

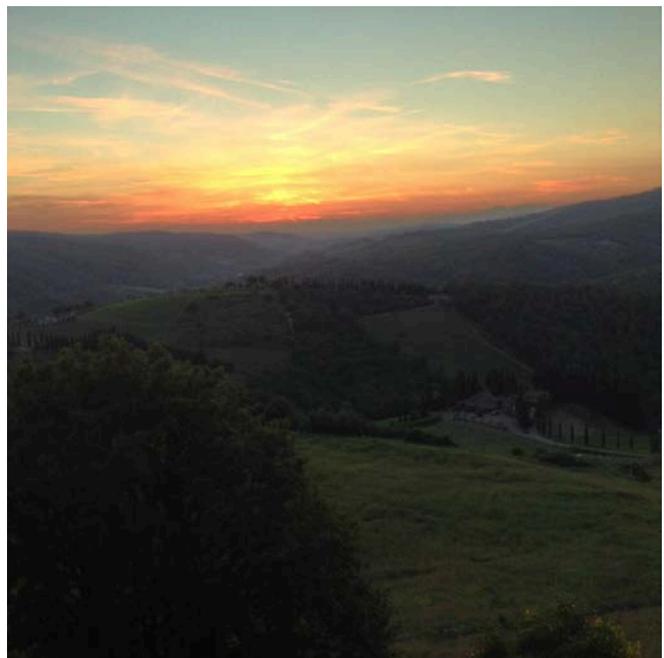
Report on Cetamura del Chianti, the UNCA Archaeological Field School

June, 2015

Thanks to the Jane C. Waldbaum Scholarship, I was able to attend the University of North Carolina at Asheville's Archaeological Field School at Cetamura del Chianti in Italy during the month of June, where I participated in archaeological fieldwork for the first time. The field school is directed by Dr. Nancy T. de Grummond from Florida State University and is a collaboration among students and professors, primarily UNCA, FSU, and Syracuse University. I was sponsored by Dr. Laurel Taylor, Field Director and UNCA Archaeology Field School Director, who worked with me on my research project and was instrumental in making sure my overall experience in Italy was both educationally and culturally significant. The site is located in the Chianti district of Tuscany and has been open since 1973. The excavations have indicated that the site contained multiple phases of both Etruscan and Roman settlement and it has produced many fascinating features including two wells which have both given forth hundreds of notable artifacts.

Intro to Italy

As a Classics major, I was excited to finally get my hands on some ancient dirt, especially since this was my first time in Italy despite studying its history for years. I could not have asked for a better place for my first experience with both fieldwork and Italy than this site and the small town of Radda in Chianti where we stayed for the month. When we weren't digging or researching we were enjoying the sunshine, tasting the food



The sunsets of Radda were a sight to behold

and wine, and exploring the surrounding cities like Siena, Florence, and Lucca. I already knew I was interested in ancient Italy, but over the course of the month I came to love modern Italy as well.

On Site

Each morning we drove through winding mountain roads and then hiked up a steep and rocky path to reach the site. We began work immediately on our respective trenches, troweling and sifting and



Me having some fun defining the freshly discovered wall

keeping our eyes out for even the smallest sherd of pottery. I consider myself especially lucky because for my time at Cetamura, I was assigned to a team that was beginning excavations on a previously un-excavated area of the site. While many students worked in existing trenches (which were of course remarkable in their own right), a few of us were able to open new units, not knowing what we might find. It was tough at times because while we spent day after day

just trying to get through one stratum, other trenches were making some spectacular discoveries. We did eventually make it through several strata and our efforts paid off when we uncovered a clearly deliberate formation of stones. The deeper we went, the more intrigued we became because it was clear that we had discovered a significant wall structure. Not much more could be understood about this feature before it was time to backfill the site and leave it for the summer. Future years and efforts will give us more information about what exactly we found, but as someone who was new to archaeology, it was very exciting to be part of this team and this discovery.

Terra Sigillata

While participating in the field school, I also conducted an independent research project on the fine Roman ceramic ware, *terra sigillata* - a type of ceramic with a red slip that is often found at Cetamura and is diagnostically significant because it can often be closely dated. For my project, I looked at sherds displaying decorative properties that had been excavated within the past four or five years. I found that decorations like rouletting, pocked appliqués, and



A very cool red gloss rim fragment featuring a matron mask and a bird

banding were fairly common. There were also less common designs like leaf imprints, rosettes, and on one particularly impressive sherd, an appliqué of both a matron mask and a bird. My task was to catalog these sherds and attempt to match their form and design to a conspectus for a better understanding of their time and place of origin. I found this to be a challenge in that many of these items were (thus far) unidentifiable. But I enjoyed the process and gained valuable insight, not only about *terra sigillata*, but also about field research methods and lab practices.

Looking Back

I had an outstanding experience at Cetamura. The work could be tiring and the days long, yet I found myself enjoying every minute of it, even growing fond of the abundant baby scorpions, poisonous caterpillars, and the theoretical threat of vipers and wild boars. I loved the anticipation that at any moment I could unearth something significant and the satisfaction I had of finding (even just a small) sherd of pottery was immense. It was exciting to learn about archaeological field methods and to be able to develop a skill set that I believe I will continue to use in years to come. It was humbling to be

surrounded by so much history and to be able to participate in our understanding of it; this level of



The ladies of my trench and a few members of the inspiring Italian well team

involvement certainly reaffirmed my love of the ancient world and my interest in archaeology is indeed heightened. I am extremely grateful that the AIA provided me with the means to take advantage of this opportunity. This experience has helped shape and direct both my

personal and academic interests in many ways. It was truly a remarkable summer

and I will never forget the great times I had both on and off the site.