



## *In Medias Res*

Newsletter of the Classics Students Association

*Fall 2006*

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As you probably know, we at the CSA are dedicated to promoting the study of and interest in the Ancient Mediterranean World. This is especially important considering the CSU budget system. We need to spread the Classical word in order to enrich our department and, in turn, our field. The best way to do this is to reach out both on and off campus and draw as much interest as we can to the Classics.

Inside this compelling newsletter you will find reviews, previews, and some titillating interviews. The CSA wants everyone to know what we've been up to since last year and what we have to look forward to this semester and beyond. Via our activities this year, we hope to spark an enthusiasm for the Ancient World in SFSU students. So get ready to read up on our fundraisers, activities, and lectures within.

Also mark your calendars for our 15th Annual Spring Lecture Series, "War and Torture in the Ancient World" beginning March 15, 2007. See you there!

*-Krista Greksouk*

### **Praetoris Nuntium**

(a message from the president)

Salvete amicos! Welcome back to another fun-filled year with the Classics Students Association! I hope everyone had a relaxing summer because we have leapt right into this semester. With midterms over, we can now focus our attention on the exciting Classical activities coming up this semester.

### ***Your 2006-2007 CSA Officers***

Krista Greksouk, President  
Nicole Daenzer, Vice President  
Carolyn Morton, Treasurer  
David Hetrick, Secretary  
Sean Hamby, Event Coordinator  
Dr. David Leitao, Adviser

### **Bertrand Lecture Preview**

Classics Department and CSA are proud to invite everybody who is interested in the Ancient World to the Second Annual Bertrand Lecture. This year our guest speaker is Prof. Amy Richlin from UCLA Classics Department. Professor Richlin is the author of *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor*, translator of *Rome and the Mysterious Orient: Three Plays by Plautus*, editor of *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, and coeditor of *Feminist Theory and the Classics*.

She will deliver a lecture under the intriguing title: "Marcus + Fronto: the Reception of Roman Homoeroticism in the 19th Century". Prof. Richlin's translation of the love letters between young Marcus Aurelius (future emperor) and his rhetoric teacher Marcus Cornelius Fronto was just published this year, so we all look forward to the fascinating lecture. Besides the exquisite food for one's mind, no less delicious food for one's body will be provided after the talk.

*-Eugene Smelyansky*

### **Dr. David Leitao, our Classics Department Chair**

During my interview with Dr. Leitao, I asked him to discuss his academic background, describe his special interests, and explain both his vision for the Department and his view of Classics in general.

As an undergraduate at Dartmouth, Dr. Leitao was a history major, specializing in the Reformation. He realized that in order to read the primary sources, he would need to learn Greek and Latin. By the time he was a senior, having only studied Greek for a year and a half and Latin for one year, he applied to law school. Although Harvard Law School was exciting, by Spring Semester, Dr. Leitao found that instead of studying for Torts, he was spending more time reading Cicero's *De Amicitia* in Latin; then during the summer when he was an intern at a big law firm, he was reading Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and more Latin. He realized that his interests were literary and classical. Subsequently, he

entered a post-Baccalaureate program in Classics at Penn, the only one that existed at that time. After one year, in the Fall of 1988 he accepted a five-year fellowship to study Classics at the University of Michigan. He was 24 years old at the time. At first his parents were disappointed that he hadn't continued with law and tried to dissuade him, but soon became very supportive.

Dr. Leitao's most inspirational teacher at the University of Michigan was Don Cameron, who wrote the Thucydides commentary we are currently using in our Thucydides translation class. Dr. Cameron emphasized comparative Greek grammar, focusing on Indo-European philology, and was the mentor for Dr. Leitao's first TA position, a Great Books course which covered, in the first semester, translated classical readings from Homer to Plato, and in the second semester, Virgil to Boccaccio. Dr. Leitao admires Dr. Cameron's wide-ranging literary and contemporary interests, his exact approach to grammar, and his belief that the Classics are pertinent to the modern world.

One of Dr. Leitao's major interests focuses on gender issues in ancient Greek culture. Questions about how you make a man, make somebody into a man and how the identities of men and women are socialized into gender roles led to his dissertation on adolescent male rites of passage. Currently, Dr. Leitao is interested in male pregnancy as a metaphor - for instance, Plato as the pregnant philosopher, the myths of Dionysus' and Athena's births, and how poets such as Aristophanes sometimes describe creativity as giving birth to poems. In addition, Dr. Leitao enjoys teaching language grammar and mythology.

Our Classics Department, according to Dr. Leitao, is not just about taking a certain number of courses, but about developing as professionals and human beings, whether on the BA or MA level. In the Bay Area we have Stanford and Berkeley, but they offer their classics courses to elite segments of the population. SF State invites a wider segment of the population to study the classics. Many people who apply for the MA program are older and the department offers a

**Interview with Dr. David Leitao, continued**

second chance at a new career; others are fresh out of college, but didn't get the breaks that some of the Stanford and Berkeley students had. Our Department offers an opportunity for MA students to go on to further studies, such as teaching and Ph.D. programs, but also welcomes students who are studying just for the love of it. Some students feel pressured by the difficult grading procedures, but this is a "tough love" approach to prepare them for the future, not a punitive stance. Thus, the high standards of the Department prepare people to continue in the field. Unlike most MA programs, we have teaching fellowships in both Greek and Latin. There are also travel scholarships available, and Dr. Leitao says that more endowments are being developed.

Concerning Classics in general, Dr. Leitao feels it is important that we not isolate ourselves from the rest of the academic community and the world. Through the CSA Lecture Series, we reach out to the rest of the community, and practice justifying our studies to other people. Dr. Leitao does not take a romantic view of the ancient world. We can't just glorify them; for instance, they were the inventors of the first philosophies that justified slavery. We need to change our assumptions about the ancient world by reading about them and being open to new ways of seeing them. There were good and bad leaders; they were humans, and that's why we study them.

-Joan Sutton

**Spring Lecture Series Review**

Our 14th Annual Spring Lecture Series this year, themed "The Gorgeous and the Grotesque," was not only a huge success but also a whole lot of fun! Starting on Thursday, April 13th, the four exciting lectures ran the gamut from makeup to the macabre, with a diverse array of lecturers from around the Bay Area.

Dr. Loretta Reed of CSU Sacramento delivered the first lecture, "In the Eye of the Beholder: Aestheticism Among the Ancients." It was a

rousing and elucidating talk on the ideas of beauty as well as cosmetics used in the ancient world, many of which we would find abhorrent or simply dangerous today (especially the crocodile dung or white lead makeup prevalent in the ancient Mediterranean!).

Dr. Elise Earthman Wormuth of San Francisco State gave our second lecture, "Sex and Death Entwined: Images of the Medusa in Popular Culture." Using PowerPoint slides and an assortment of interesting Medusa-related items, she explored the ways in which the ancient figure of Medusa permeates our popular culture even today.

Dr. Andrew Stewart of UC Berkeley discussed the Greek *hetaira* (a courtesan) in his lecture "Designing Women: The Hetaira as Model from Phintias to Praxiteles" as a model for Greek and Roman sculptors throughout the ages, particularly for depictions of the goddess Aphrodite. With slides of the various sculptures, he talked about their aesthetics and appearance in general, especially their clothing and other effects.

Dr. Austin Busch of Stanford University concluded our Spring Lecture Series with his lecture "Visions of Mortality in Seneca's Thyestes." In his talk, he compared the views of death in Seneca's *Thyestes* with those in Seneca's own philosophy. He talked about how Seneca may have placed some of his own views on death and mortality into his tragedies, especially *Thyestes*, citing Seneca's letters and moral essays as examples.

Overall our Spring Lecture Series was indeed a great success, and we at the Classics Students Association are grateful to all four of the lecturers for coming here and sharing their knowledge with us, as well as those of you who came to the lectures, of course! Thank you all for coming, and we look forward to seeing you (and more, perhaps) next year!

-David Hetrick

### **Pancakes to Print**

Pancakes, omelets, and fruit quenched the hunger of many supporters of the Classical Student Association (CSA) just this past October 22nd at Raphael's Shutter Café in El Cerrito. Thanks to our friends at Raphael's for hosting the event! Many patrons supported CSA and got a belly full to boot. Yet the hard work of fundraising doesn't end there. Even preceding the successful breakfast charity, CSA began its preparations for the annual spring book sale. The event will be held during the week of February 5th in the main entrance of the Humanities building. As the discriminating, Roman shopper would comment, "Empta optime invenies si spectas" (You can pick up some great bargains if you look). No, not all of the literature is of the Classical variety. Books, ranging in price from \$1 to \$3, will cover all manner of genre – fiction, mystery, self-help, trashy romance, do-it-yourself, history, biography, and much more. Have too many books already? Donations (HUM 378) are just as welcome in the period leading up to the event. Donate now to clear that closet or garage. Whether that's Homer's *Odyssey* or Honda's *Odyssey* (Driver's Manual), no matter your taste, CSA will have the perfect book in print.

*-Vickie Moore*

### **Interview with Michael Anderson**

The new Roman Civilization, Egyptian Civilization, and Latin professor, Michael Anderson, sat down with me in his office in the Humanities building to talk about his new job and what his plans are for the next few years.

*Sean: Where were you born?*

Michael: Well, I was born in the states, in Los Angeles, in a beach city. My parents are both English, so I grew up back and forth - always with the intention of going back home to England, which is home to me. Actually, I find that home seems to me wherever I'm not. If I'm here, then home is there. If I'm there, then home is here.

*Sean: Where did you get your degrees?*

Michael: I did my undergraduate degree at UCLA, in History, but I started out in computer science. I was very keen when I started out. I was going to do computer science and engineering with a special emphasis in business - you know - to make a lot of money. That was what I was going to do, but I didn't stick with that. So I did history there - ancient history. And the second degree was also taken at UCLA. I started in Egyptology, added a second master's in classical archaeology and then for various reasons involving a personnel change in the Egyptology department, I ended up dropping Egyptology and finishing in classical archaeology alone. Basically, all the people I was working with left and I realized it was going to take quite a bit longer to finish the Egyptology side, so I finished the one degree and sacrificed the other. Then I went on to do archaeology at Cambridge. I studied classical archaeology there, but the degree remains in general archaeology, which is probably wise I suppose.

*Sean: What were the classrooms like at your previous posts?*

Michael: I was teaching very large groups. At UCLA I taught in lecture halls. My first experience there was in Spring 2004, and it was, well, I had 250 students and 5 TA's; sort of like rock star teaching. It was great, I really enjoyed it, but at the same time you felt very remote from the students. I never learned anyone's name - except the few who came to my office - and of course my Honors students. I had an Honors section then. Then the second time it was about 120 students.

*Sean: How are you enjoying teaching here? Is it more to your style of teaching?*

Michael: Well, I don't know, I like both. There is a certain charm in the rock star teaching style, and being in a lecture hall because you're up on stage, and I enjoy that interaction - the crowd interaction. I suppose that's the Caesar in me wanting to get out. But I enjoy the teaching here more because people interrupt me and ask questions, and there's engagement. You can get very bored with yourself standing up there talking

***Interview with Dr. Michael Anderson, continued***

for an hour. About half way through you're thinking, "Oh God, I've read about this a hundred times and talked about this a hundred times, why am I talking about it again?" Whereas, if someone asks you questions then you're interacting on a much greater level. I enjoy that the most. I very much enjoy the discussion sections in my courses - if they work. If they don't work then they end up being a lecture anyway.

*Sean: What are your plans for the next five years?*

Michael: Yes, well. I have a lot of irons on the fire right now that will come to fruition in the next few years. There are a couple of short term publications that are in the works. First, there is my consulting work and the conference that I'll be presenting at in December - the Malta conference. The Malta work is funny, because it's me being a pure theoretical archaeologist, because I know only a little bit about Maltese temples. Well, I know some but not as much as a specialist might. I was a computer consultant on that, using my digital archaeological techniques. That's just one publication. The other publication is, of course, the ten-volume series on the [University of Bradford] Pompeii excavations with which I've been associated for eleven years. This series will be published - all ten volumes - let's say in the next five years. And I'm involved with only about two or three of them, thankfully. They're jointly written, which on the one hand makes them easier and on the other hand harder. I also have to get my dissertation published properly in the next five years. With dissertations you can leave it as it is and get it out there pretty quickly, or you can take the time to say what you really wanted to say - which means rewriting it extensively - and then getting it published in a proper book which might actually reach someone. So, we'll see. I'm presenting on it this winter at the AIA - the Archaeological Institute of America's annual meeting in San Diego. I'll be presenting on my own research for the first time in almost a year. We'll see, on the basis of that, how well things go. We'll see how well writing up that material for a talk goes, and whether I

want to invest that time in writing out the results into a book and changing a lot of the things I didn't like about my dissertation, or just saying, "Right, get it out there and get it published, so someone can use it instead of it sitting on my shelf." But, the most important thing in the next five years for me will be running my own research project in Pompeii, which is projected to last five to ten years. This is an archaeological field school to be run out of SFSU, digging pre-Roman archaeology in the ancient site. Of course, there will be requisite publications in there too. If it all goes off successfully within the next year, then that will be the major focus of my research for at least the next five years.

- Sean Robert Hamby

**Review of the 11th Annual Student Forum**

A rousing morning of incest, bestiality, sexual imagery, and role-playing was enacted in this year's Student Forum on the Ancient World. Great student minds came together to discuss particularly interesting topics regarding the Ancient Mediterranean World on an early Saturday morning of October. This forum followed a tradition, in its eleventh year, of students and professors joining together to support and be enlightened by a variety of stimulating themes.

The morning began in the customary fashion of early morning refreshments and conversations. After all were duly satiated, we had the pleasure of listening to a section of Rhiannon Powell's larger thesis, a presentation entitled "The Guilty Party: Euripides' *Hippolytus* and Seneca's *Phaedra*". This presentation analyzed the question of how guilt and familial history affects drama. Rhiannon utilized Euripides' and Seneca's differing arrangements of the mythology within the Cretan cycle, particularly the Phaedra and Hippolytus myth. This detailed and fascinating presentation opened everyone's minds into the multi-faceted viewpoints that authors could take upon the same mythological subject.

Following this, Eugene Smelyansky presented his paper on "The Naked Entertainment: Baths

***Review of the Student Forum, continued***

and Brothels in the Roman World”. Eugene described the various functions and concepts of nudity in the baths and brothels of ancient Rome to the accompaniment of a myriad of amusing artwork and visual displays. Eugene offered many archaeological finds which presented nudity in different spheres, as well as putting forth a few different approaches to the study and analysis of these discoveries. This presentation opened the eyes of many of the audience members, for many different reasons.

After a brief intermission, full of exciting questions and comments from and to our preceding presenters, David Hetrick brought forth his paper on “Kinesias’ Sexual Desperation as a Mock-Tragic Scene in Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*”. This presentation displayed a mix of tragic format and words within a comic play, which illuminated an even more exaggerated comic function in Aristophanes’ work. David revealed an in-depth manner of reading comedy as well as analyzing it in respect to other contemporary genres. David’s presentation helped to illuminate the ways in which Aristophanes used comedy to impart important current events and crises, while his detailed textual analysis demonstrated deeper ways of looking at ancient texts.

Nicole Daenzer, as our last presenter, had the difficult task of closing our presentations with a bang, and in fact she did accomplish this in a most stunning way. The topic to Nicole’s presentation was “Teasing Direction out of Myrrhine and Kinesias”, which was based on Nicole’s theoretical approach to producing ancient plays. Nicole did not waste any time in grabbing the attention of her audience, which she did through encouraging us to close our eyes and visualize the ancient way of presenting a specific passage from Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*. After a moving rendition of this passage from Joan Sutton and Prof. Corby Kelly, Nicole explained the numerous ways in which a modern director could produce such a play while still staying true to the imagery and perspective of the ancient mind.

This was the conclusion of our eleventh annual Student Forum, discussing sex, nudity, and ways of presenting such sultry and enticing topics of the ancient world. All of these presentations evoked a great many questions, comments, and interest from our audience. Every one of these students did an excellent job of stimulating interest in their topics as well as providing a wealth of knowledge for all present. Congratulations and Thank You to all!

*-Erin Bryan*

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