

From Sicily to Transylvania: Reports from Excavation and Field School Award Recipients for Summer 2017

Four very grateful and exciting reports have come back from the 2017 recipients of the CAMWS Excavation and Field School Award. Our recipients experienced excavations in Transylvania, Pompeii, Sicily and Turkey; we offer excerpts from their reports below. Great thanks are due to all the CAMWS membership, who support these awards with their dues, and especially to those individuals who have made specific contribution to the fieldwork award fund. These prizes are making a real difference in the lives of our students, our colleagues and those they will teach. Please do invite your students and colleagues to consider applying! Applicants may be undergraduates, graduate students or teachers at all levels of instruction. Details are at <https://camws.org/awards/excavation.php>; the deadline is January 30, 2018.

Elizabeth Wilcox, the recipient of the Peter Knox EFSA prize, traveled from Austin Peay to Transylvania to help excavate a Roman imperial settlement at Rapoltu Mare; excerpts from her report reflect an evocative landscape, a wealth of techniques, and the contribution to her future plans. She writes: Upon arrival to Rapoltu Mare in Transylvania, Romania, the village was warm and inviting. On the walk to the families we would be staying with, we saw that the village was abloom with household gardens and children catching fish in the stream. It was easy to see what drew the Romans here to lay claim to the land and its resources. The mountain which overshadowed our work area, Mount Uroi, had a Dacian fortress, under whose stone platform both human and animal remains were found. Our excavation work consisted of removing baulks from between trenches, recording stratigraphy and collecting soil samples, sieving all dirt for artifacts and eco-facts, recording drawing and photo via droid-copter. The first layer found during my work was a roof collapse, consisting of many broken tiles:



Since this was a field school, we were briefed on the strategies for the layers of digging, such as the depths and types of tools used for the layers. We were also expected to interpret the collapse, how the walls fell, and the porch area; additionally we worked at analyzing different soils. In addition to our excavation work, we conducted some phosphorus analysis with blotting paper and a diluted solution of Hydrochloric acid. These tests were used to indicate the amount of human occupation of the strata uncovered. Each sample was collected and recorded the specific GPS location and depths. Along with phosphorus analysis, we were also trained on the Stand-Alone, which would take GPS measurements with elevation levels to be recorded for usage by the GIS program. After taking many measurements, we would then enter the data and create a three-dimensional map. The training I found most fascinating was the applied Geophysics Workshop. Although I had already conducted GPR research at my University, I had not scanned areas that were known to be inhabited by people in the first century AD. We used a 500 Noggin system which penetrates variations in pedology and geology down to two meters (ca. 7 feet) in depth: this let us build a picture of what lies under the surface, and so plan our excavations more strategically. I could write so much more about this program and how it has clarified my career path in archaeology, but that would be a lengthy paper. I will say that this experience has given me a broader perspective on the field as a whole, and on my own strengths in interpreting GPR data for better archeological planning. I have been accepted to the University of Leicester for Classical Mediterranean Masters of Arts, which is a part of the Archaeology and Ancient History college at Leicester. I thank the Classical Association of the Middle West and South for funding this opportunity. You have helped make dreams come true!

Esther Knegt, from Brock University, participated in two excavations: the Marzamemi Maritime Heritage Project off the coast of Sicily, focused on a 6th century AD Roman wreck, and the Burgaz Harbours Project at Bodrum, Turkey. She writes: I arrived in Sicily with little diving experience and no field experience at this point in my education. The director of the project, Justin Leidwanger, provided me and other new divers with ample instruction and training on how to properly excavate and handle the artefacts that were uncovered. I was paired with experienced divers when working on the site and was able to learn from and witness seasoned underwater archaeologists. My days were divided into diving in the morning and working at the museum, Rudini, in the afternoons. In Rudini, the artefacts are catalogued, properly conserved, and studied for future use. Working in the museum allowed me to be a part of many steps of the archaeological process and I benefited immensely from the instruction I received from the staff at Rudini.

After excavating in Sicily I travelled to Turkey to participate in the Burgaz Harbours Project. On this excavation I was able to do research in the Conservation Lab in the Bodrum Research Centre at the Institute for Nautical Archaeology. I also worked at the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology. At both of these locations I analyzed and studied ceramics, in particular, amphora from shipwrecks. I helped look at fabric construction and classification of sub groups of amphora types. It was fascinating to visit the INA and become acquainted with scholars and archaeologists. Both these excavations helped me enhance my skill set as an archaeologist and allowed me to get better acquainted with how fieldwork is conducted. I hope to be able to work for both these projects in the following year and continue with the research questions that I had started to explore. I am thankful to both the Marzamemi Maritime Heritage Project and the Burgaz Harbours Project for teaching me all these skills, but also CAMWS for helping me fund these amazing opportunities. The summer was easier to plan and enjoy, allowing me to make the most of my education without having as great a financial burden as I would have without the support I received.

Jordan Bonadurer, an undergraduate from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, writes: Thanks to the contributions of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, my 'office' for the Summer of 2017 was the Villa della colonne a Mosaico in Pompeii, Italy. Before my internship with the Via Consolare Project I already knew that I loved studying the Classical world, but it was through excavation that I developed a passion for hands-on interaction with artefacts and gained first hand knowledge of archaeological practices.

This season the Via Consolare Project (VCP) opened four trenches, two of which I worked on. The first trench (which was reopened from the 2016 season) was directly above a street level shop and was connected to the 'core' of the Villa della colonne a Mosaicos. The investigation of this area brought a clearer understanding of the function of the space, and its position in the phases and chronology of the Villa, as well as the urbanization and expansion of Pompeii. I was able to assist in almost all aspects of the excavation of this archeological area: removing backfill, utilizing planning frames and EDM, sifting and hand sorting finds, following stratigraphic units while trowelling, assisting in photography and documentation, and preparing discard fractions and flotation samples.

I was able to contribute in a similar way to a second trench located in the fauces of the Villa that led into the viridarium of the space. One unique aspect of this trench was its close proximity to tourists. I often was questioned by visitors about a myriad of Pompeii-related topics, and had pictures taken of me. While this was a bit distracting at times, I found that I really enjoyed being an 'archeology spokesperson' as well. At the close of the season, I helped to create the data entry spreadsheet for the season report on brick and tile analysis.

It is difficult to summarize the immense impact that the Via Consolare Project had on me this summer. Before June, I had never even picked up a trowel or been to Europe, but by the end of the season I felt competent in my abilities as an intern of the project. Most shocking to me, perhaps, was how intensely I responded to being able to touch, feel, and interact with ancient artefacts.



Pottery washing became an activity I loved to do, as it let me touch and respond to a piece of Pompeian history.

Being in the Villa (and the city of Pompeii,) also gave me a similar experience. Every day as we trekked up the Porta Marina, I couldn't help but be struck by how many individuals had once walked in my same path—the thousands of modern tourists, the earlier excavators, and the Pompeians who lived and died there. Even though I'm now back at my university in Southern Illinois, I still feel the same connection to the ancient world that I felt in Italy. When I see a picture of a Roman artefact or translate a bit of Latin, I now have a context that I completely lacked before. This summer not only provided me with an opportunity to learn archeological practices, but to be completely immersed in the world I love to study.

Kaoru Yui from Mount Allison University in New Brunswick participated in the excavations at the Temple of Venus in Pompeii, led by Dr. Ilaria Battiloro. This year marked the pioneer year of the three-year long excavation program. The goals of the season were to uncover the Samnite phase, in order to reconstruct the use and dedication of the building; to supply documentation of previously unrecorded work; and to acquaint participants with methods of excavation, lab procedures and topography. Kaoru reports: We uncovered two trenches this year; trench II South was previously excavated, and trench A was discovered for the first time this year. Thirteen students were split into two groups and stayed at the same trench for five weeks. I worked in trench A. Evidence of contamination and artificial cuts of soils proved that trench A was, in fact, previously excavated, though not published. Eventually, we were able to reach the whole new layer after excavating about 60 centimeters deep. From those of new stratigraphic unit, we found many pottery pieces, painted plasters, and tiles, as well as animal bones and teeth, lead shotguns, loom weights, bronze coins, mosaic tesserae, marble, and metal objects. Potteries included common wares, cooking wares, amphorae, thin-wall pottery, unguentaria, Italian and Etruscan sigillata, African ware, black glazed pottery, red glazed pottery, and gray ware. We uncovered three walls that are north-south oriented, and parts of pavements adjoint the walls. Through the five weeks of excavation, I learned how to identify different stratigraphic units by reading the features of soils such as colour and compaction, and three different recording procedures; photograph, drawing, and written forms. Also, I learned the appropriate way to use tools and a proper way to maintain the safeties while working at the site.

Along with the excavation work, all of the students spent one day in a week at the pottery lab to study about how the findings are treated and recorded after we excavated them. We also had a few lectures on topography and a hands-on session of handling a prism and a total station to take elevation points. As part of the lectures, we also had a tour of the other sites in Pompeii and weekend trips to nearby archaeological sites.

This Temple of Venus Excavation Program not only gave me the opportunity to experience the archaeological excavation but also the chance to realize how important the technologies is for the field of archaeology. Moreover, it gave me an opportunity to talk to the actual archaeologists, topographers, and conservators who work on the site. I believe this experience, especially working at the pottery lab, will help me to pursue my future goal to be an antiquity conservator. Without participating this program, I would never be able to achieve these valuable experiences. Thank you again for giving me the great financial support to achieve this opportunity. To participate the same program next year again, I will be practicing archaeological drawing techniques under the supervision of Dr. Battiloro this year.