

Introduction

Thomas J. Sienkewicz and Jeff Rankin

Bill Urban wrote a doctoral dissertation entitled *The Baltic Crusade of the Thirteenth Century*.¹ If he had been hired out of graduate school by a major research university (R1) like the University of Michigan, his entire career as a teacher and scholar would probably have been focused on that Baltic Crusade and he would rarely, if ever, have had the opportunity to teach courses outside the narrow field of medieval history. But he was not hired by an R1. He was hired by Monmouth College, a small liberal arts college with Presbyterian roots located out in the corn and soy fields of western Illinois, where he taught for 49 years, from 1966 to 2015.

At Monmouth, Urban was not just a medieval historian. At Monmouth, he was not only encouraged but also expected to teach a wide range of history courses, including Western Civilization and American history surveys, Roman history, Greek history, the local history of Monmouth, Illinois, and a family history course in which students learned how to gather stories and genealogical information about their relatives. He also taught specialized courses in Monmouth's general education program, including Freshman Seminar and two Issues and Ideas courses for seniors which he designed himself: "War and Peace" (in which students reenacted the Nuremburg Trial) and "The New Individual: Narcissus and the Faceless Man," on individualism and conformity. He even taught Elementary Italian more than once.

Urban was not only a teacher at Monmouth but also served as advisor for the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity and coached first the men's soccer team from 1968 to 1981 and then a new women's club soccer team. He served as director of three different off-campus programs run by the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM): the Arts of Florence in 1974–1975; a program in Yugoslavia in 1986; and a program in the Czech Republic in 1994. He also led many student trips to Europe, both for Monmouth College and for the University of Michigan.

Urban's publications² reflect this diversity. In addition to twenty books about the Baltic Crusades, the Teutonic Knights and other topics on the medieval Baltic region, he has written: two textbooks for his course on the New Individual; a history of Monmouth College; a biography of Monmouth's famous son, Wyatt Earp; and a five-volume mystery series entitled *The Dean is Dead*. Urban is certainly one of Monmouth College's more prolific scholars, if not the most prolific one.

The twenty-one contributions to this *Festschrift*, written by William Urban's students, colleagues and friends, are both a reflection on, as well as a tribute to, his outstanding career as both teacher and scholar. The papers are organized around seven mostly geographically themed parts which illustrate Urban's lifelong interests: Monmouth College; the City of Monmouth; Illinois and the Midwest; the United States; the Roman Empire, then and now; the World; and Literature.

Stacy Cordery's contribution, entitled "What Bill Urban Taught Me," appropriately opens this volume. Stacy Cordery was hired by Urban in 1994 for a tenure-track position in American history and they served together as historians for twenty-two years, until 2016 when Stacy

¹ Urban 1967.

² See pages xvii–xviii in this volume.

followed her husband, Simon, to Iowa State University. She is the author of biographies of Alice Roosevelt Longworth (2007) and Elizabeth Arden (2024). In this essay Stacy reflects on those years working with Bill Urban and the many valuable lessons Bill taught her, including patience, kindness, forgiveness, hospitality, helpfulness, and, perhaps most important, the possibility of pursuing a research agenda while dealing with the many obligations expected at a small liberal arts college. Stacy not only reflects on what it was like to work with Bill Urban but also, in the process, paints a valuable picture of what it was like to teach at Monmouth College in the decades closing the twentieth century and beginning the twenty-first.

Stacy's contribution is followed by one by her husband, Simon, who currently serves as chair of the Department of History at Iowa State University. He is the author of three books: *The Iron Road in the Prairie State: The Story of Illinois Railroading* (2016) and biographies of Mother Jones (2010) and Albert Benton Pullman (2025). He is also co-editor of *Building Positive Peace* (2023). In "Coaching the Monmouth College Women's Soccer Team" Simon shares some of his experiences serving as an athletic coach at Monmouth College. At Bill Urban's recommendation, Simon was hired in 1994 to coach the college's women's soccer team in its first NCAA season. Previously the women's team, coached by Bill Urban, had had only club status. Simon offers a detailed and often amusing history of the team's wins and losses during the seven seasons he served as coach until 2000, when he resigned as coach to focus more on teaching history at Monmouth, as well as his own research. Like Stacy's reflection on her classroom experiences at Monmouth, Simon's provides a detailed picture of what it was like to be an athletic coach at the college.

The third essay focusing on Monmouth College is "The Continuing Saga of Monmouth College's Storied Stone, OR That's How the Canopus Crumbles" by J. Richard Sayre, retired Director of the Hewes Library at Monmouth College. Sayre has co-authored two bibliographies dealing with the U.S. Congress³ and is the editor of *Sandburg's Hometown: A Selected Anthology* by Barbara Schock (2024). In his contribution to this Festschrift, Sayre tells the fascinating story of an important artifact of college history housed in the library. The college's "Canopus Stone" is actually a plaster copy of a stone found in Tanis, Egypt, in 1866, and more accurately called the Tanis Stone (or Stele). Because the text of the Decree of Canopus, made by Ptolemy III of Egypt in 238 B.C., was inscribed on this stone in three languages—ancient Greek, Egyptian hieroglyphics and Egyptian demotic—the Tanis Stone, as Sayre notes, was second in importance only to the Rosetta Stone in the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Sayre explains how the college acquired a copy of this stone shortly after it was discovered, its unfortunate loss in the fire which destroyed Old Main in 1907, the rediscovery of fragments of the copy in a storage room in 1954, and the reconstruction of the stone from these fragments by Monmouth College Religious Studies Professor Charles Speel and Classics Professor Harold Ralston. From 1954 until 1997 the stone was displayed in a Wallace Hall classroom and then moved to the second floor of Hewes Library, where it can be seen today. In his modesty, Sayre does not mention that he has become the college expert on the history of this stone, on which he has given many presentations, not only to Monmouth College Classics students but also to outside groups, including delegates to a Convention of Eta Sigma Phi, the national undergraduate Classics honorary society, and to members of the Illinois Classical Conference.

³Goehert and Sayre 1982 and 1996.

The two papers in Part 2 expand the view from Monmouth College to the city of Monmouth. Tom Best, who taught history to Junior High students from Monmouth and Roseville, Illinois, for 33 years as well as, occasionally, an evening course on the U.S. Civil War at Monmouth College, offers a paper entitled “Reliving the Past with Monmouth’s Dearly Departed: What We Can Learn Through a Cemetery Tour.” In this paper Best describes the planning for and dramatic skits about deceased Monmouthians presented during a walking tour of Monmouth Cemetery on October 9, 2024. Best includes some brief background on the individuals portrayed in the tour, accompanied by photographs of the event.

Unfortunately, Monmouth’s most famous native, Wyatt Earp, is buried in Colma, California, not Monmouth, Illinois, so he could not be included in Best’s tour. Nor could Warren Bunkerr, the subject of a contribution entitled “Warren Bunkerr: Monmouth’s Celebrated 19th-Century Drag Queen” by Jeff Rankin, who served as director of Communications and as Historian at Monmouth College for more than 30 years. As Rankin notes, Bunkerr (1864–1937), who adopted the stage names Zelldo the Circassian prince and Prince Zelldo Wonderful Snake Charmer, also worked at various points in his life, as a man milliner, fire and serpentine dancer, clairvoyant, palm reader, costume designer and vaudeville impresario. He took his performances as a drag queen and snake charmer around the world, including Paris, South Africa, Canada, China, Japan, Manila, the Philippines, Australia, and Java, as well as many places in the United States. He met royalty, celebrities, and Hollywood stars, including Edward Prince of Wales, Rudolph Valentino and Mark Twain. In his travels he even crossed paths, in Hong Kong, with another famous Monmouthian, the magician Will “The Great Nicola” Nicol. Later, back in the United States, Bunkerr even joined Nicol’s show for a time as a mind reader. Bunkerr’s varied career was remarkable, especially for someone raised in Warren County, Illinois, and offers readers of this *Festschrift* opportunities to smile and even, occasionally, to laugh out loud.

The two papers in Part 3 expand the geographic focus to include the state of Illinois and the Midwest. Here Sylvia Shults MC’90 offers a paper about the Peoria State Hospital in Bartonville. Shults took courses from Bill Urban at Monmouth College where she was a Classics major and participated in the ACM London-Florence Program. She has a special fascination with the paranormal, on which she has published extensively, and is an award-winning author.⁴ Her contribution to this volume, “Befriending the Bereft: The Compassionate Legacy of Dr. George Zeller and the Peoria State Hospital,” springs from this interest. While the Peoria State Hospital, which served for many years as an institution for the insane, has been associated over the years with many bizarre occurrences and circumstances, as Shults has shown elsewhere,⁵ the paranormal is not actually the focus of this paper. Instead Shults offers an overview of the impressive career of Dr. George Zeller (1858–1938), who served as the superintendent of the hospital from 1921 to 1935. A man in many ways ahead of his times, Dr. Zeller rejected the idea that the insane should be kept behind locked doors and barred windows and did not approve of the use of chains and straitjackets. Rather, he treated his patients with patience and kindness—especially women suffering from what is now called postpartum depression and veterans

⁴ Shults’s books include: paranormal non-fiction such as *Gone on Vacations: Haunted Zoos, Museums and Amusement Parks* (2023), for which she received the First Place BookFest Award in 2024; horror novels such as *The Dark at the Heart of the Diamond* (2012); and romance novels such as *Double Double Love and Trouble* (2013a). For a full list of her publications, see the bibliography at the end of this introduction or <https://sylviashults.wordpress.com/>.

⁵ Shults 2013b, 2016 and 2019.

suffering from what is now called “post-traumatic stress disorder” (PTSD). In employing these methods, Zeller proved himself to be not a custodian or warden for his patients but rather a humane and loving physician. Shults is to be commended for helping to keep alive the memory of this outstanding son of Illinois.

The second paper in Part 3 is by Neil Dahlstrom MC '98, who took several courses from Bill Urban at Monmouth College where he majored in both History and Classics. He currently serves as the archivist at Deere and Company in Moline, Illinois. His contribution to this volume, entitled “After the Tractor Wars: Farm Equipment Manufacturers in 1929,” is a sequel to his book *Tractor Wars: John Deere, Henry Ford, International Harvester, and the Birth of Modern Agriculture* (2022), which focuses on the introduction of the tractor to American farms between 1908 and 1928.⁶ In this paper Dahlstrom describes how tractor companies, including Deere, fared in the years following the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and argues that the boom-and-bust cycle which the farm equipment industry regularly experienced prepared companies like Deere to be financially cautious but also innovative and efficient during the Great Depression. Particularly noteworthy during this period, Dahlstrom observes, were several significant innovations, including the general-purpose tractor, such as Deere’s GP tractor introduced in 1928, and the invention of reliable pneumatic tractor tires.

There are four papers in Part 4, which deals with the United States. The first paper is by Daniel Cotter MC '88 who, as an accounting major at Monmouth, did not have an opportunity to take a course from Urban. He has, however, come to know and admire Urban over the years. His paper, entitled “The Supreme Court: Originalism and Textualism,” reflects the author’s legal background and interest in the history of the court about which he has written *The Chief Justices: The Seventeen Men of the Center Seat, Their Courts, and Their Times* (2019). Noting the court’s increasing interest in originalism and textualism in the last forty years, Cotter does not offer an historical explanation for the court’s turn in this direction. Instead, he considers how an historian like Bill Urban might respond to these issues. Citing the use of textualism and originalism in the statements of various justices regarding the Second Amendment in *Heller v. District of Columbia* (2008),⁷ Cotter cautiously expresses doubt that the way that these tools were used to decide that case would be acceptable to a professional historian like Urban.

The second paper in this part broadens the issues raised by Cotter to encompass many other aspects of society. “Flawed Leadership—the Coffin Nail of Grand Ventures in Economics, Education, Business, and Politics,” is by Kenneth G. McMillan, who taught Business courses at Monmouth College for 25 years. He also served for several years on the staff of U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle. McMillan offers here a definition of leadership (“the ability to move identifiable followers to accomplish things they would not otherwise do”) and ten ways that skilled leaders are able to persuade others to act. These include: assembling a competent and committed staff; making sure that these staff members are both responsive and responsible; using open communication to identify problems and their solutions early; and avoiding uninformed statements or the support of controversial issues prematurely or without careful consideration. In McMillan’s opinion, few individuals in leadership positions in business, education, politics, or any other organizational context meet his definition of leadership.

⁶ Dahlstrom is also the author of *The John Deere Story: A Biography of Plowmakers John and Charles Deere* (2005).

⁷ *Heller v. District of Columbia*, 554 U.S. 570 (2008).

The third paper in Part 4 turns to the U.S. Presidency. Bradley C. Nahrstadt is a 1989 graduate of Monmouth College where he majored in English and joined the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. Nahrstadt's contribution to this volume, "How William Jennings Bryan Captured the 1896 Democratic Nomination for President," is based upon his recent book, *The Democrats in Turmoil: The Bitter Fights to Select a Presidential Nominee, 1896–1924* (2015).⁸ Nahrstadt begins with the observation that, as the 1896 Democratic Convention approached, there were seven likely contenders for the presidential nomination and Bryan was not one of them. He then offers a brief biography of Bryan followed by a detailed account of the convention proceedings leading up to Bryan's famous "Cross of Gold" speech and his formal nomination as the Democratic candidate for president. Unfortunately for Bryan, Nahrstadt notes, the party was left after the convention so divided by the debate between a gold or silver standard that Bryan's loss to the Republican candidate, William McKinley, in the November general election was all but inevitable.

The last contribution in Part 4, entitled "Pressing the Case: Case Studies in the Use of Poetry in Sculptural Competition in Washington, D.C." by Julia A. Sienkewicz, shows how poetry was used to support artistic proposals in 19th-century Washington, D.C. Sienkewicz grew up in Monmouth and came to know Bill Urban affectionately as "Uncle Urban." She is the author of *Epic Landscapes: Benjamin Henry Latrobe and the Art of Watercolor* (2019). Her *Festschrift* contribution, based upon her research for a book tentatively titled *Modelling Civilization: Transnational Sculpture and the United States Capitol, 1825–1865*, considers three poems published in Washington D.C. periodicals between 1834 and 1842, each celebrating the work of a different artist: Luigi Persico (1781–1860), Ferdinand Pettrich (1798–1872), and Horatio Greenough (1805–1852). All three of these artists had competed in 1834–1835 for a commission from the U.S. government to produce sculpture for the U.S. Capitol, a commission which is central to *Modelling Civilization*. In her essay Sienkewicz analyzes the way the artist and/or his work is praised in each poem and discusses how poetry could be an especially important medium in which to promote an artist's work for several reasons: the rarity of using poetry for such promotion; the prestige a poem could bring to its subject; and even the visual prominence of a poem published in a generally prose-based medium such as a newspaper.

Part 5 consists of two papers dealing with the Roman Empire, then and now. The first is by Joseph R. O'Neill, a 2001 graduate of Monmouth College with a double major in History and Classics. With Adam Rigoni, O'Neill is the editor of *The Aeneid and the Modern World* (2021). At Monmouth, O'Neill took several courses from Bill Urban, including Roman History, for which Urban assigned reading from Suetonius' *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*. It was most appropriate, then, that O'Neill chose as his contribution to this *Festschrift* a paper on one of the emperors found in Suetonius. In "The Censorship of the Emperor Claudius," O'Neill focuses on the emperor's restoration of the censorship as part of a policy of reestablishing Rome's ancient Republican institutions and practices, a practice he inherited from his imperial ancestor Augustus. Claudius revived the censorship in 47 A.D., the sixth year of his reign, a year which coincided, O'Neill notes, with the emperor's expansion of the *pomerium*, the sacred boundary of the city on the 800th anniversary of the founding of Rome. In this way, O'Neill argues, Claudius reinforced his imperial powers by projecting himself, like Augustus, as a refounder of Rome. Despite the importance of Claudius' censorship, however, there is no comprehensive discussion

⁸ Nahrstadt is also the author of several other books, for which see the bibliography at the end of this introduction.

of his actions as censor in the ancient sources which generally refer to Claudius' censorship only in negative terms. O'Neill therefore provides an overview of Claudius' achievements as censor and demonstrates how these actions emphasize the emperor's role as refounder of Rome. As censor Claudius not only conducted a census of Roman citizens, but also and more important, a *lustrum*—a ritual purification of the citizenry, which O'Neill describes as a form of refounding. Another traditional role of censor was *cura morum*, the policing of public morality. Despite ancient criticism of Claudius for his failure to address infringements of morality in his own family, O'Neill notes that there are numerous instances of Claudius appropriately protecting public morality and punishing misbehavior. The same is true for other traditional responsibilities of the censor which Claudius is said to have taken seriously, including: *lectio senatus*, the determination of the membership of the Roman Senate and ensuring the appropriate behavior of individual senators; collecting certain taxes; and overseeing the contracts of tax collectors.

O'Neill also argues that Claudius can perhaps be seen to have imitated the career of another illustrious censor, Appius Claudius Caecus, who held office in 312–307 B.C. As Appius Claudius was remembered for his supervision of public works, especially roads and aqueducts, so Claudius is said to have dedicated two aqueducts. In addition, the emperor may have been imitating Appius Claudius in his addition of three letters to the Roman alphabet. Regulating orthography appears to have been associated with the censor's maintenance of the senatorial rolls. In this capacity, Appius Claudius was known to have made the spelling of Roman names more phonetic. A third area in which Claudius imitated Appius Claudius was the restoration of lapsed religious practices. Appius Claudius had reorganized the cult of Hercules at the Ara Maxima and the emperor Claudius organized the *haruspices* (religious diviners) into a priestly college.

In all these ways, Claudius' censorship, O'Neill argues, was designed to renew the Roman state in ways which associated the emperor with two highly respected Romans of the past: Augustus and Appius Claudius.

O'Neill's paper is followed by "Cruising on the Danube with the Romans" by Vicki A. Wine and James E. Betts. The husband-and-wife authors were teaching colleagues of Bill Urban at Monmouth College, where Vicki taught a variety of courses in the Classics Department and James was a music professor. Over the years, they became good friends of Bill and Jackie Urban and in 2019 they decided to take a Viking River Cruise along the Danube River together. Wine and Betts' paper is a result of that cruise. They provide a general overview of the cruise, the amenities on the boat and an itinerary. Their narrative is filled with references to good food, wine and beer tasting and even an organ concert. In particular, however, they focus on ways that they replaced some of Viking's town tours with their own itinerary of visits to Roman sites. So, for example, instead of touring Passau, Germany, the first stop on the cruise, they sought out the Roman museum at Kastell Boiotro. At the stop in Krems, Austria, they visited the Roman museum at nearby Mautern. Instead of visiting the Roman sites and museum in Vienna they took a train to nearby Petronell to tour the site of ancient Carnuntum. In Budapest, Wine and Betts visited ancient Aquincum, while the Urbans took a city tour. For all of these Roman sites, Wine and Betts provide descriptive tours and useful historical background. Anyone interested in learning about Roman sites along the Danube would find this paper a valuable reference.

The five papers in Part 6 deal with topics ranging from Baltic studies, to language education in Wales, to diplomatic relations between Yemen and the United States in the period following the Second World War, and to grain storage in medieval Florence.

Brian Chabowski MC'95 and Tiffany R. Chabowski MC '95 have contributed two papers on the Baltic countries. Their interest in eastern Europe dates from 1994, when both authors participated as Monmouth College students in the Czech Program run by the Associated Colleges of the Midwest. Bill Urban was director of the program that year. Since then, their careers have taken them to Lithuania (1995--1998), Estonia (1995--1998), Mexico (2002), China (2018), Finland (2021--2022), and Saudi Arabia (2023 to the present) and both of their contributions reflect their broad international experience.

In "A Journey Through Seven Countries Over Three Decades: The Relevance of 1990s Central Europe to the Middle East of the 2020" the Chabowskis begin by arguing that the so-called "American Dream" is actually the aspiration not only of Americans but also of almost every living person. They then provide economic data for the seven countries in which they have lived or worked (Czech Republic, Lithuania, Estonia, Mexico, China, Finland and United States) and compare this data with that from six countries in the Persian Gulf (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). This data, they argue, demonstrates the vitality and viability of capitalist economic systems over socialized ones. The Chabowskis then compare the following cultural values among the first group of countries: Embeddedness, Affective Autonomy, Intellectual Autonomy, Mastery, Harmony, Hierarchy, Egalitarianism, Individualism/Collectivism, Power Distance, Masculinity/Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term Orientation, and Indulgence/Restraint. In the end, the Chabowskis emphasize the need to stress similarities across countries rather than differences.

In their second contribution to the *Festschrift*, entitled "The Intellectual Structure of the *Journal of Baltic Studies*: A Longitudinal Evaluation as a Foundation for Future Research Possibilities," the Chabowkis offer a bibliometric examination of Baltic studies research in the *Journal of Baltic Studies*, which Bill Urban edited from 1991 through 1994. This bibliometric examination of articles published in the journal from 1981 through 2024 demonstrates that the topics dealing with linguistics and with the political/cultural transition from communism to independence have become more complex over time. Two other important themes revealed by their bibliometric examination were Baltic, Germanic and Russian influences on the history, culture, politics, and commerce of the region, as well as attempts to Russify the local populations of the Baltic states.

Several topics for future research emerge from this study: First, the Chabowskis suggest that it would be worthwhile to study the relationship between the national cultural memory of individual countries and the capitalist diversity of the region. Also needed are studies which examine Soviet postcolonial cultural and socioeconomic structure in the modern Baltic nations and their Russian-speaking populations, in particular. A third area of study might be a consideration of the international integration of the Baltic states in the post-Cold War period and a general lack of interest in traditional ethnic cultures, along with attempts to preserve and develop these traditions. A fourth area of interest is the effect which the transition from a socialist to a capitalist economic system had had on the Russian-speaking populations in the Baltic States. Finally, the Chabowskis suggest the need for studies comparing a Baltic country's nationalism with the history of its capital city.

While the Chabowkis offered sweeping comparisons of a number of nations, in “Between Washington and Cairo: *Imamate* Yemen’s Foreign Relations with the United States in the Post-World War II Period” Richard Harrod MC ‘07 focuses more narrowly on the diplomatic history of the United State and Yemen following World War II. Harrod took a number of courses from Bill Urban at Monmouth College from which he graduated with a double major in History and Classics. He is now a Ph.D. candidate in history at Washington University in St. Louis. In his contribution to this volume Harrod uses a variety of documents, especially U.S. State Department correspondence, to explain why the relationship between the United States and the Kingdom of Yemen deteriorated from 1942 to 1962. Harrod explains how Yemen’s drift away from the United States was caused, at least in part, by a scandalous incident involving an American explorer and by the U.S. failure to provide to Yemen any significant economic support of either a public or private nature. As a result, by the end of the 1950s Yemen had definitively moved away politically from the U.S. towards the government of Nasser in Egypt and towards the Communist Bloc.

The fourth paper in Part 6 is “Small Wars: The Case of Language and Education in Wales” by Viv Edwards, a British linguist who befriended Bill Urban during several professional visits to Monmouth. Edwards is especially interested in multilingualism and international education. Her publications include: *Multilingualism in the English-speaking World: Pedigree of Nations* (2004); *Learning to be Literate* (2009); *The West Indian Language Issue in British Schools: Challenges and Responses* (2017); *At Home in School* (2017), with A. Redfern; and *Oral Cultures Past and Present* (1990), with Thomas J. Sienkewicz. As Edwards notes in her introduction, the inspiration for this paper was Urban’s reference in *Small Wars and their Influence on Nation States: 1500 to the Present* to the “long and unforgiving sense of history” of the Celtic peoples.⁹ Acknowledging the validity of this statement, in particular, for the Welsh people, Edwards, herself of Welsh ancestry, notes the important role which language and education have played in the long history of the relationship between the English and Welsh peoples. In her paper Edwards traces efforts by the British government to suppress the use of the Welsh language in favor of English, efforts which have led to a significant decrease in the number of speakers of Welsh as a first language. She concludes by suggesting some lessons that other small nations can learn from the Welsh experience.

Focus turns from Wales to medieval Florence in the last paper in Part 6, entitled “Orsanmichele: An Anonymous Grain Loft” by Janet Smith. In 1975, while Bill Urban was the visiting program director, Smith was hired as an instructor in the Associated Colleges of the Midwest programs in Florence, of which she eventually became director. During her long, 34-year association with the ACM, Smith intersected with several contributors to this *Festschrift*, including Sylvia Shults, who was enrolled in the program in 1989 and Tom Sienkewicz who served as Visiting Professor in 1992–1993. She has also served as a valuable mentor for Julia Sienkewicz as she pursued a career in art history.

In her paper Smith focuses on the 14th-century structure known today as the church of Orsanmichele in Florence. While most Florentines would describe Orsanmichele as a place of worship and most tourists visit the building for its artistic importance, Smith here emphasizes the original purpose of the building as a grain market. Smith shows how the structure of the building was originally designed specifically for the storage of grain and how it became a church. In the

⁹ Urban 2016: 140.

process she provides a history not only of Orsanmichele but also of 14th-century Florence as well as of grain markets in medieval Tuscany, especially in Florence.

The final part of this *Festschrift* is devoted broadly to literary topics, beginning with Mary Hanford Bruce's contribution of nine poems. Bruce taught creative writing at Monmouth College for 29 years until her retirement in 2014 and is the author of several books including *Dr. Sally's Voodoo Man* (2011) and *Swimming at Villa Hugel* (2014). In their retirement she and Bill Urban have remained good friends.

"Cervantes' *Quijote* as a Model and Key to Unamuno's *Niebla*" by Fred Keller is the second literature paper in Part 7. From 1988 to 2001 Keller taught Spanish at Monmouth College, where he was Bill's colleague, and the two, sharing a love for Keller's native German, have remained good friends ever since. In his paper Keller provides an overview of both Cervantes' *Quijote* (1605 and 1615) and Miguel de Unamuno's 1914 novel *Niebla* (also known in English translation as *Fog* or *Mist*) and the lives of both authors. Unamuno, a major scholar and author of early 20th-century Spain, was fascinated and even obsessed by Cervantes' novel and in 1904 published *Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho*, in which he retold Cervantes' often farcical tale with the seriousness and nobility Unamuno believed it deserved.¹⁰ While Unamuno would, nevertheless, have probably denied Cervantes' influence on *Niebla*, Keller demonstrates the many strong thematic and structural similarities between the two literary works including: a meandering protagonist infatuated with an unapproachable love; the author as a character in the novel; the use of multiple narrators; short stories interspersed in the main narrative; and a tension between reality and fiction in the plot.

The final paper on a literary topic is "A Tale of Two Epics: Homer's *Odyssey* and the West African *Sunjata*" by Thomas J. Sienkewicz, whom Bill Urban was instrumental in bringing to Monmouth College in 1984 to revitalize a tired Classics program and to serve as the college's new Minne Billings Capron Professor of Classics. Bill was very supportive of Classics and regularly taught History of Greece and History of Rome (cross-listed in both History and Classics) in alternate years. Over the years, Tom and Bill became good friends as well as regular daily swimming companions, first in the pool in the college's old Waid Gymnasium and later in the Pepper Natatorium in the college's new Huff Athletic Center. Sienkewicz's publications include: *Encyclopedia of the Ancient Greek World* (2007); with Kenneth Kitchell, *Disce! An Introductory Latin Course* (2007); with Jinyu Liu, *Ovid in China: Reception, Translation and Comparison* (2022); with LeaAnn Osburn, *Vergil: A LEGAMUS Transitional Reader* (2004); and with Viv Edwards, *Oral Cultures Past and Present* (1990). His contribution to this volume is a revised version of a convocation talk given primarily to Monmouth College freshmen in the fall of 1991. In that year these students were reading both Homer's *Odyssey* and the West African epic *Sunjata* in what was then called Freshman Seminar, the required introductory course in the college's four-year General Education Program. Sienkewicz was tasked with providing the students with some background on epic poetry in general and on features shared by these two epics. In particular, Sienkewicz focuses on the oral nature of both the *Odyssey* and *Sunjata*, both of which were

¹⁰ For Unamuno's novel in Spanish, see Unamuno 1987. For an English translation of *Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho*, see Earle's translation (Unamuno, 2023)

composed in performance by traditional singers called rhapsodes in Greece and griots in West Africa.¹¹

It is with great pleasure that the contributors to this *Festschrift* present these papers to Bill Urban in grateful recognition of his long teaching career, his significant scholarship and the many other ways he has devoted his time and energy to his students and fellow colleagues at Monmouth College and beyond.

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¹¹ See Sienkewicz 1991 and Edwards and Sienkewicz 1990 for further discussion of the Sunjata epic by Sienkewicz.

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