April 24, 2018

Re: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies Award Report

Dear Colleagues,

First I would like to sincerely thank for your award, which has allowed me to attend the annual the Paleopathology Association North American Meetings in Austin, Texas and present my research on parasitic infection in Roman period Asia Minor. Please find below a short report on the outcomes of my presentation and the positive outcomes of attending the conference.

At the Paleopathology Meeting I presented a piece of my PhD research, which was an analysis of parasitic infection in Roman period Asia Minor. These results were the first evidence for parasitic infection in past populations of any time period in Asia Minor. My talk went well and I received positive feedback from many different researchers. This was the perfect meeting to present these results as this year the meeting held a special workshop on studying parasites in archaeological material, which I was also able to participate in. The workshop was focused on presenting the methods of parasite identification from archaeological materials and the things we can learn from studying ancient parasites. This was an extremely valuable meeting as there are only a few labs in the world that work in the area of paleoparasitology and the directors of two of them were present. I got to meet students and researchers form the paleoparasitology lab in Nebraska as well as from the lab in Seoul. I was also able to attend a number of talks that were of interest to me and gave me new ideas for how I can analyse my data and new directions for my research. I also met many new researchers who I was able to discuss my research with. I was even able to establish a collaboration with a new research group that will fit nicely with my PhD research and the results will be able to help them understand the context of their Roman period site better.
From this conference I have learned some new presentation skills that I can incorporate into future presentations, I think one of the most important ones is to think very hard about who my audience will be and make sure to highlight the points of my work that are most relevant to them not just the ones that I think are the most important. I was also able to practice informally discussing my work with new researchers and feel much more comfortable talking about the work I do and giving varying levels of detail depending on who I am talking to. I also learned about some new methods for identification of certain species of parasite that people are beginning to test that may be very useful to me in the future.

Again, I would like to thank the Society for the funds awarded that allowed me to attend this conference. This is one of the largest meetings of palaeopathologists but it is quite expensive as it is held in the states each year. Without the funding I received I would not have been able to attend. Attending the conference allowed me to meet many important people in my field as well as other Roman archaeologists who I can collaborate with in the future to further investigate parasitic infection in the Roman Empire.

Sincerely,

Marissa Ledger