

## Memory of Corinne (August 27, 2007)

People are always in motion around you, and because you're in motion too you might not notice that you mostly just catch glimpses as they pass. Only when they stop moving do you get the unnatural full view we have here today, and maybe you realize how closely you should have looked, how you should seize them when you see them. This has been on my mind since the end of June, for Corinne moved faster than most people, and with a more exuberant fury.

We began our relationship with the rare bond that we both wrote Harvard theses on Lycian linguistics; as former students of Cal Watkins we were academic siblings. My view was mostly that of a professor, though, and a linguist impressed and disappointed, I admit, that Corinne's intellectual interests included social identity, cultural context, and literature as well as language. For my Latin linguistics class she wrote a brilliant paper on the geography of Oscan in Pompeii, in which she seemed to establish the existence of Oscan-speaking neighborhoods concentrated in the less rectilinear *vicoli* of the old city. I say *seemed to establish* because it is still surprising to me that this had not been figured out before, but so it is. To work this out you have to be interested in language and archaeology; you have to read and understand the fine print in editions of Oscan texts, the part that says where they were found, the part we linguists mostly skip. It's rare for anybody to do work so good it has the quality of being obvious in retrospect but nonetheless previously unseen; Corinne's dissertation could have done the same.

Once I made her cry. In Anna Morpurgo Davies's Mycenaean seminar we were at the far end of the long table, where the greasers sit. For some reason, probably because as a linguist I am insecure in classics, I made a silly joke about archaeology and after a while I noticed Corinne was a little weepy, and eventually she left. I did not understand then the complexity of her relationship with her intellectual choices, how difficult it is when your work crosses disciplinary lines to find a comfortable home — to find a focus in liminality — and how committed she was to an integrated view of ancient Italy.

I hope I always remember Corinne as she was when I last saw her, on the Friday before she died. We talked about a paper she was scheduled to give at a conference we were both attending in Oslo. Her paper was based on a dissertation chapter and she walked me through a draft handout tracing usages of the Oscan word *touto*. I have since come to see her argument — that pre-Roman identity in Sabellic Italy was based on local community networks rather than the conventionally assumed linguistic or ethnic boundaries — as a mirror of the life Corinne herself built. In any case she was happy about what she had assembled; the paper was interesting and would have challenged linguists to think broadly; and she was excited about going to Norway. Her eyes were intense as she figured out which part of her argument best set up the rest; her voice had an astonishing degree of laryngealization in the word *yeah*; and I see her still in my ugly green office chair, hunched up but rocking forward and backward a bit, propelled by constant thought into motion.