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AIA Final Report

The funds allotted to me through the Jane C. Waldbaum Scholarship covered over half of my tuition to the 2025 Italy: Pompeii Funerary Project directed by Llorenç Alapont Martin. From July 6th to August 2nd I worked alongside 20 other students and staff to reconstruct Roman funerary practices. During this project we worked across two sites, Porta Nola and Porta Sarno. These sites were similar in that they both existed just outside two different gates to the city and that they are both necropoli. However, Porta Sarno was unique in that much of this site remains untouched after the eruption in 79 AD, whereas most of Porta Nola had been excavated. Even what has not been excavated at Porta Nola has experienced disturbances, such as leveling of the site by the archaeological park, since the eruption. Thus, due to how different these two sites were, we were able to gain experience in a variety of archaeological methods and field techniques: such as the strategic removal of volcanic stone, recognizing and identifying stratigraphic levels, sifting for materials, and taking measurements of each level. In addition to our work in the field, we also spent time in the lab learning how to draw pottery, washing, sorting, and categorizing pottery fragments, and analyzing human cremated remains. Our goal when working with the cremated remains was to identify as many bone fragments as possible to provide information on who was buried in the urn. Were they a man or woman, child or adult, was there more than one person buried in the urn, did the bones show any signs of fracture or disease? The bioarchaeological and osteological methods that I learned through my work in the lab are somewhat unique to this program and introduced me to yet another intriguing way to study the ancient world.

In addition to my work in the field and in the lab, the funds from the Jane C. Waldbaum scholarship also helped to cover housing and meals (both of which costs were part of the overall tuition) as well as group weekend excursions to Herculaneum, the Naples Archaeological Museum, and the Villa Regina. These trips enhanced my experience working at Pompeii as these other sites and museums situated Pompeii within a greater archaeological, biological, and historical context.

I am extremely grateful to the Archaeological Institute of America for awarding me this scholarship, enabling me to have had such an amazing experience, and fostering my passion for archaeology.