

**Field Report:  
The Gabii Project, Summer 2015**

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**The Area D Team**

Participating in the Gabii Project was an indispensable experience for me as a young classicist. Because I study classical languages and history, I usually work inside four walls, in a classroom or a library. I applied to the Gabii Project's field program so that I could participate in a branch of classics that would allow me to engage with the material culture of the societies that I study. At Gabii, I was outside every day and literally covered in that material – or at least in the dirt that surrounded it.

The section of the site that I was assigned to for the entire five-week program was Area D, the oldest part of the site that has been opened by the University of Michigan. It is a residential area with evidence of habitation starting in the Iron Age. My trench supervisor was recent Ph.D. Marilyn Evans, who has been working at the site since Nicola Terrenato and his team opened it

to students and who wrote her dissertation on the archaic burials in Area D. She was the best supervisor I could have hoped for; her knowledge of the site was extensive, and she was an excellent teacher and mentor, helping us to learn and accomplish even more than we realized we could. She worked us very hard, but I wouldn't have wanted it any other way.



#### Documenting an SU

One of the most valuable aspects of the Gabii Project is that every volunteer spends time not only in the field but also in a variety of labs: Finds, which included washing and sorting pottery sherds, measuring and drawing vessels based on the sherds, and recording all finds within a stratigraphic unit; Archaeobotany, in which we learned how to properly float soil, identify types of seeds, and sort small fragments of artifacts from rocks and soil; and Zooarchaeology, in which we learned how to identify different types of animal bones, including fragments. As a graduate student, I also had the opportunity to work with the topography team for a day, which meant surveying stratigraphic units, entering data points into the computer system, and learning about the online publication of the data collected at Gabii over the past eight years.

This field season, we were able to close Area D, which was a huge accomplishment for the Gabii team. It was exciting to be a part of wrapping up the area, even if it meant that we were helping to complete a good amount of painstaking paperwork. In fact, this was a valuable experience in itself, because it meant that we really were involved in almost every aspect of the dig. I am looking forward to seeing what publications come out in the next few years as a result of the work we, and many others before us, have done in Area D.

My five weeks with the Gabii Project were hot and grueling but also intellectually stimulating and, maybe surprisingly, a lot of fun. It has helped me put into perspective the important work that archaeologists do, and it has allowed me to resituate my own work as it relates to archaeological finds and publications. I hope that I get a chance to come back and work at the site again, even though I'm not pursuing classical archaeology as a career. I miss the field already!



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