



Happy summer 2022!

While it is too soon to say that the pandemic is over, we were able to return to a modicum of normalcy during this past academic year here at Penn. Our 2021-22 cohort was physically present in the classroom, remaining masked all year although the university rules weren't quite as strict by the end of the year.

Our first two [Masciantonio Fellowship](#) and [Phare Fellowship](#) recipients were part of the cohort, and we will welcome our next two recipients in Fall 2022.

We were thrilled that every one of this year's post-baccalaureate students who applied to graduate school received at least one acceptance. Next year, our students will be attending the following programs:

Rutgers University, MA ancient history  
Texas Tech University, MA classics  
University of Colorado, MA classics  
University of Massachusetts at Amherst, MA classics  
University of Texas at Austin, PhD philosophy  
University of Washington, PhD classics  
Villanova University, MA classics

When I put out the call for updates, emails poured in from around the world! Well, in truth, the majority of them arrived after I send the second reminder message. A special shout-out to Anna Simas for writing back \*the day after her wedding\* - okay, people, if she can do that, no one can make any excuses about being too busy to write! I didn't manage to respond individually to people, but to everyone who said that they might be in Philly and would like to catch up, please do let me know so we can get coffee and chat.

Curtis Dozier 2001

Not too much news to report, still teaching in Greek and Roman Studies at Vassar College where I've been since 2008. Was able to host Khameleon's "Uprooting Medea" tour this Spring (<https://www.khameleonproductions.org/>) which was a great experience for me and for our students. Heading into Summer I'm still working on my book on White Nationalism and Greco-Roman Antiquity and a few other articles on related topics. As a result of that work [pharosclassics.org](http://pharosclassics.org), where I document white nationalist appropriations of antiquity, hasn't been getting as much love from me but continues to see decent site traffic and my team and I have some cool things in the works too so I hope you'll take a look and consider subscribing to our newsletter (link in any article) or following us on social media @pharosclassics. The people who I've met through working on that site are an amazing group trying to make Classics better. It's an exciting time to be involved in this field.

### Jason Linn 2005

Cal Poly renewed my three-year contract. I'm teaching World History to 1000, World History to 1789, Western Civilization to the Renaissance, and The World at War. I'm currently researching trireme freshwater logistics. This summer I hope to go on a reading and TV-show-watching binge devoted to everything Viking.

### Mary Frances Bannard 2007

I'm Class of '07, and am currently at Groton School, in Groton, MA. There, I teach Latin 1 and Latin 3 in the Classics Department, coach cross country, and run a ninth grade girls dorm. A rising senior has asked me to advise her tutorial next year on women Latinists, so I'm excited to start preparing for that over the summer! I live on campus with my husband, also a Classicist, and our 3 daughters (ages 11, 8, and almost 4). Hope all is well in Philadelphia!

### Alice Crane 2007

Just wanted to say hello! Finishing up transplant fellowship in Baltimore MD and moving to Kansas City Missouri for transplant faculty positions and excited to be on my own soon! Hope all is well with you? One of my best friends (anesthesia resident) here coincidentally majored in Classics at Bryn Mawr at the same time I was at Penn - we both took Dr Rosen's ancient medicine class 😊 I still like to think we bring more compassion, a different perspective, and a hell of lot bigger vocabulary than our non-classically trained physician colleagues 😊 but that's between you and me! I would love to hear how you are doing. I also saw Jeremy and Pamela several months ago it was really nice to not be that far away for a little while to good friends!

### Rena Lauer 2007

Hi all! Hope everyone is starting to feel some semblance of a return to normalcy. I'm still in Corvallis, at Oregon State University, where I'm now an associate professor (an anticlimactic moment that happened during the height of Covid). This year, I've launched a collaborative website that aims to collect all wills written for Jewish women until about 1600 – you can see it at [www.jewishwomenswills.org](http://www.jewishwomenswills.org). I'm also working on a project about freed slaves in the late medieval Mediterranean. Check out a new piece about that in *Medieval People* 36, hot off the presses. Our daughter is now 3.5 and loves dresses, mermaids, fairies, and all things sparkly. (How did that happen?!) Feel free to be in touch about professional things or just to say hello at [Rena.Lauer@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Rena.Lauer@oregonstate.edu).

### Sarah Murray 2007

Greetings from glamorous Porto Rafti, Greece, where, along with my team, I am wrapping up the second week of an archaeological survey I direct here (the [Bays of East Attica Regional Survey Project](#)). This year is the third of three planned field seasons; so far we have discovered lots of evidence for Neolithic to Late Roman human activity in coastal Attica. Especially exciting for me have been abundant and often highly idiosyncratic finds from the Mycenaean postpalatial period, including imported objects from the Eastern Mediterranean. While not getting my thrills from picking up small pieces of old pottery from dirt, I continue to work as an Assistant Professor of Classics at the University of Toronto, where I'm up for tenure this coming academic year. My second book, about the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age origins of athletic nudity in Greece, should drop from CUP sometime this month.

### Lakshmi Ramgopal 2007

I've been working away at my first monograph on minority Roman citizen populations in non-Roman provincial communities. A review article on the study of mobility in the Roman world will be out in the *Journal of Roman Studies* this fall and an edited volume with Neville Morley (Exeter) is also in the works. Pandemic permitting, next year will bring me to North Africa and Eastern Europe for research travel and adventures.

### Pamela Zinn 2007

I have just finished my 5th year as Assistant Professor of Classics on the tenure track at Texas Tech University. Thanks to a Loeb Classical Library Foundation Fellowship, I spent this academic year on sabbatical in Philadelphia, working on my book *Lucretius On Animals*.

### Allison Fandl 2008

During the first three months of 2022, I was part of a team that worked practically round-the-clock to get 5 historic bills passed into law in Virginia to provide enforceable protections for thousands of dogs warehoused and abused at a breeding facility that sells them for experimentation. It was remarkable that the bills received unanimous bipartisan support, and we celebrated when the new governor [signed](#) them... and now, less than 2 months later, the US Attorney's office led a raid at the facility, seized 145 dogs who were in imminent danger, and filed a federal complaint the following day. The court almost immediately granted a temporary [injunction](#) to prohibit the facility from breeding or selling any dogs. This is historic and sets precedent that will ripple through the industry, holding companies accountable for their actions (especially when they repeatedly violate federal regulations). I had the pleasure of meeting some dogs who'd been "released" from the facility a few months ago, who were adopted through a local private shelter. It was amazing that they were still friendly and wanted affection from humans despite the unrelenting suffering they'd experienced every single day of their lives until they were released. There is something utterly humbling to see them go from being afraid of grass to realizing that they like grass and that they can use their little legs to run and follow their little hound noses around the yard for the first time ever. (Those particular dogs were adopted within two days of being publicly available.)

### Matthew Loar 2008

Hard to believe it's been 15 years since I entered the post-bac program! That feels like a lifetime ago...

I write to you from a gorgeous hotel overlooking the water in Taormina, Sicily. I've just finished co-leading 20 Washington and Lee students around Rome and the Bay of Naples for the last three weeks as part of a study abroad program for the W&L Classics department, and tomorrow I welcome 20 W&L alumni to Sicily as part of a weeklong "Flavors of Sicily" tour through the university's Office of Lifelong Learning. Who says Classics doesn't pay?

Other exciting news: within the span of 24 hours last weekend, my wife received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor of English at W&L, and I accepted an offer for a new job, as Director of the Beinecke Scholarship Program (effective July 1, 2022 -- though the announcement likely won't be made until June 15, so mum's the word until then!). The new role is only part-time, though it does mean I get to travel around to 20 different colleges and universities every fall to visit the newest batch of Beinecke Scholars; perhaps I'll be coming to a neighborhood near you! Since the job is part-time, I will continue full-time with my work at W&L as Director of

Fellowships, working with students on applications for nationally competitive fellowships such as Rhodes, Marshall, and Fulbright.

When I left my tenure-track job at Nebraska three years ago, I was worried that I would miss it, even though giving it up meant finally being able to live together with my wife in the same house. I'm happy to say that I have zero regrets, and in fact I feel like something of an evangelist for this sort of "alt-ac" work. If you have any students—post-bacs or grad students—who might be interested in this kind of non-faculty work in higher education, please don't hesitate to send them my way.

#### Travis Wieland 2008

Always great to hear from you. I'm just wrapping up my global emergency medicine fellowship here at UW-Madison. It has been a productive year! I have been able to take trips to Nairobi, Kenya and Kigali, Rwanda to teach a WHO course on emergency care, and will be returning to Nairobi in August to teach the course again as well as to train more Kenyans to teach the material around the country. Our team will be publishing the didactic research that has come out of our work so that we all can continue to improve emergency care education around the globe. I've also been completing a capstone program in global health through UW, so it has been great to learn more about global public health. After graduation, I'll be moving to Minnesota to work for a large physician group based in Minneapolis-St. Paul, so gearing up for some (very) cold winters! It sounds like things are going well in the post-bac program. I'll likely be in Philadelphia within the next several months, and will definitely let you know when I'm in town. Thanks, and it's always great to see what everyone is up to!

#### John Valainis 2009

I'm still working as a historian in a central planning office for the National Park Service. It's been great - lots of new projects this year, including evaluating a few places that might become new park units for their associations with civil rights history. It's been energizing to hear the direction that our current Secretary of the Interior and NPS Director are taking us, with a renewed focus on climate science and tribal relations. The NPS has an amazing in-house climate science team. I got a chance to participate in a pilot training program with them and a few parks in New Mexico, experimenting with protocols that better evaluate the impacts of climate change on sensitive cultural resources like earthen architecture (e.g. at Chaco Culture National Historical Park). It's pretty grim at some of our parks. I'm working on a planning project for the Exit Glacier area at Kenai Fjords National Park in Alaska - the only road in the park was built so that people could see a glacier up close, but it has shrunk so much in just a couple generations that now we're trying to figure out what visitors can do other than "experience the glacier." But on the positive side we're trying to do what we can to get the science out there and manage for change.

I hope all is well with you and your family, and of course with the post-bac program! I'm still in touch with a couple of my post-bac cohort-mates and I always love hearing how everyone is doing!

#### Jonathan Weiland 2009

This is my first time writing into the newsletter since my time at Penn. I have been very fortunate in the past 13 years. I received a MA in Classics from the University of Arizona, where I focused on bioarchaeology and geographic information science (GIS). Then moved on to Stanford for my PhD in the classics department there – also with a focus on archaeology. Shortly after I finished my PhD, I took a job working for the DPAA, the Defense POW-MIA Account Agency in Hawaii. I now work as an archaeologist who searches aircraft crash sites and battlefield sites for missing American

Service members. So far, I've mostly worked in Southeast Asia, because they are among the few countries that permitted international travel in the past few years. The work is important to me, and it isn't all that different from what I did for my PhD and Master because I focused on the excavation of human remains from archaeological contexts and digital mapping methods throughout my time in graduate school. I hope everyone is doing well! I miss the PENN Museum and the beautiful PENN Campus.

#### Margot Wert 2009

Where to start? Since the last time I sent in an update, life has been an absolute whirlwind. My daughter Luna was diagnosed with stage 4 neuroblastoma on September 17, 2020, which led us to leave our comfortable lives in Shanghai behind to relocate to the Philadelphia area to receive care at CHoP. To make an incredibly long story short, Luna has been cancer-free since February, 2021, and will be entering what we hope will be the last phase of her treatment, a clinical trial at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, this June. Assuming all goes well, she will start preschool in the fall at West Hill in Bryn Mawr. Now that she is past the most difficult parts of treatment, she is settling into a routine that involves lots of plums, botanical gardens, *Hey Duggee*, and a fixation on princesses and things of that nature. Anyone who wants to hear the story of how all this transpired can go to [www.caringbridge.com/lunawert](https://www.caringbridge.com/lunawert) where my mother (and occasionally I) have been telling her story. The first few about our relocation are highly recommended for **drama**.

With all of that, our little family has landed back on the Main Line and back at Penn, where I am working as the Manager for Education and Compliance at the Gene Therapy Program and will be starting to work toward an MSEd in Higher Education starting this fall. I wish that the circumstances were different, but it feels good to be back, even as we miss our friends and family in Shanghai, particularly during the last few months of lockdown.

And, in case you are wondering "Who the heck is Margot Wert?" I've also come out as trans over the course of the past year or so, which has been just about every emotion rolled into one. I am grateful to have communities of support among family, friends, and co-workers.

Although I love how full our lives have been, I hope that my next missive contains a lot less news and a lot more muddling through!

#### Yukai Li 2010

I am still working at Carleton University in Ottawa, up in Canada. This was my fifth year here, though the first in the role of assistant professor, so I'm happily no longer sweating on contract renewals every year. The book I'd been working on since forever finally appeared in February (*Future Fame in the Iliad*), and I have a couple of articles (on pastoral and on the *Odyssey* and cinema) in the pipeline. Other than that, there's not much to report. I would love to hear from any post-baccers visiting or passing through Ottawa!

#### Megan Maier 2010

I'm still enjoying life in beautiful Montana and continue to work for a national nonpartisan nonprofit organization focused on the still prominent issues of voting and election administration in the U.S. I enjoy working in coalition with voting rights and disability rights groups to strengthen democracy and ensure all votes are safely and securely counted as cast. I also connect with government officials around the country in an effort to help advocates, researchers, the media, and the public understand the nuts and bolts of election administration.

### Alex Petkas 2010

Look up “Cost of Glory” on any podcast platform, or you can find links and description at [ancientlifecoach.com](http://ancientlifecoach.com). I mention UPenn in my bio - Good times!

### Mali Skotheim 2010

I just wrapped up my second year teaching at Ashoka. In the second half of the Spring semester, we returned to in-person classes for the first time since the beginning of COVID, so I spent some time in India for that, and finally got to see some sights in Delhi! Something I particularly enjoyed at Ashoka this year was leading a Latin reading group, which culminated with the students reading a curse tablet. This coming year, I am staying in Philadelphia while on sabbatical, and working on finishing my book manuscript, as well as some new research projects. Do reach out if you are in the area, I would love to reconnect with postbac alums.

### Emily Beugelmans Cook 2011

I’m now in my third year at Lattice, an HR technology startup based in San Francisco. I was recently promoted into a program manager role for product education, which means I’m responsible for helping roughly 200 members of our Sales and Customer Experience teams learn the ins and outs of our software. As always, I’m happy to connect with fellow alumni who are interested in exploring careers in tech and beyond!

### Sara Jones 2011

I am getting married in September in San Francisco to my partner of ten years, Blake! I am also continuing my work as a grant writer at the California Academy of Sciences, an aquarium/museum/research center based in SF’s Golden Gate Park. Sending lots of love to all the Penn post-bacc alums!

### Allyson King 2011

I was promoted to senior managing editor in scholarly publishing at Allen Press at the end of last year. I manage five journals and help with onboarding of new titles. Our latest project is a start-up journal from the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. Since they foresee having many visually impaired authors and readers, we’ve been working with them to find the best ways to make a fully ADA accessible journal from start to finish.

### Chris Parmenter 2011

I’m starting a new job as Assistant Professor of Classics at the Ohio State University in August. Spent the previous year as a postdoc at Penn’s Wolf Humanities center working on my monograph. Hope you’re well!

### Bailey Benson 2012

I’m currently in Greece - as a visiting associate member at the ASCSA - doing research for my dissertation, which focuses on reexamining the portraits of Rome’s third-century emperors. I head to Rome in July on a research grant from the Lemmermann Foundation to continue with dissertation research at local museums. This past fall, I had a fellowship from my university to visit museums in Denmark, Germany, Italy, and France. And later this upcoming fall, I’m planning another series of research trips to the UK, Norway, Egypt, and Turkey.

I'm also doing some work with the Tufts University Art Galleries, researching their collection of ancient art objects. Also, this past December the new galleries of classical art at the MFA, Boston opened to the public. I worked on a few objects in the new Byzantine art and early Greek art galleries, but my biggest project was working on the Roman portrait gallery during my tenure as the Stavros Niarchos Fellow in 2021 (it was supposed to be for 2020-2021 but the pandemic messed with the scheduling).

On a more personal note, I adopted a puppy September 2020 (so, not so much a puppy anymore) and her name is Chloe.pawtra, Chloe for short.



### Kelsey Le Clair 2012

It's great to hear from you! I keep meaning to write a blurb and then time slips away from me, so I'm making time this year. I hope all is well!

These past few years have certainly been a whirlwind! I still feel like it is 2019 and think it will take a while to re-calibrate. I am finally back at work in an office, although I am one of those folks who miss working from home. One of my favorite projects over lockdown was transcribing travel journals digitized by Penn Libraries on [From the Page](#). My favorite journal was written [by a woman traveling through Italy and Egypt in the late-1800s](#), which included many references relevant to our studies of the classical world!

The last time I wrote I was working at Penn Libraries as an administrative assistant to the director. Since then, I've worked several jobs in the Penn Library system and finally settled into a library assistant position at our storage library in New Jersey called [LIBRA](#), short for the Library Research Annex. It is a cool place to be! I work with a lot of old material and many classical-related texts have crossed my desk. There isn't much time for translating, but my language background helps me work on bibliographic records for foreign texts. I mostly perform intake on material being shipped to storage from the main campus, making it shelf-ready and accessible through our online catalog. I actually started studying for my Master of Information degree with a Library Science track this year at Rutgers University and look forward to completing my MI in 2024! In my down time I am still painting for fun and am enjoying horseback riding. I even bought my first horse last year!

### Noah Segal 2012

Hope all is well at Penn! I had a great year teaching at Bard College and in the Bard Prison Initiative. I'm currently in the process of moving to Minneapolis to take a 2-year Postdoc in the Dept. of Classical and Near Eastern Religions and Cultures at UMN, Twin Cities starting this coming Fall.

Kevin Lee 2013, 2014

Ancient urbanism and urbanization, with a special focus on indigenous southern Italy, remain my central research interests. After a deferral due to the pandemic I have spent a thoroughly enjoyable and inspiring 2021-2022 academic year as a Regular Member of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA). The numerous trips to archaeological sites and museums throughout mainland Greece, Crete, and the Ionian coast of Turkey have been unparalleled teachers of the ancient and Byzantine worlds. The program has inspired a change in my dissertation from a focus just on southern Italy to a trans-Adriatic dialogue with western Greece, where new urban centers were also emerging in the later 4th century B.C. I highly recommend everyone at any stage of a grad program apply for the ASCSA Regular Member program and take the entrance exams. If you're a Romanist, do it: the ASCSA needs more of them. And if you fail the first time, do it again. The trips, seminars, scholarly community, talks, foreign schools, Athens, and fellow Regular Members are more than worth it. It is a competitive environment, even when you get to the School. The trick is to resist feeling cowed by your fellow members' accomplishments, and channel that into feeling inspired by them. My colleagues here have inspired me to seek external travel and research fellowships, something I remain lacking in. I am thankful that we have all been able to enrich one another this year through our various research specialties and individual gifts.

The 2021-2022 academic year also saw the publication of my second article, "Urban Samnium? Towards a Literary and Archaeological Re-Evaluation" in the [5th volume of the Journal of Urban Archaeology](#). This summer I will head to Pompeii to assist the team from Cornell and the University of Reading on the [Casa della Regina Carolina Project](#), which explores both the garden of an Imperial Roman house and the layers of Hellenistic Pompeii beneath it. I look forward to weekend trips to Paestum, Metapontum, Samnium, Cumae and other sites around the Bay of Naples to sink my teeth into southern Italy.

Thomas Motter 2014

It's been a busy year! I didn't have a great summer last year — various personal difficulties made it a summer that I'm happy to leave behind me. But the resuming academic year was a very successful and productive one for me. I got half of my dissertation written, submitted one of its chapters to a journal for publication, presented at two conferences, and co-organized a very successful (and very smoothly run!) online conference here at UCLA. Returning to conferences (especially in-person) has made life in academia feel more familiar once again, and I'm very glad for that. On a similar note, we returned to in-person classes for most of the year (excluding only the first half of the Winter quarter), which was a major boost to energy and satisfaction levels after more than a year of online-only. The first time I returned to in-person teaching in front of a blackboard, within a literal minute, I could feel my old classroom energy come back, and it was electrifying and so gratifying. I remembered how much I enjoy teaching! That said, I'm looking forward to a year of no teaching for my last year at UCLA, so that I can pour all of my time into finishing my dissertation.

### Anna Simas 2014

Great to hear from you! I hope all is well. Things have been really hectic here and I'm looking forward to a break this summer (the quarter wrapped up last week). This year, I continued teaching as a lecturer in the Classics Department at the University of Washington, as well as working as Outreach Coordinator for the Humanities First freshman program. In personal news, I married my partner Tom yesterday (photo attached)! I hope you, the faculty, and everyone in the 2014 cohort is doing well, and often think fondly on our time together.



### Michael Vazquez 2015

I'm entering my third year as a Teaching Assistant Professor and Director of Outreach in the Philosophy Department at UNC-Chapel Hill. Among my more recent ancient-oriented outreach projects are a public seminar on "Stoicism and its Legacies" with Carolina Public Humanities and a new high school pedagogical resource that combines philosophical reflection with the study of historical texts in translation and in their original languages (called Primary Sources for Kids given its connection to the larger Philosophy for Kids movement). I hope all is well with you and the Classics Department!

### Matija Budisin 2016

I hope you and your family are doing very well! I finished my MA in philosophy a year ago, have worked at Trader Joe's and tutored online for a year and am getting back into teaching middle and high school Latin full time starting this fall.

### Emily Erickson 2016

So glad to hear you're doing well! I'm currently wrapping up the first year of my PhD in Art History at the University of Oregon. I've really enjoyed expanding my interests beyond ancient Greco-

Roman language and material culture this year, though I've found that I'm certainly not a Modernist. I'll spend this summer learning German (😊), so pray for me.

I think about our 2015-2016 post-bacc cohort often, and I hope everyone's doing well!

#### AJ Maroney 2016

After spending a year back up north staying with family and working at a wine shop in Princeton, I moved back to New Orleans last summer and started a job at the new Four Seasons hotel. I helped with training to open Chemin a la Mer, the Donald Link partnership restaurant, and was promoted to assistant sommelier within six months. Now I'm working on building out a wine education program to make our restaurant as incredible as I can! As always, if anybody's ever coming to New Orleans please reach out so we can catch up in person!

#### Regina Preston 2016

I am now a Senior Financial Data Analyst at Alvarez and Marsal in NYC. My classics background has been incredibly useful when learning new coding languages. I often compare it to learning Latin and then Spanish. The structure of the sentence is the same but the words change slightly. My current position combines my love of languages with teaching. I am in charge of setting up our data mart and then teaching my team how to code to access it.

#### Benjamin Turnbull 2016, 2017

After completing two years at Penn's Post Baccalaureate program, I earned my MA in Classics from the University of Maryland at College Park in 2019. My thesis was on Greek elegiac love poetry attributed to Theognis of Megara, particularly focusing on the horse metaphors as a political interpretation of the poems. I also wrote a commentary on the fishermen's song in Plautus' *Rudens* and I translated selections of Medieval Latin for Dr. Bauer's book entitled "The Alchemy of Conquest: Science, Religion, and the Secrets of the New World" (2019).

During my time at Penn's Post-Bacc, I worked at Penn's Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts as a Reading Room Assistant, an experience which made me aware of librarianship as a possible career path. After earning my MA in Classics, I earned my Master's of Science in Library and Information Science (MSLIS) degree, with a concentration in cultural heritage information management, from the Catholic University of America in 2021. I now work as the Technical Services Librarian at the Dominican Theological Library in Washington, DC, where I utilize skills from both of my Master's degrees to support students and researchers and to describe and ensure access to library materials, including rare books. My language skills have proven incredibly useful in my chosen field, as I classify and create detailed catalog records for the library's collections and answer reference questions related to primary and secondary sources. Based on my experience, librarianship is a wonderful career and I would recommend it as a viable option to future classicists. I am happy with how far I have come since I was a student at Penn's Post Bacc.

#### Nick Bolig 2017

Hello post-bacc alums! This summer I am teaching both an intensive Greek course in association with the Erasmus Academy and a summer school course on word etymologies at UNC-Chapel Hill. In the fall, I will begin my fourth year at UNC during which I will take my Ph.D. exams and begin working on my dissertation.

### Ryan Morgan 2018

My post Post-Bacc journey has taken me to France, back to the US, and then back to Philadelphia, virtually! After completing a Master's Degree in Classical Letters (as the French call it) at the University of Aix-Marseille in France, I joined the workforce back in the US as a technical recruiter. After several years of exposure to the exciting Software Development industry, I decided to re-apply to Penn for our fantastic MCIT program, which aims to provide a complete base in Computer Science for those without a background or formal training.

The program covers Computer Systems, Finite Math, Algorithms, Data Structures - all that sort of fun stuff. Although some courses have been challenging, nothing I've taken so far holds a candle to Intro to Ancient Greek over the summer in 2017. I have fond memories from that summer of sitting in the library basement practicing my conjugations on the chalkboard.

Anyway, I'm excited to be once again an active member of the Penn community, even if only online. With a graduation date of Dec 2023, I'm excited for what's to come as a Software Engineer!

### Kyra Webb 2018

1. I am getting married in August to my fiance, Alex Cuadrado, who I met while enrolled in the program. Alex is wrapping up his final year of his PhD in Italian at Columbia University.

2. I am starting a part time MS in Nonprofit Management at Columbia in the fall.

### Eleanor Choi 2018, 2019

In 2021, I received my M.A. from the University of Notre Dame, where I taught Beginning and Intermediate Latin and my thesis examined Thucydidean diplomatic rhetoric. Then, this past May, I wrapped my first year of the Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, where I presented on the Hellenistic appropriation of the *Bacchae* and prepared an article presenting a transcription of an Egyptian papyrus fragment housed in the Michigan Collection. I am so grateful for the opportunities and experiences Classics has afforded me, including my time at Penn. However, in a heartbreak and agonized decision, I will be leaving the Ph.D. and academia. In August, I will be moving to San Francisco to begin law school in pursuit of a career in environmental and animal law. In other news, I recently adopted two West Highland White Terrier sisters, Phoebe and Opal, who have proven to be a ruckus. I hope you and your family, and the Penn community, are healthy and thriving.

### Rachel Andrews 2019

I completed the Penn Post-Bacc in 2019 and went on to the University of Kansas MA (such a great program, and it was awesome to take classes with another penn postbacc, Sam!). I started my PhD at the University of Wisconsin, Madison in the fall. CANES is such a nourishing environment, as I'm sure you remember 😊

I still speak to Catherine, Melissa, and Cheyenne regularly. We are so thankful for the community of Penn bringing us all together!

### Olivia Merkhofer 2019

Glad to hear you guys made it through the pandemic without interruption. To give you an update on where I am at, I graduated from Florida State University with my Masters Degree in Philosophy this past May. I am now taking a break from academia and have taken on a position as a paralegal at an elder law firm in Tallahassee, Waldoch & McConnaughay, P.A. I plan to apply for FSU law school next year where I hope to pursue a career in Child welfare/advocacy.

### **Jeremy Steinberg 2019**

[Jeremy did not write in with this piece of news, but the Gruen Prize honorees were publicly announced in November 2021. And in a side note, I went to high school (including four years of Latin) with Erich Gruen's son.]

In 2021, the second year of the [SCS Erich S. Gruen Prize](#), the selection committee received 15 submissions from graduate students across North America treating aspects of race, ethnicity, or cultural exchange in the ancient Mediterranean. The committee was impressed by the papers' quality and range of disciplinary perspectives, methodologies, types of evidence, and time periods across the multicultural ancient world.

Of these submissions, all anonymized before review, the committee commends two with honorable mentions. Jeremy Steinberg's "Translation Across Literary Cultures in 2nd c. BCE Alexandria" (Religious Studies, University of Pennsylvania) examines Alexandrian Jews' conception of Hebrew-to-Greek textual translation and associated questions of authorship and fixity through close meticulous reading. Francesca Bellei's "The nose at the crossroads: an intersectional reading of the pseudo-Vergilian *Moretum*" (Comparative Literature, Harvard University) innovates on the theoretical side, rereading this famous literary crux for ancient race relations from a novel lens informed by intersectionality, Critical Race Theory, and Yoruba folklore.

### **Will Verdeur 2019**

I completed a full year of teaching English as a Long-Term Sub at Bishop Shanahan High School out in Downingtown, Pa. It was brutal, but I got through it. I learned a lot, and hopefully my students learned at least something. I was lucky to have had a number of supportive coworkers with whom I hope to remain friends. This summer, once I get back from Colorado, I'll be teaching a course through Main Line School Night about Mycenaean military involvement in Western Anatolia during the prelude to the Bronze Age collapse, focusing particularly on the Hittite vassal state of Wilusa in the Troad, and consider the strange and unpredictable ways in which this history is both reflected and distorted in the Homeric epics.

### **Sam Wert 2020**

Over the past two years after leaving the Post-Bacc program, I have been working on my MA degree in Classics at the University of Kansas. I have had a wonderful experience at KU filled with engaging coursework and an MA thesis centered on Ciceronian oratory. With graduation now behind me, I am looking forward to some much needed rest this summer before teaching high school Latin this fall!

### **Val Sydorenko 2020, 2021**

First year of grad work at UNC Chapel Hill is done, and what a year! I'm happy to report that it's been exactly the type of challenging yet supportive and friendly environment I was hoping to find when I was applying to grad programs! That Chapel Hill and the surrounding area is beautiful and a great place to call home for the next 4 (+, if we want to be realistic...) years is the best cherry on top. And for those in our Zoom classes who remember my lab mix Lance, I can proudly say he has adjusted wonderfully to splitting his time between his two homes in NJ and NC!

### **Zachary Cosby 2021**

Good to hear from you! I'm glad to hear that everyone passed and is moving on to graduate programs. That's huge, I remember talking to a few people who were nervous about the whole process.

I'm here in Philadelphia. I recently took a day job doing import/export logistics for a local start-up, and am happily working everyday on my own [tea importing business](#). Right now, it's being sold at a couple cafes/ restaurants, and in talks with a few more. I've had the best luck with finding customers online, where it's easier to find people who are already excited about specialty teas.

I'm continuing with my studies of Greek and Latin, and happy to report that I'm still making progress. I'm translating biblical texts right now (mostly because I've never actually sat down with them) and then reading/taking notes on the English translation of Augustine's City of God. I try to translate at least 10 sentences of both Greek and Latin everyday, though sometimes I can find time for more.

That's about it! I miss the environment at Penn, and often think about one day re-applying and actually finishing the Post-Bacc program, once I can make the money work. I'm glad that everyone had a great year, and hope that your next year is just as successful.

David Picker-Kille 2021

Greetings from Κόρινθος!

Thanks for reaching out, and I'd be happy to give a quick update! I recently finished my first year as a PhD student at FSU, which I think went very well. Although being back on a full schedule of classes (in addition to being a teaching assistant) was often stressful, I was like yourself very happy to be back in an "in-person" academic environment with my peers.

Currently, I am starting my final week of my archaeological supervisor training program at the ASCSA's excavations at Corinth run by Dr. Christopher Pfaff (this was my first time in Greece, so needless to say I am having a great time; I am in fact writing this email from the train εἰς ἀγοράν τὴν Ἀθηνῶν!). At the end of the month, I will then be heading to Italy to join the excavations of the Roman colony of Cosa, led by Dr. Andrea de Giorgi, on the coast of southern Tuscany. Last but not least, next semester, I am very excited to be teaching my first course at FSU, "Debates About the Past: Roman Civilization, History and Culture", as part of Department of Classics' heavy emphasis on pedagogical training for its graduate students.

Matt Rudin 2021

I finished my first year teaching Latin and Humanities at Regina Angelorum Academy in Ardmore, PA. I'm proud of my students who earned gold medals on the Beginning Latin level of the National Latin Exam this year. I will continue teaching next year. My wife and I bought a home in the Manayunk-Roxborough neighborhood of Philadelphia, and we are expecting our first child, a son, in July.

News from the department:

The inaugural issue of the Classical Studies Annual Newsletter was published in May and is available [here](#).

News from the program:

Bridget Murnaghan returned as the faculty co-director this year, so she was the one who jointly moderated advising sessions and read applications for next year's cohort. We, along with Tom Tartaron and Jeremy McInerney, took part as the post-bac advising group, each serving as principal advisor for a small group of students who were assigned to us based on their interests.

In the Fall term, James Ker focused on prose narratives involving the lands and peoples of Africa in the Latin post-baccalaureate seminar, while my Greek seminar read the Homeric and

Callimachean hymns (and did tough nuts, of course). Spring term found me teaching didactic poetry in the Latin seminar, and Visiting Assistant Professor Kate Meng Brassel read Plato with the Greek students.

Our weekly fall advising sessions returned to an in-person format, but because we remained masked, people had to eat lunch before or after rather than during. This was not as much as a hardship as it might have been because Penn also happened to shift the course block times this year, so students taking the post-bac seminars had time before and after our meetings to get some lunch. Bridget and I started the year off with a two-part discussion of graduate school admissions and the logistics of compiling an application dossier. This was followed by our annual plug for post-bacs to consider a master's degree as the next best step: current Penn PhD students Theodora Naqvi and Kyle West made compelling arguments based on their own experiences. Jeremy McInerney and Tom Tartaron both made guest appearances in which they talked about their own academic backgrounds and offered career advice, while Rebecca Stuhr, the classics librarian, introduced the cohort to Penn's library and information systems. Bridget and I returned to graduate school applications with a Q&A session, and then we presided over another meeting devoted to preparation for interviews and virtual campus visits. Our final colloquium featured grad students Emma Dyson and Danielle Perry (PB '14) talking about making the transition to graduate school.

I pointed out to Penn LPS that the alumni section of our website had not been updated for a number of years, so this fall they began the process of interviewing alumni and writing profiles that now appear on the website and in promotional materials. Many, many thanks to [Emily Beugelmans Cook](#) (2011), [Catherine Chase](#) (2019), [Eve Svoboda](#) (2020), and [Sam Wert](#) (2020) for taking the time to participate! I am very happy with how these turned out and flattered by all the nice things they say about the program.

We were able to publicize the [Masciantonio Fellowship and Phare Fellowship](#) much more broadly this year and so quintupled the number of applicants for 2022-23, which is good; the bad news is that we could only grant the fellowships to two students, and the majority of those who applied will not be able to participate in the program without the fellowships. There is still work to be done to increase accessibility for a wider and more diverse pool of applicants.

My news...

Even though we were back in the classroom, there were some hiccups. 'Pivoting' and 'flexibility' were our watchwords, since there were a number of close contacts and positive tests that required Zooming students in on a laptop, and Penn started the spring term with a week and a half of online classes. I was fortunate enough to stay healthy throughout the year and only had minimal reactions to the vaccines, so my work schedule wasn't disrupted as much as it might have been.

Outside of the classroom, my husband and I have cautiously been traveling a bit again. We were able to visit one son in Chicago, and to attend the other son's ultimate frisbee tournaments in California and Tennessee; most recently, we went to our 35<sup>th</sup> (!) college reunion, where I snagged a Carleton Classics T-shirt with one of my favorite lines from Ovid: Nec levis ingenuas pectus coluisse per artes / cura sit et linguas edidicisse duas (*Ars Amatoria* 2.121-2).

I'm still working on perfecting my sourdough baking, improving my Spanish, and trying to run a little faster (knees willing) each week. I hope that you all have goals that keep you motivated as well!

Best,  
Julie