

To Whom it May Concern:

The Mediterranean Sea sparkled every morning in the bright, June sun like a slab of fresh-cut marble. And, as the waves rolled in, it would rhythmically lap around Cyprus causing foam and water to spray onto the banked fishermen. I eyed the coolness of the fisherman's morning shower and fresh catch, as he would pull it up with a wide smile. But, as a member of the Yeronisos team, I knew that showers were for those who woke up at 5:00 AM rather than 5:30 AM and that the yield of the sea was for the fisherman to catch while the yield of the past was for the archaeologist to dig. Each pass of the trowel can reveal sherd scatters and, once in a while, a partially intact bowl or jug might poke through the earth after having been *in situ* since either the 1st century B.C.E or the 6th century C.E. So, neither of us could begrudge the other. Both of us were joyfully performing roles essential to community and culture, and neither of us was wondering why we were there and not somewhere else. Simply put, both of us were at home.

And, what is a home without family? My family was the Yeronisos dig team, the dig staff, and the local communities of Agios Georgios and Paphos. Each group of people was central to why our season was a success and, moreover, why my first dig experience was an even greater success. Now, the isolation that accompanies my writing this to you is completely uncharacteristic of the overall experience. First and foremost, digging at Yeronisos was an experience steeped in collaboration. It was an irrevocable part of our day-to-day lives. We ate together, talked together, danced together, hiked together, rode in the Land Rover together, sang together, joked together, learned together, and dug together. So, in the spirit of this collaboration, my experience at Yeronisos Island will be shared through these people.

At the onset, it was evident that the 2013 Yeronisos dig team had serious chemistry. Whether it was the late night recitations of the Iliad, the early morning sing-alongs on the boat to the island, or the routine gatherings for the afternoon Coca-Cola, there is no single answer as to why. Those reasons do not even account for their passion and seriousness, which they applied to their work whether it was trimming a bulk, digging a new pass, taking elevations, keeping the trench book informed, washing pottery, inventorying finds, or coming to understand more about the finds after a long day of digging in the hot sun. It almost goes without saying that each and every person on this dig did one thing consistently and well: work. But, that is just it. When we

were together, work never felt long or hard, nor did we consider it to be work. It was more of a time to be in conversation with the earth, the finds, and each other. And, like any good conversation, if it is particularly good, you never want it to end. As a result, we were never racing to end tasks- we were racing to find new ones.

For each of the dig staff there is something to write. To begin with, Dr. Paul Croft of the University of Edinburgh taught me one of the more lasting lessons I have ever had in archaeology or life. Least surprising is that he probably does not even realize that he has had this effect on many of his students. From Kourion to the secluded and hard-to-reach hill caves of the Orthodox church, he would always answer a question to which he did not have the answer with, "I don't really know, but I suppose...etc." Paul's modesty did not stop there, though. Jumping onto the jagged rocks to secure our landing with waves his size rolling in to harass him, he would secure the boat and our safe passage onto the island with no thought to his own safety, but only that of his students. Afterwards, when thanked for his heroic feat, he would only reply, "Ahh, it was nothing at all, wasn't it?" From him, I learned a lot more than what it takes to build a Chalcolithic home or how to climb a rock face to reach a painted cave, I learned how to approach the past and the present with thoughtful consideration and humility.

From Richard Anderson we received such classics as "It is Beginning to Look a Lot Like Bedrock" and, of course, who could forget his masterpiece, "Stone Chant in the Manner of the Anglican Church," which goes something like this: "One stone is a stone/Two stones are a feature/Three stones are a wall/Anything more is also a wall." Through such musical delights and much more, he taught us, the students, how to make any of the drudgery associated with the architecture of ruins and plotting and drawing maps of different sites disappear through humor and storytelling. Tales of Peter and Elektra Megaw, outlines and details of interesting devices (kites!) he has made in order to make his work as an architect easier, digestible lessons in modern Greek, and the social, political, and geographical history of Cyprus, were just a few of the topics Richard would speak on or discuss in order to make time fly. After the fact, it is evident to me that, if not for any other reason, morale was always high and laughs were abundant throughout this dig because Richard's good-humored nature made it so.

Another highlight of my dig experience was working with Dr. Jolanta Mlynarczyk on the ceramics found at Yeronisos Island. Not only did she introduce me to John Hayes's work in the typology of Mediterranean Roman ceramics, but she also personally mentored me in the

restoration and conservation of ceramics. This mentorship culminated in my mending a late-Hellenistic bowl made of Eastern Sigillata A (ESA) and another late-Hellenistic bowl made of Cypriot Sigillata (ESD). Both were wonderful specimens of the type of fine-wares available at Yeronisos Island. I would sit near the storeroom examining each sherd for any characteristic that would give away its placement. Bit by bit, I heard the clicking of two sherds that revealed to me that they were a couple. Or, the alignment of the design would reveal a continuation of a pattern that signaled a perfect fit. At some point, I looked up and realized that what I had been working on was finally starting to look like a bowl. Then, a feeling of accomplishment came over me, and Jolanta would look over and say, "oh, yes, how beautiful!" Yes, indeed, it was beautiful. Jolanta would then go on to tell me wonderfully adventurous stories about her travels and work with ceramics in Egypt, Greece, Syria, Israel, England, her home in Poland, Cyprus, and elsewhere. It was exciting to know that ceramics could take me anywhere and were equally as beautiful elsewhere. Jolanta's love of ceramics has shown a light on my own interests in archaeology because I now consider myself primarily interested in ceramics whether it is their conservation and restoration, studying and defining their types, or establishing their context and function. I can only hope that I will have the opportunity to encounter them again.

Last, but not least, of the dig staff is the director herself, Professor Joan Connelly. Throughout my time on her dig, I questioned two things. First, how is it possible that she spends so much time making all of us so comfortable by creating a home away from home without sacrificing any time to effectively lead us in our work? And, second, how does she have the capacity to remember all of her former and present students, almost all the archaeological wonders of the world, passages from poetry and novels, movie quotations, ancient and modern Greek declensions and conjugations, where is what in the storeroom, who teaches where, who directs where, and all the other things she has taught us? I think that I might have an answer. Professor Connelly is of a rare class of humans that have the unique feature of organizational genius. The ability to organize fifteen tasks into one hour and, then, to switch mindset and prepare lunch, dinner, what we are doing for the rest of the day, and what we are going to accomplish on the island the next day, is granted not a common feat. But, it slights in the face of her ability to accomplish this feat for five weeks, which is absolutely magical. Such mental acumen taught me to maintain my calm, to think thoroughly and greatly, and to approach any task with confidence. To write the least, she has sold to me the idea that 1,000 things can be

very simply managed if you are organized. At this point, all I will write, even though there is much more praise that can be given, is that she is a true leader, a genuine wonder woman, and, most importantly, an exceptional educator that has made, through her efforts, all of us at the dig so very comfortable and so much more knowledgeable.

Lastly, I want to share the feeling of *philoxenia* that all the citizens of Agios Georgios and Paphos shared with us. Every single night we had homemade, traditional Cypriot dishes at our dinner table thanks to a local tavern's willingness to take on a group of hardworking and hungry archaeologists. In addition to this tavern, there were a number of wonderful friends of the dig who opened their homes to us, cooked for us, danced with us, shared stories, gave tours of the surrounding points of interest, and discussed the future of Cyprus. These friends ranged from the local monks at the monastery of Agios Neophytos to some of those Cypriots at the center of preparing Paphos to be a European Capital of Culture in 2017. Also, a nod must be given to the fishermen who make this dig possible. Everyday we had to cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach our island off an island, and without a boat and able seaman, this would have been impossible. More than anything, though, these are the men who insure our safety to and from the island, and when you look upon them, you do not doubt that they will take care of you as if you were their own child. The peace of mind that they offer is invaluable, and they also make you feel right at home because never have you seen a smile so white and large when you board and disembark their boat. All in all, these were some of the most hospitable and friendliest people that I have ever met. But, not only were they friendly and hospitable, they were a lot of fun. And, given the chance to be with them again, I would take the opportunity in a heartbeat.

After writing these few pages, I hope that what I have written has shown that the gratitude I feel and will continue to feel for the AIA and the Jane C. Waldbaum Scholarship for making all of this possible is not bound by minutes, hours, days, weeks, or years, but a lifetime, because, without a doubt, this experience and the people involved have changed my life. No longer do I look at earth and not think what a Munsell chart might read, no longer do I look at people and see distant strangers, and no longer do I look in the mirror and see just a person who is interested in the past. Now, I look and see a person whose head and heart is in the earth, who is a stranger to none, and is a lifelong steward of the past- in other words, I see an archaeologist.

Once again, I heartily thank the AIA and the Jane C. Waldbaum Archaeological Field School Scholarship for making all this possible and so much more by helping me pay my tuition fees.

All my very best,
Quentin P. Pharr