

# H U M A N I T A S

---

Vol. 30

Fall 2006

Issue 1

## Letter from the Editor

Dear Colleagues: This has been an exciting year of honors for OCC members. In January, Jane Ulrich received the 2005 Precollegiate Teaching Award from the American Philological Association (see page 2). In March, Ohio Magazine included Benjamin Lupica on its 2006 Honors Listing for "Excellence in Education". Judith de Luce has recently been named the 2006-2007 Miami University Alumni Association Effective Educator. And in this issue, Clifford Weber honors Robert Bennett with an Horatian ode on the occasion of his retirement.

You should already have received an invitation to attend this October's OCC meeting in Cincinnati (see the Program beginning on page 18). Next year's meeting will be in Toledo, organized by Steven Strauss. Details will be available soon. Deadlines for material for the next two issues are 1 December and 1 March. Please submit material of interest from the media, articles you have written, papers you have delivered to, or reflections on the profession to:

Neil Bernstein  
Department of Classics and World Religions  
210 Ellis Hall, Ohio University  
Athens, OH 45701  
740-597-2100 (tel), 740-597-2146 (fax)  
bernsten@ohio.edu

Thank you very much.

## Table of Contents

---

<b>2005 Precollegiate Teaching Award Winner Jane Ulrich</b>	2
<b>In Honor of Robert Bennett,</b> <i>Clifford Weber, Kenyon Emeritus</i>	3
<b>Eyes Wide Shut: Blindness and Desire in Menander's <i>Aspis</i>,</b> <i>Richard Rader</i>	5
<b>A Star is Born: Mesopotamian and Classical Catasterisms,</b> <i>Jeffrey Cooley</i>	8
<b>OCC Officers and Council</b>	17
<b>OCC Meeting Program</b>	18



# American Philological Association 2005 Precollegiate Teaching Award Winner Jane Ulrich

▪ *Lillian Doherty, Chair, Precollegiate Teaching Awards Subcommittee*

Jane Ulrich teaches at Shaker Heights High School in Shaker Heights, Ohio. Her colleague and nominator, Robert T. White, identifies “confidence” as her outstanding trait, and you’ll be inclined to agree when I tell you that among the supporting materials she submitted was a student oration “*In Ulricham.*” In fact, it should really have been titled “*Pro Ulricha,*” since it demonstrated the thoroughness with which she had taught the figures of speech and the compositional principles of a Ciceronian oration. Another telling detail in the packet Ms. Ulrich submitted was the sketch of a little bearded and sandaled fellow doing push-ups at the bottom of successive Greek worksheets. For me he epitomized the combination of exertion and humor with which she elicits the best work of which her students are capable. As one of them put it in a supporting letter, “Not only were Mrs. Ulrich’s classes fun, they were hard.” In another letter of support, Prof. Judith de Luce of Miami University writes:

“Jane’s teaching is always informed by an astute, sophisticated, and compassionate understanding of the intellectual and emotional development of her students. It is not just that Jane knows Classics very well indeed and conveys that knowledge effectively. . . Rather, she paces her classes and designs activities,

quizzes, and tests which are appropriate for [her] students. . . Her standards are high. . . , but she provides every student the support, practice, and opportunity to succeed. The result is that her students absolutely flourish under her instruction.”

A unique letter of support came from six members of the Malone family, classes of 1995 through 2005. The last of these wrote, “As the youngest in a large family that was well known in my high school, I often felt like I had something to prove to teachers. In Mrs. Ulrich’s class, however, there was never the pressure of comparison to my older siblings. She recognized my own talents and personality, making me comfortable in class and enabling me to succeed.”

Clearly, this individualized attention to student needs and talents has been effective, both in the spectacular showing of her school in measures such as the National Latin Exam and in the enduring effects of her example in her students’ lives.

Beyond the classroom, Ms. Ulrich has served as President of the Ohio Classical Conference and organized its 2004 meeting. She sponsors a chapter of the Junior Classical League, which in 2005 came in second in the state (out of 40 schools) in the Academic Per

Capita division. Let me close with a parent's description of the state convention:

“The students were comfortable seeking [their teacher's] advice but were able to manage most of the convention activities independently due to successful preparation. . . Students supported each other by attending all team events. The sense of camaraderie continued in the spirit ‘competitions’ where we found Jane dressed in rubber duckie and Blues Brothers costumes along with her stu-

dents as she cheered as loudly as they did to win the spirit awards. Jane's influence on the future of Latin education was seen as she met over breakfast with several of her former students who are now majoring in Classics in college with plans to become teachers. . . She is ensuring that the future is in good hands.”

*-Reprinted by permission from the American Philological Association Newsletter, vol 29. No. 1 (February 2006), pp 11-12.*

---

## In Honor of Robert Bennett

▪ *Clifford Weber, Kenyon Emeritus*

IN HONOREM ROBERTI BENNETT  
ULTIMO MUNERE IAM PAENE  
PERFECTO  
A.D. III KAL. MAI. ANNO DOMINI  
MMVI

Laudare numquam praeteritum soles  
tempus sed ardes rem potidfus novam;  
haerere desuetis docendi  
artibus atque modis recusas.

Comes alumnos hic prope te vides;  
impellit omnis mens similis tuae,  
ipsos vetustatis relictas  
immemores, hodierna amantis.

Semper propinquat spe citior dies  
praecepta cum tu discipulo dabis  
nulli neque in coetum vocabis  
consilia ut capiatis ullos.

IN HONOR OF ROBERT BENNETT  
HIS FINAL DUTY NOW ALMOST COMPLETE  
29 APRIL 2006

You are inclined never to praise time past,  
but you rather burn for what is new;  
you refuse to cling to outmoded  
techniques and methods of teaching.

You see beside you here smiling protégés;  
an attitude similar to yours moves them all,  
being themselves heedless of old times done and  
gone  
but loving the here and now.

The day draws ever nearer, sooner than you expect,  
when you will impart your teachings to no student  
or summon any people to a meeting  
to reach decisions.

Nullos sodales quomodo mitius  
ludant monebis, nulla tuas fores  
florens celebrabit iuventus,  
nullius ingenium fovebis.

Quod credis et nunc, tum renues statim;  
mentem creabit vita novam prior,  
fiesque laudator peracti  
temporis et novitatis hostis.

Ad me puellae quam puer attigi  
pallens imago nocte venit senem;  
sic imber Aprili quod auxit  
attenuat glacies Decembris.

Tu voce magna maribus in choris  
canta vetustum carmen et histrio  
succende consessum querelis  
flebilibus veteris tyranni.

Saevos inermi pisce tuo fuga  
felis, amicos fortiter adiuva,  
tuque ipse constanti beëris  
pace deum pietatis ergo.

No fraternity will you advise to play more gently,  
no springtime of youths  
will crowd your door,  
no growing minds will you nurture.

What you believe even now you will then  
straightway deny;  
your former life will beget a new attitude,  
and you will become a praiser of time gone by  
and an enemy of newness.

To me, the pale phantom of the girl I embraced  
when young  
comes by night in my old age;  
in the same way, what the rain caused to grow in  
April  
the ice of December diminishes.

But you--with a loud voice in choirs of men,  
sing an ancient song, and, from the stage,  
fire the audience with the tearful laments  
of an old king.

Away from your defenseless fish, put to flight  
savage  
cats; staunchly help your friends;  
and may you yourself be blessed with the unending  
good will of the gods, on account of your devotion.

# Eyes Wide Shut: Blindness and Desire in Menander's *Aspis*

▪ *Richard Rader, Ohio State University, rader.59@osu.edu*

If it is the case that ideology is one's imaginary relationship to one's real conditions of existence, then it stands to reason that any attempt to distill the infinite complexity of human experience into schemes and character types is a thoroughly ideological activity. For it reduces a rich world of personality and circumstance into a false world of equivalence (all braggarts are the same, all grouches are the same), valorizing in the process a palatable boundary between self (identity) and other (difference). The same perception of the world, I contend, holds true even in the work of Menander, who is considered to have been a student of the archetypical taxonomizer of the ancient world, Theophrastus (himself the student of Aristotle). Given this, one would imagine readers of Menander could see that his world of identification (with the "good guy" figures) invites ideological criticism. Unfortunately, most critics tend to reiterate the ideological presuppositions of the text they purport to interrogate. This inclination demonstrates that the critical reception of Menander remarkably resembles a viewing of his plays in the fourth century BCE, as both experience the humanistic closure of this reified world of identity and difference as an ideological state apparatus. For the appeal of this recognizable world, so like our own in its virtues, renders us incapable of always seeing its darker face. (Imagine *The Stepford Wives*.)

The purpose of this paper is two-fold: first, to consider how the social reality of Menandrian comedy (specifically the *Aspis*) is created and manipulated. Here I will briefly explore the subtle process of audience manipulation that takes place within the prologue and the effects of this operation which can be detected throughout the rest of the play. It is my opinion, for example, that though Chairestratos' orchestration of the marriage early in the *Aspis* is illegal (it is technically Smikrines' responsibility), nevertheless our focus has been oriented so as to notice the illegality of his action but ultimately to disregard it in light of his decency (the word *chrēstos* is prominent here). In demonstrating this, I will shed light on how Menander uses character types to flatter his audience, in the process performing the more sinister, ideological work of justifying and glorifying the coerciveness of community. In other words, as an ideological representation of the world the *Aspis* justifies its own capacity to supplant, represent and supplement its coercive mechanisms. Second, I will consider how the ideological "work" of the play insinuates itself even into the reception of the Menandrian corpus. Here I will trace the ideological face of the critical reception of Menander in contemporary scholars who, like the characters at the end of the *Dyskolos*, dance and celebrate the creation of a world of illegal coercion.

# Eyes Wide Shut: Blindness and Desire in Menander's *Aspis*

"[Menander's] plots all have as their theme the reunion of husband and wife, lover and mistress, father and daughter, or father and son, and so on, as well as the righting of wrongs with removal of misunderstanding." (Post, L.A.)

"Smikrines is unusual in being wholly bad: his greed and hypocrisy are unrelieved by any feature that can win him sympathy." (Gomme and Sandbach)

"When the characters of tragedy ceased to take themselves seriously and became mere idiots dancing in the wind, Menander filled the gap by making comedy a serious and moral commentary on what men do and what they ought to do." (Post, L.A.)

". . . a spiritually misguided man in need of reform." (Sutton, D.)

"[Menander's] characters pass through an ordeal very like religious initiation and emerge reformed, purified and enlightened." (Post, L.A.)

"The prologue confirms our strong suspicion that Smicrines is the nastiest man in the world, far more offensive than other crabby men like Knemon [. . .]" (Segal, E.)

"[T]his much [i.e., the fact that a character is repellent] we know already, if we have any

decency in us." (Olson, E.)

"This scheme, which Fortune describes only in general terms, follows naturally from our understanding of his character [. . .]" (Goldberg, S.)

"Chairestratos' remonstrance is based more on a sense of basic decency than a strict sense of legality [. . .]" (Goldberg, S.)

"Certainty is impossible, but it can safely be assumed that, somehow, the Jacks got their Jills, and that Smikrines got his deserts [*sic*]." (Miller, N.)

"On the one hand we have the world of the old and maladjusted fun-hater [. . .] On the other, we have the world of the other characters of the play, who are all fun-loving, properly socialized, and characterized as thoroughly attractive youths." (Sutton, D.)

"Only a small piece of Life is imitated on Menander's stage, and only a small piece is necessary. Our own response does the rest." (Goldberg, S.)

"Each new discovery brings more evidence of generalizing about Menander's plays." (Gomme and Sandbach)

## (i) The Tragedy of New Comedy

Daos: Oh sir! Every day is a sad day for me now, and life's balance sheet is not at all

what I hoped it would be when I set out. For I thought you'd come safely back from the war, a hero, and that you'd live the rest of your life in some style, with the title of General or Privy Counsellor. And your sister, for whose sake you enlisted, would marry a man you approved of, when you'd come home to those who loved you. For myself, I thought there would be rest from long labour, as I grew old, in return for my services to you. Instead, you're gone, Kleostratos, snatched away by death against all expectation; and I, your tutor, have come home with this shield, which failed to save you, though you often brought it safely back from battle. For you were a brave man, bravest of the brave.

(ii) A Money-Grubber's Greed

Daos: [. . .] Many men had actually left the protection of the camp, and were looting the villages, burning crops and selling booty. Everyone came back with his pockets full.

Smikrines: Lovely!

(iii) A Misidentification?

Smikrines: Did you find [Kleostratos] among the fallen?

Daos: It wasn't possible to identify the body with any certainty. They'd been lying out for four days, and their faces were all bloated.

Smikrines: Then how can you be sure that he's dead?

Daos: He was lying there with his shield. It was all buckled, and I imagine that's why none of the natives had taken it.

(iv) The establishment

Tyche: Well now, if something unpleasant had really happened to these people, I couldn't be the next to appear, for I'm a goddess. But in fact they're mistaken, quite led astray, as anyone who pays attention to me will soon discover. [. . .] Daos here made a mistake. Kleostratos fought in the defence with borrowed arms, and was taken prisoner. He's alive, and he'll come back safely, quite soon now. Well, you've been properly briefed now on that. [Smikrines] is Kleostratos' uncle on his father's side, and a real villain, biggest twister in the world. He takes no account of the claims of relatives or friends, never gives a thought to the wickedness of his life. He wants everything for himself. That's his one idea. [. . .] Where [Daos] went in next door, that's the house of the Money-grubber's younger brother. He's the young man's uncle too, but he's a good man as well as a rich one. [. . .] He's a good man, as I said, and when he realized that Kleostratos was likely to be away for a considerable time, and that they had little money of their own, he was going to arrange the girl's marriage to his stepson and he was going to provide a substantial dowry. The wedding was to be today, but what has happened now will upset everything. Our villain, who heard just now about the six hundred gold pieces, and got a look at the foreign slaves, pack mules and girls, will have to have the heiress himself: and his age gives him a prior claim. But he won't succeed! He'll cause a great deal of trouble, and show the whole world what he's really like—and then he'll be back where he started.

---

# A Star is Born: Mesopotamian and Classical Catasterisms

▪ *Jeffrey Cooley, Xavier University, cooley@xavier.edu*

The hoary writing system and languages of ancient Mesopotamia were deciphered in the late nineteenth century. Since that time hundreds of thousands of cuneiform tablets have been discovered and read. Thousands of these tablets are astronomical in nature. Over the last century and a quarter, it has become quite clear that some of the inhabitants of ancient Mesopotamia were extremely capable astronomers.

What has also become clear is that the classical astronomical tradition is heavily dependant on its Mesopotamian forerunner. Indeed, many, many of the most basic features, concepts and principles of classical astronomy are borrowed part and parcel from the Mesopotamian tradition. This includes the division of the sky into 360 degrees and the use of a sexagesimal number system. Related to this, of course, is the twenty-four hour day with sixty minutes in an hour. On a more sophisticated level are the many mathematical procedures, borrowed from the Mesopotamian tradition into Hellenistic science, used to calculate planetary periods and positions.

But the most obvious and perhaps the most surprising feature of this classical dependence on the Mesopotamian tradition is the Greek adoption of many of the Babylonian constellations, both within and outside the zodiac. Surely the Greeks had their own constellations, as all cultures do.

There is no doubt, however, that the Greeks adopted many constellations with little to no modification, as part of the entire astronomical system, which they accepted from the Near East. Indeed, eventually the classical tradition would call this half-bred conception of the night sky the *sphaera graecanica*, thus claiming it entirely as its own and in opposition to the *sphaera barbarica*. Though little attested, the *sphaera barbarica* was a Hellenistic moniker for alternative constellations that were not used in the Greek system.

Some of the most entertaining mythical genres from classical antiquity are the stellar etiological stories known as catasterisms. In some ways, catasterisms are one of the most enduring legacies of classical mythology since most modern basic amateur guides to astronomy make some mention of them when describing the constellations.<sup>1</sup> Less known, however, are Mesopotamian catasterisms, several of which are preserved. Given the utter reliance of classical astronomy on Mesopotamian traditions, it only seems logical that there would remain some reflex of those Mesopotamian catasterisms in the catasterisms from the classical tradition. Even a casual glance at the few Mesopotamian catasterisms that are preserved in the fragmentary literary record, however, is enough to demonstrate that there seems to be absolutely no relationship

between the two traditions in this regard. The question that I would like to discuss here is: Why did the classical world not assume Babylonian catasterisms together with Babylonian astronomical science?

Though particular constellations, such as Orion, the Pleiades, the Hyades and the Bears, are mentioned in the earliest Greek literature—that is in Homer (the shield of Achilles, *Iliad* 18.483–492, 509–512; Odysseus navigating by stars, *Odyssey* 5.269–275) and Hesiod (*Works and Days* 383–384, 564–570, 609–622)—these works contain no hint of catasterism. Rather, the earliest collection of Greek catasterisms was assembled by the chief librarian at Alexandria, Eratosthenes, in a work rather unimaginatively if aptly titled *Katasterismoi*. Written sometime in the third century BCE, his work is no longer extant in its original form. It is preserved, however, in a Latin epitome from the first or second centuries CE.<sup>2</sup> The earliest preserved Greek work containing catasterisms is the *Phaenomena* of Aratus, also originating in the third century BCE.<sup>3</sup> The immensely popular *Phaenomena* is not a collection of catasterisms, however, it is a description of the night sky in

general for the purpose of prognostication. It is only within Aratus' description of the night sky that he inserts the occasional entertaining mythological allusion. Here Aratus relates four catasterisms, one involving the origin of the Bears (27–39), another for Virgo (96–136), the third the Horse (209–224) and lastly the Lyre (268–274). Thus, Aratus provides us with the earliest extant Greek catasterisms, but here we have only scraps, since these are only amusing diversions in Aratus' greater work. Aside from Eratosthenes' *Katasterismoi*, the only other collection of catasterisms from classical antiquity dates to a few years BCE. The work entitled variously *Poeticon Astronomicon* or *De Astronomia* was written by Hyginus, the librarian of Augustus, who is also credited with the collection of classical mythology called *Fabulae*.<sup>4</sup>

Now, most of these catasterisms actually relate otherwise well-known myths that in and of themselves have nothing originally to do with the stars. These myths are associated with the images of the constellations. For example, the figure of Sagittarius, the archer, is not simply

---

## DO YOU BELONG TO CAMWS?

The Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS) is an organization of university, college, secondary, and elementary teachers of Latin, Greek, and classical antiquity. CAMWS publishes the quarterly *Classical Journal*, issues a Newsletter three times a year, and holds an annual conference in the spring. Institutional memberships are also available. For information, please see the CAMWS website at <http://www.camws.org/>.

identified as the archer. As related in *De Astronomia* 2.27:

Many say this is Centaurus; others say this cannot be for the reason that no centaur used arrows. The reason is sought why he is represented with a horse's limbs and has a tail like the satyrs. Many say this is Crotus, the son of Eupheme. . . . Sositheus the tragedian says that Crotus lived on Mount Helicon and . . . was an active hunter. His diligence in those pursuits won him great acclaim, for he was both the swiftest in the forest and the most accomplished in the musical arts. Because of this accomplishment, the Muses asked Jupiter to represent him among the stars. . . . Since he wished to signal all of Crotus' skills in one figure, Jupiter gave him a horse's legs, because he used horses exclusively; he added arrows so that by virtue of these Crotus' skill and speed might be evident; and he placed a satyr's tail on his body because the Muses delighted in him no less than Liber delighted in the satyrs.<sup>5</sup>

Thus Sagittarius is associated with Centaurus, since the image is of some sort of half-man-half-horse freak. Alternatively, he is identified as Crotus, who was a normal man but Jupiter altered his image in the stars in order to represent his many talents. This explains what would otherwise appear to be wholly abnormal.

Only one classical catasterism is not otherwise attested to in the mythology, namely that of Piscis Austrinus (the Southern Fish), which is given an entirely foreign derivation:

This is the so-called Great Fish, which is swallowing water being poured out by the

Water-Pourer. Concerning this Fish, Ctesias recounts that it lived in a certain lake near Bambyce. When Derceto, who is considered a goddess by those inhabiting the region of Syria, fell into the lake one night, the Fish is believed to have rescued her. . . . All the fish were honored and placed among the stars because Derceto was the daughter of Aphrodite.<sup>6</sup>

It should be noted that, although this story is given a foreign setting in Syria and the constellation seems to have originated with the Mesopotamian constellation *nūnu* (<sup>m</sup>lKU<sub>6</sub>), "the fish," the myth is not known from any other source, Greek or Mesopotamian.

Aside from these mythological catasterisms, there is a sort of historical catasterism which is attested to in classical sources. It is quite rare and seems to only occur when the rise or death of someone of great renown coincides with the appearance of a comet. Such was the case with Augustus. Pliny in his *Natural History* (2.93–94) relates that:

His late Majesty Augustus had deemed this comet very propitious to himself; as it had appeared at the beginning of his rule. . . . The common people believed that this star signified the soul of Caesar received among the spirits of the immortal gods.

Apparently, then, it is good—very good—to be king.

In contrast to the classical tradition which, for the most part, associates already existing mythology to foreign-derived constellations, Mesopotamian catasterisms, by and large,

do not draw their meaning from mythology. Rather, in Mesopotamia, catasterisms are mythology. That is to say that Mesopotamian catasterisms do not associate otherwise independent myths with generic images in the sky. In Mesopotamia, for the most part, the images in the sky cannot be disassociated from the myth. Furthermore, unlike the case with classical catasterisms, the scribes of ancient Mesopotamia did not assemble their star myths into a single, organized collection. Rather, these myths exist in independent stories or are incorporated into larger stories. Two last notes regarding the nature of Mesopotamian catasterisms are in order. First, they are not particularly common. There are, in fact, so few extant Mesopotamian catasterisms that we will actually cover most of them. Second, all Mesopotamian catasterisms date to the second millennium. This is because almost all major Mesopotamian literary works originate in the second millennium, while the heyday of Mesopotamian celestial science was in the first millennium. Thus, the rarity of Mesopotamian catasterisms is due to the simultaneous decline of mythological speculation and rise of celestial science.<sup>8</sup>

One of the great motifs in ancient Near Eastern literature in general, and Mesopotamian literature specifically, is the conflict myth, in which a hero deity, often at the behest of other gods, slays a threatening monster and is rewarded for his actions. A common, though not necessarily universal, component in this motif is an act of creation, either of a feature of the cosmos or of the cosmos as a whole. Probably because of this last component, it is in texts such

as these we find the clearest and most frequent examples of catasterism in Mesopotamia.

Only partially preserved on a single tablet dating to the seventh century, the Labbu Myth is thought to have been originally composed in roughly the first half of the second millennium. Though fragmentary, enough of the tablet is preserved to reconstruct the basic plot with reasonable certainty. The world is in disorder because of a serpent monster that the divine Sea has spawned and that the storm god Enlil has designed. To deal with this crisis, the gods meet around the moon god Sin. The gods decide to offer a minor deity, Tišpak, kingship in return for his service of slaying the monster. Tišpak successfully dispatches the beast and it is here that the text breaks off.

Significant to our discussion here, is the description of Enlil's creation of the monster:

Who [brought forth?] the serpent?  
 The Sea [brought forth?] the serpent!  
 Enlil drew in the heavens [ . . . . ]  
 50 double-hours its length, 1 double [hour its width]  
 6 cubits its mouth, 12 cubits [its . . . . ]  
 12 cubits the circumference of its e[ars?]  
 For 60 cubits he encloses? [ . . . . ]  
 In the water 9 cubits he dra[gs . . . . ]  
 He raises his tail [ . . . . . ]  
 The gods of heaven, all of them [ . . . ]  
 In the heavens the gods were bowing before [Sin . . ]  
 and by Sin's fringe . . . . [ . . . ]  
 "Who will go and [slay?] Labbu?"<sup>9</sup>

It is unclear just how the Sea was involved with Enlil's creation of the serpent, which he draws in the sky. That this serpent is a constellation seems to be fairly clear, however. The idiom "to draw in the sky," to describe the creation of a celestial feature is found in the celestial divination literature to refer to the method of the creation of the stars and constellations.

But just what is this monster? It is called both a "serpent" and *labbu*, which is an Akkadian poetic term for "lion." Clearly, the monster is a *Mischwesen*, part lion, part serpent. The lion-serpent is common in Mesopotamian iconography—judging by the dimensions given, it is a weird looking beast. The terms used to precisely describe the dimensions of the lion-serpent, "double hour" and "cubit," are not only common units of terrestrial length, they are also commonly used to describe celestial distances. Since a terrestrial double hour is several miles long while a cubit is only about a foot and a half, this would make for one very, very, very long monster. However, if double hour and cubit are considered according to their celestial usage, the beast becomes a little more manageable. A celestial double hour amounts to about 30 degrees, while a celestial cubit is about 3 degrees. As for its identification in the night sky, we are at a complete loss. Though there are several sky serpents among Mesopotamian constellations, there is no constellation called *Labbu* known from Mesopotamian astronomy.

The account of a second catasterism from Mesopotamia is, like the *Labbu* Myth, extremely fragmentary. With only the last of an original seven tablets preserved, the basic

plot of the myth of Girra and Elamatum can nonetheless be reconstructed, if only in bare essentials. This story, dating from the first half of the second millennium, recounts how the god Girra rescued the land from the wicked machinations of Elamatum, literally, "the Elamite woman," who apparently had caused famine and cessation of livestock breeding. As reward for his heroism, the storm god Enlil decrees that Girra, the god of fire, be the preeminent light above his divine brethren and illuminate humankind:

Go, may you be the light of humankind.  
You made yourself appear!  
Let Girra be your name!

. . . .

Until you show them light may the nocturnal offering of the gods, your brothers, not be. . . .

Though we cannot identify his specific star, we do know that a star called Girra appears in star lists from the same period.

After Girra is rewarded, Enlil commemorates Elamatum's defeat by founding a festival commemorating the event. He imaginatively disposes of her corpse:

And the Elamite Woman whom you killed  
let her rise in the midst of the heavens.  
[ ] let her stand  
[in the mid]st of the heavens  
[ . . . to her people  
[ ] let her rise"

Thus, Elamatum was translated to the heavenly realm, undoubtedly in the form of a constellation.

Similar to Girra, though we are unsure just to what stars the constellation Elamatum was associated, this constellation appears in a prayer to gods of the night from the same period, alongside other known constellations and stars, so we can be certain of its existence in the night sky.

Thus, the myth of Girra and Elamatum was, at least in part, a catasterism explaining the existence of two stars or constellations from the Old Babylonian period. Since the myth also includes the establishment of a festival, it is possible, perhaps even likely, that the heliacal rising of the constellation was coordinated with the celebration of that festival. Thus, the myth provides an etiology for a constellation as well as a calendrical phenomenon.

The third catasterismic text I would like to introduce comes from yet another example of the Mesopotamian conflict myth. Next to the *Gilgamesh* Epic, the Babylonian Epic of Creation, *Enuma Elish*, is perhaps the best-known myth from ancient Mesopotamia. It tells the story of how a young, little-known god named Marduk achieved supremacy over all the gods of Mesopotamia and how he created the cosmos in the process. As the story goes, a new, younger generation of gods is threatened by the ancient and powerful goddess of the deep sea, named Tiamat. Terrified by her immense power, the gods offer Marduk kingship over them if he is able to slay Tiamat. Marduk does so easily and he reuses Tiamat's enormous corpse to fashion the very cosmos itself, including the earth, rivers, seas, the city of Babylon and its temples, and significantly, the sky:

He fashioned the position for the great gods,  
the stars, their counterparts, the constellations  
he installed.

He determined the year, laid out the plan. . . .

Marduk goes on to fashion the moon and the sun, among other celestial features. The account is essentially a pan-catasterism, in which the creation of the whole of the sky is described in astronomically significant detail.

Having built celestial and terrestrial homes for the gods, Marduk decides to create humankind to serve them. Marduk then assigns the gods their respective duties and dominions in either the netherworld or in heaven. With a busy day of cosmic monster slaying and universal construction complete, the gods then gather in Marduk's temple for a great feast and, after eating and drinking, they retire to their respective domains, fixing destinies and giving judgments.

Thus Tiamat's corpse remains on display like a cosmic deer's head mounted on the wall of the very fabric of creation. Like any good hunter, Marduk is proud of the weapon with which he took down his pray, that is, his mighty bow. He takes his beloved weapon, and sets it before the gods to admire:

The lord received the bow, his weapon he  
placed before them.

. . . .

They looked at the bow, how it was well  
crafted.

His fathers were celebrating the feat he  
performed.

Anu lifted it up, in the assembly of the gods  
he spoke;

He kissed the bow, “Let it be my daughter!”

He named it, the bow, thus are its names:

“Long Wood, let it be the first, and the second,  
let it be Conqueror.

Its third name is Bow Star; I will make it visible  
in the heavens.”

He fixed its position with the gods, its  
brethren.

Thus, out of the sheer joy of witnessing the exaltation of the famous weapon, the sky god Anu gives the weapon three names. Together with its third name, the Bow Star, Anu places the weapon in the sky, making it a constellation. We know from astronomical texts that the Bow Star is much of the constellation Canis Major. Anu even adopts the weapon as his very daughter. With Tiamat dead, Marduk in charge, and the Bow-Star in heaven, all is right with the world, and the gods all live happily ever after.

In addition to these mythical catasterisms, we know that in the earliest stages of Mesopotamian history, occasionally a certain king upon his death was considered to be translated into the night sky as a star or constellation. Such was the case with Šulgi, the king of Ur who reigned at the end of the third millennium BCE. This transformation was reported in a mundane economic text that documents the work record of slaves:

19 female full-time slaves

[and] 2 female slaves at 2/3 wage,  
for seven days.

Their work of 142 1/3 female slave days

on the day when Šulgi ascended to  
heaven. . . .

That this text refers to a stellar transformation of the king is verified by near contemporary star lists in which Šulgi appears along side other, better known stars and constellations. As in the classical world, however, this form of political catasterism was rare, confined only to the early stages of Mesopotamian history.

Now obviously, there are some basic similarities between classical and Mesopotamian catasterisms. Nevertheless, the differences in content, context, and number are dramatic. Mesopotamian catasterisms were really quite rare while in the classical world there were several popular collections in circulation. Furthermore, the extant catasterisms from Mesopotamia do not deal with particularly prominent constellations—as far as we can determine, for example, none of the stars in the zodiac are given a specific mythological origin. There seems to be no connection whatsoever between the catasterismic scraps we have from Mesopotamia and the virtual stellar feast from the classical world. Why is this the case and why are catasterisms such a well-attested genre in Greece and Rome?

First of all, the question of origins is very important. In Mesopotamia, the night sky had always been just as it was. Its animals and images were common in Mesopotamian thought and aesthetic and for the most part, required no mythological explanation. In contrast, much of, indeed, the most important parts of the classical sky were imported from a foreign culture. Thus, in Greece, they had no

inherent cultural significance and they needed to be fully incorporated into Greek thought and religion. Catasterisms fulfilled this necessity. This is part of the Greek obsession with finding the significance and meaning, or more specifically the Greek significance and meaning of everything, including foreign concepts and institutions. This undertaking is similar to many of the etiological stories assigned to foreign concepts and institutions that we find in such accounts as Herodotus' *Histories*. For example, the origin of the Persians is, of course, traced through the Greek mythical hero Perseus, and Herodotus even cites the Persians themselves as the originators of this idea, in spite of the fact the name of the Persians is, in reality, Persian in origin (*Histories* 6.54; 7.150).

The second reason for this situation is just as important, namely, that despite the amount of intellectual effort spent on astronomy and celestial science in Mesopotamia, catasterisms, which are one way in which myth reflects on these undertakings, were simply out of fashion and considered wholly unimportant in Babylon by the time the Greeks adopted Mesopotamian astronomy in the late first millennium.

We are left with the fact that the Greek world adopted Mesopotamian astronomical methods devoid of any mythological associations. This fact underscores the reality that, despite the heroic efforts of scholars such as Walter

Burkert<sup>10</sup> and Martin West,<sup>11</sup> who have strived to find solid, incontrovertible links between ancient Near Eastern and classical literature, literary and mythological links between the ancient Near East and the classical world remain vague, at best. There are limits to intercultural interaction. A culture will only adopt foreign concepts, ideas, technologies, etc. if they are meaningful, useful, and above all, available to the adopting culture. In the case of Mesopotamian catasterisms, they were not meaningful to a Greek audience, nor were they useful for framing the newly borrowed astronomical system within its new Greek context. But above all, Mesopotamian catasterisms were probably not adopted by the Greeks alongside Mesopotamian astronomy because they were simply unavailable.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> E.g. M. Chartrand, *The National Audubon Society Field Guide to the Night Sky* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 421–621.

<sup>2</sup> C. Robert, *Eratosthenis Catasterismorum Reliquiae* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1963) and A. Olivieri, *Pseudo-Eratosthenis Catasterismi* (*Mythographi Graeci* 3.1; Leipzig: Teubner, 1897). For a modern English Translation, see T. Condos, *Star Myths of the Greeks and Romans: A Sourcebook Containing The Constellations of Pseudo-Eratosthenes and the Poetic Astronomy*

---

The Committee for the Promotion of Latin of CAMWS regularly makes awards to help support a variety of projects. For information, see: <http://department.monm.edu/classics/CPL/Grants/CPLFundingProcedure.htm>

---

of *Hyginus* (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> D. Kidd, *Aratus: Phaenomena* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> G. Viré, *Hyginus: De Astronomia* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1992). For a modern English translation, see M. Grant, *The Myths of Hyginus* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1960) as well as Condos, *Star Myths*.

<sup>5</sup> Translation from Condos, *Star Myths*, 184.

<sup>6</sup> *Poeticon Astronomicum* 2.41; translation from Condos, *Star Myths*, 163–164.

<sup>[17]</sup> The same story is related in Dio Cassius' *Roman History* 45.7.1 and in Suetonius *Div. Jul.* 88. These authors are adamant that this was a belief of the common folk rather than *intelligentsia*.

<sup>8</sup> For descriptions of Mesopotamian celestial sciences see, H. Hunger and D. Pingree, *The Astral Sciences in Mesopotamia* (Handbuch der Orientalistik 44; Leiden: Brill, 1999) and U. Koch-Westenholz, *Mesopotamian Astrology* (CNI Publications 19; Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> CT 13 33-34 (Rm 282). See also English translation in A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation* (2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 141-143.

<sup>10</sup> W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> M. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

---

## The new Ohio Classical Conference website <http://www.xavier.edu/OCC>

Thanks to Ed Cueva and Xavier University, the Ohio Classical Conference now has a new website at <http://www.xavier.edu/OCC>. This site includes information regarding upcoming annual meetings, OCC scholarships, and an archive of prior issues of *Humanitas* in PDF format. Please consult the membership and email directories and add or correct your information as appropriate. Thanks!

## OCC Officers

---

### **President**

Edmund Cueva, Xavier University

### **1st Vice President**

Steven Strauss, Notre Dame Academy

### **2nd Vice President**

Gwen Compton-Engle, John Carroll University

### **Secretary**

Judith de Luce, Miami University

### **Treasurer**

Shannon Byrne, Xavier University

### ***Humanitas* Editor**

Neil Bernstein, Ohio University



## OCC Council

---

### **Term Ending 2006:**

Jeff Kolo, Medina High School

Stergios Lazos, Saint Edward High School

Adam Serfass, Kenyon College

Janice Vitullo, Laurel School

### **Term Ending 2007:**

Laura Abrahamsen, Lakewood High School

Steve Anderson, Grandview Heights High School

Mark Bocija, Columbus State Community College

Gwen Compton-Engle, John Carroll University

Lee Fratantuono, Ohio Wesleyan University

Carolin Hahnemann, Kenyon College

### **Term Ending 2008:**

Daniel Arbezniak, St. Ignatius High School

Mary Jo Behrensmeyer, Mount Vernon High School

Kay Fluharty, Madeira High School

Sr. Georgia Messingschlager, St. Xavier HS

Nicholas Russo, St. Francis de Sales High School

Zara Torlone, Miami University of Ohio

### **Scholarship Committee:**

Amy Sawan, Medina High School

Donald Poduska, John Carroll University

Kay Fluharty, Madeira High School

### **Hildesheim Vase Committee:**

William Owens, Chair, Ohio University

Don Lateiner, Ohio Wesleyan University

Mary Jo Behrensmeyer, Mount Vernon High School

### **Finance Committee:**

Shannon Byrne, Chair, Xavier University

Franz Gruber, The Columbus Academy

Martin Helzle, Case Western Reserve University

Jeff Kolo, Medina High School

Stergios Lazos, Saint Edward High School

### **Nominations Committee:**

Steven Strauss, Chair, Notre Dame Academy

### **Representative to OFLA:**

Sherwin Little, Indian Hill High School

### **Representative to ACL:**

Judith de Luce, Miami University

# Ohio Classical Conference Program

Vernon Manor Hotel  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
October 27–28, 2006

Friday October 27, 2006

- 8:30am, Continental Room:** REGISTRATION AND BOOK DISPLAY
- 9:00am–10:00am, Continental Room:** COUNCIL MEETING
- 10:00am–12:15pm, Continental Room:** FIRST PANEL SESSION

## Roman Literature and Art

Shannon N. Byrne, Xavier University, Chair

- ▣ Each Man's Father Served as his Teacher: Ancestral Emulation and Fictive Kinship in Pliny's *Letters*, **Neil Bernstein**, Ohio University
- ▣ Silencing the Historian: Tracing the Decline of *Libertas* under Tiberius in Tacitus' *Annales*, **Robert Brewer**, University of Florida
- ▣ The Roman Triumph and its Place in the Classroom, **Amber Scaife**, Kenyon College
- ▣ *Perfer et obdura: multo graviora tulisti (Tristia 5.11.7)*: Ovid's Rejection of Ulysses' Endurance, **Silvia Montiglio**, University of Wisconsin - Madison
- ▣ *Vita Memoriae*: Memory and Forgetting in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, **Robert W. Morris**, University of Florida
- ▣ Sculpture as a Pedagogical Tool for Architecture, **William Preuter**, West Geauga High School

- 12:30pm–2:00pm, Oak Room:** THE VERGILIAN SOCIETY LUNCHEON

*Making Sense of Vergil*

**Daniel Garrison**

Northwestern University

- 2:00pm–3:00pm,**  
**Belvedere Conference Center Boardroom:** FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

**3:00pm–4:00pm, Continental Room:**

*The Integration of the Library and Technology into Classical Studies*

**Michelle Early**

Bibliographic Control Services Librarian, Xavier University

**Kelly Kusch**

Covington Latin School

**4:15pm–6:00pm, Continental Room:**

SECOND PANEL SESSION

**The Next Generation of Classicists I**

John W. Thomas, Xavier University, Chair

**Songs of Many Wives: Renderings of “Homeric Society” and  
Manipulations of the Mythological Tradition**

- ▣ Introductory Remarks, **Brian P. Sowers**, University of Cincinnati
- ▣ The Hero Menestheus: Mortal Enemy or Misunderstood Victim? **Christina L. Kolb**, University of Cincinnati
- ▣ Medea’s Dream and the Psychology of Emotion: *Argonautica* 3.616–635, **Jason Reddoch**, University of Cincinnati
- ▣ Feasting in the Prehistoric Aegean: Views from the Linear B Tablets and the Homeric Epics, **Sarah Lima**, University of Cincinnati
- ▣ Hidden in the Shadows of the Future Perfect: Contesting the *Polis* and Misreading the Aegean Dark Age, **Aaron D. Wolpert**, University of Cincinnati

**6:15pm–7:15pm, Oak Room:**

RECEPTION

Xavier University’s Classics Department and the Office of the Academic Vice President and Provost invites OCC members to enjoy a variety of hot and cold hors d’oeuvres and open bar. The reception is **free of charge** to all OCC members who have paid their membership and registration dues.

**7:30pm:** Dinner on your own at the Vernon Manor Hotel or at one of many restaurants recommended by the Vernon Manor Hotel. (There will be a free shuttle departing from the Vernon Manor Hotel to Newport on the Levee, but the seating is limited. Please make sure to indicate on your registration form if you will be making use of the shuttle.)

## Saturday, October 28, 2006

- 8:30am, Continental Room:** REGISTRATION AND BOOK DISPLAY
- 9:00am–10:00am, Continental Room:** BUSINESS MEETING
- 10:15am–12:15am, Continental Room:** THIRD PANEL SESSION

### The Next Generation of Classicists II

Fr. Frederick Benda, S.J., Xavier University, Chair

#### Applied Approaches to Interpreting and Reconstructing the Ancient World

- ▣ Introductory Remarks, **Kathleen Lynch**, University of Cincinnati
- ▣ Cyprus, an Island at the Crossroads of Empire: A Case Study in the Interpretation of Empires and Their Effects on the Classical World, **Jody Michael Gordon**, University of Cincinnati
- ▣ Identifying a Less Spectacular Greek Sanctuary: The Case of Stymphalos, **Peter Stone**, University of Cincinnati
- ▣ Portrait of the Artist: Lysippos as Literary Legend, **Jed Thorn**, University of Cincinnati
- ▣ Making Latin Concrete: Strategies for Teaching Literature through Archaeology, **Lynne A. Kvapil**, University of Cincinnati and **Patrick Beasom**, University of Cincinnati

- 12:30pm–2:00pm, Oak Room:** BUFFET LUNCH & WORKSHOP

Edmund P. Cueva, Xavier University, Chair

*Archaeology in the High School Classroom*

**Mary Jo Behrensmeyer**

Mount Vernon High School

*An 'Instant' Approach to Helping Students*

**Nick Young**

University of Detroit Jesuit High School

University of Detroit Mercy

- 2:15pm–4:00pm, Continental Room:** FOURTH PANEL SESSION

### Greek Literature and Art

Steven Strauss, Notre Dame Academy, Chair

- ▣ E. Stallings and Margaret Atwood Revise Homer, **Judith de Luce**, Miami University of Ohio
- ▣ From Sublime to Suspicious: Plato's Shifting View of Poets, **Jay S. Arns**, University of Florida
- ▣ Archaeological Evidence for the Reconstruction of Athens after the Persian Sack of 479 B.C., **Kathleen M. Lynch**, University of Cincinnati
- ▣ Narrated Construction Sites in Herodotus and Thucydides, **Edith Foster**, The College of Wooster
- ▣ Xenophon of Ephesus and the Romance of Slavery, **William Owens**, Ohio University

**4:30pm:** Shuttles Depart for Xavier University–Schmidt Hall (If you wish to drive on your own to Xavier, the Vernon Manor Hotel will supply directions.)

**5:15pm–6:15pm:** **THE 2006 JOHN W. RETTIG LECTURE**  
Conaton Board Room, Schmidt Hall

“Texts, Sacred and Profane: Editors, Saints and Sinners”  
**Gareth L. Schmeling**  
University of Florida

**6:30pm:** **RECEPTION**  
Conaton Board Room, Schmidt Hall, sponsored by Xavier University's Office of the Academic Vice President and Provost

**7:30pm:** **OHIO CLASSICAL CONFERENCE BANQUET**  
Presentation Room, Schott Hall

**HILDESHEIM VASE AWARD**

**9:00pm:** Shuttles Depart for the Vernon Manor Hotel from Xavier University–Admissions Parking Lot–Schott Hall

*Dear Colleagues,*

*A goal of this Cincinnati meeting is to encourage greater dialogue and camaraderie between secondary teachers and university/college instructors. It is our hope that we can have the greatest participation possible. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance or answer any questions.*

*Ed Cueva*  
*President, OCC*  
*cueva@xavier.edu*