

NOTA **BENE**



Notes from the Chair

by Paul Kosmin, Philip J. King Professor of Ancient History

We live in interesting times, and our department is flourishing. If the challenges of the fall semester gave my brief term as interim chair something of a watcher-on-the-wall feel, I recognized as never before the strengths of our community and the importance of our core mission. True, there have been tough demands and some difficult decisions: among them, our faculty meetings were relocated from catered grandeur to a Boylston seminar room, our hosting budget leaned out to the essentials, and, most regrettably, workshop and conference funding for graduate students slightly reduced. Yet, I have been blown over by the *esprit de corps*, hard work, and sheer enthusiasm of our staff, colleagues, and students. Below you will get a glimpse of this, including notes on our thriving undergraduate community, our range of new courses, and our archaeological expeditions to Sardis and Falerii Novi. And alongside our regular curriculum we enjoyed a rich series of talks and workshops—highlights include the two-day Jackson Colloquium on “Nationalism, Origins, and the Politics of Latin Literature,” with a host of eminent speakers, the Ancient Studies lecture and workshop on luxury in the post-Achaemenid world by Matthew Canepa (UC Irvine), Josh Billings (Princeton) rethinking ancient atheism, and our own Irene Soto Marín on the place of Egypt in the ancient Roman economy.

This year we welcomed Emmi Farrell, as our new Publications and Undergraduate Program Coordinator (with this edition of *Nota Bene* among her many contributions), our new lecturer Kathleen Garland, with expertise in field archaeology and labor history, and our new assistant professor Peter Osorio, who, along with Reier Helle in the Philosophy Department, is giving a real boost to the study of ancient philosophy at Harvard. Our four new graduate students—Callum Lang, Audrey Saint-Juste, Ian Wilson, and Jonathan Wilson—represent in their interests a cross-section of the many disciplines that fall under our departmental umbrella, from the political associations of Hellenistic Rhodes to

Cover: Snowfall on the trees outside Boylston Hall. Jon Chase/Harvard University.

Next page: Veritas in the snow. Kris Snibbe/Harvard University.



imperiallly-inflected encyclopedism, the architecture of Mithras worship to epic and tragedy.

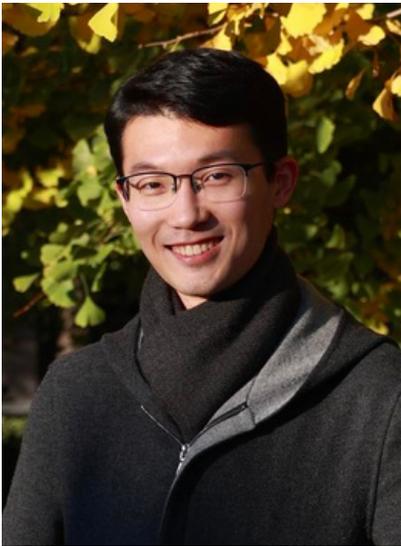
Naomi Weiss, the once and future chair, is now back from a very well-earned research leave, and I have just started one. Wishing you all the very best for 2026!

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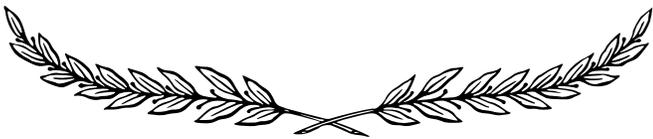


Meet Our New Graduate Students



Callum (Yuchen) Lang
PhD Candidate in Ancient History

Born and raised in Beijing, Callum received his BA in History, along with a certificate in Classical Studies, from Peking University in 2023. He completed an MA in Classics at New York University in 2025. At Harvard, he plans to explore his interests in Greek history, particularly in the Hellenistic and early Imperial periods. He also hopes to deepen his engagement with Greek epigraphy, numismatics, and material culture. Outside of ancient history, he enjoys soccer, hiking, and photography.





Audrey Saint-Juste

PhD Candidate in Classical Philology

Audrey spent her childhood in Chicago, Illinois and adolescence in Toronto, Ontario. In 2019, she moved to Montreal, Quebec to pursue a Bachelor of Music in Clarinet Performance. After taking an intensive Ancient Greek course during the summer after her second year, she added a second Bachelor of Arts in Classics and never looked back. At Harvard, Audrey hopes to integrate non-canonical texts into the history of genre-formation through her research. She is especially interested in miscellany and encyclopedism as intellectual habits connected to imperialism. Outside of classics, Audrey loves to read and write poetry of all kinds and to listen to Dungeons & Dragons podcasts.



Ian Wilson

PhD Candidate in Classical Archaeology

Ian S. Wilson is a PhD candidate in Classical Archaeology, primarily focused on religion and power in the Late Antique Mediterranean. Originally from Rhode Island, Ian earned his BA in Ancient History and Archaeology from the College of William & Mary—University of St. Andrews Joint Degree Programme. During this time, he conducted research on spatial and cognitive dialogues in Mithras worship. More recently, Ian earned a distinction from Trinity College Dublin for his MPhil dissertation on Christian violence and architectural transformation at Heliopolis/Baalbek. He has also worked on archaeological projects across the Mediterranean, including Italy, Türkiye, and Croatia.



Jonathan Wilson

PhD Candidate in Classical Philology

Jonathan comes from Lancashire in the UK. He received his BA and MPhil in Classics at the University of Cambridge, where he specialized in Homeric epic and Greek tragedy, with his MPhil thesis focusing on fatherhood in the *Odyssey*. Outside of classics, he enjoys wild camping and football (sometimes called soccer), and he has also dabbled in directing and script-editing modern adaptations of ancient plays.



Meet Our New Faculty & Staff



Peter Osorio, Assistant Professor of Classics

Peter specializes in the history of Greek and Roman philosophy, and his arrival to the department, along with that of Reier Helle in Philosophy, strengthens the study of ancient philosophy at Harvard. He was most recently Assistant Professor of Classics at the University of Maryland, College Park. Before that he was a Loeb Classical Foundation Library Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Toronto, and he earned his doctorate at Cornell University. His interests in the history of philosophy range from the archaic period to late antiquity, but he writes most on epistemology and ethics from the Hellenistic and Roman periods. This spring he will be teaching a Latin reading course on Cicero and friendship (*De amicitia* and letters) and a Roman social history and literature course on the freedmen Tiro, Phaedrus, and Epictetus. Peter looks forward to running with Reier and colleagues at Boston University a regular [Greek Philosophical Texts reading group](#), and to building programming for students interested in ancient philosophy.



Kathleen Garland, Lecturer on Classics

Kathleen is a field archaeologist, and has worked on sites across the Mediterranean, including Italy, Cyprus, and Greece. Her research focuses on labor, technology, and craft communities in Greco-Roman antiquity and in more recent history. She received her PhD in Classics from Cornell University in Spring 2025, with a dissertation that looked at the history of archaeological labor in 20th-century Greece and Cyprus, in which she traced the development of archaeological communities and their impact on village life, while also exploring how periodic funding crises and labor shortages have shaped the trajectory of archaeological theory and practice. She has side interests in archaeological outreach and activism, folk music, ceramic arts, and woodworking—a lot of her hobbies are on the backburner at the moment because she is also the mother of a rambunctious three-year-old. She had a great experience teaching Introduction to the Ancient Greek World and a course on Ancient Myth and Modern World this fall, and is looking forward to co-teaching her first graduate seminar in the spring.



Emmi Farrell, Publications and Undergraduate Program Coordinator

Emmi earned her BA in Classics and History from the University of North Carolina in 2021 and her MA in Art History from Tufts University in 2023. She has worked at several universities and art museums, including the University of North Carolina, Appalachian State University, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Within the department, Emmi helps support undergraduate programming and the journal *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*. Outside of the department, Emmi enjoys reading, crocheting, watching college basketball, and traveling to new places.



Undergraduate Update

This fall, 10 sophomores joined our vibrant community of Classics concentrators! In October, the department held a party for prospective concentrators where they got to hear from current concentrators, faculty, and Harvard Classics alumnus Kannon Shanmugam ('93), the newest member of the Harvard Corporation and a leading appellate attorney. Students also learned about opportunities to engage in classics outside of the classroom, such as the [Archaeological Exploration of Sardis](#).

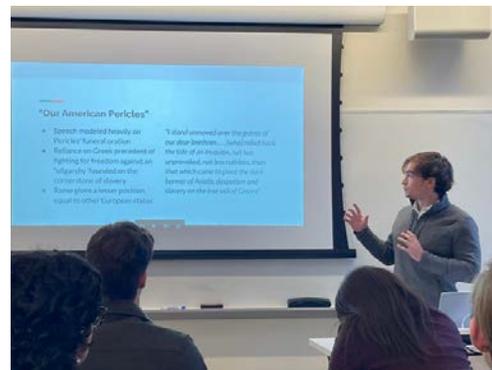
The Harvard Classical Club is back in full swing this year! Under the leadership of co-presidents Natasha Chamitoff ('27) and Lorenzo Levy ('27), the club has organized a wide range of events throughout the semester. From pumpkin painting to crafting curse tablets for this year's Harvard-Yale football game, the club has helped foster a lively, close-knit undergraduate community in our department. Most notably, the Harvard Classical Club created "*Yale Delenda Est*" buttons for the Harvard-Yale game and distributed them widely! To stay updated on what the club does next, check out [@harvardclassicsclub](#) on Instagram.



In November, the department hosted our annual Senior Thesis Colloquium, a day-long program featuring presentations from 15 senior concentrators on their projects and research interests. The Colloquium also provided an opportunity for faculty, staff, visitors, and students to come together and celebrate the fall semester with a Student-Faculty Lunch!



Top & bottom images: Students and Harvard University President Alan Garber with *Yale Delenda Est* buttons. Photos from the Harvard Classical Club.



Undergraduate Update (cont.)

In addition to the many exciting events throughout the semester, we have been celebrating two undergraduate students in our department who received prestigious awards this semester! Emma Finn ('26) was elected as a 2026 Rhodes Scholar, and Joaquim Bocresion ('28) was awarded the Wendell Prize scholarship.

This spring, we plan to continue holding community events in our department. Undergraduate students are looking forward to partnering with the Harvard Classical Receptions Workshop team to learn more about classical reception in video games.

Our seniors, many of whom will complete their theses in the coming months, are preparing to enjoy their final semester at Harvard. Our faculty are offering a wide array of courses this semester, and they look forward to welcoming students to them from across the university.

Learn more about our [Spring 2026 course listings](#).

Top row images (from left to right): Kiesse Nanor ('26), Christine Corcoran ('26), and Mac Mertens ('26) present at the 2025 Senior Thesis Colloquium:

Bottom row images (from left to right): Natasha Chamitoff ('27) and Livingston Zug ('26) enjoy some tea at our Student & Faculty Lunch; pumpkins decorated by the Harvard Classical Club; undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and staff chat at the Student & Faculty Lunch.



Reflections on the Charles P. Segal Fellowship and Two Summers at Falerii Novi

by *Natasha Chamitoff* ('27)

I am beyond grateful for the summer experiences I have had thanks to the Charles P. Segal Fellowship. The funding made it possible for me to spend a few weeks for the past two summers at Falerii Novi in Italy. During this time, I worked on Professor Margaret Andrews' Falerii Novi archaeological dig, and had a great time. It meant so much to contribute to and understand the frontier of classical field research in a very hands-on way. Beyond learning so much about archaeology and what it is really like, I enjoyed becoming more integrated into the Classics

community at Harvard and beyond. We all spent a lot of time getting to know each other and having fun together, and I'm lucky that I still spend time with many of my fellow Falerii-goers here on campus. Thanks to the Segal Fellowship, I have wonderful memories of two summers in Italy and have shared experiences with many people in the department.

Learn more about the [Falerii Novi Project](#).

Image: Professor Margaret Andrews and some of the excavation team at Falerii Novi. Photograph provided by Natasha Chamitoff ('27).



A Summer in World Heritage at Sardis

by Hannah Hoffman (PhD Candidate in Classical Archaeology)

I had the privilege of rejoining the Sardis Excavations this past summer with the support of the Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative to conduct research on their newly excavated Hellenistic ceramics and to work as their Site Recorder.

The summer season was split up into two parts: the first three weeks were set aside as a dedicated “study season” for researchers to come and work on special projects, while the last nine weeks were the regular “excavation season,” when the active digging took place. When I arrived on site for the study season in May, I collaborated with Prof. Andrea M. Berlin (Boston University) and fellow doctoral candidate Caroline Everts (University of Michigan) to study the Hellenistic pottery from Sardis, starting with the background research that Prof. Berlin had conducted—most of which was published in the 2019 *Spear-Won Land* volume, co-edited by herself and our own Prof. Kosmin—and integrating the additional material that has

been excavated but not yet studied from the past seven years.

As a part of our collaborative work, we digitally published three new locally produced Sardian wares (and 85 new vessels from them) at the [Levantine Ceramics Project](#), demonstrating what kinds of pottery the local population consumed and produced in the 4th–1st centuries BCE. Some of them conformed to long-standing traditions of the Lydians that spoke to Sardis’s own unique cultural significance, but others adapted to new styles more characteristic of the larger Hellenistic world, taking stylistic inspiration from places like Athens, Ephesus, and Pergamon.

After the study season, I spent another three weeks working on my own research on the 2nd century BCE ceramic assemblage in a neighborhood at the top of the city known as Field 49.

The historian Polybius tells the story of the Seleucid ruler Antiochus III laying siege to the city of Sardis against Achaemenes from 215 to 213 BCE, when Antiochus ultimately prevailed. The neighborhood of Field 49—sitting at the heart of the city where the old Lydian palace stood, just next to the great wooden theater—was abandoned during this siege, its inhabitants taking their valuables with them and leaving their buildings to rot until their roofs collapsed, burying whatever scant pots and trash they had left behind. What is curious about this whole neighborhood, however, is that it appears to remain abandoned for some time even after the siege comes to an end.

My research project examined the reoccupation event of this neighborhood, which occurred in the mid-2nd century BCE, likely coinciding with the construction of a new stone theater nearby sponsored by the new Attalid Empire centered at Pergamon. One of the most remarkable things about this story is that this neighborhood had been occupied

almost continuously for millennia with its earliest inhabitants going back to the Bronze Age, and it continued to be occupied after it was repopulated through the site's Byzantine and Islamic periods. The only major destruction and abandonment of this neighborhood before the siege of Antiochus III happened in 547 BCE, when the Lydian king Croesus clashed with the Persian forces of Cyrus the Great, and it took about two centuries after that major devastation before the neighborhood was rebuilt. This neighborhood thus offers a valuable space for tangling with different historical and anthropological questions: When catastrophes strike, how do people memorialize them? How does space become appropriated as a symbol of memory and of violence? When does it become appropriate to rebuild, and under what circumstances?

For the second half of the summer, I donned the mantle that I had last taken up in the summer of 2023 as the Sardis Excavation Site Recorder. My responsibilities as the Recorder were much more wide-ranging, and included hosting other specialists who came to work with the collections, cataloguing all of the new objects that came in from the field excavations, and managing the various ongoing projects involving new and archival artifacts.



Previous page (left): Caroline Everts (left) and myself (right) holding two *adorable* 4th-century *skyphoi*.

Previous page (right): Sardis Team Photo, 2025.

Left: Photo from my first year as Recorder back in 2023! The Depot makes for a VERY fun office.

It was a real delight to come back to Sardis in this role as Recorder. The site received UNESCO World Heritage status this summer, and as the excavation nears its 70th birthday I feel incredibly fortunate to have been able to be present for such a historic summer in the long life of this dig. It was great fun to reunite with old friends and colleagues, and to welcome other new members to the team from the summer. Türkiye remains a wonderful and fascinating place to explore on every spare day off, and life together at the excavation is never dull. In the cool of the evening, stargazing on the columns of the Temple of Artemis just behind the compound, it is clearer than ever that the Sardis magic stands strong.

Top: Photo from summer 2025 of me labeling a marble architectural piece, more true-to-form.

Middle: Documenting pottery all the day long.

Bottom: From left to right: Prof. Andrea M. Berlin, me, Caroline Everts. Our small but mighty pottery crew got matching pants for team spirit!





New Spring 2026 Courses

Courses in translation for undergraduate and graduate students.

CLS-STDY 108, Greek Religion
Professor Kathleen Garland

The ancient Greeks had no word for “religion,” yet theirs was a world inhabited by immanent powers and steeped in ritual. This course introduces students to a range of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of ancient Greek religion. We will explore how scholars have used ancient texts and material culture to reconstruct ancient religious practices and beliefs, and attempt to answer questions such as: What were the origins of animal sacrifice? How did ancient people induce ecstatic experiences? What is the difference between magic and religion? We will also consider how religious activities helped to construct personal and community identities, and how religious institutions interacted with the political and economic life of Greek city-states. The course has a strong emphasis on material culture and perspectives drawn from

the “archaeology of religion”; students will attend multiple museum trips and work closely with objects from the Harvard Art Museums collections.

CLS-STDY 174, Reading Roman Freedpersons: Authority and Authorship
Professor Peter Osorio

In this course we examine the personal, critical, and philosophical perspectives of select Roman freedpersons, by reading the literary remains of the editor and polymath Marcus Tullius Tiro (c. 80–4 BCE), the poet and fabulist Phaedrus (fl. 1st cen. CE), and the Stoic philosopher Epictetus (c. 55–135 CE). There are several reasons for studying these three disparate persons together. First, from testimonies and their texts we gain a rare glimpse into the internal experience of persons enslaved and emancipated (or, manumitted) by Roman elites. Second, the history of Roman

Image: Attic cup: School lessons, ca. 480 BCE, Douris. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung (F 2285). Image has been cropped. <https://id.smb.museum/object/686551/attische-schale-schulunterricht>

literature cannot be reliably told without understanding the place of freed- and enslaved persons in its production. Third, the extant works of Phaedrus and Epictetus are powerful and compelling in themselves. And, finally, we sharpen our historical methodologies, insofar as reading freed authors is a complex affair.

CLS-STDY 182, The Economy of Roman Alexandria

Professor Irene Soto Marín

This course explores the vibrant and interconnected economy of Roman Alexandria, emphasizing its role as both a producer of goods and knowledge and central player in long-distance trade. Students will delve into the city's diverse industries, including the production of textiles, fine arts, and jewelry, alongside the redistribution of essential goods such as grain, rope, and luxury imports like pepper. The course will also examine Alexandria's significant contributions to science, medicine, and philosophy, as well as its political influence, with the urban elite holding land across Egypt and maintaining strong ties with the Roman Emperor and court. Alexandria's strategic location further established it as a vital gateway to the Red Sea, facilitating trade routes to the Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Indian Ocean that promoted extensive cultural exchange. Through the study of papyri, archaeological findings, coins, and literary sources, this course highlights Alexandria's unparalleled status as a cosmopolitan center of culture, commerce, and intellectual activity during the Roman period.

CLS-STDY 194, Sport and Athletics in Ancient Greece and Rome

Professor Mark Schiefsky

A study of athletics and sport in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. Through a close study of primary sources (in English), modern secondary literature, and ancient archaeological evidence, the course explores the origins and development of the major ancient athletic contests (particularly the Olympic Games); the theory and practice of athletic training; the relationship between athletics and other forms of bodily care, such as medicine; and the changing relationship of athletics and education in ancient and modern times. Students will make use of materials in the Harvard Art Museums and the archaeological excavations in ancient Olympia. No prior knowledge of the ancient world is assumed.

MODGRKST 104, Dreams and Literature from Antiquity to Modernity

Professor Panagiotis Roilos

Against the dual background of ancient and medieval commentaries on the one hand, and modern psychoanalytic and ethnographic studies on the other, diverse literary texts will be explored. The major focus will be on Greek literature from antiquity to the present, but examples from other European literatures will also be considered (including film). Major topics: typology of dreams; dreams as narratives; dreaming and writing; religious dimensions. Theoretical readings to include: Aristotle, Aelius Aristides, Artemidorus, Synesius of Cyrene; Freud, Jung, Levi-Strauss, Lacan, Foucault, Lyotard. All texts are available in translation. Undergraduates majoring in MGreek and PhD candidates are welcome to read texts in the original Greek.

Advanced language courses for undergraduates and graduate students.

LATIN 164, Cicero
Professor Peter Osorio

The survival of Cicero's correspondence in addition to his philosophical works provides a rare opportunity to study an ancient philosopher from different points of view. In this course we consider Cicero's ethics of friendship: what did he say a friend ought to be like, and what sort of friend do his letters suggest he was like? Our reading will span three different kinds of texts: a selection of brief, everyday messages to friends; a dialogue on friendship, which includes precepts on topics like how to advise a friend (*De amicitia*); and a lengthy letter of advice to his brother, away working as a provincial governor (*Epistulae ad Quintum 1.1*).

GREEK 188, Oratory

Professor Alexander Riehle

In the largely oral societies of the ancient Mediterranean world, speech held an important place in public discourse. The delivery of orations and informal discourses could serve various purposes: to establish communication between individuals or groups, to influence decision-making in assemblies and courts, to support and spread political propaganda, to forge and represent collective identities, and to promote personal agendas. Particularly in later periods, rhetorical displays could turn into public spectacles comparable to dramatic performances. This class traces the history of Greek oratory from the classical period to late antiquity by reading representative texts in various rhetorical genres and discussing them within their socio-political contexts. In addition to canonical

orators of classical Athens such as Demosthenes, Lysias, and Isocrates, we will also study examples of Roman and late antique (including Jewish and Christian) rhetoric.

Graduate seminar.

ANCSTD 201, Movement and Migration in the Ancient Mediterranean

Professors Margaret Andrews and Kathleen Garland

In this course, we will trace the movements of people across the Mediterranean Sea, from the earliest coastal settlements to the 21st-century refugee crisis, with a focus on Greek and Roman antiquity. What drives a person to leave home and make an arduous or dangerous journey? What do they experience once they arrive? What have been the causes and consequences of mass migrations across the Mediterranean? Through the lens of human mobility and migration we will explore topics such as ancient climate, colonization, war, slavery, imperialism, economic integration, social mobility, and identity. We will also consider practical and theoretical problems in the study of mobility and migration in the archaeological and historical record.

Profiles of a Fall 2025 Course: *Ancient Global Economies with* Professor Irene Soto Marín

by Zuzanna Kowalski ('26) and Hans Elasri ('26)



Zuzanna Kowalski ('26) is a senior concentrating in Chemistry with a secondary concentration in Central European Studies.

Sparked by my growing curiosity about trade in antiquity after reading *The Books of Jacob*, I was excited when I stumbled upon *Ancient Global Economies*. As a Chemistry concentrator, I initially worried that I might not have the appropriate background to fully understand and engage with the material, but these concerns disappeared almost immediately. From the first minutes of the course, Professor Soto Marín created an environment that felt more like a discussion-based seminar than a traditional lecture. Rather than asking us to memorize facts, she pushed us to think critically about how economic systems operate across time and space. By beginning the course with a real-world example, specifically the 2021 Suez Canal obstruction, we saw just how critical trade

routes are to the global economy. This single disruption stalled 9-10 billion dollars in trade per day and sent ripple effects through global supply chains.

While this example was recent, it was not uniquely modern. Throughout the course, we examined comparable moments in antiquity, such as shipwrecks that now serve as key archeological evidence for long-distance trade. These wrecks reveal not only the circulation of goods like amphorae across vast regions, but also the longstanding importance of routes such as the Suez Canal for long-distance trade dating back to the Roman period.

This perspective really enforced the importance of understanding the past to better interpret the present. Through close engagement with primary sources and Professor Soto Marín's insights, I could clearly see how modern economies and cultural systems grew out of earlier

networks of exchange. Surveying a wide range of periods and civilizations, from the Assyrian and Egyptian worlds to the Roman and Palmyrene Empires, made clear how deeply interconnected these societies were through Indian Ocean and overland trade routes and how central those relationships were to the development of large-scale economies.

The enthusiasm of Professor Soto Marín and the teaching fellows was infectious and made the course especially engaging. I particularly appreciated the writing assignments, which gave us the freedom to explore topics that genuinely interested us. For our first assignment, we wrote a newspaper-style article based on a historical text of our choosing. This pushed us to engage with papyri and cuneiform sources in a creative way I had never experienced before. Writing interactively, rather than purely analytically, helped me internalize the material, especially when paired with readings that consistently built on and reinforced one another. Learning to synthesize overlapping sources and read more critically felt like an invaluable skill that extended well beyond this course.

It would feel unfair to say that Professor Soto Marín simply “did a good job” teaching this class. The level of care, intention, and creativity she put into the course far exceeded anything I had previously encountered. From handling rare coins like the EID MAR denarius to exploring historical maps in the Pusey Library, *Ancient Global Economies* pushed the boundaries of what a Gen Ed can be.

I walked away not only with a deeper understanding of ancient global economies but with a renewed appreciation for how the past continues to shape the systems we live within today.

Hans Elasri ('26) is a senior concentrating in Economics and Statistics.

As a Statistics & Economics concentrator, almost everything about Ancient Economies was foreign to me. I entered the course hardly knowing anything about the Roman Empire, having never read a primary source from antiquity, and without much sense of what “classics” meant as a discipline. From the very first week, Professor Soto Marín made the distant, unfamiliar past feel accessible. The course moves from contextualizing ancient long-distance trade with a parable about the 2021 Suez Canal blockage to close readings of letters between mothers and sons in the Old Kingdom quickly but smoothly. My conception of the ancient world shifted from static hieroglyphs on museum walls to a more grounded appreciation of the complexity, anxieties, and humanity of people whose lives, at the surface, seem impossibly far from my own.

The class was hardly confined to the lecture hall. Over the course of the semester, we visited some of Harvard’s museums, handled ancient coins, and explored maps from Harvard’s Map Collection. These experiences not only made the course more engaging but also reminded me of how many incredible resources are available to us as

