

CSAAR text for 2002

Lead story:

CSAAR SCHOLARSHIP HONORS HERO OF 9-11

By Tom McGinn and Susan Wood

One of the most important project the Classical Society has undertaken this year has been the funding of a scholarship for the Summer School that will commemorate Captain William McGinn, of the New York City Fire Department. We are seeking a grant of \$50,000 to fund this fund half of this scholarship annually, or \$100,000 to fund it in perpetuity.

Capt. McGinn was the day commander of Squad 18, a small unit of firefighters trained to respond to terrorist incidents and other major disasters. Squad 18 is based in Greenwich Village. Capt. McGinn had worked on the FDNY's handling of the first terrorist bombing of the World Trade Center, in 1993. Thus it was inevitable that he and they be sent to the Trade Center on the morning of September 11.

Squad 18 was one of the first units to respond to the disaster. As far as the FDNY was able to reconstruct the events of that day, they were the unit furthest up in Tower 2 when it collapsed. Accounts vary as to the precise level, but it was said that they had successfully cleared the building of civilians between their position and the fire. It appears that Squad 18 helped save thousands of lives that day. All seven men were lost, seven among the 343 New York City firefighters who perished on September 11.

Capt. McGinn spent his formative years on Staten Island, where he attended Our Lady Queen of Peace elementary school, Egbert Intermediate School, and New Dorp High School, where his father, also William McGinn, taught American History. His wife, Dr. Anne Golden McGinn, is a native of Great Kills. He leaves behind two small children, Liam, 8 and Delia, 6.

The 2002 Summer School

by Ann Vasaly

The Classical Summer School of the American Academy welcomed eleven graduate students, thirteen teachers, and one undergraduate this year. The participants came from all over the country, and their ages ranged from 61 to 19. Despite this diversity, the group got along extremely well together and seemed to appreciate the variety of perspectives and experience among the members.

As always, the program included trips both to many Roman and extra-urban sites. The latter began with Etruscan Cerveteri and finished with a trip to Subiaco, where we visited San Benedetto, the church and monastery founded on the site of the cave where Saint Benedict spent three years after forsaking Rome. These and the other trips outside of the city (such as Cosa, Terracina, Sperlonga, Tusculum, Praeneste, Tivoli) reminded us all once again what a lovely country Italy is. It is undeniable that one can always find in modern Italy much that is

ungraceful, ill designed, downright ugly; yet its beauty remains: in the sun glancing off the little bay between Mount Argentario and ancient Cosa, in the green valleys that lead from Rome to Tusculum and Praeneste, in the sight from the Janiculum of the Alban Mount rising in the misty distance. And always there is Rome itself, that extraordinary "palimpsest in stone."

For the first time in some years the members of the Classical Summer School were granted tessere that allowed free entrance to a great number of museums and sites. This group of participants valued their tessere greatly and made frequent use of them, visiting sites and museums that we were unable to go to as a group or returning to those where our group visit was far too short to take in even the major part of a collection.

The weather was uncharacteristically hot in June, but also uncharacteristically cool and cloudy in July, which meant that after a baptism by fire in the first few weeks, we had many pleasant walks without having to contend with the fierce Mediterranean sun. There were also fewer tourists in Rome this summer, no doubt due to the fear of terrorism and the downturn in the economy of the U.S. and of many other countries. Despite the former, Rome was calm throughout the summer and although many Italians are very concerned about what the post-September 11th world will bring, they treated us with their customary generosity and warmth.

The yearly trip to the Vatican Museums by the Classical Summer School is almost always a challenge. One of the few places we visit where we have to wait in line (although the wait is usually brief), the Vatican Museums are huge and difficult to negotiate, especially if one has hopes of going somewhere other than the Sistine Chapel. Both this year and last, we were allowed to visit the exceptional collection of ancient sculpture in the Gregoriano Profano and the artifacts and vases in the Gregoriano Etrusco, which are both closed to the public; the Braccio Nuovo, however, which houses an impressive collection of ancient portrait busts, has been unvisitable for some time now. The Augustus of Prima Porta normally resides in that wing, but the statue has now been taken to the restorer's laboratory, and it was with slight hope of success that we attempted to gain access there. It was a wonderful surprise, therefore, to find that we had, indeed, been granted permission to visit the statue in the laboratory. There we spent some forty minutes studying the work closely and listening to those involved in analyzing the paint colors on the marble and planning the statue's restoration and cleaning. Our visit to the Vatican thus became one of the highlights of what was for me—and I hope for the participants as well—another enjoyable and memorable summer.

Letters from Scholarship Winners 2: Pat Larash

People who attended the Classical Summer School of the American Academy in Rome last year like to start their accounts by saying that they had arrived in Rome within days of Rome's soccer team winning the national championship. As it turned out this year, it was not soccer that inaugurated my own arrival in Rome—just as well, as Italian soccer fans are *still* fuming over their team's loss in the World Cup—but rather the canonization ceremony of Padre Pio on 16 June 2002. Just hours after my plane landed in Fiumicino, I stood with a friend on the Spanish Steps and caught sight of the celebratory fireworks over St. Peter's. I would have done well to emulate this particular saint, as (apparently) he was able to bilocate;

there is so much to see in Rome that I would have benefitted from being able to be in two places at once.

My two express purposes in coming to Rome this summer (my first time in Italy) were to get to know Rome first hand so I can teach it better, and also to see the city as the first-century CE poets Martial and Ovid would have seen it. Prof. Ann Vasaly's expert organization of our field trips ensured that I (and everyone else in the program) accomplished the first goal. Starting at eight each morning for six weeks (minus some much-needed breaks on weekends) she took us on walks around (and under) archaeological sites in Rome and elsewhere in Italy. Our first few activities were, in fact, devoted to orientation: on the first day of the program, we found ourselves on the roof of the Villa Aurelia on the Janiculum hill in unseasonably hot weather that did not, nevertheless, detract from our enjoyment of the amazing view of all of Rome. The next day started off with a walking tour from the American Academy on the Janiculum, down into the Trastevere neighborhood (which I would come to know and love as an under-touristed place to find good pasta and rows of Vespas), across the Tiber, and across the street to the Forum Boarium and Forum Romanum.

Part of learning how to get around in Rome is learning how to cross the street, and Prof. Vasaly—who gave a lot of consideration to survival skills and creature comforts—had made sure to tell us to maintain a steady trajectory (despite the unnerving tendency of drivers to swerve just as they approach) and not to get lost in thought. I needed this reminder: there is a lot to think about and be distracted by in Rome. Sites such as the various fora, Largo Argentina, and even the Colosseum (excuse me, the Flavian Amphitheatre) require mental reconstruction on the part of the viewer, as they really are just (just?!) piles of rocks and “a series of small walls.” Some assembly is required; after the viewer imagines the complete building (with the help of site plans and—in the case of Trajan's Forum—a computer-generated 3D color reconstruction), she then needs to furnish it with statuary, mosaics, and other decorative elements that are housed in museums often remote from the site proper. One example that comes to mind is the portico of the Forum of Augustus; the caryatids and shield that survive from its façade are kept in the headquarters of the Knights of Malta. Through arrangements made by Prof. Vasaly and her assistant Josiah Osgood, we were able to get in to see the marbles, but only from a distance. We arrived late for our appointment (due to delays earlier in the day that were beyond our control), by which time the room containing the marbles had already been taken over by officials of the Knights of Malta who were in the process of electing a new *capo*. We were allowed to peek in the door to the room quickly, and then were shepherded along to the *loggia* to admire the view of Trajan's Forum. But even this fleeting glance was more instructive than an easily accessible picture in a book, since it gave me a sense of how big the sculptures were, as well as the building on which they were originally displayed. It also illustrated something that did not strike me until I actually saw Rome for myself, namely the way in which Romans of any era take the accumulated history (including the material remains) of their city and incorporate it almost casually into whatever they happen to be doing at the moment.

As an American visitor to Rome, I was simultaneously amused, shocked, and overwhelmed by the intermingling of different layers of history. In the case of the Theatre of Pompey (where Julius Caesar was *really* killed, despite what you may hear from tour guides in the Forum), nothing remains above ground of the theatre, although the modern streets do continue its outline. The foundations are now part of a restaurant, pink tablecloths and all. Walking around the perimeter of the Theatre of Pompey gave me a sense of how big it was—

and it is huge!—but it did require effort to remove the tightly-packed apartment buildings and replace them mentally with the semicircle of a theatre. The Baths of Nero, on the other hand, still exist above ground in part, but we were able to see them only because one of the participants in our program invited us to her apartment to see the outcropping of the Baths that had been incorporated into the walls of her building's courtyard. The site of the Colosseum shows different layers of history in (sometimes antagonistic) dialogue with one another. The Colosseum itself is the result of the Flavian dynasty's reclaiming for the public benefit the excesses of their predecessor Nero's private building program (or at least that was the spin they put on it). Commemorative plaques on the building note the renovations that various popes made to the structure as well as the spiritual recovery of the pagan building for Christian purposes. Along the Via dei Fori Imperiali leading up to the Colosseum is a brick wall on which are displayed Fascist-era marble maps of the expansion of the ancient Roman Empire. The maps each used to display a row of three fasces, the eponymous symbol of the regime, but now all that remains are the traces where someone has chiseled them off.

The true impact of the Summer School did not hit me until weeks later when I was back in Berkeley reading the poetry that Ovid wrote from exile during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. Before this summer, the thinking that I had done about Latin literature was highly theoretical and dealt exclusively with literary and rhetorical issues; if I did look at material culture as represented in poetry, it was to treat it as merely a starting point from which to go on to discussions of poetic strategy, ideology, or something similarly ethereal. But now, after having walked through the Roman Forum and up the Palatine myself, when I read Ovid's description in *Tristia* 3.1 of the journey his book takes from the Black Sea to the center of the city of Rome, I can visualize the route that the book follows and read the monuments along the route as a text in their own right. The museum trips were also invaluable in helping me to understand the material culture of daily life that forms the setting of Latin elegy and epigram. Our trip to the Museo della Civiltà Romana at EUR allowed us to look at the scale-model reconstruction of the ancient city--a very effective way of stripping away all the intervening historical layers of later buildings and demolitions--as well as the pleasant surprise of a life-size reconstruction of a private library. I took pictures of scrolls, codices, storage boxes and other bibliophilic paraphernalia, which play such an important role in Martial's epigrams and Ovid's exile poetry, until my film ran out.

I achieved my second goal—seeing Rome as Martial and Ovid would have seen it—indirectly, as some key places mentioned in their poetry no longer exist, and some places have changed in character from ancient times (the Subura neighborhood near the Imperial Fora, for example, is no longer as seedy as Martial implies it was). But Domitian's palace, praised (and, later, criticized) in Martial's epigrams, still conveys the sense of larger-than-life aloofness that it did in ancient times. It was revelatory for me to see with my own eyes that the Argiletum, a street leading out of the Roman Forum, runs through the Forum of Nerva (known as the Forum of Pallas when it was first being constructed in Martial's day). Martial mentions the Forum of Pallas in one of his opening epigrams (1.2) and the Argiletum in the next (1.3); if I hadn't visited the Fora in person, I might never have realized just how close spatially the settings of these two epigrams are to one another and to other important sites and monuments.

I also feel that, having been to Rome and back, I have finally earned the right to talk about Martial and Ovid; one of the questions that interests me most about the works of these poets is how they deal with the vast geographical distances separating themselves from their

readers. The poets talk about their respective composition and publication situations: Ovid writes the *Tristia* and the *Ex Ponto* from exile on the Black Sea and sends his poems as emissaries on his behalf to people he knows in Rome. Martial, on the other hand, writes most of his epigrams in Rome and circulates them to readers—who may be unknown to him personally—spread throughout the Roman Empire; some of his epigrams are written from semi-retirement in Spain and sent to readers in Rome. Both poets exploit their readers' familiarity with the city of Rome and the memory of the city that a Roman carries with him or her when away. Now, rather than using allusions in Ovid's and Martial's poetry as the material from which to form my mental image of Rome, I can bring my own first-hand knowledge of the city to the poetry in the same way that a centurion stationed in Britain would recall Rome when reading Martial, or that Ovid would when writing the poetry that he hopes will help him get back there.

The best part of seeing Rome was, without a doubt, the people with whom I saw it. I couldn't have asked for a better director and assistant director than Ann Vasaly and Josiah Osgood. They both brought extensive and deep knowledge of the sites, the literary sources about them, and the culture that produced them to their lectures, and combined this knowledge with good humor, sympathy toward their students, and remarkable facility in dealing with the modern inhabitants of a sometimes intractable country. The other participants in the program were a combination of graduate students and teachers, from a variety of fields: classics, archaeology, art history, and Western Civilization. It was very enlightening for me to listen to people from different fields talk about their work and to learn to see things through their eyes. Getting to know the high school teachers was invaluable inspiration for my own teaching, and it was especially instructive for me to talk to them about teaching the same subject matter to very different audiences. The challenges that high school teachers face are very different from what I face as a teacher of college students, and I now have a much greater appreciation for another side of the classics world and a deeper appreciation of the background (pedagogically and socially) from which many of my own students come.

I am very grateful to the Classical Society of the American Academy in Rome for having awarded me the fellowship that enabled me to take advantage of such an amazing opportunity. A picture is worth a thousand words, but seeing something with one's own eyes is easily worth a thousand pictures. The experiences that I had this summer have been invaluable for my intellectual, professional, and personal growth, and I would not have been able to have them without the support of the CSAAR.

The Villa Aurelia

by Katherine Geffcken

On May 25, 2002, the Academy gave a splendid party to celebrate the restoration and renovation of the Villa Aurelia. The date was chosen to coincide with the spring meeting of the Trustees in Rome. Guests included not only the Trustees, Officers, and current Fellows, but also all Academy personnel and the extended "family" of the Academy living in Rome: "old" Fellows, Residents, and friends.

Elegant with fresh cream-colored walls, the Villa itself was the star of this fine evening. In the open space before the porte-cochere (many of us remember a majestic ilex

once stood in this area) was a veritable grove of potted lemon trees lined up on the green squares of a checkerboard carpet. Though still empty of its furnishings, the Villa was brilliantly lit, and after the ribbon cutting, guests wandered through rooms admiring walls, ceilings, and especially the marvelous floors. We also knew that hidden in the structure were essential improvements — strengthened beams, new wiring, and a discreetly placed fire stairway. Many chose to sit at tables arranged in the new concert/lecture hall, created from the space previously occupied by Foresteria A and B.

In a pause between drinks and dinner, everyone assembled to hear celebratory remarks. After a welcome by Director Lester Little, the first group of speakers were those most technically involved with the restoration: Trustee and architect David Childs, architects Robert Einaudi and Fabiana Zeli, contractors Carlo and Gianfranco Sebastiani, and Assistant Director for Properties Cristina Puglisi. From time to time Pina Pasquantonio delivered expert rapid translations. President Adele Chatfield-Taylor closed this part of the program, followed by Trustee Michael Putnam, who continued his role as Academy Latinist for special occasions. Then, Trustee Chair Michael Sovern honored the many donors whose gifts funded the restoration, especially Trustee Mercedes Bass, who as Chair of the Villa Restoration not only led in giving and fundraising but also conferred on all details of the work. Honored, in addition, was the late Mark Hampton, who undertook the last previous restoration of the Villa in the late 1980's. The "Friends of Mark Hampton" listed in the program number 139. To all those responsible, in whatever way, for this achievement, we who have long admired the Villa are grateful. Some of us may be a bit nostalgic (I lived in Foresteria B for two years when, to help meet expenses, the Villa was rented to the Indian ambassador), while also welcoming this handsome renewal of a favorite place.

The Archeobus

by Katherine Geffcken

If you are going to Rome and would like to spend a leisurely day on the Via Appia, I recommend taking the Archeobus. Sponsored by the archaeological superintendencies and the Roman transportation authority (ATAC), the Archeobus leaves on the hour between ten and five, from Via di San Marco, about fifty feet from the *capolinea* of the 44 at Piazza Venezia. The ticket, which you must purchase at a nearby ticket window before boarding, costs 7.75 Euros and is valid for the entire day. You may get off at any or all stops and get back on a later bus. Of course, the earlier you leave, the more sites you will be able to visit. The stops are: S. Maria in Cosmedin, Circus Maximus, Baths of Caracalla, Porta San Sebastiano, S. Callisto, S. Sebastiano, the Maxentian complex, and Cecilia Metella.

The route then loops over to the Appia Pignatelli, but next circles again to the Appia Antica. The Archeobus has permission to drive (slowly!) down a fairly long and peaceful stretch of the Appia Antica, where normally only local residents can take their cars. At the tomb called Casal Rotondo, the bus turns left and heads to the aqueduct park near Capanelle. It is allowed to enter the park and stop at the Casale di Roma Vecchia, where everyone can get out for a fifteen minute rest or a quick walk to the aqueducts heading to Rome on the east and on the west of the *casale*. Then, the bus continues to the Appia Nuova and its last stop on the outward leg, the modern entrance of the Villa dei Quintili. From there, it begins its return trip to Piazza Venezia, letting off and picking up passengers all the way back.

There are about twenty-five seats on the little bus. On August 22, when I took it, two

competent women were in charge, a driver and a guide whose comments, in Italian and English, were brief and to the point. This guide thoughtfully and cheerfully responded to many kinds of inquiries. Among the passengers I encountered several times through the day were a family from Australia and students equipped with notebooks, cameras, and lunch supplies.

I went on the Archeobus because I was curious to see what its tour offered, and especially because I wanted to see the Villa of the Quintilii. After fresh excavations and the installation of a small museum, the Villa opened to the public two years ago. Many of us are familiar, at a distance, with its impressive remains, visible on the Appia Antica at its western boundary, and on the east from the Appia Nuova. Especially from the latter direction, its massive thermal buildings and residential quarters rise dramatically on a hill back from the road. The new, nicely arranged museum, featuring objects from the Villa and nearby areas, is located in part of the farm buildings at the entrance on the Appia Nuova. As I walked the site, under a penetrating August sun, from the eastern boundary to the Appia Antica and back, I seemed far away from Rome. I was surrounded by fields of wild flowers, the sounds of insects, and could see Monte Cavo in the distance. In the midst of this expanse, the various structures of the Villa show what a luxurious existence Commodus and later emperors could live there – large, elegant bath structures decorated lavishly with marbles, and an open area like a small forum for formal receptions.

The custodian at the museum, who clearly loves his job, told me that the adjoining property to the north on the Appia Antica, containing a large cistern and other structures of the Villa, has recently been acquired from a Spanish countess and will be added to the park. He also said that a second section of the museum will be installed in a cistern building in the center of the Villa. Already available is a nice guide to the Villa, building techniques, and the landscape issued by the Soprintendenza and translated into English by Eric De Sena, archaeological assistant at the Academy.

Whichever spots you choose to visit in the Appia area, remember to check days of opening and closing. Monday is the usual day for closing. And at most sites, you must pay an entrance fee, since the bus ticket covers only transportation.