

# FORUM FACTORUM

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MassJCL / Official Newsletter

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Cover Photo Caption:  
A full house  
Photo by Jenny Chen

# Save the Date!

## July 22nd-28th

National Convention

Emory University

Atlanta, Georgia

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Professor James Uden

Photo By Jenny Chen

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# Nota



## PRESIDENT

### *Salvete Omnes,*

I hope you all had a lovely spring break!

Thank you so much to all of our Classics Day attendees early this past December! We loved seeing you all again so much, and we hope that you enjoyed yourselves at our largest Classics Day event in the past several years.

To recap, this year's theme was "A Day in the Life," which focused on the daily lives of those frequently marginalized in the history of ancient Mediterranean societies, and featured a number of speakers, as well as an exciting opportunity to connect with our fellow classics students from almost twenty schools around the state of Massachusetts. Our eleven presenters gave lectures and seminars spread across our morning and afternoon sessions to MassJCL students and teachers on everything from the ancient coins to the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. I would like to thank our amazing 1st VP, Samhitha Vundi, for all of the work that she did to make this event possible, and Boston University, for granting us access to their student union to host this event!

Stay tuned for information on how to join the Massachusetts delegation at Nationals this summer, which will be held at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia!

Gratias tibi ago,

*Louisa Hemr*

Louisa Hemr

MassJCL President 2022-2023

# Bene





# Classics Day!

By Louisa Hemr, BLS

Classics Day 2022, the largest in the past several years, featured a number of fascinating speakers, as well as an exciting opportunity to connect with our fellow classics students from around the state. This year's theme was "A Day in the Life," which focused on the daily lives of those often marginalized in ancient Mediterranean history. Professor James Uden kicked off our event with opening remarks in which he reflected on his first experiences with classics in secondary school, and the lessons his teacher taught him back in Sydney, Australia. While he agreed that learning all of our declensions and memorizing all our verb conjugations are obviously a requirement for any student of classics, he also explained that it is equally important to think about how the texts we read would have been interpreted back in their own day. All works of literature are undeniably influenced by the environments of their authors, and so gaining an understanding of the daily lives of the original audiences of these works is really quite essential to understanding the works as a whole. I felt that these opening statements did an excellent job summing up the message of this year's Classics Day as a whole, and I would like to thank Professor Uden both for these insightful remarks, and for all of his work supporting Samhitha Vundi, our MassJCL 1st Vice President, as well as the rest of the board in creating this event.

## Classics Day Workshops

1. Professor Laurie Hutcheson - Masks in Athenian Tragedy
2. Professor Leah Kronenberg - Women Writers in Ancient Rome
3. Professor James Uden - The Lives of Children in Ancient Rome
4. Professor Caitlin Gillespie - A Day in the Life of the Colosseum
5. Ilse van Rooyen - Nuts for Nummi
6. Professor Cochran - What does Plato have to do with Pride?: Classics, censorship, and LGBTQ+ identity
- 7 & 11. Phil Rossoni - Hanging Gardens of Babylon Found?
8. Professor Tori Lee - Hades Who? Picturing the Underworld in Ancient Greece and Rome
9. Professor Stephanie Nelson - Women in Greek Drama
10. Professor Leah Kronenberg - Women Writers in Ancient Rome
12. Peter Kotiuga - "Lookin' fine in ancient times"
13. Professor Rachel Love - So You Think You Can Read?: Reading, Writing, and Everything in Between in Ancient Rome



# 1. Masks in Athenian Tragedy

By Sophia Reinfeld, Boston Latin School

I went into this convention thinking I would have to sight read Latin or try and have a full on conversation as an exercise, but what I encountered in that auditorium was more fascinating than I had expected. My first meeting was with a professor who analyzed the history behind ancient Greco-Roman theatre and entertainment. During our session we learned about the complexity of the Greek masks that actors used on stage which were detailed with overly exaggerated emotions to project the characters state of mind all the way to the back of the amphitheatres. These mask were originally made out of clay, wood, leather and a number of materials, but at the convention we attempted to create our own masks using paper and scissors. I must admit I am not the most talented artist, but the mask building not only helped me understand Greco-roman culture on a more deeper level, but I was also able to become interactive and get my hands dirty making my time there all the worth while.

# 3. The Lives of Children in Ancient Rome

By Alex Xu, Boston Latin School

In James Uden's talk about the life of children in Ancient Rome, he discussed the morbid realities that children had to face nearly two thousand years ago. Starting with childbirth, the professor detailed how young girls, sometimes at the age of 14, were expected to marry and have children! They would often sit on seats designed for birthing, while a handmaid would aid them. Unfortunately, there were many complications resulting from giving birth at such an early age - some historians estimate that giving birth was one of the leading causes of death in the ancient world. Even then, after a baby was born, it would not be safe. Many babies did not make it through infancy. Professor Uden mentioned how the Gracchi brothers, along with their sister Sempronia, were the only three to survive out of twelve children born to their parents. I found it interesting that many babies were exposed at birth by handmaids, who made this decision - not the paterfamilias. The professor then moved on to describe how many children in ancient Rome did not have the modern "childhood" - a time of fun and leisure. Instead, only those in the upper class were allowed this luxury. Others had to get working immediately. Finally, the professor discussed the stages of schooling. Although there were some women who did manage to secretly gain education, it was mainly closed off to rich, privileged citizens of Rome.

## 4. Day in the Life of the Colosseum

By Jade Scott, Winchester

My day started with a seminar on the Roman Colosseum, taught by a Brandeis professor. She brought to life, through images and vivid details, the pressure and excitement that enveloped the Roman people, especially during the fabled one-hundred days of games. These days were full of gladiator battles, executions, and animal hunts that kept Emperor Titus's people entertained during a tumultuous time.

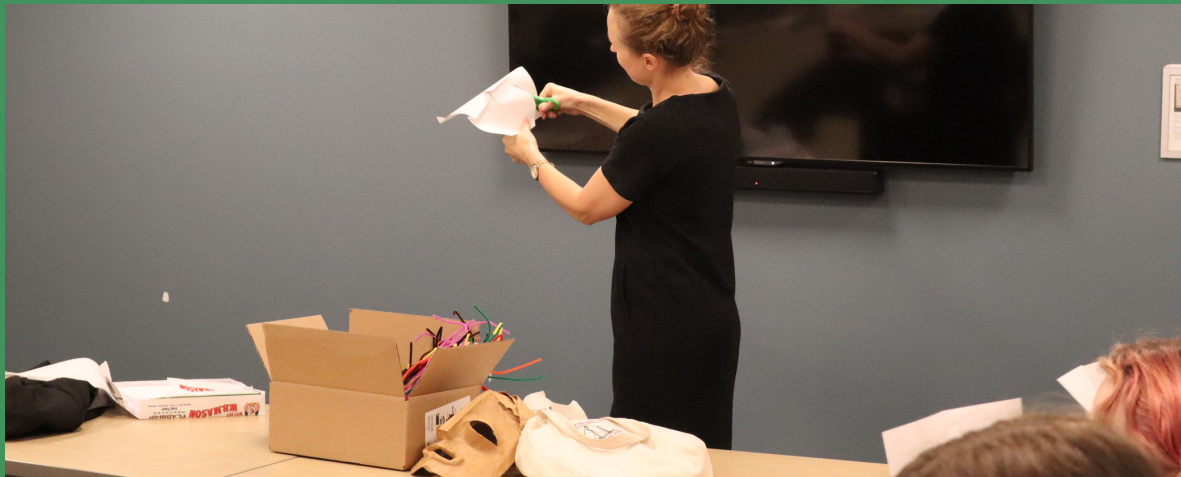
## 5. Nuts for Nummi

Zachary Chen, Boston Latin School

We went into a deep dive of the production of coins, the different locations coins were first minted, and the culture of a specific head versus tails. Coins were initially made in parts of Greece followed by Rome and in China. The "heads" of a coin typically had famous mythological stories or famous influential people like Augustus. After learning, it was time for an interactive activity. We separated into groups and analyzed 3 coins, two Athenian and one Roman. After discussing the Athenian owls, Greek letters, and the figure of Augustus, we made our own coins! I created one depicting the BLS Junior Classical League.

## *Masks in Athenian Tragedy*

Photo by Jenny Chen



## 6. What Does Plato Have to do with Pride? ♦—————♦

By Georgia Ryan, BLS

Ever since reading Madeline Miller's *Song of Achilles*, I've learned that being homosexual was very typical in the ancient world. I was immediately interested as soon as I saw the name of this workshop. I've always wondered why being queer is such a controversial subject when it's always existed, especially in Ancient Rome. I learned about how many famous philosophers/writers in the ancient world were a part of the community and how history has censored so much to the point where we've lost authentic content. We first compared Catullus' Poem 5 and Poem 48, about a woman and a man, respectively. Poem 5 is much more famous, despite having the same message as Poem 48, which is much less well-known. Poem 48 is a love poem about a man, which is why it has been so controversial and less known. I also learned about Plato's *Symposium* and the theme of pederasty in it. The *Symposium* is such a famous work; I was surprised by how straightforward and unfiltered it was. The final primary author we learned about was Sappho, and the roots of the word "lesbianism," which I learned meant "one from Lesbos." Lesbianism was also known as Sapphism since Sappho was a famous and controversial female author who wrote love poems about other women. Some even thought she wasn't a woman because they believed women couldn't write good poetry about other women.

## 7 & II. Hanging Gardens of Babylon Found? ♦—————♦

Iain Elwell, BLS

The professor spoke about the gardens of Babylon. About their purpose, when they were, and how they were made possible. To start off, they didn't really have any practical purpose in relation to the amount of work required to upkeep them. They were essentially big gardens containing trees and other vegetation. I believe they were made for King Nebuchadnezzar's wife because she wished to have the plants from her home. They were made possible by a series of aqueducts which brought water to the location of the plants, and then through irrigation canals as well as the use of the Archimedes screw, which brought water to higher levels of elevation through essentially magic. There's no other explanation.



## 8. Hades Who? Picturing the Underworld

By Jocelyn Cain, Woburn

I learned about Hades and the Underworld and how different authors, such as Homer, portrayed this scene. We learned about how the Underworld was reserved for the dead but different authors portrayed it as a darker reality compared to others. Additionally, we discussed the “punishments” that were given by the Gods in the Underworld. Examples of this are mythological figures such as Tantalus, who wasn’t allowed to eat or drink water, but these items were always just out of his reach. Another example is Sisyphus who was punished by pushing a boulder up a hill that would never reach the top before rolling back down.

## 12. Lookin Fine In Ancient Times

By Sophia Reinfeld, BLS

This assembly was a lecture concerning Greek and Roman cosmetics and hygiene in the ancient times. From public pools to blush made from crushed rose petals, I learned all about how the Greeks and Romans were able to stay clean and fashionable thousands of years ago. Citizens used sponges made from a loufa plant to bathe, just as we have loufas today! Women used beauty products such as khol sticks like modern-day eyeliner, and people owned little makeup boxes called pixels to store their products. What truly amazed me was how the ancient civilizations and cities fully used every single one of their resources and treasured them all as if they were gold. Rose petals were made into blush and Greek eye-shadow was constructed from coal.

## 13. So You Think You Can Read?

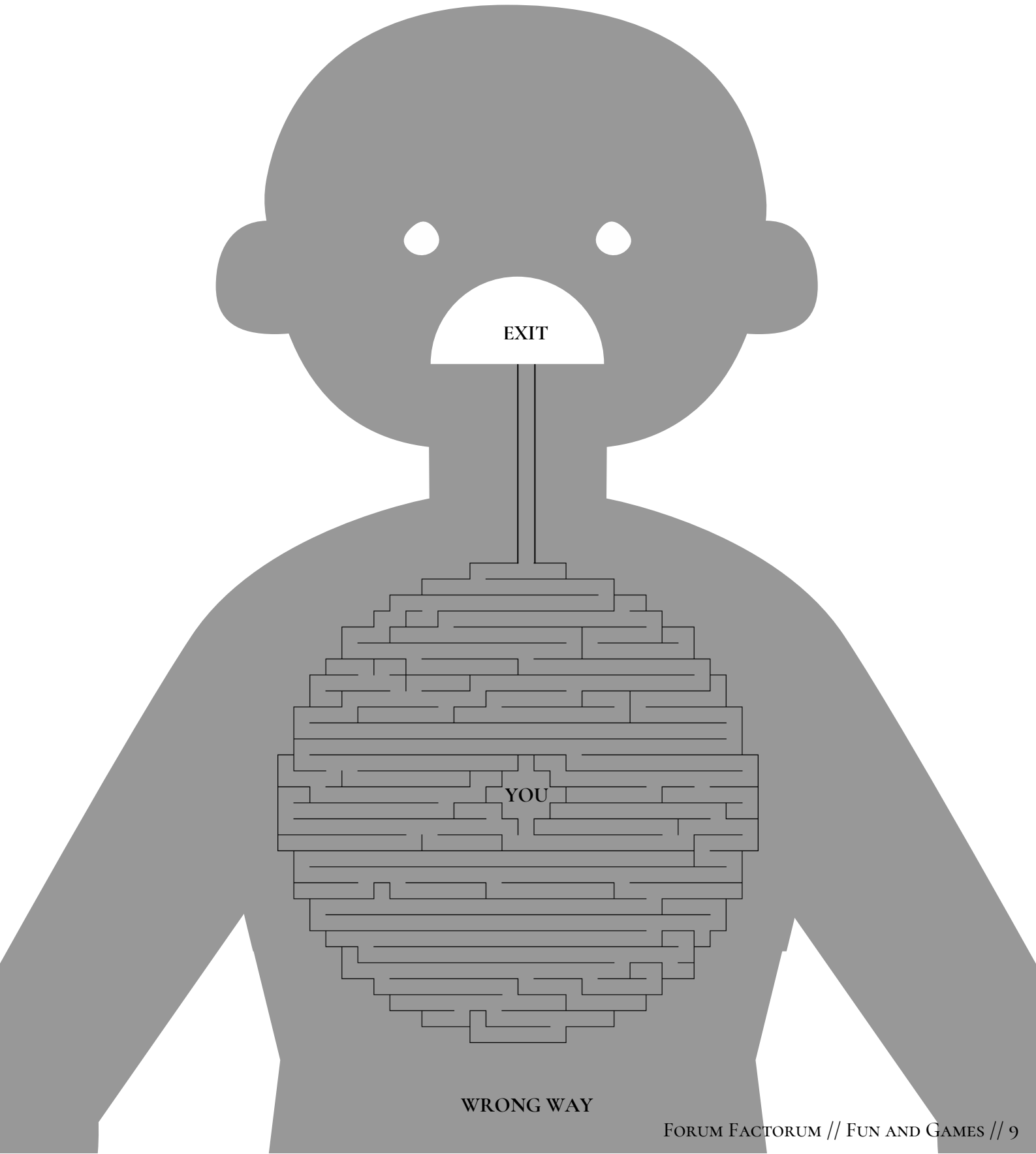
By Estiven Lezama, BLS

Professor Love takes the audience through a story of writing and how it has evolved and has been used not only in the way we know it, but for the Romans as well. How their exclusions of lower case letters, punctuation, and even spaces were not done for the sake of it but were indicative of the way they thought about the world—it provided a thought process in how they read. She demonstrates how because of the way they wrote they had to adapt certain writing styles to match their approach. She goes on filling in unknown gaps of how even the writing space was a demonstration of not only wealth, but of the significance of the contents being written. The most exciting part of the entire workshop was the simulation that she had provided as we were allowed to use the different forms of writing that the Romans would have employed such as pieces of Papyrus, broken pieces of clay, and even tablets of wax!



*Escape the stomach of your  
Father Chronos*

Maze



WRONG WAY

Photo By Jenny Chen



Classics Day Skit!



Photo by Jenny Chen

Stoic.



Photo by Jenny Chen

What does Plato have to do with Pride?

Gratias  
Maximas!