

ANNUAL REPORT: Spain-Modern Warfare 2018 FIELD SCHOOL

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Excavating the entrance to a tunnel used by Nationalist soldiers to mine Republican positions. Mine warfare was first used systematically in an urban context in Madrid.

This was our second field season excavating the ruins of a nineteenth century asylum that became an advanced military base in Madrid during the Spanish Civil War. The building was demolished immediately after the conflict and is thus an amazing archaeological site: it has preserved in situ the last moments of the war in the city, but also a lot of materials from the previous use of the place as an asylum, an institution about which very little is known. The asylum provides a unique glimpse into the experience of modern warfare in a large European capital—Madrid was the first to witness this new modality of combat. This year we excavated in open area a large portion of one of the main buildings (a canteen before and during the war) and finished the excavation of the late nineteenth-century laundry, which was transformed into an air-raid shelter. Despite its recent date (the asylum was built in 1895-1910 and the Civil War ended in 1939), it is an outstanding site for archaeological training for its stratigraphic depth and the complexity of its architectural history—the building saw many modifications in its 40 years of operation. Students had the opportunity to practice identifying layers, figuring out how they were connected and recording the stratigraphic units using forms, designing Harris matrixes and drawing profiles. This is great training for those who want to become archaeologists, as the lessons learnt will be useful in any site irrespective of age or context. For those who do not, it is a wonderful way of learning about excavation as an intellectual process.

There were three finds that were particularly relevant during this field season:

- We managed to locate what we named “the last trench of the Spanish Civil War”. It was the communication trench used by Republican and Nationalist officers to abandon the

frontline after the former surrendered Madrid on March 28, 1938. It is a place of enormous historical significance that has been utterly forgotten (and was completely invisible before our dig, as it was covered by a garden). The discovery was in the national news for several days.

- We found an intact context of the last day of the war in Madrid. Inside an air raid shelter that was sealed immediately after the conflict we found an occupation floor with hundreds of artefacts: ammunition, unexploded mortar grenades, personal belongings, lamb bones and several empty bottles of cider. These were the remains of the Nationalist celebration of the end of the war. Apart from its historical relevance, it was a great scenario to discuss concepts related to the formation of the archaeological record and archaeological temporality.
- We discovered the entrance to two tunnels used for mine warfare. This was a modality of war that was first employed at a large scale during the First World War, but it was only put to use in an urban context in Madrid. It would be later used in the Second World War, most famously in Stalingrad. The tunnels yielded a lot of war-related materials and provided the opportunity to link the site under excavation with the wider history of twentieth century violence.

As for the dissemination of the results, part of the evidence documented during the three field seasons with IFR has been used in the forthcoming book by the PI, *An archaeology of the contemporary era* (Routledge, 2019), which is the first systematic attempt at describing our present time from an archaeological perspective. A book proposal is about to be submitted to Routledge under the title *The Archaeology of the Spanish Civil War*, in which an entire chapter will be devoted to the excavations undertaken in Madrid with the IFR field school. The book is expected to be finished by mid-2019. As in previous years, we were very active posting information on Facebook, the project's blog and Twitter. This allowed us to reach a wide public (over 43,000 hits to the blog in July). The project was widely covered by the national media (TV, radio) and featured in the major newspapers.

Students participated in all research activities, including excavation and survey, documentation of the remains using total station, GPS, digital photogrammetry and digital recording sheets, and laboratory work. Particular attention was paid to the drawing of finds: two days were devoted to teaching pottery drawing. The students also had the opportunity of being shown complete artefacts, similar to those recovered during fieldwork, and being told about their history and technology by an expert. The diversity of materials found at the site enabled the students to be acquainted with the international matériel of modern warfare—a large part of the finds were First World War surplus—but also with 19th century and early 20th century civilian material culture (including porcelain, whitewares, glass and trinkets).

The students attended lectures by the PI and other members of the project regarding different aspects of the Spanish Civil War and its archaeology. Several trips and visits were organized for the students: a visit to the National Museum of Archaeology, where they were able to learn about Spain's past, from Prehistory to the eighteenth century; a guided tour through key spaces of the war in Madrid, guided by the major expert on the topic, Dr. Almudena Cros; a visit to the Valley of the Fallen, the mausoleum of the former dictator and the last fascist monument in Europe still fulfilling its original role (the visit was guided by the expert Dr. Francisco Ferrándiz); and a visit to the Museum of the Battle of Jarama.