



Institute *of* Fine Arts

IFA Archaeology JOURNAL

2015-2016 | Issue 4



Hadrianic Baths, room 4 (caldarium)

In This Issue

2 | Abydos, Egypt

David O'Connor, Lila Acheson Wallace Professor of Ancient Egyptian Art; Director, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU Excavations at Abydos

Matthew Adams, Senior Research Scholar; Associate Director/Field Director, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU Excavations at Abydos

3 | Aphrodisias, Turkey

Roland R.R. Smith, Lincoln Professor of Classical Archaeology, University of Oxford; Director of Excavations at Aphrodisias

Alexander Sokolicek, Field Director of Excavations at Aphrodisias, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU

4 | Samothrace, Greece

Bonna D. Wescoat, Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Art History, Emory University; Director of Excavations, Sanctuary of the Great Gods, Samothrace

5 | Selinunte, Sicily

Clemente Marconi, James R. McCredie Professor in the History of Greek Art and Archaeology; University Professor

Rosalia Pumo, Field Director of Excavations at Selinunte, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU

6 | IFA Archaeology Program Donors

7 | Alumni Spotlight

Message from the Director

Greetings from the Institute of Fine Arts and welcome to the fourth edition of the *IFA Archaeology Journal*. It is with great enthusiasm that I invite you to discover the triumphs and remarkable progress made this past season at our archaeological sites around the world.

Among the many highlights of the season, the team in Selinunte carried out its ninth campaign of excavation leading to discoveries of the earliest onset of Greek colonial occupation. Those in Aphrodisias worked to prepare the northern section of the Hadrianic Baths, readying the space for public viewing at the end of the season. Across the Mediterranean in Abydos, the Institute received a sizable grant from the American Research Center in Egypt's Antiquities Endowment Fund to finish construction of a new storage wing, with expected completion in 2016. Finally, in Samothrace, amidst the closure and renovation of the museum there, the IFA excavation team laid important groundwork for two new major projects to begin in 2016.

The archaeology program at the IFA provides unparalleled hands-on, in-field training opportunities to our students in addition to broadening their cultural horizons and perspectives. As three of our alumni recount in this edition, the excavation programs at the IFA shape and mold the careers and lives of our students and prepare them for future journeys in the field. We would like to thank our donors for their steadfast support, without which we would not be able to make such prominent discoveries and inspire transformative experiences. We hope you enjoy the opportunity to recount the successes of the 2015 season. We anticipate building upon these discoveries by leaps and bounds when we begin anew next summer.

Patricia Rubin
Judy and Michael Steinhardt Director
Institute of Fine Arts

Abydos, Egypt



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

The site of Abydos is located about 300 miles south of modern Cairo on the west bank of the Nile. In ancient times, it was the cult place of Osiris, ruler of the land of the dead, and was one of Egypt's most important and sacred places. Egypt's earliest kings built their tombs there, and it is where these same kings appear to have developed the architectural monumentality that was a hallmark of kingship for the rest of pharaonic history, in the form of massively built walled precincts that served as the great royal cult place for each king buried at the site.

The archaeology of Abydos spans more than four millennia of ancient Egyptian history and represents a uniquely rich research and teaching resource. The Abydos Expedition's overall research mission is the comprehensive investigation of the nature and history of this ancient great place, and its work has produced important new information about many components of the site—including the town, gods' temples, and vast desert cemeteries, in addition to many other features of great interest, such as minor temples, private votive chapels, necropolei of sacred animals, and Late Antique monastic dwellings. A particular focus in recent years has been the early royal monuments, work that is transforming our understanding of the nature of early Egyptian kingship and its central role in early Egyptian society and culture. The Expedition has also been engaged in a large-scale and pioneering program of architectural conservation. Working with the local craftsmen and using the same traditional materials as the original construction, mainly mud-brick and mud-mortar, we aim to preserve the only early royal monumental precincts that survives as a standing structure.

The Expedition's years of fieldwork at such an expansive, rich, and, important site have generated an extensive collection of archaeological study material of comparable significance. The Expedition's field efforts in 2015 focused on long-needed improvements for this collection. Although the Expedition has a relatively spacious field house at Abydos, its storage facilities had over time become totally inadequate. Support from the Institute for Bioarchaeology at the British Museum 2009–2011 allowed construction of one half of a new storage wing that now houses the bioarchaeological components of the collection, primarily human and animal remains. In 2015, the IFA received a major grant from the American Research Center in Egypt's Antiquities Endowment Fund in support of the construction of the other half of the new wing, construction of which began last spring. When completed in 2016, it will house the other major components of the present collection, including ceramics, stone architectural fragments, and ritual objects, organic materials, such as fragments of wooden coffins, basketry, and leather, and small finds, such as the jewelry and funerary figurines that frequently accompanied burials. The completed facility will also include a new dedicated objects conservation lab. The new facility will provide for greatly improved overall management of the study collection, as well as ease of access that will allow it to realize much more readily its full potential as a resource for research and teaching.

Figure 1: The field house at Abydos. Photo by Gus Gusciora for the IFA Abydos Expedition

Figure 2: Human skeletal remains arranged for documentation and analysis in the bioarchaeology collection facility at Abydos. Photo by Greg Maka for the IFA Abydos Expedition

Figure 3: Remains of a dog buried in a pottery jar in a necropolis for sacred animals at Abydos. Photo by Rose Trentinella for the IFA Abydos Expedition

Figure 4: Ebony djed and tyet emblems that once probably decorated a wooden box. Photo by Amanda Kirkpatrick for the IFA Abydos Expedition

Figure 5: Glazed faience shabti figurines that once were part of the grave goods deposited in a tomb. Photos by Gus Gusciora for the IFA Abydos Expedition



Fig. 5

Aphrodisias, Turkey

Aphrodisias illuminates brilliantly the trajectory of ancient cities in the eastern Mediterranean, from Roman imperial times into the complex post-classical world. In July and August, the Aphrodisias team worked on four major field projects.

The Mica and Ahmet Ertegun South Agora project exposed impressive remains of a medieval and early Ottoman settlement in a 2,500 m² trench across the eastern half of the pool. The excellent state of preservation and the richness of small finds from domestic contexts shed a flood of light on a little-known period in Aphrodisias' history. Other trenches explored the system of planting beds for the palm grove outside the pool and its archaeo-botanical remains. Exciting progress was made in the documentation of the South Agora's architecture, supported by rectified aerial photos taken from a new drone.

The excavation of the largest street in ancient Aphrodisias, Tetrapylon Street, brought exciting finds from Roman to Ottoman times. A 10 x 50 m trench was laid out north of the Propylon of the Sebasteion, and the mid-Byzantine re-occupation of this zone was investigated in detail. Ninth-century walls, built on the destruction layers of the street, contained a remarkable body of Roman and late antique spolia. A statue of a boy wearing a himation was found in the foundations of a long terrace wall, and two late antique portrait heads were discovered in an early medieval platform where they had been used as building rubble. One of the heads joins a statue found nearby in 2012. Conservation work behind a tall masonry structure on the street (the Niche Building) brought to light a large and dynamic head of a veiled goddess.

Conservation and documentation work in the Hadrianic Baths made excellent progress. The heating system and partially collapsed hypocausts of the central Room 4 were stabilized and conserved. The rooms restored in previous campaigns were fitted with barriers and information panels for the opening of the northern part of the Baths to the public at the end of the season.

The Propylon was an extravagant columnar entrance to the Sebasteion, the temple complex for the cult of the emperor. Its stone-for-stone restoration or anastylosis is near completion. Work concentrated on the columns and entablatures of the first story: the columns were reinforced and fitted with dowels, and missing parts were restored in hand-carved artificial stone. The re-erection of the first story will be finished in September.

In addition, documentation and publication projects were pursued on the Bouleuterion, Stadium, and the Temple of Aphrodite, as well as on coins, sarcophagi, and environmental remains. Epigraphic finds included a new fragment of Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices of AD 301, from the section regulating the prices of furniture.

Figure 1: South Agora and Pool, looking south-west

Figure 2: Over life size head of veiled goddess

Figure 3: Late antique portrait of bearded man

Figure 4: Plate with glazed surface and graffiti, early-middle Ottoman

Figure 5: Fragment of Ottoman bowl with blue floral decoration, from Iznik

Figure 6: Fragment of Ottoman bowl with blue coloring

Figure 7: Aerial view of South Agora and Pool

All Aphrodisias images © IFA – NYU.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 1



Fig. 5

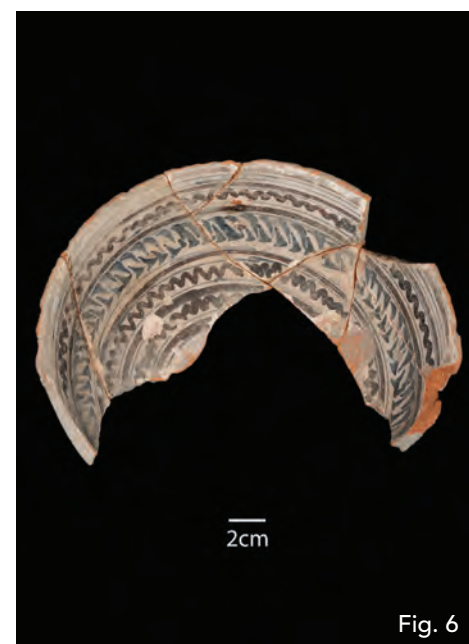


Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Samothrace, Greece

This summer was a year of transitions for us on Samothrace. After decades under the direction of the 19th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Komotini, we have moved to the newly formed Evros Ephoreia of Antiquities based in Alexandroupolis. Our colleague of more than thirty years, Dimitris Matsas (fig. 1), has retired, but fortunately he will stay on to complete the museum renovation. The museum's closure for renovation allowed for a very fine temporary exhibition of Samothracian antiquities, "Samothrace: the Mysteries of the Great Gods," at the Acropolis Museum in Athens, which opened in June and will remain on display until December 2015. A second Samothracian exhibition, "The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece," was displayed at the Louvre in the spring of 2015, in conjunction with the reinstallation of the cleaned Nike. In both exhibitions, our animations of the 3D reconstructed Sanctuary were on display.

With the museum closed, we focused our work on field projects within the Sanctuary (fig. 3). Under the guidance of geologist William Size, we completed color-coding the plan of each building according to its lithic materials (fig. 4), a project begun two years ago with Sara Chang (IFA). In discriminating between the wide variety of limestones, sandstones, and volcanic stones used in the foundations, we were able to associate several types of stone with particular island quarries (fig. 2). However, the sources of some types (notoriously that of the Nike Monument) remain to be identified. This study provides the groundwork to investigate the economics of the local construction trade and has the potential to contribute to our understanding of building chronology within the Sanctuary. With the support of the Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation, Inc., we brought a team of geomorphologists to the island to initiate a study of the dynamic changes wrought by the seasonal torrents that run through the Sanctuary. Michael Page, geographer, took high resolution aerial photographs of the Sanctuary that will be used for creating a detailed digital terrain model (DTM, fig. 5), and students photographed textures and materials for initiative to enhance the digital model of the Sanctuary, which is being funded by National Geographic.

Our conservation team worked with Greek colleagues to complete the site management program on the Eastern Hill; the students also had the opportunity to prepare large marble pieces for reinstallation in the renovated museum. The archaeologists continued to puzzle over the architectural plaster remains from the Nike Precinct in an effort to determine whether the statue stood in a covered or open environment. A key but persistently enigmatic piece of evidence is the fragmentary plaster lion's head waterspout. We were able to join locks to the broad jaw.

The groundwork laid this season will be of great value as we embark on two major projects in 2016: the publication of the monuments surrounding the Nike (Western Hill) supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and a partnership with the Université de Bordeaux to explore Thasos, Samothrace, and architectural networks of the northern Aegean, supported by the Partnership University Fund.

Figure 1: Dimitris Matsas at a team dinner at Profitis Elias. Photo by B. Wescoat

Figure 2: Quarry for the dolomitic fossiliferous limestone used in the Stoa; Akrotiri, near Kamariotissa. Photo by B. Wescoat

Figure 3: Samothrace 2015 team in the tunnel of the Propylon of Ptolemy II. Photo by A. Green

Figure 4: Plan of Theatral Circle showing the different kinds of stone used in construction

Figure 5: High resolution aerial view of the Sanctuary. Photo by M. Page



Fig. 1

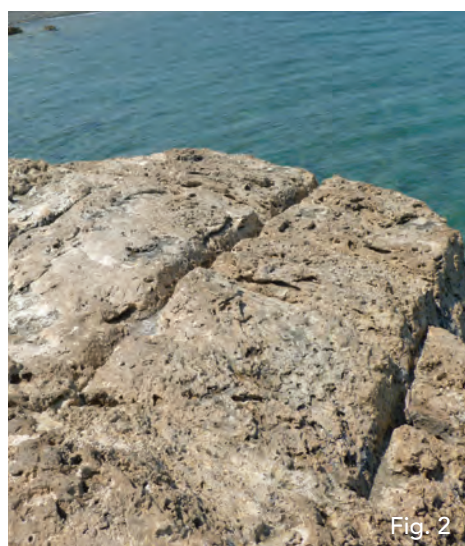


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

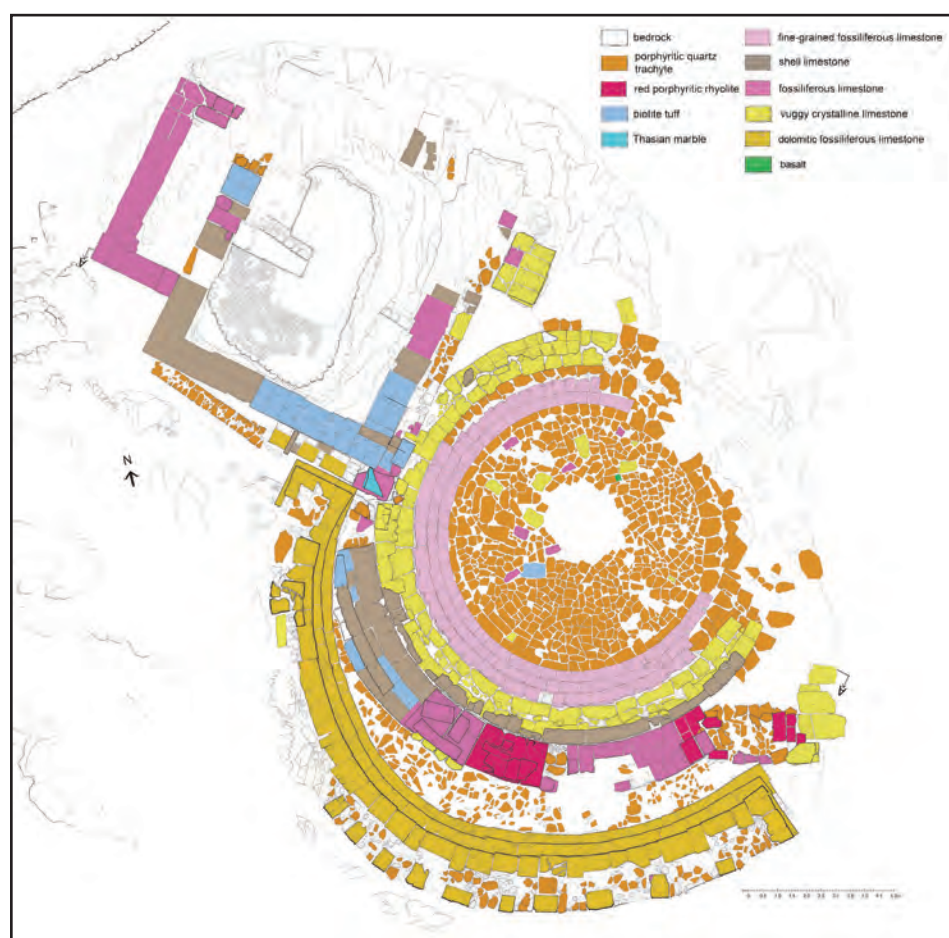


Fig. 5

Selinunte, Sicily



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

In May and June 2015 we carried out our ninth campaign of excavation in the main urban sanctuary (Figure 1). This season has produced important new findings underneath the rear chamber, or *adyton*, of Temple R, which contribute significantly to our understanding of the early phases of occupation of not only our area, but the site of Selinunte in general.

Work this season consisted of completing the excavation of Trench P, which opened two years ago in the *adyton* of Temple R, and which in the previous year had reached the bottom of a fill of stone chips serving as a foundation for an early sixth-century floor of the building (Figure 2). By the end of this season, we excavated the seventh-century and Bronze Age layers, eventually reaching bedrock, and ultimately we backfilled the entire trench.

Our work opened with the excavation of a clay floor found across the area of the trench, belonging to a predecessor of Temple R, which was at least as wide as its successor. This floor was cut on its north, west, and south sides during the construction of extant structure, whose date is now set to ca. 580–570, due to the discovery of the fragment on an Attic cup in the excavation of the fill of the trench of foundation on the north side. Pottery found in the floor of the predecessor and in the preparation layer underneath helps date this early structure to 610 ca. BCE and confirms its cultic function, as the first phase of Temple R (henceforth Temple R1). Particularly significant was the discovery, within the clay floor, of an iron spearhead (Figure 3), deposited during the construction of the building. This form of ritual deposition has been documented by our excavations also in association with the fifth-century renovation of Temple R and the construction of the South Building. No less significant was the discovery, in the floor of Temple R1, of a fragmentary cup (Figure 4) with subgeometric decoration of a type attested at Megara Hyblaea, the mother city of Selinunte.

Underneath the floor of Temple R1 we found a layer corresponding to the earliest phase of colonial occupation. The discovery of pottery and animal bones confirms the use of this area for cultic use from the very foundation of the Greek colony. The earliest pottery found in our excavations dates to the Late Protocorinthian period, supporting the dating of the foundation of the Greek colony in 628–627 BCE, as suggested by Thucydides.

The layer belonging to the earliest phase of occupation of our area, dating ca. 628–610 BCE, was found resting immediately above a layer of red clay-sand covering the bedrock, associated with scattered Bronze Age pottery in other trenches. This finding strongly speaks against a phase of Iron Age occupation in our area, and probably against the existence of a native settlement preceding the arrival of the Greek colonists in ca. 628–627 BCE.

Once again, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to our sponsors, to the Sicilian Ministry of Culture, and to the Director of the Archaeological Park of Selinunte, Giovanni Leto Barone. Additionally, we are very grateful to all of the students, experts, and colleagues who have contributed to the success of this year's season: in particular, the students Andrew Ward (our trench supervisor, who oversaw the entire operation this year), Sonia Rohrer, Madeleine Glennon, Alison Hight, Allison Kidd, Caterina Minniti, Eve Mayberger, Jessica Walthew, Flavio Ferlito, and Debora Messina; for the excavation Ferdinando Lentini and Roberto Miccichè; for the study of architecture David Scahill and Massimo Limoncelli; for conservation Anna Serotta; for the study of our finds Massimo Cultraro, Valeria Tardo, Caterina Trombi; for the drawings Filippo Pisciotta and Elisa Salerno; for the photographs Raffaele Franco; and our workman Nino Vultaggio.

Figure 1: Team of excavation for the 2015 campaign

Figure 2: View of Trench P at the beginning of the 2015 excavation

Figure 3: Iron spear from the floor of Temple R1

Figure 4: Subgeometric cup from the floor of Temple R1

All Selinunte images © IFA – NYU.

IFA Archaeology Program Donors

ABYDOS, EGYPT

American Research Center in Egypt

Mary Lee Baranger

Douglas Tilden

Rachel G. Wilf

Anonymous

APHRODISIAS, TURKEY

1984 Foundation

Amy and Seth A. Barad

Joel I. Barad

Mary Lee Baranger

Helen E. Dayton

Nathalie de Chaisemartin

Curt J.G. Dicamillo

Elizabeth S. Ettinghausen

Friends of Aphrodisias Trust, London

Stephen W. Guittard

Ariel H. Herrmann

Irvine Foundation

Magda Saleh and Jack A. Josephson

J. M. Kaplan Fund, Inc.

Samuel H. Kress Foundation

Peter Ian Kuniholm

Elizabeth M. Lewis

Lys A. McLaughlin Pike

Janko Rasic Architects, PLLC

Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation, Inc.

Rachel G. Wilf

Charles Williams II

World Monuments Fund

Anonymous (2)

SAMOTHRACE, GREECE

Mary Lee Baranger

Jean E. Dommermuth

James R. McCredie

National Geographic

Nicholas Pisis

Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation, Inc.

Rachel G. Wilf

Anonymous (2)

SELINUNTE, ITALY

1984 Foundation

Mary Lee Baranger

John and Ann Bender

Wayne and Susan Gradman

Wythe W. Holt, Jr.

Samuel H. Kress Foundation

Michele D. Marincola

Margaret M. Miles

Victoria and Samuel I. Newhouse, Jr.

Samuel I. Newhouse

Foundation, Inc.

John Griffiths Pedley

Ronald and Joan Schwartz

Alicia and Norman Volk

Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation, Inc.

Rachel G. Wilf

Charles Williams II

Anonymous (2)

This list includes contributions to the projects received from September 1, 2014 - October 1, 2015.



Two fragments of painted decoration, probably from coffins, with depictions of sinuous cobras. Photo by Amanda Kirkpatrick for the IFA Abydos Expedition

For information on how you can support the IFA Archaeology Program,
contact contact Hope O’Reilly at hope.oreilly@nyu.edu or 212-992-5869.

Alumni Spotlight



Maryl B. Gensheimer

Assistant Professor, Roman Art and Archaeology, University of Maryland

I was introduced to art history as an undergraduate at Williams College, when I enrolled serendipitously in a Western Art survey. It was not until coming to the Institute, however, that I was able to participate in an archaeological excavation. To say that my summers in Aphrodisias, Turkey profoundly affected both my intellectual and professional development is an understatement. Through daily engagement with the objects and monuments on site, I was able to refine my thinking about Roman art and archaeology more generally. Equally importantly, my work at Aphrodisias was facilitated by the very generous creative and intellectual support of the group of experts on site, who contributed significantly to my graduate training.

As an assistant professor at the University of Maryland, I strive to replicate the lessons learned at Aphrodisias in both the classroom and my new projects in Italy, at Oplontis and Stabiae. My graduate students and I aim to contextualize site-specific data and the results of our project within those of the broader community of scholars of the humanities and social sciences. In so doing, archaeology allows us to draw inspiration from – and contribute to – a multi-dimensional, interdisciplinary, and fundamentally collaborative study of the ancient Mediterranean.



Maggie Popkin

Assistant Professor, Department of Art History and Art, Case Western Reserve University

My summers at Selinunte and Samothrace as an IFA student gave me friends and colleagues I treasure to this day, and they opened my eyes to the importance of archaeology to ancient art historians. How does careful excavation provide unique insights into the ancient world? How does knowing where objects come from affect how we interpret them? What is lost when we do not know the archaeological context of an object? Such questions have shaped my research and my teaching. As a professor, I explore with my students the importance of archaeology to how we construct art historical knowledge. When we visit the Cleveland Museum of Art, we discuss questions of context and provenance. In my own research, I continue to be drawn to archaeology as an indispensable tool for the ancient art historian. I am thrilled to be a part of Samothrace's recent NEH grant to continue our work on the Sanctuary's Western Hill. Who knows what I will uncover over the next few summers, as I examine the remains of Samothrace's massive stoa and think about how it shaped pilgrims' experiences in the Sanctuary? If archaeology has taught me anything, it is that there is always something new to discover.

Deborah Vischak

Assistant Professor, Art and Archaeology, Princeton University

I first traveled to Egypt in 1997 to be a member of an excavation team led by David O'Connor, in Abydos. I fell in love with Egypt immediately.

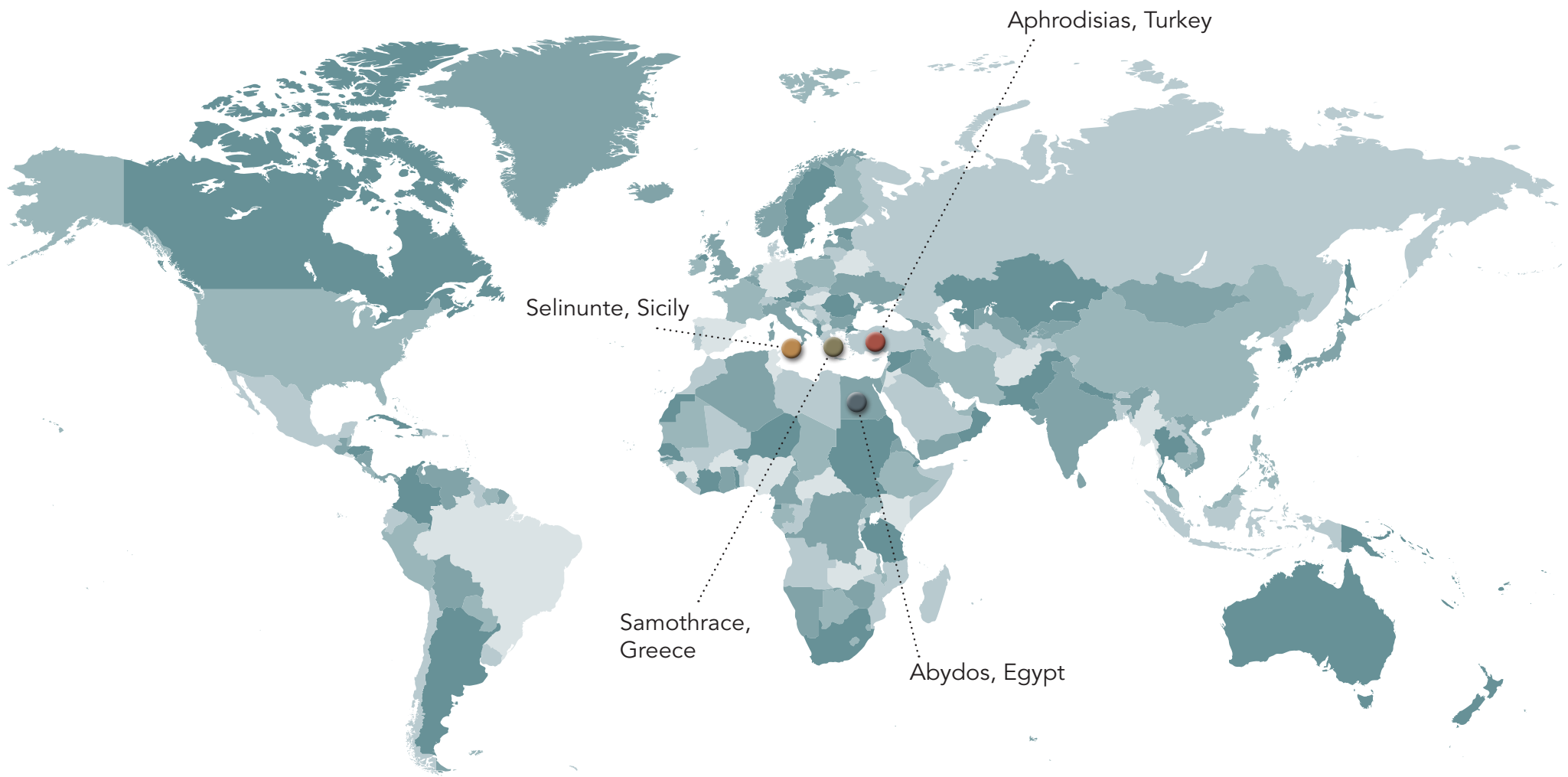
That season the team excavated the area of the early royal cultic enclosures. Among the countless things I learned, recognizing our part in the long, continuous span of history had the greatest impact. Our American-Egyptian team worked together toward shared goals of discovery, as such collaborative teams had since the nineteenth century. The newcomers like me learned from the expertise of our director and the more experienced members of the team, and all of us were following in the footsteps of the legendary archaeologist W.M.F. Petrie, who nearly 100 years earlier had identified the enclosure we now sought to re-examine.

As we worked our way downward, every discovery added to our sense of historical context, but for me a small find had the greatest impact: a mahmara, the remains left by the mixing plaster used by ancient workers to cover the mudbrick structures. Practically, these ancient people worked barefoot and left behind their footprints in the unused plaster mix that hardened, capturing their movements forever. In uncovering these footprints, 5,000 years of history telescoped into one moment: where we worked as a team, they had worked as a team.

Archaeology is not just about collecting data and categorizing material. Our job is to try to access, and in some way honor, the real people whose desires and actions produced the incredible monuments that survive. I was most recently at Abydos in 2012 working in the same area on a team directed by Matthew Adams. My favorite picture from the season is a footprint in another mahmara.



IFA Archaeology Excavation Site Countries



IFA
Archaeology
JOURNAL



Institute *of* Fine Arts

1 East 78th Street
New York, NY 10075



NYU
