



Abydos: Detail of painted decoration on the interior of a coffin, showing beings residing in the underworld

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## Message from the Director

I am delighted to present the eighth edition of the Institute's *Archaeology Journal*. This year's publication celebrates new research from this past season that paves the way for future discoveries at our five archaeological sites around the globe.

In Abydos, under the direction of Matthew Adams, students began conserving and stabilizing a site that was vandalized after our own David O'Connor performed its original excavation in the 1960s. At Aphrodisias, through excavations led by Roland R.R. Smith, new mosaics, window glass, and marble sculptures were discovered in collaboration with students from Oxford and several Turkish universities. In Samothrace, Bonna Wescoat and her team used photogrammetry modeling to enhance ongoing excavations and laid the groundwork for further research. At the Institute's newest site in Sanam, Kathryn Howley along with students found an impressive mud brick wall which they believe dates to the first half of the eighth century BCE. And finally, in Selinunte, Clemente Marconi and his team discovered a well-preserved antler of a red deer, likely used by worshippers of the goddess Artemis.

Every year I look forward to receiving these reports from our site directors about their spectacular excavations. Thanks to their amazing work, as well as that of our remarkable students and the support of generous donors, the Institute continues to make important and exciting contributions to the field of archeology.

I hope you will enjoy learning about the extraordinary work undertaken this past year by our fellow colleagues and students out in the field.

Christine Poggi  
Judy and Michael Steinhardt Director  
Institute of Fine Arts

# Abydos, Egypt

The 2019 field season of the Abydos project focused on three areas: the ritual precinct of King Khasekhemwy, the Temple of Osiris, and a small temple built by King Ramesses II.

One of the project's core research aims is exploring the use of the site by Egypt's first rulers. Kings of Dynasties 1 and 2 (ca. 3000–2700 BCE), whose necropolis was located elsewhere at Abydos, built monumental ritual precincts near the ancient town. All but one were demolished anciently, and only that of Khasekhemwy, last of the early kings buried at Abydos, still stands. This monument has been the focus of systematic excavation and architectural conservation since 2001.

This season's work explored the area in front of one of two main entrances. The original floor was defined, on which a large number of objects were produced by the rituals conducted in and around the structure. These included pottery offering jars and seal impressions, some from the formal closing and opening of the monument's wooden door.

A great deal was also revealed about the monument's later history. Middle Kingdom (ca. 2000–1700 BCE) and Third Intermediate Period (ca. 1000–700 BCE) burials were clustered along its outer wall. Most of the earlier examples were in rectangular wood coffins, sometimes painted white but otherwise undecorated. The later burials were usually in wood anthropoid coffins. Two of these were elaborately painted, but little wood survived, leaving only paper-thin layers of paint that retained the coffin shape.

As part of the ongoing architectural conservation program, the two main gateways were partly reconstructed, and a major section of wall stabilized. The area has been opened for visitors, and this year's work aimed to make key original features more visible, easier to understand, and better protected.

The excavations also included the Temple of Osiris, Abydos' chief institution, and focused on its pylon, or monumental gateway, probably built in Dynasty 30 (ca. 381–341 BCE).

The pylon was once one of Egypt's largest, but its surviving foundation had been buried by huge spoil heaps from digging a century ago. Excavation revealed its massive stone masonry and allowed the first careful study of the structure. In addition, systematic sieving of the spoil deposit produced hundreds of decorated stone fragments from nearby buildings that were overlooked in the early excavations.

Documentation and condition assessment began at a small temple of Ramesses II (ca. 1279–1213 BCE). It stood at the beginning of a great processional route that ran from the ancient town to the early royal tombs. This was the first area excavated by David O'Connor in the 1960s and has suffered badly from vandalism in recent years. This year's work is the first stage of a comprehensive conservation program.

The project continued local outreach efforts, which included visits by local primary school students and teachers, as well as students from Sohag University, workshops for Antiquities personnel, and a public lecture at the Sohag National Museum.

Follow the Abydos project:

web: [abydos.org](http://abydos.org)

Facebook: [facebook.com/digabydos](https://www.facebook.com/digabydos)

Instagram: [@digabydos](https://www.instagram.com/digabydos)

Figure 1: Fragment of wall relief showing the falcon head of the god Horus, recovered from the spoil deposit covering the pylon

Figure 2: The 2019 Abydos team

Figure 3: Institute Ph.D. candidate Briana Jackson and assistants examining stone fragments from the Ramesses II temple looking for decorated surfaces

Figure 4: Conservators Heather White, Chantal Stein, and Hiroko Kariya cleaning a painted coffin

All photos by Ayman Damarany.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

# Aphrodisias, Turkey



Fig. 1

We had a great season at Aphrodisias nine weeks in July and August, with an outstanding student team from NYU, Oxford, and several Turkish universities. Among much other research, we pursued major fieldwork in the Basilica, Street, and South Agora.

**CIVIL BASILICA.** Our new project to fully excavate, conserve, and present the façade of the early imperial Civil Basilica, begun in 2018, achieved major results. The fragmentary mosaic floors of the long side aisles were excavated, lovingly conserved, and closely documented. The massive columnar architecture of the building's façade was restored in our marble workshop-depot in preparation for re-erection in its original place. And the eastern side of the building was excavated to allow for the positioning of panels carrying the famous Aphrodisias version of Diocletian's Prices Edict that was later inscribed on the façade of the Basilica, in AD 301.

**SOUTH AGORA.** Work in the South Agora and its magnificent 170m pool focused on publication and conservation. Two teams of marble conservators worked in opposite directions around the delicate marble pool surround, lifting, repairing, and re-setting broken and damaged elements. The writing-up of the pool excavation and its extraordinary body of archaeological material – wooden, ceramic, metal, and marble artefacts – was brought to a successful conclusion.

**STREET.** Major excavation was focused in the late antique Tetracylon Street, at both its north and south ends. At the south, the long access ramp from the street to the tunnel into the South Agora was excavated to reveal complicated phases in the ramp's life,

from the second to the seventh century. At the north end of the Street, the remaining part of the old Geyre road and adjoining street wall were removed, and soundings were made on both sides of the street paving to look for datable material. Pottery showed the surviving marble street paving to be later than expected – a final (it turned out), sixth-century restoration of the road surface.

To the north of the Niche Monument, new excavation revealed a remarkable structure of the especially 'dark' eighth and ninth centuries adjoining it built over part of the street. And on the east side, a grand marble doorway of the second-third century was uncovered that led through the back of the street colonnade. Much was achieved and there were exciting finds of mosaic, metal ware, window glass, inscriptions, and marble sculpture.

Figure 1: Work on Tetracylon Street

Figure 2: Excavation of tunnel from Street into South Agora

Figure 3: New join: two parts of colossal lion console reconnected

Figure 4: Angelos Chaniotis gives seminar on religious life in Aphrodisias

All Aphrodisias images © The Institute of Fine Arts, NYU



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

# Samothrace, Greece



Fig. 1

We had an exciting season in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods on Samothrace this year. In conjunction with our emphasis on passage and movement in the Sanctuary, we focused our excavations on tracing the ancient position of the central torrent and on determining how ancient visitors may have reached the Stoa. We also began a more concerted inquiry into the late and postantique life of the region and continued our work toward the publication centered on the monuments in the western region of the Sanctuary anchored around the famous Winged Victory: the Stoa, Nike Precinct, and Theater.

Excavating right over the tourist path, Andrew Ward led investigations into the heart of the valley, proving that the ancient water channel—constructed to control the powerful seasonal torrent that cuts through the center of the Sanctuary—was further to the west than the modern channel. In fact, the current western edge actually marks the eastern side of the ancient channel! The violent collapse of the ancient Roman concrete walls that originally lined the channel was eerily reminiscent of the destruction we witnessed in the catastrophic storm in September 2017. Rebecca Salem’s photogrammetric model of this and the other excavations sites in the Sanctuary provides an excellent record, for we were obliged to backfill most of the trench and return the tourist path to a functioning state at the end of the season. In addition to being important to our understanding of the site in antiquity, this new evidence will also help guide modern interventions to control the channel during increasingly powerful storm events.

In searching for the way visitors reached the Stoa, an endeavor led by IFA alum Maggie Popkin, we re-explored a set of stairs that had been partially uncovered in the 1969, 1970, and 1993 seasons by James R. McCredie. By extending the excavated area north and westward, we encountered retaining walls that defined the area of the stairs. However, we also discovered that the structures were built in, on, and around a deep collapse of boulders and cobbles full of air pockets, which made excavation precarious. Over the winter, we will remove a huge boulder that threatens the trench, so that next year we may extend the trench westward to determine if and where the stairs continue.

We tend to think of the sanctuary ending in the grand crescendo of the Nike Monument, but there are significant remains on the hillside to the south of the Stoa and Nike Monument. Most appear to be late Roman, which significantly add to our understanding of the region generally. This summer, we freed an oval structure of the rocky debris and detritus that had filled it, and we will continue to clear and clean the area next year, in order to understand this important transitional period.

In addition to excavating, we continued research for the publication of the Stoa and the monuments adorning its terrace. This year, Sam Holzman led the team in a contest for “America’s Next Top Stretcher,” which entailed finding, measuring and admiring the features of some 500+ stretchers, so that we might choose a selection for publication. The team sifted through the thousands of fragments of plaster once belonging to the interior decoration and exterior surfacing of the Stoa, as well as over 1000 fragments of the terracotta roof of the Stoa.

Work on small finds also made great progress, under the direction of Madeleine Glennon, who also is authoring the catalogue of sculpture and terracotta figurines found in the vicinity of the Stoa. We also examined the glass and metal objects from the Stoa and pottery in the Nike Precinct. All of this work will form a key part of the next Samothrace volume.

Our conservation team this year performed a wide range of essential tasks, including lifting fragile objects from the trench, performing portable XRF and materials analysis, and planning for site preservation and management.

Figure 1: Team at the close of excavation

Figure 2: Photomodel of trench SGG.K.3, showing the stairs that led to the upper terrace on the Western Hill

Figure 3: Team members Andrew Ward and Elizabeth Dowker excavating the rocky but rewarding Samothracian soil in trench SGG.K.3. In the foreground, remains of an ancient staircase; in the background, retaining walls defining the northern limit of the area.

Figure 4: Aerial View of the postantique oval structure south of the Stoa

All photos by American Excavations Samothrace.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

# Sanam, Sudan



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

The past season of the Sanam Temple Project took place in the midst of exciting times for Sudan, just as the protests against the government of Omar el-Bashir were beginning. We have watched since then with worry and now hope for all the project's Sudanese friends as Sudan begins its transition to a democratic government, and look forward to returning to Sanam this winter, security situation permitting.

The goal of the Sanam Temple Project is to investigate the interplay of Egyptian and Nubian cultural influences at the first millennium BC temple of Sanam, asking what the predominance of Egyptian visual forms might have meant to the local, Nubian inhabitants. The 2019 season proved extremely successful both in expanding our knowledge of discoveries of previous seasons and in uncovering exciting new directions for research at the temple.

Our work inside the temple concentrated this season on the second court, where two shrines built by the Nubian kings Taharqo and Aspelta formed the focus of our investigations. These shrines were found to be the focus of considerable ritual activity within the temple, furnishing a collection of small bronze Osiris figurines and votive faience appliqué that worshippers had left before the shrine entrances. Although much of the wall decoration at the temple has suffered considerable damage since the first excavations at the temple a century ago, the reuse (and therefore protection) of some architectural elements in ancient times allowed us to reconstruct some of the original, brightly colored decoration. Among the highlights was the painted depiction of a Nubian ruler on a stone block that had been reused as a threshold by a later inhabitant of the temple.

Work at the production areas to the rear of the temple continued, shedding more light on how the Nubian population manufactured Egyptian-style objects in their own way, shaping them to their own needs. We worked our way through the dumps of production debris to reach an enigmatically shaped, beaten stone surface that will repay further investigation next year. The most spectacular of the production-related finds was an almost perfect mold for an Egyptian-style funerary figurine known as a *shabti*, destined for the Nubian royal tombs.

Most exciting of all was the area in front of the temple pylon. A large trench exposed a monumental mud brick wall, still standing to over one meter high and sixty centimeters wide. The wall enclosed two rooms within the confines of the excavated area, one with two large tandoor-style ovens, and the other with a stone floor that speaks to the building's monumental character. Given that we have not yet discovered the corners of the wall, its extent looks to be considerable. Through preliminary analysis of the ceramics, we believe the wall can be dated to the first half of the eighth century BCE, predating the temple. This is a period of time that corresponds to the rise of the Nubian dynasty popularly known as the "Black Pharaohs", and from which we have exceedingly little archaeological evidence. The prospects that this building can illuminate a vitally important but exceedingly little-known period of Nubian history in future seasons are therefore thrilling.

Figure 1: Osiris figurine, in situ on original temple plaster floor in shrine of Aspelta

Figure 2: Excavators Martin Uildriks and Matteo Merlino with another Osiris figurine

Figure 3: Faience votive appliqué from threshold of Taharqo shrine

Figure 4: Shrine of Taharqo

Figure 5: Painted stone block with Nubian ruler, reused as threshold

Figure 6: Shabti mold used for production of Egyptian-style funerary figurines for Nubian royal tombs

Figure 7: The monumental early building in front of temple. Tandoor-ovens visible sunk into the floor in right of image



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

# Selinunte, Sicily

The thirteenth campaign on the acropolis of Selinunte took place between June 7th and July 5th of 2019. This campaign was led by The Institute of Fine Arts, NYU and the Università degli Studi di Milano, in collaboration with the Archeological Park of Selinunte. The mission this year had a strong interdisciplinary and international character, consisting of more than fifty advanced students and experts, from eight different countries.

This year's dig (Figure 1) saw the continuation of work in two trenches opened last year along the southern side of Temple R (Trench S) (Figure 2) and between the western side of Temple R and the southern side of Temple C (Trench R). The excavation has produced important results concerning the earliest phase of Greek occupation of the main urban sanctuary, and the activities associated with the construction of Temple R and Temple C.

This year revealed a particularly significant discovery in connection to the sanctuary's earliest phases of use by Greek colonists. Near the southeastern corner of Temple R, we discovered the antler of a red deer in an excellent state of preservation (Figure 3). The antler is best seen as the votive deposition of a hunter to Artemis, a goddess for which, together with Demeter, there are several other indications of cult activity in this part of the sanctuary. The antler was found in levels from the sanctuary's first phase of use, likely related to an open air cult. We can attribute this to the first generation of life of Selinus (ca. 630-610 BCE). This discovery confirms the existence of forests in this area of Sicily in the seventh century BCE, and the intense interaction of the Greek colonists with the indigenous hinterland immediately after the foundation of Selinus.

The excavation this year has brought to light the western end of a rectilinear structure with foundations made of chips of stone and mudbrick elevation. The southern and eastern side of this structure had been first identified in 2010. Thanks to the new discovery this year, it is possible to reconstruct the building with a length of 4.5 m. The structure was positioned immediately to the east of the later Temple R and had the same east-west orientation. Datable to the late seventh century BCE, the structure was razed on the occasion of the construction of Temple R in the first quarter of the sixth century BCE. Based on its placement and the associated materials, this building, one of the earliest Greek structures documented at the site, likely had a sacred function. A second early building of similar form was excavated in recent years to the west, in correspondence with the adyton of Temple R.

Concerning the construction and use of Temple R, two important discoveries have been made: two additional postholes used in the lifting of the blocks of the cella of the temple, and a perfectly preserved hollow altar for libations placed near to the south-east

corner of the temple (Figure 4). Particularly significant, within this context, has been the discovery of two large bull horns, likely belonging to the same animal (Figure 5). The coinage of Selinus in the Classical period, and remains of terracotta and marble statues of bulls from the main urban sanctuary, hint at the sacrifice of these animals at Selinus. Our discovery represents the first archaeological evidence of this type of sacrifice.

Finally, the excavation of Trench R has fully revealed the foundations of Temple C, showing how the sloping of this sector of the acropolis was artificially created on the occasion of the erection of this monumental building. The layers associated with the construction of Temple C are perfectly preserved and they offer valuable information concerning the building process, including the laying of the foundations. Also notable, has been the discovery of an exceptional votive deposit associated with the construction of Temple C which included, gold, silver, ivory, a faience statuette of a falcon, and fine pottery (Figure 10). This exceptional deposit was found against the western front of Temple R, and marked the limits of the construction site of Temple C; given its position, it may be interpreted as a kind of propitiation of the goddess of Temple R by the builders of the much larger Temple C, most likely dedicated to Apollo.

Once again, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to our sponsors, to the Regione Siciliana and the Assessorato dei Beni Culturali e dell'Identità Siciliana and to the new Director of the Parco Archeologico di Selinunte e Cave di Cusa, Arch. Bernardo Agrò. As well, we are very grateful to all those students and experts who have contributed to the success of this year's season.

Figure 1: Selinunte, area of Temple R with indication of the trenches excavated in the summer 2019. Drawing by Filippo Pisciotta, David Scahill and Massimo Limoncelli.

Figure 2: Selinunte, area of Temple R, view of Trench S. Photo by Andrew Ward.

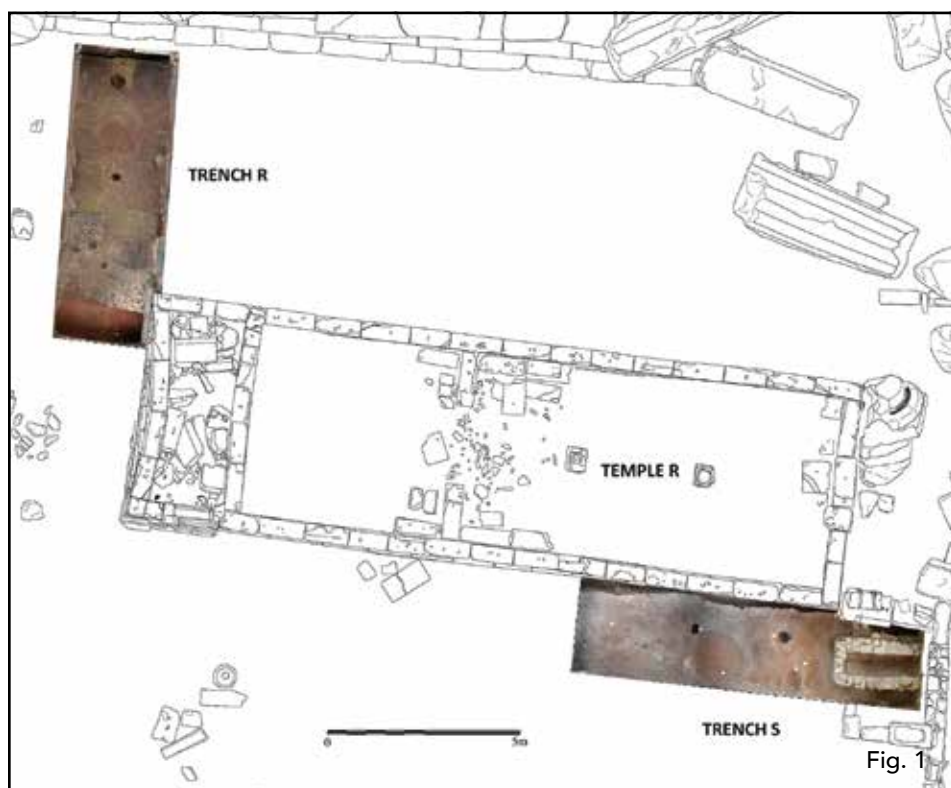
Figure 3: Selinunte, Saggio S, antler of red deer during excavation.

Figure 4: Selinunte, Trench S, hollow altar for libations near the southeast corner of Temple R. Photo by Andrew Ward.

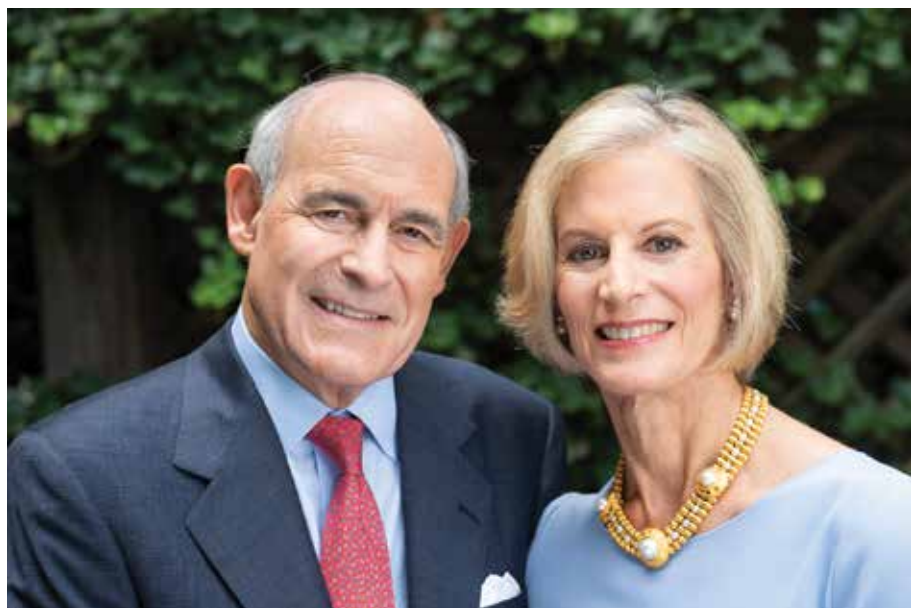
Figure 5: Selinunte, Trench S, bull's horns during excavation. Photo by Andrew Ward.

Figure 6: Selinunte, Trench R, faience statuette of a falcon. Photo by Raffaele Franco.

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## Donor Spotlight: Julie Herzig and Robert Desnick



The discipline of archaeology offers so many opportunities for the curious to explore ancient cultures, or urbanism, or the history of migrations, or to search for ancient artifacts or ancient DNA. Therefore, it is not surprising that archaeology afforded my husband and myself the opportunity to use our professional skills in new ways. Already a licensed architect, I immersed myself in the study of ancient Greek art and archaeology several years ago at the Institute of Fine Arts, where world-class professors inspired and encouraged this interest. While focusing on ancient Greece, my understanding of art history grew exponentially to include the Greek influence on early Christianity, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment. Along with other IFA students, I spent memorable summers under the bright Sicilian sun at the Selinunte Excavations on the acropolis of the ancient Greek colony of Selinus. Led by the Institute's James R. McCredie Professor, Clemente Marconi, I was privileged to take part in this exciting

excavation with its international team of dedicated professionals and students. Participating in an excavation like this is a great resource for all students of art history and conservation and the reason I choose the Institute for my studies. There is no substitute for getting your hands dirty in the field to appreciate the importance of context, or lack thereof, and the scholarship that endows old stones and potshards with cultural and historical significance. If archaeology is a tool to help us understand the past, it also reveals surprising insights into the present and guideposts to the future. This is why we are delighted to support the long tradition of archaeological excellence at the Institute of Fine Arts, as well as the camaraderie and life-long friendships that fieldwork encourages.

## Student Spotlight



### Peter Johnson

I've found there are a lot of misconceptions about what archaeologists do, from questions laced with the thrill-seeking guise of an Indiana Jones expedition to a mere misinterpretation of the field with paleontology (as cool as it would be I've never found a dinosaur). I think it's this mystery around the discipline that sparks public fascination and it's likely what initially ignited mine. When I tell people the projects I've been fortunate enough to take part in, a common response is: I always wanted to be an archaeologist when I was younger. I did too, and I've decided not to let that passion burn out. That's why I am pursuing my graduate degree at the Institute of Fine Arts.

This past winter I joined Professor Howley's project, the Sanam Temple Project, in Sudan. Having worked in the Middle East before but never in Sudan, I was eagerly excited for my first visit. Life on-site, in the small town of Karima, is spartan: internet is functionally non-existent and our daily activities are dictated by the movement of the sun, in some ways not too dissimilar from the cultural forebearers millennia before us who are the subject of our research. We joined our gracious hosts in eating Sudanese cuisine, cheered on the local soccer team, and donned traditional garb. It's this active participation, with the people and with the land, that amplifies our work. Any study of antiquity is just as much rooted in its engagement with the present as with the past. My experience in Sudan reinforced this to be true.



### Chantal Stein

As a conservation student with an archaeological focus at the Institute of Fine Arts, I was fortunate to work on a number of different excavations. One of the highlights of my education was working on-site at Abydos in Egypt, whose history stretches back thousands of years to the first Egyptian rulers. While I had previous archaeological experience, it wasn't until Abydos that I was introduced to archaeological conservation of organic materials, such as woven textiles, leather sandals, and painted wooden coffins. These materials only survive for such a duration of time in extreme environmental conditions like desert dryness, so ancient objects of an organic nature are quite rare. Dealing with such intricate and delicate artifacts, crafted and used by people thousands of years ago, was a breathtaking experience. My time on-site at Abydos gave me the opportunity to learn how to safely excavate and properly care for fragile organics, and I will gratefully carry these lessons with me throughout my future work both in museums and in the field.

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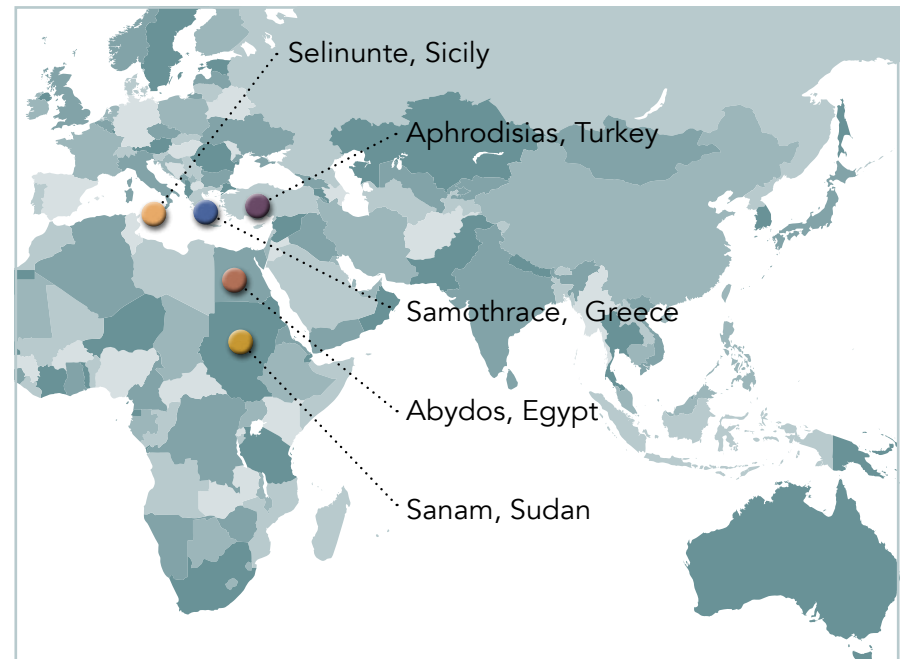
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