

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Belchite, a small city founded by the Romans, was the scene in 1937 of a major battle of the Spanish Civil War. Surrounded by Republican troops and international brigades, including the Lincoln Brigade, the city was defended house by house in intensive battles for two weeks until, finally, the 600 soldiers remaining from the original 3000 defending the town, made an attempt to escape to the Nationalist city of Zaragoza; only 200 troops made it there alive. After retaking the town, Nationalist leader, Franco, prohibited reconstruction, wanting the ruined town to remain as a symbol and monument of the civil war; excursions to the town were compulsory for all Spanish students.



The target of the project on 2023 in the old quarter will be: 1- clearing San Roque street from which the last remaining troops made a desperate attempt to flee, and document in a map all the civil war materials. 2- Research on the origins of Belchite doing test in the medieval quarters. Our project will take place in Calle San Roque, in the heart of the mediaeval town, between the Arab and Jewish quarters.



LOCATION

Belchite is located in the north-east of Spain, in the province of Aragon, 45 minutes from the provincial capital, Zaragoza. The current population of 1500 inhabitants live in the new town, which was built at a distance from the battlefield in 1939 by prisoners of war from the international brigades. The town depends mainly on agriculture for its livelihood.



HOW TO GET THERE

Daily trains and buses depart for Zaragoza from Madrid and Barcelona. From Zaragoza, there is a bus service to Belchite, making ten trips a day, that leaves from the central bus station. A timetable will be supplied.

NB: High speed trains running from Madrid and Barcelona to Zaragoza may be costly. In this case, the bus may be a less expensive option.

DATES

First team 1- 14 July.

Second team 15-28 August.

WORK SCHEDULE

On the first day there will be a guided tour of the ruins of the old city, as an introduction to the project, and on the same day talks will be given on the history of the area, the work schedule for the project and safety guidelines for the works of clearing. Team members will work five days a week, leaving a day free to visit the battlefield and a rest day. Work at the excavation will begin at 7am on weekdays in order to avoid high midday temperatures. In the afternoon, after the lunch break, there will be laboratory tasks and a series of seminars on different aspects of the Spanish Civil War. Between lunch and the laboratory work, team members will have access to the municipal swimming pool. Dinner will be in a local restaurant.



ACCOMODATION

Accommodation and food will be provided in the new village, just a 10-minute walk from the excavation site.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Travel insurance: It is essential to have travel insurance.

Climate and clothing: Due to high temperatures, you will need only summer clothing and you will need to bring sunscreen.

Necessities: If you need to purchase necessities or require medical attention, you will find supermarkets, a pharmacy and a medical centre in Belchite.

FEE

The fee for 15 days of fieldwork is €1000. This includes accommodation, three meals a day, work materials, and various lectures and cultural excursions.

ASSOCIATED INSTITUTIONS

The Spanish Association of Military Archaeology.

BOOKING YOUR PLACE: Contact the director, Alfonso Fanjul. Email. schoolofarchaeology@gmail.com

PROJECT MANAGER . Qualifications include: Doctorate in Archaeology, Autonomous University of Madrid; Degree in Prehistory, University of Salamanca; Degree in History, University of Oviedo; President, Spanish Association of Military Archaeology; Manager, Cuetu Civil War Museum, Lugones, Asturias; Recipient, several cultural research awards; Manager, numerous archaeological excavations relating to the civil war.

Published works of interest include:

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