



With the funding provided by the Premier's International Scholarship, I had the privilege to spend the autumn of 2014 in an archaeology field school program hosted by Simon Fraser University in Greece. In the months of September through November, myself and fifteen other students of diverse fields of study lived and excavated a necropolis dating to Greece's Archaic period on the island of Kefalonia. This opportunity represented many things for me, among them, the opportunity get field experience in archaeology which cannot be taught in a classroom and the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. Many who choose to study archaeology get their start reading mythology and classical novels such as the Odyssey and the Iliad. The opportunity to practice archaeology in Greece, meant being able to explore my passion in the very culture that inspired it in the first place.

Simon Fraser University's "Dig Greece" field school program, is one of several field school programs available in a diverse range of study. Participation in a field school is of particular importance to students of archaeology. Many aspects of archaeology cannot be taught within the walls of a classroom and require hands-on experience from skilled archaeologists who have a developed knowledge of the particular time or region of study. This program allowed me to work with a scholar with a vast knowledge of Greek pottery and antiquity, as well as a trained human osteologist. Through the field and lab practicums required of the program I was able to gain experience and develop a working knowledge of excavation, extraction, preparation, cleaning and analysis of pottery, artifacts and human remains. These skills are essential to anyone looking to do

professional and academic work in archaeology, and it was a very rewarding experience to take these concepts from the classroom to the field.

One particularly cool aspect of the program was its location on Kefalonia, one of the Ionian Islands. As part of one of our courses we did an in-depth study of Homer's *The Odyssey*, and discussed its archaeological significance. This experience was really brought to life in Kefalonia's close proximity the island of Ithaca- the mythical kingdom of Odysseus. There is even some speculation that Kefalonia itself may have been the Ithaca referenced in the poem, due to the ambiguity of Homeric geography. Most importantly, however, Kefalonia and its inhabitants represented a remarkably welcoming and generous environment in which to study. The Greeks' passion for history and hospitality were apparent in almost every interaction. It was inspiring to be surrounded by people of such an appreciation for heritage, which is an appreciation for all of those who study archaeology.

I must add that the hospitality received during the duration of my time in Greece extended to every region of Greece that I visited. As part of the program, we also went on field trips to numerous large and small scale archaeological and historical sites including at Athens, Olympia, Pylos, Patras, Epidauros and personal trips to Kalamata, Sparta, Delphi and the Mani Region. Every community, from the largest city to the smallest fishing town, offered hospitality to us as students and visitors. Their love of life, music and food was a delight to experience, and some of my favourite memories of the trip include partaking in traditional Greek meals and dancing to bouzouki music until the early hours of the morning.



Being able to experience Greek culture was particularly exciting for me as a joint major of archaeology and cultural anthropology at Simon Fraser University. Cultural anthropology encompasses a vast field of study of human life and behaviour and often involves the study of "other" cultures. Many who go on to do graduate studies in anthropology will spend months at a time doing field research in another country. This opportunity gave me a glimpse of what doing such research is like: entering a new space as an outsider, and eventually developing an understanding and appreciation of the culture to be able to observe it from multiple viewpoints. The practice of anthropology is grounded in an appreciation for the diversity of human life, and my time in Greece allowed me to appreciate the complex and loving culture affectionately referred to by some as the cradle of civilization and the birthplace of democracy.

I truly value the experiences I had on this trip, which are unique to studying in a global setting. Simon Fraser University is one of only a few outside universities offering programs within Greece. This program not only offers students a chance to see what doing real excavation-work is like, but also gives a "foot in the door" as far as working internationally upon graduation from their university program. Beyond this, it has instilled in me an appreciation for hard work and thoroughness. Excavation was not always easy; it required long periods of physical labour, sometimes in warm and humid conditions and often started early in the morning. But at the end of the day, it was some of the most rewarding work I've done so far in my life. Unearthing my first artifact will be a memory that I will cherish forever, and it took place in, what is now, one of my favourite places on earth, all made possible due to the Premier's International Scholarship.

It is hard to express the gratitude I have for the support of the foundation, thank you.

Casey Gray

Simon Fraser University Departments of Archaeology and Anthropology