

## A Welcome Note from CAAS President Dan-el Padilla Peralta

Dear all,

It's my delight to welcome each of you to the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Classical Association of the Atlantic States (CAAS), hosted at the Heldrich Hotel and Conference Center in New Brunswick, NJ. Our meeting would not be possible without the steadfast efforts of our Program Coordinator, Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos, and the Program Committee. We are also indebted to our longtime Executive Director, Mary Brown, and our Treasurer Henry Bender; the Awards Committee, chaired by Maria S. Marsilio; the Clack Committee, responsible for the coordination of this year's Clack Lecture; our webmaster Jennifer C. Ranck and Social Media Coordinator Talia Chicherio; and the many members of our CAAS community who have been hard at work to ensure a successful annual meeting.

We have a rich and exciting program lined up. I wish especially to draw your attention to our Clack Lecture on Friday, October 18, when Professor Yopie Prins (Irene Butter Collegiate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan) will present "Sappho Echoes." The author of *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton 1999) and *Ladies' Greek: Victorian Translations of Tragedy* (Princeton 2017), and co-editor of multiple volumes, Professor Prins is a leading figure in the study of classical reception – which will be a salient theme in Saturday's programming. At the plenary session on October 19, I'll be in conversation with Dr. Mathura Umachandran (Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History, University of Exeter) and Dr. Chella Ward (Lecturer in Classical Studies at the Open University) about [\*Critical Ancient World Studies: The Case for Forgetting Classics\*](#), their game-changing open access edited volume that will push us to think about and beyond the boundaries of the discipline. We are grateful to our guests for traveling to join us and share their wisdom, and to each of you for making the journey to the Annual Meeting.

I took to heart the call of members at last year's annual meeting for greater organizational transparency. One of my objectives as President has been to promote such transparency in the communication and application of our Bylaws and Regulations – primarily in dealings with the Board and Executive Committee, and in dialogues with members who have sought illumination about specific procedures and protocols. With this commitment to transparency in mind, I close this letter on one note of clarification. Beginning at our April meetings, the Board committed to a reexamination of the charges for different positions as specified in our regulations, and to the formalization of a reappointment process for stipendiary Officers. As our Executive Director's current term comes to a close, it has seemed to me especially urgent to get moving on this front, and to implement – in keeping with Bylaws Art. V Sec. 3 – a procedure for reviewing the performance of officers that could then guide the Board in making determinations about reappointment. I am pleased to announce that one outcome of that procedure's first phase was the generation of a report on the Executive Director's performance. This report, which distilled a robust dialogue at our April Board Meetings, commended some aspects of this performance and identified other aspects for improvement. When the Board reconvenes this week at the Annual

Meeting, it will have an opportunity to evaluate both the report and the Executive Director's (solicited) response to it prior to deciding on reappointment.

It is important to stress that this procedure is meant to be part of any stipendiary officer's reappointment. Such a procedure has historically entailed (and will continue to entail) closed-door discussions in which the Directors fulfill their obligations to the organization and to the membership by evaluating thoroughly each stipendiary officer's performance, whenever they are up for reappointment.

I see my exposition of this proceduralist work in this letter as integral to the promotion of that transparency and professionalism that I understand many of our members to be seeking. I would welcome any and all feedback from CAAS members on how we can strengthen our protocols for review and constructive criticism – of officers and of the organization as a whole – now and in the future.

Wishing each of you well,  
Dan-el Padilla Peralta  
Professor of Classics, Princeton University