

Spring 2026 | Volume 15 | Issue 2 | Edited by Vincent Beltaos



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome	3
CMME Professors	4-5
Graduate Spotlight	6-7
Arabic House Events	8-9
CMME Spring Events	10-11
Honors Theses	12
Department Awards	13
Class Schedule	14-15
Other Editions	16

*Antiquity Now* is the official newsletter of the Macalester College Classical Mediterranean and Middle East Department, featuring students, staff, opportunities, and the department's future endeavors. For more information about CMME at Macalester, visit our website below:



# Greetings from the Department Chair

Andy, Beth, Brian, Carla, Ozzy, and I send you warm greetings from the 3rd floor of Old Main. We think spring has finally found its way to St. Paul. The micro buds are turning into leaves and blossoms. Graduation is just around the corner. So, it's time to review the highlights of spring semester 2026 in the department of the Classical Mediterranean and Middle East.



We had an exceptional beginning to the new year. In January, Andy, Beth, Ozzy, and I spent a week in Morocco and Spain, laying the groundwork for a new faculty-led study-away course focused on the early Islamic expansion into North Africa and Al-Andalus.

The Arabic house was a hub for campus-wide events, including a wonderful Iftar in March. We hosted a touring production of an ancient Roman comedy by Plautus performed by St. Olaf students. We brought majors and minors together to socialize and also to enjoy poetry night – a linguistic celebration of Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, (and Croatian!) poems read by our students and faculty.

We celebrated academic successes: seniors Karen Hill and Emily Hodson completed honors projects; Beth's new book was published; and Ozzy's Harvard dissertation won an award of distinction. We sent students off on their summer adventures with our end-of-year picnic. And now we look ahead to fall and our full schedule of language and context courses. As always, we thank you for being part of the CMME extended family and we eagerly welcome all of your news.

Nanette

# Where in the World is the CMME Team?



Dinner in Meknès



Overlooking the “Medinah” in Fez



Crossing the Pillars of Hercules

The professors traveled to southern Spain and Morocco over winter break to become more familiar with the region. They visited Meknès, Seville, Fez, Tangier, the Roman center of Volubilis, and more.

They spent time in places such as Málaga in southern Spain, where Professor Nanette Goldman was enamored with a facsimile of the original Phoenician inscription.

Then they stopped in Córdoba, where they visited the famed Mosque-Cathedral, which Professor Beth Severy-Hoven enjoyed seeing up close.

In Fez, they saw the “Medinah,” or Old City, where Professor Haci Gündüz particularly enjoyed spending time in the marketplace. Crossing the Pillars of Hercules was also a highlight of the trip.

Overall, the professors enjoyed themselves. Being able to spend time with one another in a place that included all of their interests was very fun.



Promoting the CMME 101 course; Mosque-Cathedral, Córdoba

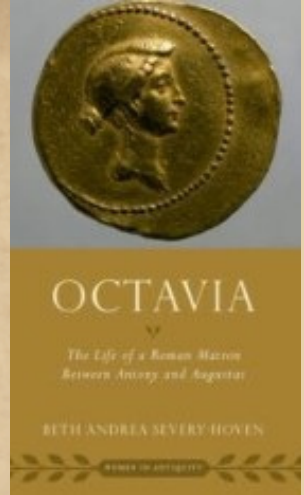
# Faculty Accolades

## Octavia Brought to Light

Professor Beth Severy-Hoven published her book, *Octavia: The Life of a Roman Matron Between Antony and Augustus*, with Oxford University Press as part of its *Women in Antiquity* series.

Octavia was the elder sister of the first Roman emperor, Augustus; the fourth wife of Mark Antony; and an ancestor of the emperors Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. “While Octavia’s contemporaries have had multiple biographies written about them, this is the first published monograph focused solely on Octavia in any language,” Severy-Hoven said. “Her life provides a fascinating view into changes in the social and political landscape for women and men of the Roman elite – and how those changes came about – as the Republican system of government disintegrated into total war and a new imperial system emerged.”

Severy-Hoven added that conversations with Macalester students over the years have benefited her work enormously.



## A Remarkable Contribution to Islamic Studies

Assistant Professor of Arabic Language and Literature Hacı Gündüz was named co-winner of the 2025 Alwaleed Bin Talal Dissertation Prize in Islamic Studies by Harvard University’s Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program. The honor includes a \$1,500 award.

Dr. Gündüz’s dissertation, “A Rūmī in the Lands of Shām: Life, Poetry and Legacy of a Janissary-Turned-Poet Māmayya al- Rūmī (d. 985-7/1577-9),” examines 16th-century Damascene poet Māmayya al-Rūmī, whose popular poetry was later excluded from the modern Arabic literary canon. Khaled El-Rouayheb, faculty director of the Islamic Studies Program, praised the dissertation as “a remarkable achievement and substantial contribution to the field of Islamic Studies.”



Prof. Gündüz earned his doctorate in Arabic and Islamic studies from Harvard University.

# Graduate Spotlight: Ruby Kinnamon



Ruby Kinnamon took Latin at Macalester, reading the *Satyrিকা* with Professor Beth Severy-Hoven, and Catullus with Professor Nanette Goldman. With her Biology Major and Religious Studies Minor (along with her Latin, of course), she secured a production assistant job on two NOVA productions about Chemistry and Engineering. After Mac, she pursued a Master's of Education from Harvard. Later, her networking at a conference on Museum Studies paid off, and she was offered a job making media for museum exhibits across the country.

Ruby had nothing but good things to say about her time at Macalester, calling it, and the liberal arts experience, instrumental to her postgraduate success. Her favorite classes were Latin, Hindus and Muslims, Microbiology, and Women in the Bible. Her biggest piece of advice was to make connections wherever you go, follow your heart, and pay attention to aspects of your life beyond grades.

When she's not developing media for museum exhibits, Ruby stays civically engaged, plays music in a Honky-Tonk band, and spends time with the people she cares about. Recently, she restarted knitting, thanks to her sister (and fellow Mac student), May.

# Graduate Spotlight: Bea Mellsop



Bea majored in Classical Languages at Macalester, taking both Greek and Latin. Her favorite class was Greek with Nanette, which she called her “lifeline” after multiple COVID years. She was heavily involved with the costume shop in the Theatre and Dance department and worked a job at a costume company in the Minneapolis area. Following graduation, she completed the College Year in Athens’s post-grad program. Eventually, Bea decided to apply to grad school and is now at the University of Durham in the UK, pursuing a Master’s in Classics & Ancient History. She is currently writing her dissertation. In her spare time, she reads some Homer with a small group and hangs out with friends at a local pub.

Bea advises current Mac students to put themselves out there more, take advantage of opportunities as they arise, and interact more with the campus community. For those considering grad school, she says to do the research ahead of time and be sure it's what you want to do.

Additionally, she expresses her gratitude for her undergraduate experience at Mac because the liberal arts education prepared her well for her post-graduate program.



During her final semester, Bea took on many opportunities: precepting in her modern Greek class, designing costumes for the school play (as the assistant costume designer), plus her coursework. While this was difficult and unpleasant to experience at the time, Bea was glad she got through the tough semester. The most difficult part of grad school for her has been adjusting to the specialization common amongst UK universities and the courses becoming more self-directed, which present additional challenges.

# Arabic House Events

## Studying Away in an Arab Country Information Session



The Arabic House hosted an information session for those interested in studying abroad in an Arab country, featuring student testimonies from those who studied in Jordan, Morocco, and Oman, among others.



## Spring Community Gathering



In late April, the Arabic House opened its doors to visitors. Anyone who wanted to discuss anything Arabic was invited to join the current and future Arabic House residents, along with next year's Arabic preceptors, for tea and conversation.

# Arabic House Events

## Iftar



**CMME organized an Iftar, the ceremonial breaking of the daily fast during Ramadan. This fantastic event was made possible by our incredible Party-Planning duo: Carla and Professor Ozzy! We had Pita, Mana'eesh, Fatoush salads, Falafel, sweet treats, and dates to break the fast according to tradition. The event had an excellent turnout, and everyone had so much fun connecting as a community.**

# Spring Events

## Majors and Minors Mingler

This semester, the department hosted an informal gathering of current and prospective CMME Majors and Minors to sip mocktails and get to know one another in a friendly, low-stress environment.



## St. Olaf Latin Plautus *Vidularia* Play Performance

A student cast from St. Olaf came to Macalester and put on a fantastic performance of the Latin playwright, Plautus's *Vidularia*, or *Lost Bag*, play. Macalester CMME students sat in the Concert Hall and watched ancient comedic, satyr theatre come alive right before their eyes!



# Spring Events

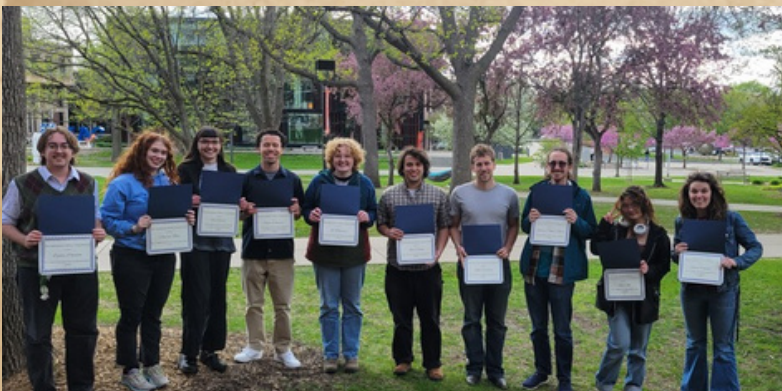
## Multilingual Poetry & Pre-Registration Gathering



The CMME Department hosted its pre-registration event, where professors and students read a variety of Classical or Classically-inspired poetry, including snippets from the Koran, Catullus, the Hebrew Psalms, a Cavafy piece, and even a poem written by one of our own Arabic students! Ice cream and other Passover-friendly snacks were served.



## Picnic



The Department co-hosted an end-of-year picnic with History. A chilly and cloudy spring day outside on the LC Portico was the backdrop for a wonderful celebration of the Old Main Third Floor community.

# Honors Thesis Presentations

## Emily Hodson

Emily Hodson presented her Thesis: **“Catacombs in Context: Exploring Roman Architectural Influence in the Catacombs of Rabat, Malta.”** She drew connections among Roman architectural influence, Phoenician motifs, and local Maltese cultural influences on the island's Roman-era Catacombs.



Additionally, her work helps undo the theological association that earlier scholars tended to rely on, which overemphasized the Christian elements of the catacombs while ignoring evidence of other influences.

## Karen Hill



Karen Hill presented her Thesis: **“Ruins and Remedies: Archaeology of the Hospital Sites of Jayavarman VII in Medieval Southeast Asia.”** She presented her findings from her time in Cambodia at Imperial Khmer hospital sites, exploring the Angkor Thom complex and the surrounding area (particularly Tonle Snguot). Her work sheds light on how Jayavarman VII

portrayed himself as a healer and the relationship between military and medical language. Furthermore, she explored the strict use of Buddhist medicine in Imperial Khmer, with little to no Chinese influence, and the impact of French colonial archeologists on modern Cambodian archeology.

# Department Awards

## Virginia McKnight Binger Award Winners



Emily Hodson, '26

The Virginia McKnight Binger Award is awarded to outstanding students who demonstrate an exceptional proficiency in classical languages and/or ancient history. This year's recipients are Emily Hodson and Kolya Shi.



Kolya Shi, '26

## Jeremiah Reedy Award Winner

The Jeremiah Reedy Prize in Classics recognizes students who have made significant contributions to the CMME Department. It was created to honor Jerry Reedy, who taught Classics at Macalester from 1968-2004. This year's recipient is Edward (Ned) Keyse.



Ned Keyse, '26

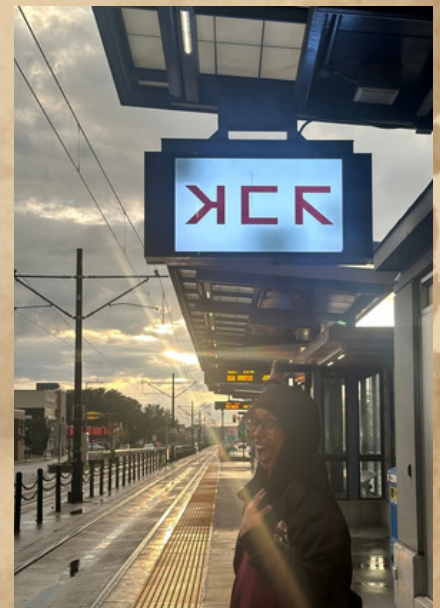


Matías Lozano, '28

Congratulations to CMME students Sihaam Barre '28 and Matías Lozano '28 on receiving the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF), awarded to students interested in careers as scholars and faculty members in the humanities.

Over the next two years, Sihaam will work on a research project focused on understanding how Indigenous Somali political and social systems are transformed and remapped through colonialism.

In addition to his work with MMUF, Matías has received a Critical Language Scholarship from the US Secretary of State's Office! This highly sought-after scholarship is given out to citizens studying and mastering critical languages, including Persian, which Matías will study in Tajikistan.



Sihaam Barre, '28

Number	Name	Days	Time	Instructor
CLAS 135	India and Rome	TR	3:00-4:30	Andrew Overman & James Laine
CLAS 194	Demokratia and The American Experiment: Origin & Challenges to Government Of, By, and For the People (FYC)	TR	9:40-11:10	Andrew Overman
CLAS 260	Introduction to Art History I: From Prehistory to the Medieval Period	MWF	10:50-11:50	Serdar Yalçın
CLAS 282	Art and Architecture of the Islamic World	MWF	2:20-3:20	Serdar Yalçın
CLAS 294	Before Homosexuality: Same-Sex Desire and Expression in Pre-Modern Islamicate World	TR	1:20-2:50	Haci Gündüz
CLAS 294	Ancient Greek Temple (FYC)	TR	1:20-2:50	Serdar Yalçın
CLAS 490	Senior Seminar	MWF	9:40-10:40	Beth Severy-Hoven

Number	Name	Days	Time	Instructor
CLAS 111	Elementary Latin I	MWF	2:20-3:20	Brian Lush
CLAS 111 L1	Elementary Latin I Lab	T	3:00-4:00	Brian Lush
CLAS 113	Elementary Arabic I	MWF	9:40-10:40	Haci Gündüz
CLAS 113 L1	Elementary Arabic I Lab	T	8:35-9:35	Haci Gündüz
CLAS 117	Elementary Hebrew I	T	12:00-1:00	Nanette Goldman
CLAS 117 L1	Elementary Hebrew I Lab	T	10:10-11:10	Nanette Goldman
CLAS 117 L2	Elementary Hebrew I Lab	T	3:00-4:00	Nanette Goldman
CLAS 231	Intermediate Latin I: Prose	MWF	10:50-11:50	Beth Severy- Hoven
CLAS 241	Intermediate Arabic I	MWF	1:10-2:10	Haci Gündüz
CLAS 241 L1	Intermediate Arabic I Lab	R	10:10-11:10	Haci Gündüz
CLAS 261	Intermediate Greek: Prose	MWF	3:30-4:30	Brian Lush
CLAS 483	Advanced Reading in Latin	MWF	2:20-3:20	Nanette Goldman



Check out previous issues of *Antiquity Now* by visiting the Macalester Classical Mediterranean and Middle East website or scanning the QR code



This issue of *Antiquity Now* was edited by Vincent Beltaos (he/him), a sophomore Classical Mediterranean & Middle East Major and Religious Studies Minor. A special thanks to Ms. Carla Zelada, and all of the CMME Professors for welcoming me into the department. I look forward to my last two years here!