Discentes

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Letter From The Editor

Dear Reader,

_Discentes_ was founded in 2012 by the initiative of students seeking to provide a forum for undergraduates in the University of Pennsylvania Department of Classical Studies. Now, we seek to continue and improve that founding initiative by introducing a new, cleaner, and stylish layout. We have simultaneously endeavored to maintain and strengthen the standards for _Discentes_’ content.

Besides serving an undergraduate forum, we hope that _Discentes_ will shine light onto the multi-disciplinary nature and range of undergraduate talent in the Classical Studies Department. While freshman Julia Pan provides an interpretive reading of Catullus on love, senior Allyson Zucker studies the diverse functions of the Roman Forum. While junior Ray Lahiri examines ancient Skeptic thought, sophomore Nathan May compares the poetry of Virgil and Augustine. Representing the Department’s archaeological nature, junior Jeremy Cohen recounts his experience doing fieldwork in Israel. Further emphasizing an interdisciplinary approach, this edition’s faculty interviews feature Professor Thomas Tartaron, who discusses ancient harbors, and Professor Lauren Ristvet, a Professor of Anthropology who has taught Classics courses.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts that made this publication possible. First, I would like to thank our Content Editors: Nina Kaledin, Alexander King, and Reggie Kramer, along with Tuyet-Van Huynh, our Layout Editor, who deserves credit for the publication’s new appearance. Second, I would like to thank my colleague, Sean Carpenter, whose long tenure with _Discentes_ brought important experience and knowledge to the table. Finally, I would like to thank our faculty advisor, Professor Ralph Rosen, whose advocacy made this publication financially viable, and whose cheerful yet helpful counsel made preparing this publication a true pleasure.

Louis Capozzi
To begin, what is your position within the Classical Studies Department?

PROF. TARTARON — I am an associate professor, which means I have tenure, and I am an Associate Professor of Classical Studies. I teach archaeology courses. Every once in a while I teach an Ancient History course. I don’t teach any of the language courses because they don’t need me to, so I handle with our other faculty, Brian Rose and Kim Bowes, the archaeology courses.

You’re also the chair of the AAMW program.

Right, so we have a graduate program called Art and Archaeology of the Mediterranean World, which we call AAMW and I’m the chair of that. That is a graduate group which consists of faculty from a number of different departments: Classical Studies, Anthropology, Art History, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and more. This is a graduate program only, mainly PhD. We also have some terminal MA students, but it’s mainly PhDs.
What sorts of careers does the AAMW train you for?

Actually a lot. I would say by and large, people come into the program hoping to have an academic career, but several people move off into different directions, museum jobs being one of the main ones. We have several who are working museums in different parts of the world. Occasionally, there are more different tracks. People sort of go off into things like auction houses, using their art historical background, that kind of thing. There are many different things that people end up doing. Some of them end up teaching secondary school, but the majority end up in either a research shop, like a postdoc, or eventually in an academic position.

How long have you been at Penn, and what did you do before that?

I’ve been at Penn since 2006, and before that, I was an assistant professor of anthropology at Yale from 2000 to 2006, and prior to that I was at MIT as a postdoc and lecturer for 4 years.

What attracted you to Penn?

Penn’s a great job. It’s a great place to be. One of the things that was really attractive to me was the Penn Museum. It was a huge asset for Penn. So many colleagues, so many resources, so many collections down there I can use for teaching, and I can use for research. I was also attracted very much by the department, because the Classical Studies Department is one of the best such departments in the country. My colleagues are incredibly collegial, so it’s a great group of people. They really understand what an archaeologist does, so it was a great fit for me.

What research area do you focus on?

I do archaeology, mainly of Greece, so I’ve worked in Greece since 1988 continuously. That’s a long time. Over my career, I’ve worked in many parts of Greece on many different
projects. My main expertise is in what we would call late pre-history, especially Mycenaean Greece. People generally know about the Mycenaens through Homer, who writes of a great race of people that participated in the Trojan War, something that happened long before his time. Most people would associate those people with the Mycenaens. That’s about 1500 to 1100 B.C. I work in that area by doing field archaeology and also research, but recently I’ve branched out into other things. For instance, I do ceramic petrography, which is a laboratory analysis of pottery. You make thin sections and compare the mineralogy with local geology, looking at things like sourcing and trade.

Using anthropology, I’ve also expanded my research to include the use of ethnography and ethnoarchaeology, so I’ve got a couple projects going where I’m interviewing older fishermen and women who live in coastal areas. I’m doing this in Greece and also in India. Those interviews are helping me to understand what these kinds of communities of fisherman and coastal people are like, because within Mycenaean archaeology, one of my main interests is harbors and maritime connections.

**Before you started your work on maritime transport and commerce, had there been much research about Mycenaean trade networks, or not really?**

It’s a really dynamic and growing area of interest. Basically, in the past, say, 30, 40 years, the main interest has been trying to trace long distance trade, so the Mycenaens’ trading with the Egyptians, the people in Anatolia, the Hittites, and with people in the Levant, like in Ugarit. There’s a lot of interest in that long distance trade. What really was missing was, first of all, any notion of where the actual harbors were, where the ships were, and also any sense of what local-scale maritime networks were like. Greece has the longest coastline in Europe, and so you’re never far from the coast. Locally, there are lots of small scale networks of people involving trading, intermarriage, and all kinds of economic
and social networks. Those are really ignored. What I've been doing with my recent research has been, first, to try to establish ways of finding where these ancient harbors were. It's difficult because the coastline has changed so much over the last 3000+ years. Second, to try to come up with ways to understand these small scale interactions.

**How does one reconstruct an ancient harbor? Are there telltale signs, does it require some specific technology, or is there a lot of inferential guess work?**

Yes, it's difficult because as I said, the coastline has changed so much. What you really need is the help of geologists and geomorphologists, and people who study coastline change. It's a very specialized field. They can look at telltale signs in land forms, they can do underwater work, and they can also do things like coring where you pull up a long, cylindrical core of sediment, and by examining characteristics like microfauna, you can learn a lot about the coastal environments because they're sensitive to salinity and temperature, so you can look at features like whether the area was an open sea environment or a lagoonal environment or a lake, and then you can study that change over time.

In Greece, there are big problems like siltation of rivers, but the main problem is tectonics. Earthquakes are constantly moving the coastline up and down, and with these major geological changes, you can render a perfectly good harbor unusable, or you can create new harbors. I had a case where one area had a lovely sheltered harbor today, seemingly the location of a Bronze Age harbor, but it actually didn't exist in the Bronze Age. But in a different area, where there's a terrible location for a harbor now, it turned out to be the Bronze Age harbor. It was only through the technology methods I discussed that we were able to figure this out.

**Compared to more mainland studies, is the material you focus on primarily geological in nature? You've discussed a lot about coring and topographical deviation over time. Do you also examine coastal villages or sites of previous occupation?**
Yes, the thing that started one of my research projects was, during a search for harbors, we happened upon a major architectural settlement called Kalamianos. This was again a place that’s not a harbor today. By studying that settlement, we initiated all these questions about what the function of this coastal site was, and we wanted to know, was there a harbor there? By going through all of this research, we discovered, yes, there was a great harbor there. This helps to explain what the site was doing there.

When designing a research project that involves a topic as broad and complex as trade, does the site come first, or does the topic come first, or is it kind of a combination of both?

Ideally, the research question comes first. That’s what happened with us. We wanted to study maritime networks in this particular part of Greece, so we designed a project where we would search along the coastline, and we would create a GIS model about where the more likely locations would be, and then we’d just go out and look. This is how we actually found Kalamianos, along with another major site that we also investigated.

What do you consider your greatest finding or discovery at Kalamianos?

People sometimes ask me what’s been my greatest discovery, and I think it’s finding this site. The thing that’s so remarkable about Kalamianos is that it’s a Mycenaean site that is unique: the architecture is still standing above ground. The foundations are standing maybe up to a meter and a half tall, and you can see building foundations across the entire settlement, except for the part that’s submerged underwater. All other Mycenaean sites are buried sites. This gave us an unusual opportunity, without having to excavate, to really be able to map out an entire town, which is unheard of. We can now talk about not just a site and not just a harbor, but a micro-region that’s interacting with other sites around the Aegean Sea.
Was there anything surprising that you found at this site that questioned your previous understanding of trade in Mycenae?

Yes, probably the main thing that really surprised us was how monumental the architecture was. This led us to believe that this place was probably a colony founded by Mycenae itself. We think it’s possibly Mycenae’s main harbor on the Saronic Gulf. Mycenae likely came in and founded this harbor for economic and military reasons. We actually did the walk from our site to Mycenae, which took us 13 hours to complete. It was a rugged walk; however, one could easily do that in a couple of days.

In your ethnographical study, you’re interviewing modern people about their relationship with harbors. Have you been able to extrapolate connections between modern day coastal villages and those that are around several thousand years ago?

Yes, that’s a really good question, and that’s the main challenge. Obviously, the modern people are not ancient people, and with a 3000 year separation, there are vast changes over time. What we are really trying to figure out is whether there are kinds of universal ways that people on coastlines interact with the sea and the way they form relationships with nearby settlements. That’s the reason we want to interview the oldest people possible. Really, World War II is the frontier of change. People living before World War II in Greece, and in many other parts of the world, were using traditional techniques that were not vastly different from those of ancient times. After World War II, the infusion of technology really changed everything. Therefore, we want to find elderly people who have real memories of this.

We’ve been able to identify kinds of patterns, of people living in Greece, but also in India, about the ways that coastal people transmit knowledge from one generation to another, about the ways that people on coastlines are often marginalized by inland centers of power. Because of that, they develop worlds of their own. They develop distinct identities. These are the
kinds of things that one can see not only in the ancient world but also in the modern world.

We looked at those kinds of things, and every once in a while, you find a really startling parallel. One of these was a fishing technique. In India, there’s a type of fishing where you take a little boat out and release a big net, which is connected by 2 ropes to the shore. Then, 5 or 6 men on each side of the rope slowly pull in the net. In Greece, there’s the same thing in modern times called “gripos.” The startling thing was I found a depiction of men doing exactly the same thing on 2 pieces of Greek painted pottery from the 12th century B.C. Every once in a while, you get one of these eureka moments, where you realize things may not have changed so much. Thus, there are certainly justifications for doing ethnographical work.

Speaking more broadly about Classical Studies, where do you see it heading in the next 50 years?

That’s a big question. Obviously, humanities are kind of under attack with this emphasis on STEM and declining resources. But I do think that Classical Studies remain vibrant. A Classical Studies degree can lead in many different directions. For example, lots of Classical Studies grads go to law school. The major allows you to become really skilled at language and at communication. Such skills are not as well served in STEM areas, and yet, those are skills that everyone needs to get by, and to really excel in the modern world. It’s all about communication.

To students interested in getting involved in archaeology or becoming archaeologists, any advice?

One thing is that it’s very easy to do. I always like to say archaeology is for everyone. For students that are interested in going on a dig or having an archaeological experience, there are so many ways to do it. What they really need is a little bit of guidance from a professor to help them decide what would be the best entry for them, like a field school.
It’s not just about “doing” archaeology, it’s also a cultural experience. It can involve teamwork, group living, learning about new cultures, and experiencing modern countries like Greece or Italy. All of these things are great bonuses, so I think it’s more than just learning “how to” do archaeology.
At several critical junctures, both Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Book One of Augustine’s *Confessions* invoke an ancient critique of representational art. The poet – composing a nationalist epic – as well as the theologian – recounting his reaction to the poem some four hundred years later – draw upon a discourse inaugurated by Plato in the fourth century B.C.E. The various concerns leveled at poetry in the *Republic* – most importantly its lack of truth-value and engendering of destructive emotion – resurface in telling ways throughout the epic and autobiography alike. When Virgil expresses a painful awareness of the limits of his craft, or gestures towards its potentially destructive emotional effects, he registers self-doubts that will be magnified in Augustine’s condemnation. In both the implicit self-questioning and the explicit rebuke, Plato’s critique is powerfully put into effect.

A primary item of Platonist critique, operative in both Virgil and Augustine’s works, is the familiar accusation of falsehood: “An image-maker, a representer, understands only appearance, while reality is beyond him... So... we’d be perfectly justified in taking hold of him and placing him in the same category as a painter.”¹ In such an idealist framework, the work of the painter or poet is inherently severed from truth; inevitably, the picture or poem remains a counterfeit of reality. Moreover, beyond this preoccupation with truth–
value is a fear of the emotional reactions provoked by the mimetic picture or poem: “and a further point of resemblance is that the part of the mind he communicates with is not the best part, but something else… he destroys the rational part by feeding and fattening up this other part, and this is equivalent to someone destroying the more civilized members of a community by presenting ruffians with political power.” The work of the tragic poet, just like that of the painter, “irrigates and tends to these things when they should be left to wither, and it makes them our rulers when they should be our subjects…”² Poetry, which Plato sees as intrinsically mendacious and productive of passion and irrationality, assumes a multidimensional threat – one that will be portrayed in consequential ways by Virgil and Augustine.

As early as Book One of the *Aeneid*, the Platonist critique of poetry is brought to the fore. After arriving in Carthage, Aeneas takes a tour of the temple Dido had dedicated to Juno. After the shaken hero exclaims to his friend that “Troy’s renown will yet be your salvation”³ Virgil offers a striking portrayal of his reaction: “And he fed his soul on empty pictures / Sighing, weeping, his face a flood of tears / As he scanned the murals of the Trojan War.”⁴ The Latin *inani* (empty or vain) carries no positive connotation whatsoever; rather, it stresses the mural’s troublesome hollowness, its necessary severance from reality. When one considers the shared limits of poetic and visual representation – something we have already seen outlined in the *Republic* – this critique of the artwork would seem to gesture towards something larger. Indeed, it serves as an interrogation of nothing less than Virgil’s entire poetic project: questioning his own role as a chronicler of Aeneas’ journey, the poet fears his likeness to Plato’s “image-maker,” the “representer” who “understands only appearance, while reality is beyond him.” At this somber moment, Virgil registers a real ambivalence about the purpose of art, painfully questioning its utility. Using the Carthaginian mural as a stand-in for the *Aeneid* itself, the poet confronts

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the possibility that his poetic effort is a fundamentally futile and fraudulent one.

In addition to examining the deceptive nature of mimesis (literary or artistic imitation), Virgil – through the character of Dido – examines the further Platonist claim that poetic representations incite destructive emotions. Indeed, the Carthaginian Queen is led to her destruction partly by means of her lover’s storytelling: her powerful affective response, after hearing Aeneas’ story, only serves to embolden her ultimately fatal passion. Plato, we must recall, famously remarked that the poet/painter works by “gratifying” the “irrational side” of their reader/viewer, facilitating a dangerous emotional instability. With this in mind, Aeneas’ account of his people’s suffering – a narrative that enthralls Dido – further inflames

5. Plat. Rep., 70, 75.
the irrationality of which the philosopher speaks. Accelerating the Queen’s descent into madness is the emotional impact of her lover’s representation. In awe of “What the Fates have put him through at sea, / The wars he painted, fought to the bitter end…”⁶ Dido is plunged into a state of intense desire. Recalling Plato’s accusation that the poet “gratifies… an aspect which hungers after tears and the satisfaction of having cried until one can cry no more,”⁷ the Queen yearns to hear again the account of her beloved’s suffering: “Mad to hear once more the labors of Ilium, / She demands the story again, and again she hangs / on every word.”⁸ (emphasis mine) As illustrated by Plato’s language, Dido remains hungry to hear of Trojan hardship, enraptured by an account of death and woe. Aeneas’s narrative, as it becomes clear, exerts a powerful control over his lover as she is drawn in, rendered obsessive, and provoked to emotional excess. As the book comes to its deadly close, Dido (the loser) serves as a cautionary counterpoint to Aeneas (the winner): her passion is the tragic inversion of the hero’s stoic resolve. Abandoned by her lover, the Queen ends up losing everything; poetry, and its dominantly emotional impact, is partly to blame.

Written some four hundred years after the Aeneid, and eight hundred after the Republic, the first book of Augustine’s Confessions draws on the same critiques of mimesis. In the opening section of his spiritual autobiography, in which he describes his childhood reaction to Virgil’s epic, the theologian invokes the familiar Platonist concerns. Just as Virgil did in the scene of the Carthaginian temple, Augustine adopts the emphasis on art’s fraudulence and insubstantiality. The epic, over the course of his account, is described as “vain,” “false,” an “empty fable.”⁹ We are not far here, then, from either the ontologically inferior “appearances” of Plato’s Republic or the pictura inani of Juno’s temple. Poetry – appearance rather than

reality, shadow rather than substance – is in all these cases predetermined as an empty, diminished thing.

Even more crucial to Augustine than the claims of poetry’s insubstantiality is the fear of its emotional impact. Plato’s concern that mimetic art “communicates” not with “the best part of the mind” but “something else” here finds another powerful expression.¹⁰ In a famous passage, Augustine writes, “... I was later forced to learn about the wanderings... of Aeneas... and to weep over the death of a Dido who took her own life from love. In reading this, O God my life, I myself was meanwhile dying by my alienation from you, and my miserable condition in that respect brought no tear to my eyes.”¹¹ As his account indicates, the pathos of Dido’s death is so overwhelming as to cause the suppression of spiritual concerns. Weeping over her fate, Augustine finds a perverted kind of pleasure in his reaction: “Had I been forbidden to read this story, I would have been sad that I could not read what made me sad.”¹² Such a sentiment recalls the irrational desire of Plato’s playgoer who “hungered after tears and the satisfaction of having cried until one can cry no more.”¹³ Indeed, the queen is acting upon that part of his mind that “urges us to remember the bad times and to express our grief, and which is insatiably greedy for tears.”¹⁴ Operative in the experiences of the Athenian spectator, Dido, and her fourth century sympathizer alike is the desire to hear a tale of loss and pain: a tragic play, the Trojan’s defeat, the suicide of an abandoned lover. Losing self-control, replacing

¹⁰ Plat. Rep., 70.
¹³ Plat. Rep., 75.
¹⁴ Plat. Rep., 74.
reason with passion, they fall prey to poetry’s emotional manipulation.

With different intentions and in different degrees, both the author of the *Aeneid* and his most prominent fourth-century reader invoke the Platonist critique of mimesis. A fear of poetry’s fraudulence and its irrational emotional effects – built into the epic as fleeting moments of self-doubt – are made more explicit in Augustine’s account; what serve as brief questionings in Virgil’s work are given full expression in the saint’s harsh censure. The threat of poetry’s inherent “emptiness,” as well as its natural “irrigation” of those things which “reason” should suppress, arguably falls away in the *Aeneid* as the romance section makes way for “a higher order of things... a greater work”¹⁵: the teleological, epic conclusion. The famous “pictures” in this second half, the images on Vulcan’s shield, are prophetically true rather than false and empty, producing awe and wonder rather than “over-indulgent” grief.

However, as Augustine’s account of the *Aeneid* demonstrates – as does the experience of countless other schoolboys, writers, and composers from Henry Purcell to Hector Berlioz – Virgil could not suppress such “over-indulgence.” After all, it is the tragic pathos of Dido that has most powerfully aroused affective response. When later readers, medieval and renaissance schoolboys, and Baroque operagoers encounter the character, Plato’s greatest fears are all too often realized; Dido’s fate kindles that part of their minds that for the philosopher must urgently be suppressed. Weeping for a poetic fiction, they are ruled by passion rather than reason, “regressive” self-pity rather than “productive” confidence, “not the best part, but something else.”

¹⁵ Verg. A., 6.52-53.
Is it better to have loved and lost than not to love at all? Catullus expresses another opinion: “Odi et amo” (I hate and I love).¹ In just four simple syllables, the late Roman Republic poet Catullus is able to convey the raw, inner turmoil that love and passion wreak upon him. Like many disillusioned people, Catullus hoped that love would make him whole in some way, but through his tumultuous relationship with Lesbia, he discovers that being in “love” only makes him insecure and obsessive. Throughout his lyric poetry, especially in his polymetra and epigrams, Catullus poignantly captures the insecurity that stems from the vicious cycle of falling in love, betrayal of foedus, and heartbreak.

While falling in love, the line between passion and obsession is often blurred. Catullus’ concept of love is similar to Plato’s theory “divine madness,” which presents love as an uncontrollable part of human nature. David Konstan details: “Amor was a spell of overriding passion, a fit of madness, and the

¹ Catullus, Epigramma 85

Codward painting of Lesbia with her Sparrow-1916
lover was regarded as the subject of temporary insanity."² In Catullus’ case, he placed an incredible amount of value on Lesbia’s beauty, so much that he began to put Lesbia on a pedestal. Catullus finds Lesbia to be the most beautiful girl in the world: “Lesbia formosa est, quae cum pulcherrima tota est” (Lesbia is beautiful, not only is she all of these things and still the most beautiful. She is so attractive that she is, “Tum omnibus una omnis subripuit Veneres” (So much so that

she stole all the Venuses from all together).³ By comparing Lesbia to Venus, Catullus is using a standard of comparison that would have been considered very high, because Venus is the standard of beauty for the Romans.⁴ Catullus continues to construct this pedestal when Catullus asks for “da mi basia mille,” (give me a thousand kisses).⁵ At first, a thousand kisses may seem undyingly romantic, but Catullus wants to give Lesbia even more kisses: “deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum”(then immediately a thousand then a hundred). Is this basial affection coming from an outpouring of affection or an unhealthy attachment? It seems like Catullus is leaning more towards obsession and codepency. He calls Lesbia his “mea vita” (my life) and hopes that their love will be “perpetuum” (everlasting).⁶ Co-dependent people often subvert their own needs, which put them in the position of trying to receive love from a very difficult person”.⁷ Catullus is idealistic in his relationship with Lesbia, however, his obsession with her could easily turn their relationship unpleasant.

Catullus believes that each relationship has a contract of trust, a foedus. The person breaking the contract has more power in the now unbalanced relationship than the other, and the other person in the relationship is subjected to betrayal and confusion. Patrick McGushin explains foedus further: “the concept of married love as a foedus, a contract which depends for its validity and permanence on the observance by each partner...that is the essential ingredient of such a union.”⁸ Catullus writes: “aeternum hoc sanctae foedus amicitiae” (our whole life this eternal pact of holy friendship). Many themes of Catullus’ writing appear in this phrase. For instance, there is the mention of aeternum, or eternal. Forms of aeternum or perpetuum occur frequently throughout Catullus’ poems, which demonstrates the ongoing trust and faith that Catullus has in his relationship with Lesbia.⁹ He thinks that their foedus is holy and will never be broken.⁸ Also, the usage of amicitiae in this phrase indicates that their relationship right now, according to Catullus, is a balanced one. In true friendships,
there is a power balance, because friends do not need each other to “complete” each other’s lives. Cicero supports this general sentiment from his essay De Amicitiae: “But here is another golden rule in friendship: put yourself on a level with your friend”.¹⁰ Relationships, on the other hand, lead to one person depending on another for a fulfilling life. In a clever, but painful analogy that Catullus makes between Lesbia’s bird and himself, he reveals that, “digitum dare appetenti/ et acris solet incitare morsus, / cum desiderio meo nitenti / carum nescio quid lubet iocari” (she is accustomed to give the top of her finger, / And to provoke sharp bites, / Whenever it is pleasing for my shining sweetheart / To make some dear joke);” and this demonstrates the dangerous situation in which Lesbia takes advantage of and takes him for granted, like her bird.¹¹ The pain that Catullus feels is expressed here: “nulla fides ullo fuit unquam foedere tanta, / quanta in amore tuo ex parte reperta mea est” (there was no treaty with as much trust / as was found in that of my love for you).¹² It is evident that Catullus trusted and loved Lesbia very much, thus his later pain stemmed from a relationship built upon a foundation of co-dependence and an uneven power dynamic because of the betrayal of their foedus.

Betrayal and heartbreak aside, was the relationship between Catullus and Lesbia truly love? Catullus is more self-aware of this issue in later poems. He bemoans: “cum ventitābās quō puella ducēbat” (when you would always come where the girl led).¹³ This sentence clearly demonstrates the power imbalance in their relationship. He always followed Lesbia, even though following “the girl” may not have been the happiest path for him. Many psychologists often say that relationships are built on compromise; therefore one-sided relationships are doomed to fail.¹⁴ There’s something so alluring about Lesbia that makes Catullus remind himself that what’s over is over, but he can’t stop thinking about her: “Miser Catulle, dēsinās ineptīre, / et quod vidēs perīsse perditum dūcās” (Wretched Catullus, stop being a fool, / and what you

¹⁰ Cicero, De Amicitiae trans. E.S. Shuckburgh.
see has perished, consider perished). Typically in Catullus’ poetry, the word _miser_ is seen in the phrase me _miserum_ (o wretched me),¹⁴ but perhaps Catullus uses the third person in poem 8 to emotionally distance himself from the situation. It helps to talk about one’s relationships through the lens that one is a character instead of a real live person. The heartbreak that comes from solely obsessing over love is the ultimate destruction. This destruction or _excruciare_, to torture, is central to the themes of both poems 76 and 85. In poem 76, he knows that Lesbia is ungrateful and asks himself, “*quare iam te cur amplius excrucies?*” (So why do you keep torturing yourself further?).¹⁵ Then in poem 85 he laments, “*nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior*” (I do not know, but I feel it being done and I am tormented).¹⁶ Notice the difference in the person of the verbs. ‘Excrucies’ is in the second person, while ‘excrucior’ is in the first person. It is possible that by using the second person, Catullus the poet, who strives to approach love rationally, is scolding Catullus the character. When he later writes _odi et amo_.,¹⁷ he uses first person because both Catulluses have finally accepted the torment of love.

The transition from third to second to first person is very deliberate, and also reflects Catullus’ innermost thought process and his transition to acceptance. Simply put, his feelings towards Lesbia are ambivalent. While he hates and loves at the same time and is tormented, it is better to have loved than to not have loved at all because Catullus believes that the grand purpose of life is to experience this relentless cycle of love. Moreover, Catullus transformed the pain from this cycle into art, which is attractive to humans because its pain and sorrow are intimately relevant to personal experiences.¹⁸ No one can reveal the richness of life as a whole, but artists can unveil personal wisdom that they have gained from their own life. For example, Catullus laments, “*qui illius culpa ceedit uelut prati / ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam / tactus aratro est*” (which, by her fault, like the flower at / the farthest meadow, dies after it was touched by the plow / passing by).¹⁹

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This is such a startling image of pain and loss that can only be comforted through artistic expression. Catullus’ pain from his relationship of falling in love with, being betrayed and heartbroken by Lesbia has been turned into poetry that expresses emotions that are timelessly transcendental.

**Works Cited**


When George Washington University Professor, Tel Kabri Excavation Co-Director, and impromptu limerick enthusiast Eric H. Cline notified me of his “just having happened to stumble upon” my first post on the Penn Museum website, I realized that I had a tangible audience for my story. [25 June 2015]

This summer, I took the advice of classics professors (“text comes alive in the dirt”), former students (“studying abroad, if done right, is one of the most worthwhile college experiences”), and my family (“spend time in Israel as a twenty-something”), as I found myself digging precise trenches just miles south of the Lebanese border.

My path to Tel Kabri consisted of some targeted Internet searching and peppering my professors with questions. “Of course I know Eric Cline,” Prof. Jeremy McInerney told me in office hours. “He and I played cards together in Athens.” A few months later, I was on a nine-hour voyage across the Atlantic: seated in Clássica, drinking Italian coffee, and on my way towards an archaeological site located just a few kilometers from the Mediterranean coast. On the lands of Kibbutz Kabri, every other year for the past decade, Professor Cline has led a team of colleagues, post-docs, and students
from U.S. institutions and the University of Haifa on coordinated excavations of a pre-biblical, Minoan-era¹ Canaanite palace. Their aim was to find residue of the oldest wine in the world at the same site where Israeli archaeologists discovered a Minoan-style fresco in the 1980’s.² Instead of mosaic tiles, our all-hands-in-trench findings emerged as fired Canaanite clay.

Walking to a Tel Aviv station, I checked to ensure my suitcase had all the essentials: handy trowel, thick textbook, field notebook; lightweight clothes, long-sleeved, and open to receiving a plethora of dirt stains.³ I am not one to wake before dawn’s rosy-fingered arrival. But starting on that first dig-morning, around 4:45, I arose before l’élévation of the sun levantin. Accompanying me on that fateful bus were roughly thirty undergrads and graduate students, roughing it with hiking boots and water jugs, trowels and pencils. Many students hailed from Cline’s own GW or Andrew J. Koh’s Brandeis. Yet, I found myself immediately welcomed as “Jeremy, from Penn!” by both professors—each having a red-and-blue Ph.D.—leading to easy conversations.

1. Estimates of the Middle Bronze Age’s exact dates vary, but they hover around 1700 B.C., which was precise enough for publication in the New York Times. (See note 9.)

2. For more on the actual history of the place, see Cline’s and Yasur-Landa’s (very readable) article “Poetry in Motion: Canaanite Rulership and Aegean Narrative at Kabri” in EPOS: Reconsidering Greek Epic and Aegean Bronze Age Archaeology, ed. Morris and Laffineur (Liege.
Professor Assaf Yasser-Landau, formerly of the 1980s New Wave music movement and now of the maritime and coastal archaeology program at the University of Haifa, consistent mutual reference to Kafka or *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* accomplished similar geniality. They all lent credibility to the suspicion that such a person has to be perhaps a little odd, dedicating a life to the palatial economics and intercultural trade of the Bronze Age Mediterranean. As they watched us work through six-hour shifts, taking notes or photographs or turns with the pick-axe, professors smilingly sold graduate programs (and/or personality cults). Many word games, logic puzzles, and contrived allusions later, Assaf assured me I might just be idiosyncratic enough for the profession.

Whether I was qualified for the dig’s manual labor was another matter entirely. My “un-apologetically lanky” physique may have helped me blend into Tel Aviv bars, but my muscles sure paid the piper—pick-axing, crouching, balancing, carrying, emptying, and high-fiving—at the local rate of 12 Israeli new shekel/day, or whatever an after-shift non-iced coffee (with ice) cost at the local gas station. It was rewarding work, though, worth the increased appetite for hummus and penchant for falling asleep at 8:30 pm. And what a tan! Armistice lines ran along my legs, upper arms, and lower neck, separating two Euxenine shades between which only a 1028-pack Crayola could distinguish.

Still, the work went ever on, as the self-described Clininates more deeply and widely delved into proto-Canaanites’ palatial storerooms. Depending on your politics within the archaeology community and willingness to accept data collected by first-of-its-kind, on-site residue analysis, you may well nod toward Kabri’s claim of “world’s oldest-known palatial wine cellar.” Indeed, even if you are skeptical of *The New York Times*’ public-interest journalism⁴ and member-updated Web pages⁵ there is still great merit in discovering wine residue. Especially if said residue is indicative of recipe-based mixology, in dozens of storage jars housed within several

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5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Kabri
separate rooms, adjoining uniquely paired Syrian-style architecture and Aegean-style frescoes, all abandoned enigmatically some 3,700 years ago. And if the wine’s derived ingredients imply trade with far-flung parts of Asia in the early second millennium BCE. The jury is out until Koh’s⁶ final lab reports are in, along with the triad’s subsequent publications.

All in all, it was exhilarating stuff, made more so by sleeplessness and more than one double shift. I still keep in contact with some of the other students, who are pursuing various permutations of geology, ancient history, classical languages, and literature. Some were graduate students, who offered valuable advice on the initial postgrad forays into academia. Some were peers, exploring intellectual opportunities at respective institutions. One was a rising high school senior who, sure of a future in archaeology, subsequently visited me at Penn a few weeks into the semester.

Feeling four-millennia-old pottery and soil affirmed a personal interest in a world otherwise accessed only via Wikipedia pages, Penguin translations, or Ancient Greek grammars. Four incredible weeks leave me with a more holistic approach to and appreciation of antiquity.

The problem in setting out a reasonable and fair account of Skepticism often arises in the very complexities that give it its unique strengths. For every scholar who insists on one understanding or reading of the philosophy’s central sources, there are a myriad of opposing viewpoints. The lacunae in time and the textual record that stand between us and the skeptics certainly do not assist the eager student in any meaningful way. Consequently, any reconstructive efforts require a good deal of creativity and a delicate touch so as not to obliterate the nuances of this rather singular philosophy. Even some of the central tenets and problems of this philosophy require care and attention lest they be lost in the dustbin of history. Two such central problems in skeptic epistemology—or rather, which arise in the concerns of skeptic epistemology—are those of ataraxia (ἀταραξία) and apraxia (ἀπραξία). The former consists of the bliss asserted to arise in the final suspension of belief and the withholding of assent in ἐποχή (ἐποχή). Meanwhile, the latter describes a central problem in skepticism, namely, that of how one is to act when all certainty is gone from life. As a mode of argumentation, Skepticism was and is strong, but when it came to the problem of apraxia, it took a level of philosophical systematization that would carry Skepticism away from its dialectical roots.

There are essentially two schools of skeptic thought attested during the Hellenistic era: those of the Pyrrhonists (or Pyrrhonians) and those of the Academics. The latter arose in
what had been Plato’s academy in the mid third century B.C. due to the innovations of the Academy’s leader, Arcesilaus, who, according to Diogenes Laertius, “was the first to suspend [making] assertions because of the contradiction among arguments. He was also the first to argue both sides of a question and the first to change the doctrine handed down by Plato....”¹ Arcesilaus, by all reports, was a controversial and infuriating figure, who took no small pleasure in the polemic aspect of philosophy, particularly when it came to agitating the Stoics. In this, he came equipped with a honed and updated dialectical method drawn from the earlier dialogues of Plato.² Indeed, Numenius said that “nobody knew about Arcesilaus’ stand any more than they knew about which side the son of Tydaeus was on, about whom Homer said that no one knew whether he sided with the Trojans or the Achaeans,” as well as that “[he] took precautions so that he would not have difficulties, never appearing to endorse a dogma, but rather emitting the suspension of judgment for his own protection, like the ink emitted by a squid.”³ Arcesilaus was leery of the validity of sense impressions, as all skeptics were to varying extents, but the specific cause of this caution is rather uncertain. For Thorsrud, Arcesilaus’s argument against knowledge built upon kataleptic sense impressions is not due to his own commitment to this view, but rather due to a dialectical strategy designed to “[lead] his dogmatic interlocutors to admit that they themselves are unwillingly committed to it.”⁴ Just as Arcesilaus never endorsed dogma, so he designed his argumentative strategy in order that it never allowed space for the unquestioned acceptance of dogma.

This view of the philosopher is premised upon a view of Arcesilaus deeply indebted to the Socratic method and particularly to the style of argumentation carried out in the earlier dialogues, where, in the end, no lasting conclusion is made either by Socrates or his interlocutor. Consequently Thorsrud views Arcesilaus as primarily teaching others to suspend their judgment, rather than rely upon dogmatic

Stoic beliefs regarding the nature of knowledge. A.A. Long shares a similar view, regarding any position Arcesilaus (and by extension, anyone following in his particular approach) might pick up as held entirely for the purposes of counter-argumentation, rather than for the purposes of forwarding a particular understanding of knowledge, and, in doing so, commit to any belief regarding the truth value of a given argument.⁵

In this regard, Arcesilaus is indebted to a revolution in the realm of epistemological inquiry that seems to have taken place around the start of the Hellenistic era. As Gisela Striker informs, “Towards the end of the fourth century B.C., Greek epistemology appears to undergo some dramatic changes. New technical terms are introduced, indicating a shift of interest from the question ‘what is knowledge?’—assuming that there is such a thing—to ‘is there any knowledge?’”⁶ This revolution serves as the grounds from which the Skeptic schools of thought would emerge. This question too serves as a one of the major indications of the alteration of the modes of inquiry that had served Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in good stead, a refinement of the philosophical language to reflect increasingly complicated and abstruse problems. From this re-centering of the central question of epistemology arose the potential for philosophers such as the skeptics to further challenge these central assumptions. For the skeptics, identifying self-evident truth could not lead to objective knowledge, as earlier philosophers had argued; without a foundation upon which truth can be established, this compositional work is impossible.⁷ While later skeptics would complicate this somewhat, an analysis of such will have to wait briefly for Pyrrho to have his turn first.

What Arcesilaus is to the Academic skeptics, Pyrrho is to the Pyrrhonists and more. By all accounts, Pyrrho was a formidable thinker and an even more sincere practitioner of the philosophy he preached, who apparently once issued a remark.

to lament the seeming difficulties of divesting “oneself entirely of one’s humanity.”⁸ As might be imagined from such a statement, Pyrrho’s reputation to the skeptic community was formidable; as Groarke argues, it is perhaps due to Pyrrho’s strength and conviction that he was such a valuable thinker to the Pyrrhonist tradition: he promises a certainty that finds its origin in the ability to reject unsubstantiated and unverifiable claims.⁹ The differences between the Pyrrhonist school and

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⁸ Burnyeat (1997), 57.
⁹ Groarke (1990), 91.
the Academic school are several, but in practice are difficult if not impossible to parse out, because, as the magisterial Jacques Brunschwig posits, “the two traditions were [mutually] contaminated from the start.”¹⁰ Arising in the same culture in similar philosophical climates, and sharing a fundamental principle (albeit one interpreted in several different ways), the two skeptic schools were indebted to each other where they did not draw upon the same sources. Indeed, in some accounts, Aenesidemus founded the Pyrrhonist school centuries after Pyrrho, inspired by his predecessor’s resolute example, who “split off from the dogmatism of the Academy of his time.”¹¹ Furthermore, it is very difficult to establish the differences between two philosophical schools that, as Striker points out somewhat dramatically, “advocate no theories at all.”¹² For the sake of time and space, however, I shall avoid discussing the overall differences between the schools much further. Suffice it to say that the differences arise primarily in methodology, where the Academics were always more interested in controverting philosophical positions, whereas Pyrrhonists did not engage with the dogmatist Stoics or Epicureans on the same level, rather arguing by opposing the “sense impressions or unreflective ordinary beliefs.”¹³

Pyrrho envisioned skepticism as having a significant moral component or moral promise, whereby *aporia* (ἀπορία, the state of being at a loss, having withheld all assent to sense impressions) is one of total tranquility.¹⁴ In contrast, Arcesilaus, following in the tradition of Socrates, believed quite the opposite, since for Socrates “aporia is a spur to further inquiry, not a welcome state of calm….“¹⁵ The state of realizing one’s total inability to know anything, for Pyrrho, was one of perfect bliss, where you can be disturbed in no way by no one. There can be no fear or other negative emotions in a state of *epoché* (ἐποχή—suspension). Burnyeat clarifies, saying, “Remove belief, and the emotions will disappear; as fear, for example fades when one is dissuaded of one’s belief that the thing one was afraid of is dangerous.

At least to the extent that emotions derive from reason and thought, they must disappear when judgment is suspended on every question of fact or value.”¹⁶

Yet here the problem of apraxia enters. If one is in a state of ataraxia, where is the instigation to act? Are we not for intents and purposes mere vegetables should we neglect this faculty? This is the area where the Stoics and Epicureans found the most ammunition to hurl against the Skeptics, in arguing that Skepticism is essentially a passive mode of argumentation and when it comes to promoting action is entirely inadequate. In such a way Arcesilalus offered an argument against the problem of apraxia by controverting the Stoic preoccupation with the issue of assent and arguing that assent was not an integral component of action.¹⁷ Instead, he argues that to act reasonably would be to act correctly, and that thereby one can lead a happy life even without ever committing oneself to a sense impression.¹⁸ However, the dogmatists reaction to this would clearly be that without assent, this would be to reduce the actions of the wise to the instinctual reflexes of animals. This method of argumentation is also an area where the skeptics would always face significant trouble because, as Gisela Striker points on in a later addendum to her work comparing the Pyrrhonists and Academics, “the problem is that in order to get rid of philosophy, the Skeptic himself has to engage in philosophy.”¹⁹ Carneades, faced with the problems of Arcesilalus’s skepticism, emerged to challenge the dogmatists by doing exactly that. Far more of a philosopher in the Hellenistic mold than his predecessor in Arcesilalus,²⁰ Carneades was more willing to engage in active philosophizing, rather than simply rebutting opponents.²¹

While this makes Carneades particularly valuable, it simultaneously made the Skeptics vulnerable in the future.²² He held that it was “possible to adhere to a persuasive impression without assenting to it.” By that, he means that the Skeptic could assent to the proposition that something appeared

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to be so, without ever committing oneself to it.⁵ In doing this, Carneades forwarded a different notion of assent than that which the Stoics believed. In doing so, it seems likely he primarily intended just to argue against the Stoics, but he wound up so producing the “official epistemological position of [the skeptic] school.”⁶ The result of this would be a state of affairs such that Aenesidemus could accuse the disputations between the later skeptics and Stoics as being “Stoics fighting Stoics,”⁷ due to the way that, arguing against Chrysippus, Carneades wound up suffusing the language of skepticism with Stoic terminology.

The end result of Carneades’ answer to the problem of apraxia was that he accidentally caused a systematization of Academic

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skepticism that would result, ultimately, in the conversion of Antiochus of Ascalon. The decline of the pure skepticism was imminent, but the traditions of uncompromising anti-dogmatism that originated with Pyrrho and Arcesilaus would remain strong in the Pyrrhonist school of skeptic thought, and would go on to shape modern philosophy when the nascent Descartes was exposed to them many centuries later.

**Works Cited**


The Roman Forum is a place full of contradictions and unity. On a comprehensive time scale, the forum grows from a semi-random connection of buildings to the monumental center of the most powerful nation in the Mediterranean. On the other hand, from day to day, the Roman forum changed according to the Roman calendar, transforming from the holy grounds of a religious festival to bustling markets, and from a political battleground to a judicial arena. Ancient Romans experienced the forum through a kaleidoscopic lens, cheering on gladiators in front of the very rostra where Cicero delivered epic political speeches, purchasing a goat at the market before sacrificing at the Temple of Jupiter, and visiting the brothel beside the Temple of the Vestal Virgins.

Martial aurally narrates a scene of the noises that resounded through the forum and compellingly portrays its chaos with a first person narration:¹

Here the moneychanger indolently rattles piles of Nero’s rough coins on his dirty counter; there a beater of Spanish gold belabors his worn stone with shining mallet. Nor does the fanatic rabble of Bellona cease from its clamor, nor the gabbling sailor with his piece of wreck hung over his shoulder; nor the Jew boy, brought up to begging by his mother, nor the blear-eyed huckster of matches. Who can enumerate the various interruptions to sleep at Rome?

This sensory overload exists because of the many different types of activities occurring simultaneously in a single space: the forum. The archaeological term, palimpsest, offers a valuable angle to approach and understand the many elements of this chaotic picture. Palimpsest derives from the Greek roots meaning “scrape again” and refers to “the superimposition of successive activities, the material traces of which are partially destroyed or reworked.”² Palimpsest exists spatially and temporarily in the forum. Spatially, the same area could be used for market stalls, political debates, or worship of the gods. Temporally, the entire atmosphere of the forum could shift dramatically from that of pagan piety to a secular spectacle. These superimpositions beg the question, when one event transformed into another, were all the other previous events held in that same area no longer relevant? I argue that each event interacted with the other events in a unique way.

It is impossible to understand the forum without considering the disparate elements and the ways in which they interact with each other. In this paper, I aim to explore a few selected relationships between different dimensions of the forum that shaped and frequently complemented each other. Most evidence comes from the late Republican era, with the exception of a few imperial writers whose voices echo Republican thinkers. Perspectives from this period interpret Roman society, and the Forum Romanum in particular, in a multitude of ways.

### Religion and Economy

Markets thrived before and after religious festivals and public games for reasons of convenience. The markets opened up before religious festivals in order to meet the demand for sacrificial animals. In addition, three periods of extended commerce, mercatus, fell right after the public games since Romans congregated in the forum in large numbers.³ Sellers were incentivized to set up stalls during this time in order to reach the vast consumer base during these times, while

consumers were incentivized to attend religious festivals in the forum for both practical and pious reasons, but also to find goods and services that were otherwise unavailable.

Religion and the economy were not only tied consecutively on the calendar, but were also closely intertwined in the forum. Jupiter and Mercury adopted roles as merchant deities and stimulated trade through the crowds they attracted to their shrines, crowds that built a market for the exchange of goods.⁴ The Temple of Saturn referred to the agricultural god of sowing and corn, a staple in Rome’s food production and the markets that surrounded the temple.⁵ Whether the merchant deities attracted the markets to their steps or the forum markets influenced the characteristics of the gods is difficult to ascertain, yet the worship of the gods and the markets certainly influenced each other’s practices. Beyond the physical exchange of goods, temples were centers of intangible assets and financial investments as well. A Roman businessman seeking external financing could have looked to temples in order to acquire funds for his enterprises. Temples were an important means of pooling investment funds in the early Roman Empire.⁶ In this way, the temples in the forum acted not only as religious centers, but also as financial centers for Roman citizens.

Additionally, Roman temples served the function of public treasuries, aeraria. In the treasury at the Temple of Saturn were kept “the treasuries and archives of the state, as well as the balance used for the weighing of precious metals.”⁷ Temples were viewed as one of the most secure places in the city, the least likely to be looted and destroyed by thieves or conquerors. Therefore, the state stored the monetary reserves and the foundational documents in this place of refuge. Additionally, the balancing scales found in these temples were used for weighting precious metals. The officials wanted to insure honesty in economic transactions by ensuring standardized weights and measures to prevent fraud. The

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5. Stamper (2005), 36.
7. Stamper (2005), 37.
security of the temple insured honesty, an important basis for transparent and, therefore, efficient markets.⁸

The adjacency and geometrical overlap of the physical space of Roman temples and economic structures made it possible for the forum to concurrently serve as a place of worship and as a treasury. Furthermore, archaeological evidence points to the physical adjacency of monetary and material storage units and temples. Archaeologists have frequently uncovered rooms for the display of merchandise in conjunction with the ruins of some shrine or temple.⁹ What type of merchandise did these storage units protect? While there are many possibilities, I will address one such possibility in this paper. The aforementioned rooms displayed the riches of a conquered nation, implying that the pagan worship exacted monetary sacrifice, as opposed to animal sacrifice.

This economic relationship between the gods and the people mirrors the purchase of a good or service right outside the temple on its steps. While the counterparty in the transaction was a deity rather than a plebeian, the dedicator exchanged money for the security and goodwill of the gods. In a certain sense, sacrifice is giving some of your substance to the divinity in turn for the divinity’s good will. For instance, Pompey dedicated money to Minerva after his successful campaign in Asia. Diodoris the elder records an inscription “Pompey, having taken the statues and the other images of the gods and the other valuables of the enemy, has dedicated to the goddess twelve thousand sixty gold pieces and three hundred seven talents of gold.”¹⁰ As soon as Pompey stepped outside the shrine, he would have seen a multitude of other types of exchanges being completed in the forum. In this way, the commercial transactions for goods and services contextualized the transactions between man and god when juxtaposed in the forum.

Although festivals customarily superseded all other activities in the forum, Ovid asks Janus why business still goes on in

8. Transparency is so vital to market efficiency and prosperity that one of the stated goals of the Securities and Exchange Commission is: “a far more active, efficient, and transparent capital market that facilitates the capital formation so important to our nation’s economy.” See “The Investor’s Advocate” in Bibliography.


10. Diod. 40.4. Also, Orlin (2002), 133.
the *Forum Romanum* during the festival of the New Year. This question suggests that he was familiar with markets that would close on the first day of the year, making the fact that the Roman Forum remained open that much more significant. Janus explains that, like the offering, business affairs persist as a precursor for prosperity the whole year round. According to Ovid, when asked to defend the business activity on the New Year, Janus rationalizes, “I assigned the birthday of the year
In this poem, in describing the festival of Janus, Ovid depicts the business-like atmosphere of the festival. The religious and economic entanglements in the forum during festival time were so prominent that Ovid renders it necessary to provide the economic context in order to describe the religious event at the beginning of each year.

Politics and Religion

Since the Temple of Castor and Pollux was prominently located and was large enough to hold a gathering of people, it was used for many purposes. In this section, I will focus on the religious and political functions of the temples and the forum in general. The two consuls made the Temple of Castor and Pollux their headquarters, convening some assemblies and conducting official business on its podium facing the forum. By the second century BC, it would accommodate meetings of the Senate and its podium would serve as a voting site of the comitia or the assembly.

Why did the consuls choose to make the Temple of Castor and Pollux in the forum their headquarters? Simply because of the number of people it could hold? While initially this may have been the main reason, the centrality of the Temple and its proximity to all other activities in the forum publicized the way the government operated. When many people could not read, the buildings themselves told the stories. Then, what story did the Temple of Castor and Pollux tell? Before mass news media existed, one way Roman officials educated the populace on the structure of the government was by conducting government affairs in public places. The forum is the ideal place to reach the masses, and the magnificence and sanctity of the temple commanded the people’s attention and respect. Furthermore, by associating government affairs with worship of the gods in the physical space, Roman citizens also inevitably equated the importance of the two in their minds. Although the shared space can be viewed as a matter of

14. Ibid.
convenience, over time it influenced and united the practice of religious and political rituals.

The association can be extended even further. Political leaders adopted a certain god-like aura when they were seen orating next to statues of heroes and gods in front of their sanctuaries. While this association occurred naturally by mere physical positioning, Roman leaders often fabricated this heavenly relationship to elevate themselves. Therefore, if the leaders intended to deify themselves and to imbue the supernatural into their political campaigns, they had more reason to closely link their image with religious sites and priests. For example, Livy describes this purposeful deification at Scipio’s triumphal parade after the defeat of Carthage. Livy recounts, “Scipio visited all the temples of the gods with the Roman people” and defines Scipio’s aim in leading this parade clearly: “he moved through the city as if he were Jupiter himself.”¹⁵ Livy highlights the fundamental connection between piety and political success in Rome in many accounts in his histories.¹⁶ When describing Augustus, Livy attributes a defining part of his identity and success as templo rum omnium restitutorem ac conditotrem, “the restorer and founder of all temples.”¹⁷

Not only did political leaders use the shared space of political and religious gatherings to their advantage, but the religious leaders profited as well. Political leaders benefited from the support of religious leaders and vice versa. The shared space facilitated the close interaction between political and religious leaders, enabling the mutually advantageous relationship. In this way, both benefited from cooperation. In order for cooperation to exist, there must be communication and the adjacency and sometimes even the overlap of their respective offices facilitated communication. In fact, no significant public act or event could succeed without the priests’ backing.¹⁸ At the same time, the consuls and senators controlled the actual initiative and organization of religious events.¹⁹ As a result, the political and religious leaders

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¹⁵ Liv. 38 51.12-14.
¹⁶ Liv. 5 49.7.
¹⁷ Liv. 40 20.7.
¹⁸ Stamper (2005), 38.
¹⁹ Ibid, 39.
consulted each other and needed to support each other in order to accomplish any major public work.

**Politics and Economy**

The proximity of government buildings to the market allowed for politicians to manipulate prices and regulate the markets closely. The government’s role in the Roman markets relates to Juvenal’s conception of *panem*. One way the Roman government ensured the people were fed was through the *annona*, “grain handout” to citizens.²⁰ In the *Res Gestae*, Augustus deems it important enough to recount from his many achievements distributing grain to the public four times: “When consul for the eleventh time (23 B.C.E.), twelve doles of grain personally bought were measured out… Consul for the thirteenth time (2 B.C.E.), I gave HS 240 to the plebs who then received the public grain.”²¹ At times, economic and political circumstances necessitated manipulating the price of grain in addition to the *annona*. In times of shortage, the government intervened in the grain markets, supplementing the anonna with lower prices. The officials, spearheaded by the *praefectus annonae*, worked with the private grain dealers in order to mediate between the people.²² For example, Pompey manipulated the prices by not allowing shipments to land, using famine as a weapon in civil war. Lucilius bemoans Pompey’s political and economic maneuver, “Why should I next complain that he took into his own hands the harvests of the whole world and forced famine to do his bidding?”²³ Not only did Pompey exert control through the intimidating number of soldiers under his command, but also through his army’s proximity to the markets. This was possible because both political institutions and the markets were centered in the Forum, contributing to his ability to control the supply closely and consequentially, the price.

The government not only regulated grain, but many other goods and services through taxation. The specifics of taxation

²⁰ Morley (2002), 55.
²¹ Aug. RG 15.
²³ Luc. 1.26
in ancient Rome are beyond the scope of this paper, but it will explore the effects of the Forum’s political and transactional nature on the efficacy of tax collection. As a center of international trade and international politics, the destination of Silk Road travelers, Babylonian merchants, and Egyptian craftsmen, many cultures and economic customs converged in the Roman Forum. Merchants not only exchanged goods, but also political tactics and colluded to evade government regulation. Livy reported that prohibitions against higher rates were evaded in the late republic by transferring the loans to foreigners who were not subject to rate restrictions.²⁴ Much like moving assets to nations with lower tax rates today, it was possible in ancient times to transfer ownership of commercial loans among interested parties.²⁵ The Roman Forum provided the ideal place for such transactions since

²⁴. Liv. 35 7

political and financial motives daily circulated in the forum’s colonnades. It would have been natural for the conversation to shift from the topic of economic goals to political barriers.

Furthermore, politics and the economy intersected not just in the goods market, but also in the financial markets. Financial markets - which refer to intangible assets, equities, and debt—and these arenas of economic activity, thrived in the Roman Forum as well. These types of intangible markets existed within reciprocal relationships known as patronage. Patronage refers to the mutual obligations between a *patronus*, “sponsor” or “benefactor”, and his *cliens*, “client”, and many of these obligations transpired in the Forum. The *patroni*, most often politicians, campaigned in the Forum, whose markets attracted diverse crowds. These economic markets attracted
Roman citizens who were not part of the elite social circle the politicians interacted with in their villas, but were still important as voters to ambitious politicians. In turn, Roman citizens who otherwise would not interact with the politicians could approach and escort the patron’s daily *deductio in forum* (descent into the forum) and pitch their business plans.²⁶

The interpersonal dependence between the elites and regular citizens was regularly manifested in the forum. The Roman Forum staged many displays of affection and hostility for politicians and their constituents alike.²⁷ The openness of the Forum for both the elite and the common person emboldened such interactions that transcended socio-economic classes.

In some ways, this symbiotic relationship between the elite and plebeian classes in the Forum permitted socio-economic mobility. Whether it translated itself outside of the Forum is debatable, but within the Forum, small strides of economic mobility moved the class system forward. While not enough is written by plebeian sources to draw upon, this point is suggested by Cicero’s writings. Cicero considers the perspective of the men in his escort, “Poor men have only one place to earn or pay back a service to our order: this effort of providing an escort during our candidacy for office.”²⁸ By sympathizing with the men in his escort, Cicero grants the plebeians a voice they would otherwise not have. These types of personal relationships fostered during the walks in the forum between *patronus* and *cliens* allowed plebeians access to opportunity and sponsorship, which could their lives and that of their families.

Like the exchange of one material good for another at the stalls lining the Forum, Cicero depicts the escort as part of a system of exchange, whereby members of the lower orders repaid their patrons for services rendered, such as representation in court and sustenance at the table. However, this personal relationship was not for the sake of camaraderie alone, if at all. The political elite were undeniably aware

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28. Cic. Mur. 70.1
that the audience of this escort as they walked through the forum were the “city denizens, the potential voters at the next election.” The forum provided the publicity necessary to motivate the elite to listen, or at least pretend to listen, to the Roman citizens.

The political structure of the Forum also facilitated collective organizations and the pursuit of economic justice. Since the market operated in the shadow of Senate meetings, the merchants shadowed the structure of political institutions by organizing legal financial partnerships. A societas was a legal form of partnership that the Romans had developed by the later third century BCE to finance commercial activity. Societates provided a rare example in an agrarian economy of pooled equity capital. In this way, financial institutions imitated the governmental structure surrounding them in the Forum. As an example of the pursuit of economic justice in the forum, Martial provides the example of the economic downfall of the barber, Cinnamus, who, accused of unscrupulous transactions, fled the justice of the Forum. Since the markets operated directly beneath and next to the judicial institutions of the government, punishment could be enacted quickly.

The Forum Romanum: A Unified Diversity

Finally, let us refer back to the first section and look at the connection between the economy, the government, and religion through the perspective of the forum Romanum. When Pompey dedicated his spoils in the forum at the Temple of Jupiter, publicizing and accrediting the gods for his victory, he most likely did so in order to win the respect and votes of the people. After all, everyone—the elites, the plebeians, and slaves—could witness and celebrate Pompey’s glory side-by-side in the forum. Pompey and many other Roman leaders decorated the forum as political tool to display the riches the respective leaders obtained in battle or travels, especially when it advanced their political agenda. Roman
poets, such as Martial, expound on this publicity and suggest Rome herself—or at least the personification of the city—publicizes her own glory. Quoting Martial: Golden Rome ostentatiously displays her riches, viewed the tender young slaves, and devoured them with his eyes; not those exposed in the open shops, but those which are kept for the select in private apartments, and are not seen by the people, or such as I am.”³³ The monuments and activities of Rome, located for the most part in the forum, proclaimed Rome’s glory to visitors and citizens alike.³⁴ Actively engaging the “living memories” of the public, the forum’s monuments connect memory and history, interacting with the viewer on multiple dimensions, economic, political, and religious being just a few.³⁵ The market stirs up the memory of the sacrifice that stirs up the memory of the triumphal parade that stirs up the memory of gladiators. The memories overlap, much like the buildings themselves.

I have just skimmed the surface of some of the web of connections between the economic, religious, political, spectacular and social dimensions of Roman life in the Forum. Each function warrants further research on its own and in relation to the other elements present in the forum. Although these activities are distinguishable and undermine each other at times, there is much to glean from understanding the separate institutions of Ancient Rome inseparably from each other. In some ways, it is irrelevant whether these distinct elements consciously or unconsciously shaped each other; ancient Romans experienced the political, religious, spectacular, and economic areas of life all at once. The heterogeneity of Rome can be understood through a more nuanced perspective when explored through the activities and environment of Forum Romanum, a space that reconciled seemingly contradictory institutions.

33. Mart. 9.59.
34. In fact, “monumentalization of the Forum Romanum no doubt proceeded in tandem with the growing ambitions and success of Rome,” (Steinby 330) as evidenced by monuments named after war heroes and political revolutionaries. In some ways, displaying the spoils of war so centrally in the Forum responded directly to the ambition of Rome as well. At the same time, the fact that these monumental celebrations and riches took place in the forum, alongside the assemblies, economic markets, and public meeting places reinforced the people as the cornerstone of Rome’s success.
Works Cited

Bohn, Henry C. *The Epigrams of Martial* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1897).


So, you’re teaching CLST 311, Disasters in the Ancient Mediterranean World, with Prof. Cam Grey. As an archaeologist and a professor in the Anthropology Department, how did you get involved with this class?

LAUREN RISTVET — Cam and I talked about teaching this class together a few years ago. My early research was on human responses to environmental catastrophes with a focus on climate change in the Early Bronze Age in Northern Mesopotamia. When Cam told me that he was pursuing a master’s degree in environmental science and was interested in environmental history, it seemed like a great point of connection and we thought we could do something fun.

Could you tell us a little bit about your current research?

My current archaeological project is in Azerbaijan at the site of Oglanqala in an autonomous republic called Nakhchivan. It’s a large fortress site atop a hill overlooking an irrigated plain that was mostly occupied episodically between 1000 BCE and 100 CE. My research considers empires and frontier dynamics, with a focus on Urartu (ca. 800-600 BCE), the Achaemenid and Seleucid Empires (ca. 550-330 and 330-200 BCE, at least here) and Parthia/Rome (ca. 200 BCE-200 CE). This area was consistently along a border throughout this millennium so I investigate violence and trade particularly, since these were the main vectors of empire.
What made you decide or want to become an archaeologist?

I took a great class—Civilization and Collapse—so close to our disasters class as an undergraduate with Professor Harvey Weiss at Yale. And then Harvey invited me to come dig with him in Syria and I was hooked.

Your area of interest is Mesopotamia. Did you have any prior experience with Greek or Roman history, culture, or archaeology?

Yes. My first job was actually as an assistant professor of ancient near eastern and Mediterranean history at Georgia State University, where I and someone teaching Latin were the only people dealing with the ancient world at all. So I taught Greek and Roman history. I also excavated for three seasons in Greece and my research in Mesopotamia and the Caucasus includes the Hellenistic and Roman periods. My recent book has a chapter on negotiating tradition in Seleucid Babylonia, and I’m really interested in this period and place.

How do you think the ‘softer’ side of Classics, the textual analysis and the translation, can inform archaeology? And vice-versa?

I think they both provide a useful context for the other. My own work has been greatly enhanced by the rich textual sources available in Mesopotamia, and my recent book Ritual, Performance and Politics in the Ancient Near East specifically engaged with texts from ca. 2400 BCE, ca. 1750 BCE, and ca. 300-100 BCE. They helped me to understand emic views of ritual, memory, tradition, and history and changed the questions I asked of archaeological data like burials or settlement systems. Archaeology often provides useful material that can change the questions historians and text people ask as well. So, for example, information from surveys can provide broad perspectives on population change or demographic reconstruction.

Both Classics and Anthropology are very broad fields, and I imagine there is significant overlap. Could you talk a little bit about the relationship between the two fields of study?
Archaeologists at Penn are housed in many departments, particularly Anthropology, Classics, Art History and [Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations]. One division is often spatial and temporal; anthropology has archaeologists who work everywhere in the world, except the ancient Mediterranean. But this isn’t always true everywhere. Michael Dietler is an archaeologist who runs a cool project in France (looking at the Hinterland of Massalia during the pre-Roman and Roman periods) and he’s in an anthropology department. In the past, anthropologists were more likely to consider theory explicitly, but I don’t think that’s true anymore at all. Another division sometimes has to do with the presence or absence of writing, but I certainly use quite a lot of texts in my own work.

And is there much cooperation between the two departments at Penn?

On a personal level, especially among the archaeologists, we meet all the time. I also occasionally attend the Classics colloquium. We also supervise a lot of graduate students together.

What has your experience been like teaching a Classics course, full of Classics students?

It’s been really fun! I love close reading and this has given me a chance to do that.
Q: Is there a difference between Classics courses and students and Anthropology courses and students?

I think most of my courses often have both, especially archaeologically-minded Classics students.

Q: And, lastly, do you see yourself engaging with Classics as a field or with the Classical Studies Department in the future?

Certainly! On the graduate level I work with students in the Ancient History and Art and Archaeology of the Mediterranean World programs, and on the undergraduate level I hope to keep teaching with classicists whose interests overlap with mine, like Cam Grey and Julia Wilker.