



INVESTIGATING THE SPREAD OF FARMING IN THE NEAR EAST: THE BONCUKLU PROJECT, TURKEY

Course ID: ARCH 350B

July 16- August 15, 2020

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

School of Record: Connecticut College

DIRECTORS:

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INTRODUCTION

Turkey has evidence of one of the earliest transitions from hunting and gathering to village farming in the world, but the early Neolithic of central Turkey is poorly understood. The Boncuklu project is investigating the appearance of the first villages and farmers in central Turkey. At Boncuklu we are also exploring the origins of the remarkable symbolism seen in paintings and reliefs at the nearby famous Neolithic town of Çatalhöyük. Well preserved decorated Neolithic houses and artifacts are notable features of Boncuklu, apparently representing ritual practices that are direct predecessors to those seen at Çatalhöyük. Working alongside experts in the analysis of evidence from early farming communities and professional excavators, students will learn a range of archaeological research techniques and methods and about the wider context of Anatolian archaeology.

The course will take place at the Neolithic site of Boncuklu, dating to c. 8500 BCE, the earliest village in central Anatolia and the predecessor of the famous Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük. The site is located in the Konya Plain in central Turkey, 40 kms east of the major city of Konya, a famous Medieval centre where the 'whirling dervish' sect was founded by the Medieval philosopher Celaleddin Rumi. There are many medieval buildings of the Seljuk period to visit in

Konya, a booming city. The field school also includes visits to other sites and museums in central Turkey including Çatalhöyük, the dramatic Neolithic site of Aşıklı, with evidence of repeated rebuilding of houses and an experimental village. Aşıklı is located about 3 hours east of Konya in Cappadocia, also famous for its underground cities and painted medieval churches which there will thus be an opportunity to visit. We also visit a number of remote Byzantine and Hittite sites around Konya.

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 institution 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 more transcript may be sent to the student home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvrkl>.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of the course is to enable students to better understand how archaeology is practiced in the field. To achieve this objective, this course has three primary goals: (1) to provide students a practical working knowledge of **archaeological field methods**, including survey, excavation, laboratory analysis, artifact cataloging, and conservation; (2) to introduce students to the **intellectual challenges presented by archaeological research**, including research design, the interpretation of data, and the continual readjustment of hypotheses and field strategies with regard to information recovered in the field; and (3) to introduce students to the Neolithic and later archaeology of Anatolia.

The course primary directive is to enable students to better understand how archaeology is practiced in the field. Students will also learn how archaeologists study the origins of agriculture in an area where it first began and the spread of agriculture outside of such primary areas of origin.

PREREQUISITE

No prior experience in archaeology is required. This is hands-on, experiential learning and students will study on-site how to conduct archaeological research. Archaeology involves physical work and exposure to the elements and thus, requires a measure of acceptance that this will not be the typical university learning environment. You will get sweaty, tired and have to work in the outdoors. Students are required to come equipped with sufficient excitement and adequate understanding that the archaeological endeavor requires real, hard work – in the sun, on your feet, and with your trowel.

PROGRAM

Excavations: Students will participate in guided excavations at the site of Boncuklu, excavating Neolithic houses, burials and middens.

Survey: Students will be instructed in use of survey equipment and on-site survey.

Recording: Students will participate in filling out specific excavation forms, planning, AND recording the excavated stratigraphy.

Flotation and sieving: participation in retrieval processes for archaeobotanical and other finds

Cataloging: Students will participate in field sorting and cataloging of finds.

Laboratory: Scheduled lab tasks will include washing, sorting, and cataloging of finds.

DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involves risk. Students interested in participating in any IFR program must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we take risk seriously. 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 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.

Archaeological work involves physical work in the outdoors. You should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those you experience in your home or college town. This program operates in a hot Mediterranean summer environment. During the day, temperatures in the shade fluctuate between 70°-90°F. However, under the sun they may reach 80°-90°F. Humidity is relatively low and some mosquitoes and/or flies may be close to the excavation area and dig house. In order to be protected from sunburn and/or insects students will not be allowed to work in shorts or tank tops at the site. Good footwear, working cloths, and sun protective gear (hat, sunglasses and sunscreen) are required.

We live in a friendly but conservative small rural community. We must respect local customs so clothes that do not reveal any flesh are appropriate for these reasons as well as to protect you from the sun. In contrast to hot daytime temperatures it can be cool in the evening and morning.

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

GRADING, ASSESSMENT & OUTCOMES

Undergraduate Student grading:

- **33% of Grade:** One essay on Anatolian Neolithic archaeology
- **67% of Grade:** Fieldwork participation, assessed in relation to competence in
 - **Excavation tool use and observation of stratigraphic phenomena**
 - **Accurate and precise planning**
 - **Comprehensive, accurate, precise and insightful compilation of context and feature records**
 - **Contribution to retrieval processes such as flotation and residue sorting**
 - **Effective on site survey**
 - **Contribution to team activity**

Students completing this course will have significantly developed excavation and recording skills and thus be able to operate more independently and take on more responsibility on future archaeological fieldwork; they will have achieved a better understanding of the whole archaeological process including interpretation, which will be a good preparation for graduate work; they will have developed significant transferable skills relating to team work, initiative, work to demanding deadlines, adaptability in the face of challenging conditions, all prized by a wide range of employers and key to success on future field projects of whatever nature.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students will spend 4.5 weeks at the Boncuklu Project excavation centre. The first days there will involve lectures. There are weekend site visits around central Turkey including Cappadocia and local sites. The main four weeks will be spent in the field in survey and excavation at Boncuklu with laboratory training as well. The dig house has good communal facilities with kitchen, several showers and toilets, washing machine, and laboratories. There is outdoor covered dining and social space. Field school students will be housed in shared dorm rooms on bunk beds. There is also the option of large well insulated project tents that offer more space.

All meals will be communal events and will provide plenty of nutritious but basic food in the tradition of local cuisine. The daily diet in Turkey is heavily based on pasta, rice, legumes bread other vegetables, with some meat. Vegetarians/Vegans are catered for.

Note: our website boncuklu.org gives a flavor of life for the team at the site, you are encouraged to visit the site.

TRAVEL AND MEETING POINT

We suggest you 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. Such time frame still allows the purchase deeply discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss if airline ticket costs if we decide to cancel a program.

Students are responsible for making your own travel arrangements, once the timing of permit issue by the Turkish authorities is confirmed. Students will fly in and out of Konya (KYA) and will be met at Konya airport on arrival. If you flight is delayed or you missed your connection, please call, text or email the project director immediately. A local cell phone number will be provided to enrolled students.

Students will arrive on Thursday, July 16. This field school ends on the afternoon of Friday, August 14. Students should prepare for onward travel or return home on Saturday, August 15.

PLEASE NOTE: DO NOT BOOK FLIGHTS UNTIL INSTRUCTED BY THE FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTORS. MINOR CHANGES TO THE MEETING POINT AND STARTING DATE (BY A DAY OR TWO) MAY BECOME NECESSARY IN THE LIGHT OF ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES WHO ISSUE THE OFFICIAL PERMIT FOR THE EXCAVATION.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

All personal engaged in archaeological research in Turkey must be cleared by the authorities. Enrolled students will receive a special visa to attend the field school. All accepted students will be asked to complete official forms – those will be sent to students by Project Directors – and all documents will be submitted as a group for approval to relevant Turkish authorities.

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.

Week 1:

Friday Morning: Lecture: The Neolithic of the Near East and origins of agriculture
 Afternoon: Lecture: The Neolithic of Turkey

Saturday Morning: Boncuklu lecture
 Afternoon: Çatalhöyük lecture

Weeks 2-5: Excavations at Boncuklu. Daily program: 7-9.30 am, 10 am -1 pm, 3.30-6 pm. Students will rotate between excavation, sampling, laboratory work and planning on site and in the labs.

First long Weekend: Trip to Cappadocia, visiting Neolithic sites under excavation and Byzantine underground cities.

Week 5, Friday: finish field work

EXCURSIONS

Three types of excursions are planned within the course: (1) an extended visit to the nearby site of Çatalhöyük; (2) a weekend in Cappadocia visiting Neolithic sites and the famous Byzantine underground cities (3) visits to local Byzantine and Hittite sites.

REQUIRED READINGS

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

Baird D 2011 The Late Epipalaeolithic, Neolithic and Chalcolithic of the Anatolian Plateau, 13000-4000 BC calibrated. In D Potts ed. *Blackwell's Companion to Near Eastern Archaeology*

Baird D, Fairbairn A, Martin L and Middleton C 2011 The Boncuklu Project; the origins of sedentism, cultivation and herding in central Anatolia, in Özdoğan and Başgelen eds *The Neolithic of Turkey; new excavations, new discoveries*. Arkeoloji ve Sanat.

Baird D 2011 Pınarbaşı; from Epipalaeolithic camp-site to sedentarising village in central Anatolia, in Ozdoğan and Başgelen eds *The Neolithic of Turkey; new excavations, new discoveries*. Arkeoloji ve Sanat.

Baird – A. Fairbairn – E. Jenkins – L. Martin – C. Middleton – J. Pearson – E. Asouti – Y. Edwards – C. Kabukcu – G. Mustafaoğlu – N. Russell – O. Bar-Yosef – G. Jacobsen – X. Wu – A. Baker – S. Elliott, Agricultural origins on the Anatolian plateau, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 115 (14) E3077-E3086

Collis J. 1996 *Digging Up the Past – an introduction to archaeological excavation*. (Available as a Kindle edition)

During, B 2011 *The prehistory of Asia Minor*. Cambridge University Press

Hodder, I 2007 *The Leopard's Tale*. Thames and Hudson

Sagona, A and Zimansky, P 2009 *Ancient Turkey*. Routledge

RECOMMENDED READINGS

You can find out much more about the project on our website: boncuklu.org

The British Institute at Ankara produces an annual publication detailing the results from its projects. Until 2011 this was called *Anatolian Archaeology*. Now it is called *Heritage Turkey*. The Boncuklu project has an article in each year since 2006.

Baird D 2002 'Early holocene settlement in central Anatolia: problems and prospects as seen from the Konya Plain' in F Gerard and L Thissen eds. *The Neolithic of central Anatolia*, 139-159.

Baird D 2006 The history of settlement and social landscapes in the Early Holocene in the Çatalhöyük area in Hodder I ed. *Çatalhöyük perspectives. Çatalhöyük Project Volume 6*, 55-74. McDonald Institute/British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara Monographs

Baird, D 2007 The Boncuklu Project; the origins of sedentism, cultivation and herding in central Anatolia. *Anatolian Archaeology* Vol 13,14-17

Baird D 2008 The Boncuklu project; investigating the origins of sedentism, cultivation and herding in central Anatolia. *Anatolian Archaeology* Vol 14, 11-13

Baird D 2009 The Boncuklu project; investigating the origins of sedentism, cultivation and herding in central Anatolia. *Anatolian Archaeology* Vol 15, 9-11

Baird D 2010 The Boncuklu Project: investigating the beginnings of agriculture, sedentism and herding in central Anatolia. *Anatolian Archaeology* vol 16 11-13

Baird D 2010 'Was Çatalhöyük a centre; the implications of a late Aceramic Neolithic assemblage from the neighbourhood of Çatalhöyük' in Bolger and Maguire eds in *The Development of Pre-state Communities in the Ancient Near East*. Oxbow books

Baird D, Carruthers D, Fairbairn A, and Pearson 2011 Ritual in the Landscape; evidence from Pınarbaşı in the 7th millennium BC cal Konya Plain. *Antiquity* 85, 1-16.

Baird D *et al* 2013 Juniper smoke, skulls and wolves tails. *Levant*

Hodder I and Meskell, L 'A "Curious and sometimes trifle macabre artistry"' *Current Anthropology* 52/2, 251-2

Lichter C 2007 ed. *Die ältesten Monumente der Menschheit*, 123. Badische Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe. (Some sections in English and good images of Neolithic sites)