

RITUAL AND DEATH IN PREHISTORIC PERDIGÕES, PORTUGAL

Course ID: ARCH 365AS

July 19 - August 22, 2020

Academic Credits: 8 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 12 Quarter Units)

School of Record: Connecticut College

FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTORS:

Dr. António Valera, Era Arqueologia; ICArEHB -Algarve University (antoniovalera@era-arqueologia.pt)

Dr. Lucy Shaw Evangelista, Perdigões Anthropologist and Archaeologist in ERA Arqueologia, Portugal (lucyevangelista@era-arqueologia.pt)



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Perdigões complex, a prehistoric ritual site made up of a necropolis and a megalithic ceremonial enclosure. Extending out 16 hectare the site is composed of concentric ditched enclosures, built and inhabited for about 1500 years, between 3400 and 2000 B.C. Set in a natural amphitheater that opens to the east with entrances that align with the rising sun during the summer and winter solstices, the architecture of Perdigões indicates that astronomy was core to the world view of the civilization that built and occupied its structures.

The dimensions, extensive chronology, monumentality, prolific concentration of structures (negative and positive), contextual preservation, evidence of long distance interaction and social aggregation, evidence of ritualized practices of feasting, and excellent preservation of bones, ecofacts and archaeological materials make Perdigões one the most important sites in the Iberian Peninsula available to research the development of social complexity in Neolithic Europe. Since 1998, a regular research program is being developed at the site with a focus on funerary contexts, chronology, architectonic characterization, social interaction, ritualized practices, and world-views.

Students will be participating in the research to better understand the chronology and biography of this complex site in order to comprehend the social practices that were followed, namely funerary practices, social interaction, mobility, and the structured deposition in pits and ditches. Through lectures, fieldwork, and lab work, students will complete this field school with an overall understanding of the many sciences that contribute to the research of Perdigões, including bioanthropology, archaeometry, isotopic studies, zooarchaeology, geophysics, and archaeological studies of material culture and architecture. The diversity of material culture types at the site offers a unique opportunity to gain deep insights into economic, social, technological, demographic, and ideological characteristics of the people that lived and died in this complex. The 15 ditches that define several enclosures and the thousands of pits not only provide an extensive record of bones, ecofacts, and archaeological material, but also of processes of site formation, both natural and anthropic, where intentionality can be identified in a variety of deposition practices. There is extensive evidence of weaving, stone knapping, bone carving, pottery production and copper metallurgy. Thousands of animal remains have provided a profound amount of data to inform questions of animal management practices and human-animal relations in ontological terms. Diversified collective funerary contexts not only provide data for the characterization of populations, but also to address mobility, interaction, social relations and ideological frames.

Architectonic solutions and materials, and their relation with landscape, cosmologies and social relations, also have a fertile area for research in this site. A great diversity of exotic materials, used for adornments or ideotechnic objects offer hints that this complex was part of a much larger network that informed societal relations and identity management processes.

This is a site that allows a holistic approach to the communities of the 4th and 3rd millennium BC.

Where is the investigation heading:

- Understand the reasons that lead to the decline/demise of Perdigões and its chronology, in the end of the 3rd millennium B.C.
- Describe the social practices related to feasting and understanding the way they are related with the filling of negative structures in the second half of the 3rd millennium B.C.
- Question the importance of social emulation practices and of regional interaction of exotic materials for the development of Perdigões as a center of social aggregation;
- Understand how to frame funerary practices involving commingling and manipulation of human remains with processes of ideologic expression in the mid/second half of the 3rd millennium B.C.
- In regard with social practices of emulation and forms of identity management: understand differences between architecture and funerary rituals that reveal differences in identity; identifying structures and ceremonial spaces; amortization/depreciation of resources and some objects considered to be “luxury”, both in feasting rituals and funerary rituals;

What will be done:

- Positive and negative structure, funerary and non-funerary will be excavated, ideally in the central area of Perdigões; here we hope to find abundant vertebrate faunal remains, archaeological materials (mostly ceramic, copper, bone), human remains, charcoal and seeds;
- In the field there may be registered human occurrences at very restricted and punctual areas.
- In the Lab the bioanthropological work will be dedicated mainly to Tomb 3, dug in 2017.

Work methodologies students will become familiar with:

- Excavation and record according to the Barker / Harris method;
- Using a total station/GPS for the opening of new surveys, during excavation and field drawing
- Cleaning and identifying faunal remains (species and bone type) according to the principles of vertebrate taxonomy
- General artefact treatment and methods of typological analysis; methods of archaeological drawing
- Excavation and register techniques applied to human remains, cleaning and identifying of human bones, methods for the estimation of age at death, sex diagnosis, and minimum number of individuals;
- Sampling techniques for pollen and charcoal analysis.

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units (equivalent to 12 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a private, highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see grading assessment and matrix). This field school provides a minimum of 160 direct instructional hours. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institutions prior to attending this field school.

Transcripts: An official copy of transcripts will be mailed to the permanent address listed by students on their online application. One additional transcript may be sent to the student's home institution at no additional cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvrkl>.

PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for participation in this field school. It entails hands-on, experiential learning and students will learn on-site how to work in an excavation, treat archaeological findings (i.e. clean, photograph, catalog and store) and to reach conclusions from their work and finds. Students must keep in mind that they will be dealing with fragile contexts, materials, and artifacts, and so an adequate and careful approach to every stage of field and lab work is also required.

DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involve risk. Students interested in participating in IFR programs must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we do not take risk lightly. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it complies with all our standards and policies, including student safety.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We encourage students to explore such insurance on their own as it may be purchased at affordable prices. insuremytrip.com or [Travelgurad.com](http://travelgurad.com) are possible sites where field school participants may explore travel cancellation insurance quotes and policies. If you do purchase such insurance, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition. See this [Wall Street Journal article about travel insurance](#) that may help you with to help to decide whether to purchase such insurance.

We do our best to follow schedule and activities as outlined in this syllabus. Yet local permitting agencies, political, environmental, personal, or weather conditions may force changes. This syllabus, therefore, is only a general commitment. Students should allow flexibility and adaptability as research work is frequently subject to change.

You should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those you experience in your home, dorms or college town. July and August are the hot season in Alentejo. Temperatures are usually around 35°C/95°F. Even though field work is done early in the morning (7am to 12pm) and under a tent, it will be dry and hot. Please plan accordingly.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult the project director, as appropriate.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This program will introduce students to concepts and a range of sciences that are intimately related at Perdigões: archaeology, bioanthropology, geophysical prospection, geoarchaeology and zooarchaeology. All investigation conducted at the site falls under the spectrum of prehistory, specifically in the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Early Bronze Age.

This field school aims to prepare students to:

- Understand Perdigões in the context of Portuguese and European prehistory (Neolithic and Chalcolithic), the site's excavation and investigation history, ditched enclosure sites in Portugal;
- Understand and perform excavation tasks: the use of tools, digging techniques, etc.
- Perform field documentation tasks: the use of measuring and documentation tools and devices, creating written recordation (context sheets, field journals, finds' labels, etc.); photo, and graphic documentation (drawing of stratigraphic sections, architectural structures, contexts, etc.).
- Understand processing procedures: cleaning, selecting, and arranging archaeological finds; technical pottery drawing, the organization of finds storage, etc.
- Understand basic principles of geophysical prospection (how to do it and interpret results).
- Apply knowledge about bioanthropology, geoarchaeology, and zooarchaeology to archaeological findings in Perdigões.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of their time at our field school, students will be able to:

- Execute basic excavation and lab tasks;
- Be independent in the field, understanding the methods and processes employed;
- Document and interpret archaeological findings;
- Draw conclusions and research from the analysis of the findings;
- Understand the application of different sciences in the context of the excavation, such as bioanthropology, geophysical prospection, geoarchaeology and zooarchaeology;

GRADING MATRIX

Evaluation questionnaire (5%): A questionnaire will be held at the end of Week 1 to assess student apprehension of information given during that week.

Excavation performance (35%): Students will be evaluated as they complete chores in the field. Those chores include the use of tools, digging techniques, the use of measuring and documentation tools and devices, the way they handle findings.

Lab performance (25%): Students will be evaluated as they complete chores in the lab. Those chores

include creating written, photo, and graphic documentation of archaeological finds, drawing of stratigraphic situations, architectural structures, contexts, etc., cleaning, selecting and arranging archaeological finds, the organization of finds storage, etc.

Field Notebook (30%): Students are expected to complete a field school journal and present it for evaluation during their final week on site. Project staff will instruct students on the expectations for workbook entries.

Attendance, participation, and demonstration of interest (5%): Students are required to participate in all field school activities, and encouraged to present the main work they were involved in by the end of each week.

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT

Hold purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancelation of a field school. The IFR typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to program beginning and make Go/No Go decisions by then. This time frame still allows the purchase of discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss of airline ticket costs if we decide to cancel a program.

Students are responsible for making the necessary arrangements to get to the meeting point on July 19th, 2020. Exact meeting location and transfer hours will be set after enrollment, to make sure we adapt to the times students are arriving.

Students landing in Portela Airport in Lisbon, will be met by the project staff and transferred to Reguengos de Monsaraz. Students arriving by any other means of transportation to Lisbon (train, bus, etc.), should make their way independently to the meeting point at the airport. August 22nd, the last day of the field school, students will be driven back to Lisbon where they will arrive not later than 5:00pm. No flights should be booked prior to this arrival hour.

If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text or email project director immediately. A local emergency cell phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Portugal is a member of the European Schengen Visa Agreement. As such, US citizens may enter Portugal for up to 90 days for tourist or business purposes without a visa. Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months after your designated departure date.

Citizens of other countries should check the Portuguese Embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements.

ACCOMMODATIONS and FIELD TRIPS

Students will be accommodated in small houses (about 2-3 rooms each) in Telheiro (Reguengos de Monsaraz), a small town near Perdigões. Each house has a kitchen, living room, and one bathroom. Shared rooms hold a maximum of 3 people. The houses will be cleaned twice a week. It is the students' responsibility to maintain the house clean for the rest of the week. Students will be taken by car to the site daily.

Lunch and dinner will be provided. Breakfast is the students' responsibility. Sunday lunch is students' responsibility. Food and other amenities can be purchased at local stores. Three supermarkets are about a 15 minutes ride from Telheiro. Also, the restaurant Sem Fim is at a 5 minute walking distance from the houses.

Regarding dietary restrictions, since lunch is provided by Esporão's canteen and dinner is provided by

a local cook, it is difficult to accommodate any specifications rather than vegetarian. It is not possible to accommodate vegan or gluten free diets. The gastronomy in Alentejo is very rich and diverse, but also traditional and conservative.

Once a week, at the end of the day, students will be driven to the laundry.

Saturday afternoons will be free, and dinner is included.

On Sundays there will be field trips. Lunch is not included.

On the 8th of August there will be an optional field trip to Mérida, Spain, charged separately.

COURSE SCHEDULE

All IFR field school begins with safety orientation. This orientation includes proper behavior at the field area, proper clothing, local cultural sensitivities and sensibilities, potential fauna and flora hazards, review IFR harassment and discrimination policies and review of the student Code of Conduct.

The theoretical training will be imparted along the week responding to the following topics:

- Introduction to Portuguese and European prehistory (Neolithic and Chalcolithic);
- Learning about the site's excavation and investigation history;
- Understanding the ditched enclosure sites in Portugal;
- Understanding the goals of this program;
- Visit Perdigões and some of the megalithic heritage in Reguengos de Monsaraz.

Week 1

Mornings in the field

Excavating;

Mastering digging techniques;

Using measuring and documentation tools and devices;

Handling findings;

Understanding the relationship with sciences like bioanthropology, geophysical prospection, geoarchaeology, and zooarchaeology.

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Theoretical training (see program below)

Tuesday and Thursday

Treating materials;

Training in typology;

Training in bioanthropology;

Week 2

Mornings in the field

Excavating;

Mastering digging techniques;

Using measuring and documentation tools and devices;

Handling findings;

Understanding the relationship with sciences like bioanthropology, geophysical prospection, geoarchaeology, and zooarchaeology.

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Theoretical training (see program attached)

Tuesday and Thursday

Treating materials;

Training in typology;

Training in bioanthropology;

Debate afternoon based on previous readings of assigned bibliography

Visit Évora, Almendres, Anta Grande do Zambujeiro (Saturday).

Week 3

Mornings in the field

Excavating;

Mastering digging techniques;

Using measuring and documentation tools and devices;

Handling findings;

Understanding the relationship with sciences like bioanthropology, geophysical prospection, geoarchaeology, and zooarchaeology.

Monday, Wednesday

Theoretical training (see program attached)

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

Treating materials;

Training in typology;

Training in bioanthropology;

Debate afternoon based on previous readings of assigned bibliography

Visit Évora, Almendres, Anta Grande do Zambujeiro (Saturday).

Week 4

Mornings in the field

Excavating;

Mastering digging techniques;

Using measuring and documentation tools and devices;

Handling findings;

Understanding the relationship with sciences like bioanthropology, geophysical prospection, geoarchaeology, and zooarchaeology.

Monday, Wednesday

Theoretical training (see program attached)

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

Treating materials;

Training in geophysical prospection applied to archaeology;

Training in isotopic analysis;

Visiting the Arqueometria Hércules Lab (in Évora);

Visiting the Alqueva Dam (Saturday).

Week 5

Mornings in the field

Excavating;

Mastering digging techniques;

Using measuring and documentation tools and devices;

Handling findings;

Understanding the relationship with sciences like bioanthropology, geophysical prospection, geoarchaeology, and zooarchaeology.

Afternoon week 5

Treating materials;

Training in geoarchaeological approaches;

Learning about the Alqueva mitigation process;

EQUIPMENT LIST

- Work shoes (preferably closed shoes like sneakers or running shoes)
- An additional set of walking shoes or hiking boots
- Clothing suitable for outdoor activities (consider hot weather conditions and appropriate work wear)
- Refillable water bottle
- Hat
- Medication - It is not necessary to bring over-the-counter medicine from your country since you can buy all common types here (e.g. aspirin, anti-insecticides, sunscreen, etc.). It is recommended, however, that you bring any individual prescription medicines;
- A converter for an EU type electricity wall-plug if needed;

REQUIRED READINGS

PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students via a shared Dropbox folder.

VALERA, A.C., SILVA, A.M., CUNHA, C. and EVANGELISTA, L. (2014), "Funerary practices and body manipulation at Neolithic and Chalcolithic Perdigões ditched enclosures (South Portugal)" in A.C. Valera ed. Recent Prehistoric Enclosures and Funerary Practices in Europe, *BAR*, International Series 2676: 37-57.

https://www.academia.edu/9813771/Funerary_practices_and_body_manipulations_at_Neolithic_and_Chalcolithic_Perdig%C3%B5es_ditched_enclosures_South_Portugal

VALERA, A.C.; SILVA, A.M. and MÁRQUEZ ROMERO, J.E. (2014), "The temporality of Perdigões enclosures: absolute chronology of the structures and social practices", *SPAL*, 23, p. 11-16.

http://institucional.us.es/revistas/spal/23/art_1.pdf

VALERA, A.C. (2015), "Social change in the late 3rd millennium BC in Portugal: the twilight of enclosures". In MELLER, H.; RISCH, R.; JUNG, R.; ARZ, H. eds - 2200 BC – Ein Klimasturz als Ursache für den Zerfall der Alten Welt? 2200 BC – A climatic breakdown as a cause for the collapse of the old world. 7th Archaeological Conference of Central Germany October 23-26, 2013 in Halle (Saale): 409 –427.

https://www.academia.edu/18859497/Social_change_in_the_late_3rd_millennium_BC_in_Portugal_The_twilight_of_enclosures

RECOMMENDED READINGS

VALERA, A.C. (2017) – "The 'Exogenous' at Perdigões Approaching Interaction in the Late 4th and 3rd Millennium BC in Southwest Iberia", In BARTLHEIM, M.; BUENO RAMÍREZ, P.; KUNST, M. – Key resources and sociocultural developments in the Iberian Chalcolithic, p. 201-224.

https://www.academia.edu/35332058/The_Exogenous_at_Perdig%C3%B5es_Approaching_Interaction_in_the_Late_4th_and_3rd_Millennium_BC_in_Southwest_Iberia

VALERA, A.C., EVANGELISTA, L. and CASTANHEIRA, P. (2014), "Zoomorphic figurines and the problem of

Human-Animal relationship in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic Southwest Iberia", *Menga*, Revista de Prehistoria de Andaluzia, 5:, p. 15-33.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271191726_Zoomorphic_Figurines_and_the_Problem_of_Human-Animal_Relationship_in_the_Neolithic_and_Chalcolithic_Southwest_Iberia

VALERA, A.C., SCHUHMACHER, T.X., BANERJEE, A. (2015), "Ivory in the Chalcolithic enclosure of Perdigões (South Portugal): the social role of an exotic raw material", *World Archaeology*.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00438243.2015.1014571>

VALERA, A.C. and EVANGELISTA, L.S. (2014), "Anthropomorphic figurines at Perdigões enclosure: naturalism, body proportion and canonical posture as forms of ideological language", *Journal of European Archaeology*, 17, 2, p. 286-300.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1179/1461957114Y.0000000057?journalCode=yēja20>

VALERA, A.C. (2016), "Ditched enclosures and the ideologies of death in the Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic South Portugal", In ARD, V.; PILLOT, L. – Giants in the Landscape: Monumentality and Territories in the European Neolithic. *Archaeopress Archaeology*: 69-84.

https://www.academia.edu/23692737/Ditched_enclosures_and_the_ideologies_of_death_in_the_Late_Neolithic_and_Chalcolithic_South_Portugal

VALERA, A.C., SIMÃO, I., NUNES, T., PEREIRO, T. DO, COSTA, C. (2017), "Neolithic ditched enclosures in Southern Portugal (4th Millennium BC): new data and new perspectives", *Estudos do Quaternário*, 17, APEQ, Braga, 2017, p. 57-76. <http://www.apeq.pt/ojs/index.php/apeq>

M. BARTELHEIN, P. BUENO RAMÍREZ, M. KUNST (editores), "Key resources and socio-cultural developments in the Iberian Chalcolithic", *RessourcenKulturen*, N°6, Tübingen, p.7-21.

M. CRUZ BERROCAL/L. GARCÍA SANJUÁN/A. GILMAN (Eds.), (2013) "The Prehistory of Iberia. Debating early social stratification and the State, Oxon, Routledge", 10-28.

Whittle 2014: A. Whittle, The times and timings of enclosures. In: A.C. Valera ed., "Recent Prehistoric enclosures and funerary practices in Europe", *BAR, International Series 2676*, 2014, 1-12.