the only thing to study. So I went to Duke and worked with Francis Newton, focusing on Latin paleography and textual criticism. The second great attraction of manuscript studies is that they provide a plausible pretext for extensive travels in Europe; and while working on my dissertation, I had the opportunity to visit many of the great libraries in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy, and the Vatican City.

After a week in the Baroque 'Lesesaal' at St. Gall abbey, huddled over tenth-century manuscripts, I was hooked for good. The attractions of the clean, generally well-appointed, often elegant, and almost always climate-controlled reading rooms of medieval manuscript collections trumped for me the very different pleasures of the decidedly less predictable and often less hospitable environments associated with field work in archaeology.

As a graduate student, I was lucky enough to spend a year in Berlin studying medieval Latin with Fritz Wagner and Franco Munari, and I returned to Berlin as a post-doc in 1984 thanks to a fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung. I became as interested in medieval Latin texts as in Classical works, and most of my research since – and as much of my teaching as I can turn in that direction – focuses on medieval manuscripts, medieval Latin texts, and the transmission and reception of Classical Latin texts in the Middle Ages. My research aims to integrate the study of the texts found in medieval manuscripts with the study of the physical and intellectual settings in which those manuscripts were produced and preserved. Our ancient Latin texts did not survive in a vacuum; they were produced by individuals with interests and agendas that were often very different from our own. Understanding how and why people read and wrote Latin in the Middle Ages helps us better interpret the Classical texts they bequeathed to us. That was the principal insight I gained from my studies with Professor Newton, and I believe that he would say he had, in turn, learned it from his UNC mentor B. L. Ullman.

Although the attractions of the physical artifacts and the comforts of elegant libraries led me to spend more than two decades as a curator of medieval manuscripts at Yale University, my return to the Triangle to teach the disciplines I learned, and learned to love, here is a dream fulfilled. The long journey that brought me back to North Carolina was not a solitary one. My wife Elizabeth, whom I first met in an elementary Greek class when we were undergraduates, made the move here with me in 1979 and again this past summer. We have twin sons, William and Joseph, both now in graduate school. Elizabeth and I are incurable collectors of antiques, my particular obsession being Chinese porcelain of the Qing dynasty, and hers painted American furniture, especially chairs, of the nineteenth century. We have begun searching for a new home in the area to house our collections (and ourselves), and are looking forward with particular anticipation to our first winter in twenty-three years without snow.

Lidewijde de Jong

Last year I started as Assistant Professor in Archaeology in the Department of Classics at UNC. I was born on the edges of the Roman empire, just across the Rhine in cold and rainy Germania Inferior, better known as The Netherlands, and work on the warm and dusty eastern Roman border, in modern Syria. How then, I am frequently asked, did I end up in the US, so far away from the Roman world?

That story perhaps starts with my Greek and Latin teacher in high school who put me on the path of archaeology. Starting as an Art History major at the University of Amsterdam, the lectures about Classical art and archaeology caught my interest and reminded me of how my teacher contextualized the ancient texts. So I moved to the Department of Classical Archaeology where I finished an MA degree. My curiosity in the Middle East began with a course on the prehistory of the Near East and the opportunity to excavate in Beirut (Lebanon) during the post civil-war reconstruction of the city center in 1995 and 1996. Here, on our free weekends we would travel to Damascus or visit archaeological sites in Syria and Lebanon. The combination of wealth in archaeological remains, kind hospitality of the Syrians and Lebanese, and the warm climate was hard for

me to resist. The following year I joined the excavations at Tell Sabi Abyad (Syria), carried out by the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (The Netherlands), where I came back for three more seasons. Since then, I have also excavated in Greece, Italy, Jordan, and Tunisia.

While excavating in the Middle East, I became aware of the deep disciplinary divides between Classical and Near Eastern archaeologists (and even more with my prehistory colleagues at Tell Sabi Abyad). The impact of this divide was apparent when I worked on my MA thesis on Roman archaeology in Syria and Lebanon. Whereas the most prominent archaeological remains in both countries date to the Roman period, Classical archaeologists have –at least since WWII– largely shied away from this region, while Near Eastern archaeologists are rarely comfortable with "recent" remains, or anything post-Alexander the Great. As a result, large portions of the archaeological finds remain unstudied, a situation from which I am still profiting.

After finishing my MA degree, I worked in the Near Eastern department of the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden. Here I was in charge of the preparation of the fieldwork seasons at Tell Sabi Abyad and the analysis of the excavation reports. We, a small group of archaeologists and students, had a great time working upstairs in the stuffy and dark attic of the museum, surrounded by reports and artifacts covered with Syrian dust. However, stratigraphy was not my final calling and after a few years I explored the possibilities for graduate research. This, finally, brought me to the US and to Stanford University, where I finished a Ph.D. degree in the Department of Classics and the Archaeology Center. At Stanford, I had the opportunity to explore current methodological and theoretical issues and their applications in archaeology. In particular, I developed an interest in ancient empires and their transformative impact on indigenous communities, and the role of material culture in understanding the construction of identity and power in these imperial contexts.

For my dissertation, I returned to the Roman province of Syria (modern Lebanon and Syria), and to funerary practices. The assemblage of tombs and cemeteries from this period is exceptionally rich and provides a great deal of information about the social structure of the local communities after the coming of Rome. I am currently working on a book version of this dissertation (Becoming a Roman province: An analysis of funerary practices in Roman Syria in the context of empire). I have also just completed an article on the Roman cemetery of Tyre (Lebanon). This burial ground, excavated between 1959 and 1967, is one of the most extensive and best-preserved in the region, but unfortunately, due to the political circumstances in Lebanon, the excavation and publication of the material were never fully completed. In this article, I re-evaluate and analyze this burial ground, and address the profound changes that took place in the first centuries of the Roman rule in the province of Syria. I argue that the tombs played a new role in the performance of civic identity and local power strategies.

My third project concerns the final publication of the excavations at Tell Sheikh Hasan in the Balikh Valley in Syria, which I co-directed between 2005 and 2007. This town on the eastern border of the Roman empire was inhabited from the Hellenistic to the Early Islamic period (330s BCE-1260 CE). The excavation at Tell Sheikh Hasan provides insights into Roman imperialism from the perspective of a border town. For this project I, furthermore, explore ancient imperialism from a comparative perspective, by juxtaposing the impact of the Roman empire with that of the Early Islamic, Abbasid empire on indigenous communities in the Balikh Valley.

At UNC I have the wonderful opportunity to teach these topics, including several ancient empires in my course on Ancient Cities. This semester I am also teaching a graduate course on the Archaeology of the Roman Province. We have only just started, but I am very excited about this class and look forward to our discussions. I hope to bring in some of my own work and get the perspective from the graduate students, who come from different disciplines. In general, because my research keeps crossing disciplinary boundaries, working in an interdisciplinary Classics department with scholars focusing on literature, history, and material culture is very stimulating, as is the close collaboration with archaeologists in Ancient History, Religious Studies, and Anthropology on the UNC campus.

Owen Goslin

It's now a little over a year since I moved to Chapel Hill, after a long period of traveling around the country as I pursued my studies: from my home in Michigan, to college in Chicago, followed by a year in Philadelphia, a stint of graduate school in Los Angeles, and finally a year outside Boston, where I taught at Wellesley College. My wife and I are only now beginning to think of summer as something other than "moving season." Although all of my time in higher education has been spent in large metropolitan areas, I actually grew up in a quite different place: a small town on the north shore of Lake Michigan, where my education began in a two-room schoolhouse. My hometown of Cross Village still has the dubious distinction of being listed in the book Michigan Ghost Towns – to the amusement of its 200 remaining residents.

I arrived at my research interests – Greek poetry generally, and Euripidean tragedy more specifically – partly by accident. I entered the University of Chicago with vague notions of studying archaeology, or maybe Roman social history. I had heard horror stories, however, about the difficulties of Greek, and decided that I should take that first to see whether I was cut out to be a classics major. It was difficult, no question. But out of that challenge, and after succeeding Greek courses, I began to feel more at home in Greek poetry than in any other area of my studies. In particular I liked the detailed attention to language that was required in reading these difficult works; and I was also drawn to the way that tragedy dramatized the problems inherent in communication. This fascination with tragic rhetoric led to my undergraduate honors paper (directed by Laura Slatkin), which I wrote on the dramatic appropriation of sophistic argumentation in Euripides' Orestes. I enjoyed working on that paper so much that I decided to continue Classics further, first at Penn (Post-Baccalaureate year) and finally at UCLA (MA and PhD).

At UCLA my interest in the relationship between contemporary rhetoric and drama led to my dissertation on Euripides, directed by Kathryn Morgan, which I am currently re-writing as a book manuscript (Enacting Pity: a study of rhetoric, supplication and decision-making in Euripides). I argue that Euripidean tragedy, through its innovative deployment of the supplication ritual and the rhetorical arguments for pity that often accompany it, participates in a larger Athenian debate about the obligations of citizens to one another, and to non-citizens outside its borders. In Euripides' dramatic preoccupation with supplication we can see how the decision to pity another implied an entire sequence of judgments and possible outcomes, concerning the proper use of power and the nature of the relationship between the parties involved. In addition to tragedy I've maintained research interests in other areas in Greek poetry, including a recently submitted article on the Typhonomachy in Hesiod's Theogony, in which I argue that the passage is more important to the program of the poem than has previously been recognized. Another paper in preparation concerns Callimachus' Hymn to Apollo, and the importance of the poet's identity as a resident of Cyrene to the intertextual strategy that he adopts. A more recent area that I've been developing as a teaching interest is ancient athletics. Since my only experience with competitive sports consists of a few undistinguished years in little league soccer, this new interest has surprised those who know me. But why the ancients – or anyone, for that matter – invested so much time and energy on sporting spectacles is what really fascinates me. I consider sport as part of a spectrum of ancient cultural performances, including tragedy – albeit a performance where the script contains any number of possible outcomes, resulting in tragedy, comedy, and everything in between.

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