

SPHS Bursary Report: Naxos Quarry Project 2026

The SPHS fieldwork bursary enabled me to take part in the Naxos Quarry Project (NQP) during the 2026 season. The project entailed a survey of Palatia islet and an architectural study of the Portara temple site, as well as some work on a sculptural study with Dr. Rebecca Levitan of two colossal unfinished kouroi in the Melanes quarry. The bursary of £200 went toward my travel expenses (flight and Athens ferry) between London and Naxos from June 13th to June 30.

During the first week, the team undertook the survey under the direction of Dr. Evan Levine, with students collecting and documenting diagnostic pottery, tiles, lithics and other material dating widely, from the Neolithic period to the modern day. In the afternoons, the team gathered to enter the data collected from the day into the project database. The team's ceramicist and illustrators, Thanasis Garonis and Vaia Papazikou worked from the Naxos archaeological museum storage rooms. As a student, I helped wash the pottery, practiced technical drawing with Vaia, and learned from Thanasis how to read diagnostic pottery sherds. The survey continued into the following week, at which point the architectural study was also underway.

The architectural study, led by Dr. Jessica Paga and Dr. Jean Vanden Broeck-Parant, entailed the documentation (measuring, drawing, describing and photographing) of over 500 individual marble blocks at the site of the Portara temple. I learned how to identify various diagnostic features of a single marble block such as anathyrosis, amphibolyte, point chiseling marks, claw chisel marks, clamp holes, dowels, pry holes, and more. I also learned how to identify possible uses for a block out of its original context, such as ashlar, foundation packing, and later reuse.

During the second week, the project's 3d modeling specialist, Matt Naglak arrived, and each day taught students how to use laser scanning (LIDAR) programs (like Scaniverse) for quick, less detailed 3D scans. He also taught us how to generate photogrammetric models. It was particularly useful to photograph objects of varying sizes and observe how the number and quality of the photos affected the final photogrammetric model in different conditions. On one of the days, I also had the opportunity to try my hand at drone photography. The data from the individual blocks were also entered into the database at the end of each day, a process which taught me how to use database programs and also maximise productivity when dealing with large amounts of data of various sizes and media.

Working on the sculpture study with Dr. Levitan, I was tasked with collecting, translating and/or assessing secondary scholarship to do with the fragments of the Naxian Colossus on Delos, as a comparandum to the Melanes kouroi. Day trips included the Melanes quarry where we visited both unfinished kouroi and a marble monolith, the Sanctuary of the Source at Melanes, the reconstructed temples at Sangri and Yria, a church featuring spoliated marble, and the modern marble quarry at Kinidaros. The team even rallied a few hours after working on site to help a Naxian farmer and friend of the project harvest his potatoes in exchange for lunch.

Thanks to my participation on Naxos, I am also lucky to continue working on the sculpture study as a research assistant for the next few months, after completing my MA studies.

Ultimately, my experience on the NQP was an invaluable opportunity to participate in an interdisciplinary project, which taught me a variety of archaeological and architectural research methods. Having had no previous experience with fieldwork, I am more confident now in my ability to apply these methods to other projects, and perhaps on Naxos again next year.



Survey
on
Palatia.



Technical
drawing
lesson at
apotheke.



Practicing my
drone photography!



Pottery washing.



Students at Sangri museum.



Discussions before starting architectural study.



Discussions with Rebecca at upper kouros, Melanes.



Potato farm!



Lower kouros, Melanes.



Group photo at the Portara.