

Archaeology of the Spanish Civil War - 2018

Fieldwork/Internship opportunity

Project Director: Alfonso Fanjul Peraza - Phd. by University Autonoma de Madrid

Location: Oviedo, Asturias, Spain

Session Dates: (arriving the 30 th of June) excavation from 1 st of July -15 th of July.

Price: 400 dollars per week

- Includes accommodation, food, and equipment
- Airfare and travel cost to Oviedo is NOT included

**Past field experience is not required

What do we do?

Our main objective is to document Asturias' war and conflict history through archaeological research. We examine valuable information and material through a scientific perspective, in a **non-political** manner that allows a **neutral examination** of past conflict throughout the region.

We often excavate trenches that saw wartime action in the Battle of Oviedo in 1936-7. These trenches are generally located along the mountains surrounding the city, where both the Nationalist and Communist troops were positioned. This 2018 summer season, we will be focusing our excavations on the battlefield of Escamplero. Here, we will be excavating a communist first fire line trench.

The Escamplero is a low mountain pass that connects the western side of Asturias with the city of Oviedo. The Republican troops took to the location in the attempt to prevent the arrival of Nationalist troops to break the siege on the city. When Nationalists tried to take over the pass, a large battle ensued to defend the Escamplero of their assault.

The Nationalists succeeded in taking control of the pass, opening up a small road, called *Grado's Corredor*, to help the besieged Oviedo. In the months following, the red army continued in their attempt to once again regain the Escamplero , as it was the perfect place to cut off that supply route. The area witnessed many months of conflict, leaving the hills full of trenches, tunnels, bunkers, fortified houses, and even mass graves.

Below are some of the views of the forest we were studying in 2016, part of the same trench complex, were we are digging this year.



What does a typical day look like?

We head out to the site around 9 am in the morning, arriving between 9:30 and 10. There, we will set up continue our excavations until around 1 pm, where we will take a lunch break on site. Depending on weather and the day's progress, we generally start to pack up and leave around 5 pm.

After arriving back at the house (and having a much needed shower), we organize our day's findings and begin cleaning and documenting the artifacts.

Monday through Saturday we are out in the field carrying out excavations. Sunday is our day off, and if car space allows, we will take day trips to surrounding areas, be it a beach and seaside village, or visiting other archaeological sites such as hillforts or Neolithic caves.



Where do we stay?

We all stay in a nice old country home belonging to Alfonso's (the director's) parents. Depending on space, you may be sharing a room and bathroom with others.

Getting to Oviedo

Or you flight to London, Paris, Lisbon were they have direct flights to Oviedo/Asturias airport, or you flight to Madrid and you pick up a bus.

You can buy a bus ticket from the ALSA bus company. These buses leave out of Terminal 4 (there will be signs to direct you) and the journey is usually 6 hours (Don't worry, there is a toilet!). It is best to buy your bus ticket a week or two BEFOREHAND, or as soon as you know your flight schedule, as these buses tend to fill up. This bus will take you to the Oviedo City bus station (Estación de Autobuses de Oviedo). Give us your estimated arrival time, and we will be there to pick you up!

How to Apply?

First send us an email telling who you are and your interest on being part of the team. Then you would reserve a vacancy when you pay a fee of the half of the price of the fieldschool.

Some important things more:

Arriving and leaving dates. It's not a problem if you arrive one day early or you leave one day late, you have a place at home so its not a problem to stay.

First day. On the evening of the first day we will do a small walk inside of the city of Oviedo for an introduction of the battle and the project.

Language. All the team speaks English so if you don't know Spanish its not a problem.

Weather. In norther Spain it can be rainy and a bit cold specially on evenings. You will need some clothes to work under the rain.

Insurance. Always needed just in case you need some visit to the local hospital.

Sleeping bag. We have a few rooms and bathrooms in the house but depending on the number of students perhaps you'll have just a mattress and blankets to sleep so I recommend you to take a basic sleeping bag also with you.

The region. Asturias is a "Celtic" region of Northern Spain far away of the topics of flamenco and bullfighting, here we have backpipes and the cider is the regional drink. You have a helpful website on the region in the web: wereisasturias.com

Weekend trips. We are very flexible on the weekend visits. We have a big amount of different archaeological sites from different ages that we can visit, from prehistoric caves with paintings, celtic hillforts, roman ruins,... so normally I tell the members of the team about the options and you all together decide what you prefer to see that day. If the weather is good someday we stop in the beach after working or in the weekend trip. The coast is just 40 minutes drive from Oviedo.

The subject of the 2018 excavation. Every year we have a subject on the research for a paper in a conference or a journal. This year is going to be "comparing trench material culture". Mainly we will work on communist materials found in the trenches to compare the daily life of nationalist and communist soldiers from the archaeological findings.

Also every year we work in a catalog of Spanish civil war materials with the main objects found.

Future Researches. We are really open to new people who wants to research in our subject, so sometimes we help students to publish with us the results, or we let them use our materials for their own research. The field is really big. In the same landscapes we have trenches, fortified houses destroyed or roads build during the battle, mass graves,...so we are really glad if some member of the team wants to do further research.

Going out. Near every evening we go out to have some cider or to visit some local festival, specially in the weekends, so people will also can see some Spanish summer life.

Permission. We already have the permission from the government to dig in the battlefield.

Founding. As a non-political project we are out of all the Institutional founding for research on Spanish civil war archaeology. In one way that allows us to have an aseptic and more scientific view of the results of our excavations, but in the other side we need to ask for a fee to the students who wants to participate in the project. Your fee is paying the expenses of the excavation and also in the future it can help us to publish some nice catalog of the material culture or a book with our collection of unpublished photos of the battle.

Metal detector. We have a metal detector but if you have one it will be also helpfull if you take it to the excavation.

Bibliography of the project. (you can find and download them in www.academia.edu, except the one of the caves)

FANJUL PERAZA, A., DUARTE, R., FEITO ÁLVAREZ, F. y BRACERO, C., (2014): "The forgotten battle. Archaeology of the Spanish civil war in the trenches of Oviedo's siege". *Trébole. Boletín cultural de Asturias en América*, 3: 21-33.

BONDURA, V., FANJUL PERAZA, A., TREVÍN PITA, V. (2015): "Resistance, Refuge, and Retaliation: The Use of Caves during the Spanish Civil War in Asturias". Presented at The 80th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, San Francisco, California. 2015 (tDAR ID: 397837)

DÍAZ HERRERO, M., FEITO ÁLVAREZ, F. y FANJUL PERAZA, A. (2014): "Munición extranjera en la batalla de oviedo 1936/37. Estudio material de las excavaciones arqueológicas en el pico paisano". *Trébole. Boletín cultural de Asturias en América*, 3: 16-20.

Certificate. As a director of a project with the permission of the regional government of Asturias I am allowed to sign an official certificate to the students who do practice with us.

Want to know more or have any questions?

To see more of what we do, you can check out our Facebook group page *Archaeology of Violence in Asturias* where we post photos and background information on the regions past conflict, some of our finds, and any updates. Feel free to join the group page as well!

For any further questions, you can contact the director, Alfonso, through his email, schoolofarchaeology@gmail.com.