

FROM THE EDITORS

The idea for *Discentes* sprung from melancholy tidings. In the spring of 2012, we learned of the passing of Penn graduate and former classics major Kojo Minta. As a junior, Kojo started a classical studies journal specifically for undergraduates. He called it *Polymatheia*.

Kojo aspired for the journal to “turn a critical and introspective eye to the Classics.” The first and only issue is a marvel of student scholarship—stimulating and thought-provoking. Reading it last spring, we were captivated by Kojo’s vision. First, we mused about reviving *Polymatheia*. Then, we set out to expand on the journal format to create a magazine for the Department of Classical Studies at Penn. We resolved to preserve the essence of *Polymatheia* while broadening the scope of the publication.

Discentes is the result. Our goal is to create a forum for the classical studies community at Penn built on undergraduate scholarship and engagement. *Discentes* means “the ones learning” and this magazine is written for that group. *Discentes* is for the learners—anyone and everyone with a passion for learning about the world. The magazine allows students to publish original research, read about classics-related events, and explore the field’s relationship with the greater academic community.

This issue presents five research papers authored by Penn undergraduates. In “Reconciling Physical Mortality With Literary Immortality,” Charlotte Edelson explores Sappho’s and Horace’s lyric perspectives on old age. Laura Santander investigates the motivations for the re-use of Homeric papyri in “Recycling Homer in Greco-Roman Egypt.” Madeleine Brown discusses the influence of Demosthenes on a young James Madison in “The Making of a Statesman.” In “The Survival of Winged Victory in Christian Late Antiquity,” Jesse DuBois seeks to explain why

early Christians retained winged Victory iconography while other pagan images were rejected. Finally, in “*Xenia Perverted*,” Noreen Sit addresses Apuleius’ subversion of proper guest friendship in the *Metamorphoses*.

This semester, Penn has been the setting for a number of extraordinary events. The Museum hosted the Underground Shakespeare Company’s performance of a modern adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra*, the Department partnered with the University of St. Andrews to organize “Hip Sublime: Beat Writers and the Classical Tradition,” and the Undergraduate Advisory Board staged its third dramatic reading, selecting Euripides’ *Trojan Women* as the fall tragedy.

We are incredibly grateful for Professor James Ker’s extraordinary support and advice. Renée Campbell was a great help in ironing out the logistics of publication. We would also like to thank Professor Jeremy McNerney for generously volunteering his time to speak with us about his work and his perspective on classical studies as a discipline and Darien Perez who took time to answer our questions about her experience as a post-baccalaureate student.

Classical studies is thriving at Penn. The rich calendar of events inspired by the classics and the strong undergraduate scholarship exemplified in the five papers published here demonstrate as much. We hope that *Discentes* will be an outlet for this intellectual energy.

“Sometimes I write them because I’ve fallen in love.

Sometimes I write them just for the fun of it.”

-Horace, *Odes* 1.6¹



Carson Woodbury



Laura Santander

¹ *The Odes of Horace*, trans. David Ferry, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997.