

Duke University
Center for Late Ancient Studies
Report on the activities in the academic year 2002-2003

I. LECTURE SERIES

As in the preceding years, the core activity of the Center consisted in the organization of the monthly lecture series. The speakers and topics of the lectures reflect the diversity of the Center's fields of interest. An important consideration always is the potential benefit for graduate students working in Late Ancient Studies. Surrounding each of the lectures, there is ample opportunity for the graduate students to meet and discuss with the speaker.

The list of this year's lectures was as follows:

- 1) September 26, 2002: Yizhar Hirschfeld (Dumbarton Oaks, Washington; Hebrew University, Jerusalem) – The Judean Desert Monasteries and Their Architectural Setting.
- 2) October 24, 2002: William Adler (North Carolina State University, Raleigh) – Sextus Julius Africanus and the Roman Near East in the 3rd Century CE.
- 3) November 20, 2002: Lisa Fentress (The American Academy, Rome) – From Sixth-century Abbey to Renaissance Villa. The Abbey of San Sebastiano at Alatri.
- 4) December 11, 2002: Jan Opsomer (University of South Carolina) – Plutarch on Frank Speech and Flattery.
- 5) January 27, 2003: Ithamar Gruenwald (Tel Aviv University, Department of Jewish Philosophy) – Magic and Ritual Theory: The Bible, the Sages, and the Magical Papyri.
- 6) February 21, 2003: Richard Lim (Smith College, Northampton, MA) – Imperial Autocracy and the Performance of Consensus in the Late Empire.
- 7) March 28, 2003 – Richard Sorabji (King's College, London) – Death and Personal Survival: The Recurrence of Pagan Views in Christianity and Modern Philosophy.
- 8) April 25, 2003: David Frankfurter (University of New Hampshire, History Department & Religious Studies Program) – Iconoclasm and Christianization in Late Antique Egypt: Monastic Treatments of Space and Image.

For the organization of these lectures there was close cooperation with departments participating in the Center, viz. Art and Art History, Classical Studies, Religion. There was financial support from the Department of Art History for lecture no. 3. Lecture no. 5 was co-sponsored with the Center for Judaic Studies.

In addition to the main program of monthly lectures, the Center organized, or participated in the organization of, two other activities.

- September 26, 2002: Guy Stroumsa (Hebrew University, Department of Religious Studies), speaking in an informal setting on his recent work on Clement of Alexandria.
- February 13, 2003 (lecture organized by the Center for Judaic Studies and co-sponsored by the Center for Late Ancient Studies and the New Testament Colloquium): Paul Flesher (University of Wyoming, Religious Studies Program) – What Did the Jews at Dura-Europos Believe?

II. READING GROUP

Under the auspices of the Center, the Reading Group “Late Ancient Studies” meets on a monthly basis in an evening session to discuss a recent publication (one or more articles or a section of a monograph) in one of the subfields of Late Ancient Studies. Here again the focus is on graduate students, who make suggestions for the selection of the readings and appoint one among them (alternatingly) to lead and structure the discussion. Participants in the Reading Group are graduate students and faculty members from Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill. Faculty from other universities occasionally attend the meetings, as do scholars working at the National Humanities Center and other visitors.

The Reading Group has met nine times in the course of the academic year 2002-2003. The convener of the group, who also took care of the distribution of the texts, was Catherine Chin (Graduate Program in Religion). The attendance is between 12 and 25 persons (3 – 6 of whom are faculty).

On one of our meetings (Sunday, March 30), we had Richard Sorabji as our special guest (the CLAS lecturer on March 28). In a previous reading group meeting we had been discussing his recent book, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) and now we had the special privilege of addressing our remarks and questions directly to him.

III. A LOOK INTO NEXT YEAR’S PROGRAM

At the moment of the submission of this report, preparations for next year’s program already are well underway. With the graduate students we have been discussing the strengths and (relative) weaknesses of last year. In the meeting of the Executive Committee, on April 29, 2003, we have set up a tentative program which presently is being worked out. For September and October, we will have regular lectures. The first (September 10) will be by Guy Stroumsa (Early Christianity, Hebrew University – travel expenses will be from Bloomington, Indiana only); the second by David Brakke (Early Christianity, Indiana University), in early October. For January 2004, we have made arrangements with our Duke colleague Diskin Clay (Classics Department) for a talk on Evil in Late Antiquity. In March, the well-known Berkeley scholar Daniel Boyarin has agreed to address our Center (on a topic dealing with the intersection between Judaism and Early Christianity), when he will be visiting the John Hope Franklin Center for a

symposium. In April the Oxford art historian Jaś Elsner will be our speaker, visiting us from Chicago, where he will be staying for a short period. Other plans are in the process of being worked out.

As will be clear from the above survey, internationally renowned speakers are selected, while at the same time – given the limitations of our budget – we try by all means to reduce the expenses.

We also have decided to introduce some variation into the format of our monthly sessions by asking graduate students or colleagues to give a response to the lecture or by occasionally working with the seminar format.

For the funding of next year’s activities, we hope in the first place to rely on the Funds of the Provost and Arts & Sciences (prospective amount of \$ 5,000). With the Center for Judaic Studies we have an outstanding relationship of cooperation which, we are confident, will again result in co-organizing and co-sponsoring one or two activities. In addition, we will ask the participating departments to assist us in organizing lectures or activities in their field of expertise.

IV. FINANCIAL SITUATION

Expenses

A. General	587.50
B. Specific expenses for each lecture	8,997.94
C. Expenses for the Reading Group (50% will be reimbursed by the Graduate Program in Religion)	171.06
Total expenses A + B + C:	<u>9,756.50</u>

Income

A. Funds from Provost and Arts & Sciences	5,000
B. Balance forward	2,710
C. Subvention from Judaic Studies Fund (lecture no. 5)	1,500
D. Subvention from Department of Art & Art History (lecture no. 3)	300
E. Private donation	250
Total income A + B + C + D + E:	<u>9,760.00</u>

Balance, to carry forward to next year	<u>3.50</u>
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V. Organization and administration of the Center

During the academic year 2001-2002 the Executive Committee of the Center was composed as follows:

- Lucas Van Rompay (Director)
- Mary T. Boatwright
- Peter Burian
- Elizabeth Clark
- Bart Ehrman (UNC-Chapel Hill, Department of Religious Studies)
- Michael Ferejohn
- Zlatko Plese (UNC-Chapel Hill, Department of Religious Studies)
- Kent Rigsby
- Annabel Wharton
- Clare Woods.

Administrative work for the Center for Late Ancient Studies is carried out, efficiently and with much dedication, by the staff of the Department of Religion: Nancy Hurtgen, Kathy Duke, and Sandra Woods.

VI. Approval of the Report

A draft version of the report was approved at the Executive Committee's meeting of April May 9, 2003. The final version has circulated among committee members by e-mail and received its final approval on June 27, 2003.

For the Executive Committee,

Lucas Van Rompay, director.

July 8, 2003