

ROME, 1988

by Eileen Torrence



At the base of Trajan's Column, Rome, Italy.

The 1988 Summer Session at the American Academy in Rome was literally filled with "highs" and "lows," and all were magnificent illustrations of the complex structure of the Eternal City, which Gerhard Koeppl and Joanne Spurza revealed to us layer by layer!

The pace was set on our first day as we began in the depths of the 4th century church, San Clemente. We discovered multiple levels of Christian and Roman places of worship, including our first glimpse of a mithraeum. By evening we had ascended to the rooftop of the Villa Aurelia to take in a panoramic view of the City itself, and to challenge each other to a game of "Name That Monument."

Other "highs" on our itinerary included: trekking through the Alban Hills to visit the Temple of Diana near Nemi; enjoying a view of the "Fucine Lake" and imagining Claudius running to and fro along its banks during the disastrous mock naval battles; and meandering along the terraced slopes of Sulla's Temple of Fortune at Praeneste (Palestrina). On our return to Rome from this pleasant town we made a detour to the wine-making village of Frascati, where many of us chose to enjoy a "fiasco."

At Horace's Sabine Farm, we listened to presentations and recitations by group members and by guest Professor Eleanor Winsor Leach; we climbed to Fons Bandusiae to cool our feet and to play in its magical, musical waters.

On another outing, the brave scaled Mt. Soracte in the rain (which I must confess I bypassed to visit a medieval Italian village). And of course, there were daily excursions through the hills of Rome. During these perambulations, especially when I missed the bus, the words of Vergil reverberated in my ears and pulse! "... facilis descensus... /sed revocare gradum superasque evadare ad auras,/hoc opus, hic labor est."

But every step up was worth the effort, and I felt as though I were on top of the world when I celebrated my 25th birthday on the 25th of July, standing at the top of Trajan's Column! Gerhard "spiraled" us through as much of the Dacian Wars as daylight permitted. The expressions of horror and pain on the faces of the wounded and dying were disturbing, while the depictions of villages, camps, bridges, and aqueducts refined my textbook knowledge and understanding of these structures. I kept my camera busy during this privileged visit, and I shall always treasure the unique photo opportunity of the Imperial Fora and the Markets of Trajan.

The "lows" were easier on the muscles but just as stimulating as the more strenuous sites. Our group was allowed to visit the interior of the Tabularium, where we viewed the remains of the Temple of Veiovis. In the Forum Romanum we were made privy to current excavations which continue to illuminate our understanding of the ancient world. Darby Scott, the director of the Academy, enlightened us with his findings in the House of the Vestals, and Elizabeth Nedergard's archaeological discoveries on the Arch of Augustus enabled us to update information which we had received only that morning.

We were also able to visit the Domus Transitoria, marveling at the beauty of its nymphaeum and the still vibrant traces of paint remaining on the walls and vaults. Of course, after the fire of A.D. 64, Nero replaced this modest dwelling with the infamous Domus Aurea, which we were also allowed to investigate after donning protective headgear. The excess of luxury and architectural inno-

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ventions overwhelmed us, and it was especially poignant to imagine Raphael and his students sharing the same reactions as they etched their names on the ceilings and experimented with "grotesques."

Other "below-ground" adventures took us to Largo Argentina, where we descended steps to join the "molti gatti" who made their homes in the mysterious four temples there. We entered Etruscan tombs at Tarquinia and Caere (Cerveteri), sometimes crawling down to view ominous scenes of snarling dogs and masked players in a funeral painting; and sometimes ascending stairs to gain entrance to a tomb carved of stone, mimicking the features and comforts of a home.

Our appreciation of Etruscan culture was further enhanced by visits to the Villa Giulia Museum, where Professor Nancy DeGrummond shared with us her expertise; and Professor Larissa Bonfante gave us a "Basic Etruscan" lesson in an informative and entertaining presentation in the Academy Map Room.

During excursions outside the City, I fell in love with the streets and shops of Ostia Antica, and I fell into the wagon-wheel tracks in the streets of Pompeii! I learned never to go to excavation sites without an ample supply of potable water, or at least to travel with a friend who carries a flask. I imagined having dinner in Tiberius's Grotto near Sperlonga, flanked by colossal statues portraying the "Blinding of Polyphemus." At Hadrian's Villa, I longed to plunge into the waters of the Maritime Theater, or into the "peccile" in the Canopus, but I staved off thirst until I could be refreshed by the dancing waters of Tivoli.

By the end of the summer session, we had made a full circle and ended as we had begun: investigating the various levels at the site of a Christian church. The stunning mosaics of S. Agnese fuori le Mura dazzled the eye, and its catacombs offered a cool, if not eerie repose from the Italian sun.

There are many more people, places, and events from last summer that have made a lasting impression upon my mind and heart. Guest lecturers, archaeological sites, museums, parties, and daily life in modern Rome awakened my mind and tantalized the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. I smile now, knowing that whenever I wish to re-experience the multi-levels of Rome and its surrounding areas, I need only to recall these memories from within my heart.

I intend to share the gifts I acquired from this experience with my students, and with all people who share a love of wisdom and beauty. Truly, Rome holds these for all. I thank Eta Sigma Phi, The Scholarship Selection Committee, and all my supporters who made last summer possible.

[Editor's Note: Eileen Torrence was an undergraduate student at Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana, where she was a member of Gamma Alpha Chapter. She served two terms as National Treasurer (1982-1983 and 1983-1984) and a term as National President in 1984-85. As

an undergraduate she earned certification for secondary school teaching, and she is looking forward to teaching Latin in Rockhurst High School, Kansas City, Missouri, this fall.]



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1988-1989

Alpha Upsilon Chapter The College of Wooster

The past year has been an extremely busy and fulfilling one for the Alpha Upsilon Chapter. In October, a number of members and faculty traveled to Oberlin College to hear the Martin Classical Lectures, delivered this year by Dr. John Winkler of Stanford University. In November, we made a trip up to the Cleveland Art Museum to see a special exhibit on Greek, Roman, and Etruscan bronzes. For the first part of the spring semester, we welcomed the late British classical scholar John Ferguson to Wooster as a scholar-in-residence. Dr. Ferguson gave numerous formal and informal lectures on such broad-ranging topics as Roman Satire, the history of the Roman Empire, Plato and Socrates, and the expansion of the Classics in Africa. We were all deeply saddened to hear of Dr. Ferguson's death this spring.

In addition, Alpha Upsilon hosted their own monthly Classics Forum, which features presentations from faculty, visiting scholars, and students. In April we shall initiate a new and highly talented class into our chapter.

Paul Bellis
Grammateus

Epsilon Epsilon Chapter Rockford College

We again participated in the AIA series of lectures at Rockford College. Of special interest to the group were presentations on, "Archaeology of Mycenae," (in memory of the late Professor George Mylonas) by Professor Dimitri Liakos of Northern Illinois University, and on "The Birth of Greek Sanctuaries," by Professor Mary Voyatzis of the University of Arizona. Professor Raymond L. Den Adel, our adviser, presented, "Monuments of the Emperor Hadrian," on the Lupercalia, especially in commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of our chapter on the Rockford College campus. Greetings were received and read from the Executive Secretary of Eta Sigma Phi, from the Monmouth College Chapter, Gamma Omicron, (which installed our chapter in 1974), and from the president of the Illinois Classical Conference.

The initiation of three new members will be held on April 19, 1989, and certificates will be presented at the Honors Day Convocation on April 26, 1989.

Susan Long
Grammateus

Beta Delta Chapter The University of Tennessee

We welcomed new initiates at the annual fall meeting in November, 1987, at Hopecote. The new members received their certificates of membership and Professor David Tandy gave an illustrated lecture on early Greek shipping. This meeting is always open to all members as well as to all students in the Department of Classics.

For the first time in living memory the local chapter sent representatives to the national meeting of Eta Sigma Phi. In March, Adam Epstein and Frank Stratikis attended the 1988 meeting in Maryland.

Nineteen new members were initiated at the annual initiation and awards night on April 27, 1988. Dr. Thomas Heffernan, Professor of English, was among the initiates, and he addressed the group on his adventures in philology as a specialist in Mediaeval Latin. The Greek Prize was awarded to out-going president Frank Stratikis; the Latin Prize went to Adam Epstein. Pam Tillman will receive the Arthur H. Moser Scholarship for 1988-89. The Haines Scholarship will go to Pamela Chilton and Teresa Vay Smith. New Officers were elected at the meeting: Adam Epstein, president; Pamela Tillman, vice-president; Melinda Carter, secretary.

We were proud to announce that Frank Stratikis won two of the top prizes in the national Eta Sigma Phi translation contest, first in advanced Latin and second in advanced Greek. This September Frank has begun work in the Ph.D. program at the University of Michigan.

Classics Newsletter, UTK

Epsilon Chi The University of South Florida

This was a busy year at the Epsilon Chi Chapter. Having just been chartered three years ago, our club faced many challenges. We are in the process of purchasing an "Honors Club" plate for our library and for displaying our club name to the USF student populace in general. We helped to purchase a Loeb Classical Library set for our own USF library. This year we plan to show Roman movies to help raise funds.

In February some of our members helped the local high school Latin clubs in their annual district forum. Finally, we inducted two new members into our chapter this past year and look forward to the future and to expanding our membership. Our new president, Donald Daugherty, will be our first delegate ever at a national convention, and our club goes into 1989 ready for the many activities and challenges that Eta Sigma Phi can offer.

Donald Daugherty
President

