

Editor's Introduction

Ian Firla

1999 has proved to be an exciting year for Gravesian affairs. Since our last issue, word has come that no fewer than four film companies are at various stages of production on films about or based upon works by Robert Graves. These include one about the Graves-Riding affair, *The White Goddess*, a new version of *I, Claudius*, and one of *King Jesus*. As more information is made available, I will post it on the Trust web site and e-mail discussion list (www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/graves/graves.html).

Grevel Lindop and I continue to work on the volume of papers from the White Goddess conference. In the meantime, you will find in this issue several papers from the conference that were not included in the book. As I am sure you will agree after reading these papers, the reason for their exclusion was not quality, but rather the thematic focus of the book and, alas, space.

The call for letters for the journal has been well received, as has the electronic discussion list. I encourage everyone to actively participate in the on-going discussion via our email-based group: <http://www.mailbase.ac.uk/robert-graves/>. One response from the email discussion is included in the Letters section here because it responds directly to the question on the White Goddess sigil posed in the last issue by Harmut Buecher. I look forward to seeing the debate on the sigil flourish, as it is by no means exhausted.

In the last issue, I reported that a Robert Graves day school at the University of Oxford's School for Continuing Education had been organised for October 30, 1999. That date has been revised and the day school will now take place on October 9. Please note that Robert Davis will not be able to deliver his talk on *The White Goddess* and that Grevel Lindop will take his place. We are also in the process of organising a similar day school that will take place at the University of the Balearic Islands several days later. Please contact me at the Robert Graves Trust, St John's College, Oxford (OX1 3JP) for further information on either of these day schools, or if you would like to organise something similar at your own insti-

tution.

You may have noticed the three new logos on the back cover of this issue. Thanks to the efforts of William Graves, the Adjuntament de Deià, Balear, Conselleria d'Educació, Cultura i Esports, Govern Balear and the Universitat De Les Illes Balears have all pledged generous annual contributions to the production of *Gravesiana*. With the continued support of our other sponsoring institutions, the goal of the journal becoming financially secure has nearly been achieved. However, it remains imperative for the journal's distribution to grow. Those of you with institutional affiliations should try to have your libraries take out subscriptions to the periodical while others could see to it that the journal is indexed in the YWES, MLA and other key research catalogues.

With the growing interest in Graves and the flurry of activity that will doubtless arise if even one of the film projects is completed, the Journal and the Society seem well positioned to grow. I continue to be amazed by the number of visitors to the web pages and how that number has climbed from an average of 10-12 per day to 20-odd per day to the 35-40 per day that we now usually receive. More and more of these visitors are expressing an interest in participating in Gravesian affairs (as well as the usual students who are looking for 'easy' answers to questions like 'What is Graves' poetry about?').

With the confirmation of the plans for the conference to be held at SUNY Buffalo in June 2000 (see page 248), the regularity of our academic meetings seems to have been established. We continue to receive an eclectic mix of papers for the journal that, in their variety, are a tribute to Robert Graves' interests. Our bi-annual meetings guarantee that we have a fresh source of papers as well as new participants and contributors. However, if you do know academics who are working within the period that Graves was most active, please do show them a copy of the Journal or write to me asking for a promotional flyer if you think it will generate an article!

Although I was concerned that future issues might not be as strong in poetry and fiction as the first issue in this volume. I am very pleased to be able to offer you in this number the poetry of

Kathleen Raine, Spike Milligan and Simon Brittan-Ortiz as well as an extract from a superb autobiographical work by Lucia Graves, *A Woman Unknown*. With the introduction of the new feature, "Poets on Poems" (see page 250) in the next issue, I know that we will enjoy the best in poetry and the latest in 'Gravesian' fiction.

Ian Firla
Poznan, June 1999



Cartoon of Robert Graves by Anthony Paul, 1961, entitled "Professor Graves preparing a lecture on men who have debauched the muse"