

ANNUAL REPORT: Zita Project, Tunisia 2016 FIELD SCHOOL

Director(s): Brett Kaufman, University of Science and Technology Beijing
Co-Director(s): Ali Drine, Institut National du Patrimoine; Hans Barnard, University of California, Los Angeles; Rayed Khedher, University of California, Los Angeles



[IFR student Alexandra Augsburger and Dr. Thomas Fenn conducting ground penetrating radar at the Roman Forum of Zita]

This summer the team did not excavate in the field, but rather investigated the multitude of objects that we have already recovered over the past three seasons since the inception of the Zita Project. Our limited time in the field was spent using ground penetrating radar to examine architectural features, ancient industrial waste, and industrial infrastructure. Our bioarchaeology team conducted micro-excavations on tophet urns, providing a great deal of information on Neo-Punic sacrificial practices. The project zooarchaeologist was also able to reconstruct dietary practices from the Punic to Roman transition at the site over a 500 year period, something that has been very rare in the archaeology of North Africa. Paleoethnobotanical studies of charcoal and seeds commenced, and samples were also taken for soil chemistry analysis of the ancient metallurgical sediments. Ethnographic study of traditional charcoal-makers spearheaded by our Tunisian colleagues has given us a great perspective on regional fuel procurement practices that may extend to antiquity. The field school students participated in every one of these activities, learning the big picture and the intricacies of each specialty, while assisting the specialists in their analyses. We are preparing a monograph on the archaeology, ethnography, and history of the Zarzis Peninsula, beginning

with Punic and Roman Zita, continuing through the French colonial era, and looking to the future of the post-revolutionary Tunisian people and democracy.