

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS NEWSLETTER

2019-2020

MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM CHAIR



Dear colleagues, students, and alumni,

The Department of Classics had a productive year in 2019-2020. Courses were taught, research was conducted, articles and books were published, and PhD degrees were justly earned by several graduate students. Not that everything was perfect. There was the pandemic, unfortunately still ongoing, while much else in recent news has been disheartening. Nonetheless, the department has managed to keep its focus on its pedagogical mission. We bravely and resourcefully finished the spring term with online instruction. A crack team of graduate instructors and TAs are currently teaching online

summer courses, and now we are all all puzzling over how to implement dual delivery—online, and to some degree, in-person—in the coming academic year.

This electronic newsletter surveys the breadth and depth of our achievements. It opens with two historical essays. Ben Akrigg provides a discussion of the Athenian plague as described by Thucydides, with commentary on the relevance of this ancient event to current circumstances. And on the basis of archival material that fell into my hands this year, I contribute a piece on the origins of Lillian Massey Building and the Household Science Department that first occupied it.

Next in the newsletter is a sample of all the great things accomplished by our graduate and undergraduate students this year. We are fortunate that three of our recent doctoral graduates, John Fabiano, Brad Hald, and Chiara Graf, will be teaching some of our courses this coming year. Along with Alex Cushing, they provide brief reports of their recent and ongoing experiences. As for undergraduates, CLASSU displayed enormous leadership by initiating a high school outreach event last November. In late February, the department began a monthly coffee hour for undergraduates. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic the first occurrence of this event was also the last of the year, but the Undergraduate Coffee Hour will arise again sometime in the future! Both graduate and undergraduate students also industriously re-organized student space in the building, something that will be of great value as we learn how to safely use our building again.

Stuck at home as we are, unable to travel, we all appreciate reports of department faculty working hard on archaeological digs abroad. Though Sarah Murray will be able to do some work on site this summer, other international archaeological plans have necessarily been cancelled. It's very nice, then, that we have reports and pictures of last summer's season from Sarah, Seth Bernard, and Carrie Atkins.

Assistant Editor Emelen Leonard conducted fascinating interviews with current post-doc Flavia Amaral and the Athenians Project team of John Traill and Philippa Matheson. Flavia describes her interesting research and provides colorful comparisons of study and life in Brazil and North America. John and Philippa describe the long and complex history of the very important Athenians Project, with some instructive commentary on the beneficial role of computers in Classics research. The upcoming retirement of Ernest Weinrib of the university's Faculty of Law provides an opportunity to share his memories of his experiences in our department as both student and instructor—more welcome historical material for the newsletter. Finally, I ask readers to note the final item in the newsletter, the opportunity to donate to many fine scholarships and fellowships belonging to the department. Last year's newsletter heralded our most recent initiative, a diversity bursary for introductory study of Latin and Greek in our summer program. I'm pleased to report that, with generous contributions by Arts & Science, and donations by Christer Bruun, John Traill, and myself, the department was able to triple the bursary funds for this summer. Please consider making a contribution to this noteworthy fund, or one of our many other funds.

Jonathan Burgess, Professor & Interim Chair, July 2020

STUDENT NEWS



GRADUATE STUDENT [achievements in 2019-2020](#)



CLASSU has lots to report about [its activities in the past year](#)

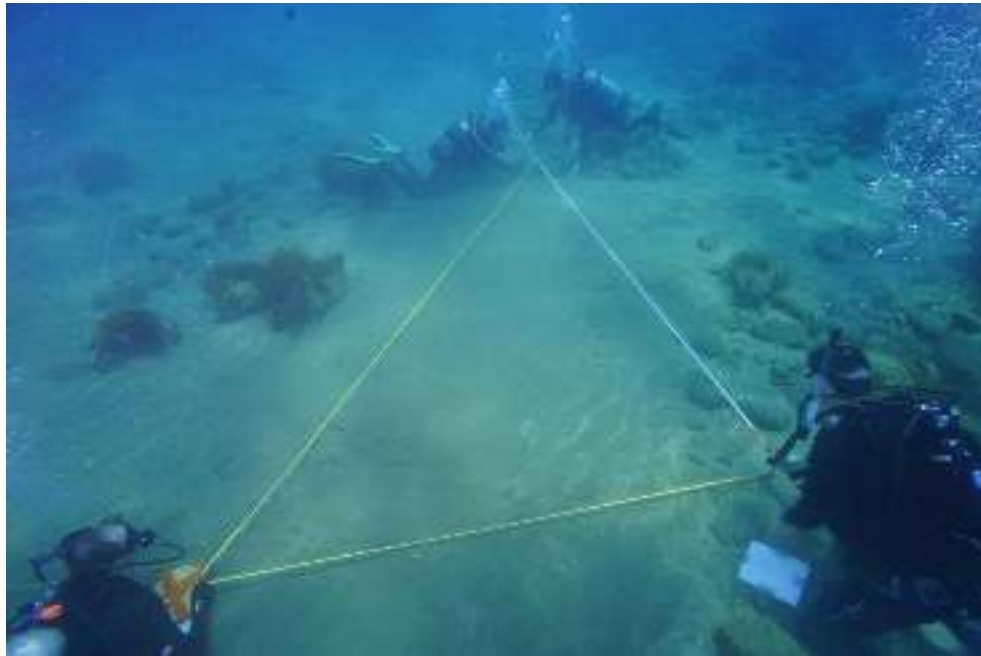
IN THE FIELD AND WATER



SETH BERNARD on [excavations at Populonia, Italy](#)



SARAH MURRAY on the pilot season of
[The Bays of East Attica Regional Survey \(BEARS\)](#)



CARRIE ATKINS on [underwater exploration off Cyprus](#)

INTERVIEWS

By Emelen Leonard

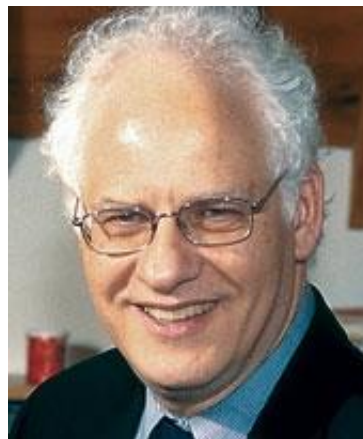


FLAVIA AMARAL on her [studies in North America](#)



JOHN TRILL and PHILIPPA MATHESON on
The Athenians Project

RETIREMENTS



ERNEST WEINRIB regards Classics with 'affection and awe'

DONATIONS

Please consider contributing. As reported in last year's newsletter, the Department of Classics has initiated a diversity bursary for study of introductory Latin and Greek in our summer program. And this is just one of many funds that belong to the department. Your gift will support future generations of scholars of ancient Greece and Rome.

You can support the Classics Department through U of T's [online donation portal](#).

Designation options include:

- Departmental Trust (for the diversity bursary, etc.)
- R. M. Smith Memorial Fellowship in Classics
- M. B. Wallace Memorial Graduate Award in Classics
- Emmet Robbins Memorial Graduate Award in Classics
- Kathryn Boshier Memorial Graduate Fund in Classics
- John Landon Memorial Fellowship in Classics

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[Past issues](#) are available on our website.

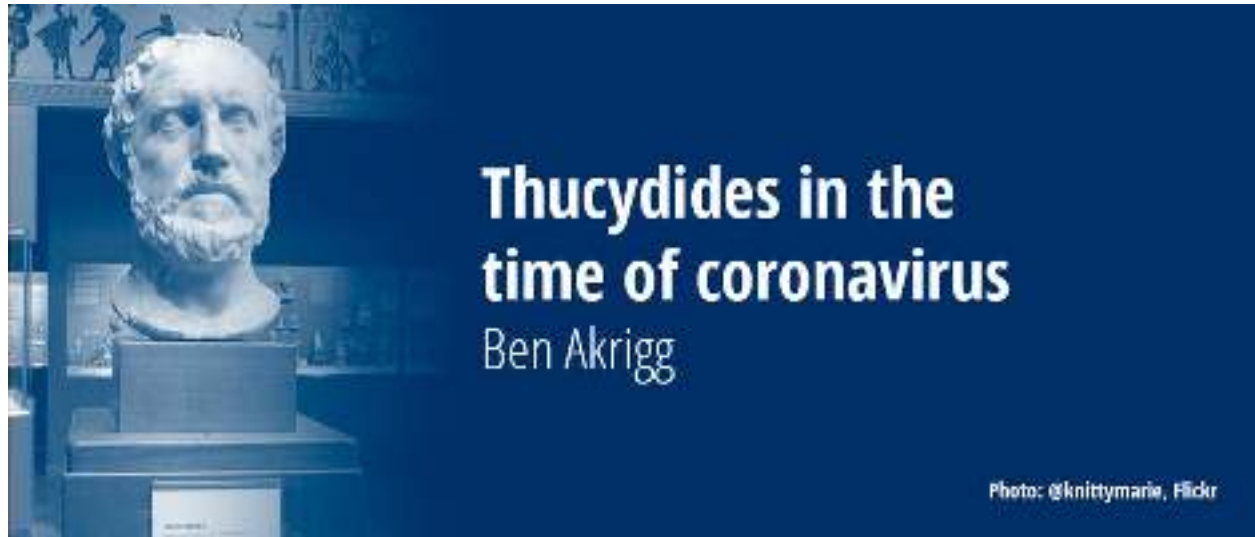
The Department of Classics is housed in the Lillian Massey Building, a one-minute walk from Museum subway station and a five-minute walk from either St. George or Bay subway stations. Directly in front of the building is a [Bike Share Toronto](#) terminal and bike lane.

[Lillian Massey Building](#)

125 Queen's Park

Toronto, ON M5S 2C7

Thucydides in the time of coronavirus



In March this year, as the extent and severity of the coronavirus pandemic were becoming increasingly obvious, many Greek historians found themselves in unusually high demand in the media. In my case the call came from *The Economist*, but for a while [Thucydides and his account of an ancient outbreak of disease](#) seemed to be [all over the press and the internet](#). This prompted an instant rush of gratification in seeing our subject being noticed outside the academy, even if there was also irritation at seeing the inevitable misunderstandings. On a moment's reflection, though, it was also rather surprising: why should anyone want to think about this episode in an ancient writer's work?

The plague narrative is one of the most familiar sections of Thucydides' work, and not just to our PhD students who wrestle with it as part of their reading list. As we have been repeatedly reminded in recent weeks and months, the plague narrative has been influential on writers of later disease narratives, fictional and factual, from Lucretius to Max Brooks. It is an exquisitely crafted gem within Thucydides' "possession for all time" that neatly illustrates many of his themes and literary strategies. It is highly emotive, full of vivid detail, and carefully structured. The author asserts his credibility and authority in both implicit and bluntly explicit ways. It is also easy to conclude that he has a rather jaundiced view of humanity in general and his fellow Athenians in particular, and this clearly appeals to contemporary doom-mongers and disrupters who are keen to assert the fragility of norms and institutions. As usual with Thucydides' text, however, on anything more than the most superficial reading it turns out to resist simple interpretations and easily-drawn conclusions.

In the absence of other narratives or documentation it is hard to assess the accuracy and validity of Thucydides' account, although there is enough to be confident that he didn't just make the whole thing up. The precisely recorded and detailed descriptions of symptoms do, however, turn out to be rather frustrating: Thucydides says that he wants us to be able to recognize the disease if we see it again, but in spite of the gallons of scholarly ink that have been spilled on the issue, and the confidence with which claims and counter-claims continue to be made, the identity of the disease is uncertain, and may always remain so. Thucydides also claims in a later passage that the plague delivered the biggest single blow to their power that the Athenians suffered during the war. In terms

of the numbers of soldiers and sailors who died this may well not be an exaggeration. But the war continued for many years afterwards, and the plague cannot have been the cause of Athens' eventual defeat. We remember Thucydides' description of the horrifying consequences as the usual restraints on public behaviour, and even basic morality, seem to break down. Yet the institutions of democracy seem to have operated without serious interruption (which allowed the journalist with whom I spoke to produce a piece about the [resilience of democratic regimes](#)).

It is important to remember too that just as we see the "Peloponnesian" war from an implicitly Athenian perspective (it was the war they fought against the Peloponnesians), so we think of this disease as "the plague of Athens" because that is where Thucydides, unsurprisingly, keeps his focus. But he also tells us that it affected not just many other places in Greece but most of the huge Persian Empire. What happened in those places and how people reacted we cannot tell. Thucydides does invite us to wonder about them, and what the real long-term effects were in Athens. He certainly never gives us the easy answers we want. That's a problem for anyone writing a short piece like this, but it helps to explain why we repeatedly return to the historian's text.



History of Lillian Massey Building



University of Toronto Archives. 2009-55-10MS

Lillian Massey building, ca. 1909

In the fall of 2019 Jane Aspinall of the Toronto Reference Library called my attention to an archival document about Lillian Massey Building and the Household Science Department. Jane's colleague Steven Shubert, who had published an article on the stained-glass windows in the marble staircase, was also very interested. Since Jane is my partner, and Steven was once my (excellent) Greek language student, this all seemed like happy coincidence to the Interim Chair. In addition, Isabelle Cochelin, Interim Chair of the Centre for Medieval Studies, alerted me to plans for an event in the building for Household Science alumnae to occur in May of 2020. Unfortunately this event had to be cancelled, but through the year I gathered notes with the intention of composing a newsletter item.

The Toronto Reference Library document, a dozen or so type-written double-spaced pages, gives an account of the origins of Lillian Massey Building. The author, Katy Malouf, has been identified by Jessica Todd, Archivist for Victoria College, as an employee in the 1980s of the Ontario Ombudsman, housed in Lillian Massey before the arrival of Classics and CMS. Lillian Massey Tremble (1854-1915) was the daughter of Hart Massey, after whom Hart House is named. She provided funds towards the construction of the building, completed in 1913, to house the Department of Household Science. The name of this department to this day remains in stone above the front entrance.

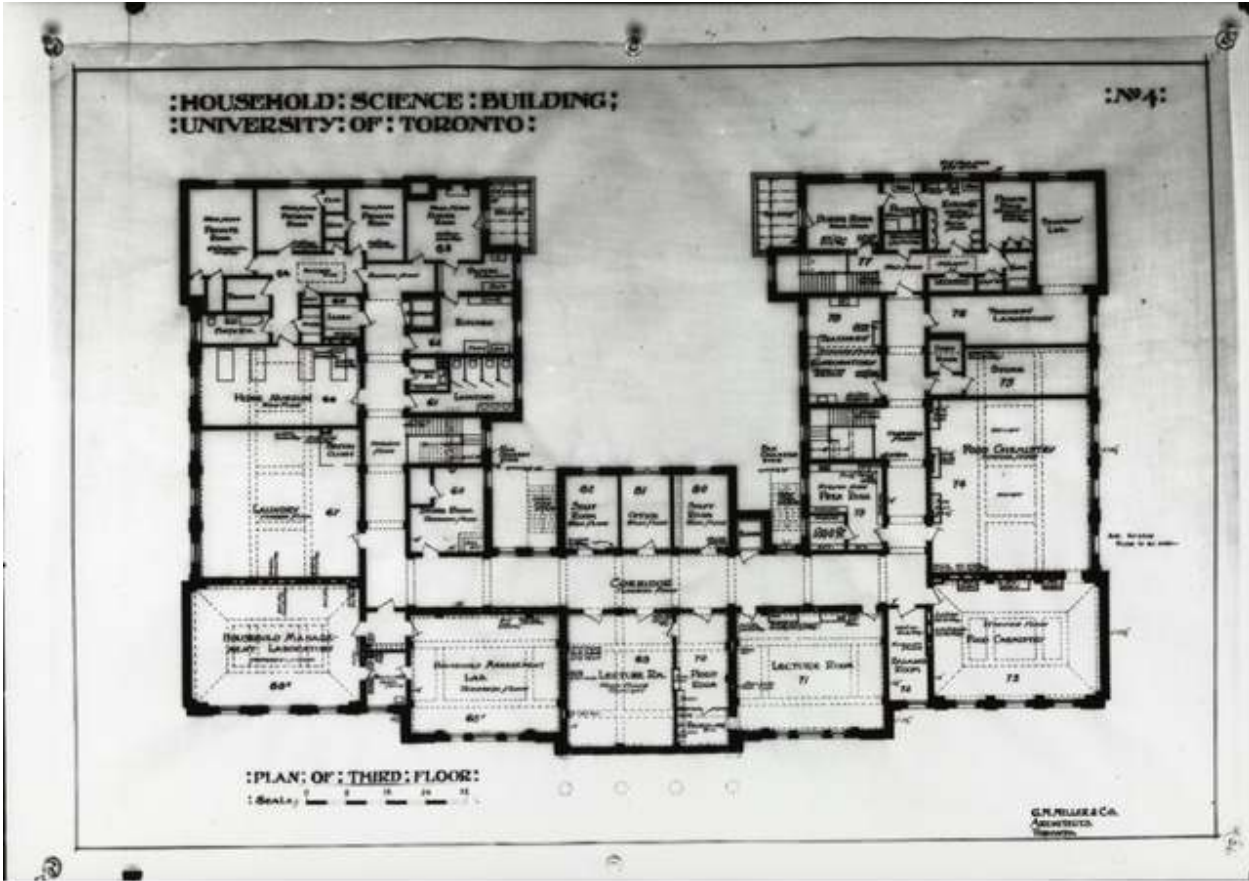
For some, the concept of a university department devoted to domestic skills seems dated and unsettling, as expressed in blogTO's 2010 article "[Nostalgia Tripping: The Lillian Massey Department of Household Science](#)" (which includes some nice pictures). But Annie Laird, the director of the program, and Clara Benson, who taught in the program, are of historical significance in the history of the University of Toronto. The two were the first female professors at the university, and the latter was one of the first women awarded a doctorate at U of T, in physical chemistry. It was lack of suitable employment opportunities that led to Clara Benson to teach "food chemistry" in the Department of Household Science.



University of Toronto Archives, 2001.TT.0015

Clara Benson, ca. 1899

The training in food processing, textile manufacture, clothing design, space management, and infirmary sanitation was based on scientific foundations. A contemporary plan of the third floor indicates, besides offices and classrooms, multiple kitchens and laboratories.



University of Toronto Archives. 2009-55-11MS

3rd floor plan, Lillian Massey Building



University of Toronto Archives. 2009-55-12MS

Laboratory, Lillian Massey Building

The second floor also contained laboratories, kitchens, and lecture rooms. According to Katy Malouf, up to 100 students could work in the building's laboratories at the same time. It is not for parties that a kitchen was attached to our room 205; this is where students for marks prepared meals to serve professors in the adjoining wood-paneled dining room. Though the program was generally considered preparatory for the management of a home or the teaching of home economics in secondary schools, students could also hope for careers involving textiles, food, and lab work.

Lillian Massey Building provided female students of the university space for exercise when Hart House allowed only male members. Clara Benson, after whom is named the Clara Benson Building, originally the Women's Athletic Centre, long advocated for the establishment of athletic facilities for females on campus. Below are pictures of the basement pool (now covered over within Club Monaco; its glass roof is still visible in the back of the building), and the gymnasium, which consisted of the east side of the basement and first floor (my office seems to exist in an upper corner of it).



University of Toronto Archives, 2005-65-1MS

Pool, Lillian Massey Building; gymnasium



University of Toronto Archives. 2009-55-SMS

Gymnasium, Lillian Massey Building

The activities in the Household Science Department were the inspiration for the scenes on the beautiful stained-glass panels in the marble staircase. As Steven Shubert explains in his article "[Egyptianizing Stained-Glass in Toronto](#)," Lillian Massey Tremble originally envisaged scenes of Greek women working. These would be consonant with a neoclassical building with a main entrance inspired by the north porch of the Erechtheion. But the artist, Henry Holiday, elected to create ancient Egyptian scenes of cooking and cloth preparation. Steven, who has a PhD in Egyptology from the University of Toronto, expertly discusses these scenes with their simple hieroglyphics in his article, as well the artist's colored drawings, or *modelli*, now stored in the Royal Ontario Museum. The windows themselves were dedicated in 1915, soon after the death of Lillian Massey Tremble.

Besides Jane Aspinall and Steven Shubert, I thank Jessica Todd, Will Robins, and Isabelle Cochelin for their assistance. All images are in the public domain and acquired from the [University of Toronto Archive](#). Steven Shubert's article in the Spring 2014 issue of [KMT A modern Journal of Ancient Egypt](#) is stored on our department website with permission. I have also consulted *The University of Toronto: A History* by Martin L. Friedland (University of Toronto Press, 2002) and *A Path not Strewn with Roses: One Hundred Years of Women at the University of Toronto, 1884-1984*, by Anne Rochon Ford (University of Toronto Press, 1985). Both are available online through Roberts. I have also viewed a further archival document by an alumna of the program, shared with me by Isabelle Cochelin.

Graduate students on 2019-2020



Despite the challenges of the pandemic, it was a banner year for students earning their doctoral degree. Chiara Graf, Brad Hald, John Fabiano, and Alex Cushing all successfully defended their PhD dissertations; Rachel Mazzara's oral will occur at the end of summer.

With ingenuity the grad students have created some semblance of a community even in these socially-distanced times through a Woodbury WhatsApp group, and various socially-distanced events like Zoom coffee hours, Zoom Pub Quiz, and a scavenger hunt. All of this was organized by our valiant arbiter elegantiae (i.e. social chair), Rachel Mazzara.

Grad students also re-organized the Woodbury library and re-conceptualized the basement kitchen as a multi-use space, as well as other downstairs spaces. New furniture and equipment have arrived and will be put in place to make student spaces more welcoming—and more useful in a socially distanced world.

Alex Cushing



My dissertation title was "The Economic Relationship between Patron and Freedman in Italy in the Early Roman Empire". It was the first remotely-defended/Zoom-defended dissertation in Department history. I was in Washington DC during my defense, my external was in Belgium, and everyone else was in Toronto, so that was interesting. This later picture features a Covid hairstyle.

Chiara Graf



My dissertation was called “Wisdom and Other Feelings: Affect, Knowledge, and the Senecan Subject.” This coming year, I’ll be a postdoctoral fellow here at the U of T Classics Department.

John Fabiano



Dissertation Title: *Narratu sunt digna*: Aspects of the Socio-Economic Life of Rome's *Plebs*, 275-455 CE

Dissertation Summary: My dissertation encompasses a wide-ranging analysis of the socio-economic life of the non-elite urban population of Rome and their interactions with the institutions and administration of the city from 275 until 455 CE. Following current trends in the study of late antique society and by adopting new sociological approaches, I present a non-elite population that formed a socially and economically contrasted group, which experienced vitality on a level not hitherto appreciated in histories of the Late Empire.

Future plans: I am pleased to be spending the upcoming academic year once again at the University of Toronto as a Lecturer in the Department of Classics. In the Spring of 2021, I'll be heading to Ghent University in Belgium to take up a visiting fellowship as part of a research programme on the Structural Determinants of Economic Performance in the Roman World.

Bradley Hald

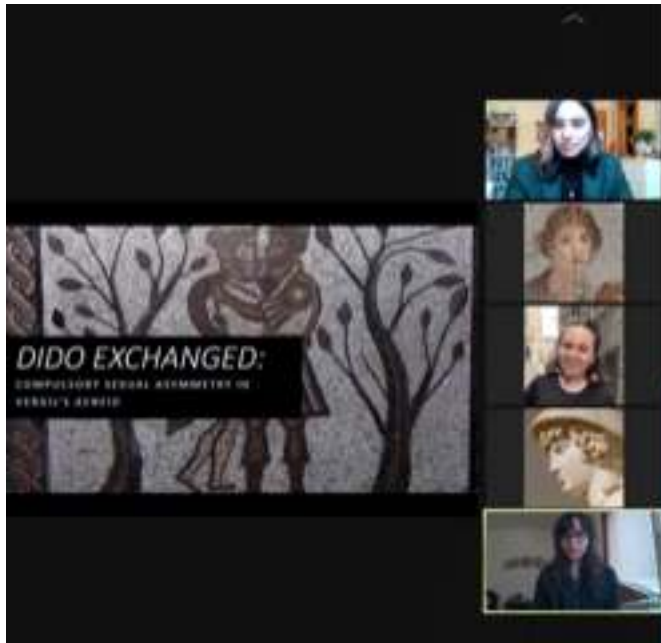


It seems weird to talk about ‘future plans’ at this moment in the world, but my plan before the pandemic was to get a job teaching classics at the secondary school level. That has panned out partially: this summer I’m leading Latin classes for some local Toronto high schoolers and also for some Chinese high school students in China and Europe, all via Zoom. I may try again in the spring to get a proper high school teaching gig, but we’ll have to see what the world looks like then.

I completed my Masters research in 2013 at the University of Toronto, writing on the metapoetics of *bougonia* in Vergil’s fourth *Georgic*. After that, I took a hard one-eighty and focused my PhD research on Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*. In November 2019, I successfully defended my thesis, entitled “Vision, Fear, and Knowledge in Thucydides’ *History*.” As a graduate student, I completed several foreign programs in language, ancient history, and classical archaeology, including German for Classics Students at the University of Cologne and the Regular Program at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. I am currently employed as a Lecturer in the Classics Department at Toronto, teaching Latin and Greek language and literature.

Visit the [Graduate Classics Course Union](#) page to learn more.

CLASSU (Classics Students' Union) on 2019-2020



CLASSU is excited to report another wonderful year for our undergraduate constituents, who continue to show a keen interest in the field of Classics and our Department here at the University of Toronto.

Foremost, we are thrilled with the successful execution of the sixth volume of our undergraduate journal, *Plebeian*, featuring exciting papers from eight authors. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we have published the journal online, and we hope to have physical copies available soon. Additionally, CLASSU hosted a variety of academic and social initiatives throughout the year, including a graduate school information session. Thank you very much to all of the graduate students and professors who participated. We also hosted two academic seminars in the fall and winter semesters. Finally, CLASSU hosted an open house event for highschool students in the Greater Toronto Area looking to study Classics at the post-secondary level. This was our first time hosting an event of this nature, and we were extremely pleased to see students from all across Ontario join us!

Also notable news: CLASSU President Irum Chorghay was selected for the Katharine Ball Graduating Award for Course Unions, from the Arts and Science Students' Union!

As always, many thanks to the ongoing support of the Classics Department and the GCCU. We are looking forward to many more great things in the coming year!

For more about us, visit the [Classics Student's Union](#) page.

Seth Bernard on Populonia excavations, summer 2019

In June and July of 2019, Seth Bernard and a group of four University of Toronto students participated in the second campaign of excavations at Populonia, the Romano-Etruscan site on the coast of Tuscany. The project, in collaboration with the Superintendency of Pisa and Livorno and two colleagues from the University of Siena, explores the urban development of the city's acropolis in the period following the Roman conquest of Etruria. In particular, this year's group excavated within a thermal complex, one of the earliest public bath installations in Etruria, dating to the decades just before 100 BCE. Students were Drew Davis, Laura Harris, Prabhjeet Johal (Art History), and Naomi Neufeld. We were happy to have a visit from Prof. Bruun.



The site



Everyone hard at work



Seth Bernard and UofT students



The visitor works for his lunch.

Sarah Murray on the BEARS expedition, summer 2019

The Bays of East Attica Regional Survey (BEARS) project completed a successful pilot season of fieldwork around the Greek bay of Porto Raphti in June of 2019. The team was very much looking forward to continuing our research this summer, but unfortunately the global health crisis intervened, and we had to cancel the 2020 field season, originally scheduled for June. We are keeping an eye on health, safety, and travel regulations and might attempt a small study season in August if conditions allow. In the meantime, throughout the summer we will be posting a variety of reflections from team members on the project blog to stay connected during the hiatus.

<http://bearsarchaeologicalproject.org/blog/>

The website also contains quite a lot of general content about BEARS (not to mention nice photos of the Mediterranean for those cooped up at home) and all are welcome to explore!

Note in particular posts there by two BEARS 2019 student team members (Irum Chorghay and Kat Apokatanidis), who kept journals of their time with the project last summer and have generously agreed to share excerpts on this website.



The BEARS 2019 crew

Carrie Atkins on Cyprus underwater project, summer 2019

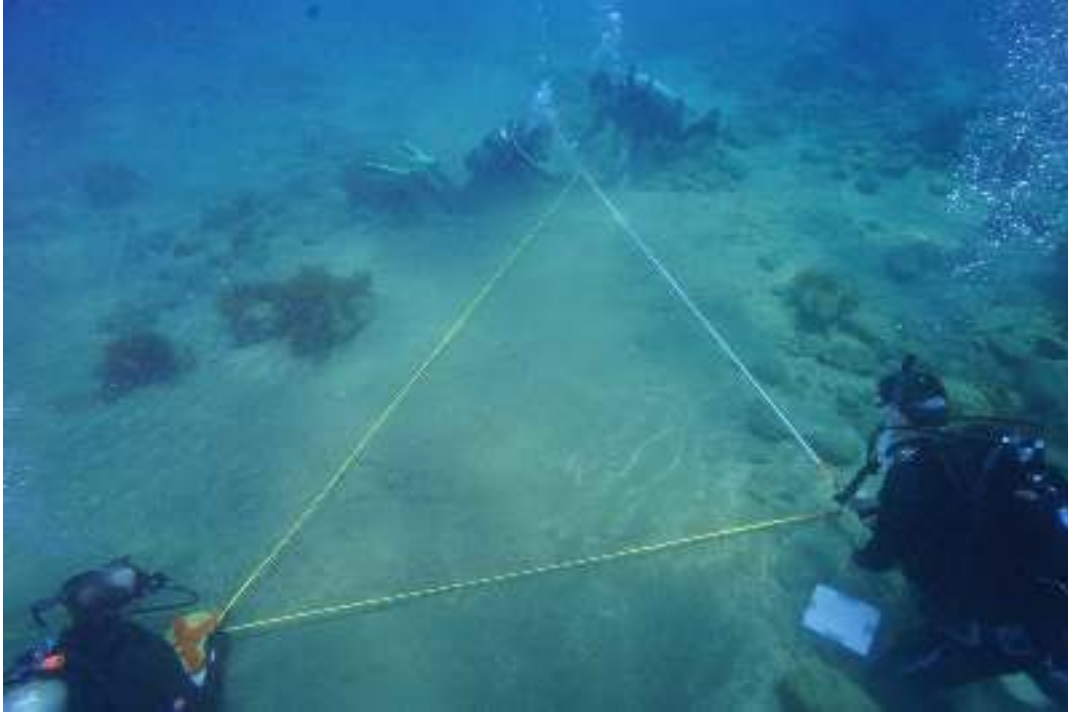
In June 2019, Carrie Atkins returned to Maroni-Tsaroukkas, Cyprus, with a team to wrap up the first stage of survey of the Bronze Age anchorage. The international team included students and researchers from UofT, Cornell, and Texas A&M University. Between the 2018 and 2019 seasons, about a meter of sand had been deposited in the central region of the site and scoured away from the eastern part. The scouring meant that more anchors and ceramics were visible. The team worked non-stop to record over 13 new anchors, 5 new blocks, and over 50 sherds. Sampling of the seabed was also undertaken, and there are some encouraging preliminary results in the work by a graduate student from Texas A&M, who is using optically stimulated luminescence in order to assess deposition of anchors. The photogrammetry results from the dive scooter provide a 3D image of the seabed, and preliminary results from the ROV are promising. The project is transitioning to the next phase of research to investigate site formation processes in order to understand how much the seabed and coastal zone have changed since the Late Bronze Age.



UofT undergraduate, Stepan Popov, uncovers and prepares to record a 3-hole anchor.



A diver prepares to record a large stone block, estimated to weigh 1 ton.



The dive team prepares to set up a new quadrant for survey.

Interview with Flavia Vasconcellos Amaral



After completing her PhD in São Paulo, Dr. Flavia Vasconcellos Amaral has joined the University of Toronto's Classics Department as a postdoctoral fellow under the supervision of Dr. Regina Höschele. Emelen Leonard spoke to her about her current research and projects, the intoxicating world of Greek epigram, studying classics in Brazil, and more.

Emelen Leonard (EHL): Any current research projects?

When I started my academic path as an undergraduate, Greek epigram was a sort of underground topic in Brazil and at the University of São Paulo, my *alma mater*. Only a handful of researchers worked on the genre and I was very enthusiastic about exploring untrodden paths, as Callimachus would put it. Greek epigram is still not as canonical as other genres, but nowadays there are more Brazilian researchers dedicated to understanding this fascinating genre, and I am proud to say that my work has played a role in this change.

For my postdoctoral project (*'Narrative Strategies in Greek Dialogue Epigrams'*) I decided to investigate the evolution of different voices and narrative techniques employed in epigrammatic dialogues. Although epigrams are intimately tied to writing, they imitate oral speech acts. We encounter 'talking objects' in votive and funerary contexts at a very early stage of the genre. In these cases, the dedicatory objects and tombs serve as narrators. It was a natural step to add a second person serving as an interlocutor, which led to the birth of dialogue epigrams.

Striking in this kind of epigram is its intrinsic fictitiousness. We encounter, for example, impossible dialogues between the deceased and a passerby. Interestingly, funerary dialogue epigrams provide roughly the same kind of information as early epitaphs, in particular, the name of the deceased, their patronymic and place of origin. However, its format leaves room for other pieces of information, such as the *causa mortis* and lamentation. So, dialogue epigrams develop different narrative strategies for traditional motifs. I am also very interested in how these texts were read by their audience and how inscribed and literary epigrams relate to one another.

The University of Toronto has given me the wonderful opportunity to take my studies on epigram to a different level in a very stimulating environment. Also, I am very honored to be under Regina Höschele's supervision. Her work and that of Peter Bing were a great inspiration to me when I wrote my dissertation, and I could not think of a better privilege than to work with them at this point in my career.

At the University of São Paulo I am a member of a research group on Hellenistic literature (*Hellenistica*). Some of us have been working on a translation of the texts from Gow and Page's '*Hellenistic Epigrams*.' We lack Portuguese translations of epigrams and our aim is to fill this gap so as to promote the genre not only in Brazilian academia but also in our community. It is our plan to launch either a podcast or a video channel to disseminate our contributions beyond our Facebook page, which I manage. Because of Brazil's higher education crisis and the pandemic, many research groups and researchers now cooperate in the virtual space. Our research group will follow this trend locally at first, but we aim to involve international researchers in future collaborations, and I would be very pleased to invite researchers from our department.

I have also been doing some Classics-related volunteer work here in Toronto. '*Quarentena Clássica*' is a series of monthly virtual meetings with the Brazilian community in the city, hosted by the non-profit Networking para Brasileiros (NPB). Anyone can take part and we make the recordings available online. At each meeting we read and discuss Greek literature that is somehow connected to topics that have been on people's minds during the pandemic, e.g., death and the ephemeral nature of life. We also had a virtual *symposion* to talk about drinking parties in antiquity and how we drink together nowadays. It was the funniest and most pleasant get-together, because each participant brought along their own drink and snacks. I have had very positive feedback and it is truly rewarding to see how the community reacted to the seeming 'modernity' of ancient texts. As a researcher, I think one of my roles is to make the power of ancient knowledge more accessible to people outside of academia, and I feel really thrilled to be able to do this here in Toronto! It would be great to expand that to a wider number of people in an English version of the event.

EHL: Your previous work has dealt with drinking and death in Greek epigram. Can you say a bit about the relationship between these heady topics in the Greek imagination?

There is so much to say about the interconnection of drinking and death in the Greek imagination! Death and the pleasures of life go hand in hand in Greek culture, and their close connection is reflected in the works of many poets, philosophers, and artists.

A common *topos* of archaic and elegiac poetry is that there is no pleasure after death – hence one should enjoy the drinking, eating, and other kinds of entertainment found at the symposium. By the early third century BC, poets began to experiment with the generic boundaries of epigram and started to use features of sympotic lyric and elegy in a form originally meant for epitaphs and dedications. Because of the overlap between sympotic and funerary themes, epigrammatists developed archaic and elegiac tropes within funerary epigrams to portray drinking and death in new ways. Thus, it is possible to trace an evolution of these heady topics as a binary pair in *The Greek Anthology*.

In my dissertation, I analyzed the funerary epigrams of Book 7 of *The Greek Anthology* that contain sympotic terms in order to investigate how the 'drinking and death' pair evolved. The themes were developed within three major groups of epigrams: 1) epigrams dedicated to Anacreon, an early lyric poet who wrote sympotic poetry, 2) epigrams about drunk women, and 3) epigrams about drunk men. The epigrams dedicated to Anacreon operate programmatically, whereas the epigrams about drunk women focus on distinct characterizations of women who drink wine, and the epigrams about drunk men feature moderation in drinking. Therefore, interestingly, in epigram the brevity of life and the absence of mortal pleasures in death are not presented as the main reasons for enjoying the delights of the symposium, as we find in early Greek lyric.

EHL: You've pursued research in São Paulo (Brazil), Cincinnati (USA) and now Toronto (Canada). How has your experience been working in these different countries?

In my experience there are significant differences between Brazilian and North American Classics. When students decide to pursue higher education in Brazil, they sit for an entrance test to start a specific course of study. Unfortunately, 'Classics' does not exist as such. Ancient Languages and Literature, Ancient Philosophy, Ancient History, and Archaeology are separate subjects that belong to different departments. So, when a student interested in Ancient Languages and Literature is approved in the entrance test, he/she will join the Languages department and only in the second year will he/she choose either Greek or Latin to major in (by default, all students also major in Portuguese). That was my path.

I belonged to the Department of Classical and Vernacular Languages as an undergraduate, MA, and PhD student at the University of São Paulo, the best in Brazil and the second-best university in Latin America. The department provides training in Greek and Latin language and literature, Portuguese and, Indigenous language and literature. As there are around 800 new candidates every year and all of them must attend introductory lessons in Classical Literature, the Greek and Latin staff is quite large, with 27 professors. Great emphasis is placed on the translation of ancient texts, because we still lack translations in Portuguese. MA and PhD programs last 2 and 4 years respectively, and students have a research project and a supervisor from the time of their admission. Despite studying at the most prestigious university of Brazil, I cannot deny that our training may not be as intense and complete as in North America. We also still lack funding in our department to have access to the most up-to-date scholarship.

As a Tytus Fellow at the University of Cincinnati (Summer 2019), my aim was to collect material for a project entitled '*Female Voices in Greek Epigram*'. UC was the perfect place for my purposes because one can find nearly everything at the Carl Blegen Library, an academic paradise on earth! But due to time constraints the project is on hold for the time being. However, some of my findings will be shared in an episode of a video series called '*Estudos Clássicos em Dia*', a project designed by professors from USP, and I hope to write a series of papers on this topic in the near future. Cincinnati is not as cosmopolitan and busy as Toronto but I had a nice summer visiting museums and parks and attending baseball (for the first time) and soccer (my favorite!) games.

Being part of the Department of Classics of the University of Toronto has been personally and professionally enriching. I am making the most out of my stay by attending talks and workshops, besides doing my research. Before the pandemic I was able to enjoy most of the events within the literature stream, and I valued meeting some of the staff in person. I am part of a reading group on Babrius' fables led by Regina Höschele and Peter Bing, which has sparked my interest in learning more about the author and the genre. Many workshops provided by the School of Graduate Studies on academic writing have been very helpful. So has Katherine Blouin's '*Classics write*' virtual group. I also loved doing work at Robarts during weekends when it was open. Some dislike the look of the building, but I find its architecture original and remarkable.

EHL: What are your impressions of Toronto so far?

The weather is certainly a challenge for someone coming from a tropical country. Having fewer hours of sunlight during the winter was a bit strange at first. But the snowy and freezing winter has its own charm and I learned to relish it. I found the snowfall particularly hypnotic (as the number of recorded videos to my family and friend attest!). I also appreciate the coziness of indoor heating everywhere, something we do not have in São Paulo. That being said, I must confess that I celebrated the return of warmer days!

Toronto is a bustling city with lots to see and do and, in this sense, it resembles São Paulo. I love visiting Toronto's many museums, cafés, and cinemas. Living in the northern part of the city allows me to enjoy green areas and a bit more silence. That is really something I appreciate about living here. My husband and I take lovely strolls in different, interconnected green areas. Another advantage is that I am able to get around by public transport without the hassle of the traffic we have in São Paulo. It feels very safe to move around the city. I am also extremely impressed with Toronto's public libraries and their services. Hopefully, I will get to use these spaces again soon.

The Athenians Project: An Interview with John Traill and Philippa Matheson



John Traill with "Athenians" student contributors Abigail Ferstman, Sean Stewart, Joshua Zung, and Marielle Balanaser who is holding a brush over a wet plate with a paper on top.

Emelen Leonard (EHL): Can you say a few words about the Athenians Project and your roles in it?

John Traill (JT): 90 years ago on the first day of the modern excavations of the Athenian Agora 25 inscriptions were found, a sign of things to come. That total has now grown to nearly 8,000, and that counts only writings on stone; 1000's of additional inscriptions on pottery and metals, silver and bronze coins, lead curse tablets, jurors' tokens etc. will increase the sum substantially. Benjamin D. Meritt, the leading American epigrapher at that time, and soon to join Einstein and the mathematicians Veblen and Alexander in an elite club at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, was appointed in charge of the epigraphical finds. He started a card catalogue of the personal names on these inscriptions, as he later explained to me, for a simple, practical purpose, so that "they would not unknowingly publish the same inscription twice." NB Personal names are an important constituent of Attic inscriptions; it is hard to find one without a name, and many inscriptions are crammed with them. Athens was a democracy and people in a democracy feel important and like to see their names in print. Athens' neighbours were not democracies, and by comparison we have a paucity of inscriptions and names of citizens from them. Over the years with the contributions of many scholars and with material added from literary and well as other epigraphical sources Meritt's hand-written file grew to over 100,000 entries and became a well-known but limited tool in the study of Attic prosopography. Access was only through personal visit to IAS or by letter to BDM . . . hardly a satisfactory situation.

I first met Meritt and used his file in the mid 1960s when, as part of my Ph.D. dissertation, I was preparing for publication a group of Agora inscriptions honoring members of the ancient Athenian Council. I had been an undergraduate student at U of T introduced to Attic epigraphy by Mary White and later a graduate student at Harvard studying with Sterling Dow, who, incidentally, was the teacher of 4 or 5 other members of our U of T Department (we were an "endowed" Department). In the summers, and part-time in winter sessions, I studied mathematics and sciences (hence my interest in sciences and Scientific Terminology) becoming increasingly fascinated with the "miraculum mundi" of the day, the computer. Ed. It did not hurt that David Packard, whose father was 2/3 owner of the HP company, was a classmate in graduate school. At that time David was using the computer to compile a concordance of Livy. During my several years at IAS in many conversations with BDM we discussed the possibility of computerizing his file of Attic prosopography which he formally turned over to me when I returned to Toronto permanently in 1972. I also brought with me from a friend in Princeton, Michael Barnett, a letter of introduction to the leading computerist in Canada, C. C. Gottlieb, who immediately directed me to his best students, Ivor Ladd and John Kornatowski who were then developing a database management system now called EMPRESS. Two colleagues in Classics, [Mac Wallace](#) and his sister Philippa Wallace Matheson, were working on amphoras in the Agora at this time, and Philippa who then had some free time enthusiastically joined ATHENIANS. She has been responsible for most of the computing aspects of the Project. Victoria College offered us physical space, and Dan Derkach accommodated our computer needs at CHASS. SSHRC provided initial financial backing, and EMPRESS from the very beginning has maintained continuous technical support. More recently, during the last decade, through our friends at EMPRESS and in Computing Science we were invited to join a consortium of research projects in the 4 major universities of the Toronto area under the contrived acronym BRAIN (Big Data Research and Analytic Information Network).



Philippa Matheson (PM): John Traill had done all the basic planning for Athenians and needed some one in the mid-1970s to help get the data entered from books of photocopied cards and a small library of epigraphical texts into a just then being created Multi Relational Database System. MRS was the work of a couple of computer science graduate students, whose professor thought that John's project might be a good test of their product (it needed Greek characters, for one thing) and who was himself Greek and much intrigued by John's idea of making a "telephone book" of ancient Athens on computer. My job was to enter the data into the right fields in the database. First we had to settle on the fields and what should go where, which entailed much discussion and rule-making before the database was ready to start receiving data. Some of that time was spent learning to use a computer: I typed "help" at the blinking cursor on the screen of the terminal on the work table in the project's attic on Charles St ... "There is no help on this machine" it replied. I typed "teach" ... "Command not found". I typed "learn" ... and was presented with a slew of options like "file-handling, entering text, C-programming" most of which I worked my way through. So when the barebones presentation of fields in the database, one after the other, turned out to be hard to use, I was able to set up a rudimentary program that collected the required information, allowing multiple corrections, and finally entered the record into the database. Some of the mistakes I made were costly: "your program, enter delta, has been running for [some astronomical number of] CPU seconds — is this what you want?" asked an email from the Computer Science centre, whose machine we were using ... Soon my role had changed to teaching new data enterers how to do it, and doing minor programming to facilitate the job.

EHL: How has the Athenians Project evolved since its beginnings in the 1970s?

JT: The ATHENIANS Project has changed enormously since its modern electronic inception in the late 1970's. Originally designed as a computer venture which was set up in 2 EMPRESS relational databases, main and refs, after a decade and a half of data-entry and correction practical exigencies forced us to change our course, temporarily to postpone the online release, and to produce a hard-copy version which took the form of 22 volumes of Persons of Ancient Athens, the most recent volume published in 2016 (a 23rd, very definitely the last, is nearing completion). The TEX

programs translating the computerized data into print were developed by Philippa, who at the same time has been active in 2 other computer projects, amphoras, which goes back to her early Agora studies, and the bibliographical classical reference tool, TOCS-IN. Our commitment, however, has always been to an on-line computer resource, and to that end lately, by which I mean especially the last 4 months during the lockdown caused by the covid virus, we have been implementing a translation to Unicode. This format with polytonic epigraphical Greek is a sine qua non for online access. Once more Philippa has been doing the programming, including the invention of many features required for our peculiar needs, e.g. a full accent system for the older Attic alphabet. These have been exciting times for our Project. We can at last report that all 19 databases have now been converted to Unicode, our "athuni". It is a veritable dream come true.

EHL: Did you anticipate that the Project would be so long lasting? Is there an end in sight?

JT: As to the termination of the Project we have harbored no delusions; we knew at the very beginning that as long as there were new epigraphical and papyrological finds and discoveries in scholarly research, to say nothing of continuous computer enhancements, our Project would continue. Over the years we have widened our research to include topographical data, in particular an interactive electronic map of Attica which joins persons and places and links our databases of topographical and prosopographical information. We have also been exploring the means of digitizing squeezes, paper impressions of ancient inscriptions of which the ATHENIANS Project has a collection of about 5,000. In addition to goal of presenting digital images of these squeezes on our 2 websites we are exploring the analysis of the data with a view to joining of fragments and the identification of the ancient inscribers. For the linking of such diverse sources as epigraphy, prosopography and topography EMPRESS offers a particularly suitable environment.

PM: It was clear from the beginning that Athenians, like the Peloponnesian War, would be both great and lengthy. The only surprising thing to me is how difficult it has been to overcome the original SSHRC edict and switch from paper to screen. That is now happening with some minor programming on my part to take the information from the database dump files and convert the roll-your-own Greek transcription John has been using all these years into a more legible HTML unicode version (similar in format to the printed volumes) for online browsers. We are working also on a more efficient way of searching it than just using your browser's "find" function. In that sense there *is* an end in sight: volume 23 will be the last printed, and future updates will apply to the HTML version only. As long, that is, as there is someone (and at moment, that means only John Traill) to keep up with recent publications and add new ancient Athenians, and new information about ones already known, to the database. But even if he stopped updating it tomorrow, the mass of searchable information it contains will be a resource for classicists for a long time to come.

EHL: What were your experiences like as pioneers of digital classics? How receptive were other members of the discipline?

JT: Of course we had opposition at first. It took many attempts to win support from funding bodies and from some superiors who were "traditionalists." They had an "allergy" to new technology, but in the end the technology won, allergies were overcome, and opinions changed.

When we started we were aware of only one other computer system for ancient Greek, David Packard's Ibycus, and he, critical of its faults, urged us not to use it, but rather to develop our own system. TLG was under construction at this time and David and I discussed what format it should take. We also exchanged information with a later graduate-student friend at Harvard, Greg Crane, who was then developing his Perseus website.

ATHENIANS became a personal obsession and I must have spent 60,000 hours in-putting and correcting data. The project resembled a traditional Ontario family farm: all 3 daughters, Ariana, Larisa, and Corinna, who studied Classics at Toronto, from a very young age worked on ATHENIANS.

PM: Well ... some outright hostility but mostly indifference. Not a very humanistic activity, programming, perhaps? Some people were actively interested: Richard Tarrant, then chair of the Dept, dropped in to see what I was doing one day, and it happened that there was a notice on the screen about an error in my program in line one thousand and something. We had a pleasant half hour putting the infant database through its paces, and as he was leaving I asked if by any chance he could tell me what the line number on the screen was when he came in? He did. Perhaps it takes a certain type of mind to appreciate computers which textual critics and epigraphers (not to mention other archaeologists) have ... For me it was an escape — from the “I’ll see if I can find something you can look that up in” way in which I got answers to my questions as a student into a world of immediate, accurate feedback that keeps you moving ahead with the job and gives a sense of achievement. Virginia Grace, with whom I worked periodically on her amphora archive at the Agora in Athens, was highly dubious of our plans to computerize her files, and used to refer, pejoratively, to “pushing buttons.” Then one day she asked me if the list I had just printed out for her could by any chance be sorted — wasn’t that something computers could do? So I’m always a bit wary of people who *sound* hostile. In fact they usually come round in the end. But perhaps because there is a learning curve, and it seems so mathematical, and the “garbage in, garbage out” syndrome has produced so much bad work, humanists tend not to value “pushing buttons.”

EHL: How, in your views, can modern technology shed new light on the ancient world?

JT: The accumulation of large databases of information and the development of sophisticated large-scale data-mining techniques widen and enhance traditional tools, and also offer a vast range of new techniques in data analysis and visualization for the exploration of the ancient world.

PM: I don’t think any technology can do exactly that. New light can only be shed on the ancient world when people who want to know things think up ways to find out and apply those new ways. What modern technology can do is to keep expanding the new ways, and thus encourage us to want to know more things. How many non-Athenian women were buried in Athens with a gravestone in the form of a stele (i.e., a substantial monument)? Inscribed in verse? Between certain dates? Where did the women come to Athens from? Do we know what they did when they arrived (aside from getting buried)? Family? One might want to know, but probably not enough to spend many years extracting the data from printed sources. When the Athenians database is available to answer such a question for someone doing a search of 100,000 records in a few minutes, finding out no longer has such an exorbitant cost in terms of time. Perhaps that is as good a measure as any to judge technological advance by: what desirable end does it make possible that it was not practical to pursue before?

Retirement of Ernest Weinrib



Ernest J. Weinrib

Ernest J. Weinrib, University Professor and Cecil A. Wright Professor of Law, will be retiring after many years teaching our Department's Roman law course. Professor Weinrib first came to the Department of Classics in the early sixties as an undergraduate. After earning his PhD in Classic at Harvard University, he has taught in the Department since 1968, including during the time when he was a student at U of T's law school ("my status changing from law student to Classics professor and back every time I crossed Hoskin"). When he was appointed to the University Faculty of Law in 1972 he insisted to the Dean that he be allowed to teach one course a year in Classics. Besides standard Roman law courses, he often taught a course of his own creation on Jewish history in the Greco-Roman Period, which became one of the offerings in the then- nascent Centre for Jewish Studies. Professor Weinrib reports that "I always regarded the Department of Classics with affection and even with awe," and he is thankful that "the Department was always very accommodating to me, even to the extent of acceding to my request (when I became seriously interested in legal philosophy) to teach the Greek course on Plato's Republic." He found this experience especially memorable because he had taken the course as a student years earlier under "the indomitable John Rist." We thank Ernie for his kind words and for sharing his memories, and we wish him a wonderful retirement.