

This summer I was incredibly fortunate to participate in the Kalavasos and Maroni Built Environments (KAMBE) Project in Cyprus, led by Kevin Fisher (project director) and Sheri Pak (project supervisor) from the University of British Columbia. I joined a team of other students working at a Late Bronze Age site (dating from 1650 to 1100 BCE) in the Vasilikos River Valley (south-central Cyprus) where we uncovered the remains of an ancient building located in an important urban and administrative center called Kalavasos-*Ayios Dhimitrios*. The goal of our 2025 season was to investigate two new areas within this building, and I focused on investigating the layout of the building and the city and how it shaped the way people interacted with each other in their daily lives. By studying the architecture, objects found, and how different parts of the building were connected, I gained valuable insights into how ancient urban spaces helped build social connections and community identity.

While participating in this field school, I learned how to excavate and do remote sensing (including geophysics, drone-based aerial survey, photogrammetry, and 3D laser scanning) while collaborating with experienced archaeologists and experts from around the world. We were joined by geoarchaeologist Rachel Kulick who led workshops where we worked alongside her to collect soil samples and analyse stratigraphy. We were also joined by Panayiotis Panayides who works at the Cyprus Department of Antiquities who taught us about paleoethnobotany and led soil flotation workshops which allowed us to recover micro and macro archaeobotanical material trapped within the soil.

For five days of the week, our team worked on two trenches newly opened in this 2025 project season, supervised by graduate students Madeline Topor and Talia Neelis. I am grateful to both Madeline and Talia for their patience and guidance. I learnt so much from them and was able to become a proficient excavator under their teaching by the end of the dig. The trench I worked in investigated a room within the monumental building, where we uncovered many pottery sherds and other important artifacts that indicated what the room may have been used for by the ancient peoples. I learnt how to use a pickaxe for the first time, though I was very clumsy to begin with, I eventually became quite proficient at doing even passes. We also learnt how to do detailed baulk drawings once we finished digging in order to precisely record the stratigraphy of each baulk of both trenches. This was quite difficult given that one of the baulks I drew was 8.5 metres long and had many rock inclusions, but also a very important skill to preserve as much of the archaeological record as possible before the season ended.

One of the weekdays was spent doing field trips around Cyprus where we visited museums and archaeological sites. We visited Nicosia, Pathos, Kourion, and Larnaca, and went to amazing sites such as the Sanctuary of Apollo Hylates, Kouklia-*Palaipaphos* (Sanctuary of Aphrodite), Hala Sultan Tekke (a Late

Bronze Age and Medieval/Islamic site), Nea Paphos and the Tombs of the Kings. These archaeological sites were massive and monumental, and it really felt as if I was walking through an ancient city. One of my favourite features was the many Roman baths we encountered and learning about their engineering, and also being able to go into the ancient tombs. I also really enjoyed visiting the museums, as I was not very familiar with Cypriot culture and history prior to this field school. I was blown away by the ancient Cypriot material culture, especially the pottery, as I have never encountered artifacts like them. There was a lot of (very cute) animal shaped pottery, and the decoration of the artifacts was absolutely beautiful.

On our final week of the field school, all of us students washed and processed all of the finds for submission to the Cyprus Museum (located in Nicosia). We had to be very meticulous and careful, but it was also a lot of fun to work together at the quarry, chat about our dig experiences, and get even closer as a team. We all really bonded during the field school, as we dug for nine hours each day under the sun and came together for dinner every evening in the village to eat delicious Cypriot food and drink a well deserved beer. We were also lucky to be joined by the seven-year-old son of the project leads, Jack, who kept our spirits high with his energy and humour during the long dig days, and even helped us sieve and wash pottery!

This field school was one of the best experiences of my life. I am so grateful for this scholarship, as I would not have been able to attend otherwise considering the cost of tuition and travel. Prior to attending the dig, when I was accepted into the field school, I called it a once-in-a-lifetime experience. However I would no longer call it that, as I enjoyed it so thoroughly that I would definitely participate in more digs in the future! The skills and knowledge I gained will guide my future research and career in ancient studies and allow me further opportunities to participate in archaeological field work in the future. I would like to give a final but emphatic thank you to the AIA and its donors, and KAMBE project leads Kevin Fisher and Sheri Pak for the award and for giving me this incredible opportunity that I will never forget.



The KAMBE 2025 team at the Amathus Archaeological Site in Limassol.



Me trowelling and articulating pithoi sherds.



Our trench during a pass.



The 2025 KAMBE team before starting a day of digging.



Me (on the right) working with fellow graduate student, Lauren Gastineau (on the left).



One of the many cats in Kalavasos village, named Halloumi.