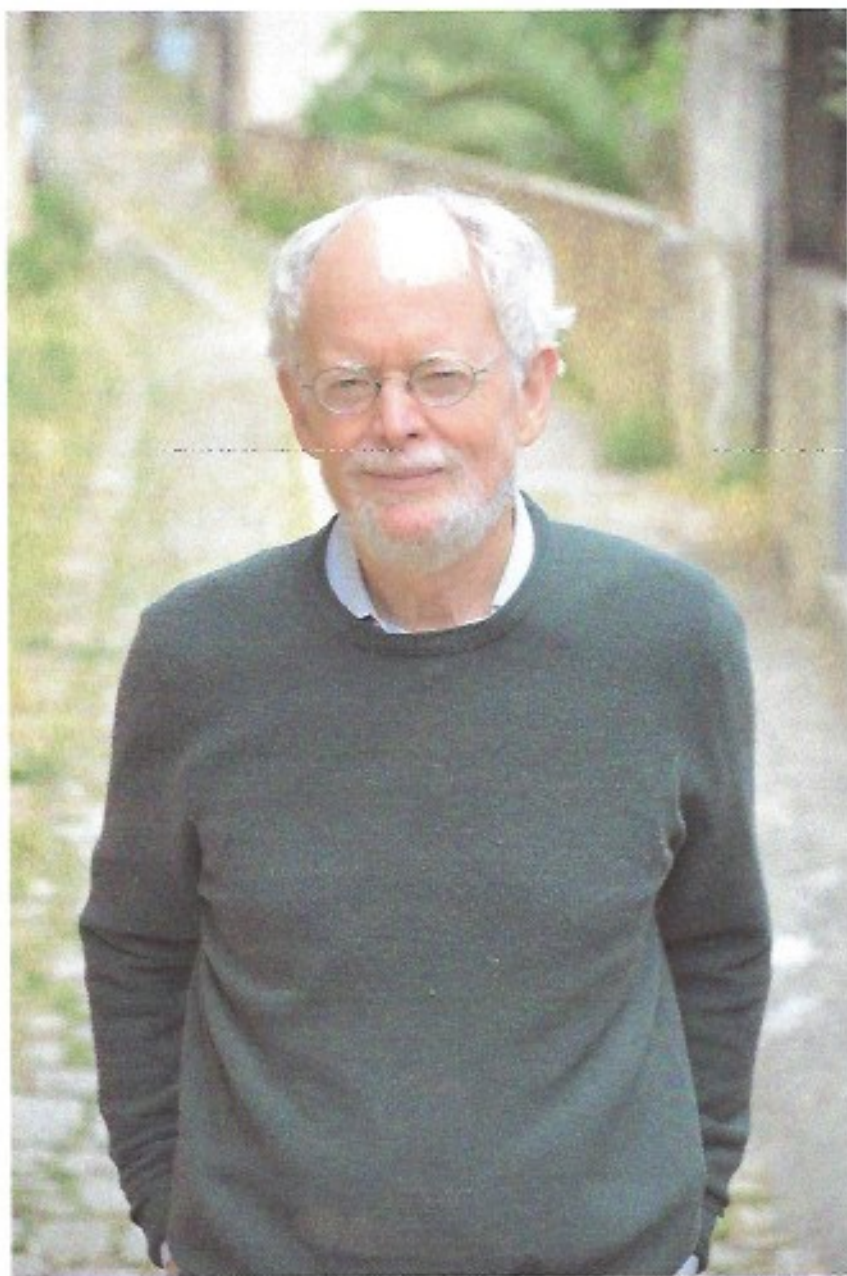


Special Section

A Tribute to Malcolm Bell III, 1941–2024

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Frontispiece
Malcolm Bell III (photo by Erik Thorkildsen, used with permission).

Preface

Anthony Corbeill, University of Virginia

Elizabeth Fentress, Rome, Italy

Margaret L. Laird, University of Delaware

On 30 May 2024, the American Academy in Rome hosted an afternoon dedicated to the memory of Malcolm Bell III. It centered on three of the four great passions of his life: the Academy, plundered antiquities, and the site of Morgantina in Sicily. (His fourth passion was, of course, his family.) The afternoon closed with a cello recital by Mac's son, Raphael. A recording of the full program can be heard at <https://youtu.be/WSVvdXyBjK8>. This celebratory section includes versions of three of the tributes that were presented, accompanied by a photo essay. The varied nature of the contributions speaks to the many facets of their subject: a man of parts, all of them splendid.

Malcolm Bell III as Andrew W. Mellon Professor-in-Charge in Rome, 1993–1996: Friend, Teacher, Leader

Caroline Bruzelius, Duke University

Malcolm Bell III (“Mac” for me and all who knew him) was a luminous, brilliant, and intense friend and collaborator. The years during which we worked together in Rome (1994–1998, while I was Director and he was the Andrew W. Mellon Professor-in-Charge of the School of Classical Studies, *fig. 1*) saw the completion of the massive and complex renovation of the McKim, Mead, & White Building (MMW), its beautiful garden, and that of the Villa Aurelia. These projects were capped by the celebration of the Academy’s centennial in 1994, an event attended by Italy’s President, Luigi Scalfaro. Beginning in August of 1993, all was disruption and preparation: the MMW Building was closed and the Director, Mellon Professor, and a much-reduced number of Fellows (only in the Humanities) “camped out” in the Villa Chiaraviglio. We ate our meals in the kitchen of the Villa Aurelia; the staff worked in the Casa Rustica. As the renovations neared completion and the centennial approached, there were some cliff-hanging moments, not the least of which was the discovery that the main sewer of the MMW Building was blocked with an intractable, cement-like substance. Good to have discovered this before the Fellows moved in!

The position of Mellon Professor (now known as the Andrew W. Mellon Humanities Professor) has been essential to the Academy’s mission from the time that the School of Classical Studies merged with the School of Fine Arts in 1912 to create the American Academy in Rome, a unique institution that brings scholars, artists, and writers together for a year of work and creativity. Because the Academy welcomes Fellows from diverse fields, the Mellon Professor functions as a bridge between Rome and the Fellows, between the wonders and complexity of this ancient city and our community of (mostly)

Figure 1
Caroline Bruzelli us with Malcolm
Bell III at a reception at the
American Academy in Rome,
Spring 1996 (photo by Diana
DePardo-Minsky, used with
permission).



Americans, some of whom have never been to Europe before. There are two important challenges: first, to foster a community within the Academy; and second, to introduce the splendors of Rome, its surroundings, and Italy more generally to those who are willing and interested. For many decades the Academy has offered this experience in the forms of Walks and Talks and occasional longer trips. We owe much of this vision to Frank E. Brown (1906–1988), who served as Professor-in-Charge, occasional Director, and Director of the excavations at Cosa. Brown’s knowledge of Roman antiquity was deeply embedded in a broader concept of the Mediterranean. This expansive view of the Roman world was continued in the following decades by his successors (Mac Bell included) in the form of study trips to Sicily, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon.

For many Fellows—irrespective of their own field of study—the trips and Walks and Talks represent eye-opening opportunities, and Mac was marvelously effective at engaging with their broad range of fields and interests. Poet Kark Kirchway (Fellow in 1993–1994 and Andrew Heiskell Arts Director from 2010–2013), wrote:

My favorite memory of Mac involved one of his walking tours of Rome's historic center. And in fact it provided one of three poems in a cycle called "Roman Hours" included in my third book of poems called *The Engrafted Word* (1997). As I recall it, Mac led us all into a tiny shoemaker's shop. Someone lifted up a trapdoor in the floor, and we climbed down a ladder to see, shimmering under water, the analemma from the Horologium of Augustus in the Field of Mars. Though I am frequently reminded of how Rome's ancient life continues beside, and often underneath, the contemporary life that we are given in the city, I never felt it as forcefully as I did then.

As Mellon Professor, Mac also served as a bridge between Fellows and colleagues in the other scholarly communities of Rome, in the Superintendencies, universities, and foreign academies. Perhaps no other city is as rich in national and international research institutes, and the opportunities they provide for Americans to enlarge their networks of knowledge and connections can be profoundly life changing. In addition, the Arthur and Janet C. Ross Library brings many Roman scholars and members of other foreign institutions to the Academy to do research, in the course of which they may have a coffee in the bar or join us for lunch.

When I first arrived in Rome in 1993, one of my first encounters with Mac found him levitating with rage at the Villa Aurelia. A backhoe was digging a hole for a new cistern. Of course—as all archaeologists know all too well—you can't do more than plant a geranium in the ground in Italy without coming across something ancient. As I came to know Mac better and learned more about the illegal excavations at Morgantina, I understood more fully how he had become so acutely sensitive to the digging of holes.

Mac taught the Academy community about the fragility of the ancient world, how close and yet how vulnerable it is when we live in a city like Rome. During the years we worked together, Mac became increasingly engaged in the battle against the illicit international antiquities trade and the terrible damage being done to archaeological sites; Claire Lyons's essay in this collection addresses his fundamentally important accomplishments in this area. Mac helped put in place an agreement between Italy and the United States that has led to the repatriation of numerous works of art and inflected the culture of collecting antiquities. This is something of which the American Academy should be proud and celebrate.

I close with a few words about another aspect of Mac, one that might possibly have something to do with his Scottish heritage. On some of the longer Academy trips, to Sicily or Tunisia, for example, if there happened to

be a choice between a slightly more expensive hotel or a slightly cheaper one (though possibly without heat and perhaps with bugs), Mac inevitably chose the latter. Returning Fellows would tell of sleeping in hats, gloves, and coats, and certain critters under the beds. Perhaps this was Mac's way of toughening us up for the rigors of learning about the ancient world.

We admired Mac. He opened the eyes of all who had the good fortune to be present at the American Academy in Rome during the years of his professorship. We learned to see the ancient world through him. Many came to love him as a friend, colleague, collaborator, and fierce defender of principle and honor. We loved his passion, his humor, thoughtfulness, kindness, moral rigor—even, sometimes, his rather daunting intensity—along with his passion for music and antiquity. Malcolm Bell embodied the principles and values of the Academy, even as he helped to expand and enlarge the community in new and important directions.

There will not be another man like Malcolm Bell III. He was *an estimable gentleman*.

And we are grateful to have been for some time in his orbit.