



SEEKING EUROPE'S FIRST CIVILIZATION: TELL YUNATSITE, BULGARIA

Course ID: ARCH XL159

June 24 - July 22, 2017

DIRECTORS:

Asst. Prof. Kamen Boyadzhiev, Archaeologist and Head of the Exhibitions' Department at the National Institute of Archaeology and Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; Dig Co-director; Balkan Heritage Foundation affiliate. balkanheritage@gmail.com

Ass. Prof. Yavor Boyadzhiev, Archaeologist and Associated Professor at the National Institute of Archaeology and Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; Dig Co-director; Balkan Heritage Foundation affiliate.



INTRODUCTION

Tell Yunatsite is located near the modern village of Yunatsite in Southern Bulgaria. It is among the biggest tells in Europe with a diameter of approximately 110 m/360 ft and height of 12 m/39 ft above the modern surface. Tell Yunatsite was first excavated in 1939 by the Bulgarian archaeologist Vasil Mikov. In 1976, regular excavations were carried out on an annual basis. Since then, research at Tell Yunatsite has grown into an important research program under the National Institute of Archaeology and Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. At times, Greek and Soviet archaeologists joined research at the site and today this is an international research effort directed by Bulgarian scholars. The field school will be held for fifth year and is a joint cooperation between Balkan Heritage Foundation (BHF), the Regional Museum of History in Pazardzhik, the Tell Yunatsite Excavation Team from the National Institute of Archaeology and Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Institute for Field Research.

To date, approximately one third of the tell has been excavated. This work yielded rich collections of archaeological materials, and the sterile soil has not yet been reached. There is a medieval cemetery at the top of the Tell, followed by a Roman period level, two Iron Age levels, another dated to the Early Bronze Age, and finally a Chalcolithic layer. It is unknown if the cultural history of the tell begins in the Chalcolithic period or whether older human occupation layers exist.

The archaeological field school takes place at the Tell Yunatsite lowest excavated layer, which corresponds to the time of Europe's first prehistoric civilization in the fifth millennium BCE. The study of these very first complex societies in Europe began 40 years ago with the excavation of the Varna Copper Age necropolis. That excavation was the first to demonstrate the rise of social complexity in the region. It is during this time that metal processing became wide spread and it is the earliest dates for such transformative technological innovation. Data suggest that it is the world's earliest mass production of both copper and gold (the world's oldest gold treasure was found in the Varna [Copper age necropolis](#)), the first urban settlements in Europe, distinct social and political stratification, and pictograms and characters interpreted by some scholars as the world's oldest script (as on the Gradeshnitsa tablet, for instance). The area of this civilization stretches from Anatolia across the Balkans to the Carpathian basin and the steppes of Eastern Europe. It collapsed around the end of the fifth millennium BCE under the pressure of drastic social and demographic changes, which were presumably caused mainly by climate change but were exacerbated by foreign invasions.

Recent excavations at Tell Yunatsite indicate that the Chalcolithic period settlement covered an area far larger than the tell itself and consisted of uptown (acropolis?) and a downtown distinct. The uptown section was surrounded by a five meter wide clay wall and a broad and deep ditch. Buildings at this part were placed closed to each other, creating an almost unbroken urban fabric. The Chalcolithic settlement experienced a violent event at *ca.* 4,200-4,100 BCE. Evidence suggests deliberate destruction by outsiders. Many skeletons of children, elderly men, and women were found scattered on floors, suggesting a massive massacre. Those who survived returned and resettled at the Tell, but soon even they left. At that point, Tell Yunatsite and the area around it were abandoned for more than 1,000 years. During this time, a sterile layer accumulated over the last Chalcolithic layer.

This field school provides a unique glimpse into the transition between the **Copper Age and the Bronze Age** in European and Mediterranean prehistory. In 2017, field school students will take part in further excavation of burned Copper Age buildings. Archaeologists and students will seek together the answers of the following questions: why and how did one of the earliest protourban centers in Europe emerge in the beginning of the fifth millennium BCE, and what are the reasons that caused its devastation 800 years later?

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 tell;
- The archaeology of the Chalcolithic period in the Balkans and prehistoric warfare and weapons;
- Finds processing and documentation procedures: cleaning, sorting, labeling, documenting, and storing archaeological finds, flotation and processing soil samples as well as documentation (including technical drawing and photography) of prehistoric (Copper and Bronze Age) tools and weapons, etc.;
- Contemporary standards of work on an archaeological site, including 3D intra-site modeling and documentation and GIS spatial analysis in archaeology;
- 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 (30-40⁰C). 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. Consists of app. 25 hours of lectures.

MODULE II – Practicum (app. 145 hours). Consists of two components:

1. Field work, including the basic practices of excavation and archaeological records;
2. Workshops dedicated to primary archaeological finds processing and documentation.

MODULE III - Excursions accompanied by lectures, presentations and behind-the-scenes visits to sites of historical/archaeological significance (app. 15 hours), such as the Regional Museum of History in Pazardzhik; the Archaeological Museum, Roman monuments and Old Town Quarter in Plovdiv; Stara Zagora and its Museum of History, Roman monuments and the museum of Europe's best preserved Neolithic (5600 BCE) dwellings; the National Archaeological Museum and the Roman monuments in Sofia.

MODULE IV – Homework (app. 15 hours) will be assigned to all students, which will consist of editing and processing students' field documentation (field journal, context sheets, drawings, photos, etc.) and preparing presentations and reports.

Date	Morning	Afternoon
24 June Sat		5.30 pm - pick-up from pick-up from Sofia airport. Arrival at the hotel. Check-in. Traditional Bulgarian welcome dinner.
25 June Sun	Orientation. Tour of Pazardzhik Old Town Quarter.	Lectures: Rise and Fall of Europe's Earliest Civilization in the Fifth Millennium BCE. Tell Yunatsite: Environment, History, and Excavations.
26 June Mon	Field work Instructions: Hygiene, health, and safety at the site. Basic Field Methods and Practices for Excavation and Documentation. Use of Tools and Working Techniques.	Lectures: Warfare in Prehistory. From the Field to Storage: Review of Basic Methods for Uncovering, "First Aid", Consolidation in Situ, Cleaning, Sorting, Labeling, Documenting, and Storing Ceramic Artifacts
27 June Tue	Field work Instruction: Introduction to the Field Journal; Contextual Sheets, Log Book and Other Forms	Tour of Pazardzhik Regional Museum of History Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
28 June Wed	Field work Instruction: Three Dimensional Positioning of Finds, Features and Structures. How to Use a Total Station	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
29 June Thu	Field work Instruction: Horizontal and vertical Stratigraphy	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
30 June Fri	Field work Instruction: Photography for Archaeologists	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
1 July Sat	Excursion: Plovdiv (the ancient city of Philippopolis) – European capital of Culture 2019: Archaeological Museum, Roman monuments and the Old Town Quarter	
2 July Sun	Day-off	
3 July Mon	Field work Instruction: How to Draw a Ground-plan/elevation-plan/Cross-section Using a Scale	Workshop: Artifact Recording and Illustration: Prehistoric Pottery
4 July Tue	Field work Instruction: Excavations Preparation. Preliminary Indoor Research	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
5 July Wed	Field work Instruction: Excavation completion. Post excavation work and analyses	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation

6 July Thu	Field work	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
7 July Fri	Field work	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
8 July Sat	Excursion: Bulgarian capital Sofia: Downtown area including the National Archaeological Museum, the Cathedral, the 4 th century rotunda of St. George, and the 6th century church of St. Sofia.	
9 July Sun	Day-off	
10 July Mon	Field work	Lecture: Geodatabase Modelling in Archaeology: What, How, Why? Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
11 July Tue	Field work	Workshops: Producing 3D Photogrammetric Models of Excavation Units. Finds Processing & Flotation
12 July Wed	Field work	Lecture: Dating methods for Prehistoric Sites. Workshop: Database creation and incorporation.
13 July Thu	Field work	Lecture: An Introduction to GIS Spatial Analyses and Cartography. Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
14 July Fri	Field work	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
15 July Sat	Excursion: Stara Zagora (the ancient city of Augusta Traiana): the Regional Museum of History, Roman monuments, and the museum of the Europe's best preserved Neolithic (5600 BCE) dwellings.	
16 July Sun	Day-off	
17 July Mon	Field work	Lecture: Prehistoric Weapons in the Copper and Bronze Age Balkans; Workshop: Documentation of Prehistoric Tools and Weapons – Artefact Photography.
18 July Tue	Field work	Workshops: Documentation of Prehistoric Tools and Weapons – Artefact Photography. Finds Processing & Flotation
19 July Wed	Field work	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
20 July Thu	Field work	Workshop: Finds Processing & Flotation
21 July Fri	Field work	Exam Presentation of the Excavation's results. Evaluation meeting. Dinner and farewell party
22 July Sat	Departure. Check-out by noon	

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

A typical work day

6.15-6.30 am	Travel to the site
6.30-8.30 am	Fieldwork
8.30-9:00 am	Breakfast at the site
9:00-11.00 am	Fieldwork
11.00-11.15 am	Break
11.15 am -1.00 pm	Fieldwork
1.00-1.30 pm	Lunch
1.30-1.45	Travel to the hotel
1.45 – 4.45 pm	Siesta
4.45-5.00 pm	Travel to the site
5.00-8.00 pm	Lectures/Workshops/Finds processing
8.00 – 8.15	Travel to the hotel
8.15-9.15	Dinner

In case of rainy days, lectures and 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 %	Artifact drawing (stone and bone artifacts)
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 Tell Yunatsite 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

In [Primavera Hotel](#) in the district town of Pazardzhik, Bulgaria – in comfortable rooms with 2-3 beds per room, bathrooms with shower and WC, TV, air-conditioning and free Wi-Fi. Cheap laundry service available at the archaeological site. Participants are not expected to bring any additional equipment, sleeping bags or towels. The hotel is located next to the main pedestrian area of the Downtown Pazardzhik. There are lots of shops, pharmacies, banks, ATMs, a hospital, taverns, bars, cafes, post office and tourist attractions around in the hotel area. Pazardzhik is a mid-size Bulgarian town (50 000 inhabitants). The town and its surroundings offer a variety of opportunities for good entertainment, sightseeing, sports, wine-tasting and shopping.

The excavation site, Tell Yunatsite is situated about 10 km away (15 min ride) from Pazardzhik and the hotel. Transport on work days will be arranged and covered by the Balkan Heritage Foundation (BHF). Next to the site is the archaeological base with running water, electricity, a field latrine, dining and lab facilities as well as a tool storage available to the students.

Meals: Three meals (Balkan cuisine) per day are covered by tuition fee. This field school can accommodate vegetarians, vegans and individuals with gluten- and lactose-intolerance. Kosher-restrictions are impossible to accommodate in this location.

Breakfast and lunch meals will take place at the site during the work days. Other meals will take place at the hotel's restaurant. Brown-bag-lunches will be provided during excursions and days-off.

Students must pay on their own for extra days or for single room accommodation.

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT/TIME

Students will meet on June 24 at 5:30pm at the **OK Taxi Desk** (Balkan Heritage Foundation Travel partner) in the Sofia International Airport Terminal 2 arrival area. From there, students will be driven via taxi/shuttle to the hotel. The trip takes app. 1-1 ½ hrs., but that time highly depends on the 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 the field school venue.

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 www.bhfieldschool.org (*for Bulgaria*) and www.bhfieldschool.org/project/YUexc (*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 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. Pazardzhik has numerous pharmacies and drug stores as well as several hospitals providing regular and specialized medical care and first aid.

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:

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

Aslanis, I. Settlement Patterns in the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age: the Case of the Prehistoric Settlement of Yunatsite, Bulgaria. – In: Neolithic and Copper Age between the Carpathians and the Aegean Sea. S. Hansen, P. Raczky, A. Anders, A. Reingruber (eds.). DAI, 2015, 395-402 (Archäologie in Eurasien, 31).

Balabina, V., T. Mishina. Considering the Destruction of the Latest Eneolithic Village at Tell Yunatsite – In: Boyadzhiev, Y., S. Terzijska-Ignatova (eds.) - The Golden Fifth Millennium. Thrace and Its Neighbour Areas in the Chalcolithic, Sofia 2011, 39-47.

Boyadzhiev, Y. Chronology of Prehistoric Cultures in Bulgaria. – In: Bailey D. and I. Panayotov (eds.). Prehistoric Bulgaria. Monographs in World Archaeology № 22, Madison, Wisconsin 1995, 149-191.

Boyadzhiev Y. Chalcolithic Stone Architecture from Bulgaria - Archaeologia Bulgarica VIII, Sofia 2004, 1-12.

Boyadzhiev, Y. Tell Yunatsite: Development and Absolute Chronology of the Settlements from the Beginning of the Chalcolithic to the Early Bronze Age. – In: Neolithic and Copper Age between the Carpathians and the Aegean Sea. S. Hansen, P. Raczky, A. Anders, A. Reingruber (eds.). DAI, 2015, 381-394 (Archäologie in Eurasien, 31).

Merpert N. J. The Problem of Transition from the North Balkan Aeneolithic to the Early Bronze Age in the Upper Thracian Valley – In: Europa Indo-Europea, Roma 1994, 41-50.

Todorova N., Mazanova V. Late Chalcolithic Ceramic Style at Yunatsite Tell (Approach to the Systematization of the Ceramics from the Newly Excavated Levels) – In: Nikolova L. (ed.) - Technology, Style and Society. BAR International Series 854, Oxford 2000, 331-361.

Zäuner, S. The Dark Side of the Chalcolithic. Evidence for Warfare at Tell Yunatsite? An Anthropological Approach – Boyadzhiev, Y., S. Terzijska-Ignatova (eds.) - The Golden Fifth Millennium. Thrace and Its Neighbor Areas in the Chalcolithic, Sofia 2011, 49-56.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Aslanis I., Y. Boyadzhiev. Fleißdeponierung in der chalkolithischen Siedlung von Yunatsite – In: Prehistoric Thrace. Proceedings of the International Symposium in Stara Zagora, Sofia – Stara Zagora 2004, 370-378.

Boyadzhiev K. Development and Distribution of Close Combat Weapons in Bulgarian Chalcolithic - Studia Preahistorica 14, Sofia 2011, 265 – 281.

Boyadzhiev Y., I. Aslanis, S. Terzijska-Ignatova, V. Mazanova. Yunatsite: Ein Bulgarisch–Griechisches Grabungsprojekt. Die Jahre 2002–2008 - In: Boyadzhiev, Y., S. Terzijska-Ignatova (eds.) - The Golden Fifth Millennium. Thrace and Its Neighbour Areas in the Chalcolithic, Sofia 2011, 21-37.

Boyadzhiev Y. Ethnocultural Interrelationships in the Lower Danube Area during the Second Half of the Sixth and the First Half of the Fifth Millennium BC (According to Evidence from Cemeteries) - *Studia Preahistorica* 14, Sofia 2011, 205 – 223.

Grant J., Sam Gorin and Neil Fleming. *The Archaeology Coursebook: an Introduction to Themes, Sites, Methods and Skills.* Routledge, 2008.

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

Merpert N. J. Bulgaro-Russian Archeological Investigations in the Balkans. Ancient Civilisations from Scythia to Siberia – In: *International Journal of Comparative Studies in History and Archeology*, Vol. 2, N 3, Leiden 1995, 364-383.

Tell Yunatsite. The Bronze Age, Vol. 2, Part 1 (Moscow, 2007). (In Russian; a summary in English is available after each chapter.)

Todorova N. The Ornamentation of Late Chalcolithic Pottery from Yunatsite Tell, Pazardzhik District - – In: Nikolova L. (ed.) *Early Symbolic Systems for Communication in Southeast Europe.* BAR International Series 1139, Oxford 2003, 291-311.