

**1990 Annual Report**  
**Department of Classics**  
**Monmouth College**

**submitted by**

**Dr. Thomas J. Sienkewicz**  
**Departmental Chair**

**Department of Classics  
Monmouth College  
Annual Report  
1989-90**

**The Academic Program.**

Course enrollments in the Department of Classics were satisfactory this year, especially in translation courses. Tom Sienkewicz taught Greek History for the first time (while Bill Urban was on sabbatical) and there were 29 students enrolled in this course. There were 24 students in Classical Mythology, 14 in Word Elements, and 30 in Sport and Recreation. The Sport enrollment was particularly encouraging. It would even have been higher if there had been more room in the Capron Classics room.

Enrollments were more modest in Ancient Literary Genres which drew only 2 students for epic but 13 for drama. The department remains concerned about student interest in this course which, in many ways, is the basic building block for the rest of the Classics curriculum. In some ways the genre focus of the course may be part of the problem and, for this reason, the department has decided to reorganize the course along thematic instead of genre lines. Next year, for example, the course will be taught under the theme "Love and Marriage" and will consider a variety of genres rather than one.

Enrollment in Elementary Latin remained about the same as last year (8 students instead of 7). There were 7 students enrolled in advanced Latin courses this year and 4 in Greek language courses.

**Course Features**

Current events were incorporated into the mythology course taught in winter term. Because of news releases concerning moons of Neptune recently discovered by Voyager 2, Tom Sienkewicz included a unit on the mythology behind the names of planets and their moons. Each student in the class gave a report on the way various moons were named and nominations were submitted for names for the new moons. Dr. Raj Ambrose of the Physics Dept. participated in these class discussions. The class voted on the best names and sent the chosen names, Thetis and Peleus, to the Outer Solar System Task Group, which is in charge of naming new celestial phenomena.

Student oral reports continue to be a prominent and successful course feature. This year there was a memorable presentation on the story of Aphrodite, Ares and Hephaestus in the Odyssey in the Classical Mythology course and an excellent report in the Greek History course on the Athenian plague of 429 B.C. presented in the form of a modern newscast. In some classes students were asked to choose by ballot the best presentation; invariably they selected ones which had also been highly rated by the instructor. A modest prize was awarded to these students.

A special effort was made this year to increase student use of the library by offering the option of writing research papers rather than reaction papers in some Classics courses. Results were encouraging and the practice will be continued next year.

Once again the Sport and Recreation course included the Monmouth College Olympics organized by the class for a group grade. This year's Olympics were very well attended by a large number of students not enrolled in the course. Because of the success of this experimental course, the department has decided to include it as permanent part of the curriculum.

Another experiment this year was a trip to the World Heritage Museum at the University of Illinois in Urbana. This museum contains an excellent collection of reproductions and casts of objects from ancient Egypt, the Greco-Roman world, and medieval and Renaissance Europe. CAB agreed to sponsor the trip, which was mandatory for all students enrolled in Greek History and Ancient Drama. About forty students made the trip, either on the rented bus or on their own. Tom Sienkewicz gave a brief gallery talk. Student reaction to the trip was overwhelmingly positive. Despite the long ride, every student who went enthusiastically suggested that the trip become an annual affair. For this reason, the department plans to sponsor this trip again next year, and perhaps encourage students enrolled in the Western Civilization course to accompany the Classics students.

### The Semester Curriculum

The major challenge for the Classics Department during the 1989-90 academic year was adapting the curriculum to the semester calendar and dealing with the staffing problems which will arise from this change. Most significantly, the department had to face the reality that it would simply not be able to offer as many courses under the semester system as it had under 3-3. It quickly became apparent that one of the sacrifices would have to be the department's participation in the Freshman Seminar program. While Tom Sienkewicz was only able to teach Freshmen Seminar on average once every two years under 3-3, and then only as an overload, it was felt that the advantages to the college and to the department were worth the effort. In particular, the department agrees with the statement by Dean William Julian in his Bulletin dated May 11, 1990 that "Freshman Seminar is one of the best available vehicles for introducing students to [a] department and its program." It is unfortunate that Classics will no longer be able to do this. Particularly unfortunate is the consequent loss of freshman advisees. Without Freshman Seminar Tom Sienkewicz will only have majors as advisees in the future and will have less opportunity to be involved in the advising process. It may behoove the college to consider alternative methods of allocating freshmen to advisors since the Classics Department is not the only academic area with a similar problem.

The elementary Greek language courses were another concern in this transition. Were it not for the willingness of Dr. William Amy in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies to teach these courses, it might have been impossible to offer them. While enrollments in Greek courses have not, in recent history, been strong at Monmouth, these courses are important for many Classics, Philosophy and Religious Studies majors. Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine a true liberal arts college without Greek language courses. The fact that Monmouth offers Greek is one way that it can be grouped with schools like Knox, Cornell and Grinnell (which offer Greek) instead of schools like McMurray, Eureka, Central and even Illinois Wesleyan (which do not).

Review of the curriculum, however, did have some positive aspects. While much of the program was simply translated from term credits to semester hours, there were several important changes. These include the splitting of the old Classical Mythology course into two separate courses:

1.) a general mythology course called "Classical Gods and Heroes" which will focus on general features of mythology and its influence in the modern world; and 2.) a course entitled "Classical Mythology and Religion", which will deal with myth theories and features of ancient religion. The first course will satisfy the Beauty and Meaning requirement while the second will remain a Thought and Belief course. Although these courses will be taught in alternate years, the "Classical Gods and Heroes" course should probably be taught more frequently.

Another important curricular change is the incorporation of the old Ancient Family and Sport and Recreation courses into a new course called Ancient Societies. This course will be taught annually with rotating themes: 90-91, Africa and Blacks in the Ancient World; 91-92, The Ancient Family; 92-93, Sport and Recreation in the Ancient World; and 93-94, to be announced. (The sequence would repeat beginning in 94-95.) In addition, the department plans to offer the Monmouth College Olympics component of the Sport course as a one-credit, pass-fail course in years when sport is not the theme of the Ancient Societies course.

### Classics Students

In 1989-90 the department graduated its first Classics (as opposed to Latin) major. This was Sylvia Zethmayr, who was an asset to the department in many ways and participated in a variety of departmental activities. Sylvia was awarded the departmental prize at Honors Convocation this year and plans to pursue a masters degree in History at Illinois State University next year as further preparation for a career in Museum Studies.

Another senior worth mentioning is Edward Malter, who graduated this year as a biology major with a Classics minor. Ed first took Classics through the General Education Program and continued to take any course he could fit into his schedule. This year he chose, as an elective, to take elementary Latin. When he could not fit LAT102 into his schedule in winter term, he was even willing to take it as an independent study in the spring term. The department is proud of Ed. His broad interests show the true spirit of a liberal arts education.

The department also gained a junior as a Classics major, Stacy Stoyanoff, who is also pursuing a major in biology. Stacy is considering further studies in the field of history of science and has already studied both the Latin and Greek languages. Stacy won the American Bible Society prize at Honors Convocation this year.

In addition, Paula Hageman, a freshman, is planning to be a Classics major and there are several students with Classics minors.

While these are not large numbers, the department suspects that there never will be a myriad of classics majors at Monmouth. After all, in any given year, Monmouth already produces about as many Classics graduates as the University of Illinois does. Given the difference in size, the Monmouth Classics program is doing well if it is creating among students an interest in classical subjects. In the long run, it does not matter as much if a student majors in Classics as it does if a Monmouth student takes Classics courses which are personally, academically and professionally re-

warding. For this reason, while major programs must remain an essential feature of the Classics at Monmouth, a significant effort must be made to insure that as many students as possible have an opportunity to be exposed to the study of the ancient world.

### **Eta Sigma Phi.**

The following students were inducted this year into Gamma Omicron Chapter of Eta Sigma Phi, the Classics Honor Society: Jonathan Acheson, Tim Atterberg, Jeffrey Coverdell, Paula Hageman, Ed Malters, Sharon Miller, and Stacy Stoyanoff. Robert Nelson did a fine job as prytanis of the chapter. Unfortunately no one was able to represent the chapter at the national convention in Florida due to lack of funds.

A special feature for the chapter this year was the initiation of Mr. Chet June MC'69 as an associate member of the chapter on Friday, April 20, 1990. While Mr. June, visiting on campus for a careers event, had not been inducted as a student, he has demonstrated a continuing love of Classics and the chapter is pleased to have him as a member, albeit delayed. The chapter was honored to have at this initiation ceremony several other alumnae members: Miss Bernice L. Fox, founder of the chapter; Ms. Sandra Wolf, MC'64, and Ms. Beth Ell, MC'73. Both Ms. Wolf and Ms. Ell had been national officers in the society.

### **Other Campus Activities**

Mr. June, Ms. Wolf and Ms. Ell came to campus as part of a CAREERS Program (Caring Alumni Returning to Explore Experiences and Resources with Students) organized by Ms. Deborah Vettors of the Career Planning Office and Mr. Drew Boster, Director of Alumni. A particular effort was made by the department to bring back alumni who were NOT in the teaching profession in order to illustrate to students that many career options are open to Classics majors. Thus, Ms. Ell is a librarian for a large industrial company; Ms. Wolf is a private consultant who teaches business people how to improve their writing; and Mr. June finds employment in the U.S. for foreign health professionals.

The Classics Department was also involved in two convocations and related campus events: a convocation entitled "Medea: Myth, History and Myth-Criticism" by Dr. Peter Arnott of Tufts University on October 25, 1989 and a convocation entitled "Modern African Literature: An Overview" by Dr. Ola Rotimi, a visiting Fulbright scholar from Nigeria. In addition to his convocation Dr. Arnott gave an evening performance of his marionette version of Euripides' Medea and also critiqued a dress rehearsal of the Monmouth College Crimson Masque production of the same play. All of these activities were planned to fit with Freshmen Seminar, in which Medea was one of the required readings. An ambitious program was also planned for Professor Rotimi, who also critiqued a Crimson Masque dress rehearsal and visited several classes, including Tom Sienkewicz's Ancient Drama class, where he discussed his play The Gods Are Not To Blame, an adaptation of Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannos.

Arnott's visit also coincided with the celebration of Foreign Language Week, October 23-27, which was co-sponsored by the departments of Classics and Modern Foreign Languages. Among the many activities of this week was the joining of all 8 A.M. elementary language classes (including students studying French, German, Latin and Spanish) for an exercise in derivation and vocabulary comparison. This event was so successful that next year we plan to repeat it, perhaps with the addition of some English majors.

On Monday, January 15, 1990 Tom Sienkewicz gave a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at a Vespers Service. In this tribute he compared Dr. King to some of the ancient Greek heroes and to Hercules in particular.

On January 31st he gave a luncheon presentation to the Association of Women Students (AWS) on the status of women in antiquity.

In March he gave a lecture in Sue Holm's class on the influence of ancient Latin poets on Spanish Golden Age poets.

The department continued to maintain a bulletin board in Wallace Hall. Classics Challenges posted here continued to provide visibility for the department and classical learning for members of the college community, including students, faculty and staff.

Once again the department benefited from the financial support of Mr. Keith Capron, who assisted in the purchase of several hundred Classics books for the library this year. Particular purchases included a variety of English translations of classical literature as well as a complete set of the Oxford Classical Texts (a basic group of texts for any Classics library). With the addition of these books the Classical holdings in the Hewes Library are beginning to become respectable after decades of inadequate budgets.

The department was also glad to accept on behalf of the college the gift of several decades worth of The American Journal of Archaeology from Dr. James Poultney, a teacher of Tom Sienkewicz at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Dr. Poultney's gift filled in conspicuous gaps in the library's holdings and is much appreciated.

The 1989-90 Fox Lecturer was Dr. Nelson Potter MC'61, professor of philosophy at the University of Nebraska, who gave a presentation entitled "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance." The lecture was well attended by students, faculty and members of the general public.

### **The Classics Writing Contests**

For the past several years the department had sponsored two annual essay contests, the Harold Ralston Contest, open to Monmouth College students, and the Bernice L. Fox Context, open to high school students. This year it was decided to transform the competitions from essay contests

into writing contests so that entries could include not only essays, but also poems, short stories, dramatic pieces, and other forms of creative writing. This change produced entries of a significantly higher quality than in the past.

The Ralston Contest this year offered a prize of \$100.00 for the best writing on any topic related to Classical antiquity. The winner was Melissa Brewer, '92, an English major who wrote a dramatic response to Euripides' Hippolytus. All the entries in the contest this year were of good quality and it was difficult for the judges to make a decision. The department also acknowledges its gratitude to Mrs. Faith Ralston who has generously supported this contest financially for a number of years.

The topic for the Fifth Bernice L. Fox Essay contest, open to any high school student in the United States, was to write a new myth based upon classical antiquity. The winner of the \$100.00 cash award was Katie Cuplin of Rockford, Illinois. 306 students from 36 high schools competed in this year's contest--the largest number of entries ever received.

### **The Western Illinois Society of AIA.**

The department continues to sponsor the Archaeological Institute of America in western Illinois. A faithful group of paid members support the society financially and a larger group of individuals, including students, faculty, and the general public, attend these programs. Generally, these programs are arranged with little or no cost to the college, but, at the same time, provide the college with favorable visibility off-campus as well as with a variety of academic programs which would otherwise be unavailable in this geographic area.

The following programs were sponsored at Monmouth College by the archaeological organization. On October 12, 1989 Professor Nicholas Toth of Indiana University gave a presentation entitled "The Workshops of Eden: The Origins and Significance of Human Technology." Response by students and faculty to Professor Toth was so favorable that he will return next year to give both a convocation and an evening archaeological lecture. On December 7, 1989 Professor Avery Springer of Illinois State University talked on "The Catacombs of Rome: Buried Treasures." On March 13, 1990 Tom Sienkewicz gave "An Archaeological Tour of West Africa." On May 7, 1990 Professor Thomas Jacobsen of Indiana University gave a presentation entitled "Man and the Sea in Prehistoric Greece," a topic which fit in well with the Greek History syllabus. Several archaeological films were also shown throughout the year. In addition a panel discussion entitled "The Dickson Mounds Controversy: Should We See the Bones?" was held on April 16, 1990. Several other events were held at nearby colleges and the department is particularly glad that it has been able to encourage collaboration with several area institutions in this way.

### **Off-Campus Activities.**

The department has continued to maintain a high profile outside the college, especially among high school Latin teachers. This was the second and final year of Tom Sienkewicz' term as

President of the Illinois Classical Conference. In addition to presiding as president at the annual meeting of ICC, held in Pekin on October 6-8, he also gave a presentation entitled "Ancient History in Cartoons." Several other Monmouth people attended this meeting. In particular Bill Urban participated in a panel discussion on the teaching of ancient history and LeaAnn Osburn, MC'71, a Latin teacher at Barrington High School, was named the Illinois Latin Teacher of the Year.

As president of ICC, Tom Sienkewicz has had to travel as far as Chicago and Springfield to represent the Classics and Monmouth College at a variety of events.

Some of his other activities include the following: At Octoberfest, a conference sponsored by the Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Dr. Sienkewicz and LeaAnn Osburn gave a presentation entitled "Foreign Language Olympics: Parallel Projects for High School and College." At Winterfest, also sponsored by the Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, he gave a joint presentation with Fred Keller of the Department of Modern Foreign Languages on "Foreign Language Week Activities." In March he organized "Roman Chariot Races" at Globalfest, a statewide foreign language day for high school students. Several hundred students participated in these races and two Monmouth college students, Sylvia Zethmayr and Paula Hageman, assisted Tom Sienkewicz in running these races.

Dr. Sienkewicz continued to speak at high schools throughout the state this year. These visits included Pekin High in November, Lyons Township and Lincoln Elementary School (Monmouth) in February, and Notre Dame High School (Peoria) in March. On May 22 he gave the keynote speech at the Honors Banquet at Marquette High School in Ottawa. In this talk, entitled "Courage and a Steadfast Heart," he compared the pursuit of academic excellence to the journey of Aeneas in search for a new home in Vergil's Aeneid.

In addition to these activities, Tom Sienkewicz also gave several presentations to college audiences. In January he participated in a panel entitled "Is there a traditional Africa?" held as part of Africa Week at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana. His contribution to this panel was a paper entitled "The Sunjata epic of West Africa." In April he read a paper entitled "Can I Get a Witness: The Role of Audience in Composition in Performance" to the Department of Classics at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. In December he also attended the annual meeting of the American Philological Association in Boston. This was the first time in ten years that he had attended this meeting, the most important one for American classicists. It was probably at least as long since Monmouth College had been represented at an APA meeting. At this meeting Tom Sienkewicz accepted the APA award for excellence in the teaching of Classics.

### Summary.

At the beginning of the academic year the major decisions which the department faced regarding the calendar change were not encouraging. In retrospect many positive ideas have flowed from this curricular reevaluation and the department now faces the semester calendar with a workable curriculum.



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The departure of Ed Scott from the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, however, is unfortunate not only for the college, but also for the Department of Classics. In the past few years the Classics and Philosophy programs had come to be more closely co-ordinated and Bill Amy had taken on the teaching of the elementary Greek language courses. Now the situation is more uncertain and there is danger that a very precarious equilibrium may suddenly disappear.

With its many campus-wide activities, the department continues to reach out to the rest of the college. The Classics program is encouraged significantly by support from the History Dept and from the Dept. of Philosophy and Religious Studies and by less frequent cooperation with other areas, such as Modern Foreign Languages. Nevertheless, some concern still remains about Classics involvement in Freshmen Seminar and in academic advising.

All in all, however, the department is optimistic about the future. There is a good curriculum in place and there are some enthusiastic and good students.

Ad astra per aspera.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas J. Sienkewicz  
Capron Professor of Classics