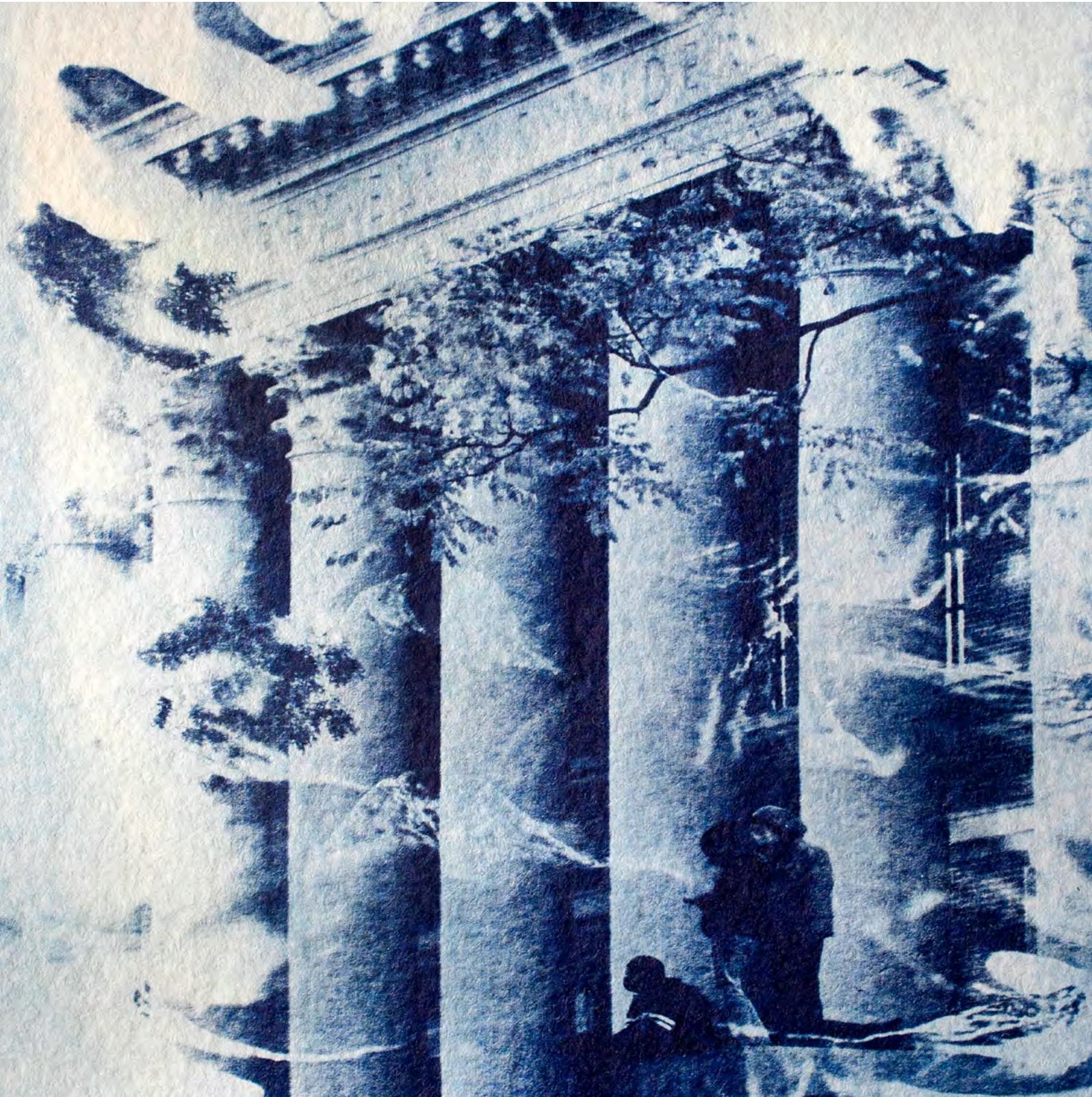


NOTA **BENE**





NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Tidying up the chair's office some weeks ago, I stumbled across an old, yellowed manuscript tucked at the back of a filing cabinet that had long since fallen into disuse. Unsigned but written, clearly, by a feeble imitator of Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe*, the document appears to attempt a description of a typical semester in the Department of the Classics. Despite its mannerism, the text retains a certain timeless quality; it is striking how well it captures the life of the department even today. I publish here the *editio princeps* of this curious narrative as a substitute for the customary digest of our newsletter's contents:

Hunting once for erudition beneath the shady oaks of Harvard Yard, I found a delightful place of respite on the second floor of Boylston Hall, a sanctuary of the Muses tended with devotion by acolytes young and old. Filled at once with both meditative quiet and fervent conversation, the hallways of that sanctuary were the very picture of scholarly industry: students studying, teachers teaching, coffee caffeinating. If you saw the beauty of the paradigms, notes, and diagrams traced on the blackboards, you would think that the words themselves were about to draw breath and speak, so elegant were they in form and eloquent in expression. All those gathered in that sacred space pursued their work with such diligence and zeal that what they had learned by long labor had the appearance of natural talent. And the whole place was suffused with the love of knowledge. May the god permit me to share in this love of knowledge, but to retain my stylistic composure.

The last sentence suggests that the anonymous author recognized that he had gotten a bit carried away, but one nevertheless appreciates his sincere admiration for the flourishing intellectual community that still populates Boylston's second floor. In 2023, this community is flourishing more than ever, as we have just welcomed six wonderful new graduate students and twenty-two new sophomore concentrators (a record, at least in recent decades)!

In the pages that follow, you will find articles describing various other newsworthy developments in our community, including a review of the third, very successful summer of our Scholars-In-Training program; accounts of summer travels by some of our students; a summary of the progress of excavations at Falerii Novi, co-directed by Professor Meg Andrews; a short essay by recent alum Micah Johnson-Levy ('20); a description of new artwork that now hangs in Smyth Library and the department's lounge; and announcements about current and upcoming programs. We have also had to say goodbye this year to three long-time members of our community, Gloria Pinney, Kevin McGrath, and Jack Cobb. Short remembrances of their lives and contributions to Harvard Classics appear later in these pages.

As the seasons change and fall fades into winter, remember Daphnis, who never let the winter snows keep him from visiting Chloe. Please visit us in Boylston Hall for companionship and refreshment, intellectual and otherwise!

(Portions of these notes were inspired by David Treuer's novel *The Translation of Dr. Apelles*, an adaptation of Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe*.)

— David Elmer

Above: David Elmer speaking to a sophomore prospective concentrator at a recruitment event.

Next page: Sophomore concentrator Frances Campos ('26) in Paul Kosmin's "Introduction to Greek Civilization" course. Photo: Jon Chase/Harvard University.

Cover: Stephanie Mitchell/Harvard University.



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GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ANCIENT HISTORIANS APRIL 18–21, 2024

In May 1974, the Association of Ancient Historians was formalized at Harvard upon the initiative of Ernst Badian, John Moors Cabot Professor of History. To mark the golden anniversary, Harvard has the honor of hosting the 50th annual meeting from the evening of Thursday, April 18 until the morning of Sunday, April 21, 2024. All the sessions will be plenary and in person.

In addition to the regular panels, in which submissions will be grouped with papers dealing with related (or contrasting) topics and approaches, the program will include panels dedicated to the following themes: “God, History, and the Anthropocene”; “Complex Origins: Racial Formation in the Ancient World”; “The Exploited: Questions”; “Beyond the Mediterranean?”; and “Focal Points and Blind Spots.” The proceedings will be brought to a close with a panel devoted to the legacy of Ernst Badian. Further details fleshing out the intention behind the dedicated panels is available on the conference web site: aah2024.org/home.

It is expected that at least 130 ancient historians will attend from all over the country and beyond. Current undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and friends are welcome to attend the proceedings on this flagship occasion. All queries should be addressed to the organizers, Emma Dench and Paul Kosmin, at the following address: 2024AAH@fas.harvard.edu.



SCHOLARS-IN-TRAINING SUMMER PROGRAM

Now in its third year, the department's *Scholars-in-Training* program brought nine students to campus for seven weeks during the summer. This year the program supported five high school students and four college students with interests in Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies. *Scholars in Training* is designed to run alongside Harvard's Summer School, so that participants can take either intensive Greek or Latin (four hours of classes, five days a week). This year we added two workshop series to the program: "Classics in the 21st Century" and "Tools for Scholarship and Writing." Each workshop met weekly: in the former we explored dialogues between antiquity and our contemporary world and discussed the history of the discipline and contemporary debates about what Classics is and opening up the field to different historical and cultural dialogues. In the workshop on scholarship and writing, we concentrated on bringing greater flair and creativity to academic writing. The program is very much a departmental group effort: in addition to the intensive language classes and the workshops, the program also featured a manuscript workshop in the Houghton Library, led by Louis Zweig (see photo), a workshop in the Harvard Art Museums, led by Sarah Eisen, a workshop on research databases and library resources led by Jorge Wong Medina, and film and games nights organized by Alex Vega and Jorge Wong Medina. Rhea Lesage and Steve Kuehler ran a special workshop on training for a career as a research librarian. Since several of the participants in the course are writers of mythical and historical fiction, we also arranged a Zoom conversation with the author Madeline Miller about her novella *Galatea* (first published in 2013; republished in 2022 with a new Afterword). This event was made possible by generous funding from the Open Gate Foundation.

The program is due in very large part to Teresa Wu's leadership and organization. This year Teresa was supported by Chris Rudeen (EDIB Fellow in Classics for 2022–23) and Emily Greenwood. The beating life and soul of the program was the instruction and mentorship provided by Jorge Wong Medina, Emily Mitchell, Alex Vega, and Louis Zweig. To provide additional workshops and professional development opportunities for our college students, Scholars in Training partnered with the SROH (Summer Research Opportunities at Harvard) program, and one of our scholars was formally enrolled in SROH to pursue a research project under the guidance of Professor Jared Hudson. We are proud of the achievements of participants from former years, several of whom are studying Classics at leading colleges and universities. As I write, we are in the process of advising some of the high school students who took part in the program this year on their college applications.

Now that the program has run for three years, we are working to shore up financial support for its continuation. Currently, we have to raise funding for the program each year on an ad hoc basis. Funding this year came from the FAS Dean's Office, the Provost's Office, funds controlled by the Dean of Arts and Humanities, the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative, the Harvard Summer School, and the Center for Hellenic Studies. We are enormously grateful for this generous support.

— Emily Greenwood

The Department of the Classics offers scholarships to enable high school or college students to explore classical language and culture through both coursework and research at Harvard in the summer.

In addition to covering the course fee, on-campus room and board, and travel to/from Harvard, the scholarship provides a stipend.

In the belief that our community and our discipline thrive on diversity, we especially welcome applications from members of groups historically underrepresented in the academia (e.g., underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, first-generation college students, students from disadvantaged economic backgrounds) and those who are interested in making contributions to access, inclusion, diversity and outreach in the field of Classics.

The application for our summer 2024 program is now open! Learn more or apply at [our website](#). Deadline: January 26, 2024.

ROMARE BEARDEN PRINTS ON DISPLAY

Six prints from Romare Bearden's "Odysseus" suite are now on display in Smyth Library and Boylston Hall. Read David Elmer's remarks on Bearden and his prints below.



In early December, the department gathered in Smyth Library to celebrate the installation of new artwork: six screenprints, signed by the artist, from Romare Bearden's "Odysseus" suite. Bearden is probably best known for his depictions of African-American life in rural North Carolina and of the Harlem jazz scene, but the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were subjects that he returned to throughout his career.

Born in 1911 in Charlotte, North Carolina, Bearden grew up in Harlem, attended high school in Pittsburgh, and spent two of his college years (1930–32) at Boston University. He served as a private in the Army during World War II. His postwar studies, funded by the GI Bill, included time spent studying philosophy in Paris with Gaston Bachelard.

Bearden worked in many media, including painting, drawing, and printmaking by various techniques. He was best known, however, as a collagist. His "Ody-

seus" prints in fact originate in a series of twenty collages Bearden made in 1977 based on the *Odyssey*.

There is an interesting connection between these works and Harvard. In 1974, Bearden was commissioned to design the cover for the *Harvard Advocate*, vol. 107, no. 4, a special issue entitled *Black Odyssey: A Search for Home*. Bearden's cover doesn't engage explicitly with the *Odyssey*, but one wonders whether the commission sparked his return to Homeric themes a few years later.

Bearden's approach to artmaking has often been described as "improvisatory" and jazz-like, particularly in his collage work. (He was also a jazz composer.) He liked to revisit the same theme again and again, exploring the possibilities of variation within a compositional framework. After completing the "Odysseus" collages, he recreated the entire series in watercolors, a medium requiring an entirely different approach to



artistic improvisation. From my point of view, as a scholar of oral traditions, it is very easy to think of each realization of one of Bearden's compositions as a performance, and a composition-in-performance (to use a phrase coined by Albert Lord).

As the culmination of Bearden's intense engagement with the *Odyssey* in the late 1970's, Hugh MacKay published an edition of screenprinted versions of six of the "Odysseus" compositions. Bearden collaborated closely in the making of these prints, and signed each one individually. We have been able to acquire a complete set of the MacKay edition. Five works—*The Fall of Troy*, *Circe Turns a Companion of Odysseus into a Swine*, *The Sirens' Song*, *Odysseus Leaves Nausicaa*, and *Home to Ithaca*—are now hanging in Smyth Library. *Cattle of the Sun God* is on display in Boylston Hall.

As prints, we can think of these works as the final, "textualized" product of a series of previous "compositions-in-performance." These printed "texts" were meant by Bearden to be widely distributed and "read." In this sense, they seem eminently appropriate for display alongside Smyth's collection of printed texts, which represent the culmination of a long preceding scribal and critical tradition.

Bearden was regarded as one of the twentieth century's greatest masters of the use of color. I hope visitors to Smyth will enjoy the richness and vibrancy of those colors. But I also hope that Bearden's images will inspire reflection on the rich and diverse histories represented by the books on the shelves, including both the traditions that produced these texts and the long history of responses to them. The *Odyssey* was and is a performance tradition, and Bearden is just one of many "performers" of the *Odyssey*—though a performer with a unique vision. His work is a reminder of the capacity of the works we study to continue to inspire new and compelling visions of human experience.

– David Elmer

Above: Blake Lopez ('24) in Smyth Library, at the celebration of the new prints. Photo: Tejas Vadali.

Previous page: Sarah Eisen studying Bearden's prints in Smyth. Photo: Tejas Vadali.

To learn more about Bearden's "Odysseus" series and his work as a printmaker, see R. G. O'Meally, ed., *Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey*, and M. L. Corlett, "Impressions and Improvisations: A Look at the Prints of Romare Bearden," in *The Romare Bearden Reader*, ed. R. G. O'Meally.



Top left: *The Fall of Troy*. © 2023 Romare Bearden Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

Center left: *The Sirens' Song*. © 2023 Romare Bearden Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

Bottom left: *Odysseus Leaves Nausicaa*. © 2023 Romare Bearden Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

Top right: *Circe Turns a Companion of Odysseus into a Swine*. © 2023 Romare Bearden Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

Center right: *Cattle of the Sun God*. © 2023 Romare Bearden Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

Bottom right: *Home to Ithaca*. © 2023 Romare Bearden Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

SPRING 2024 COURSES

See a sample of the courses on offer next semester. For a full list, visit [our website](#).



COURSES IN TRANSLATION (FOR UNDERGRADUATES)

FYSEMR 65N

Fashion in the Ancient Mediterranean World

Irene Soto Marín

This seminar explores the manufacture, trade, and social function of objects of fashion in the Ancient Mediterranean World. Clothing, cosmetics, and hair performed significant functions as markers of status and class, as well as social identity. Furthermore, the manufacture of jewelry, perfumes, and makeup in antiquity represented some of the most highly skilled ancient industries, and textiles and garments were the most widely traded and highly valued goods in antiquity. We will encounter how both men and women were subject to fashion in personal adornment.

GENED 1131

Tragedy Today

Naomi Weiss

In Athens in the fifth century BCE, thousands would gather at the theater to grapple, through the medium of tragedy, with questions such as: What happens if a woman is in power? How different are we from foreigners? What happens to the victims of war? 2500 years later, Greek tragedies are all around us, in films, on TV, and in plays, novels, music, and social media. In this course, we will explore how and why such an old artform is still used to explore a wide range of contemporary issues, from systemic racism to religious intolerance to trans rights to the benefits and dangers of AI.

CLASARCH 163

The Polychromy of Ancient Sculpture

Adrian Stähli

The seminar investigates the current evidence for the coloring of ancient sculpture, examines recent reconstructions of the polychromy of ancient marble and bronze statues, studies the semantics of color of hair, skin, and flesh in antiquity, provides an overview of the reception of classical sculpture in modern art, but also the impact of modern sculpture and aesthetic theories on the perception of classical statues, and reconstructs the historiography of the discovery and the scholarship on ancient polychromy, including its broad popular reception in the 19th century.

CLS-STDY 97B

Introduction to the Ancient Roman World

Kathleen Coleman

This course traces Roman history from the earliest settlement along the Tiber to the shift of power eastwards in late antiquity. We will study Roman authors, coins, papyri, graffiti, mosaics, brick stamps, curse tablets, and anything else that gives us access to Roman thought and culture. Amongst others, we will encounter gladiators, doctors, musicians, and hairdressers (sample occupations practiced by women, as well as men!). The course includes hands-on sessions with the collections of Houghton Library and the Harvard Art Museums.

CLS-STDY 112

Regional Study: Macedonia

Emma Dench and Paul Kosmin

This course will explore the political and cultural history of Macedonia and northern Greece, from the archaic period to late antiquity. We will focus on questions of change, recurrence, and continuity within the long history of this frontier region, at the threshold of the Aegean and Balkan worlds. Themes will include the formation and identity of the Macedonian kingdom, interactions with Balkan and Asian neighbors, conflicts with Greek poleis, imperial expansion and consolidation, provincialization by Rome, and the dynamics of early Christian community building. Students will travel to Macedonia during spring break.

COURSES IN TRANSLATION (FOR GRADUATES AND UNDERGRADUATES)

CLS-STDY 139

Causation and Agency in Greek Philosophy

Rachana Kamtekar

We think about causation both to determine responsibility and to explain what happens. And we can judge whether A caused B using different cognitive systems, which may give different answers. This course examines how both pre-philosophical treatments of cause in the Greek sophists (Antiphon, Gorgias) and theoretical accounts of causation in Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and Epicureans conceive of causation, with a particular focus on (1) how human agents come to be responsible causes, both shaped by and shaping our actions, and (2) the emergence of the problem of free will.



Student taking notes during Paul Kosmin's "Introduction to Greek Civilization" course (fall 2023). Photo: Jon Chase/Harvard University.

CLS-STDY 154

Ancient Global Economies

Irene Soto Marín

This course will introduce students to the complex and sophisticated nature of ancient economies, with a particular focus on the global connections of well-known ancient polities such as the Assyrian, Egyptian, Macedonian, Roman, and Palmyrene Empires. Students will learn how to dissect historical and analytical narratives that utilize quantitative and qualitative data sets through case studies, such as the economic logistics of the military conquests of Alexander, the constructions of the pyramids of Old Kingdom Egypt, the price of urban development of the city of Rome, and the capital investment required for the long-distance trade along the Silk Roads and Indo-Roman trade routes.

CLS-STDY 172

Romanness after Rome

Jan Ziolkowski

Explores major issues relating to Rome and Romanness, from antiquity to the present day. Many Romes have existed. At the beginning, why were the Romans called Roman? What was it to be a Roman citizen? From Late Antiquity on, why was there a New Rome or Second Rome? Were the Byzantines Roman? Why was the Church Roman Catholic, the Holy Roman Empire Roman? What makes Roman law Roman? Why was there a Third Rome? What is Romanness today?

CLS-STDY 180

The Seleucid Empire

Paul Kosmin

The Seleucid Empire was the successor kingdom to Alexander the Great's conquests in Asia, extending, at its height, from the borders of India to Bulgaria and from Armenia to Bahrain. It was the largest and most powerful state of the Hellenistic world. This course will explore the formation,

functioning, and collapse of the Seleucid empire, paying particular attention to colonization, city-founding, and the architecture of power; the nature of Hellenistic kingship, ruler cult, and charismatic authority; cultural, literary, and religious innovations; interactions with non-Greek states, including the kingdoms of northern India; and resistance movements, including the Maccabean Revolt.

CLS-STDY 184 / ANCSTD 201

Classical Antiquity and the Legacy of Slavery at Harvard

Jared Hudson and Irene Peirano Garrison

This course investigates the historical ties between the study of Classical antiquity at Harvard and slavery, and the complex and enduring legacies of those ties. Areas of examination include the relationship between the ideologies of slavery in the ancient and modern worlds, the teaching of ancient languages and literatures and the historical development of the institutions of slavery, the evolving history and politics of classical and Judeo-Christian antiquity in the Harvard curriculum, and the role of the study of antiquity in abolition and other forms of resistance. Students will use University collections to develop original, public-facing research projects over the course of the semester.

COMPLIT 156

Songmaking and the Idea of Lyric

Gregory Nagy

A re-examination of "Lyric" as occasion as well as genre. Central questions will include: how do the "lyrics" of composed song come alive in performance? For example, how do the two librettists of Puccini's opera *La Bohème* contribute to the making of a masterpiece in song? Shared readings include *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins. Students are free to select as their focus of research any particular "lyric" traditions, composed in whatever language.

BEGINNING/INTERMEDIATE LANGUAGE

GREEK 2

Introduction to Ancient Greek 2

Ivy Livingston & TF

Participants will continue to develop their ability to read Greek. Students will begin to gain direct access to the literature and culture of Greece through texts based on classical authors.

GREEK 10

Introduction to Ancient Greek Literature

Ivy Livingston & TF

Close reading and analysis of Greek literary texts, both prose and poetry, beginning at an intermediate pace.

LATIN 2

Introductory Latin 2

Ivy Livingston & TF

Participants will continue to develop their ability to read Latin. We will engage with a variety of texts, including inscriptions and graffiti, from the classical period and later, as well as modern learner literature.

LATIN 10

Introduction to Latin Literature

Ivy Livingston & TF

Close reading and analysis of Latin literary texts, both prose and poetry, beginning at an intermediate pace.

MEDLATIN 10

Introduction to Medieval Latin Literature

Jan Ziolkowski & TF

Close reading and analysis of post-classical literary texts, both prose and poetry, beginning at an intermediate pace.

MODGREEK AB

Elementary Modern Greek

Calliopi Dourou

Basic oral expression, listening comprehension, grammar, reading, and writing. Language instruction is supplemented by reading of simple literary passages and other texts, and by online instruction. Part two of a two-part series.

MODGREEK BB

Intermediate Modern Greek

Panagiotis Roilos & TF

Aims at further development of skills in speaking, comprehension, reading, and writing. Selected readings in prose (literary and journalistic), poetry, folksongs, modern music, and theater serve as an introduction to aspects of modern Greek literature and culture. The course is conducted in Greek and focuses on topics selected by the instructor and the students in the first term. Grammar is reviewed in the context of readings. Instruction is supplemented by online instruction.

ADVANCED LANGUAGE (FOR GRADUATES AND UNDERGRADUATES)

GREEK 120

Homer

Gregory Nagy

A reading of selections from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Greek. Emphasis will be placed on verbal art, oral traditional poetics, and the differences between the two epics and their heroes. Among the selections will be the heartbreaking scene in *Iliad* 6 where the doomed couple Andromache and Hektor say good-bye to each other for the very last time. Assignments will accommodate different levels of Greek.

LATIN 104

Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

Rachel Philbrick

This course will focus on reading the first six books of the *Metamorphoses* in their entirety, with particular attention to narrative techniques, inter- and intratextuality, and issues of genre. We will also examine some acts of reception of the poem in the visual and literary arts from antiquity through today.

LATIN 144

Roman Invasions

Jared Hudson

The Roman empire is, and was, often thought of as threatened by "barbarian" invasions. This course reverses that premise to examine Romans as invaders. It studies narratives of Roman military conquest through close readings in Latin of selections from Caesar, Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus (alongside texts in translation and secondary readings). We will explore the fine-grained mechanics of how violent colonization is portrayed in literary Latin prose, while also analyzing how the genre of Latin historiography justifies, commemorates, and, at times, subverts Roman claims to domination through military force.

MEDLATIN 151

Virgil in the Middle Ages

Jan Ziolkowski

Examines the treatment of Virgil and his poetry from antiquity through the Middle Ages into the early modern period. Sizes up the reception of the poet as a polymath and magician. How was he handled biographically? Assesses approaches taken to the *Aeneid* within the literary canon. Looks at the treatment of Virgil's poetry in commentaries and literature. Explores responses to the style and content of Virgilian poetry, such as rejection, appropriation, and allegorization.



Students in Irene Soto Marín's "Intro to Roman Numismatics" course (fall 2023) visiting the Art Study Center at the Harvard Art Museums.

MODGREEK 100

Advanced Modern Greek

Panagiotis Roilos

This course offers an introduction to the history and broader cultural contexts of Modern Greek literature from the 19th century to the present. Emphasis will be placed on Greek modernism (especially the so-called "Generation of the Thirties") and postmodernism. Literary works will be read in Greek.

GRADUATE COURSES

CLASPHIL 239

Intertextuality and Reception from Alexandria to Rome and Beyond

Richard Thomas

Exploration of the pragmatics of the intertextual relationship between Hellenistic poetry and the prior Greek tradition, and of republican, Augustan, and imperial Roman poets' further complicating of and building on this practice. Further exploration of the reception of these bodies of literature in subsequent traditions down to the present day. Particular attention to the effect of intertextuality on genre and genre formation. How is intertextuality to be situated within the field of reception studies or the classical tradition? What, if any, are or should be the limitations of reception studies within the field of classical philology?

CLS-STDY 225

Plato on Political Expertise

Rachana Kamtekar

Plato's dialogues from *Protagoras* to *Laws* investigate political expertise (*technē*), which aims at the virtue and happiness of citizens. Drawing on the early dialogues' account of expertise as (1) aimed at some good and (2) having an account of the means by which it achieves this good (3) by improving its materials, this course will focus on Plato's late political thought in the *Statesman* (which specifies the expertise distinctive to politics and its relation to other expertises) and *Laws* (which considers law as a means of inculcating citizen virtue).

COMPLIT 244

On Imagination: From Plato to Postmodernism

Panagiotis Roilos

This seminar explores the development of the concept of imagination in diverse premodern and modern philosophical/theoretical and literary contexts. Emphasis will be placed on Plato, Aristotle, Stoic and Neoplatonic philosophers, medieval Christian readers of antiquity, Kant, Schiller, Fichte, Schelling, the British Romantics, Freud, Lacan, Sartre, Iser, Todorov, Deleuze, Guattari, and Castoriadis. This seminar will also develop an interdisciplinary approach to the topic by drawing on cognitive sciences and cognitive anthropology.

ALUMNI STORY

MICAH JOHNSON-LEVY ('20)

Theater professional Micah Johnson-Levy reflects on her time as a Classics concentrator, her career as a casting director, and how she came to work on Hadestown.



“It’s an old song ... It’s an old tale from way back when ... It’s an old song ... and we’re gonna sing it again.” These are some of the lyrics from the opening song of the Broadway musical *Hadestown*—a show that intertwines the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice with the fractured love story of Hades and Persephone. The song is sung by the show’s narrator, Hermes, a character in the musical whose role as a psychopomp is transformed into that of a railroad conductor. It’s also the first song I ever heard anyone sing at a *Hadestown* audition in the summer of 2019, while doing a professional internship in the office that cast the show.

When I showed up to Harvard for the first time in 2016, I knew I enjoyed two things: theater and Greek mythology. I had grown up attending school and community productions in Michigan, and later

I had become deeply involved in my high school’s theater program. When it came time to declare my concentration, I realized I had really enjoyed one class in my first year: the Classical Mythology Gen Ed. In one of my more chaotic moments, I decided to declare a joint concentration in Folklore & Mythology and the Classics without having ever taken any other Classics classes. I’m not a person who necessarily takes leaps of faith, but this just felt right.

In the Classics department, I felt an instant sense of belonging. I suddenly realized the amount of joy that could come from learning something you love with people who love it too. The spring break trip to Sicily—part of the Regional Study: Sicily course—was one of my best college experiences, and the friendships I developed with

my classmates have extended to this day.

My classes satisfied my desire to understand the context and deeper significance of Greek mythology—a prime example being Naomi Weiss’ course on Gender and Sexuality in Ancient Greece. Inspired by Paul Kosmin’s course on the Persian Empire, I followed this interest in my senior thesis: “Theseus and the Amazons: Images of the Ideal and the Other in the Context of the Greco-Persian Wars.”

There is a lot of pressure both at Harvard and from the world outside to pick a concentration with your future in mind. Every undergraduate studying humanities will inevitably be asked “What do you think you’re going to do with that?” Being in the Classics department taught me one important thing: you should study what makes you happy and make space for joy in your

education, because you would be shocked at what you can do with any degree.

I first learned about *Hadestown* in 2017, when an old friend and mentor from my high school theater days, who knew I was studying the Classics, called me up and asked if I had ever heard of the show. Flash forward to 2019, and I was completing my first official professional internship in the office that cast *Hadestown*.

Several months after I graduated in 2020, my former boss reached out to see whether I wanted to pursue a career in casting. Soon after, I started working remotely part-time, and in August of 2021, I finally moved to New York to work full-time as a Casting Assistant. Casting isn't the most well-known or well-understood career. Basically, I work with writers and directors to find actors that are right for each of the parts. Creatives tell me what they're looking for, and then I go off into the world to try to find it. That way they can focus on the hard stuff: creating a piece of theater.

Just over two years later, I'm still in New York working on *Hadestown* and other projects. November 15 marked my official Broadway debut as a full Casting Director with the first public performance of *How to Dance in Ohio*, a musical about a group of autistic young adults getting ready for their spring formal.

Harvard Classics department and everyone in it. I couldn't possibly go through and list every person in the department whom I can credit with changing my life, but I would be remiss not to mention a few. I can never give enough thanks to Teresa Wu for her warmth and care, Naomi Weiss and Paul Kos-

“you should study what makes you happy ... because you would be shocked at what you can do with any degree.”

I took the lead on casting, which was made all the more special given that I am autistic, something I, like many women and people of color, only learned after graduating from college.

As I look back, I can't track exactly how I got here. I studied history throughout my time in school, but I still can't quite figure out my own. All I can say is that I feel immensely lucky, and I owe more than I can describe to the

min for teaching me what love and passion for the Classics looks like, and David Elmer for helping me find my voice.

I found myself in the Classics department. I learned what it meant to not only discover what you love but own it and dive in headfirst. I still have a lot of learning to do in my life, both about the world and myself, but I don't know if I'd be on the path I am right now without my time running around Boylston.

HARVARD CLASSICAL CLUB PERFORMS SENECA'S *MEDEA*

This past April, our department welcomed Paul O'Mahony, artistic director of Out of Chaos Theatre and *Reading Greek Tragedy Online (RGTO)*, to deliver an on-campus workshop aimed at training undergraduates in the performance of classical theater. The workshop, centered on an original translation of Seneca's *Medea* completed by Classics concentrator Elena Lu ('26), ran beautifully: Paul's adept instruction helped participating students develop powerful performances of Seneca's characters, and the Harvard Classical Club was invited to organize a fully staged reading of Elena's translation to debut on RGTO in May. For the next month, Paul served remotely as the staged reading's director, building upon his workshop to help student actors cement their confidence with the skills necessary to bring classical theater to life.

The RGTO staged reading, [streamed live on YouTube](#), was hosted by Joel Christensen along with special guest Angela Hurley and was performed by Harvard Classical Club members Blake Lopez ('24), Elena Lu ('26), Olivia

Ma ('26), Fiona McFerrin-Clancy ('25), Mac Mertens ('26), and Lucy Nathwani ('26). In staging the performance, three separate actors alternated the part of *Medea*—by doing so, the students experimented with the multiform nature of *Medea*'s character.

The successful performance served as the jumping-off point for the Harvard Classical Club's current work to develop a live stage production of *Medea: The Musical*, whose performance will blend innovative with traditional elements. The play will take place over the weekend of March 23 in Agassiz Theatre. Look for announcements on the department's website and social media channels!

The club owes special thanks to Professor Naomi Weiss for organizing Paul O'Mahony's initial visit to campus, helping to facilitate the club's performance on *Reading Greek Tragedy Online*, and tirelessly supporting the club's current production efforts.

— Fiona McFerrin-Clancy and Blake Lopez

THE FALERII NOVI PROJECT

Professor Margaret Andrews reports on the first two seasons of excavations at Falerii Novi, an ancient Roman town in central Italy.

The Falerii Novi Project is the first scientific archaeological excavation of the ancient Roman town of Falerii Novi in central Italy. The project is an international research collaboration among Harvard University, the University of Toronto, the British School at Rome, and the University of London. Rome established “New Falerii” in 241 B.C.E. after the residents of “Old Falerii” revolted and were resettled following their defeat. Falerii Novi now lies below a vast expanse of fields surrounded by its original fortifications. In the past, archaeologists have investigated the city remotely, using a variety of geophysical techniques, and these have shown the plan of the entire city: monuments, temples, houses, shops, a theatre, an amphitheatre, and tombs. The Falerii Novi Project began the first excavations on the site in 2022. The project aims to investigate the everyday life of Falerii’s residents, especially its residential and commercial spaces, to show how urban life changed over the course of the 1500 years during which the city was occupied, from the Roman through the medieval periods. The project also aims to clarify the environmental history of the city—how residents exploited their natural surroundings and the impact that the surroundings had on the city in turn. Environmental sampling, as well as the examination of a rich assemblage of faunal remains, are therefore primary research objectives. The Falerii Novi Project brings an unprecedented multidisciplinary approach to an ancient Roman city in the hope of clarifying many aspects of ancient urban life that have not received due attention in traditional approaches to Roman urbanism.

In the first two seasons, the team—including, so far, three Classics graduate students, two History graduate students, two Classics undergraduates, and a Classics postdoctoral fellow—has excavated trenches within the central market of the town, a house, a principal intersection within the street grid, and two shops lining the town’s forum. We have already shed light on periods of occupation in the town when it was previously thought to have been abandoned, especially late antiquity. Senior concentrator Jack McLaughlin (’23) found it “an incredible experience to be out in the field and see firsthand how the archaeological method contributes to our understanding of the ancient world. Being new to archaeological fieldwork, [he] was fascinated by every step of the process ...” Graduate student Sammi Richter said that “finding and digging an ancient trash pit was



Above: Jack McLaughlin proudly wields a pick for the first time.

Below: Sammi Richter digs deep into late antiquity.

one of my favorite parts.” Ancient trash is an archaeologist’s treasure, especially at Falerii Novi!

During the excavation season, the team lives in the nearby town of Civit  Castellana, which is actually the medieval settlement on the site of Old Falerii. Harvard students share apartments with students from other universities so that they may get to know people from around the world who also have different interests. Jack McLaughlin added, “It was truly lovely to live in Civit  Castellana, the Italian countryside town where we were based, alongside the other project participants. From making friends with the owner of our local deli, who cut salami and cheese for us after long days of digging, to sipping Aperol spritzes in the piazza, it was a summer I’ll never forget.”

Any students interested in digging a Roman city and/or sipping spritzes in the Italian countryside are welcome aboard the Falerii Novi Project in future summers! To learn more about the project, visit [our website](#).

— Margaret Andrews

STUDENT TRAVEL

FROM ALGORITHMS TO THE ARGONAUTICA

KEVIN WONG, PHD CANDIDATE IN CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY

Thanks to the Charles P. Segal Fund, I was able to pack in an exciting travel schedule that lasted the entirety of June, during which I got to fully indulge my interests in epic, video games, and the digital humanities.

The UK was my first destination. After catching up with friends and professors in Oxford, I gave a talk at the Institute of Classical Studies (ICS) for their “Digital Classicist London” seminar series. I spoke about game development software and search algorithms, and how our contemporary classical imagination is profoundly shaped by these sociotechnical agents of reception.

My next stop was Seville, where I presented at the annual conference of the Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA)—the equivalent of the SCS in the field of game studies. My talk was scheduled to be one of the first in the five-day conference. Grateful to have it done early, I spent the rest of the time meeting other video game scholars and putting a face to those whose incredible works I’d read. I attended talks on sociality, e-sports, ecocriticism, technical design, and even a thought-provoking panel on whether a canon should be developed for game studies. I was delighted to find a few other classicists there: one gave a talk on games as mythological curation, another on Latin pedagogy and teaching Catullus through interactive game design.

Then I was off to Pisa, where I attended the first meeting of the International Epic Network, which is co-organized by our own Professor Irene Peirano Garrison. This meeting, an intercollegiate workshop on Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica* 5, was held in late June at the Scuola Normale Superiore (SNS). I enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with some of my fellow



Members of the Harvard community at the Scuola Normale Superiore for the inaugural meeting of the International Epic Network. From left to right: Phoebe Lakin, Rebecca Deutsch, Kevin Wong, Irene Peirano Garrison, Rachel Philbrick.

Banner above: The view from Mt. Soratte. Photo: Alex Reed.

graduate students and professors and to meet the contingents from UCLA, the University of Toronto, and the SNS. The atmosphere over the three days was jovial, and we had the chance to tour and explore the SNS. Each graduate student who attended took turns giving a presentation. In between sessions, much coffee and cake was had.



The Music Room in the Dumbarton Oaks Museum. Photo: Vivi Lu.

ORAL HISTORY AT DUMBARTON OAKS

VIVI LU ('24)

I spent my summer at Dumbarton Oaks as a Byzantine Studies Oral History Intern. The Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, located in Washington, DC, is an institute of Harvard University that supports scholarship in Byzantine, Pre-Columbian, and Garden and Landscape Studies. During my internship, I contributed to DO's ongoing Oral History project by interviewing prominent scholars of Byzantine Studies with affiliations to the institute. I also became acquainted with the Summer Fellows in all three branches of study, toured the beautiful and historic gardens, and joined a reading group translating Gregory of Nyssa's *On the Soul and Resurrection*.

Outside of the library, I enjoyed outings with friends and interns throughout the summer and sat in on the Colloquium for Ancient Rhetoric's summer workshop, co-organized by Professor Irene Peirano Garrison, at the Center for Hellenic Studies in June. In addition to seeing Dumbarton Oaks' collection, I loved exploring DC's many museums and landmarks. I am grateful for the generous support of the Classics department for making this summer at Dumbarton Oaks possible!

RESEARCH IN ATHENS AND THESSALONIKI

JULIA TELLIDES ('24)

This summer, I conducted archival research abroad for my senior undergraduate thesis, which examines the relationship between the Greek government and the Jewish community in Thessaloniki during the early twentieth century. With the support of the Charles P. Segal Fund, I explored archives, museums, and universities worldwide, piecing together the records of this community.

First, I spent a month at the Gennadius Library in Athens studying Greek secondary literature related to my thesis and taking an advanced Greek course at the local university. Afterwards, I stayed for two weeks in Thessaloniki, a city central to my research interests and rich in Jewish culture. I accessed exclusive collections at the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, engaged with local Jewish scholars, and walked through the very buildings and spaces that formed the core of my paper.

My research then brought me to London, where I visited two archives. With permission from the Board of Deputies of British Jews, I had the chance to delve into their collection at the London Metropolitan Archive.



Memorial for the destroyed Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki. Photo: Julia Tellides.

Additionally, I investigated early 1900s government reports from Thessaloniki at the British National Archives in Kew.

I am deeply grateful to the Harvard Classics department for granting me the opportunity to engage in invaluable archival research abroad for my thesis.



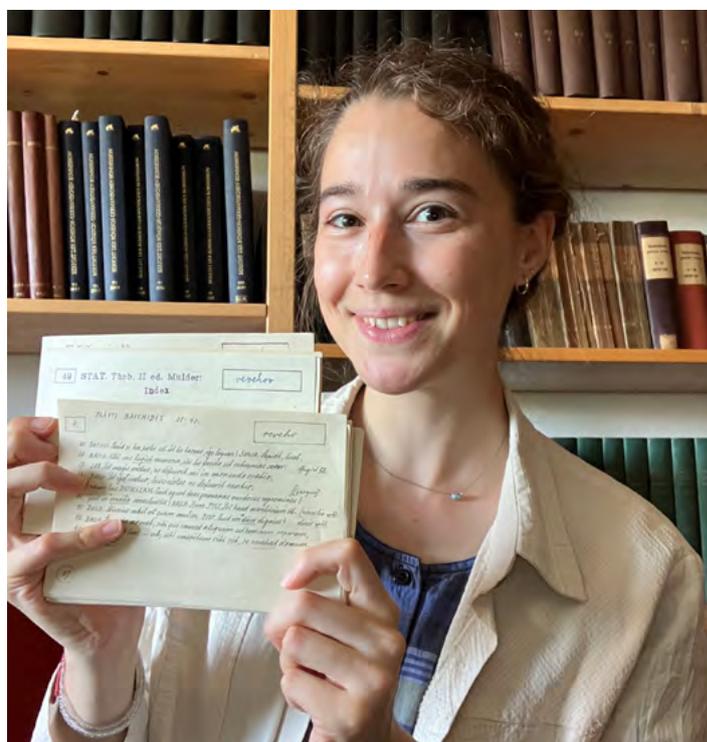
SUMMER IN THE BLUE LAND

PHOEBE LAKIN, PHD CANDIDATE IN CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY

Last summer I spent an enjoyable two months working as an intern at the Thesaurus Linguae Latinae (TLL) in Munich, where I composed TLL articles for the noun/adjective/verb trifecta *riscus* ('a small basket or box'), *rimosus* ('full of cracks'), and *reveho* ('to carry back'). The patient guidance of Josine Schrickx, my supervising editor, made the project both fun and engrossing, as did other kind and friendly colleagues and the hospitable library.

Much careful detective work goes into each article. Researchers must acquaint themselves with the attestations of their given word (handwritten by predecessors on slips of paper or "Zettel," the backbone of the TLL), employ an in-house reference system to check and expand these citations, and then (my favorite part) determine how to structure their article. Head-scratching questions often emerge at this stage: when and how did a rare term for a small container start to denote a monastery bookshelf? Are wild beehives built structures in the same way that ships or houses are? Each word has led a unique life, so each box of slips is a new adventure. Relevant here is the German term for treasure hunt, "Schnitzeljagd." Though we usually associate "Schnitzel" with pan-fried cutlets, here it refers to a scrap of paper – just like "Zettel." Lexicography, in other words, is akin to a search for hidden treasure.

Munich's museums and the Bavarian countryside were another source of delight during my stay. At the Lenbachhaus I so admired the artwork of Der Blaue Reiter, an Expressionist group founded by Kandinsky and Marc, that I paid a visit to the town of Murnau, where the Münter-Haus and Schlossmuseum display



Top of page: A misty day on the moor.

Right: Phoebe holding up Zettel.

more of their work. A hike through the Murnauer Moors, Central Europe's largest contiguous wetland, with the distant foothills of the Alps fading in and out through fine curtains of mist, showed me why painters flocked to this part of Bavaria, known as the "Blue Land" both for Der Blaue Reiter and for its special light.

In June, with others from our department, I participated in the International Epic Network Workshop at SNS Pisa, this year on Valerius Flaccus. Next, combining entomology with etymology, I presented a paper at a conference on "Insects in the Premodern World," hosted by LMU Munich. Many thanks to all at the TLL, to the organizers of both conferences, and to the Segal Fund for making this summer itinerary possible.

MEET OUR NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS



Mia Brossoie

PhD Candidate in Medieval Latin

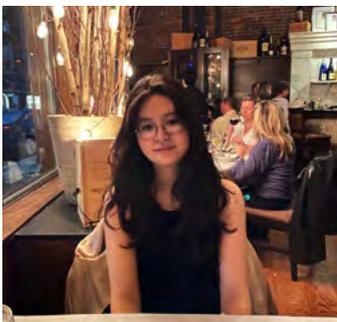
Mia Brossoie grew up in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, then continued her growth at Brown University in Rhode Island. Through the Department of Classics and the Program in Medieval Studies, she earned an A.B. in Classics (Greek and Latin Track) and in Medieval Studies (Late Antique Cultures Track). Mia became equally enchanted by poetry of late antiquity, leading to research interests in classical reception in this field, specifically at Charlemagne's "court," as well as literary boundaries. She is passionate about black and white dogs, "cow dogs," and believes that she will one day finish the Modern Library's list of 100 Best Novels.



Alanis Gonzalez

2023–2024 Research Scholar

Alanis Gonzalez grew up in Chicago, IL, surrounded by diaspora children like herself. In pursuit of a career in prairie ecology, she attended Grinnell College, only to fall in love with the ancient Greek language in her first semester. During her time at Grinnell, Alanis was a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow (MMUF), a community that allowed her passion for both classics and Mexican/Chicanx studies to flourish. After graduating from Grinnell in 2022 with a dual BA in Biological Chemistry and Classics, Alanis worked as a Math and Science Teacher at her high school alma mater, Roycemore School. Once she completes her post-baccalaureate year, she plans to begin her PhD in Classical Philology, where she will continue to explore questions of identity and how folklore and history foster conversations across time.



Phoebe Hyun

PhD Candidate in Ancient History

Phoebe Hyun comes from Seoul, Korea. Though she started with a fascination for 20th-century modern history, after discovering Erich Gruen's "Augustus and the Making of the Principate" in her high school library, she also rapidly developed a passion for ancient history. To cultivate this interest further, Phoebe undertook her BA in Ancient and Modern History at the University of Oxford (2021), writing her dissertation on the legacy of Cleopatra Selene in Mauretania. She then completed an MSt degree in Classical Archaeology, also at the University of Oxford (2022), where she studied (among other things) coinage from different parts of the early Roman Empire. She is now delighted to come to Harvard University, where she is excited to continue exploring the ancient Mediterranean. In particular, Phoebe hopes to research the social history of the Roman Empire, investigating how people formed different kinds of intercultural connections. Outside of ancient history, she is a keen reader of literature, an avid collector of second-hand books, and a new cat-mom to a kitten, Teddy.



Felix Montgomery

PhD Candidate in Classical Philology

Born and raised in Queens, New York, Felix discovered his passion for language as a teenager. A graduate of Brown University (AB Greek & Sanskrit, 2023), he developed interests in historical linguistics while completing a study abroad at the University of Oxford, St Anne's College. His senior thesis examined methodological issues pertaining to the Dorian Migration, with a focus on linguistic, literary, and archaeological approaches. He hopes to continue his studies on Greek and Indo-European historical linguistics, alongside the use of orasho in Japanese Hidden Christianity. Outside of class, he enjoys reading, maintaining an active lifestyle, and drinking tea.



Esther Reichek
PhD Candidate in Classical Philology

Esther Reichek received a joint BA/MA in Classics from Yale University in 2023. Her senior essay drew on affect and trauma theory to propose a new reading of Nestor’s digressive speech in *Iliad* 11. She served as editor in chief of *The Yale Historical Review* and worked as a research assistant for the Yale Nile Initiative. Her current research interests include generic transformation and rupture across Greek, Latin, and Classical Arabic literary traditions.



Diontay Wolfries-Thomas
PhD Candidate in Ancient History

Diontay Wolfries-Thomas is from Montreal, Quebec. He graduated from McGill University with a BA in Classics in 2021 before moving to Toronto in pursuit of a master’s degree at the University of Toronto, which he completed in 2023. While there, he wrote a master’s thesis entitled “Death at Sea: Human Jettison and the Maritime Slave Trade in Herodotus 8.118 and Early Modern Britain.” Outside of Classics, he enjoys anything to do with basketball and is perhaps overly enthusiastic about horror movies (especially *Scream!*).

HARVARD CLASSICAL RECEPTIONS WORKSHOP

The Harvard Classical Receptions Workshop, a new initiative led by graduate students, made its debut this fall semester.

Jointly led by Nate Herter, Phoebe Lakin, Sarah Gonzalez, and Kevin Wong, this workshop was started to create a visible space for scholars interested in reception to share, learn, and discuss various approaches to the study of classical reception. Holding these sessions every other week, the group is thrilled to have found a steady and sizeable turnout of faculty and graduate students across several departments, comprising a lively and engaged audience.

For the inaugural session on September 13, Kevin Wong brought us through an overview of the field and how “classical reception” has been articulated from a variety of critical, methodological, and ideological perspectives. On September 27, Sarah Gonzalez led a session on the reception of Greek tragedy, where the group discussed the reception of tragic motifs and the potential of tragedy as a form of social activism in Luis Alfaro’s *Electricidad*. On October 11, Nate Herter took us through a discussion on the reception of classical myth within twentieth-century avant-garde practice. On October 25, we welcomed Prof. Kathleen Coleman and Dr. Ross Clare, author of *Grece and Rome in Videogames*, for a discussion moderated by Kevin Wong on the reception of antiquity in video games, film, and the modern entertainment industry. On November 8, rounding off our sessions for the fall semester, Phoebe Lakin placed reception studies and the environmental humanities in dialogue, leading us through several ecocritical readings of Virgil’s *Georgics*.

The four of us have been hard at work on the details for the upcoming spring semester—including new session topics, research-sharing opportunities, and collaborations with peers from other universities. Do keep an eye out for an even more engaging and intellectually stimulating series in the spring! To join our mailing list, sign up on [our Google form](#).

— Sarah Gonzalez, Nate Herter, Phoebe Lakin, and Kevin Wong

NEW ISSUE OF PERSEPHONE

The 2022–23 issue of the undergraduate Classics journal *Persephone* is available on [the journal’s website](#). This publication was founded in 1995 by Harvard undergraduates and two students in the Harvard Extension School, Jack Cobb and Rodney Dennis, whose early work on *Persephone* is traced elsewhere in this newsletter (“Jack Cobb and Friends”).

This issue features work from undergraduate contributors who come from a wide range of institutions in the US and the UK and who approach classics in a myriad of ways, from argumentative essays to poetry (in ancient Greek and in English) to visual art. A heartfelt thanks to *Persephone*’s Editorial Board—and in particular the editor-in-chief, Fiona McFerrin-Clancy (’25)—for their tireless efforts.



UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

This semester has been a busy one! In August, Naomi Weiss (DUS) and Ryan Pasco (Undergraduate Program Coordinator) introduced themselves to incoming first-years at the Academic Fair. In late September, the department invited undergraduate students to see the American Repertory Theater's production of *The Half-God of Rainfall*, an epic fusing Greek mythology and Yoruba spirituality by playwright Inua Ellams. In October, we held a party for prospective concentrators, where first-years and sophomores heard from our faculty, staff, current students, and alum Patrick Sanguineti ('17). In November, at the annual Senior Thesis Colloquium, senior thesis writers presented on an exciting range of topics, including ancient Greek mathematics, sex workers in Latin elegy, Basquiat's classical reception, and digital augmentation of funerary artifacts.

Students have been hard at work, too! In May, the undergraduate Classics journal *Persephone* released its 2022–23 issue. This spring, the Harvard Classical Club will put on a production titled *Medea: The Musical*. Read more about each on pages 13 and 19.

We are delighted to welcome twenty-two sophomore concentrators—the highest number in years—to join the department's lively undergraduate community!



REMEMBRANCES

JACK COBB AND FRIENDS

It was about thirty years ago that I met John (Jack) Wheelwright Cobb (Harvard class of '49), who died peacefully at home on June 24, 2023, predeceased in 2022 by Ann, his wife of 69 years. Following his retirement in 1992 as a trust officer at Fiduciary Trust Company, Jack began a new phase of his life. In addition to becoming an accomplished landscape painter, he began taking Classics courses at Harvard, picking up where he had left off as an undergraduate, when his studies included a freshman conversation on the *Odyssey* with classicist John Finley in the fall of 1945. Almost a half-century later I was fortunate to teach him in a number of classes in the College and the Extension School. In these years he deepened his friendship with Rodney Dennis, who had retired a year earlier as Curator of Manuscripts at the Houghton Library. Their presence in the classroom was a delight, not just for me, but also for the Classics undergraduates in particular, who clearly enjoyed reading and discussing Latin poetry with these ebullient gentlemen as they embarked on their new odyssey. Jack was more of a Hellenist, and became a teacher of Greek in the Extension School, also taking and teaching classes with Ann in the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement; Rodney, more of a Latinist, went on to publish poetic translations of Catullus, Horace, and Tibullus, thence seamlessly to Giovanni Gioviano Pontano's *Baiae*, the hendecasyllabic collection edited by Jim Hankins in his wonderful *I Tatti Renaissance Library*.

It was through such classes that Jack and Rodney made contact with the undergraduates with whom they would co-found *Persephone*, first issue Spring 1995, with financial and other support from Greg Nagy and Zeph Stewart, chair of the department and trustee of the Loeb Classical Library respectively. Jack was President of the journal in those early years, and Rodney was, with others, Senior Editor—the self-irony of the epithet quite intentional. They along with undergraduates and graduate students both contributed poetry, articles, and artwork as did their friend, the acclaimed poet David Ferry, another supporter of the department, who also died in 2023, aged 99. The Harvard Gazette obituary for Rodney from October 2006 included this detail of *Persephone*: “This publication, now in its 12th year, offers the general reader prose, poetry, translation, and artwork relevant to the classics. His co-founder, John Cobb, writes: ‘He was the spark without which the engine could not have run’”—I am tempted to make a comment about two-stroke engines. It was a particular joy to see Jack and Rodney, who clearly relished their return to the classroom, giving inspiration to the department’s students, and taking inspiration from them. Their engagement, so evident in those early editions of *Persephone*, helped to launch a journal that is now approaching the end of its third decade.

— Richard Thomas

Previous page, top: Naomi Weiss chatting with a first-year student at the Academic Fair. Photo: Tejas Vadali.

Previous page, bottom: Concentrator Sophia Downs ('25) speaking at our party for prospective concentrators. Photo: Tejas Vadali.



KEVIN MCGRATH

Kevin McGrath, a dear friend of the Classics Department, died on November 4, 2023, after a valiant struggle with a brief and most destructive illness that he faced with his customary equanimity and grace. He was a stellar teacher and researcher, specializing in Sanskrit epic. After earning his PhD in Harvard's Department of Sanskrit, as it used to be called, he was offered a tenure-track professorship at Willamette University, but he turned down the offer, preferring his life in Cambridge as poet and scholar. Starting in 1995, he was Poet-in-Residence at Harvard's Lowell House. Nina Zipser and David Laibson, the current Faculty Deans of Lowell House, describe Kevin's role in shaping there a society of poets that has evolved, over 25 years now, into "the vibrant tradition it is today and will remain with his leadership, mentorship, and communal values as our guide," and they fondly remember how "he joyfully led each May Day Poetry reading and mentored countless writers and poets in the Lowell House community."

Meanwhile, as an Associate of the Department of South Asian Studies, Kevin published a plethora of scholarly books on Sanskrit epic, including *The Sanskrit Hero: Karna in Epic Mahabharata*, *Stri, Jaya, Heroic Krsna, Arjuna Pandava: The Double Hero in Epic Mahabharata*, *Raja Yudhisthira: Kingship in Epic Mahabharata*, *Bhisma Devavrata: Authority in Epic Mahabharata*. He also did fieldwork in the Kacch of Western Gujarat, culminating in a masterpiece of a memoir, *In the Kacch: A Memoir of Love and Place*.

Kevin also taught, most brilliantly, ancient Greek literature in translation, partnering with the writer of this eulogy in courses centering on ancient Greek heroes and organized for Harvard's Core Curriculum, also for the subsequent Program in General Education. More recently he taught a similar course for the Division of Continuing Education, earning the praise and lasting loyalty of countless grateful and admiring students.

Kevin McGrath will be sorely missed by his friends, colleagues, and students. Please see [here a personal tribute](#) by the writer of this eulogy.

— Gregory Nagy

GLORIA FERRARI PINNEY



We mourn the loss this past September of Gloria Ferrari Pinney, a beloved member of our department from 1998 until her retirement in 2003. The recipient of numerous distinctions, including awards from the American Philosophical Society, the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy in Rome, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, Gloria was a truly interdisciplinary scholar. While she established her reputation as a classical archaeologist and art historian, her later work, especially in books such as *Figures of Speech: Men and Maidens in Ancient Greece* (2002; winner of the Archaeological Institute of America's Wiseman Book Award) and *Alcman and the Cosmos of Sparta* (2008), lay firmly at the intersection of material culture and literary interpretation. Philologists and archaeologists alike turned to her work for illuminating, often breathtakingly original insights.

Those who knew her personally might remember her best for her warmth, humor, and generosity. She was a devoted teacher and mentor who developed life-long friendships with her students. She was an ideal colleague, whose wisdom and collaborative spirit enlivened and enlightened every aspect of the life of the department.

A selection of her papers, edited by former students, friends, and colleagues, will soon be published by Harvard University Press. She is greatly missed.

— David Elmer