



Department of HISTORY

Spring/Summer 2005

History Department Receives Gift of Three Endowed Chairs in Greek History

One morning, a little more than a year ago the Acting Dean of Arts and Humanities, Georgios Anagnostopoulos, summoned Profs. David Goodblatt and Daniel Vickers to his office. They arrived at his door expecting the worst – why else does a dean summon a chair and a senior faculty member? Perhaps a search would be cancelled or staff laid off. Instead, the dean told them that the Greek-American community of San Diego had decided to raise money for the establishment of three endowed chairs in Greek history and was prepared to offer them as a gift to our department. One of these chairs would be for ancient, one for Byzantine, and one for modern Greek history – to be funded at the rate of one a year starting in 2005.

A zephyr could have blown them over. They returned to the department, presented the notion to the departmental council, and reported back to the dean in early April that History would be only too happy to house the proposed chairs. The dean then informed the Hellenic Cultural Society of San Diego, which began the task of raising the necessary funds. That was less than a year ago, and already the Society, under the energetic direction of its president, George Koulaxes, has succeeded

in securing enough pledges to endow the Ancient Greek Chair fully and to be within a stone's throw of funding the Byzantine Chair as well. The department will soon begin the search for suitably distinguished scholars to fill both positions. This will not be an easy task. Standards for endowed chairs are high, and we would not want to squander such remarkable gifts on anyone who is anything less than exceptional. The process of filling these three chairs will undoubtedly take several years. When completed, however, the project will have created something quite extraordinary.

First, we now have the opportunity to build the leading center for the study of Greek history anywhere in North America. Many universities own a chair somewhere in the field of Greek history, but nowhere will there be a concentration of eminent historians in one department to match ours. Second, the Ancient Greek and Byzantine chairs, along with our plans to recruit in Ancient Rome will allow us to rebuild our doctoral field in ancient history, which has been limping along shorthanded since the retirement of Alden Mosshammer. Third, the modern Greek position will complement our developing

strength in the eastern Mediterranean – the territories of the former Ottoman Empire – a critical area of concern for Americans today.

The endowment also creates challenges. We must develop funding to support graduate students in this field. The university library must build a collection to support the new chairs. The Hellenic Society has agreed to donate its fairly extensive private collection to UCSD, which will be a help, but the bibliographers at Geisel will have to assist us in developing this part of the library's collection.

These problems can be managed. The bottom line is that in an age in which public universities are struggling mightily just to maintain themselves, the gift of three endowed chairs from one community is a remarkable event. It is now up to the department to do justice to this gift and, through several years of energetic recruiting, transform that generosity and trust into a lasting center of intellectual energy.

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Chair's Column

Danny Vickers



Danny Vickers

The sixteen months since I assumed the chair of the Department of History here at UCSD have been so busy that our newsletter has been temporarily placed on the back burner. New appointments, new outreach programs, new course offerings, new staff, new committees, new graduates – and a new chair who has to learn how all of this is done. Though often exhausted by it all, I am encouraged, especially by the infusion of new blood. During the last two years, five new faculty have arrived in the department; we are currently attempting to recruit two more; and we have seven more positions scheduled for recruitment in the next few years. A healthy department is a young department, and I am confident that this new generation of scholars will possess the energy to repair our weaknesses and add to our strengths.

Perhaps the most important new, unfolding story in the department is the decision of the Greek-American community of San Diego to fund the creation of three endowed chairs at UCSD in Greek history. That development is treated separately in the *Newsletter*. In other fields, however, the recruitment of new faculty has been proceeding over the last year almost without respite.

In 2004, five search committees added four new historians to our ranks. In the field of modern Middle East history, we hired **Michael Provence**, who works on twentieth-century Syria and has written a history of political upheaval and popular nationalism entitled *The Great Syrian Revolt*, to be published this coming summer by the University of Texas Press.

A native San Diegan, Michael received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and was teaching at Southern Methodist when we lured him home again.

In the history of science, we hired **Tal Golan**, a specialist in nineteenth-century science who has just completed a book (now published by Harvard University Press) on the history of scientific expert testimony in Anglo-American courts entitled *Laws of Men and Laws of Nature*. Tal has worked in the private sector as an electrical engineer; he then obtained his Ph.D. from Berkeley; and at the time we hired him, he was teaching at Ben Gurion University in Israel.

The history of science field group added yet another member with the appointment of **Emily Thompson**. An undergraduate physicist at Rochester Institute of Technology then (after a stint in the private sector) a Princeton Ph.D. in the history of science, Emily had taught at Pennsylvania and was a research fellow at M.I.T., when we managed to recruit her. Her first book, *The Soundscape of Modernity*, a study of how technologists created modern sound in the early decades of the twentieth century, has won a bevy of significant awards, including the John Hope Franklin Prize (for best book) by the American Studies Association.

The long and complicated search to replace Ramon Ruiz in the field of twentieth-century Mexican history finally came to a happy conclusion with the appointment of **Everard Meade**, a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago. Ev works on the history of capital punishment in modern Mexico – a topic of

considerable current interest with a story line that he handles with great panache. He will be defending his dissertation this spring.

This year, we are in the middle of several more searches and have just succeeded in appointing a young historian of modern Africa: **Jeremy Prestholdt**, who took his Ph.D. in the top-ranked African history program at Northwestern. He wrote his dissertation on the impact of West African economic and social practice on the global economy of the nineteenth century, part of which has already been published in the *American Historical Review*. As this newsletter was going to press, we were still trying to nail down two other searches – one in late imperial China and the other in twentieth century U.S. cultural history.

Turning from appointments to outreach, the U.S. historians within the History Department managed last year to secure, in cooperation with the San Diego County Office of Education, a \$1,700,000 grant from the United States Department of Education. This will fund a three-year program to enhance the teaching of American history in the elementary and middle schools of our city. This grant, the third largest in the nation, will fund three Summer Institutes between 2004 and 2006, where faculty members will introduce about fifty teachers each year to the cutting edge of historical understanding. The teachers will then convert what they have learned into curricula suitable for the children under their charge. As the Institutes progress, the County Office of Education will mount the best material these teachers produce on a massive website open to public school teachers across the country.

Recent Grads Accept Tenure-Track Positions

Doug McGetchin (Ph.D. 2002, Europe, advisor David Luft) accepted a tenure-track assistant professorship in World History at the MacArthur campus of Florida Atlantic University in Jupiter, Florida, where he will continue to teach and do research on cultural interactions between Europe and India since the eighteenth century.

Doug's dissertation, "The Sanskrit Reich: Translating Ancient India for Modern Germans, 1790-1914," investigates the cultural implications of the academic discipline of Indology (the study of South Asian texts, literature, and culture) and the diffusion of this knowledge about ancient India within modern Germany.



Doug McGetchin



Volker Janssen

Volker Janssen (Ph.D. 2005, United States History, advisor Michael Bernstein) will begin a tenure track position in California History at California State University Fullerton, Orange County in Fall 2005. Volker came to the University of California, San Diego from the University of Hamburg, Germany, in Fall 1999 with a Fulbright Scholarship.

Volker's dissertation titled, "Convict Labor, Civic Welfare: Rehabilitation in California's Prisons, 1941-1986" traces the rise and fall of the state's correctional system from a welfare state institution focused on rehabilitation to a mass prison bureaucracy that has become such dominant political concern in the past twenty years. In particular, I uncover important connections between military institutions and corrections both in matters of rehabilitation as well as retribution.

Laura M. Zucconi (Ph.D. 2005, Ancient Near Eastern History, advisor William H. C. Propp) will begin a tenure track position in Ancient Mediterranean History at Richard Stockton College of New Jersey in Fall 2005.

Laura's dissertation titled, "'Can No Physician be Found?': The Influence of Religion on Medical Pluralism in Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and Israel" looks at how these ancient cultures understood illness to be a message from the divine and that restoration of health entailed communication with the divine. Each culture had one type of healer that focused on the mortal aspects of the illness such as the presence of symptoms, what the message means for humans, and how humans can communicate with the divine. A second type of healer, also common to the three societies, concentrated on the divine aspects such as why the divine sent the message and what the divine needs in order to restore health.



Laura Zucconi

Recent Faculty Publications

- Tal Golan, *Laws of Men and Laws of Nature: The History of Scientific Expert Testimony in England and America*. Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Judith M. Hughes, *From Obstacle to Ally: The Evolution of Psychoanalytic Practice*. Brunner-Routledge, 2004.
- Stefan Tanaka, *New Times in Modern Japan*. Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Daniel Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail*. Yale University Press, 2005.

Save the Date...
Hellenic Cultural Days at UCSD
October 22-23, 2005

As the funding for the three Greek Chairs comes close to completion, the Hellenic Cultural Society is proposing to recognize the achievement, honor the donors, and promote further development of their initiative by holding a "Hellenic Cultural Days" celebration on the campus of UCSD on the weekend of October 22-23, 2005. There will be readings, dancing, food, athletics, and a display of the Society's own historical and cultural collections.

Planning for the event is still in the early stages, but most of the activities will occur on Saturday, and will probably take place at the north end of campus near available parking and the RIMAC facility. We will keep friends and alumni posted on schedule and location as they solidify, and we invite all of you to drop by. History faculty, current students, Chancellor Fox, and many members of the Greek-American community of San Diego plan to be present. We hope you will too.

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This newsletter is now available electronically! To keep you connected to the Department of History, we've added *e*news*, a semiannual e-newsletter, to our modes of communication to our friends and alumni. It's a fast, convenient way to find out what's happening in our department. In future issues of *e*news*, we'll report on student fellowships and award winners, placement activities, faculty research, and of course, the academic excellence that is the hallmark of the UCSD Department of History.

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