



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

Course ID: ARCH 350B

June 24 - July 22, 2023

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

FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTOR(S)

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OVERVIEW

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 Covid19 circumstances allow. 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 will thus be an opportunity to visit a sample. 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 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 360 hours of experiential education. 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's home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvurkl>.

PREREQUISITES

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 outdoors. The food is cooked by local cooks so if you are fussy about food styles you are not used to, this dig is not for you. 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.

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 and programming prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it still complies with all our standards and policies, including those pertaining to 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 [Travelguard.com](http://travelguard.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.

We do our best to follow a schedule of activities, methods training, and programming as outlined in this syllabus. However, this schedule can be easily disrupted by any number of unforeseen circumstances, including revised decisions by local permitting agencies, political unrest, and changes in the weather. While this schedule represents the best of the director(s) intentions, we—students and staff alike—need to be adaptable and tolerant of necessary alterations. This adaptability is an intrinsic part of all field research. Archaeological work involves physical work outdoors. You should be aware that conditions in the field are different from 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 clothes, 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. Local cooks prepare the food, so make sure you are happy with unfamiliar foods.

In order to attend an archaeological excavation in Turkey you will need a research visa. These are arranged through a permit application by Professor Baird. Before you travel to Turkey you will need to pick up your research visa from a suitable consulate in the USA or elsewhere. This may involve a trip to the consulate or mailing your passport with a secure prepaid return delivery envelope, these arrangements may vary by consulate and you will have to be in touch with your local consulate to check their arrangements. Be aware that this process will take time and some effort on your part, as well as the cost of the research visa.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the program director and staff.

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 in-field post-excavation methods**, including flotation and wet sieving retrieval processing, artifact and ecofact sorting, laboratory analysis,

artifact cataloging, data entry, experimental archaeology and site public engagement and site conservation issues; some small scale excavation in relation to the making ready of a Neolithic building for public display may also be conducted but this is not certain (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 as well as site management issues; and (3) to introduce students to the Neolithic and later archaeology of Anatolia.

The course's primary directive is to enable students to better understand how archaeology and especially post-excavation strategies are 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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students completing this course will have significantly developed understanding of archaeological retrieval processes and the processing of archaeological artifacts and ecofacts, archaeological data logging, experimental archaeology and site management and public engagement issues and thus be able to operate more independently and take on more responsibility in future archaeological post-excavation; 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 teamwork, 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.

ASSESSMENT

Undergraduate Student grading:

- **33% of Grade:** One essay on Anatolian Neolithic archaeology
- **67% of Grade:** participation in in-field post-excavation work, assessed in relation to competence in
 - **Contribution to retrieval processes such as flotation, wet sieving and residue sorting**
 - **Contribution to laboratory work on various artifacts and ecofacts (e.g. lithics, small finds, animal bones and archaeobotanical materials)**
 - **Contribution to team activity**
 - **Contribution to experimental archaeology**
 - **Contribution to site management/site presentation/public engagement activities (which may include small excavation and conservation)**

TRAVEL, ROOM & BOARD, & SAFETY LOGISTICS

COVID-19 Disclaimer:

The logistics outlined below for this IFR field school were written according to the most current and accurate information available to IFR. We recognize that the best practices for preventing the transmission of the coronavirus may change in the coming months. The IFR will be revisiting

program-specific plans periodically throughout the enrollment period and will update program details according to new developments, new travel protocols, and updates to local policies. Updates to program-specific protocols will be communicated to participants at the pre-program orientation.

An IFR field school is designed to provide safe, positive, and constructive experiences for participating communities, students, and researchers. We are committed to protocols and practices that support the health and well-being of all involved in our field school projects, including the members of the community in which these projects take place. The IFR COVID-19 Policies have been developed with Dr. Kurt Eifling, the IFR Medical Director. Dr Eifling is a Fellow of the Academy of Wilderness Medicine and a practicing physician (<https://ifrglobal.org/about/staff/>).

We strongly recommend reviewing IFR's COVID-19 policies before enrolling in a program. All IFR students sign an agreement (Student COVID-19 Prevention Agreement) to uphold and abide by all aspects of the IFR COVID-19 policy as published on the website (<https://ifrglobal.org/ifr-covid-19-practices/>) as well as any program-specific protocols. These practices are subject to change as health and risk management experts provide new recommendations and best practices.

PRIOR TO TRAVEL

IFR requires all students participating in IFR programs to be “up to date” with their COVID-19 vaccines, meaning they have completed a COVID-19 vaccine primary series AND received the most recent booster dose recommended by CDC, if eligible. For recommendations and eligibility for booster shots according to age and health status, please consult the [CDC website](#).

VISA REQUIREMENTS

All personnel 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 the Project Director – and all documents will be submitted as a group for approval to relevant Turkish authorities. This will result in the issuing of a research visa. Once the permit is issued in late May-early June these will be collected from a Turkish consulate, 1 of 6 in the USA or other country. Each consulate has its own practices so students will need to contact your preferred consulate to arrange collection either by person or by mail, partly depending on local arrangements. This will require prompt action by students under guidance from Professor Baird. Consult with Professor Baird about which consulate would work for you.

Citizens of other countries are asked to check the embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

Due to ongoing uncertainties regarding the travel regulations related to COVID-19, IFR will assess the local conditions closer to the travel date (5–6 weeks prior to the program beginning) and will make Go/No Go decisions then. You are required to participate in the mandatory orientation meeting when we

will discuss the latest travel information and regulations. We also suggest you consider postponing the purchase of your airline ticket until *after* the program orientation.

- Students are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, once the timing of permit issued 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 your 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 24 June. This field school ends on the afternoon of July 22. Students should prepare for onward travel or return home on July 23.
- **PLEASE NOTE: DO NOT BOOK FLIGHTS UNTIL INSTRUCTED BY THE FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTOR. 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 personnel 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.
- You may be asked by your airline to provide personal information regarding COVID-19 that may be shared with the Ministry of Health and third countries when necessary. Anyone who knowingly provides false information may be prevented from traveling.
- **Passport validity**
- The Turkish government requires that your passport should be valid for at least 6 months from the date you enter Turkey and that there is a full blank page for the entry and exit stamps.
- **Flights:**
- The closest city to the site is Konya. There is an international airport at Konya although most flights route through Istanbul. Flying to Konya is easiest and Professor Baird will meet IFR students at that airport. Alternatively, one can fly to Istanbul and travel by high-speed train (4 hours) from Istanbul to Konya, although these trains book up quickly. Professor Baird will also meet people at the train station in Konya if required. You will be driven from the collection point to the site in the dig vehicle.
- If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text or email the field school director immediately. A local emergency mobile phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.
- The dig house complex is located immediately next to the site, so no additional travel arrangements are required in this regard.
- Trips relating to the field school programme, for example to other archaeological sites, will be carefully managed in regard to Covid 19 circumstances, especially at the sites we might visit.

- **LOCAL PROTOCOLS, REGULATIONS, & EXPECTATIONS**

- **Local community:**

- The site and dig house are located next to a small Turkish village, although we are based within our own self-contained compound. We have good relations with the village community and respect local sensibilities and traditions, dressing appropriately in that regard (guidelines will be issued preceding the excavation).

- Normally the excavation has many visitors from local communities as well as Turkish and foreign tourists.

- **Public spaces and services**

- Smoking in open areas (streets, avenues and other open public areas) is banned.

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

Interaction with the local community must be limited to situations where everyone is masked when indoors and/or can ideally be outside.

ACCOMMODATION

Students will spend 4 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 part of the 4 weeks will be spent in the field in post-excavation activities and analyses at Boncuklu including laboratory training, experimental archaeology and site presentations as well. The dig house has good communal facilities with a kitchen, several showers and toilets, washing machines, 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 and 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.

IFR students will occupy well ventilated shared rooms in the dig house complex and large well ventilated tents. Single occupancy isolated sleep spaces can be made available if Covid-19 related circumstances require this.

There are toilets and showers within the dig house complex adjacent to the sleeping rooms and tents. The project has machines for laundry and the laundry service is organized centrally. Maximum occupancy limits will be set on these facilities and suitable spacing guidelines established for users respecting 2m distances if required by Covid19.

Rooms and wash/toilet as well as other dig house facilities, including kitchen (which is in its own separate building), will be cleaned regularly by a cleaner hired by the project. Depending on Covid19 circumstances this cleaning utilizes disinfectants and other Covid19 related protocols (as advised by University of Liverpool which is engaged in much cutting edge Covid19 related research).

If necessary people will be well spaced in the well-ventilated labs in pods when using lab space. We have a large outdoor roofed work space, but with open sides, in which the well separated pods can work on material processing. Similarly covered but open sided work areas for flotation and sieving well removed from other work areas can be operated by pods.

If necessary depending on Covid19 circumstances materials that might be contaminated by Covid19 will be kept isolated until they can be safely disposed of. Up to date advice will be sought on this aspect before the field season.

If necessary due to Covid 19 all participants in a field school, students and staff, will wear masks while indoors (i.e. during lectures, during labs, in shared residential spaces, etc.).

Regular hand washing will be a part of the project's daily schedule.

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There is a large open air, but roofed, dining area which can seat several pods respecting Covid19 related distance requirements. Prepared food will be served in shifts to allow Covid 19 distancing requirements. The cooks will be regularly tested, masked and gloved and use disinfected space and utensils and remain socially distant from the team.

MANAGING COVID-19 CASES & OUTBREAKS

Anyone with Covi-19 symptoms will need to be isolated in dedicated rooms on site. Their laundry will be isolated separately and after the suitable time period laundered according to Covid-19 protocols. They will have separated toilet/shower facilities subject to regular deep clean. Likewise meals will be supplied and their utensils subject to isolation and deep cleaning. Testing will be provided through local health services.

High quality hospital and ICU facilities are available in Konya c. 40 minutes drive away. Ambulance services are available in the village, but in emergency the ambulances equipped with higher quality paramedical equipment would come from Konya. If advised by the local health services the dig vehicle could also transport medical cases to Konya. Any health situation in regard to Covid-19 on the excavation will be communicated to the local municipality and Konya health teams. The government representative who works on the project will also implement relevant Ministry of Culture protocols pertaining to Covid-19, which we anticipate will be updated in summer 2023.

The project will continue after the IFR field school so if an IFR student needs to stay and isolate longer this will be possible.

EQUIPMENT LIST

What to bring checklist

We supply bedding and facilities for clothes washing, as well as work equipment, but you should bring or obtain the following before you come to site (the items marked * can easily be obtained in Turkey; those marked ^ are not easily available, unavailable for larger/taller people or surprisingly

expensive in Turkey and should be brought with you). Note that there are more specific notes on some of these items elsewhere in this guide.

- Towel*
- Toiletries* in a bag that can be hung in the showers while you wash
- Sheet sleeping bag if using communal sheets creeps you out
- Flip-flops for use in shower, bathroom and around the dig house
- A minimum of 2 changes of work clothing (light, strong and covering arms and legs)^
- Work shoes (desert boots or similar – no or very light tread)^
- Wide brimmed hat^
- Sunblock^
- Water bottle*
- Torch and replacement batteries
- Small rucksack or bag to take gear to site
- Entertainment: books, cards, tablet/i-devices
- Stationery for personal use (notebook, pens etc)
- Personal medication (many medications are available in Turkey but bring specific medicines)
- Insect repellent
- Rehydration salts – e.g. UK Dioralyte.
- Diarrhea relief tablets e.g. Imodium etc.
- Currency and/or cash cards plus a credit card

COURSE SCHEDULE

All IFR field schools begin with safety orientation. This orientation addresses local and program protocols concerning student behavior, appropriate attire, local practices and sensibilities that may be unfamiliar, potential fauna and flora hazards, IFR harassment and discrimination policies, and the student Code of Conduct.

PROGRAM

Flotation, sieving and residue sorting: participation in retrieval processes for archaeobotanical, zooarchaeological and other finds.

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

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

Experimental archaeology.: we have a program of experimental archaeology relating to our Neolithic reconstruction buildings and related work areas.

Site presentation activities: we are constructing a shelter and preparing a Neolithic building to be put on permanent view. Our visitor areas will be equipped with signage. We will liaise with local schools. Students will be able to participate in some of these public engagement/presentation preparation activities.

EXCURSIONS

Three types of excursions are planned within the course: (1) an extended visit to the nearby site of Çatalhöyük; (2) a day trip to Cappadocia visiting Neolithic sites and the famous Byzantine rock cut churches (3) visits to local Byzantine and Hittite sites.

SCHEDULE

Week 1:

- Day1: Collection and settling in and initial orientation.
- Day 2: Morning: Lecture: The Neolithic of the Near East and origins of agriculture
Afternoon: Lecture: The Neolithic of Turkey
- Day 3: Morning: Boncuklu lecture
Afternoon: Çatalhöyük lecture

NB, depending on numbers these may become evening lectures instead.

Following days: trip to Çatal and Hittite sites

Weeks 1-4: Post excavation and related work at Boncuklu. Daily program: 7-9.30 am, 10 am -1 pm, 3.00-6 pm. Students will rotate between retrieval, sorting, sampling, laboratory work, in lab training opportunities, experimental work, site presentation work and data entry.

On one of the long weekends : Trip to Cappadocia, visiting Neolithic sites under excavation and Byzantine underground cities.

REQUIRED READINGS

PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students via a shared Dropbox folder. Students are encouraged to download and/or print readings prior to traveling. Course participants are expected to be prepared to engage the discussions led by facilitators, all of whom will be looking for compelling evidence that students have read and thought about the assigned readings prior to the scheduled day on which they are first discussed.

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

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 Ozdoğan 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.

D. 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

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 had 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)