



Archaeology

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Street and Propylon of Sebasteion. Aphrodisias, Turkey. © The Institute - NYU

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Message from the Director

I am delighted to welcome you to the fifth edition of the Institute's *Archaeology Journal*. I could not be more pleased to report the important advances the Institute of Fine Arts continues to make at our four excavation sites. As you will see from the contents here, this year's season was a great success for all of our archaeological teams. These reports from the field give an enticing glimpse at what future discoveries may hold.

Among many highlights of the season, we saw: the completion of the new collections wing at the Abydos field house that will facilitate enhanced support for current and future research on-site; the first full-scale investigation into the central torrent running through the Sanctuary at Samothrace; the production of a new, detailed map of the Selinunte team's area of investigation at Temples R and B; and the completion of the excavation of the Hadrianic Baths at Aphrodisias, with the northern section of the complex made open to the public.

Archaeology at the Institute is one of the pillars of our academic offerings and provides our scholars with unparalleled access to *in situ* research opportunities and contact with objects of the ancient world. In the course of their tireless work, our professors and students produce new and vital perspectives that influence scholarship of antiquity and post-antiquity across the world. It is thanks to the unwavering support of our donors that we are able to accomplish so much each season.

Thank you for your interest in archaeology at the Institute of Fine Arts. I hope you will enjoy reading about our many achievements from the summer.

Patricia Rubin
Judy and Michael Steinhardt Director
Institute of Fine Arts



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Abydos, Egypt



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

One result of the large-scale and regular excavations carried out over many years by the Institute of Fine Arts' Abydos Project is the generation of a wide range and large volume of archaeological study material, which represents a fundamental resource for pursuing research questions about both ancient Abydos and ancient Egypt more broadly. Much of what is generated during a field season cannot be "finished" then, as it may require or be appropriate for specialized or ongoing analysis. Organizing and maintaining a research resource like the Abydos study collection involves having adequate and appropriate space and security considerations, particularly in the context of Egypt since 2011. With the permission of and in consultation with Egypt's Ministry of Antiquities, the Abydos Project has been working since 2009 on a new collections wing at the Abydos field house, and construction was completed in summer 2016.

The new wing represents a major enhancement for the project. It includes ample, stable, and secure storage spaces both meet present needs and allow for considerable future growth, as well as two working labs, one for the study of bioarchaeological material, primarily human and animal remains, and an objects conservation lab. The essential regular involvement of professional and student conservators in the project necessitated a dedicated and appropriately equipped workspace. Major support from the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), through its Antiquities Endowment Fund grant program, and the Institute for Bioarchaeology at the British Museum made this important initiative possible.

Institute students and Conservation Center faculty were part of the planning of the facility, and while on-site, students of art history, archaeology, and conservation, were responsible for beginning the process of moving and organizing material in the new storeroom, which will continue in future seasons.

The completion of the new collections facility at Abydos represents a major milestone for the project, after many years of coping with inadequate space and less than ideal storage conditions. The excavated study material, representing more than 3500 years of Egyptian history and from many components of the site (town, temples, cemeteries, Egypt's first royal monumental funerary buildings, among others), will, moving forward, be considerably better and more securely housed and will, at the same time, be much more accessible for research and study purposes.

Adaptability to changing circumstances is a necessity in any field setting and is particularly the case in Egypt since 2011. In recent years the Abydos Project has worked closely with Antiquities officials on a range of initiatives aimed at maintaining the security and integrity of the site. Most recently, the Ministry made an urgent request for assistance in responding to the threat posed by rapidly expanding adjacent agricultural fields. An emergency grant from ARCE supported the hire of temporary site guards for the area at risk and the construction of an 800-meter long wall that establishes a physical and conceptual boundary between the ancient site and the fields. Construction began in spring 2016 and will be completed next season.

Figure 1: Institute student conservator Eve Mayberger cleaning the remains of an adolescent female buried wearing an unusually well preserved and elaborately braided wig and a beaded diadem. Photo by Matthew Adams

Figure 2: The Abydos field house. The new collections wing is behind the domes at the far right, so as to not be visually obtrusive on the main approach to the house. Photo by Matthew Adams

Figure 3: Organizing boxes of artifacts to be moved into the new storeroom. Photo by Briana Jackson

Figure 4: Digging the foundation trench for a boundary wall between the agricultural fields at left and the edge of the archaeological site at right. Photo by Matthew Adams

Aphrodisias, Turkey

The Institute’s project at Aphrodisias is revealing the surprising grandeur of a medium-sized city in the eastern Roman Empire and its long post-classical life into Ottoman times. This year, the Aphrodisias team worked from July to mid-September on several projects.

The Mica and Ahmet Ertegun South Agora Pool Project exposed nearly the full marble perimeter of the pool and moved into the post-antique layers covering it. A large trench of 2,800m² revealed an unexpected intensity of post-antique and medieval activity across the whole area. Among a large number of coins, small objects, and broken marbles, two finds stand out: a beautiful fragment of a Julio-Claudian male portrait, and a graffito on the pool edge commemorating one ‘Kolotron, chief of the gold-workers’ accompanied by two engraved busts of champion athletes.

The continued excavation of the city’s major north-south street brought exciting discoveries. A new trench south of the Sebasteion’s Propylon found a large middle-Byzantine structure built partly across the line of the street and consisting of an imposing heated bath facility, unusual for its time. A large veiled female portrait head was found in excavation north of the Propylon, and a careful trial fitting was able to show that it belongs to a statue found earlier, of one Aemilia Lepida, an imperial princess of the Tiberian period.

A final season of conservation work in the Hadrianic Baths brought this project to a conclusion. The floors, bathing pools, and heating system of the central Room 4 were stabilized, and the great upstanding limestone wall between Rooms 4 and 5 was scaffolded, cleaned of earth and plant growth, and repaired with stainless clamps and dowels. The excavated northern part of the bath complex is now open to the public, with new signage and steel-wire barriers.

Strong progress was made in research and publication projects on the Stadium, Sebasteion, North Agora, and Temple of Aphrodite, as well as on coins, inscriptions, sarcophagi, statuary, and environmental remains. The entire Prehistoric and Bronze Age material from the 1970s excavations on the Theater and Pekmez Hills – some 2,000 boxes – was sorted, cleaned, and re-housed in the first part of a major re-organization of the excavation’s depots.

Figure 1: Hadrianic Baths, wall between Rooms 4 and 5

Figure 2: Julio-Claudian portrait from South Agora

Figure 3: Statue of Aemilia Lepida

Figure 4: Institute students Allison Kidd and Kelley Stone in South Agora

Figure 5: Graffito on edge of pool in South Agora

Figure 6: Hadrianic Baths, Room 6 open to public

All Aphrodisias images © The Institute - NYU.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Samothrace, Greece

Research in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods on Samothrace centered on two interconnected initiatives during the 2016 season. As part of the project, “Northern Aegean Architectural Networks,” funded by the Partner University Fund and co-sponsored by the Université de Bordeaux-Montaigne and Emory University, we began the season with an architectural study tour of Thasos, Samothrace, and Macedonia. The team of French and American graduate students investigated architectural connections between the two islands and their relationship to trends in Hellenistic architecture in northern Greece. Several of the participants then joined the regular season on Samothrace (fig. 1).

During our field season, we pursued two major projects. In conjunction with our National Endowment for the Humanities supported project to prepare the full publication of the western region of the Sanctuary centered on the Stoa, Nike Precinct, and Theater, we worked extensively on the documentation of the Stoa’s nearly 2400 architectural blocks. We also began to inventory the many marble fragments that originally belonged to the host of dedications that stood in front of the Stoa. We continued to work on the remains of plaster and tiles from the vicinity of the Nike Precinct, in an effort to determine if the statue was originally set within an enclosed building. The Nike originally stood above the steep Theater, traces of which we were able to identify in 2013. The theater faces into the Sanctuary and clearly communicates with the Altar Court on the opposite bank of the ravine. In order to articulate their relationship more clearly, we reopened our investigation of this unusual Doric building.

Recognizing its centrality not only to our understanding of the Theater but the entire Sanctuary, we mounted the first full-scale investigation of the most dynamic natural feature of the sacred temenos: the central torrent running through the heart of the Sanctuary. We aim to understand how it shaped the sacred terrain, and how it was controlled and bridged. Our team of geomorphologists mapped the watersheds and stream dynamics far up the slopes of Agios Giorgios, while our team of archaeologists recorded the extensive remains of Greek, Roman, and modern retaining walls constructed to channel the volatile water. Using photogrammetry, we created a 3-dimensional model of the ravine, which was then orthorectified so that the remains could be drawn and color-coded in plan and section. We now have a much fuller idea of the course of the channel, as well as its areas of vulnerability and repair, but we have not yet recovered evidence for the way in which the ravine was bridged.

We continued our long-standing conservation program working with objects and attending to the condition of the site. Hill slope failure and significant erosion to the east of the Anaktoron exposed significant ancient debris. In advance of interventions to remediate the erosion, we conducted a surface survey of the region. Thanks to the initiative of our Greek colleagues, we are now able to work in a new, state-of-the-art laboratory constructed by the Ephoreia, where we helped to prepare objects that will be displayed in the newly renovated Samothrace Archaeological Museum (fig. 2).

With the support of the National Geographic, we created a new version of our digital reconstruction of the Sanctuary, with its animations following the pilgrim’s passage (figs. 3 and 4).

Figure 1: PUF team members in the Agora of Thasos. Photo by B. Wescoat

Figure 2: In the new conservation lab, Kimberly Frost prepares an SOS amphora for display. Photo by B. Wescoat

Figure 3: Digital reconstruction of the Sacred Way. American Excavations Samothrace

Figure 4: Digital reconstruction of the Sanctuary. American Excavations Samothrace



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

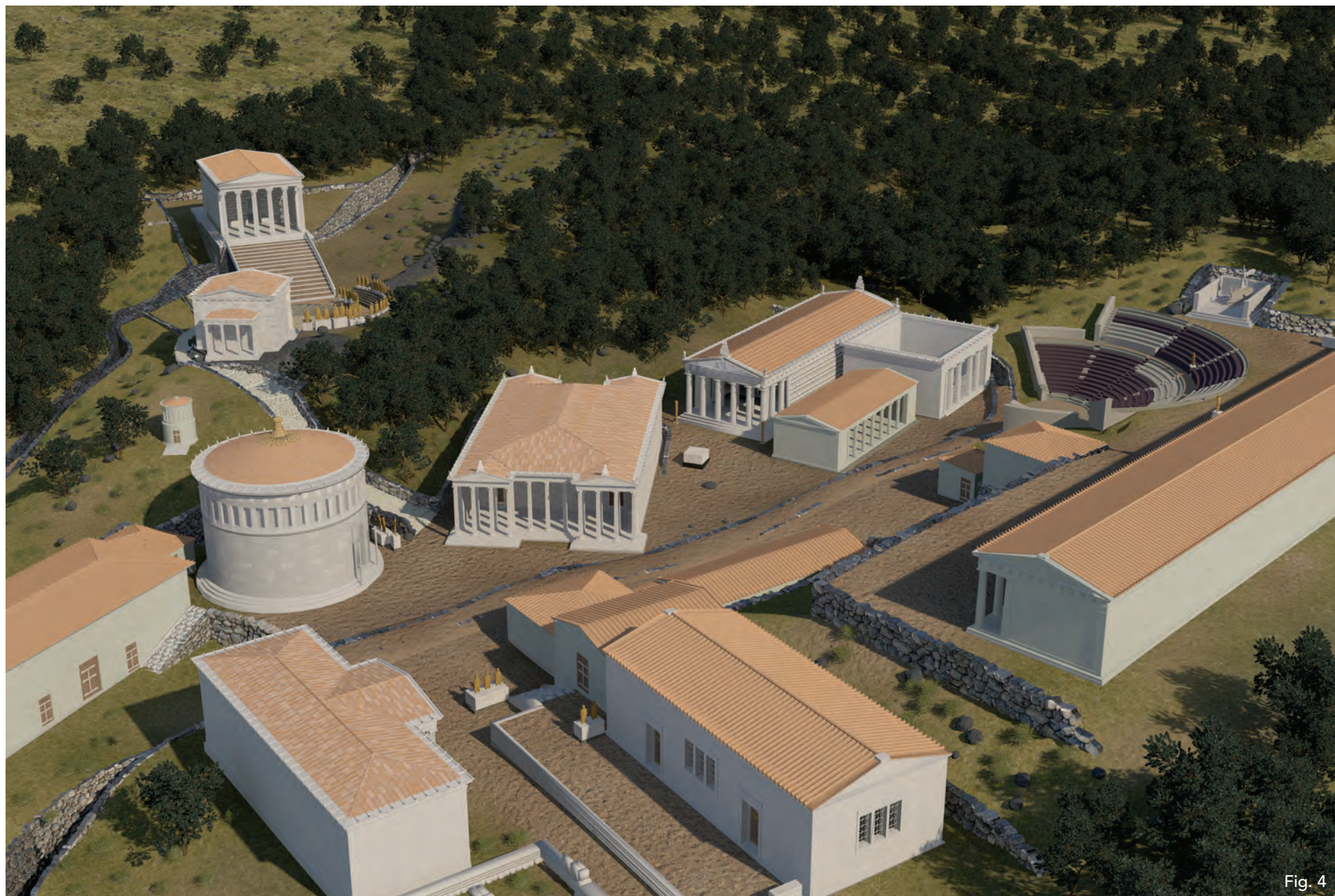


Fig. 4

Selinunte, Sicily

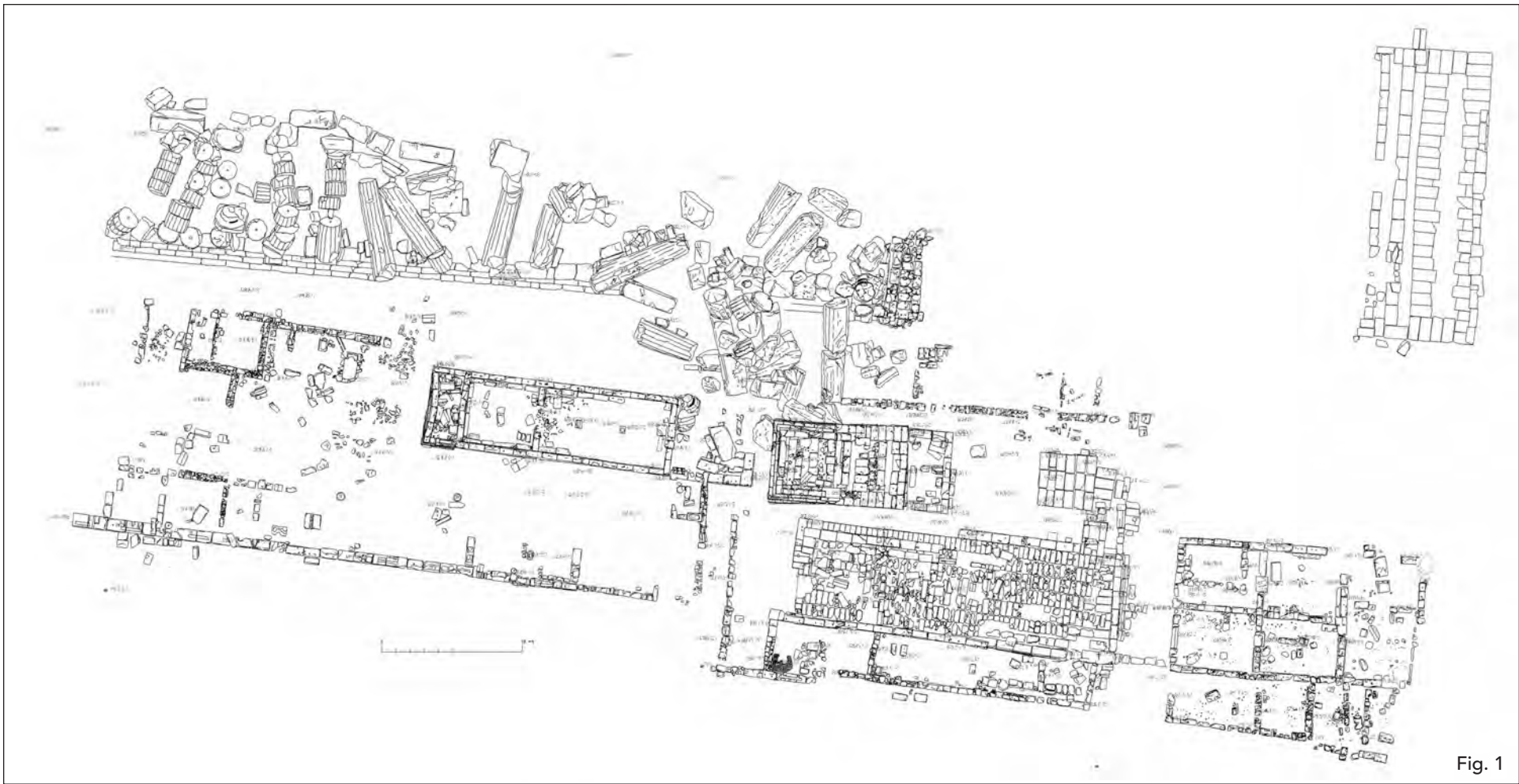


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

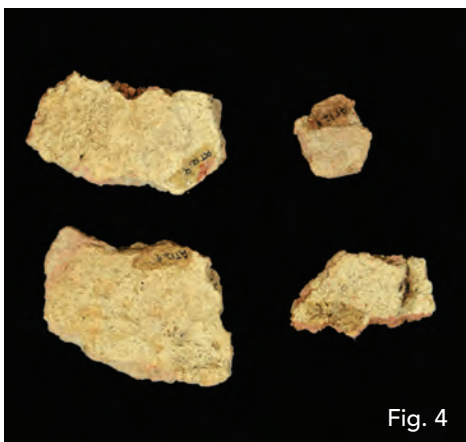


Fig. 4

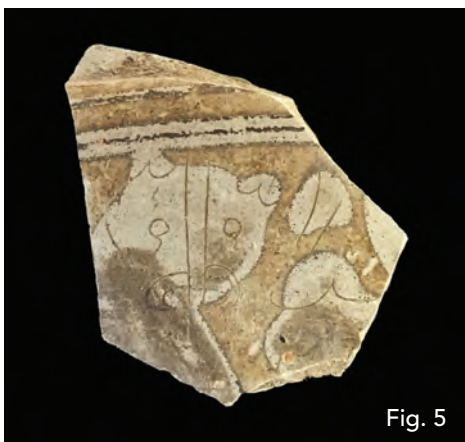


Fig. 5

In May and June 2016 we conducted a successful study season, concentrating our attention on the study of the general topography of the southern sector of the main urban sanctuary and on the systematic examination of the finds from our earlier excavations.

We accomplished much on both fronts. In preparing the publication of Temple B, we succeeded in producing a new, detailed map (Figure 1) of our area of investigation, which represents a substantial improvement on the existing published plans. Through this documentary work we were able to analyze important structures of the Archaic period associated with the ritual use of this part of the sanctuary. Related final studies on finds discovered in the early seasons of excavation—dating from the Prehistoric to Hellenistic periods—were also successfully completed.

No less significant was the analysis of more recent finds from the area of Temple R, which has refined our understanding of the site's stratigraphic sequence, particularly in the Archaic period. Here, a first phase of occupation during the Bronze Age (Figure 2) was followed by a gap starting in the Early Iron Age. The next evidence for occupation dates to the third quarter of the seventh century BCE (including Late Protocorinthian and Transitional pottery) (Figure 3), which can be related to the Greek colonial foundation, when our area was clearly identified as sanctuary. A probable preliminary phase of open air cult was soon followed (after ca. 620 BCE) by the construction of a first structure with mudbrick walls and a thatch roof (Figure 4). This first structure, already associated with ritual activities (including wine consumption), was dismantled after only a few decades to make way for the construction of Temple R. Progress in the analysis of the ceramic finds from the building's foundation trenches and fill beneath the floor points now to a dating of this building to ca. 590-580 (between Early Corinthian and Middle Corinthian) (Figure 5). We have also identified in Temple R a possible destruction by fire towards the end of the sixth century, as shown by the burning of the original clay floor in the cella. The restructuring of the building took place between the end of the sixth and the beginning of the fifth century, within the general reshaping of the main urban sanctuary started ca. 540 BCE.

Once again, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to our sponsors, to the Sicilian Ministry of Culture, and to the new Director of the Archaeological Park of Selinunte, Architect Enrico Caruso. As well, we are very grateful to all those students, experts, and colleagues who have contributed to the success of this year's season: in particular, the students Andrew Ward, Madeleine Glennon, Flavio Ferlito, Alba Mazza and Debora Messina; for the study of architecture Dr. David Scahill and Dr. Massimo Limoncelli; for conservation Laura Schepis and Laura Volpe; for the study of our finds Dr. Angela Bellia, Prof. Lorenzo Lazzarini, Dr. Babette Bechtold, Dr. Massimo Cultraro, Dr. Ferdinando Lentini, Dr. Roberto Miccichè, Dr. Pitano Perra, Dr. Valeria Tardo, Dr. Caterina Trombi, Dr. Pietro Valenti, and Dr. Marco Vattano; for the drawings Filippo Pisciotta; for the photographs Raffaele Franco; and our workman Nino Vultaggio.

Figure 1: New state plan of the area of investigation

Figure 2: Late Bronze Age pottery from Trench A (2007)

Figure 3: LPC conical oinochoe from Trench O (2012)

Figure 4: Fragment of wall or thatch roof from Trench O (2012)

Figure 5: Fragment of MC vase from fill beneath the floor of Temple R in Trench O (2012)

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This list includes contributions to the projects received from September 1, 2015 - October 3, 2016.



Institute Ph.D. candidate Briana Jackson and Doha Fathy, who joined the project from the Registration Department of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, sorting out problems with tags on baskets of pottery sherds. Photo by Kelley Stone.

For information on how you can support the Institute’s Archaeology Program, please contact the Development Office by calling 212-992-5804.

Student Spotlight



Kimberly Frost

This past summer I was fortunate to work as student conservator at the excavations in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods, Samothrace. Though I had no previous experience in archaeology, it quickly became clear that a conservator’s perspective and knowledge can play a key role on an archaeological site. I worked with director Bonna Wescoat to coordinate data from many members of the team including geologists, architects, and mapping specialists concerning areas of land instability on site. The opportunity to work in a tight-knit team is quite the opposite of typical conservation work treating individual objects. My summer in Samothrace taught me that, like archaeology, conservation is never a solo pursuit. Though I will return to working on objects in museums and other contexts, the lasting impressions from my field work in Samothrace will continue to inform my work. I have returned with a renewed enthusiasm to work openly with experts in many fields and a new appreciation for the original context of museum objects.



Madeleine Glennon

During my time at the Institute of Fine Arts I have had the opportunity to work on the archaeological excavations at both Selinunte and Samothrace. As an undergraduate I studied Classics with a focus on ancient Greek Art and Architecture, but had never worked on an excavation until the 2013 season at Selinunte. This experience demonstrated to me, having only studied ancient objects in the library and museum, that close interaction with artifacts and their physical contexts is an invaluable tool. Despite four years of archaeological fieldwork in Sicily and Greece, this feeling has never diminished. Hiking through the sanctuary at Samothrace searching for and identifying blocks has taught me more about ancient architecture than any book or lecture and I am a better scholar for it. There is always more to learn from these incredible sites and experiencing them in person is the best way to do so.

Donor Spotlight

Rachel G. Wilf



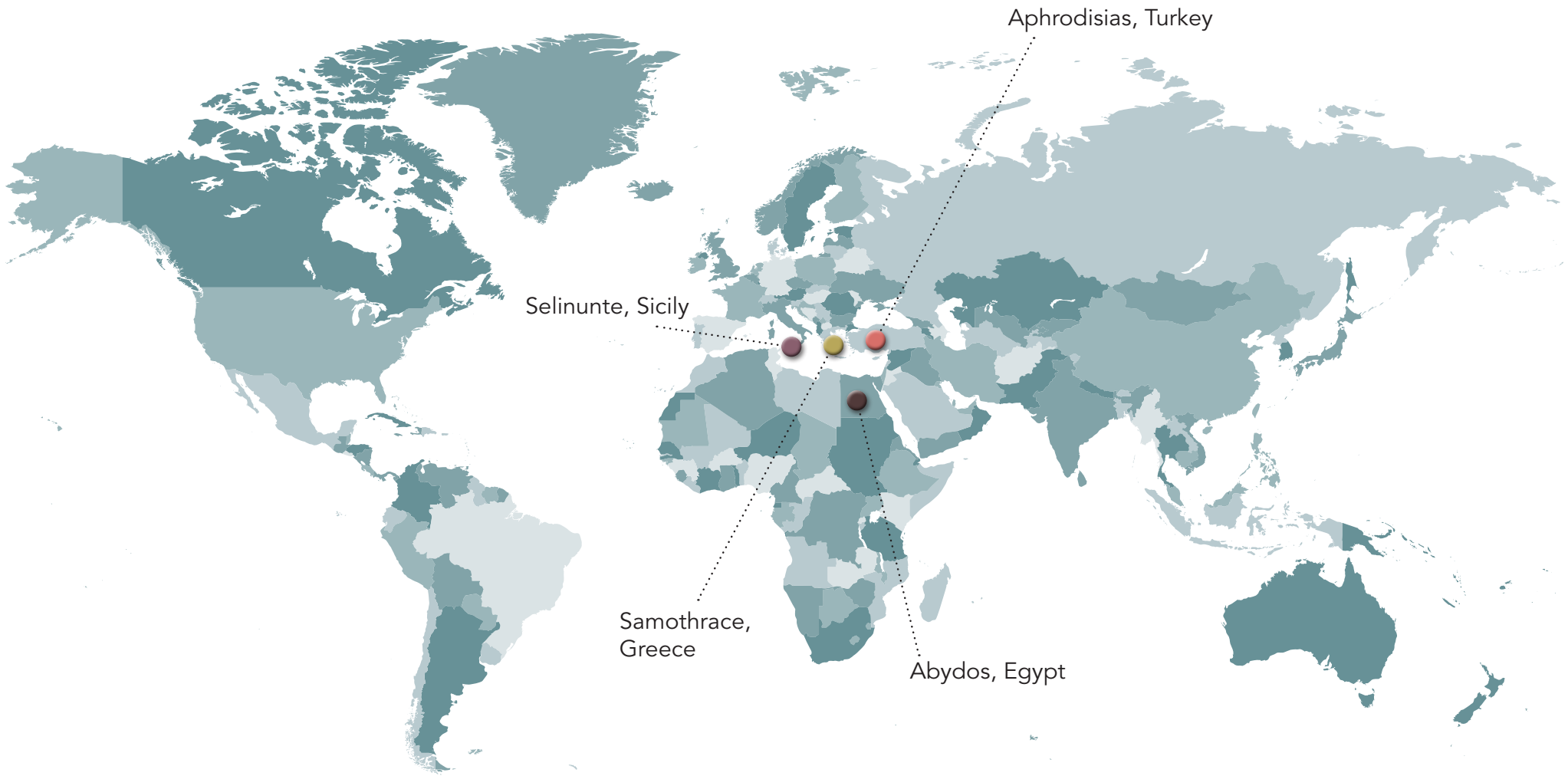
My support of archaeology at the Institute may appear somewhat unexpected, considering that I collect contemporary art, and studied and worked with contemporary art for many years. However, as a proud alumna of the Institute, I know from my own experience how important object-based and on-site study is to art historians in all areas of focus. It is this knowledge that compelled me to support archaeological excavations at the Institute. Furthermore, studying Greek and Roman

art as both an undergraduate and graduate student provided a fascinating counterpart to my coursework in modern and

contemporary art and architecture. Learning about the oldest works of art in tandem with those made more recently has only deepened and enhanced my appreciation of all art, as it has provided me a fuller scope of our cultural story from the beginning to the present.

Supporting the Institute’s archaeological excavations allows students not only to experience objects in person, but also to place these objects within a spatial and temporal context, which is an imperative step in archaeological scholarship. Experiencing the climate, landscape, people and culture of a location while studying its historical objects is as close as we can get to breaking down the barriers of time and reaching far back into the past. It places these ancient objects into a deeper and more enriched context, resulting in higher quality scholarship. I am so pleased to support such an important and exceptional program for aspiring art historians.

The Institute's Archaeology Excavation Sites



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