

THE BIRTH OF EUROPE: EXCAVATIONS AT THE NEOLITHIC SETTLEMENT OF ILINDENTSI, BULGARIA

Course ID: ARCH XL159

June 10–July 8, 2017

DIRECTORS:

Dr. Małgorzata Grębska-Kulova, Curator and research fellow at the Department of Archaeology, Blagoevgrad Regional Museum of History; Visiting professor at South West University, Bulgaria; Balkan Heritage Foundation affiliate (grembskamal@gmail.com);

Mr. Petar Zidarov, PhD candidate in Archaeology, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Germany; Visiting professor at the Department of Archaeology and Center for Vocational and Continuing Education and Research assistant at the Lab of Archaeometry and Experimental Archaeology, New Bulgarian University, Sofia; Balkan Heritage Foundation affiliate.



INTRODUCTION

During the seventh millennium BCE, the Balkan Peninsula was a gateway through which farming, animal husbandry and generally Neolithisation spread from Anatolia and the Near East to Europe. Central parts of the Balkans (including the Struma River Valley) were among the most important migration routes during that period. Among the six Early Neolithic settlements mapped in the small Middle Struma Valley is the site of Ilindentsi. The site is located on a high terrace at 250-253 m above sea-level just at the foot of the Pirin Mountains - the third-highest mountain range on the Balkans. The site – with vertical and horizontal stratigraphy – covers an area of almost three hectares, where the prehistoric cultural layer lies immediately under the top soil (10 to 20 cm). During previous seasons (2004-2009 and 2011-2016) archaeologists unearthed remains of Early and Middle Neolithic (6000 – 5500 BCE) settlement structures and features. Among them are several dwellings, one with stone foundations, another with elaborate floor construction and under-floor drainage systems. A third structure is completely burnt with well preserved *in situ* "kitchen-space" including an oven, grain-storage pit and a Neolithic grave of a new-born baby. The settlement was protected by a clay coated stone wall and a ditch in the central area and by a wooden palisade along its southern border.

Magnetic gradiometer map of the site shows two anomalies in the southern and northern parts. Excavations in 2011-2016 revealed a system of concentric trenches around the Neolithic ditch (their

purpose remains unclear) and a Neolithic well structure in the South. The cultural layer was rich with artifacts dated to the first half of 6th millennium BCE.

Although the possibility for acculturation of indigenous population cannot be completely disregarded at this stage, archaeologists assume that the Neolithic settlement at Ilindentsi was established by people of Anatolian origin (culture Hacilar VI-I), who also established the earliest and the largest Early Neolithic settlement near modern Kovachevo in the Valley. These migration patterns trace the routes of European Neolithisation and indicate multiple origins. Early farmers likely entered Europe due to complex and varied reasons: increased population, limited environmental resources, climate change etc.

Research at Ilindentsi aims to address these questions by investigating more nuanced patterns in the archaeological record. Our goal is not only to explore migration routes and reasons for European Neolithisation but also the type and history of interactions between different Neolithic groups and farming communities in the Balkans, their technology, economic and social organization. More site-specific questions concern the continuity/discontinuity of habitation, borders of the settlement through time and the function and the range of fortifications. In 2017, field school students will take part in further excavation of two Neolithic buildings (one of them keeps remains of stone-wall foundations, a rare example of stone architecture in the Neolithic Balkans).

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 12 quarter credit units (equivalent to 8 semester units) through our academic partner, UCLA Extension. UCLA is a top ranked research university and its archaeology program is ranked amongst the best in the country. All IFR field schools instructors and curricula are approved both by the corresponding academic department and the Academic Senate at UCLA. This field school provides a minimum of 192 direct instructional hours.

Transcripts: Transcripts are available through UCLA UnEX and instructions for ordering transcripts may be found at <http://bit.ly/2bD0Z3E>. Grades will be posted and transcript available usually within six weeks after the end of this field school. All IFR field schools are designated XL classes – courses that are equivalent to undergraduate courses offered by the UCLA regular session. All XL courses are transferable for unit and subject credit toward the Bachelor's Degree at all campuses of the UC and CSU systems. Classes numbered 100 to 199 are considered upper division (junior/senior). For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/2bjAqmy>.

UCLA students: Students can take classes through UCLA Extension to complete requirements. However certain considerations must be taken into account. For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/2bJWeHK>.

Credit Units Transfer: Most universities accept UCLA credit units – there are very few exceptions. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss the transferability of the credit units with school officials BEFORE attending the field school.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To introduce students to:

- Field archaeology and finds processing methods considering the specifics of excavating a Neolithic settlement;
- The archaeology of the Neolithic period in the Balkans with focus on Neolithic pottery and tools;
- GIS and its application in archaeology;
- Finds processing and documentation procedures: cleaning, sorting, labeling, documenting, and storing archaeological finds, flotation and processing soil samples as well as study and recording of Neolithic pottery, etc.;
- Contemporary standards of work on an archaeological site;

- Health and safety requirements at an archaeological site.

To prepare students to perform:

- Basic excavation tasks: to use proper excavation tools and techniques, follow excavation procedures, recognize artifacts and ecofacts, and distinguish archaeological contexts during involvement in excavation activities;
- Basic field documentation tasks during an ongoing excavation project: the use of measuring and documentation tools, creating a written, graphic and photographic record.

DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Archaeological field work involves physical work in the outdoors. You should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those you experience at home or around your dorms or college town. Note that a southern European (subtropical) climate dominates in the region, making summers hot (30-40 C). Rainy and chilly days in this season are rare but not unheard-of.

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

COURSE SCHEDULE

The Field School schedule consists of four modules:

MODULE I - Theoretical module (app. 25 hours). Consists of three components:

Lectures and instructions about the field methods and practices;

Lectures about different aspects of the archaeology of Ilindentsi and the settlement context;

Lectures about the history and archaeology of the Balkans, Bulgaria and the visited sites.

MODULE II – Practicum (app. 155 hours). Consists of two components:

- Field work including basic practices of excavation and archaeological records;
- Workshops dedicated to primary archaeological finds processing and documentation.

MODULE III – Excursions accompanied by lectures, presentations and behind the scene visit to sites of historical/archaeological significance such as the medieval town of Melnik and Rozhen Monastery, the Blagoevgrad Regional Museum of History, (UNESCO World Heritage Site) and Sandanski - a popular SPA resort, keeping archaeological remains from the Late Antiquity (app. 15 hours).

MODULE IV – Homework (app. 10 hours) will be assigned to all students, which will consist of editing and processing of students' field documentation (field journal, context sheets, drawings, photos, etc.), preparing of presentations and reports.

Date	Morning	Afternoon
Day 1 10 June		4.00 pm - pick-up from Sofia airport. Arrival at the guest house. Traditional Bulgarian welcome dinner.
Day 2 11 June	Orientation	Lectures: Emergence of Early Farming in the Near East and Europe: Causes and Consequence; The Early Neolithic Site at Ilindentsi and Its Geographic and Cultural Environment;
Day 3 12 June	Field work Instructions:	Lecture: From the Field to the Storage: Review of Basic Methods for Uncovering, "First Aid", Consolidation in Situ, Cleaning, Sorting,

	<p>Hygiene, health and safety at the site.</p> <p>Basic Field Methods and Practices for Excavation and Documentation.</p> <p>Use of Tools and Working Techniques.</p>	<p>Labeling, Documenting and Storing Ceramic Artifacts;</p> <p>Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation</p>
<p>Day 4</p> <p>13 June</p>	<p>Field work</p> <p>Instruction: Introduction to the Field Journal; Contextual Sheets, Log Book and Other Forms</p>	<p>Lecture: Early Neolithic Pottery in Southwestern Bulgaria – Part 1</p> <p>Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation</p>
<p>Day 5</p> <p>14 June</p>	<p>Field work</p> <p>Instruction: Three Dimensional Positioning of Finds, Features and Structures. How to Use a Total Station?</p>	<p>Lecture: Early Neolithic Pottery in Southwestern Bulgaria – Part 2</p> <p>Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation</p>
<p>Day 6</p> <p>15 June</p>	<p>Field work</p> <p>Instruction: Stratigraphy: Horizontal and Vertical</p>	<p>Lecture: Dating Methods for Prehistoric Sites</p> <p>Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation</p>
<p>Day 7</p> <p>16 June</p>	<p>Excursion: Visit to the Rozhen Monastery and the medieval town of Melnik: sightseeing and optional wine-tasting.</p>	
<p>Day 8</p> <p>17 June</p>	<p>Day-off</p>	
<p>Day 9</p> <p>18 June</p>	<p>Field work</p> <p>Instruction: How to Draw a Ground-plan/elevation-plan/Cross-section Using Scale</p>	<p>Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation</p>
<p>Day 10</p> <p>19 June</p>	<p>Field work</p> <p>Instruction: Photography for Archaeologists</p>	<p>Lecture: Field Reconnaissance Survey. Geophysical (Electrical and Magnetic) Methods in Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey</p> <p>Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation</p>
<p>Day 11</p> <p>20 June</p>	<p>Field work</p> <p>Instruction: Excavations Preparation. Preliminary Indoor Research</p>	<p>Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation</p>
<p>Day 12</p> <p>21 June</p>	<p>Field work</p> <p>Instruction: Excavation completion. Post excavation work and analyses</p>	<p>Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation</p>
<p>Day 13</p> <p>22 June</p>	<p>Field work</p>	<p>Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation</p>

Day 14 23 June	Field work	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
Day 15-16 24-25 June	Tour to Philippi (UNESCO World Heritage Site) and Kavala, Greece.	
Day 17 26 June	Field work	Lecture: Technology of Production of Stone and Bone Tools during the Neolithic Period in Europe
Day 18 27 June	Field work	Workshop: Artifact Recording and Illustration: Prehistoric Pottery
Day 19 28 June	Field work	Lecture: Introduction to the Neolithic Ceramic Studies Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
Day 20 29 June	Field work	Workshop on Neolithic Ceramic Studies Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
Day 21 30 June	Field work	Workshop on Neolithic Ceramic Studies Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
Day 22 1 July	Excursion: Visit to the Rila Monastery (UNESCO World Heritage Site) and the Regional Museum of History in Blagoevgrad	
Day 23 2 July	Excursion: Tour of Sandanski	Free time
Day 24 3 July	Field work	Lecture: GIS and Its Application in Archaeology Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
Day 25 4 July	Field work	Lecture: Raw Materials and Diagnostic Features in Diachronic Perspective Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
Day 26 5 July	Field work	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
Day 27 6 July	Field work	Lecture: Standards in Archaeological Reports And Publications Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
Day 28 7 July	Field work	Presentation of the Excavation's results. Evaluation meeting & Exam. Dinner and farewell party
Day 29 8 July	Departure. Check-out by noon	

Course structure may be subject to change upon directors' discretion.

A typical work day

6.00-6.20 am	Breakfast
6.20-6.35 am	Walk to the site
6.35 am-1.00 pm	Fieldwork, including a 30 min break* and a lecture on field archaeology's methods and practices (at the site)
1.00-1.15 pm	Walk to the guest-house
1.15-4.00/4.30 pm	Lunch and siesta
4.00/4.30 -7.30 pm	Lectures/Workshops/ Finds processing
7.30-8.30 pm	Dinner

In case of rainy days, lectures and/or lab work will be performed.

GRADING MATRIX

% of Grade	Activity
20 %	Exam
10 %	Excavation (use of tools, digging, scraping, brushing, cleaning, sieving, etc.)
10 %	Field journal and context sheets/labels
10 %	Leveling, measuring and scale-drawing (ground plan/ cross section/ specific archaeological structure or feature);
10 %	Photography
10 %	Finds processing: washing and sorting, labeling and registration
10 %	Artifact drawing (pottery)
10 %	Statistic forms
10%	Flotation and processing of flotation samples.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

The required minimum attendance for the successful completion of the field school is 85% of the course hours. Any significant tardy or early departure from an activity will be calculated as an absence from the activity. An acceptable number of absences for which a medical or reasonable excuse is provided will not be taken into account if the student catches up on the field school study plan through additional readings or personal consultations and tutorials with program staff members.

PREREQUISITES

None. 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 understanding that this will not be the typical university learning environment. You will have to work outdoors and will get sweaty and tired. Students are required to come equipped with sufficient excitement and adequate understanding that archaeology requires real, hard work, in the sun and wind, on your feet, and with your trowel. The work requires patience, discipline and attention to detail.

The field school at Ilindentsi will host students and professionals of archaeology from all over the World. With such an international team it is vital that all students respect the IFR code of conduct, each other's cultures, and local social and cultural rules and laws.

EQUIPMENT LIST

- Work shoes (preferably closed shoes like sneakers or running shoes)
- An additional set of walking and hiking shoes.

- Clothing suitable for outdoor activities (consider weather conditions from hot and sunny to rainy and chilly).
- Wide brim hat for field work.
- A light raincoat for possible rainy and windy days is recommended.
- Medication - It is not necessary to bring over-the-counter medicine from your country since you can buy all common types in Bulgaria (e.g. aspirin and anti-insecticides, sunscreen/tanning lotion, etc). It is recommended, however, that you bring any individual prescription medicines.
- Don't forget to bring a converter to EU type electricity wall-plug if needed.
- A good attitude for work, fun, study, and discoveries.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation: In the Blagovesta Guest-house (www.blagovestaguesthouse.com), Ilindentsi, Bulgaria in comfortable rooms with 2 to 3 beds, bathrooms with a WC, shower, air-conditioning, and TV. Laundry service and free Wi-Fi is provided. Students are not expected to bring any additional equipment, sleeping bags or towels.

The village and the site: Ilindentsi is a small village – there are a couple of basic food & beverage shops, bars & taverns, a winery, a Christian Orthodox church and an art-center with a sculpture park. The closest supermarket, drug-store, pharmacy, bank with ATM and medical office are in the municipal center Strumyani, 3 km away from Ilindentsi.

The excavation site is situated about 1 km away from Blagovesta guesthouse. Participants will be expected to walk to the site and back to the guest house during the work days. The walk takes approximately 15 minutes. All site trenches are protected from the sun by sheds. The site has no running water or electricity nearby but there is a field latrine.

Meals: Three meals (Balkan cuisine) per day are provided. Meals usually take place in the guest-house garden. Brown-bag-lunches will be provided during excursions and days-off. This field school can accommodate vegetarians, vegans and individuals with lactose-intolerance. Kosher and gluten-free restrictions are impossible to accommodate in this location.

Students must pay on their own for extra days and for single room accommodation as well as for extra meals, beverages, services and products!

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT/TIME

Students should arrive on June 10 at 4:00 to the **OK Taxi desk** (Balkan Heritage Foundation Travel partner) in the Sofia International Airport Terminal 2 arrival area. From there, students will be assigned a taxi/shuttle and will taken to Ilindentsi. The trip takes app. 2.5-3 hrs., but that time highly depends on traffic. It is recommended that students exchange/withdraw up to 20 Bulgarian lev (app. 11 USD), buy a bottle of water, and visit the restroom before the trip. The taxi/shuttle can stop for a short break at a gas station on the way to Ilindentsi.

If you missed your connection or your flight was delayed/canceled, call, text or email the project staff (email: bhfs.admissions@gmail.com). Local contact information will be provided to enrolled students.

Students are able to get general information, essential travel basics, and tips concerning the project location and the country at the BHF website (www.bhfieldschool.org) (**for Bulgaria**) and www.bhfieldschool.org/project/BEBGexc (**for the project / see the map on the bottom of project web site**). All students will receive a travel info-sheet with specific travel details prior to departure.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Citizens of EU, EEA, USA, Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand **do not need a visa** to visit Bulgaria for up to 90 days. Citizens of all other countries may need a visa. The Balkan

Heritage Foundation can send an official invitation letter that should be used at the relevant embassy to secure a visa to the program.

For more information visit the Balkan Heritage Foundation web site at <http://www.bhfieldschool.org/information/visa-help> and the links provided there.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Safety and health orientation will take place at the beginning of the program. Ilindentsi is a small Bulgarian village but the municipal center of Strumyani (3 km away) offers first aid medical care and a pharmacy. The closest town with a hospital is Sandanski – 15 km away.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Bulgarian dialing code: +359

Time Difference (Summer time): UTC/GMT +2 hours (March through October).

Measure units: degree Celsius (°C), meter (m.), gram (gr.), liter (l)

Money/Banks/Credit Cards: The Bulgarian currency is the Bulgarian LEV (BGN). You cannot pay in Euros or other foreign currency, except in casinos and big hotels (where the exchange rate is really unfair)! Since 1997, the Bulgarian LEV has been pegged to the EURO at the exchange rate of 1 euro = 1.955 lev (usually sold for 1.94 lev). Bulgarian banks accept all credit cards and sometimes travellers' cheques. Usually banks open at 8.30-9.00 am and close at 5.00-6.00 pm. They work from Monday to Friday. Shopping malls, supermarkets, and many shops in Sofia and/or bigger towns and resorts will also accept credit cards. This is not valid for smaller "domestic" shops throughout the country where the only way of payment is cash! You can see Bulgarian notes and coins in circulation at:

<http://www.bnb.bg/NotesAndCoins/NACNotesCurrency/index.htm?toLang= EN>

Exchange of foreign currencies is possible not only at banks but also at numerous exchange offices. NB, Most of them don't collect a commission fee and have acceptable exchange rates (+/- 0.5-1,5% of the official rate) However, those located in shopping areas of big cities, resorts, railway stations, airports, etc., can overcharge you varying amounts. Ask in advance how much money you will get!

ATMs are available all over the country and POS-terminals are in every bank office.

If you plan to use your credit/debit card in Bulgaria, please inform your bank of your intention before departure! Otherwise it is very possible that your bank will block your account/ card for security reasons when you try to use it abroad! Unblocking your card, when abroad, may cost you several phone calls and a lot of money.

Electricity

The electricity power in the country is stable at 220 - Volts A.C. (50 Hertz). Don't forget to bring a voltage converter, if necessary!



Outlets in Bulgaria generally accept 1 type of plug: two round pins. If your appliance's plug has a different shape, you will need a plug adapter.

Emergency

National emergency number is 112.

REQUIRED READINGS

Boyadzhiev, Y. *Early Neolithic Cultures on the Territory of Bulgaria.* – In: I. Gatsov, Y. Boyadzhiev (eds.). *The first Neolithic Sites in Central/South-East European Transcet, vol. I. Early Neolithic Sites on the Territory of Bulgaria.* BAR International Series 2048, 2009, 7-43.

Bojadžiev, J. *Absolute Chronology of the Neolithic and Eneolithic Cultures in the Valley of Struma.*- In: H. Todorova, M. Stefanovich. G. Ivanov (eds.). *The Struma/Strymon River Valley in Prehistory. In the Steps of James Harvey Gaul, 2.* Sofia,2007, 309-316.

Grant J., S. Gorin and N. Fleming. *The Archaeology Coursebook: an introduction to themes, sites, methods and skills.* Routledge. 2008

Grębska-Kulova, M. and I. Kulov. *Prehistorical Sites in the Middle Struma River Valley between the End of the VIIth mill. BC and the beginning of the Ist Mill. BC.*- In: H. Todorova, M. Stefanovich. G. Ivanov (eds.). *The Struma/Strymon River Valley in Prehistory. In the Steps of James Harvey Gaul, 2.* Sofia,2007, 279-296.

Lichardus-Itten, M. and J.-P. Demoule, L. Perničeva, M. Grebska-Kulova, I. Kulov. *The site of Kovacevo and the Beginnings of the Neolithic period in Southwestern Bulgaria. The French-Bulgarian excavations 1986-2000.* – In: *Beiträge zu Jungsteinzeitlichen Forschungen in Bulgarien.* Eds. M. Lichardus-Itten, J. Lichardus, V. Nikolov. Bonn, 2002, 99-158.

Nikolov, D. *Periodization of the Neolithic along the Struma Valley.* In: *Academia Litterarum Bulgarica.. Thracia XV. In honorem annorum LXX Aleksandri Fol. Serdicae, MMIII,* 99-106.

Pernicheva, L. *Prehistoric Cultures in the Middle Struma Valley: Neolithic and Eneolithic* - In: *Prehistoric Bulgaria. Monographs in World Archaeology No 22.* Edited by D. Bailey, I. Panayotov, pp. 99-147. Madison Wisconsin 1995

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Čochadžiev, S. and V. Genadieva. *Contribution to the Study of the Early Neolithic Age in the Struma River Basin.* - In: M. Stefanovič, H. Todorova, H. Hauptmann (Hrsg.). *James Harvey Gaul in Memoriam 1.* Sofia, 1998, 79-89.

Gimbutas, M. *Neolithic Macedonia. As reflected by Excavation at Anza, Southeast Yugoslavia.* *Monumenta Archeologica 1.* Los Angeles, 1976.

Gurova, M. Bonsall, C. *Lithic studies an alternative approach to Neolithization.* – *Bulgarian e-Journal of Archaeology,* vol. 4, 2014, 104-135.

Malamidou, D. and D. Kryoneri. *A Neolithic and Early Bronze Settlement in the Lower Strymon Valley.*- In: H. Todorova, Stefanovich, M. and G. Ivanov (eds.). *The Struma/Strymon River Valley in Prehistory. In the Steps of James Harvey Gaul, 2.* Sofia,2007, 297-308.

McIntosh, J. *Handbook to Life in Prehistoric Europe.* New York, 2006

Mitreviski, D. *Prehistory in Republic of Macedonia-F.Y.R.O.M.* – In: D. Grammenos (ed.). *Recent Research in the Prehistory of the Balkans.* Thessaloniki, 2003, 13-72.

Perlès, C. *The Early Neolithic in Greece. The first farming communities in Europe.* Cambridge, 2001.

Perničeva, L. *Prehistory of the Strumešnica valley* - In: Śliwa J., Domaradzki, M., (eds.). *The lower Strumešnica Valley in prehistoric, ancient and early medieval times.* Kraków, 1983, 11-34.

Perničeva, L. and I. Kulov, M. Grebska-Kulova. *Early Neolithic House from Bălgarčevo, Blagoevgrad Region (SW Bulgaria).* – *Archeologia Bulgarica,* 2000, 3, 1-10

Weninger, B. and E. Alram-Stern, E. Bauer, L. Clare, U. Danzeglocke, O. Jöris, C. Kubatzki, G. Rollefson, H. Todorova, T. van Andel. *Abrupt Climate Forcing Observed at Early Neolithic Sites in South-East Europe and the Near East.* – In: *The Struma River Valley in Prehistory.* H. Todorova, M. Stefanovich, G. Ivanov (eds.), Sofia 2007, 7-28.