# Classics

## Department of Classics Annual Newsletter Summer 2025

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Classics
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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# Department of Classics

Annual Newsletter | Summer 2025


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"Fragment of a Head,"
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# Ex Cathedra

## Message from the Chair

*Professor George Boys-Stones*
*Chair of the Department of Classics*


On April 25 this year, we inaugurated a new lecture series, the Arts and Science Lecture in Classics, which was delivered to a packed audience by Harvard's Emily Greenwood. The purpose of this series – generously funded by the Faculty of Arts and Science (and brilliantly organized by Prof. Victoria Wohl and graduate student Letticia Cosbert-Miller) – is to showcase the perennial capacity of Classics to enable imaginative and critical thought about the world we live in (Prof. Greenwood spoke about the myth of Odysseus as a way of thinking about the experience of immigrants and refugees). That capacity, of course, is what makes students of Classicists so well equipped to flourish in an astonishing diversity of occupations after their degree. It has been a particular pleasure for me this year to connect with our alumni. We participated for the first time in the University's "Backpack to Briefcase" series, bringing inspirational alumni in to talk about their careers to current students. April saw the successful expansion of our annual "Donor Appreciation Lecture" to an event for "Alumni and Donors": Simon Goldhill, Professor of Classics and Fellow of Kings College Cambridge, spoke on "touch" in Classical literature including (sic) the New Testament. We are always looking for donors of course (find us at engage.utoronto.ca) – in fact we rely ever more on the generosity of our benefactors, especially to support the funding packages that allow us to attract the excellent graduate students we have. But we are also keen to keep in contact with alumni/ae who can help bridge the imaginative gap between the study of Classics and what it empowers our students to be in society.

Not, I should say, that our students need much convincing to study with us: undergraduate course and programme enrolments continue to rise, the languages are stronger and more popular than ever, and the undergraduate student society is thriving (its Ancient Food Days have become a popular fixture in the University's calendar). Sarah Beke, Eli Vodarek-Berman and Abdullah Zafar were all prizewinners in the Classical Association of Canada (CAC) Sight Competition this year; Daniel Featherby won first prize in Latin and second in Greek!

Meanwhile, Jackson Hase won a prize for the graduate trophy cupboard: the 2025 Graduate Student Presentation Prize, awarded at the CAC Annual Meeting, which this year took place in Winnipeg. And Don McCarthy became the second consecutive winner from our Department of the University's CI Teaching Excellence Award – Kat Furtado won it last year. This award is a substantial achievement, since it is open to all graduate course instructors in the Faculty of Arts and Science, and it is a remarkable testimony to our graduate body that they have brought it home to the Department twice in a row!

We are delighted to welcome a new superstar Greek literature specialist to our faculty – Dylan Kenny, who started with us in July: you can find out more about him on pp. 12-13 . He replaces seasoned superstar Homerist Jonathan Burgess, who retired at the end of June after 30 years in the Department – although we will still have him around as he sees through a SSHRC-funded project on Polyphemus, and will continue to do some teaching. We celebrate the award of tenure to Kenneth Yu and his promotion to Associate Professor: this milestone comes with the right to a year's research and study leave, and Kenneth will spend part of his in Los Angeles as a Getty Villa Scholar, working on religious experience in antiquity. We are equally delighted that Carrie Atkins, who teaches in the Department of Historical Studies at UTM and is a member of our graduate faculty, has also been awarded tenure and promotion.

We have another exciting year in prospect, with a senior search in Late Antiquity and plans under way for the next iterations of those lecture series – it is a Classics year for the Stubbs Lecture at University College as well: Emily Wilson will be coming. Keep an eye on our website, and consider yourself warmly invited to these, and any other of our advertised lectures that catch your eye. If I haven't already, I look forward to meeting you!


# Department Accomplishments



## FACULTY

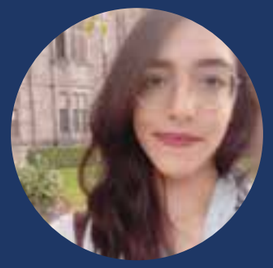
**Katherine Blouin awarded Jackman Humanities Faculty Research Fellowship in December 2024.** Katherine's Fellowship Research Project is titled Dystopian Ruins, Trusted Simulacra: Classics, Archaeology, and the Construction of Modern Alexandria and Toronto. Dystopian Ruins explores how Classics and archaeology were instrumental to the modern European colonisation of Alexandria and Toronto between 1805 and 1914.

**Celebrating Jonathan Burgess as he retires after 30 years with the Department.** Faculty members and partners came together on May 2, 2025 for a dinner to celebrate Jonathan Burgess's 30 years as a colleague. Read his interview on pages 14-15.

**Kenneth Yu promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure; awarded 2025/2026 Getty Scholars Program Fellowship.** Kenneth was granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor, beginning July 1, 2025. In 2026, he will be part of the Getty Villa Scholars group, whose theme is "Religious Experience in Antiquity."

**Carrie Atkins promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure.** Carrie is an archaeologist specializing in maritime connections in the ancient Mediterranean. She is a member of our graduate faculty as well as the Classical Civilisation group in the Department of Historical Studies at UTM.

# GRADUATE STUDENTS



**Claudia Paparella awarded Jacobi Stipendium.** This international scholarship will enable her to spend Fall 2025 in Munich, working at the Commission for Ancient History and Epigraphy at the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut.

**Jackson Hase awarded Graduate Student Presentation Prize at 2025 CAC Conference.** Jack's presentation was titled "Sending Letters to Nobody: Distance and Information in Late Antiquity."

# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

**Maya Smart awarded UofT Excellence Award.** This summer she joined Professor Seth Bernard at Falerii Novi as part of a project to trace the production and distribution of Roman Republican "black gloss" pottery.



# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS

**Chau/Chan Scholarship in Classics**
Frank Qiao
**Chau Family Undergraduate Scholarship in Classics**
John Weachter
**C. B. Farrar Undergraduate Scholarship in Classics**
Abdullah Zafar
**Graham Campbell Fellowship in Memory of Maurice Hutton in Classics**
Izzy Friesen
**W. B. Wiegand Prize in Ancient Greek**
Izzy Friesen
**Dorothy Ellison Scholarship in Latin**
Sergen Hisar
**Dorothy Ellison Graduating Scholarship in Latin**
Izzy Friesen
**Eric Trevor Owen Scholarship in Greek**
Tallulah Valliere-Paul
**Ancient Greek History Undergraduate Award**
Tallulah Valliere-Paul & Eli Vodarek-Berman
**John Spina Undergraduate Award in Classics (Intermediate Greek/Latin)**
Grace Huang-Zhan, Brooke Headrick, Nicole Jacquette, Kate Levey, Joshua Ng, Frank Qiao, Sophie Stankovic, Wenzhao Wang, Abdullah Zafar
**All Souls Historical Essay Scholarship in Ancient History**
John Weachter

# CAC SIGHT TRANSLATION WINNERS

**1st Prize in Junior Latin and 2nd Prize in Junior Greek**
Daniel Featherby
**3rd Prize in Junior Greek**
Sarah Beke
**2nd Prize in Junior Latin**
Eli Vordarek-Berman
**3rd Prize in Senior Greek**
Abdullah Zafar

# *Spotlight Interviews*

Faculty Spotlight

# Dylan Kenny

A warm welcome to Professor Dylan Kenny, who joined the Department in July 2025. Prof. Kenny's research focuses on archaic and classical Greek poetry and intellectual history, with particular interests in Pindar, Bacchylides, the Sophists, and the history of classical scholarship. Prof. Kenny received his PhD in Classics from the University of California, Berkeley in 2023 and taught at the University of Cincinnati before joining us this summer.

**What in particular drew you to Pindar's poetry? What is it like being a Pindarist?**

It wasn't love at first sight. I first learned Greek in an intensive course in college which concluded with some Plato and Euripides. The following semester, I somehow ended up in a class on Pindar. I remember feeling completely out of my depth, maybe even slightly betrayed – how was this still the language I had just spent so much effort learning? And what could one begin to say about these poems, which appeared at once baroquely patterned and totally uncontrolled? Needless to say, it didn't click for me then. I didn't touch Pindar for years, but in graduate school I was able to devote a year to reading the whole corpus – and then I was hooked, by the poems' extraordinary formal experimentation, but also by the question of just what these experiments were meant to achieve, and why they were so celebrated, in their own time. Even now, that original vertiginous feeling has not disappeared, but it has become richer and deeper. Pindar stretches our sense of sense. This is one reason that a later poet like Hölderlin found him so fascinating. And it's one reason why he is such an interesting, if sometimes frustrating, author to study. You can come right up to the edge of meaning, and watch Pindar just run out over the abyss like the Road Runner in the old cartoons.

**What other aspects of ancient literature are you currently most interested in beyond Pindar? What are your other favourite authors, works, periods etc.? Any future research plans you can give us a sneak peak of?**

My current research project situates Pindar in the broader intellectual history of the fifth century, which means that I get to read a wide variety of texts, from Herodotus and Empedocles to the Hippocratic corpus and the Dissoi Logoi. This is one of the great joys of working across genres, and I'd like my future projects to maintain this kind of wide scope. At the same time, I'm particularly interested in the ways that certain formal impulses get picked up in different genres – so, for example, I've been thinking recently about the gnōmē or the short maxim, both as a form that traverses poetry and prose, but also as a privileged object of reading practices in antiquity and early modernity.

**Outside of reading ancient literature, what else do you enjoy doing? Do you ever have time to watch or read for pure pleasure? If so, any recommendations for our readers?**

I love getting outside, so it's been a treat getting to explore some of Toronto's parks and ravines. As for pleasure reading, it's been a pretty busy summer, with moving and getting settled, so I've been more inclined lately to whatever I can pick up and put down with ease, or gobble up in one sitting: short stories, poems, etc. New to me are the lovely tales of Johann Peter Hebel, a kind of 19th-century Lutheran Hesiod who regularly wrote stories and articles for a farmer's almanac (in addition to much else). I came to him through his many admirers: Kafka, for example, said one of his stories was "the most wonderful in the world." I also enjoyed the poet Robyn Schiff's recent Information Desk: An Epic, which I read in part to see how a poem that calls itself an "epic" in 2024 thinks about epic. But I found much more: like Hebel, in fact, Schiff has a keen interest in labor, a penchant for zoological detail, and a knack for a wry story (including, e.g., her chance encounter with JFK, Jr. at the Metropolitan Museum information desk).

**What are you most looking forward to about living in Toronto?**

There is so much here – art, music, film, and the amazing intellectual community of the university. It's also wonderful to live in a city with such great public spaces and parks. I'm looking forward to seeing how Toronto changes with the seasons. In the summer heat, I've been biking around to the abundant splash pads of the local playgrounds with my two-year-old, but I'm told that soon enough ice rinks will sprout up in the very same parks.

This June marked the bittersweet retirement of Jonathan Burgess after teaching in Classics at UofT for 30 years. While faculty and students are sad to see him retire, they know Burgess will remain a devoted member of the Classics community. He will even be appearing at the front of the lecture hall before some eager undergraduates this upcoming year. As he begins to enjoy his well-earned leisure, we sat down with Burgess to reflect on his career as well as to look at what's next.

**How did you come to study Classics, focus your research on Homer, and arrive at your career path?**

I took some Latin in high school. The small school my parents taught at started the program when I began 9th grade, and I signed up with a small group, many of them friends. We learned a lot at a casual pace, though I did get into trouble when I persuaded my classmates to write nonsense Latin on the board for our homework on April Fools' Day. The teacher was not amused. For my third year of Latin, I was in a much more ambitious Latin program at Collegiate School in Manhattan, where my dad worked. We read Cicero, which I loved, even though I was not up to speed. I opted out in my senior year, but Cicero stayed with me as I developed my academic writing style. I did some more Latin in college, some Plautus rather unhappily but very happily Horace and especially Catullus. Greek started by chance. I took a course reading all of the *Iliad* in translation in my junior year, and the professor suggested, to my surprise, that I take up Greek. I told him I only had another year of college, and he replied "You like Homer, and we teach Greek with Pharr's Homeric intro textbook. By the time you graduate you will have read half of Book 1 of the *Iliad* in Greek." Me: "Sign me up." Loved it, then moved on, so I thought, but when I was employed as a social worker in that college town (Waterville, Maine) I was encouraged to sit in on classes, and eventually through references I got into a two-year MA program in Lexington, KY. That was followed by some Latin teaching in Kentucky and Washington DC before I decided to try out a PhD program.

**What brought you to UofT?**

As the previous answer might suggest, I tend to make decisions by impulse and feel, often after a prayer or two to the gods. One of my Kentucky teachers knew Emmett Robbins, and I chose UofT over Chicago for that reason (and also because I had been to French River with my wife and Canada seemed cool). Mostly I was again shocked to be accepted despite my odd on-and-off Classics training.

**What is your fondest memory from your 30 years teaching and researching at U of T? Is there any work you are particularly proud of?**

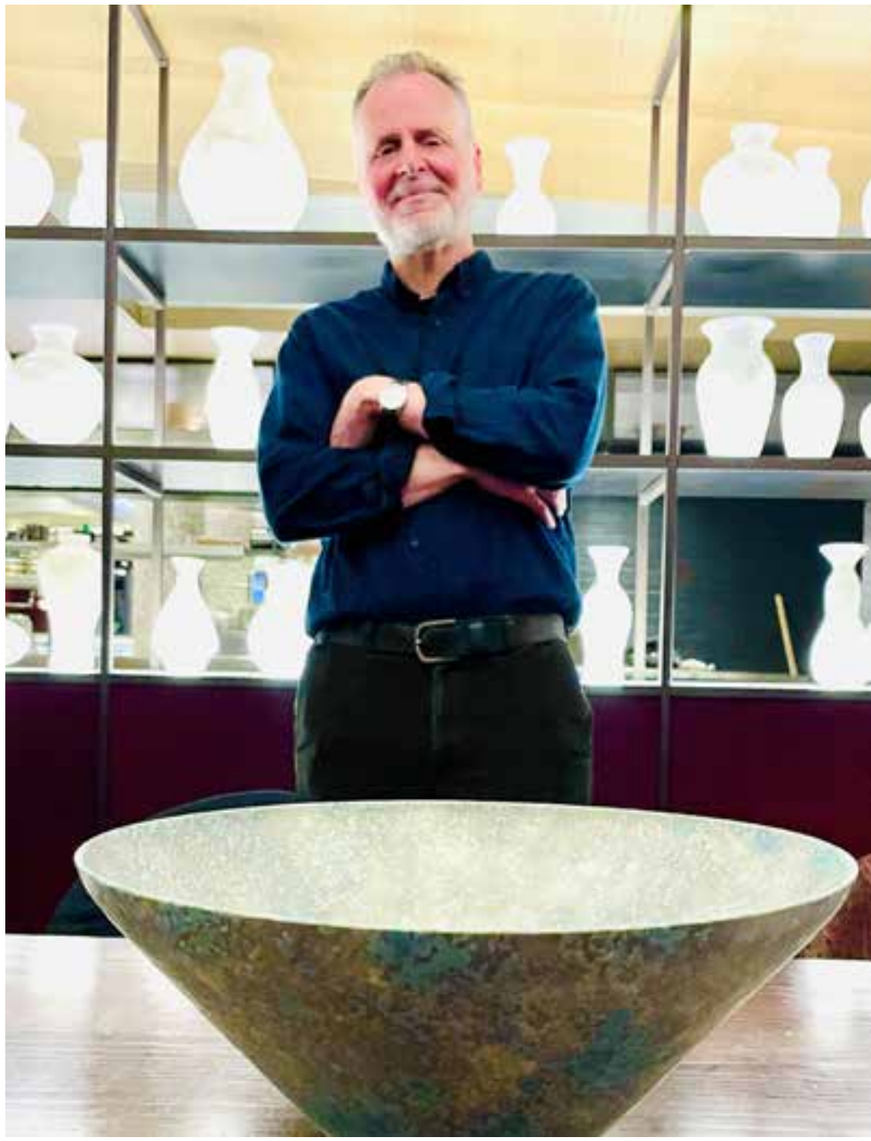
I enjoyed all varieties of classes, from the CLA160 and CLA myth courses (year-long courses when I was first teaching them) to the language courses (a lot of Latin teaching at first, given my employment record), the undergraduate and graduate Homer courses (including a grad seminar in which we read all of the *Odyssey* in twelve weeks and another in which we read most of the *Iliad* in a semester—the kind of course that one unfortunately is not allowed to teach anymore). But especially fun were first year seminars on reception of Homer, where I always had great groups of kids who were go-getters and enthusiastic about the Homeric epics and their reception. I learned a lot from them and often publish about reception of Homer. I think my favorite publication is my 2015 book Homer. It's designed as an introduction, and I wrote in the style of teaching and had fun with it. There was no pressure to clutter it up with footnotes and bibliography. When I dip into this book these days it seems informative and fun, if I do say myself.

**Do you have any kernel of wisdom or secret insight to share with those looking to or just beginning their careers in Classics?**

That's a good question, and I often talk to graduate students about this issue, as well as the related issue for undergraduates about why take Classics courses, especially Latin and Greek. I began to give a short history of the starts and stops and ups and downs in my study of Classics on the first day of undergraduate classes, and to my surprise students really liked this and often told me so years later. I think they appreciated my honesty about my unusual personal story, the challenges and the good luck, as outlined above. Finding your way, experimenting, keeping chill, and persevering. I think students assume we are geniuses or something, and they like to hear the truth about our very human ups and downs and our career challenges. For graduate students it is a tough career to get into, but I encourage students to have fun with it whatever the prospects, as I did with beginning Latin in the 9th grade. It's never going to be a waste of time to learn about Classical literature and the ancient world.

**How do you plan to spend your retirement? Is there anything you are particularly looking forward to?**

I have a SSHRC fund that ends in early 2029 on the Polyphemus episode and its reception, so I'll be working, though with a relatively free schedule. This summer I've had to catch up on a couple of papers and now I'm writing up a paper to deliver at the Homer conference in Ithaca (no, not New York Ithaca; the real Homeric Ithaca, a lovely island). That's work and travel, which I've always been happy to mix. Otherwise, I like hanging around in my neighborhood near the Junction and High Park, walking the dog, catching up my reading, trying to exercise, trying to play the piano, etc. Next spring I'll teach the scientific terminology course, which I look forward to for the etymology if not the science.



Faculty Spotlight

# Jonathan Burgess

Faculty Spotlight

# John Magee

**Reflecting on your own rich academic journey, which includes experience both as a doctoral student here at the University of Toronto and as an Emeritus professor at the same institution, how do you perceive the evolution of both yourself and this university over these four decades? What initially drew you to the University of Toronto, and what drew you back to this community after the completion of your doctorate?**

I entered graduate studies at the UofT in 1980, after a year during which as a Special Status student I took graduate courses in Classics and Medieval Studies out of a raw curiosity about the institutional landscape here. Antiquity, the Middle Ages, philology, philosophy—I couldn't decide between periods or disciplines and saw nowhere that accommodated the full range as comprehensively or as well as UofT did. And that was that—a naïve but happy decision. Looking back now, I have no idea how to begin describing the evolution, either of myself or of UofT, over the course of the intervening decades. Some reasons for returning in 1992 will come up, also a few thoughts about change.

**As both a product and a contributor to the University of Toronto's academic community, what aspects of your work here do you consider most impactful or meaningful? What brought you to UofT?**

I felt that I owed UofT a great deal by the time I'd completed the PhD and returned to the US for my first academic position (1986), where I immediately appreciated the deep and broad preparation I'd received here. That sense of debt factored into my decision to join UofT in 1992. I hadn't anticipated spending so many years in administrative work, and would have made more focused efforts to avoid it if I had, but the feeling of indebtedness saw me through many of the inevitably dark administrative moments. For about two decades, the public face of the UofT has made a virtue of some of the financial exigencies it faces, especially at the provincial level. An informal observation made by a physicist, I remember, to the effect that UofT is like a bee, which by the laws of nature should be unable to fly, then caught the attention of the Faculty of Arts & Science and now has UofT extolling the merits of Defying Gravity. Cynicism is an easy trap to fall into, but the fact is that UofT did, and does, accomplish a lot with little, which I take seriously despite the challenges it entails. Impact, meaning? Very little. There's the pleasure of having been able to pursue the research I did, the satisfaction of having taught the students I did, and a general belief that the institution depends on those who make the administrative sacrifice in sober awareness of the fact that it's not about lasting impact or a deep sense of meaning but about keeping things running as well as possible for the sake, finally, of students, undergraduate and graduate.

**Throughout your tenure, *volventibus annis*, you've likely witnessed significant changes in academia, in terms of methodologies, perspectives, and technological advancements. How have these changes impacted your approach to research and teaching?**

At Columbia I struggled with the user's manual for a word processor called XyWrite in 1986, and watched a colleague send an "email" via a "modem" in 1991; the Greek corpus was newly searchable via some machine I've forgotten the name of, and Apple released the Mac Classic ("Brand new, and already a Classic!"), which conveniently handled Greek fonts and had a graphic interface involving a "mouse" ("Das ist aber keine Maus!" a visiting German scholar earnestly remarked on seeing it). I was behind then and have remained so since; I used various technologies as well as I could but essentially approached teaching and research in ways that maintained strict distinctions between means and ends in that regard. Changes in methodologies and perspectives seem somehow perennial: *in ipsa sui mutabilitate constantia*—even the codex, after all, was once a major technological innovation. In the event, I've enjoyed considerable freedom at UofT in figuring out where I fit amidst the changing currents.

**As you prepare to transition into retirement, how do you perceive the continuity between your past experiences and the future direction of Classics, especially regarding your interests in ancient philosophy and textual criticism?**

A difficult question, given that I had no formal training in ancient philosophy (*nec umquam philosophum audivi*) but got there via Classics and stayed there because of the textual criticism and commentary entailed by recovery of the texts that I was studying. To return to a previous point, UofT was extraordinary in this regard, especially after the launch of the Collaborative Program (now Specialization) in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy: I found the easy flow between ancient and medieval and between philology and philosophy nourishing, and remain grateful for that.

**Do you have any advice to give young academics or aspiring professors based on your experiences? How do you perceive the evolving landscape of academic research and publication, and what opportunities and challenges do you foresee for future scholars in this digital age?**

If I did, it would be obsolete by the time I could gather the concentration to articulate it. Like others, I've thought about it in connection with the individual graduate students I've supervised and the different supervisory committees I've served on, but without ever coming to the same conclusions. The only generally applicable lesson I can think of is that things work best when students have a strong, clear sense of the direction in which they want to head and why—*scito te ipsum*—and faculty members have a firm grasp of the requisite means to their chosen ends. As to the second question, one of the reasons for the decision to retire is precisely that I don't see myself as a reliable guide through the future challenges of the digital age, that's for younger colleagues.

*Photo credit: Diana Tyszko.*

Postdoc Spotlight

# Efthymia Tsiolaki

**Your current research focus—the archaeology of rural populations in the Bronze Age Aegean—sounds fascinating. Can you give us a snapshot of your project? What specifically have you been working on and discovering recently?**

Research on the Late Bronze Age Aegean has focused heavily on palaces and elite centers, but my project shifts attention to the peripheral communities that supported and interacted with them. In Messenia, my case study area, much of what we know about the regional social and economic organization comes from the palace's Linear B archive, which arguably reflects the perspective of the palace. I instead rely mainly on surface survey data to investigate smaller settlements on the periphery. Currently, I'm studying how pottery types compare across sites to understand variations in economic activity, social status, and regional connections. Early results suggest these communities may have been more diverse than previously thought, and not merely passive recipients of elite control. This helps build a more nuanced picture of how the countryside fits into the larger palatial system.

**Do you have any other future research projects you dream of completing? If so, do you care to a give us a sense of what you hope to look at next?**

I think I have more dream projects than I'll ever have time to complete, as I suspect is true for many of us! One that I've been steadily developing builds on my work as a ground stone tool specialist in several archaeological projects. These often-understudied tools range from grinding slabs and mortars/pestles for food preparation, to axes and adzes for farming and building, and more specialized implements such as anvils and hammers used in metallurgy, just to name a few. Because of this range, they offer valuable insight into daily life, ancient economies, and craft production. My research traces their life cycle: from raw material procurement to manufacture, use, and discard. Eventually, I hope to write a book that uses ground stone tools as a lens for exploring broader questions of everyday life and economic organization in the ancient world.

**For those of us out of the loop, could you tell us more about what being an archaeologist is like and your journey to becoming one?**

Although archaeology is part of Classics, it can feel like an entirely different world! A lot of our work takes place in the field (excavating, surveying, or studying artifacts), but we also spend significant time in the library conducting research. Archaeology is also a highly collaborative field, and often specialists with different expertise work together to obtain perspectives that would be impossible without an interdisciplinary approach. For example, in one of my ground stone tool projects I work closely with other specialists to understand how people processed grains and used domestic spaces. Ultimately, what I find most fascinating is that there's always the potential to uncover something that significantly changes our understanding of the past. I imagine it's similar to how philologists might feel now, with the exciting possibility that the Herculaneum papyri might reveal entirely new texts.

As for my personal journey in archaeology, growing up in Greece, I was exposed to the ancient world early on, which influenced my decision to study archaeology. As an undergrad, I joined my first archaeological project and I was fascinated by how much information a few pottery sherds could reveal: how people used natural resources, their daily lives, social status, and contacts with other regions. In Greece, I also worked in several international projects, which exposed me to different methods and approaches and shaped my decision to continue my studies abroad.

**Your studies have taken you across the Atlantic from Greece to Cincinnati and now up north to Toronto. How does Toronto compare to where you've lived before? What are your favourite parts of living here?**

I've lived in Toronto since 2020, and I really enjoy the city. Because of my studies in Cincinnati, I was familiar with the lifestyle and scale of North American cities, which are quite different in comparison to Greece. What I find very inspiring and unique about Toronto, however, is how the different neighborhoods of the city reflect the cultural diversity of its residents. It feels like travelling to different parts of the world within just a few blocks!

Alumni Spotlight

# Chiara Graf

**Tell us about your career path since graduating from UofT in 2020: what were some highlights and some challenges on the road to where you are today?**

After graduating from UofT, I held two temporary teaching positions in the UK, one at the University of St Andrews, and one at the University of Warwick, before getting a tenure-track job at the University of Maryland (UMD) in 2022. The biggest challenge was, predictably, the precarity of those first two years: though I had it easier than many people, I still found it very difficult to adapt to teaching in the British university system while also constantly being on the market for the next job. Another big challenge about that time was the feeling that everything I did, I was doing for the first time: first job talk, first time teaching outside of UofT, first article, first book, etc. It seemed like I was constantly being overwhelmed by some new insurmountable hurdle!

Of course, there were lots of highlights, too. I had some really smart, kind, and welcoming colleagues in the UK, a number of whom are still among my closest friends and interlocutors. I've stayed in touch with some of my students from that time as well, one of whom is now pursuing a PhD!

**How has your experience been at the University of Maryland? What are your favourite parts about working in the Classics Department there? What are the best parts of life in Maryland itself?**

Genuinely, I couldn't have asked for a better job than the one at UMD! The Classics department here is small and close-knit, and I think our students really appreciate the sense of community we provide within a large, STEM-focused university. We have an MA program in Classics, and I've discovered that I love teaching students at this critical juncture in their scholarly careers. They tend to be very curious, eager, and truly fun to have in class. I even started a graduate Theory Reading Group, modeled after the one led by Victoria Wohl at UofT (which was a highlight of my grad career)!

I actually live in Washington, D.C., which is within easy commuting distance to UMD. The best part is definitely the seemingly endless amount of art, movies, and music that you can access for free. There's also a lot of natural beauty nearby. I recently went camping on Maryland's Assateague Island, an island inhabited by wild ponies that spend their days roaming around the dunes.

**Congratulations on the recent publication of your first monograph—Seneca's Affective Cosmos (OUP, 2024)! What was the process like of converting your dissertation into a book? What else have you been working on and publishing in the last 5 years?**

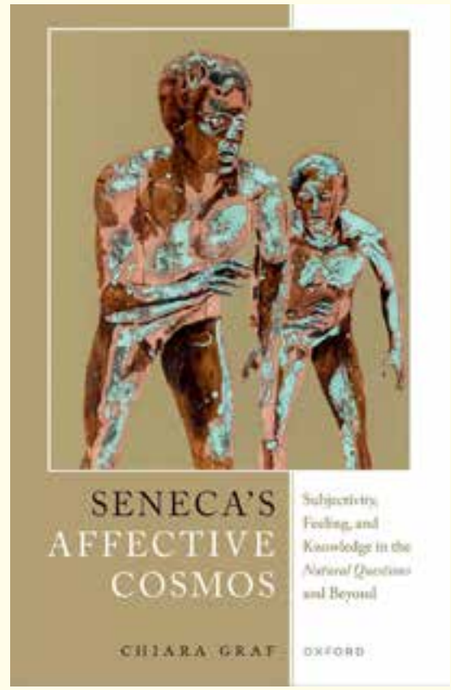
Thank you! In retrospect, it was a rewarding and relatively painless experience, although if you had asked me two years ago I probably would have said something different! I submitted my manuscript to the press fairly quickly after graduating, and I spent the bulk of my time working on the revisions recommended by the peer reviewers. I found it enormously helpful to have some concrete guidance and objections to respond to as I reworked my manuscript. Ultimately, it was really satisfying to see my ideas develop through the revise and resubmit process (though my book is still far from perfect, and looking back on it two years after submitting the final draft, I can already see a lot I'd change).

While Seneca will always be my first scholarly love, he and I are on a bit of a break right now. These days I spend my time with a grab-bag of idiosyncratic Imperial Romans. I have two articles coming out this Fall, one called "Phaedrus's Fables and the Weight of Rule," and another called "Archive and Acervus: Heaping Exempla in Valerius Maximus and Frontinus;" this summer, I'm working on pieces on Apuleius and Seneca the Elder. Despite the miscellaneous nature of these authors, I've been noticing some recurring themes emerging, and I'm looking forward to easing into my next long-term project soon.

**We all know the life of a professor is very busy, but if you've had any time for extracurricular reading or viewing, what have you been into recently? Any recommendations for our readers?**

I love this question! I've been reading *Clarissa* by Samuel Richardson for a while now, but it's so long that I have to take breaks to read contemporary novels. One of my favorites that I read last semester was *Loved and Missed* by Susie Boyt.

As for movies, I just watched Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Syndromes and a Century*, and I can't recommend it highly enough. The minute it ended, I wanted to watch it again! I also watch a lot of Italian movies. Two fun ones I've seen recently have been Marco Bellocchio's *Slap the Monster on Page One* and Luchino Visconti's *Le Notti Bianche*.




Seneca's Affective Cosmos, *Prof. Graf's first monograph, published in 2024.*

# Department Reports

# CGSU REPORT

Angus Wilson,
Classics Graduate Student
Union President

At the close of one academic year (and with another incipient!), it's a pleasure to have the occasion to look back on the many successes and achievements of the graduate students over 2024-25, as well as the ways in which we've addressed the concerns arising from our AGM in October 2024.

One of the primary goals of the CGSU executive this year has been to work with the Department to establish a precedent for the orientation of incoming students each year. This was born of a shared acknowledgement that the first week is very important in shaping student experience, establishing cultural priorities, and encouraging an environment of supportive collegiality within the Department. In the pursuit of this, we have worked alongside Profs. Akrigg and Boys-Stones to arrange informal social events that precede the September sight examinations, as well as inviting other university divisions (UTGSU, CUPE, ARCDO) to participate in an orientation event alongside the Department's and the CGSU's own in-house provisions.

Additionally, the CGSU Executive has been working alongside the Department Executive to understand the best way forward for the graduate student examination system. From these discussions, we are working with the Department Executive to address the specification of editions on the reading list, and the inclusion of those texts in the Woodbury Library – many thanks are due to Taylor Stark for his efforts on this latter point. More generally, further discussions on the subject of the graduate examinations are ongoing.

Beyond these efforts, I am fortunate that the happy task of cataloguing the many triumphs of the graduate students over the past year is mine. Warm congratulations are in order for two from our ranks who successfully defended, Anthony Antunes and Katerina Apokatanidis! The graduate students also distinguished themselves at the CAC this year, with Jackson Hase taking the Graduate Student Presentation Prize; Jackson also presented at SCS in January, as did Don McCarthy, Vittorio Bottini, Katerina Apokatanidis, and Taylor Stark – well done all! Further boughs were added to the many palms won this year by Don McCarthy, who won the TATP Course Instructor Teaching Excellence Award, and Claudia Paparella, who received the Jacobi Stipendium to work at the Commission for Ancient History and Epigraphy in Fall 2025.

Before closing my comments, I will take a moment to thank the CGSU executive this year, whose continuous efforts have made the year the success it was: thank you to David Jacks (Vice President), Tiphaine Lahuec (Treasurer), Nicholas Odom (Social Chair), and Jessie Ethier (Secretary). Each member has done exceptional work in taking on the additional responsibilities of being on the executive. Social events, coordination and engagement with UTGSU, continued updates to the Woodbury Drive and chat, and close care of the CGSU's finances are essential for supporting the graduate student body. Thanks are also due to the broader CGSU constituency, without whose continued attendance at the AGM and engagement with the health of their union the efforts of the entire executive would be in vain – thank you all. Finally, my thanks go out to the Department Executive – Profs. Boys-Stones (Chair), Akrigg (Graduate Chair), and Wilkinson (Undergraduate Chair) – for their support and transparency in working with us over the last year.

To provide a final update of the utmost importance: the CGSU executive has purchased a couch for the Woodbury Library. Thank you to Prof. Boys-Stones for his support on this; and to my fellow students, *bene quiescatis*.

# CLASSU REPORT

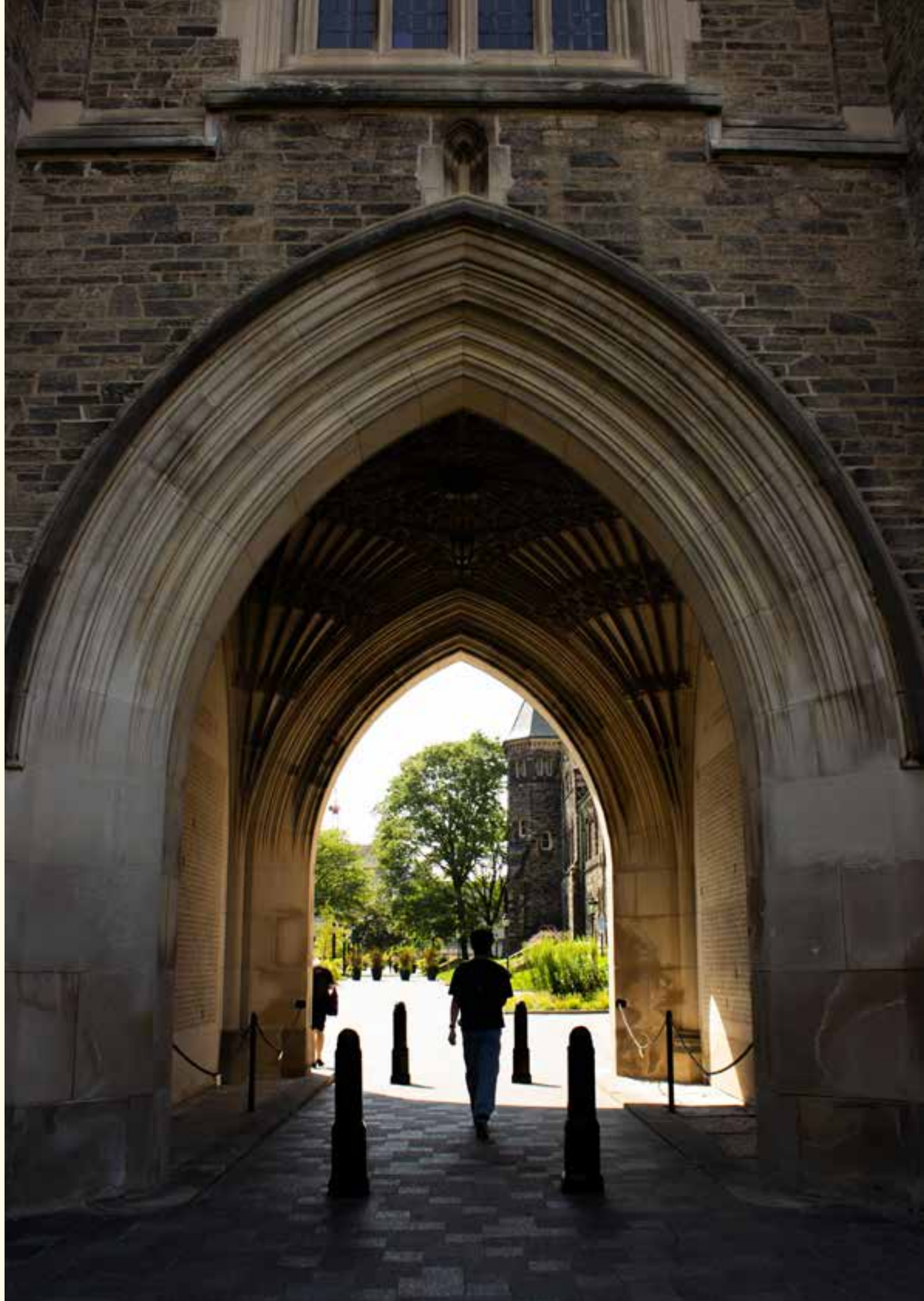
Tessa Clare Delaney-Girotti & Teodora Mladin,
Co-Presidents of the
Classics Students' Union

CLASSU is elated to report another fantastic year of initiative and programming made available to the student body, organized by our executives, and with much help from the Classics Department. On top of continuing some of our established initiatives, such as our bi-annual Ancient Food Day and our Academic Seminars, the CLASSU executive body also introduced (and re-introduced) initiatives that have helped further build community among the students.

From Latin and Greek poetry recitals to Discussions in Classics, students were able to share their enthusiasm for ancient literature and topics that go beyond the classroom. Such initiatives have encouraged engagement with ancient materials and allowed students to ignite inspiration in one another.

We are also proud to announce the publication of *Plebeian XI*, our student journal, featuring papers from undergraduate students that cover a wide scope of remarkable topics. *Plebeian XI* showcases some of the immensely insightful research that the undergraduate body brings to this field. A great success thanks to our Editor-In-Chief Anoushka Banerjie, Deputy Editor-in-Chief Micah Heinricks, and Head Associate Editor Tallulah Valliere-Paul. Additionally, we were honoured to host our department's first Graduation Reception, celebrating the hard work done by students, and honouring their achievements among faculty and peers at Hart House.

Of course, all of this was achieved with the incredible help of the department. Faculty, graduate students, and staff have provided support from all sides, allowing CLASSU to have another successful year. We truly could not have done it without your help. We would especially like to thank Professor Boys-Stones, Professor Wilkinson, Professor Akrigg, Professor Sutton, Angus Wilson, Taylor Stark, Georgia Ferentinou, and Don McCarthy.



# *PLEBEIAN* REPORT

Anoushka Banerjie,
Editor-in-Chief,
*Plebeian*: Journal of the Classics Students' Union

The eleventh volume of *Plebeian* kicks off a new decade of Classics undergraduate scholarship, and we believed it might be interesting to cast our net a little bit wider this year. Our publication boasts seven papers covering laws, artistic choices, linguistic examinations, and cross-cultural narratives across the ancient Mediterranean. Each of our authors used skills learned outside Classics to analyze and write on their specific topics, bringing to light the importance of interdisciplinary learning. We have also continued the First Year Feature: Maya Barmi's paper on grief in Catullus' Carmina III received a lengthy discussion portion during the Assembly of the Plebs. The Assembly in general had a huge audience turnout, both in person and over Zoom. We were worried about having enough chairs!

We began this volume with a vision of inclusivity and diversity, aiming to bring campus-wide attention to Classics. It's an ambitious goal, to be sure, but this year, I'm proud to say that *Plebeian* reached the Listservs of several departments, including Anthropology, History, and Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations. We also received a record number of top notch paper submissions from students enrolled in a range of studies. While we can't accept them all, we'd like to direct them to *Ecclesia*, our Substack for shorter, but no less informative blog posts. Former Editor-in-Chief Piper Hays launched this last summer, and we'd love to continue it. *Ecclesia* encourages undergraduates to showcase their work, but without the intense pressure of the *Plebeian* editing process.

Lastly, *Plebeian Vol. XI* has been published, and you can read it online or you can grab a copy from the CLASSU Lounge (LI009). As the current Executives are now graduate students, we look forward to seeing who will pick up the torch in the Fall and where they'll take the journal next. As always, a huge thanks is due to CLASSU and the Classics Department for all of their help. We hope to see the journal grow even more in the coming months!

*Photo: Aerial view of the UTM campus.*
*Source: Wikimedia Commons.*

# UTM REPORT

The Classical Civilization Program at the University of Toronto Mississauga welcomed a number of visitors this year who contributed to the program's successful events. Dr. Moshe Bildstein from the University of Haifa was Visiting Professor in Historical Studies for the entire academic year and he gave a very stimulating University of Toronto Mississauga Annual Classics Seminar (UTMACS) discussion and paper. To UTMACS, we also welcomed Cillian O'Hogan (Centre for Medieval Studies, UofT) and Fabio Colivicchi (Queens). In January, Philip Egetenmeier from the University of Hamburg, who has joined the Classics Program in Historical Studies as a postdoctoral fellow for two years, presented the first results of his current research project. In February, Andreas Bendlin organised a colloquium in memory of Roger Beck, where Martin Revermann, Aldo Tagliabue, Mareile Haase, John Kloppenborg, Matt McCarthy, and Andreas Bendlin offered important papers on areas of Prof. Beck's interest and reflected on his contributions. Finally, in March we hosted Profs. Bettina Reitz-Joosse (University of Groningen) and Glenn Most (Scuola Normale Superiore/The University of Chicago) for our Classics and the World Today 7 event, in which they discussed "Buildings as Metaphors: Constructing Understanding in the Ancient and Modern Worlds" both in an extremely well-attended public lecture (followed by a reception) and at a methods workshop, which over twenty advanced undergraduate and graduate students attended.

# UTSC UPDATES

For updates from the Classical Studies program at the University of Toronto Scarborough, visit their website or follow their Instagram, @utschs!

# *Field Reports*

# FIELD REPORT

Sarah Murray,
from the Larisa Castle,
Argos

From August 5th to 15th, 2024, along with my colleagues Philip Sapirstein of the University of Toronto (Art History) and Sylvian Fachard of the University of Lausanne and the Swiss School of Archaeology at Athens, I conducted a campaign of architectural survey at the Larisa castle in Argos. The Larisa is one of the two ancient acropoleis of ancient Argos, along with the smaller Aspis hill, and looms dramatically over the modern city. Underneath the currently prominent Byzantine-Venetian defensive fortifications lies a rich palimpsest of architectural remains dating from the Middle Bronze Age to Roman periods.

The aim of the campaign was to create a complete photogrammetric model of the monument and all associated walls, which would in turn facilitate the production of a complete stone-by-stone plan of the ancient remains of Larisa and a schematic plan of the medieval castle. This will enable the first comprehensive architectural study of the fortifications and structures from the Bronze Age, Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods.

During the campaign, all the topographic, geodetic, and photographic data necessary for a complete photogrammetric survey of the castle were collected, controlled within a standard error of ca. 1 cm across the site. More than 5,200 photos were taken and aligned in a 3D model, 1,300 of which were drone images. The model is anchored to

*Photo: Panoramic view of Larisa castle.*

**THE LARISA.** *The Larisa is one of the two ancient acropoleis of ancient Argos, along with the smaller Aspis hill, and looms dramatically over the modern city.*

271 ground reference points by DGPS, controlled by the addition of 76 scales. We used a 45 Megapixel Nikon D850 with a Zeiss 25mm prime lens for ground photography, keeping the camera close enough to the base of the walls to record them at sub-millimetric precision. The drone, an Aurelia X6 model with six rotors, carried a 45-megapixel Nikon Z 7II with a 40mm lens useful for medium-range imagery of the upper walls and higher-altitude overviews of the whole site. The full model of the site comprises about 450 million points, with exported 2D views serving as the basis for measured drawings.

Thanks to this data, it will be possible to produce new plans of the ancient phases, as well as very precise elevations of each wall. This documentation will make it possible to describe the remains and their construction technique, to restore the missing sections, to establish a succession of architectural phases and to propose a study of the building. The models may also be useful in monitoring the condition of the castle as well as supporting future research into the later phases by other scholars.

A promotional video for the project can be viewed and downloaded online.

# FIELD REPORT

Carrie Atkins,
from Maroni-Tsaroukkas,
Cyprus

With the help of Sheri Kapahnke (a PhD Candidate in Art History), I have been developing a geoarchaeological analysis of the Late Bronze Age anchorage of Maroni-Tsaroukkas, Cyprus. This next phase of the project aims to establish the contours of the past coastline to verify whether part of the site used to be terrestrial, as results from our prior survey indicate (Atkins and Manning 2022). To test this hypothesis, we are also examining the movement of sediment across the site, as well as excavating in the nearshore region around ceramics to determine whether they are in their original position (Atkins 2022).

In June 2025, Sheri and I returned to the site to prepare for an upcoming field season (planned for June 2026). We were able to document a cluster of several large three-hole stone anchors that were not visible in our prior survey but were recorded in the 1990s. Using photogrammetry, we were also able to document that several anchors had moved across the seabed in the intervening years. Knowing the mass and location of those anchors that have been displaced will ultimately aid us in determining site formation processes.

**Right, top:**
UofT PhD candidate Sheri Kapahnke (Art History) prepares to an anchor for photogrammetry.

**Right, bottom:**
Sheri, left, and Carrie Atkins, right, at the site.

# FIELD REPORT

Seth Bernard,
from Falerii Novi, Tiber Valley

In June of both 2024 and 2025, students from the Department of Classics returned to participate in the Falerii Novi Project, under the co-direction of Professor Seth Bernard. Falerii Novi is an urban site in the Tiber Valley, about an hour's drive north of Rome. The site was founded in the Middle Republic after the Roman conquest of the local Faliscan centre of Falerii Veteres, modern Civita Castellana, and it endured into the early Middle Ages when it was abandoned and transformed into agricultural land managed by a monastic community. The Falerii Novi Project, which sees the University of Toronto partnering with the British School at Rome, Harvard University, and the Institute of Classical Studies at the University of London, has since 2021 investigated the site's history, drawing from a wealth of geophysical data, which reveals a densely inhabited ancient city below ground. The project operates under the kind permission of the *Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per la provincia di Viterbo e l'Etruria Meridionale*. The project's aims are to reconstruct a more complete picture of city life in the Roman and Post-Roman past, understanding how people's lifeways and habits were shaped by urbanism, and what we might understand about the practices of city-life across the socioeconomic spectrum. To this end, the Project has avoided large, well-known Roman urban monumental architecture and has explored instead a range of commercial, domestic, and productive spaces. We have complemented stratigraphic excavation with a range of environmental archaeological techniques including bulk soil sampling through flotation, residue analysis, and pollen and sedimentary DNA work to restore a picture of the city's evolving impact upon its regional ecology over time. In 2024, students from Toronto helped to excavate a large house south of the forum area, which was originally built in the Republican period and refurbished in the Early Empire with a grand impluvium with marble and mosaic floors. The house was then transformed for productive purposes in Late Antiquity before its collapse and abandonment sometime in the 6th century CE. In 2025, we moved to a new area in the city's northern extent, where Toronto students explored properties used for production, probably of wine or oil, again from the Republic into the High Empire. From the Classics department, participants included PhD candidate Claudia Paparella, postdoctoral fellow John Sigmier, and undergraduate majors, Leah Baggoo, Maya Smart, and Ellie Swenson.



**Top to bottom:**
Participants working to reveal the impluvium of an Early Imperial domus with a mosaic floor.

Participants excavating a productive space for processing oil and wine, in the use from the Late Republic through the High Empire, located in the city's northern extent.

**Opposite:**
Professor Bernard offers a historical reconstruction of a Roman latrine with a ceramic toilet seat recovered from a productive area in the city's northern extent.

**Above:**
Claudia Paparella giving a trench tour of a productive area in the city's northern extent.

**Opposite:**
Professor Bernard holding a Spanish amphora recovered by participants from the British School at Rome from a storage facility in the city's northern extent.

**Cover Image (pages 40-41):**
The Falerii Novi Project team from 2025 standing in front of the Gate of Jove in the Republican city walls.

# *MAKE AN IMPACT*

The Department of Classics seeks your support to continue its mission of educating and inspiring the next generation of scholars, researchers, and enthusiasts.

Your donation will enable us to enhance our educational programs, provide resources for groundbreaking research, and offer valuable scholarships and fellowships to deserving students.

With the goal of increasing the participation of historically underrepresented groups in the study of Ancient Greek and Latin, the Department of Classics offers bursaries to cover tuition for summer language courses. Your support has a direct impact on the future of our students, the Department, and the entire discipline.

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