

The Poggio Civitate Archaeological Project

Poggio Civitate ("Hill of the Civilization") is located in central inland Tuscany. Excavation began in 1966 under the direction of Dr. Kyle M. Phillips, Jr. of Bryn Mawr College. Work continued under the direction of his student, Dr. Erik Nielsen, and is currently lead by Dr. Anthony Tuck of UMass Amherst. The excavations have brought to light a large volume of material from distinct phases of Etruscan occupation.

The latest seasons continued to explore exciting discoveries such as a new monumental building uncovered on the main plateau of the hill and a Hellenistic Villa.

Orientalizing Phase – Seventh Century BCE

The site emerges in the early seventh century with a well-preserved complex of inter-related monumental buildings. The first building of this Orientalizing Complex (OC1), a Residence, was uncovered in 1970. This building was elaborately decorated with a sculptural program in terracotta and appears to have served as the residence of a family of regional social prominence. Recovered from the floor of OC1 were cooking equipment, a banquet service of imported Greek and locally produced fine wares, bone, antler and ivory inlays that once decorated furniture, and numerous objects of personal ornament and everyday use. Based on the dating of the Greek pottery from the building indicates that the building's destruction occurred around the end of the seventh century BCE. Other ceramic evidence, somewhat more controversial, suggests that OC1 may have been constructed sometime in the second quarter of the seventh century BCE.

In the early 1980s, excavations revealed the presence of another building contemporary with OC1, Orientalizing Complex 2 (OC2), that clearly served as the site's primary area of industrial work during the seventh century BCE. OC2 was pavilion in form and housed numerous types of manufacturing activity including bronze casting, bone and antler carving, terracotta manufacture, ceramics production, food processing and textile manufacture. This building is currently the earliest known example of such a multifunctional workshop in Central Italy.

From 1996 through 1999, excavation immediately to the south of the residence revealed the presence of a third building of this complex - a large tripartite structure now referred to as OC3. Although much of the building was destroyed in the subsequent building of the later phase of the site, enough of the floor plan was preserved to allow excavators to reconstruct a building with a large central cella flanked by two chambers precisely half the dimensions of the central room. Both the building's tripartite form and examples of luxurious inscribed vessels found resting on the floor of the central cella suggest this building may have been an early example of a temple, making it one of the earliest examples of monumental religious architecture in Italy known to date.

All three of the buildings of the Orientalizing Complex were destroyed in a single fire that appears to have been accidental.

Archaic Phase – Sixth Century BCE

The survivors of the fire in the previous phase appear to have combed through the destruction to collect anything of value and then the debris was scraped to level, and the plateau was flattened. The area was thus prepared for the construction of a massive four-winged building enclosing central and southern courtyards. Each wing was sixty meters in length and a western defensive work extended that façade an additional thirty meters. Like the buildings of the earlier complex, this structure was also elaborately decorated with terracotta sculpture that sat along the pitch of the roof. In addition,

frieze plaques were nailed to exposed wooden beams, a sculpted lateral sima system ornamented the courtyard while gorgon antefixes decorated the building's perimeter.

Speculation about its function has led to such theories as a political meeting hall, a religious sanctuary, a palazzo and even an Etruscan version of an agora. Currently, the excavators believe that the building combined the functions of the disparate structures of the earlier phase into a single edifice, dating to the early sixth century BCE.

Based on the latest pottery from the site, sometime shortly after the middle of the sixth century BCE, the building was dismantled. The statuary was removed from the roof and smashed, the fragments separated and then buried in pits around the perimeter of the building. The walls were knocked over and the site was never reoccupied.

Pompeii Project: Porta Nola Necropolis

Aims

The international multidisciplinary project (British School at Rome; Ilustre Colegio Oficial de Doctores y Licenciados en Letras y Ciencias de Valencia y Castellón, Departamento de Arqueología; Museo de Prehistoria e Historia de La Diputación De Valencia; with the support of the Ministero dei Beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo – Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Pompei, Ercolano e Stabia) studying the necropolis of Porta Nola (Pompeii) has as its objective the investigation of the population of Pompeii, and more generally the Roman population, using new archaeological data and techniques. The study of the necropolis permits the study of the physical characteristics of the inhabitants of Pompeii, as well as their diet, way of life and funerary practices. The necropolis offers a unique opportunity as different levels of social strata are represented around the cemetery, from the monumental tomb of Marcus Obellius Firmus, to the burials of the Praetorian guards to the so-called poor graves alongside the city wall. During the first excavation of the area in the mid-1970s, several casts were made of fifteen individuals discovered fleeing Pompeii, eighteen hours after the beginning of the eruption. These casts were also being examined, as preserved within the plaster casts are the skeletal remains of the individuals.

The necropolis

The tomb of Obellius Firmus, whose inscription on the front pediment records the funeral of M. Obellius Firmus, aedile and joint magistrate during the reign of the Emperor Nero, was discovered and partially excavated in 1976. The excavation recovered the funerary stele and a glass funerary urn. The new research of 2015 has discovered a further cremation burial inside the tomb. The ceramic vessel was accompanied by grave goods including a coin, dating to between AD 66 and AD 69, which provides new information concerning the dating of the structure. Furthermore, over 200 fragments of the ornately decorated bone covered funerary bed have been recovered, some of which have traces of the gold leaf decoration.

The area immediately behind the tomb of Marcus Obellius Firmus with the smaller gateway into the necropolis was searched in order to understand whether it formed part of the funerary precinct or delimited the pomerium of the city. The excavation discovered a number of deposits alongside the gate resulting from the cleaning of ustrinum (the place of a funerary pyre), as well as beaten earth road that led through the gate to the circuit road of the city.

The area immediately outside of Porta Nola (the Nolan Gate) was first cleared in 1907–8. Since then, soil has once again accumulated opposite the gate, re-burying an unknown 'schola' type tomb. The project has cleared the basalt block roads and brought back to light the Augustan period tomb. The third area of the excavation lies immediately alongside the city walls where in the late 19th century excavations discovered 36 cremation urns. Traditionally these tombs have been interpreted as graves of the 'poor'. The 2015 excavations have revealed a different picture with the discovery of a further two urns and an inhumation burial, covered in fragments of amphora, of a baby, aged between 3 and 6 months. The urns, as well as containing the ashes of the deceased, also contain a coin, as well as funerary goods, usually a small ceramic unguentarium. The project has been able to date these burials, through the stratigraphic excavation to the late Republican – Early Imperial period.

A further part of the project is the study of the casts made of the victims of the AD 79 eruption discovered in the mid-1970s near the tomb of Obellius Firmus. The analytical study of the casts, coordinated by the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Pompei, Ercolano e Stabia (Dott.

Stefano Vanacore and Dott.ssa Annalisa Capurso), has allowed the determination of the age, sex, pathologies and activities of the individuals. Furthermore, the anthropological data, together with photogrammetry, x-ray analysis and 3D reconstruction allow the reconstruction of the original positions at the moment of death.

The International Field School saw the participation of 22 students from ten different countries who over the course of five weeks were trained in excavation techniques, ceramic identification and osteology, with a focus on studying cremation burials. Alongside the team, conservators continued work begun last year on the structure of the tomb of Marcus Obellius Firmus as well as conserving the objects being recovered from the site.

Vindolanda

Vindolanda lies just to the south of the curtain wall of Hadrian's Wall and has a very different 'feel' to other sites along the Wall. It lies upon the first Roman frontier in the north – The Stanegate Road. Vindolanda was demolished and completely re-built no fewer than nine times. Each re-build, each community, leaving their own distinctive mark on the landscape and archaeology of the site.

After Hadrian's Wall and the Roman occupation was abandoned by its imperial armies Vindolanda remained in use for over 400 years before finally becoming abandoned in the 9th century. The physical remains include some of the following:

- A large Pre-Hadrianic bath house and a beautifully preserved 3rd century bath house.
- Several commanding officer's residences and barrack buildings
- A headquarters building
- 3rd and 4th century evidence of village houses and workshops, latrines, and a Roman Celtic temple to an unknown Romano Celtic God.
- The only temple to be found on display to a Roman god inside an auxiliary fort anywhere in the Roman Empire (Jupiter Dolichenus).
- A Post-Roman mausoleum and late Roman Christian church replicas of a Roman temple and shop, a Romano-British house and replica sections of Hadrian's Wall in turf timber and stone

The extramural settlement

The extramural excavations take on two or three very separate aspects. The work continued below the foundations of the large Severan barracks and *vicus* buildings initially explored in the early 1970's. The excavation has produced around 30 writing tablets, hundreds of shoes, a wooden toilet seat and a great deal of good information on the sequencing in the middle of the timber forts. The second aspect is to explore, to the south of the Severan barracks, new third century extramural houses, backing on to a small but exclusive road which linked the centre of town to the Roman cemeteries in this period. Here it was expected to encounter more of the high-status courtyard buildings, and other extramural structures and spaces which could be attributed to a part of the settlement and fill in a blank space in the plan of Vindolanda in this period. Finally, below the new parts of the town, are the remains of the old Severan south wall, ramparts, and defensive ditch. The ditch has, in the past, proved to be an incredible time-capsule, filled with the rubbish and debris of a very short-lived garrison (occupied c AD200=212) and quickly sealed by the foundations of the new town above. It is from this ditch that a head on a stake was found in 2002 (by Dr Alexander Meyer).

Beads, bracelets and a small phallic pendant were other notable finds from the first few weeks. On the 30th of May, the excavators uncovered a potential ink writing tablet which is highly unusual. Made from oak, and as thick as a stylus tablet.

The fort

Inside the fort, the opening of the passage between two large East-West oriented cavalry barracks has immensely improved our capabilities to excavate the northern part of the quadrant. With the excavation of the Antonine toilet completed, and the individuation of most drains feeding it done and dusted, the area only needs some gentle landscaping to be readied for

consolidation. A new Antonine building has recently emerged during such works: it is oriented North South and appears to be flanked on both sides by thin, finely carved drains.

The chase of the Antonine Wall (180-200 AD) continues from where we left it in 2015, running up towards the South Gate of the fort, which from now on will be closed to the public. The chase has in fact pushed so much westwards that, after some more de-turfing, work has commenced on the 3rd and 4th century via Decumana: there is high hopes that, underneath those layers, a gate to the Antonine fort wall will yield the building inscription we have all been looking forward to.

In the northern side of the quadrant, floors, doors, drains and items of the everyday life of the 3rd and 4th century garrisons are gradually being revealed. During the excavation of the debris above and between the cracks of a 4th century barrack floor, a beautiful copper alloy Apollo bust has been unearthed. As more 3rd century barrack walls and roadside drains emerge, the maze of stones becomes more intricate.

In the northeastern corner of the excavation area, just as you head down from the fort excavation to our museum, you will be able to observe a rather posh and well-built system of under floor heating. Lacking the traditional brick or stone pillars, which characterise bathhouse hypocausts, a curvilinear channel capped by large flagstones would have run underneath the floor of a 4th century junior officer's private apartment.

Vicus

The foundations of the buildings were constructed by laying down heavy sandstone blocks (many are over a metre in length) on which either stone or wattle and daub superstructures were built. Ovens, mixed flagstone and earthen floors, paved outer courtyards and impressive drains are just some of the features encountered in this area, features which adorned what must have been some of the most impressive extramural real-estate at Vindolanda in the third century. These houses were spacious and well appointed, situated in relatively quiet part of town on its south-western border, behind the bustle of the main street, out of direct sight of the fort walls and to the north of the small road which led from town towards the nearby cemeteries on the hill overlooking the site to the west.

A great deal of domestic pottery, animal bone, and items of personal adornment such as beads have formed the bulk of the material cultural dataset recovered from this area thus far.

the people who lived in these houses, and despite the impressive engineering and work involved in the placement of their large foundation stones, almost every one of the buildings would have faced extreme structural issues while in use. Half of the houses were constructed over the remains of the Severan rampart mound, a solid clay bank, itself built over an equally robust Roman road from within the period II-VI forts. The other half over the deep (at least three metres deep) and wide Severan period (cAD200-2012) southern fort ditch. A ditch filled to the top with soft organic matter, rubbish and silt and then capped with clay and stone. The results of this are that half of the homes had the best foundations, the other half, the worst, and all of the buildings either slipped off the ramparts or bowed into the depression of the fort ditch. Although ultimately failing to provide an adequate foundation, the use of stones and clay used to seal the top of the ditch has afforded us a wonderful window in to the Severan fort, one which is semi-anaerobic or waterlogged with very good preservation of wood, bone and leather.

Parco dei Ravennati, Ostia Antica

The American Institute for Roman Culture's Summer Archaeological Field School is an intensive, accredited five-week educational program in Roman archaeology led by AIRC faculty and expert archaeologists. The program offers students a unique combination of one week of specialized academic instruction in Rome, including visits to major museums and open-air sites to augment field studies and provide participants with a broader context of what life was like in the ancient city, and four weeks of hands-on fieldwork at an important archaeological site in the city and environs.

The AIRC Summer Archaeological Field School offers its participants both a synchronic (single-period) and a diachronic (multi-period) approach to the study of Roman culture. Through this dual approach, which provides depth and breadth simultaneously, participants will gain a comprehensive historical and cultural appreciation of Rome and Roman civilization, from its rise to power to its decline, understanding how it set a standard of cultural values that continues to exert influence over the entire Western world to this day.

During the fieldwork component, participants are offered a focused look at the techniques and methodologies of modern archaeological research, through which archaeologists are able to explore past cultures and understand more about their histories and origins as well as learn the importance of archaeological record-keeping, including the proper methodology for conducting excavations, archaeological drawing, note-taking, and identifying/organizing/cataloguing finds. In addition, they become familiar with a variety of Roman artifacts and building techniques/materials and practice "reading" art, architecture, and other traces of this civilization's material culture to reconstruct the wider cultural framework and the city of Rome and its port at Ostia and their rich archaeological record. Finally, they are introduced to the principles of historical conservation of the material remains of the past.

The Project

It is a multi-year project at Ostia Antica, the harbor city of ancient Rome. The project takes place in the Parco dei Ravennati, a public green space situated between the main archaeological site of Ostia and the Medieval *borgo* with the imposing Renaissance castle built by Pope Julius II. In collaboration with the City of Rome and the Special Superintendency for the Archaeological Heritage of Rome, and under the direction of principal investigators Dr. Darius Arya (AIRC Executive Director) and Dr. Michele Raddi (archaeologist and topographer, AIRC associate), who have obtained the excavation permit from the Italian Ministry of Culture, the AIRC project clean, excavate, and document two areas of the park:

Area A consists of an Imperial Roman structure in *opus mixtum*, part of which was redecorated in Late Antiquity with frescoes and an elaborate *opus sectile* (cut polychrome marble) floor; the *opus sectile* room was subdivided into a series of smaller rooms in the Middle Ages. Behind this space lies a vaulted structure with double apse and a niche on the southwest side, partially investigated in the 1970s, dating to the 15th century and probably associated with the construction of the castle at the edge of the *borgo*. Exploratory work in 2012 revealed re-use of these spaces as recently as the Second World War.

Area B consists of a well-preserved stretch of a Roman road—likely the last major phase of the Via Ostiensis dating to the early Middle Ages—flanked by a small circular Late Republican mausoleum built in cement and travertine. In Late Antiquity the core of the mausoleum was converted into an octagonal structure, and in the Middle Ages it was re-used again as a place of burial.

The experience will include the following didactic aspects to which all participants are exposed, all under the supervision of experienced professionals:

- strategy, techniques, and methods of stratigraphic archaeology, including pre-excavation topographic research and cleaning/defoliation;
- detailed architectural and functional study of the exposed remains involving both the traditional (hand-drawn) method and the latest technology (photogrammetry, total station, and CAD software);
- cleaning, analysis/classification, and documentation of all classes of artifacts;
- photographic documentation of artifacts, standing remains, and archaeological stratigraphy using digital cameras;
- the history and physical condition of the site and approaches to conserving it for future generations.

Despotiko, Paros

Project Description

The project's priority is to understand spatial organization of the sanctuary of Apollon at the area of Mandra.

There are significant indications that in prehistoric and ancient times the island-due to its central position among the Cyclades and the large Despotiko Bay-played an important role in maritime communication routes. The strait separating Despotiko from Antiparos only has a minimum depth of about one meter, with the intervening islet of Koimitiri. This extreme shallowness of the strait suggests the possibility of a link between Antiparos and Despotiko in former times.

Archaeologist Giorgos Kouragios (21st Antiquities Ephorate) has worked the site for the past seventeen years, and has revealed an extensive and rich archaic sanctuary probably founded by inhabitants of Paros. The center of worship was a protected courtyard, which dominated the marble prostyle temple with a colonnade with seven columns of an approximate height of seven meters. Next to this, he discovered a ceremonial dining area and a ritual altar.

The research unearthed, very close to the entrance of the sanctuary, a large new building. The excavation of the building wasn't completed, but it became clear that it had a complex ground plan with at least five rooms, based on the findings dating back to the classical period. The identification of the building, first shows the continuous operation of the sanctuary during classical times and the large extension and the complex spatial organization, which reflects its widespread reputation and large numbers of visitors, both in archaic and classical times.

Research in archaic building D, one of the most important buildings of the sanctuary used for worship was made entirely of marble, with a marble colonnade of four columns in front. Unearthed beneath that building was an earlier building, and a large quantity of pottery from the geometric period (9th-8th century BC) with large quantities of burnt and unburnt animal bones, such as horses, pigs, sheep, goats and poultry. These findings are of particular importance because they are more consistent with the earliest evidence of religious practice in the sanctuary of Apollon as early as the 9th century BC, the same place where in the 6th century BC they built the monumental temple.

The excavation of 2016 focused on the further exploration of a number of archaic sacred edifices, detected the previous years not only within the sacred precinct but also outside of it. More importantly, the earliest construction of the site up to date was fully excavated. Its character and function needed to be revealed since it provided important information concerning the early cult practices at the sanctuary. Moreover, the investigation was extended on the uninhabited islet of Tsimintiri, which used to be united with Despotiko during antiquity, on which a number of archaic buildings had been detected during the excavation season of 2011.

The first week of the course was spent on the island of Paros, where the students worked at the storage rooms of the Archaeological Museum of Paros with the discovered material from the site. The students were trained at the detailed processing of the finds, mostly of pottery, figurines and other minor objects. They therefore became acquainted with the process which enables the detailed study, interpretation and publication of the excavated material.

At the end of the first week students were transported to the village of Agios Georgios on Antiparos. During the following three weeks at the excavation site on Despotiko (a short daily boat ride from Agios Georgios), the students familiarized themselves with the entire excavation procedure.

They were taught the basic methods of stratigraphical excavation, the onsite documentation, the recording and processing of the finds. The work at the site was combined with a number of activities in the afternoons at Agios Georgios, including the detailed documentation of the activities at the site, the preparation of architectural plans and, more importantly, of the excavation diary.

Afternoon lectures covered the theoretical issues concerning archaeological theory and methods, the various types of archaeological evidence with a focus on the material from Despotiko, ancient religious practices and rituals, the birth and development of Greek sanctuaries and in particular of those in the Cyclades. The aim of these lectures was to enable the students to fully comprehend the purposes of a systematic excavation and to place into its theoretical context the sanctuary and its material culture.

Ancient Greek Shrine of Demeter, Persephone in Bulgaria's Black Sea Resort Sozopol

A shrine of goddesses Demeter and Persephone from the 6th century BC has been discovered during the 2016 archaeological excavations of the Ancient Greek polis of Apollonia Pontica, today's Bulgarian Black Sea city of Sozopol. The discovery has been made by the team of Assoc. Prof. Krastina Panayotova, a long-time researcher of ancient Apollonia Pontica. Earlier in summer 2016, Panayotova's team discovered 2,600-year-old "arrow coins" near the Apollo Temple on the St. Cyricus Island, which today is a peninsula connected with the Old Town of Sozopol and the Bulgarian mainland. The rock Cape of Stolets (Skamniy) is one of the landmarks of Bulgaria's Sozopol, and is frequented by local and international tourists every day. In the 6th century BC, however, it was selected as the location of a shrine by the Ancient Greek settlers who established Apollonia Pontica. The shrine was hewn into the rocks on the Stolets Peninsula. The specific deities to whom the Ancient Greek shrine was dedicated have been identified thanks to the discovery of clay and terracotta figurines. First of all, the traces of the hewing into the wall are visible, and the entire space was filled with gifts. For example, votive vessels which were made specially for the rituals – miniature jugs... about 10 cm tall imitating the normal vessels. They have also found a lot of statuettes of baked clay and terracotta and, as a matter of fact, it is thanks to them that it has been found out that this place was a shrine of Demeter and Persephone. The heads of the statuettes are best preserved, and these are all female depictions. The one with the younger face is Persephone, and Demeter is the older and sterner one.

The archaeologist points out that the Ancient Greeks used caves for their religious rituals but the settlers who founded Apollonia Pontica attracted by copper deposits in the region had no caves nearby which is why they had to make do with the rocks on the Cape of Stolets (Skamnia). "In this case, the relief [of this location] on the edge of ancient Apollonia provided an opportunity for performing these rituals by using this rocky cape, including by digging pits and hewing holes into the rocks. Because we know from the legend about Persephone that she was sneaked into the underworld through a cave. Apparently, [the Ancient Greek settlers] were looking for this connection to the underworld through caves, cracks, etc.," elaborates the lead archaeologist. It is noted that similar Ancient Greek rock-hewn shrines have been found on the Island of Thasos and in Miletus which is where the settlers of ancient Apollonia Pontica came from. Panayotova says the cult for Demeter and her daughter Persephone was very strong and important because the former was the patron of fertility, trade, and laws, whereas the latter, with her descending and return from the underworld, symbolizes the seasons, birth, fertility.

The archaeological excavations on Cape Stolets in Sozopol have also revealed that in the 6th century AD, i.e. the Early Byzantine period, a large fortress tower was constructed on the same spot together with a water cistern and a horreum (granary). It is unlikely that the fortress tower on the rocky peninsula was ever attacked because of the shallow water of the Black Sea right of the coast preventing military ships from coming too close. Yet, the robust construction indicates that the tower was deemed crucial for the defenses of Apollonia Pontica (Sozopolis) in the Middle Ages when the city was part of Byzantium and later the medieval Bulgarian Empire.

Inside the fortress wall on the Cape of Stolets, the archaeologists have been researching a necropolis with a total of 180 graves, the last 30 of which have just been excavated. While medieval Christian burials usually contain no funeral inventories, in one of the graves the researchers have found a beautiful ceramic bowl.

During the 2016 archaeological season, Panayotova's team has also completed the excavations of the 12th century Christian basilica on Cape Stolets named after St. Peter and St. Paul. Its floor was made of marble and bricks, and the temple probably had frescoes but no fragments of them have survived. In the midst of the ruins of the basilica, however, the archaeologists have stumbled upon the massive foundations of an initially mysterious structure which has turned out to have been a windmill from the early 19th century. "In the early 19th century (i.e. the period of the Ottoman Empire), the church didn't exist anymore, and the construction of a chapel was not allowed, which is why this windy spot was used for a windmill," Panayotova explains. Her colleagues and she have found evidence that a chapel was built there later, in 1864. The precise year of its construction was discovered in an unorthodox way. "The builders had placed four glass bottles, one in each corner of the foundations of the chapel. One of the them was from a French perfume, and the producer, Lubin Parfums Paris, is still making perfumes. We contacted them, and they told us that the respective series was produced in 1864. The bottle was used in the chapel because it was a nice, strong bottle," says the lead archaeologist.

Her team is also hoping to discover the ruins of a monastery called "Holy Apostles" which is known to have been located nearby.