



Notanda Borea

California Classical Association – Northern Section

REPORT ON THE SPRING 2011 CONFERENCE

The CCA-N Spring Conference on the new AP Latin examination was held recently on the San Francisco State Campus. We were first introduced to the new exam by Juan Carlos Morales and Jill Cooker of the College Boards. The exam consists of passages from both Vergil and Caesar and focuses on the theme of leadership.

Further exploration of the rationale behind the selection of Vergil passages and strategies for how to teach them came in a series of presentations by the AP Latin committee, headed by Mary Pendergraft of Wake Forest University, and followed by Teri Kawamata of Loyola High School (CA), Dawn La Fon of White Station HS (TN), Sulochana Asirvatham of Montclair State University (NJ) and Jane Crawford of the University of Virginia (VA). In an information-packed session, we discussed various ways to use figures such as Dido to teach the theme of leadership and how to handle the appearance of spot questions on the new exam.

A second panel, “Caesar, Dux Redux” was led by Robert Cape of Austin College (TX), Clifford Hull of Tudor Park School (IN), and Chris Francese of Dickinson College (PA). It focused on themes, essential questions, and resources useful for teaching the new exam’s Caesar passages, including an extensive bibliography for classroom use.



After a short break for lunch and a CCA-N board meeting (including the election of the 2011-2013 officers and board), a third session was held in the afternoon for our members to share tips, tricks, and best practices for teaching Latin in the classroom. From shortcuts for placing macrons with your word processor to teaching with

nodictionaries.com to having students design tours of ancient Pompeii using Google Earth, it was a pleasant session of sharing and brainstorming for all.



The College Boards generously made a massive package of information, including guidelines, handouts, and practice material, available on CD-ROM for attendees of the conference. You can find these materials online at:

http://ccanorth.org/tools_for_teaching and

<http://advancesinap.collegeboard.org/world-languages/latin>

--David G. Smith, Past-President, CCA-N

CCA-N TREASURER'S REPORT

As of March 13, 2011, the total assets of CCA-North were \$10,014.99. Inflows between July 1, 2010 and March 13, 2011 totaled \$1,605.50 and included membership dues (from 47 regular members, 22 retired members, 3 student members, and 16 affiliates with CCA-South) totaling \$910.00, contributions to the Marian McNamara Scholarship fund totaling \$315.00, contributions to the Richard Trapp Grant-in-Aid fund totaling \$325.00, contributions for Laetaberis totaling \$50.00, and \$5.50 in interest earned. Outflows during the same period totaled \$961.23. So far this fiscal year, \$205.75 was the cost of the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 Conferences, \$292.28 has been expended for supplies, \$264.00 for postage, \$175.70 for the CCA-North website (www.ccanorth.org), and \$23.50 for bank charges. Thus Inflows have exceeded Outflows by \$644.27.

--Ben Schalit, Treasurer, CCA-N

CCA ESSAY CONTEST – WINNER!*Rome and the Resurgence of Classical Antiquity*

Sam Fancher

12th Grade

Menlo School, Atherton

Ancient Greek and Roman societies have had a tremendous impact on nearly every academic field, as well as on our culture and architecture. In school, I find that most of my classes (not just Latin) require me to use knowledge or a skill I have obtained by studying Classics. In nearly every profession, knowledge of Classics has some useful application, whether it be a lawyer who needs to know the term *habeas corpus*, or a financial analyst who uses his study of Julius Caesar's Rubicon-crossing to make a risky, but profitable decision for his company. Recently, there has been a resurgence of classical antiquity on big and small screens. There have been movies, such as *Gladiator*, TV shows, such as *Rome*, and video games such as *Rome: Total War*. The revitalization of Classics in the form of entertainment indicates that Americans are eager to learn more about the people, culture, and philosophies that have most influenced our development as a country. Moreover, the portrayal of certain characters on the screen suggests that we are perhaps more interested in humanized versions of these classical figures rather than the more impersonal historical, versions found in books.

Rome, a two-season mini-series co-produced by HBO and BBC, focused on Rome's transition from Republic to Empire. The series was incredibly costly, reportedly around \$100 million; it was, nevertheless, a ratings success. The first episode focuses on the growing rivalry between Caesar and Pompey, along with several other sub-plots. In textbooks, Caesar and Pompey are cast as magnificent characters, larger than life. They are extraordinarily popular and tremendously powerful. In other words, they are difficult to relate to on paper.

Rome, however, adds nuances to the characters that can't be captured by textbooks (granted they aren't always totally accurate). For example, when Caesar's Aquila, or golden eagle, is stolen by thieves, he sends two soldiers to retrieve it – even though he secretly hopes that it is lost. Caesar tricks Pompey into believing that this symbolic loss of power is an actual sign of vulnerability and baits him into making the first move in an inevitable civil war. Pompey, worried about Caesar's rising fame and his own slipping power, sends his slave “to kill two birds with one stone.” In doing so, he unknowingly takes Caesar's bait and reveals his hostility. Caesar sends Pompey the head of his slave and reveals that he will prepare his armies to take the city of Rome.

The duplicitous nature of Caesar's personality is usually excluded from textbooks. Furthermore, Pompey's insecure and nervous nature can't be captured by simple text. An actor with words and expressions is much more capable of

bringing this character to life. In addition, realistic sets and tremendous costume design add to the richness of each historical figure. Other characters like Marc Antony, Octavian, and Atia (a fictional character based on Clodia) are humanized in similar ways. People will always have interest in the most powerful and remarkable characters in history; that is one thing that keeps the Classics alive. What intrigues people, however, and what causes them to return to the theater or turn on the TV is the relatable aspects of each character's personality. If viewers can relate to Caesar's ambition or Pompey's fear, then they will be much more interested in Classics altogether.

The popularity of *Rome* also indicates that modern people are drawn to the culture and government of the Classical world, perhaps because it provides a fitting model for American culture and government today. That is, viewers watch movies and shows about classical antiquity because they are interested in learning more about their own world.

The connections between the Roman Republic and America are numerous and fairly evident. Our founding fathers were heavily influenced by the Roman model of government and thus created a similar republic with, among many similarities, senators representing the people. America is the most powerful nation of its time, just as Rome was the greatest superpower during its time; both nations also obtained fairly large empires and controlled the most powerful military force in the world. The similarities aren't always positive, however. Our politicians are both greedy and power-hungry, and the separation between rich and poor grows larger everyday—much like it did between patricians and plebians in Ancient Rome.

Rome makes all of these similarities very clear in the first episode. Rome, the city, is presented in a very realistic manner; it is loud and diverse, much like New York City. The senators argue in the Senate and represent different interests much like our senators. Caesar's legions are powerful and well-disciplined in fighting tribal warriors in Gaul, much like our soldiers fighting in the Middle East. Finally, the struggle for power between different factions, so evident in our country between the Democrats and Republicans, is shown through Caesar and Pompey's power struggle. Viewers are drawn to a program like *Rome*, and thus to the study of Classics, because of the similar imperfections that exist in our society and in Rome's.

The resurgence of classical antiquity in movies and television is a result of the connection that viewers now see between America, a nation unsure that it will remain a superpower, and Rome, a nation that faced similar insecurities. Furthermore, the humanization of typically god-like historical figures such as Julius Caesar draws further interest. All together, the revitalization of classical stories in modern entertainment suggests that Classics is relevant to our society as a parallel on which we can base our hopes and fears.

BOOK REVIEW:

Carol Goodman,
The Lake of Dead Languages



A few months ago I read Carol Goodman's *The Lake of Dead Languages*, first published in 2002. Her heroine, Jane Hudson, comes to Heart Lake School for Girls in the Adirondacks to regroup after her separation from her husband. Why that school? Because she had gone there herself as a scholarship student some twenty years before. But it did not end well. One week before her graduation, her three best friends committed suicide under mysterious circumstances.

Now she is back as the school's Latin teacher, but once again death touches her life. Classical references permeate the book, and the story, though dark and convoluted, is compelling. I even managed to get past the fact that her advanced students (not her Latin P's!) have to scrub declensions off their hands before taking a test in the opening pages. There were times, however, when I floundered in the details and longed for a happy, playful moment. There is also a dearth of strong male figures; we see the events mostly from Jane's eyes. For those of you who enjoy Gothic novels, however, this is a book for you.

On the other hand, I really loved *The Night Villa*. Set mainly in Herculaneum, Naples, and Capri, it centers around a classics professor, Dr. Sophie Chase, who has been researching the life of Petronia Iusta, an actual slave girl who lived in Herculaneum in 79 AD.

After a deadly shooting in the Classics Department (imagine!) at the University of Texas, she escapes to Italy to work on the Papyrus Project and to recuperate from a gunshot wound to the chest. There she teams up with her former professor and lover, her favorite student, and the wealthy but enigmatic John Lyros who has built an exact replica of the Villa della Notte on Capri where the team lives and works when they are off site. Inspired by the Villa dei Papiri, Goodman offers us her fictitious villa in Herculaneum with its subterranean passages promising ancient manuscripts. As everyone rushes to unearth and possess these papyri, the plot twists and tantalizes like the labyrinth the team is exploring.

Perhaps I was drawn to this particular novel because I was traveling in Italy with students as I read it, but I think it has a special affinity for all of us who love the Classics. Goodman is talking about our world, and she is able to jump from present to past just as we do every day in our classes. I think you will enjoy this novel, which, though still Gothic, cannot escape the glorious light that is Italy.

--Dobbie Vasquez

EVENTS AT SFSU

Mary Louise Hart
Associate Curator of Antiquities at the Getty Villa
Minoan Art: The Aesthetics of a Ritual Culture
Lecture | April 28 | 8 p.m. | 7 Hills Conference Center

SFSU Classics Students Association
19th Annual Spring Lecture Series
Check www.sfsu.edu/~clas for more information.
Lectures | 4/13-5/11 Wednesdays | 7:00 PM | HUM 587

Title TBA
Reviel Netz (Stanford)

What's the good of happiness (eudaimonia) in Hellenistic philosophy?
Tony Long (UC Berkeley)

The Judgment of Paros: Hellenistic Cultural Identities on a Cycladic Island
Tom Hawkins (Ohio State University)

Title TBA
Erich Gruen (UC Berkeley)

EVENTS AT UC BERKELEY

The Ever Elusive Etruscan Egg
Lecture | April 4 | 5:10-6:30 p.m. | 308J Doe Library

The Decline of Political Virtue in Plato's Republic Books 8-9
Lecture | April 5 | 5-7 p.m. | 7205 Dwinelle Hall

Text and Context: The Archaeology of Ancient India
Lecture | April 10 | 2-3:30 p.m. | 370 Dwinelle Hall

The Ancient Library from the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum: Origins, History, Prospects
Lecture | April 12 | 5:30-6:45 p.m. | Doe Library, Morrison Room

The Aesthetics and Facture of 'Voodoo Dolls' in Classical Athens
Lecture | April 14 | 5-6:30 p.m. | 308J Doe Library

Why Suffer Together? A Problem in Aristotle's Theory of Friendship
Lecture | April 19 | 5-7 p.m. | 7205 Dwinelle Hall

The Getty 'Medea' and Rubens's Construction of a Modern, Senecan 'Grande Âme'
Lecture | May 2 | 5:10-6:30 p.m. | 308J Doe Library

Recent excavations in the Horrea Agrippiana, Rome: Time, labor and ideology
Lecture | May 6 | 8 p.m. | 370 Dwinelle Hall

EVENTS AT STANFORD

Polis: The Greek City-state 800 BC-AD 600

John Ma, Corpus Christi College Oxford
Lorenz Eitner Lecture on Classical Art and Culture

Lecture | April 14 | 6 p.m. | Building 320, Room 105

FAMSF ANCIENT ART COUNCIL EVENTS

*The Lod Mosaic and Its Menagerie:
Roman Influence in Local Mosaic Art*

Miriam Avissar
Senior Archaeologist, Israel Antiquities Authority

Registration is required: ancientart@famsf.org
Lecture | April 27 | 7 pm

*Deification and Damnation:
The Creation and Destruction of Art in Imperial Rome*

Dr. Fred S. Kleiner
Professor of History of Art and Archaeology and Chair

Lecture | 14 May | 2 pm

**HUMANITIES WEST CELEBRATES
MEDITERRANEAN CULTURE:**

Minoan Crete: The Dawn of European Civilization

April 29 and 30, 2011 | Herbst Theatre, San Francisco

A prosperous and powerful maritime society flourished on Crete from ~2700 to ~1400 BCE. Around the 17th-16th century BCE a devastating volcanic eruption at nearby Thera (Santorini), followed by a tsunami, destroyed the Minoan navy and economy, triggering the gradual collapse of this Bronze Age civilization. Egyptian records, paintings of Cretans bearing gifts to the Pharaoh, and Minoan paintings found in Egypt testify to this brilliant culture. Archaeological finds in Crete and Santorini showcase Minoan Crete as a flourishing sea empire until a shift in power transmitted and transformed Minoan culture onto the European continent and into the palatial empire of the Mycenaeans.

Sponsored by the Consul General of Greece; the Center for Modern Greek Studies and Classics Department at San Francisco State University; Stanford University; UC Berkeley

Tickets are available through
www.humanitieswest.org

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**Nota Bene: We are always delighted to receive submissions for future newsletters!
Please send articles, photographs, and announcements to ccanorth@yahoo.com**