

Reports from 2021 SPHS fieldwork bursary holders

To begin, I would like to express my gratitude to the British School at Athens and its committee for choosing in favour my application for the 2021 Fieldwork Bursary award. Having been granted this bursary by the BSA, of which all of its awards are internationally competitive and lauded, I am very grateful for their decision; it has left me with a renewed sense of confidence and ambition, and I look forward to the challenges of applying for further awards in the near future.

The bursary helped to support myself while participating at the Pylos Palace of Nestor 2021 summer season project (May 15th – July 17th), co-directed by Professor Jack L. Davis and Dr. Sharon Stocker of the University of Cincinnati, Ohio.

The site is situated in the Southwest Peloponnese, Southwest Messenia, upon on the Ano Engliano ridge which overlooks the crescent Bay of Navarino. Locally, it is 4 kilometres west of the small town of Chora and 18km north of the modern bay town of Pylos-Nestor.

In recent years the project has captured much local and international attention. In 2015 the team discovered the intact, aceramic LH II (c.1450 B.C.) shaft grave of the popularly called ‘Griffin warrior’ in the shadow of Tholos IV. In 2018 further marvels in the shape and depth of two further tholoi were discovered to the immediate east of Tholos IV, which continue to be excavated.

Christian Lindesay (University of Wales, Trinity Saint David)

The financial support provided by the fieldwork bursary allowed me to participate in the Emporio Hinterland Project on the island of Chios. This is a three-four-year synergasia project of University College London and the Ephorate of Chios. Complications regarding the archaeological permit meant that fieldwork was delayed by a couple of weeks after arriving on the island, though I still managed to take part in almost two weeks of intensive field survey. It was the first time I had conducted field survey, so through the training offered by the experienced directors, Professor Andrew Bevan and Dr Brenna Hassett, as well as the practical application of the methodology in the field, I feel I was able to learn a lot about this important form of archaeological fieldwork. Particularly useful skills I learnt were in being able to identify pottery types in the field according to vessel types, periods, material etc. and in the post-field survey processing of this material. I was responsible, for example, of the photographic archiving of the material collected each day. Even while we were waiting for the permit to arrive, the team of postgraduate researchers and I were completing necessary digital research and preliminary work under the instruction of the directors to aid the overall project. During this time, I received training in how to use Geographic Referencing Software (GIS), which will undoubtedly benefit my own doctoral research as well as my participation in future research projects. I also helped in digitalising previous pottery catalogues of the BSA's excavations in the Emporio region into a database.

Overall, all these experiences provided a unique opportunity for professional development which will undoubtedly prove influential in my prospective career in archaeology, as well as in the short term in relation to my doctoral research. Being able to network with a friendly and highly skilled group of postgraduate researchers, professors and museum staff has already benefitted me in several ways, not only from the skills I learnt but also through the sharing of research ideas and other information. Without the financial support offered by the BSA and the SPHS, I would not have been able to participate in this project; given the circumstances of COVID-19, several unexpected costs arose including tests required for travel among other things such as having to rearrange travel to the island due to delays in the project's start date. I was also able to buy the necessary field kit to participate in intensive field survey. I am truly grateful to the BSA and the SPHS for the financial support which has allowed me to participate in this project.

Matthew Evans (Warwick University)