

## What previous students thought about Butrint

### **Craig Little, Summer 2010 and 2011**



The opportunity to get hands on training is a never ending experience at AUR. The Archaeological Department at AUR teaming up with the Butrint Foundation Training School in Albania, allows students like myself to get my hands dirty while learning a skill. The Butrint Foundation Training School will guide the students to apply the theories and methodologies that they learn in the classroom and to apply it in the field. Not only was I digging in some Albanian field, the Butrint Foundation Training School made me feel as if I was helping to give a sense of identity to the Albanian culture while at the same time they ensured I got to live and experience the modern day Albanian culture. To go on this excavation was an experience of a life time, that is why I have to do it twice....I will be back this summer to learn new techniques and experience the cultural relations!!

### **Dana Phelps, Summer 2010**



The Butrint Training School makes for a fantastic hands-on experience in archaeology. The training school is held in a unique location, Albania, a country that has a great deal to offer. I learned much about this developing country, from its communities to its cultural heritage and spectacular beaches. The three weeks I spent in Butrint working on the excavation with archaeologists and students from all over the globe comprise an experience that I will never forget. I left Butrint with a deeper knowledge of archaeology, new friends, and a greater appreciation for life. I highly recommend this program to anyone interested in the fields of archaeology and cultural heritage.

### **Leslie Forbes, Summer 2009**



There is nothing quite like watching the sun rise over the mountains as you trek your way across the fields on your way to an unearthed mausoleum. Five in the morning never seemed so worthwhile. Butrint, Albania is an incredibly underrated archaeological site, fittingly located in an incredibly underrated country. Every weekday morning we would go to our site on the Vrina Plain, described as the “suburbs of Butrint”

to dig at a mausoleum. Over the weeks, we found several skulls and human remains, bountiful amounts of pottery, a bathhouse, and even some coins and carved bones. On the weekends, we went on field trips to surrounding areas, such as the Blue Eye – an immeasurably deep natural pool – and Gjirokastra, where we learned about Ottomans and saw underground Communist bunkers.

Altogether, this was a very rewarding experience. I went to learn how to practice archaeology, and I came out with so much more. I learned about the culture and history of Albania and made lasting friendships with both the locals and the other archaeologists. There was a lot of time spent doing hard work, but the entire time was spent having fun.

### **Kate Banghart, Summer 2009**



In the preface to his book *Albania Past and Present*, published in 1919, Constantine Chekrezi recounts a story which had occurred some twelve years before: someone attempted to send a letter to the British Consulate of Scutari, once one of the most important cities in Northern Albania. Instead of being sent to the newly independent Albania, the letter ended up in Albany, NY, USA. The receiving postmaster returned the letter with the simple response, "Try Europe." This witty anecdote is

oddly similar to some responses I received after telling my friends and family I was going to Albania for the summer. Looks of confusion, perplexity, and the occasional nervous glance were common. I will admit, I was a bit hesitant to go to a completely unfamiliar country on my own. Now, however, I consider it one of the best decisions I have ever made.

The field school was rigorous (and not just because of early mornings after fun nights) and I learned an incredible amount about basic archaeological techniques and the history of the city and the surrounding area. I received an amount of attention and support unparalleled by any field school about which I have heard. Academic stimulation is impossible to avoid (as is a nice tan and a toned body) as Butrint draws an international community of scholars from all sorts of specializations. The territory of Albania is ripe for studying: from antiquity and into the modern day. The government and economy is blossoming and developing post-Communism—a fascinating period from which you can still see visible remains. My time in Albania left me with new skills, fresh knowledge, great friends, and wonderful stories.