

The Ptolemies Invade Westwood

The 3rd Annual Wep-waut in Westwood: Ancient Egypt at UCLA

BY KANDACE PANSIRE

On May 8, 2004, the way was opened again for the third annual *Wep-waut* symposium, "From Alexander to Cleopatra: The Archaeology of Ptolemaic Egypt." *Wep-waut* is an Egyptian god who takes the form of a jackal. His name means "Path-Finder," or "Opener of the Ways," and as a mascot for the annual symposium, *Wep-waut* is particularly apt. This conference allows both graduate and advanced undergraduate students to present their findings on individual research projects, opening the way for them to share their work with the community at large. The symposium began with an introduction by Professor **Willeke Wendrich**, whose course on Ptolemaic Egypt inspired the research done by the presenters. After giving her remarks on the purpose of this conference and opportunities for the community to become involved in Egyptology, Professor Wendrich introduced the speakers.

The first speaker of the day's conference was **Rebecca Ivanjack**, an advanced undergraduate who spoke on the Ptolemaic city of Alexandria. She looked at the city's legendary beginnings through the great minds that lived and studied there, its enduring legacy, and the city's eventual decay and destruction. She also gave an intriguing discussion of the great library at Alexandria and the impact the loss of the knowledge that once was gathered in it may have had on modern scholarship.

The second speaker, **Elizabeth Mullane**, is a graduate student through the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology and is studying the Hellenistic and Roman Near East. Liz continued to shed light on Alexandria through her discussion of the Pharos Lighthouse. She presented its history, from the earliest literary mentions to the current archaeological excavations. She also recreated the Pharos using a combination of texts, coins, mosaics and other sources, among which the recent underwater archaeo-

logical investigations.

Amber Myers, a graduate student in the Near Eastern Languages and Cultures Department, broadened our discussion of Ptolemaic Egypt with an overview of settlements in the Faiyum, an oasis in the Western Desert. Amber concentrated on the excavation history of the sites, in particular the settlement of Karanis, and she discussed the history of scholarly research in this often neglected area of Egypt. This was followed by our fourth presenter, advanced undergraduate **Jose Ramirez**, who spoke on agriculture in Ptolemaic Egypt. After explaining the Egyptian calendar, he detailed the fertility provided by the inundation cycle and gave examples of tools and equipment commonly used in Egyptian agriculture.

Eric Wells, also an advanced undergraduate and student of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, gave a discussion of Ptolemaic papyri. He gave a fascinating talk on the contexts in which many caches of fragmented

papyri are found, including those packed inside the mummies of crocodiles and those that are found as part of cartonnage mummy masks. This first set of presentors then took questions from the audience and the symposium broke for lunch.

After the lunch break, the talks continued with advanced undergraduate **Abigail Deras**, who spoke on women in the Ptolemaic period. Abigail set up a comparison between the role of women in Athenian Greek society and that of contemporary Egyptian women. She compared such things as dress, education, public life and domestic life, and argued that Egyptian women lived more comfortable lives with more rights and freedom than Athenian women of the same period.

Erica Ellis, another student of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, traced the development of temple art (inscriptions, royal depictions, and cultural blending as

continued on page 11



Wep Waut in Westwood, 8 May 2004

WEP-WAUT GROUP IN FRONT OF THE FOWLER BUILDING IN WESTWOOD ON
MAY 8, 2004.