

I highly benefitted from the Jane C. Waldbaum Field School Scholarship. I am a second-year master's student in the department of Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies at the University of British Columbia, who hopes to move on to a PhD program in the advancement of further study of the Roman world. As a recipient of the scholarship, I was able to see part of the Roman world through an excavation of a Roman villa in Alba Iulia, Romania. To get to Alba Iulia, I needed to ride in planes, trains, and automobiles. And the cost of this transportation was more than I would have been able to afford. But with the generosity of the scholarship, I was able to pay for the transportation required to get to my destination in Romania.

Flying into Romania, I was able to gaze at the rolling hills and lush forests of Transylvania, once occupied by ancient Romans.



After arriving at the small but important Cluj International Airport, I used a combination of Italian vocabulary (I forgot to study Duolingo Romanian) and pointing to communicate with the taxis and busses that would bring me one hundred kilometers south to our excavation's headquarters in Alba Iulia.



The late-night arrival to our dormitory in Alba Iulia was followed by an early morning wakeup.



The first day of four weeks of early morning wakeups was to begin by heading to the museum in the center of the city where the tools and materials needed for our excavation were stored.



Following the work at the museum, we headed to our site located outside of the city, situated on the elevated plain of a farm's alfalfa field surrounded by sunflowers.



The next four weeks would involve arriving at the site at sunrise for the excavation of three trenches and the examination of three structures of the villa uncovered there within.



The discovery of plenty of bricks, tiles, stones, and other structural materials was critical for slowly and laboriously uncovering and explaining the activity of the ancient people who previously used the land. Many of these Roman elements have been repurposed over the centuries into infrastructure in the modern city, and can be easily identified by their original stamps.



These stamps are mostly human in origin, but we found at least one brick where a Roman's

canine companion left their mark.



Out of all the discoveries found within the trenches that I helped to excavate, the archaeological find closest to my heart was my find of a particular piece of pottery. While the trench was filled with numerous fragments of pottery and bones, this particular fragment of pottery contained a



graffito of the Greek letter, gamma. I had discovered and held the fragment of an object into which a Roman had carved their name. Unfortunately, the rest of the object containing the remainder of the name was not recovered, but it is the most connected I have felt to a member of the ancient world. And throughout the excavation, I became more and more connected to the ancient people, those whom I study, who lived and worked on the land.



The Waldbaum Field School Scholarship allowed me to have an educational and life experience I would not have had without the grant given to me. The excavation allowed me to think differently, to think in archaeological ways distinct from my previous historical and philological training. I hope to take what I learned from the excavation in Romania and apply it

to my future scholarship and other opportunities to participate in archaeological excavations. I learned so much about archaeology, Romans, and myself because of the scholarship