



Greetings from Philadelphia!

We are just settling into summer here, which means that the first fireflies are appearing and the cicadas are not yet deafening. Our 2023-24 cohort finished up classes last month and have headed out towards their next adventures. We will have a number of returnees next year, and others are going to the following programs:

University of Cincinnati, PhD  
Cornell University, Bridge program  
Tufts University, MA  
University of Maryland, MA  
University of California - Santa Barbara, PhD  
University of North Carolina, post-baccalaureate program

I always enjoy receiving the rush of responses to my request for updates. Thank you to everyone who wrote in! I also took the liberty of reporting on some news from people who didn't write in, since there were a few situations where I saw a familiar name out in public...

Darius Arya '92

Darius has been living in Rome for 26 years. He got his PhD from UT Austin and has been directing the non-profit American Institute for Roman Culture ([romanculture.org](http://romanculture.org)) for over 20 years. (Yes, he pops in to say to Franco and Luisa every now and again!) Nearly 15 years of archaeological work in Rome Ostia Antica and many university programs later, he is now busy with the Institute's free learning platform [ancientromelive.org](http://ancientromelive.org). Please check it out- and if you are in the field, please reach out ([dar@romanculture.org](mailto:dar@romanculture.org)) to collaborate. He's also been filming tv documentaries on the ancient world for almost 20 years. Look out later this year for his new programs on PBS and Nat Geo! Weekly, you can find new Institute videos at [youtube.com/@ancientromelive](https://youtube.com/@ancientromelive) - often with collaborative special access to sites and museums.

Louis Hamilton '92

I'll always be grateful to my professors in the post-bacc program, especially Jim O'Donnell and Ann Matter. The attached photo is taken in Rome of me with students from my honors history course: *Dante: Heaven, Hell, and Florence*. I am the old guy who is reading from *Inferno* XVIII.25-33.



Emma Scioli '95

It's hard (for me) to believe that I am entering my twentieth year at the University of Kansas. I head towards this milestone after a year of leave at Kansas' Hall Center for the Humanities, where I devoted my time to a research project on the related concepts of the "imago" and the "vestigium" in Roman poetry. I will also resume my duties as DGS for our MA program, into which we have welcomed several excellent Penn post-bacc students over the years. The Kansas MA program in Classics is thriving, and I hope that current professors reading this newsletter will continue to encourage their undergrad and post-bacc students to apply to KU as they consider careers in Classics and decide how they wish to shape the future of our field. One highlight of the past year was a reunion dinner with my fellow post-bacc student Maura Keane Heyn (UNC Greensboro) at AIA/SCS in Chicago.

Sarah Bolmarcich '96

Sarah was featured in the New York Times for her search for a house in the Phoenix area:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/09/21/realestate/phoenix-arizona-house-sale.html>

Curtis Dozier '01

I've been on research leave the past academic year working on my book on white nationalism and Greco-Roman antiquity, based on materials I've encountered directing *Pharos* ([pharosclassics.org](http://pharosclassics.org)) for the past seven years. I'm in the final stages of preparing the manuscript, which is a good thing because I need to submit my materials for tenure in January. I'll be returning to teaching at Vassar in the Fall with a course on Classical rhetorical theory and the Presidential campaign. Gotta crawl out of my writing hole and start paying attention again!

Jason Linn '05

I finished my 11<sup>th</sup> year teaching history at Cal Poly. This summer I will stop feeling like a phony ancient historian by finally visiting Athens along with numerous Greek battlefields and islands. As a Byzantine dilettante, I hope to see some medieval sites too. I'm also revising a paper on "Freshwater Logistics of Triremes" and starting a paper titled "Did the Huns reach Thermopylae in 447?". Gardening has become a new hobby.

Suzanne Lye '05

My first book is coming out in August. Here's the [link](#).

Jen Gerrish '06, '07

Things are going well for me down at the College of Charleston - I just finished my ninth year here! I'm still teaching some of everything: in this calendar year I have taught/will be teaching Josephus to our upper-level Greek students, Sallust to our upper-level Latin students, a Roman history survey, a History seminar on the Five Good Emperors, the Classics sophomore seminar, and an introduction to Roman Civ (in which I'm using Silius Italicus' *Punica* as my main textbook - will it be just a medium disaster or a huge one? stay tuned!).

Teaching keeps me pretty busy but I am doing some writing, too. My Aris & Phillips volume of *Galic Wars* Books 1-2 comes out in December, and I'm currently writing a

monograph on Sallust for the De Gruyter *Trends in Classics* series. I just had an article on Josephus accepted by *Arethusa*, as well.

Most importantly, I continue working on my cookie decorating skills - I've been learning for a year now! Anyone who wants to see my efforts can find me on IG @caesarscookies . Practice definitely has not made perfect, but they're *cookies*, so I don't get a lot of complaints.

Rena Lauer '07

This year has been a big one for our family. We welcomed a daughter, Eliana, in September. Now nine months old, she's a delicious curly-haired girl who loves to laugh, army crawl around, and is starting to speak. Big sister Avigail has just graduated from pre-school and is thrilled to be starting kindergarten. We parents are very happy and terribly sleep-deprived. Professionally, I waded into the world of creative writing with the publication of a book chapter that is a lightly fictionalized biography of two historical characters I discovered in the archives in Venice. It is included in a volume called *Portraits of Medieval Europe, 800-1400*, edited by Raffensperger and Dailey.

Gillian Bentley-Richardson '09

I look forward to voting in TWO national elections this year, since I recently became a British citizen. But I'm still a Pennsylvanian at heart. My kids just attended their first baseball game when the Phillies played in London and they had a blast. Classics is also playing a part in their upbringing: I attach a photo of the girls in Greece.



John Valainis '09

I'm still working for the National Park Service in a central planning office, still loving it. I'll note a couple of highlights although one of them was as difficult and distressing as it was rewarding. I got to serve as one of the historians working on the assessment of historical sites related to the lynching of Emmet Till in 1955, in which we recommended certain of them to be suitable as a national park unit. The new national monument was designated almost a year ago (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/07/25/a-proclamation-on-establishment-of-the-emmett-till-and-mamie-till-mobley-national-monument>), and now I've been assigned to the team helping the new park develop its Foundation Document (the core

document that defines a park, its purpose, and what it needs to fulfill its mission of educating the public and protecting its natural and cultural resources).

I've also been assigned, to my great delight, to an international assistance project at Petra, Jordan. I just learned that the National Park Service helped them develop their general management plan in the 1960s. Now, visitation to the site is exploding which is stressing the historic landscape. So a bunch of coworkers and I will be helping the Jordanian site managers develop new strategies to balance visitor enjoyment and resource protection. This will be a multi-year project and hopefully we'll do a site visit later this year!

I guess the last thing I'll mention is a dumb joke that I find absolutely delightful, and I hope you will too. Most of what I do relies on Microsoft products - Word, obviously, but also SharePoint and Teams - to collaborate with people all over the country. Microsoft sucks. It never works right. We all know this. Most of my colleagues suffer in silence but I routinely vocalize what they and I are thinking, at every one of our branch meetings. One of my coworkers studied Classics, too, and made me the attached image. I cannot express to you how delighted I was at this perfect gift! At the end of every branch meeting, apropos of nothing, I post this to our chat: Microsoft delenda est. Because it's true.



As always, I'm happy to talk to any post-bacs who are considering careers outside of academia, especially jobs in the civil service as historians or archeologists.

I hope all is well with you and your family, and that the post-bac program is still going strong. The program was such a huge stepping stone in my career!

Megan (Brodie) Maier '10

I was recently promoted to Deputy Director at my organization, where I spend ever more time supporting the work that helps people from historically disenfranchised communities vote with confidence and without barriers. Recently, I was fortunate to ride along with my wife as she ferried a helicopter through the Northern Rockies back home to Montana—absolutely awesome! In kitty news: we heartbreakingly said goodbye to my sweet Ziegler, with whom I am grateful to have spent almost 17 years; Furby is her adorable, loud, cozy self and enjoying being back home where she can eat the grass, though I think she misses the Vegas heat!



Azeem Gopalani '10

Hope you're well. I don't have anything of note for the newsletter, as I'm just quietly living my life in Glasgow. I've been concentrating on my career and apart from my primary responsibilities as a banker, I'm also involved in advocacy for women in the workplace and for a more socio-economically diverse workforce at my firm. Personally, I've been doing a lot of hiking all over Scotland with friends, and as always, plenty of reading.

Nikki Pareja '10

I was just pulling onto campus for the Consulting Scholar meeting at the museum when your email came through -- what a coincidence!

I'm moving to Maryland in the autumn as Prof of Art History at Salisbury University. I'll be the ancient person on campus and will get to work designing new archaeology courses and opportunities, including the construction of a new outdoor excavation simulator. The last year has also been great for the Aegean Bronze Age Study Initiative (ABASI), as we've funded some stellar student work, as well as the first workshop on relations between the Aegean and Indus in the Bronze Age at Oxford (December 2022), and the resulting volume, which will hit shelves soon. ABASI will also host the Anne P. Chapin Archive, which will be launched online by autumn of this year if all goes well. The second Oxford workshop is this November, so plenty to do to finish organizing that. Although I'm staying stateside this summer for the archive, to finish editing Anne's Festschrift and to square away the move to MD, field season 2025 is already filling up with work at Stelida on Naxos, and several sites on Crete (Sissi, Knossos, Mochlos, Gournia). If any Postbaccs plan to swing through the Aegean to look at some plasters (or if you have interested students), send a message my way. The more the merrier.

Otherwise, life at home is good. My Siberian Husky, Pizza, has been trying valiantly to guard the back garden from bunnies, although she winds up helping them dig their burrows and cuddling them if I'm not looking. Her German Shepherd sister, Brienne, couldn't care less about the rabbits, so long as she has her ball. Last but not least, Kitty, the (toothless) 18 year old is still going! His Ancient Greek is much better than mine at this point. Been doing loads of outreach with the Princeton Learning Cooperative and Infinity Charter School, and the kids at both institutions are a blast. Most days (now that term is ending) involve an early morning hike through the misty Blue Mountains along the Appalachian Trail, some gardening and errands and then writing in the afternoons, and evenings by the garden fire pit or reading in the library. Life really doesn't get any better.

Mali Skotheim '10

This year, I spent the Fall at the CHS in Washington, DC, and then returned to Philadelphia in the Spring to wrap up some writing projects. One thing that has been bringing me joy this Spring is the Master Watershed Steward training program in Philadelphia, which trains PA residents in all topics relating to water and watershed health, in order to prepare them for volunteer opportunities in this area. I apologized during my interview for not having a background in environmental studies, but the program leader immediately jumped in— "But you studied ancient Rome--the Romans loved water management!" It's true! You never know where Classical connections will pop up.

Brady Eskilson '10, '11

Brady did not write in, but I was excited to see that he was awarded one of five Rudolph Masciantonio Latin Teacher Grants to Support DEI Initiatives.

Nicole Freeto '11

My position at [Morristown Beard School in Morristown, NJ](#) is open and if you know of any post-bacc students or alumni who would be interested in a high school teaching position, send them my way! I'm happy to put in a good word for them.



I really valued the experience I had in the post-bacc and it led me to where I am today, both professionally and personally. I hope you are doing well and have a wonderful Memorial Day weekend. We're visiting my parents in the area this weekend and we're planning on taking our son around Philadelphia as one of our last east coast trips before July. We're hoping to include the Penn museum in our day trip--I haven't been back in several years and would love one last walk around campus before we move! I always look forward to seeing the post-bacc newsletter, even if I prefer not to feature in it. Thank you so much for everything you taught me. It's been longer than I realized, but it still feels like it was only a few

years ago. Tempus fugit!

I hope you're doing well. If my math is correct, you're about to celebrate 20 years at UPenn. I still remember our Euripides class fondly. It was my favorite Greek class ever. (JNJ: Thanks, Nicole! That is so so lovely to hear.)

Sara Jones Criswell '11

I started a new position as the Director of Foundation and Government Giving at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, which includes the de Young and Legion of Honor museums. I've especially enjoyed exploring our collections of Greek pottery and working with the Ancient Art department on grants, most recently to sponsor a performance of Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Tauris* in our theater. Dreaming of spring in Philadelphia!

Chris Parmenter '11

Hello! I am starting my third year as an assistant professor of Classics at Ohio State. It's been an exciting year on the publication front, as I had [two articles](#) come out and my first [book](#) is due in August. Otherwise I've been spending a lot of time on the water this summer in New England, where I can be found when not teaching in Columbus. I'm fond of my time Penn and feel lucky that I was able to return as a Wolf Humanities Center postdoc in 2021-22.

Melissa Grasso '13

Hey old classmates, strange to think it's been over ten years since our time together. I sincerely hope you're all thriving.

As for me, I graduated from Vanderbilt and spent four years teaching Latin in Ohio. I moved back home to Boston and worked in an academic library for another four years. Now I work as a researcher at a law firm. I never would have guessed in 2012/3 this is where I'd end up.

If you remember him, I married Michael about a year and a half ago. He waited ten years to propose. We recently bought a place together. It's all very normal here.

I wonder sometimes where your lives took you all. Feel free to text or email or message me anytime, I'd love to hear from you.

Emily Mohr '13

Emily did not write in, so I will step in on her behalf and proudly announce that she won the AIA graduate student paper award!

Becky Vandewalle '13, '14

Thank you for doing the work of keeping everyone connected through this newsletter! It is always lovely to see how everyone is doing, especially where academic circles can be surprisingly small! I have a short update this year:

I am studying for a PhD in Geography at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. I just passed my preliminary exam at the end of May and am hoping to defend during spring 2025. My work involves building tools for running spatial simulations on supercomputers. In particular, my background in Classical Archaeology has helped to inform my work on simulating human behavior in contexts with sparse data and high uncertainty. The flexibility of the program at Penn (that allowed me to take classes in Archaeology and Geographic Information Systems) directly led to me pursuing graduate work in spatial computing. I'm so glad to have had the opportunity to be part of the Post-Bac!

Thomas Motter '14

Hope all is well with you! After finishing my PhD last year, I started lecturing at California State University, Long Beach. I've been teaching an introductory course on myths about language, and a course on language acquisition. I also presented a paper at the Linguistic Society of America and have been working (when I could find the time around teaching and other work stuff) to write it up into an article for publication. Indeed, since the semester ended, I've taken advantage of the time to get cranking on the research I wasn't (and all too soon again won't be) able to do during the year!

Anna Simas '14

I'm sorry for the delay on this! It has been a busy year at work and at home. I am still in my role in HR at Slalom, learning a lot, and enjoying the fact that every day is different. We have also undertaken some ambitious home improvement projects, which I hope to have completed by this time next year! Otherwise things have been fairly low-key which I'm not complaining about!

Sending best wishes to you, the faculty, and the class of 2014!

Isabella Reinhardt '14, '15 (and Ryan Pilipow '14)

I'm so happy to hear it's time for the latest installment of the post-bac newsletter! I love reading it each year, and this year I actually have some news to contribute.

Ryan and I have been living in Nashville, TN for the last three years while I've been working as a lecturer at Vanderbilt. We are leaving Nashville this summer, however, to move to Austin, TX where I'm starting as Assistant Professor at the new University of Austin (UATX). Our daughter Ursula is a big, chatty 3-year old now (I've attached a picture) and we're expecting a second daughter, Silvia, in early June! I realized the other day that it had been ten years since Ryan and I met in your post-bac Greek class—there's so much that I'm thankful for that started with the post-bac program, not least our growing family. Wishing you all the best!



Josh Renfro '15

It's been a while. I am glad to hear you are well and I want to thank you for keeping up this newsletter. I hope to defend a dissertation later this summer in the Ancient Philosophy Program at UT Austin. If I am successful, I have a non-tenure track job starting in the Fall at Purdue. Let people know that they can contact me at [joshuasrenfro@gmail.com](mailto:joshuasrenfro@gmail.com). My old institutional address is changing and I have not yet received my new one.

Michael Vazquez '15

I had the great fortune of collaborating with fellow Penn post-bac, Dr. Kelly McArdle ('16), as part of an [SCS-funded, community-facing program](#) I co-organized at UNC-CH (this year's production centered on Euripides' Alcestis). We had the chance to discuss ancient tragedy and the play's philosophical themes with Kelly's brilliant students at Excelsior Classical Academy.

Joe Watkins '15

Still working towards the PhD at Boston University. Defended my prospectus last October and have been writing more or less diligently since. We bought a house this past spring, which accounted for some of the less diligent time--but I'm hoping to make up for it this summer



before I go to Rome to teach high schoolers again. I've been thinking a lot about my post-bac year as I work on my diss, especially regarding Prof. Damon's classes while I work on my Caesar chapter.

Matt Budisin '16

I'm teaching Latin to sixth and ninth graders in Brooklyn, NY, while starting to prepare materials for applying to philosophy PhD programs in the Fall. Kindest regards to you and yours, and all the very best wishes to the current post-bac students.

Jeff Nolte '17

This fall I'll be starting my fourth year of teaching two sections of intermediate Latin as well as beginning and intermediate Ancient Greek at Glendale Preparatory Academy in Phoenix, AZ. By the end of their second year of Greek our seniors will have read parts of the *Iliad* and the Gospel of John, and all of Lysias' "On the Murder of Eratosthenes." It's a lot of fun. I'll also be getting back to my physics roots by taking on an elective second-year physics class offered to the seniors. I'm excited! Hope you are doing well!

Matthew Rudin '21

I'm happy to give you an update of what my family has going on. I decided I will attend law school at Temple beginning this fall. Thanks again for your letter of recommendation. I was going to let you know soon in a separate context, but I only just decided I would accept my admission this week after thinking about it for many months. I'm excited to return to school.

My wife Cait and I still live in Manayunk-Roxborough with our two Cavalier King Charles Spaniels Grover and Brutus, and our two sons Ernest (2) and Charles (6 months).

Sheldon Hallock '21, '22

After graduating from UPenn's post-bacc program in 2022, I have spent the past two years at UMass Boston's Latin and Classical Humanities Master's program (Greek/Latin track). Having just graduated with my degree, I am currently preparing to move to Providence to begin at Brown's Classics PhD program in Fall 2024! I'm really excited to be progressing in my goal of having a doctorate, and I am certain that the post-bacc program put me in a fantastic position to function excellently at the master level of ancient Greek and Latin comprehension (those tough nuts really worked). I will continue to laud UPenn's post-bacc program, and look forward to my burgeoning future in this community of classicists!

Jordan Mitchell '21, '22

Academically, I'm just securing the last loose paper of my first (non-post-bac) year at Penn, while taking "German for Reading Knowledge." I've also begun--and imagine I shall persist in--toying with Doric comedy and mime. Extra-academically, the majority of my time is devoted to Oscar, seen here lording his watermelon over our long-suffering cat, Mort. With all that's going on, I can recall little of the past 9-10 months, to be honest, but think they've been pretty lovely? Looking forward to teaching come fall.



Mark Russell '21, '22

Thanks for reaching out - it's been a very busy few months. I just finished my Classics Masters at Villanova, and managed to get a Latin teaching job! Last week I was offered a position at the Wyndcroft School in Pottstown, teaching grades 5-8. I'll also be starting state certification courses in the fall at Wilson College (online).



Did I mention we had a baby?? Amy was born February 22nd, and Bruce just turned 4 years old (he was born the summer I was accepted into the postbacc). Time really flies.



Kristóf Szabó '22

I hope this email finds you well. To give an update on my progress, I have finished my master degree at Rutgers University, and I was accepted to a PhD fellowship in the classics program at the University of Indiana at Bloomington. I completed a masters thesis titled *Regalianus, Dryantilla, and the Carnuntum Mint*, which is an analysis of the coins produced by that usurper in the 3rd century. Since I applied to a lot of British schools for a PhD, it was a requirement to have a proposal ready, so it afforded me the opportunity to get started early on that as well. I want to study the political administration of the province of Pannonia in late antiquity, from the 4th to 6th centuries, and its transformation from a Roman province into a "lost territory" after the Avar siege of Sirmium. Because the Pannonian border is mainly situated in the modern country of Hungary, I'm also making efforts to learn the language at Indiana; they offer a lot of courses to learn Hungarian and have a lot of different routes to study abroad. On a personal note, this is a particularly good development for me because I have a lot of family that

are currently living there; my parents even have an apartment they inherited from my grandparents in Győr. I'm also taking a French reading intensive course over the summer (the same program I learned German from last year).

Besides the update, I would also like to take the time to extend my immense gratitude towards the Post-Bacc program at UPenn. The program prepared me really well for this degree, and, during masters exams in particular, it was critical for my ability to pass. It provided a substantial bridge between my undergraduate and graduate studies.

Thank you for the opportunity to give an update. It's great to hear from you!

Jingyi (Jean) Yang '22

So great to hear from you! It was a shame that I missed the deadline for the newsletter last year, but I won't ever again. Seeing life updates from all the wonderful people one knows means everything.

Life has been extraordinary in Austin. It's a *τιμή* to be part of a lively community of philosophers, classicists, and musicians, with so many reading groups, seminars and concerts to pass time with. I'm about to enter the dreadful prospectus stage of the program in the coming academic year, but things have gone quite smoothly. Last summer I was lucky to have been awarded departmental research funds to visit Greece (Patras and Athens) for the first time -- a classicist's dream that came true. The greatest news of this year is that my boyfriend Shengsong has completed his PhD in Chemistry from Penn, and will start a Postdoc at UChicago this summer. It's easy to get emotional knowing that we'll both bid farewell to the beautiful Penn campus, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Schuylkill River, and so many lovely memories here in the past six years.



Today is our first chinchilla kid Diamond's (short for 'Democritus') second 'gotcha day'. We're making a hay cake and celebrating with him, long with his younger brother Tutu (short for 'Plato'). Attached is a picture of Shengsong holding Diamond and me holding Tutu. They'll be moving with us to Chicago shortly, so exciting travels ahead for the two Philly natives, too!

Kate Cota '22, '23

It's been a year since I finished my classes at UPenn, and I'm happy to say that it's been a good one! I spent this past summer in Bulgaria as part of the Balkan Heritage Field School at Pistiros and had an amazing time. During this school year, I took a gap year as an elementary school librarian while applying for graduate school. I had an amazing time with my new job, but I am more than excited to jump back into the classical and academic world. This next year, I will be attending Indiana University at Bloomington to study Classical Archaeology and Reception.

Silja Hilton '23

Salvete omnes, and greetings from Tulane University, New Orleans!

I can't believe it has already been a year since I attended the post-bac program at Penn. I am still so grateful for the opportunity I was given through the Elsie Phare Fellowship 2022-23, which not only strengthened my Classical Greek and Latin skills, but also helped prepare me for further graduate studies.

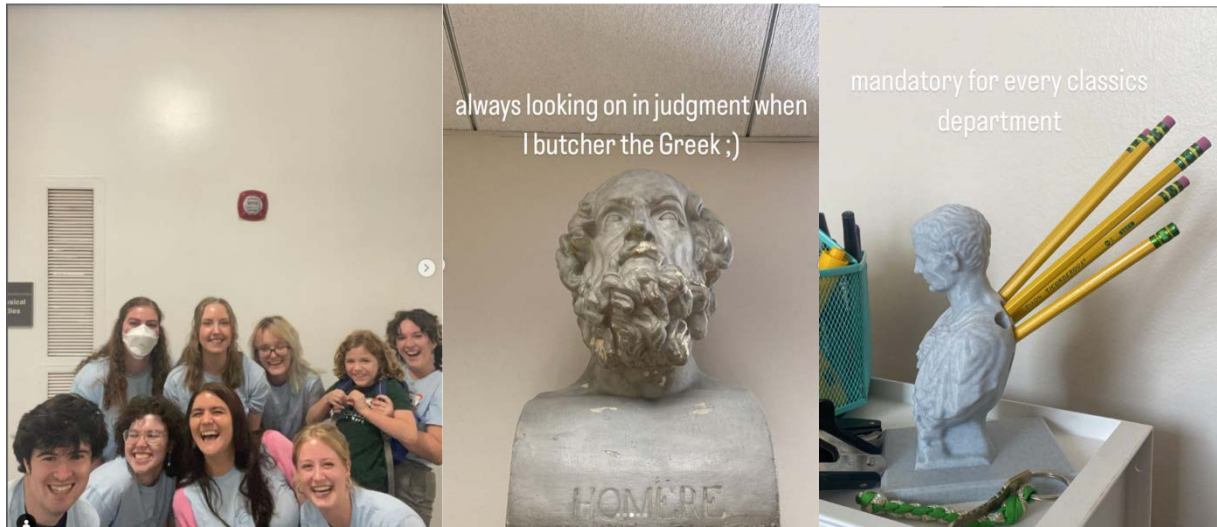


Left to right: Me on the left with the girls in my MA program and a Mardi Gras parade guy! – An amazing Zulu parade float on Mardi Gras day – My cat!

While I am missing Penn, my post-bacc cohort, and my friends in PA, I am having an incredible time at Tulane and loving the diverse and lively culture of NOLA--food, music, people, and all. This year I had my first Mardi Gras experience (it is a carnival season more popular than Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter combined!), got my first King Cake baby in a King Cake (almost broke my tooth), took the iconic streetcar, explored the French quarter, Bourbon street, Frenchmen street (they have the BEST block parties), and ate at Cafe Du Monde, where I had my first beignets. I even adopted a little rescue cat--Kaipo Patroclus. He loves to go on walks, eat, climb trees, cuddle, and sleep.

Having completed my first year as a Master's student in Classical Studies, some of my favorite graduate seminars so far have been "Bad Emperors," "Athens and Persia," "Plutarch," and "Slavery in Antiquity." My favorite class I TA'd for was "Mythology." Some papers I wrote were, "I, Claudius Reimagined: The Unlikely Emperor Who Rose to Power and Maintained It," "That Empires Fall: Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and the Quest for Political Stability," and "Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen: On Love and Fortune*." Currently I am conducting summer research for my MA thesis, which focuses on intergenerational politics in Plutarch's *An seni, Praecepta*, and also in his *Lives*. In addition, I am working on a project for Tulane's Mellon Graduate Program in Community-engaged Scholarship, which resonates with both my personal and scholarly interests (for instance, Classics and social justice) while mainly grounded in sustained collaboration with a community partner. The goal is to try and bridge the gap between Classics and Tulane's wider community, but mainly to lift the voices of New Orleans' underrepresented through storytelling.

Other than that, I will soon be applying to PhD programs and keep thinking to myself how lucky I was to have sat in on ‘all those Wednesday meetings’ while at Penn ha!



Left to right: Some of Tulane’s Classics undergraduates and graduate students – Tulane’s graduate seminar room has a bust of Homer that plagues every student of Ancient Greek ;) – Just a mandatory Classics department office knickknack

Sawyer Jones ’23

I’ve just finished my first year in the University of Arizona’s MA program in Classical Archaeology. I’m currently in Sicily digging at Segesta through the Arizona Sicily Project and preparing for my comprehensive exams in the fall. Barring any unexpected developments, I look forward to continuing my education in archaeology after finishing my MA next year!

I’ve attached a photo of me in situ at Segesta.



Kyle Machado ’23

I’m doing well after my first year at FSU. I’m currently in Tuscany working with Andrea De Giorgi at an excavation of an Etruscan settlement at Montereggi. It’s the first season of excavations here in over twenty years, so we’re all pretty excited to see how things go. Besides that, I worked as a TA this past year and I’m assigned to be an instructor of record in the fall for a Greek Debates class, which is a class at FSU that covers Greek history, culture, and rhetorical techniques.

Jack Mitchell '23

Over the last year, I've been living in Oregon in order to care for my grandmother and grandfather. (My grandfather passed this last April but no reason to include that really). I got engaged in March to my wonderfully creative fiancé who is in the process of publishing his first novel and pursuing a degree in Fish & Wildlife Science. Currently, we are fostering a litter of nine puppies and their mother while we prepare to move to Eugene in order for me to attend the University of Oregon to pursue my Master's in Classics. I've also been brought on as a Graduate Employee and will be assisting courses in Greek & Roman Mythology as well as Greek & Roman Life and Culture. My dog, Galavant, is excited about getting a new sibling when we adopt one of our fosters and has been getting up to all kinds of adventures that include skunks, rivers, and long snowy hikes.



(The landscape picture is the view headed towards my grandmother's house)



Indiana Podbere '23

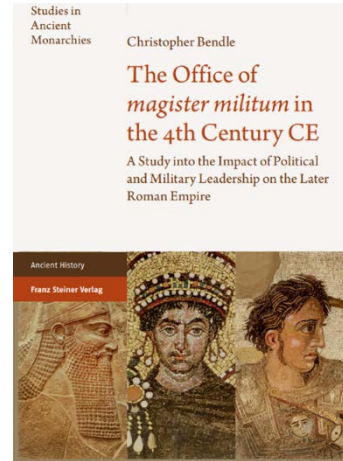
I hope you are doing well! I miss my time at Penn and in Philly!

A quick update is that I am working at Salesforce in sales programs in San Francisco! I am planning on going to Rome and Pompeii this summer if you have any tips and recommendations!

Chris Bendle '23, '24

I'd be happy for you to include that I am starting a PhD at the University of Cincinnati in the Fall! I don't have any photos or anything but hopefully I will soon. My book has also recently been published, not sure if that is something I can include? I've attached some information and the cover here:

<https://www.steiner-verlag.de/The-Office-of-Magister-Militum-in-the-4th-Century-CE/9783515136143>



News from the department:

Ralph Rosen retired this spring, following Cynthia Damon into emeritus status. There are some photos of the festivities [here](#).

You are probably all aware of Emily Wilson's many public-facing appearances. (A majority of post-baccalaureate applicants state that they want to work with her and/or Bridget Murnaghan.) I especially enjoyed her conversation with Margaret Atwood, held in Irvine Auditorium on Penn's campus. Emily will take on the mantle of Department Chair starting July 1.



News from the program:

Bridget Murnaghan continued her role as Faculty Co-Director this year, and the two of us along with Tom Tartaron and Jeremy McInerney made up our faculty advising group for the program. Each of us was the principal advisor to a portion of this year's students and shepherded them through the process of graduate school applications.

Amelia Bensch-Schaus taught the Latin post-baccalaureate course in the fall, focusing on a number of prose selections from Cicero, Sallust, and Tacitus. The Greek post-baccalaureate course was tiny – only two students – which meant that we got to really dive deep into the Homeric and Callimachean hymns. Scheherazade Khan was my T.A. for that course, and she helped spark some interesting discussions! My spring Latin course read didactic poetry with me twice a week, and the students met on Fridays with Dan Mackey (PB '16, '17) to do sight

readings. And the Greek course, taught by Amelia Bensch-Schaus with Odysseas Androutopoulos serving as T.A., read some Herodotus, Hippocrates, and Euripides.

Our Wednesday lunchtime meetings filled our fall semester, initiating our cohort into the mysteries of graduate study. Bridget and I held two meetings in which we discussed all the components of a graduate school applications – personal statement, recommendation letters, writing sample, and sometimes GREs – and later in the semester we held a question-and-answer session to help with any issues that had cropped up. A trip to the library to receive an introduction to Penn’s library and research materials followed, facilitated by Rebecca Stuhr, the classical studies librarian. Tom Tartaron and Jeremy McInerney each ran one session to talk about archaeology and ancient history, respectively. Current graduate students Danielle Perry (PB ’14), Zach Elliott, and Phoebe Thompson talked about how their educational pathways included M.A. programs. In the early spring, once most applications had been submitted, we addressed the possible outcomes of those applications, including interviews, campus visits, waitlists, and offers of admission. Our final meeting focused on the transition to grad school, and included the wise words of current grad students Phoebe Thompson, Jordan Mitchell (PB ’21, ’22), and Sheridan Marsh.

Last spring, a crew from LPS followed us around, did some photo shoots, and interviewed some (at the time) current students and one alumnus (Jeremy Steinberg ’19) for a promotional video. You can see the finished project [here](#).

Our [Masciantonio Fellowship and Phare Fellowship](#) holders thrived in our program. Next year Natalie Dean will start the master’s program at the University of Delaware, and Kevin Treadway will study at Cornell University in their Bridge Program. We were thrilled to be able to offer next year’s fellowships to two students who will return for their second year at Penn, Stephanie Sherrett and Emilie Prince.

My news...

My family has continued to be busy and very spread out. Tim, after graduating from Carleton College last spring, travelled through Europe with his girlfriend and spent some time [WWOOFing](#) at a small vineyard near Bologna. They are now settled in Minneapolis, where Tim is working at a coffee shop and perfecting his latte art. Alex just finished his first year of a Ph.D. program in Operations Management at the Kellogg School at Northwestern University. This summer he will start research on a topic to be decided soon, and which I may or may not understand, and which may or may not involve him spending time in Paris (!). My husband Eric has taken on the position of Dean of Academic Success at Swarthmore College, which entails more meetings and less grading than his former job as an astronomy professor there.

Spring was an extremely hard semester for me. One of my closest friends was in the end stage of her cancer battle and passed away, two months after we had to say goodbye Iris, our 20-year-old cat (who had her own health struggles). Then right after finishing finals, we moved my 94-year-old father to a senior living apartment in Berkeley, and my siblings and I are in the process





of emptying out the house where he has lived for 60 years, and preparing it for sale – though we all live on the East Coast, and he (and the house) are in California.



It hasn't been all bad: Eric and I had a lovely vacation in Florence and Rome, where I got to see some of my favorite works by Caravaggio and Bernini. Alex and Tim came home for the funeral, and we were able to have a wonderful weekend together in April. After the end of classes, Eric and I spent a weekend in Minneapolis with Tim and Iris (his girlfriend, not our cat). And my father is settling in very happily in his new apartment.

Taking the fall semester off will, I hope, give me time to restore my work-life balance, which has gone out of kilter in the last year. Johanna Kaiser will be Director during Fall 2024, and Jeremy McInerney will take over as Faculty Co-Director. I have a summer of soccer to look forward to (Viva España!), a number of knitting and embroidery projects planned, and hopefully some visits with my kids and other family members, and European travel during the shoulder season, when I wouldn't normally be able to leave town. (Greece, Slovenia, and Croatia are possible destinations.)

Thank you again to everyone who helped keep our program moving forward this year, and to all you alumni, near and far!

Best,  
Julie