



Antiquity Now

MACALESTER COLLEGE
CLASSICAL MEDITERRANEAN AND
MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT
NEWSLETTER

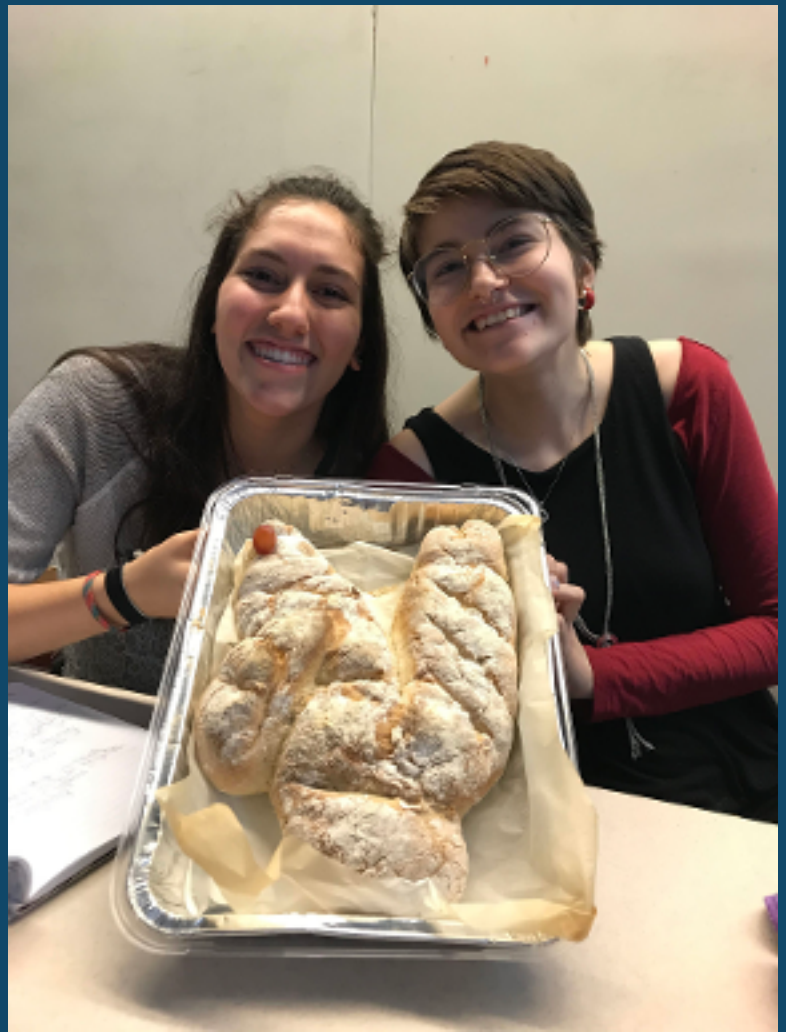
Volume 9, Issue 1 | Fall 2019

The Classical Mediterranean and Middle East Senior Seminar met for class and dinner at Professor Andy Overman's house. Photo taken by Andy Overman. Left to right: Sophia Jones, Noah Wilkerson, Charlotte Houghton, Kayleigh Kaminski, Ikran Sheikh-Mursal, Franki Gillis, and Professor Andy Overman.

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Intermediate Latin students Elena Stanley (left) and Molly Block (right) baked the bread of Priapus, the most well-endowed god in human history, as an edible visual aid to their presentation. Photo taken by Katie McCarthy.



ANTIQUITY NOW is an update and review of activities and opportunities in the Macalester College Classical Mediterranean and Middle East Department. Each edition shares student and faculty news in respect to publications, internships, new classes, study away and research abroad, and highlights alumni who continue to do important and interesting things around the globe. Editors: Herta Pitman, and Zhiyuan (Simon) Wang.

Fall Highlights

Fall Events

Classics Department events in Fall 2019 included Welcome Back and Pre-registration lunches, and four candidate talks for our search for a tenure-track Arabic professor.

We capped the semester with senior capstones on December 11, followed on December 12 by our decades-old tradition, The Classics Cookie Party, this year back in our Old Main 4th floor lounge.

The fun will start right back up in January with a group of twenty professors and students traveling to Rome for January in Rome.



Above: Students enjoying pizza at the Pre-registration Lunch

Below: Simon Wang and Henry Elspenpeter represented Classics at the Major's Fair.



"C" is for Classics Cookie Party!

Below: Cookies from the party, including one "Mac Classics" one.



Senior Capstone Conference



Andy Overman welcomes attendees to the Senior Capstone Conference.

The Senior Capstone Presentations were on December 11. These were the conference presenters and topics:

Charlotte Houghton

"Searching for Satisfaction: Epigrams as a Way to Understand Ancient Sexual Norms"

Noah Wilkerson

"The Bedul and the Co-opting of Bedouin Identity in the Formation of Modern Jordan"

Sophia Jones

"Irene the Iconodule: A Reexamination of the Empress Irene's Theological Policies in a Political Context"

Kayleigh Kaminski

"Speaking the Unspeakable: Translating Greek Tragedy for Sexual Violence Advocacy Theater"

Francesca Gillis

"Ancient Foodies: An Analysis of the Meaning and Use of Food in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome"

Ikran Sheikh-Mursal

"A Stagnant Crisis: Examining Water Scarcity in Jordan through a Public Health Lens"

Below: Congratulations to our seniors!

From left: Noah, Kayleigh, Charlotte, Sophia, Francesca, & Ikran, with Andy



FROM ΠÓΛΕΙΣ TO METROPOLISES

This semester, the department offered two courses on ancient πόλεις (a Greek word that means cities). How do professors select the cities to teach? What is some ancient wisdom that we can learn today? We asked Professors Serdar Yalcin and Andy Overman.

SERDAR YALCIN

ANDY OVERMAN

How do you approach the topic of ancient cities?

The main theme of my course is the symbiotic relationship between the empire and its imperial center. The cities that I have selected - Babylon, Rome, and Constantinople - all grew and declined in conjunction with the fate of the empire, and my goal is to discuss with students the changes in the material and visual cultures of these urban centers in relation to their imperial identities.

In the *Cosmopoleis* class, we discuss the following six cities: Alexandria, Rome, Jerusalem, Constantinople, Baghdad, and Venice. These cities all achieved a tremendous degree of global reach and cultural dominance, despite their dissimilar urban landscapes. With this observation in mind, we study the growth and development of these ancient cities, comparing and contrasting their distinct paths towards the cosmopoleis.

How does each city take a diverging path towards prosperity?

All three cities rely on different cultural foundations. Babylon, for example, was a Mesopotamian city. The way it utilized public monument to communicate with its people was not similar to the situation we observe in medieval Constantinople. As a Christian city, Constantinople had less public art in medieval times, though it still carried certain characteristics in its urban layout of a Roman city. Instead, medieval ornamentation focused more on the interior of the architectural spaces (churches and palaces).

There are different cultural and economic forces that drive the city to thrive. Alexandria, for example, obtained its prominence as a result of its intellectual wealth. It attracted the giant minds of the Age, gathering all the smart people to exchange ideas and further stimulate thoughts. Imperial Rome, on the other hand, was a spectacular city, largely because of its giant bureaucratic system. It was the political center of the world, where people could find the best job with the highest salary.

What can we understand about modern cities by studying ancient ones?

The idea of "empire" does not end, and it changes the way imperial centers are embellished according to the prevalent ideologies. London, for example, was the center for the Great British Colonial Empire, and there was the remarkable impact of colonialism on the urban development of this city. Even today, we have the US and China as the great imperial powers, and we can ask ourselves the same type of questions as we study the ancient and medieval cities.

The cultural life should not be neglected. What the six cities have in common is that a rich cultural life leads to a greater economic strength and political stability. In addition to that, most of them see the cultural diversity as a conscious effort. They welcome foreigners, and are inclusive about the foreign practices. This is the point where real growth happens.

If you have to choose, which city is your favorite?

If I had to choose, I would say Constantinople because I come from that city and there are just too many emotions around it. However, Babylon is also a very interesting site. It is the least known city among the three. In fact, before the archaeological excavation, we only know the city from written sources such as the Bible and the *Histories* of Herodotus, which helped the creation of this imaginary opulent, powerful but decadent city. It is so fascinating to compare the Babylon imagined and the Babylon in reality.

Alexandria. Everyday in Alexandria will be so different, with different people studying their own area and inventing new material. You never know whether the man you just saw yesterday would figure out the curvature of the earth. It is just too exciting.

Find out more about Andy and his *Cosmopoleis* class in the online article here:

<https://www.macalester.edu/news/2019/12/what-we-can-learn-from-ancient-cities/>





أهلاً وسهلاً بكم جميعاً!

MEET GREGORY HALABY

Interview by Zhihuang (Simon) Wang

Professor Gregory Halaby is teaching Arabic this year in the Classical Mediterranean and Middle East Department. Before joining Mac, Greg had just completed his PhD at Harvard in Classical Arabic Literature. Having explored the Arabic language and literature in the broader Mediterranean context, he is now actively bringing his own cultural insight into the department. Let's meet Greg and learn his stories!

Q: What are some of your personal connections with Arabic?

Greg: I started to learn Arabic as a child. My parents are both Arab-American, and I heard the language a good deal growing up, especially in the kitchen, dinner table, and with our extended family. When I was young, I started making a small dictionary of the words that I was learning. However, I did not start to learn the language more rigorously until after high school, when I decided to postpone my undergraduate studies to take a gap year and learn Arabic at the American University in Cairo. Then, I went to UC Berkeley where I studied Arabic language and literacy, especially classical poetry. For my PhD, I continued studying classical Arabic literature, and expanded from poetry to diverse genres of writing in which poetry and prose interact, such as travel writing and literary anthologies.

Q: What are your research interests? How do you perceive Arabic in the broader context of the ancient Mediterranean?

Greg: My research interests address classical Arabic poetry and prose, namely, how poets in later periods manipulated motifs of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period. With the founding of the Umayyad and then Abbasid Caliphate in the middle of the 8th century CE, the motifs of the earlier period were reconfigured by the so-called *muhdathun* (modern) poets to reflect the changing geographic and cultural landscape. With the emergence of Islam and movement from the Arabian Peninsula to Mesopotamia and beyond, Arabic-Islamic Civilization intermingled with the Greco-Roman and Persian (Sassanian) legacies onto which it expanded. As I teach and research the classical canonical texts, I also actively seek out marginalized texts, for example, by women poets to provide a more nuanced picture of the era.

Chronologically, my work does not stop with the Abbasid period, which is conventionally portrayed as the pinnacle of Arabic-Islamic Civilization. Arabic literature and intellectual history continued to develop--in conversation with the past--rather than simply fall into decline. In the last couple decades, scholars have worked hard to challenge this so-called "decline narrative." In fact, after the Abbasid period and even into the 19th century, scholars produced and transmitted intellectual history and literature through means that many have overlooked. For example, in the form of Arabic commentaries and glosses on the margins of other texts.

Q: How do you like the campus here at Macalester?

Greg: I have really enjoy teaching at Macalester because it fosters a vibrant environment of learning. I also find it to be a place conducive to student-centered teaching, which allows students to bring their interests and experiences into the classroom in intellectually productive ways. When it comes to research, I like how the college provides plenty of resources to participate in conferences and pursue my own scholarship.

Spring 2020 Courses Offered in Classics

CLAS 212-01	Elementary Latin II	M W F	01:10-02:10 pm	Mark Gustafson
CLAS 212-L1	Elementary Latin II Lab	T	03:00-04:00 pm	Mark Gustafson
CLAS 214-01	Elementary Arabic II	M W F	09:40-10:40 am	Gregory Halaby
CLAS 214-L1	Elementary Arabic II Lab	M	12:00-01:00 pm	Gregory Halaby
CLAS 214-L2	Elementary Arabic II Lab	W	02:20-03:20 pm	Gregory Halaby
CLAS 223-01	Introduction to Archaeology	T R	09:40-11:10 am	Andrew Overman
CLAS 235-01	Elementary Greek II	M W F	09:40-10:40 am	Brian Lush
CLAS 235-L1	Elementary Greek II Lab	R	01:50-02:50 pm	Brian Lush
CLAS 235-L2	Elementary Greek II Lab	R	03:00-04:00 pm	Brian Lush
CLAS 283-01	Art and Architecture of Ancient Greece and Rome	M W F	02:20-03:20 pm	Serdar Yalcin
CLAS 292-01	Palestinian Resistance: Exile, Memory and the Struggles for Freedom (2 credits)	W	07:00-08:30 pm	Andrew Overman
CLAS 294-01	Frenemies: Byzantine-Islamic Relations in Late Antiquity	T R	01:20-02:50 pm	Andrew Overman
CLAS 294-02	Homer's The Odyssey: A Literary and Historical Approach	T R	01:20-02:50 pm	Burgess, Goldman
CLAS 294-03	Art/Arch of Islamic World	M W F	10:50-11:50 am	Serdar Yalcin
CLAS 332-01	Intermediate Latin II: Poetry	M W F	03:30-04:30 pm	Mark Gustafson
CLAS 338-01	Intermediate Hebrew II	M W F	12:00-01:00 pm	Nanette Goldman
CLAS 342-01	Intermediate Arabic II	M W F	10:50-11:50 am	Gregory Halaby
CLAS 342-L1	Intermediate Arabic II Lab	R	03:00-04:00 pm	Gregory Halaby
CLAS 342-L2	Intermediate Arabic II Lab	W	01:10-02:10 pm	Gregory Halaby
CLAS 487-01	Advanced Reading in Greek	M W F	10:50-11:50 am	Brian Lush

NEW 2-CREDIT SEMINAR FOR SPRING 2020, with Professor Andy Overman, Wednesdays 7:00-8:30 PM

CLAS 292-01 PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE: Exile, Memory, and the Struggle for Freedom

This course is a highly dialogical seminar where students examine and discuss key issues and ideas concerning Palestinian life, politics and culture amid the occupation.

**Classics
Talks
SMAC**

SMAC (Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity and Classics) features the outstanding research of undergraduates at Macalester College in the study of ancient Mediterranean people and cultures. Students in *Intermediate Greek II: Poetry* serve as the editorial board, participating in the peer review process. The newest issue will be released in January. To find them there after January, and see earlier issues, please visit the journal website.

CLAS 294-01 Frenemies: Byzantine-Islamic Relations in Late Antiquity

Taught By Andy Overman

This course examines the interaction, commerce, and conflict between the Islamic Caliphate and Christian Byzantium from the origins of Islam in the seventh century to 1453 and the collapse of the Byzantine Empire. These two empires were bound together by shared space, common interests, and episodic distrust. They were Frenemies. The sources for this study are Byzantine and Islamic histories from the period, together with critical analysis of those sources. In addition, and importantly the literature and art these two empires produced provide vital and illuminating sight into these bodies, including their view of one another. Counts for the Middle Eastern and Islamic Civilization concentration and as a context course for the Classics major or minor.



CLAS 294-02 ENG 294-04 Homer's The Odyssey: A Literary and Historical Approach

Taught By Matthew Burgess & Nanette Goldman

This course, team taught by Matthew Burgess (English/Creative Writing) and Nanette Goldman (Classical Mediterranean and Middle East), will address Homer's Odyssey from several perspectives. Students will be introduced to the poem's historical context, social purpose, and original composition. They will also learn to analyze the text from a novelist's point-of-view, focusing on narrative elements like plot structure and characterization. Projects will be of two types, literary analysis and creative writing. By the end of the semester, students will have gained a far richer understanding not only of The Odyssey, but of the writing process itself.



Alumni Notes

James Kriesel '00 is now Assistant Professor of Italian at Villanova University. Recently, Notre Dame Press published his book on Boccaccio, in which he explores how Boccaccio was inspired by Ovid's erotic elegies to use the sexualized female body as a symbol for truth.

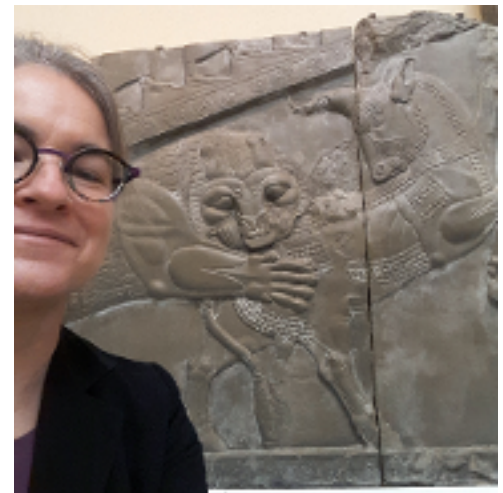
Ben Larson '08 started a new job as an attending physician at Lankenau Hospital in the Philadelphia area. He recently bought a condo in Philly and he says his family is there to stay.

Cedar (Ranney) Shapiro '14 studied Hebrew and Arabic at Macalester and was interested in the close relationship between those languages and between Islam and Judaism. Cedar moved to Berkeley to train as a Jewish feminist ritual leader, or Kohenet, and worked as assistant to the provost at Starr King School for the Ministry, a Unitarian Universalist and multireligious seminary. In particular, she worked for Ibrahim Baba, a queer multireligious leader, scholar, artist and activist. Cedar is releasing an album of music in Hebrew and Arabic that came through the community they built.

Elliott Averett '15 has left the Seattle Police Department and is going Georgetown Law. He got engaged in May and now lives with his fiance in DC.

Beth at the British Museum

In early October, **Beth Severy-Hoven** was invited by the Institute for Classical Studies at the University of London, where she gave a presentation entitled "Octavia: First First Lady of Rome?" which drew on work from her current book project. She then consulted at a former women's college that now is part of the multi-campus University of London, namely Royal Holloway College, on their plans to develop an interdisciplinary women's and gender studies centre. Finally, she gave a keynote address at a conference on Germanicus, a Roman imperial prince. Germanicus' early death was widely and publicly mourned, which provides historians with a number of contemporary documents in which people displayed their loyalty to the imperial house. The conference focused on how scholars can use these materials to understand the shift from the Roman republic to the empire.



Beth at the British Museum, with a Persian relief at Persepolis.

More Cookie Party Pictures

Spoiling dinner with our friends is so much fun.



Find Opportunities in Classics on the "Opportunity Updates" Page

Our department is often asked to share information from other organizations. We consolidate that information into ["Opportunity Updates" on our website](#). Find calls for papers (C), internships (I), job opportunities (J), grad programs (G), volunteering opportunities (V), fellowships (F), research/project opportunities (R), scholarships (S), learning opportunities (L), networking opportunities, and more. The listings are usually updated several times every week. Find these recently posted opportunities like these, and more:

(A) American School of Classical Studies at Athens Summer Session

The [ASCSA Summer Session](#) is a six week program in Greece. It will run from June 15 to July 29, 2020. About half the program involves travel throughout Greece. Tuition is \$4,900. Scholarship information can be found [here](#). Apply at [this link](#) before **January 10, 2020**.

(A) American School of Classical Studies at Athens Summer Seminars

The ASCSA offers two 18-day summer seminars for the study of Greek history and monuments. Aegean Networks of Technology will take place from June 8-26, 2020. The Northern Aegean: Macedon and Thrace will be held from July 2-20. Cost for each program is \$2,750. Information about scholarships and the program can be found [here](#) and [here](#). Apply [here](#) by **January 10, 2020**.

(G) Masters in Public Humanities at Brown University

Brown University's MA in Public Humanities is an interdisciplinary program for students interested in meaningful engagement with the public. Graduates include archivists, art teachers, communications managers, curators, development writers, interpretive guides, marketing coordinators, and nonprofit business managers. The program offers two [fellowships](#), as well as other financial aid. The application deadline is **January 15**. Learn more and apply [here](#).

(L) Summer Programs with the Roman Frontier Excavation Field School

ArchaeoTek offers summer programs to learn about the Roman Frontier and Ground-Penetrating Radar in Transylvania. Their workshops this year are "Roman Villa and Settlement Excavation–Identity and Wealth on the Roman Frontier," "Applied Field Geophysics Workshop–Ground Penetrating Radar Applications," and "Geophysics Exploration and Roman Archaeological Exploration." To see program dates and costs and to apply, visit this [site](#).

(C) Undergraduate Journal of Humanistic Studies

Carleton College's *Undergraduate Journal of Humanistic Studies* invites undergraduate students to submit senior theses or other well-developed papers. The journal accepts submissions on a rolling basis and publishes two issues a year, in February and May. To learn more, visit the [webpage](#), or email ujhs@carleton.edu.

<https://www.macalester.edu/classics/studentopportunities/>

